

WOMEN, CLASS AND FAMILY

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1. Introduction

This paper explores the relations between patriarchy and class in the context of the capitalist mode of production. The relations between these terms, patriarchy and class or patriarchy and capitalism have been, in the women's movement, embedded in an often rancorous debate. For Marxist-feminists in particular, the dilemmas of how to locate ourselves in what were often represented by both sides as contradictory and opposing struggles, were serious and painful. On the one side, radical feminists posed men as the 'main enemy'. For them, therefore, any struggle must oppose patriarchy directly as a form of domination imposed by men on women. For them, Marxist-feminists, who link the struggle against patriarchy with a struggle with men against the ruling class, work with the oppressor and are thereby complicit in the reproduction of patriarchal relations. They have gone over to the other side. On the other side, Marxist-feminists, viewed as traitors by radical feminists, encountered a parallel accusation from the Left. Basing arguments on the theoretical work of Engels, women's oppression was identified with the historical emergence of private property and hence of class relations. The struggle for a classless society subsumed the struggle for women's emancipation. To struggle separately for immediate gains for women, or worse, to struggle within Marxist organisations against male chauvinism, served only to divide and weaken organisations committed to class struggle. The problems for Marxist-feminists have been how to represent feminism within class struggle, how to understand the relations between patriarchy and capitalism, how to confront and oppose male chauvinism in the working class and in the often petty bourgeois character of Left organisations, how to relate revolutionary organisation and struggle to the autonomous women's movement and how to bring understandings learned there into the struggle for socialism.

This is a highly oversimplified rendering of the deep political rift underlying theoretical discussions of the relation between patriarchy and capitalism. It produced a tendency to view patriarchy and capitalism as mutually exclusive and opposing terms. More recently, however, formulations have been developed providing a theoretical ground enabling Marxist-feminists to bring feminist positions into Marxism. Perhaps the most influential have

been those which seek to create a bridge between the two terms and sides by understanding patriarchy and capitalism as distinct but interacting systems. Hartmann, for example, has written of the unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism, reflecting on the tendency to collapse feminism into Marxism and proposing as an alternative to understand patriarchy and capitalism as assembled historically. Patriarchy in her view pre-dates capitalism and has been incorporated into capitalism as the latter developed. Some aspects of patriarchy have served capitalism and others have been in contradiction with it. Neither system is reducible to the other; each is shaped by and shapes the other.' Similarly Eisenstein has argued that patriarchy is a universal principle and that its local historical forms are expressions of this. There is feudal patriarchy, capitalist patriarchy and socialist patriarchy. Patriarchy takes on its distinctive character in the context of a particular mode of production and in the case of capitalism, patriarchy provides the hierarchical ordering of political control of the political economy and capitalism its economic **system**.³

The tack I have taken is somewhat different. I cannot see a mode of production as excluding the organisation of gender relations.⁴ In pre-capitalist societies, gender is basic to the 'economic' division of labour and how labour resources are controlled. In other than capitalist forms, we take for granted that gender relations are included. In peasant societies for example, the full cycle of production and subsistence is organised by the household and family and presupposes gender relations. Indeed, we must look to capitalism as a mode of production to find how the notion of the separation of gender relations from economic relations could arise. It is only in capitalism that we find an economic process constituted independently of the daily and generational production of the lives of particular individuals and *in which therefore we can think economy apart from gender*. In treating patriarchy and capitalism as distinct systems, we are reading back into history and into other kinds of societies a state of affairs peculiar to our own.

We have come slowly to the discovery that gender permeates all aspects of social, political and economic organisation; that what has been seen as not gendered is in fact largely an exclusively male arena of action and that from that viewpoint, gender relations are only present when women are. But from the standpoint of women, we are coming to recognise the pervasive effect or presence of **gender**.⁵ To posit a distinct **sex/gender** system⁶ is to inhibit analysis and understanding of the gender-saturated character of social relations by sectioning off those involving women. I have taken the view that we must begin by including women from the outset in our attempt to make out the historical processes in which we are implicated and which launch us towards the future we try to grasp and make. In so doing the concepts we are familiar with and which have been built upon an assumption of a universe which has excluded gender by

excluding women must be pulled, stretched and if necessary remade. For we are addressing the reality of a world which is put together as it is in the actual activities of actual individuals and in that world women are really present. They are as much in class, part of class and class struggle as men. Gender relations are, I shall try to show, an integral constituent of the social organisation of class.⁷

To begin from the standpoint of women means finding a method of thinking which does not insist that we put aside aspects of our experience of what we know by virtue of the living we do in an ordinary everyday way in an ordinary everyday world. We are confident of the discoveries we have made as women in reflecting on and consulting our experience. In the making of the women's movement, we opened our consciousness to the experience of other women and found our own oppression reflected in theirs. In the process of consciousness-raising, we sought to objectify and make real an oppression we shared. As women outside the dominant classes, which was the first site of the women's movement, became active the voice of women's experience was for them how they discovered their common oppression with others and how we and they learned of forms of women's oppression which we did not all share and which had different class sites.

The concept of patriarchy names relations, events, suffering, powerlessness, repression, which happen in many forms in our experience. Yes, violence is done to women. There are the ordinary daily ways in which women find they don't count. There are the ordinary ways in which women's labour and sexuality is used and appropriated. The experience named 'patriarchy' is a real experience. We experience it inwardly as a product of how women and how men have been socialised in the relations of dominance and subordination. We are trapped again and again into relations and situations we do not and have not chosen, but cannot escape because, among other reasons, patriarchy as an ideological practice has sought to deprive us of moral sanction and the inward surety to speak up for ourselves. What we see is a society which directly oppresses women, which has written books, tracts, constructed laws, made regulations, created organisations, work relations etc., systematically subordinating women to men and systematically placing us in relations which render us politically and economically powerless. Of course it is not a conspiracy. But as we learn more, it becomes clear that it has been *done*, actively. The social, political and economic forms of women's oppression have been and are the actual work, actual activities, actual doings of actual individuals. Of course women are part of these institutions, participating in the ways in which they have been rendered powerless—at least until recently.

Looked at in this way, the problem of patriarchy versus class takes on a different cast. The interpersonal relations of direct dominance, between women and men, are implicated in a larger organisation of the society.

Even if we see the patriarchal principle at work in each new setting, in government, business, professions, labour unions, yet that personal relation of dominance and inequality is articulated to the larger social, political and economic organisation of the society. It cannot be separated from it. The direct and personal character of men's domination over women takes on its actual character within determinate social relations specific to capitalism and to its development over the past 150 or so years. The relation between the actual forms of men's dominance over women, and women's general inequality in the society, are specific to this kind of society, to this historical epoch. These are the forms in which we experience oppression. They are the only forms of oppression we know. Whether there is something beyond or beneath which is general is not our first question. Our first question is to understand the relation between what we find at the level of experience and the larger social, economic and political process, viewing the latter as historical processes. For of course, this place, this time, these material conditions, these social relations, are where we do our work. This is what we must understand.

The first and fundamental step is to begin where women are in the society, with the everyday worlds of our experience, and to be prepared to reconceptualise the accepted concepts, frameworks and theories. These are built upon and presuppose how the world appears from positions and from within discourses from which women have for centuries been excluded. Much thinking and research on the family in the past has failed even to recognise that what women were doing in the home was work. The concept of role as it was developed and used provided a means of analysing family relations as interpersonal processes in which the work process was invisible. The absence of women's work in the home has become for many of us a major presence in the work of many writers. Here then we will attempt to place women and their work in the centre of the picture—not to rewrite a new and female chauvinist version of the family but to redress a gross imbalance and in part also because we cannot move towards the full picture until this imbalance has been rectified.

This means raising questions about our conceptual practices and conceptual organisation. The ordinary ways of our thinking and research begin in the intellectual world, with questions arising out of debates among social scientists, intellectuals, administrators, etc. We begin ordinarily outside experience and in the discourse (the interaction between thinkers and researchers exchanging knowledge and thinking in the form of texts). This approach gives us trouble when we want the ordinary experience of women in the everyday world at the heart and centre of our inquiry.

Let us look at what happens with the concept of 'The Family'. When we start in the intellectual world, that concept 'The Family' defines our concerns. We are oriented first by the work done in studying 'The Family'

and thinking about 'The Family'. Beginning with the concept leads us into a special set of procedures. These leave out the actualities of people's work, lives and experience and the varying actual settings and the actual social relations in which people live and work. 'The Family' becomes the topic and object of investigation. Actual families are examined with respect to how they may be seen to have common features and properties which can be assembled as aspects of 'The Family'. Questions then arise concerning what families across time, culture and class have in common with one another—their size for example, their constitution in terms of membership—is the nuclear form of the family a universal form? and so forth.'

This approach focuses upon conceptual problems and upon the problems of finding in the real world features corresponding to the conceptual structure. The actuality is examined in terms of 'family structure' or the like. Structures are read into the world as its features. This is not how we will proceed here. For there is another way. It is to make the actual practices visible so that we can locate our inquiry in an everyday world.

In Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the state*⁸, he uses a method of analysis which shows how we can get out of the difficulty we are left in once we have deserted 'The Family' concept and want to find out how to begin where people are and where the work is actually done.

This method takes an actual work process and locates it in a determinate social relation. Then we can see how the articulation of an individual's work to the social relations of a given mode of production determine how she is related and the ways in which she becomes subordinate. There is on the one hand a work process, an actual activity, and on the other social relations (also activities) which articulate the society. With the shift from communal to private property—

The administration of the household lost its public character. It was no longer the concern of society. It became a *private service*; the wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production.¹⁰

Engels oversimplified, but the method he used is important. He did not see the division of labour simply as a distribution of work in work roles. Rather he saw the work process as articulated to social relations which defined its relation to others and hence defined how the doer of that work was related in society.

If we follow Engels' method we will see that we cannot treat the material basis and work organisation of home and family as constituting an independent entity, independently determined. Rather they are articulated to and organised by social relations which *are* the social relations of a mode of production. The very separation, the very privatisation of

women's work in the home and how it is mediated by private property (according to Engels) is a feature of the social relations of a definite mode of production. This approach does not draw a boundary on the mode of production at the door of the home. Rather home and family are seen as integral parts of and moments in a mode of production. Our method is one which raises as empirical questions in every instance both concerning the work which is done, and the relations which organise and articulate that work to the social economic and political processes beyond and outside the home. Thus we don't cut across class and other differentiations or rural/urban differences in a society to discover the lineaments of 'The Family' and then return to the abstracted family to discover how it 'varies' in differing class, historical and other contexts. We begin with a method which locates the family and women's work in the home in the actual social relations in which they are embedded. The inner life and work of the family, and the personal relations of power between husband and wife are understood as a product of how family relations are organised by and in the economic and political relations of capitalism. The relation between internal and external, between the personal dimensions of relations, i.e. those wherein particular individuals confront, cooperate, engage sexually, are related as parents and children, work together as individuals, and those relations which are organised as economic and political relations, is the key to women's experience of the personal as political as a relation of oppression. In back of the personal relations of women and men in the familial context is an economic and political process which provides the conditions, exigencies, opportunities, powers and weaknesses in terms of which the interactional process goes on. Choice, decision, moral commitment, love, hate, alienation, are there in a context and in conditions in relation to which family members have no choice, where their particular commitments to each other may make a difference in terms of the fate of individuals and of the family as a relational working unit, but do not change the conditions, means, grounds, of what they may or can do. No matter how it is done, where men are wage earners and women cannot earn enough outside the home to provide for their children independently of a man and his wage, dependency permeates every aspect of the interpersonal process in the home—regardless of how loving, how caring, how much or little respect each has for the other, how they have been able to work together, how much the man has learned to grant autonomy to his wife, or she has learned to assert herself *vis-à-vis* him. The economic and political process is there as a continual presence giving shape, limits and conditions to what goes forward, and, as in every other aspect of a capitalist mode of production, supplying change, and necessitating adaptation in ways which render the examples of lifetime experience of previous generations irrelevant as models for each new generation.

Our strategy then seeks for the determination and shaping of the inter-personal forms of domination and oppression of women in how the economic and political relations in which the family is embedded constitute inequality, creating relations of dominance and dependency within the family. Of course other things are going on. But I want to push as far as possible an analysis which investigates how capitalism works in relation to women's situation in the family so that we can grasp the specific forms and processes of women's oppression—so that we can see what it is, how it is there, and perhaps be clearer about how to work for change.

In the analysis which follows, class and family, or class and patriarchy, will not be viewed as opposing and incompatible terms—placing us in an either/or situation at every point. Rather our strategy will be one relating the specific form of the family to the class organisation of a changing capitalist society. The basic conception of class we will work with is Marxist. This differentiates classes on the basis of a differing relation to the means of production. A dominant class appropriates and controls the means of production. It is supported by a class which labours to produce the subsistence of the ruling class as well as for itself. In capitalism this relation takes the form of the mutual constitution of capital and wage labour, surplus value is the form in which surplus labour appears and is appropriated by the dominant class. This dichotomous class structure does not become visible in a simple way for reasons which will in part be a topic of parts of this paper. For we shall see that rather than an analysis of family relations leading us away from an examination of class, it brings into focus class and the divergence between the underlying relation of capital and labour and the surface features blurring the sharpness of the underlying opposition. By beginning with class as a dynamic relation central to capitalism, by recognising families as organised by and organising social relations—among them class relations—by avoiding the concept of 'The Family' and thereby avoiding making class relations invisible by using the concept to make differences between classes unobservable, we can begin to see the social organisation of class in a new way. We discover the family or forms of family work and living, as integral to the active process of constructing and reconstructing class relations, particularly as the dominant class responds to changes in the forms of property relations and changes in the organisation of the capitalist enterprise and capitalist social relations.

It is important to preserve a sense of capitalism as an essentially dynamic process continually transforming the 'ground' on which we stand so that we are always continually experiencing changing historical process. It is one of the problems of the strategy of the intellectual world that our categories and concepts fix an actuality into seemingly unchanging forms and then we do our work in trying to find out how to represent society in that way. This we must avoid. We must try to find out how to see our

society as continually moving and to avoid introducing an artificial fixity into what we make of it. The society as we find it at any one moment is the product of an historical process. It is a process which is not 'complete' at any one time. The various 'impulses' generated by the essentially dynamic process of capitalism do not come to rest in their own completion or in the working out to the point of equilibrium of systematic interactions. The process of change is itself unceasing and at any moment we catch only an atemporal slice of a moving process. Hence to understand the properties, movement, 'structure' of the present, we must be able to disentwine the strands of development which determine the character and relations of the present in Western capitalism.

In our discussion we will rest at one major theoretical indecision by avoiding a clear distinction between 'bourgeoisie' and 'middle class'. The uses of terminology here will be descriptive rather than analytic. The current state of the debate on class and stratification is quite inconclusive and does not yield a satisfactory terminology, let alone theoretical account. I have become inclined to treat the capitalist elite, the middle class and the so-called petty bourgeoisie as a single class in relation to contemporary forms of property and the contemporary modes of maintaining domination of the means of production and the processes of expropriating surplus labour. It is an internally differentiated class articulated to the regional basis of the capitalist economy, actively organised and reorganised as a class by ideological processes, by the organisation of networks of personal relations, by the maintenance of privileged access to state and state services including education, governmental regulation and so forth. This section of society appears as dominant and corresponds to the ruling class as Marx and Engels used that term in *The German Ideology*.¹¹ It refers there not to a political group, but to that class which controls and dominates the means of production. The ruling of the dominant class or classes in contemporary capitalist society is mediated by a ruling apparatus of bureaucracy, legislature, management, intellectual discourse, professional organisation, etc. The payoff for the dominant classes is various forms of expropriation of surplus value where surplus value can no longer be seen as arising in a relation of individual capitalist to individual worker but must increasingly be understood as the organisation of relations between dominant classes and a working class as major segments of society and hence as having systemic properties. The class which rules, the dominant class or classes is, as I have said, internally differentiated. We can distinguish different sectors including the locally based petty bourgeoisie contributing his or her own labour to the enterprise, a large middle class salaried and occupying positions in managerial, bureaucratic or professional organisations, and an elite who come nearest to being describable as 'owners' particularly closely linked to finance capital and top levels of government. The working class can also be seen to be internally differentia-

ted into different sectors though its internal structure is as much organised by forces external to it than by initiatives arising from within. The major class organisations of the working class are trade unions and these in fact have served as part of the organisation of a dual labour market separating a core or central work world from a marginal or peripheral sector. The internal structure of the working class must be seen largely as responses to conditions and pressures originating in the economic process and as a defence against exploitation.

It must be clear by this point that questions concerning the designation of class and relations in contemporary capitalism cannot, in my view, be answered definitionally. Nor wholly at the level of theory. They can indeed be resolved at the theoretical level only by empirical inquiry examining the social relations mediating control and domination of the means of production and expropriating surplus labour, as they actually are today. Indeed this present essay can be seen as part of such an inquiry concerning itself with how the organisation of relations between women and men can be understood as integral to the forms of domination securing the means of production and expropriation to dominant classes and subordinating a working class in a relation of exploitation to them.

2. *Individual, Family and Property Relations*

At the beginning of the *Grundrisse*, the work which lays the foundations for the developed formulations of *Capital*, Marx analyses the social construction of individuality. He presents the individual as a social creation, a form which arises in social relations characteristic of capitalism.¹² Of course individuals exist under all modes of production, but it is only with capitalism that the individual emerges as a determinate social actor, entering into social economic relations as an individual. This conception was important in Marx's thinking about the stage represented by capitalism in the historical processes of transforming society towards human emancipation in classless society. The individual appears as a free agent with the breakdown of feudal relations tying serf to household and to land, lords and serf, and ordering relations of exploitation and appropriation as relations of obligation between persons embedded in personalised relations of fealty and force. Capitalist relations externalise the relations of inter-dependency in general forms—the relations of exchange between money and commodities and the distinctive form of these taken as capital appears. The individual, whether as capitalist or as wage labourer, is detached from personal forms of interdependency and is constituted as a free agent in market relations. Thus capitalism as it destroys feudal relations and creates the autonomous individual also creates the conditions for the democratic processes of civil society.

The promise of democracy was, however, withheld from the mass of humankind. Democracy proved partial. The egalitarian claims and advances

on the basis of which the alliances of the English, American and French revolutions had been created were in the event necessarily restricted. Underlying the egalitarian principles and egalitarian forms of government were class differences radically modifying the social and political effects. The individual had indeed arrived upon the historical scene, but he was of two kinds—an individual owning the means of production and seeking to put it to use by buying labour-power to apply to it and an individual lacking the means to produce for himself or for the market, owning only his own labour power which he must sell in order to live. The truly egalitarian society promised by democratic forms of government can emerge only when this basis of inequality among individuals is eliminated. Until then, democracy remains a means to the exercise of state power by the dominant classes.

Taking the standpoint of women discloses a further barrier to equality. The universe of individuals thus constituted as such is a universe of men and not of women. Marxist thinkers have done much work recently to analyse the specific relation of women's domestic labour to the labour-power sold as a commodity by the worker.¹³ This work hones in on what is missing from Marx's model. The constitution of the individual worker as an individual appearing on the market with his labour-power to sell presupposes a work organisation 'behind the scenes' which is not articulated directly to the market process, but appears as a personal service to the individual worker. That individual depends upon domestic labour as the essential basis of his capacity to sell his labour-power to the capitalist, hence to appear as an individual in the marketplace. Marx and Engels believed that the development of capitalism would progressively break down these vestigial forms of personal dependence, that all members of a family would enter directly into the industrial process as individuals, and that the final transformation of family relations would be through the socialisation of private domestic labour.¹⁴ This has not happened, at least not in the way in which Marx and Engels anticipated. Rather, our times until recently have seen a consolidation of the privatised relation in which the individual worker is 'produced' through his wife's domestic labour. This relation is integral to the appearance of the worker as individual on the market. Hence the social form of the individual as worker is, like the wage, an appearance which conceals an actual relation between the domestic labour done largely by women in the home and the individual wage-earner in the productive process.

The analysis of the significance of domestic labour has however addressed only one side of the appearance of the individual. It addresses the construction of individuals only of the working class. On the other is the individual owner of the means of production. In Marx's work private property as constitutive of the individual capitalist as economic agent remains unexamined and unexplicated as a social relation. The individual

as one participating in the appropriation and control of the means of production must also be reproduced daily as an individual through the domestic labour in the home. Further than that, when the means of production were identified with an individual or individuals, the property relations of entrepreneurial forms of capitalism also depended on relations within the family. In the first stages of capitalism the continuities of property and the consolidation and continuity of capital transgenerationally depended upon an organisation of family relations which subsumed the wife as a civil person under the person of her husband and gave to the father significant control over the relations formed in marriage by his sons and daughters. Marriages among the bourgeoisie brought into being relations among properties appropriated by individuals. The actor on the economic and political scene, the civil person, legally constituted as such, was the husband and father whose rights to appropriate his wife's property and earnings, as well as those of his minor children, mobilised property, resources, and labour of the family in the interests of the capitalist enterprise on whose successes and failures the family depended. The family became a corporate economic unit identified with an individual man. At various levels of the economy different aspects of this control and appropriation came into prominence. For the smaller entrepreneur, the petty bourgeois, owning and working in his own shop as well as employing others, women's domestic labour (of wife, daughters and servants) was integral to the subsistence organisation of the enterprise. At levels where the specialisation of merchant, financial and similar roles created actual forms corresponding to the theoretical category of agents of capital, the bourgeois appropriated the domestic labour of the women of his household; and controlled the women of his family's capacity to create social linkages. He was legally accorded exclusive access to his wife's sexuality since that provided the essential corporeal connection between men of one generation and men of the next through which the continuity of property could be established. He also disposed of similar rights in his daughters' sexuality as a means of forming connections between his capital and property and that of others. As Hall and others have pointed out, marriages between kin of appropriate degrees was a significant mechanism for the consolidation of capital transgenerationally in the absence of specialised capital-holding institutions, trusts, joint stock companies, corporations, etc.¹⁵

These relations are more than relations in which men exploit women.¹⁶ If we examine the legal relations closely and their changes, we would see how they are geared to constituting formally the forms required by the relations of capital, of the market, and of the developing property-owning forms. They are the social constitution of the capacities of an individual, whether an individual person or later a corporate form, to act as an economic agent, to incur debts, to make loans, to hold mortgages, to hold

property in land in ways which articulate it to a real estate market, etc. These are the kinds of linkages and requirements which are constitutive of the form of the bourgeois family, given its character as an economic unit and they determine how domestic labour and resources are appropriated. Hence as these institutions change, and of course they have changed greatly, the relations determining the form of the bourgeois and middle-class family, the internal structure of appropriation and the relation of domestic labour to these, have also been modified. In particular as property (in the sense of ownership of the means of production) shifts to the corporate form of ownership and the chief actor on the economic scene ceases to be the individual person and becomes the corporate person (so that even a one-man enterprise would be constituted as a company), a radical separation between the company or corporation and the bourgeois or middle-class family emerges. These are changes in the middle-class family. They are great changes in the roles and activities of women, and the contexts in which women's domestic labour in the home is done.

In the earlier stages of capitalism, the social relations which were key as contexts for women's domestic labour in the middle class were those of the property institutions and other institutions organising and constituting economic agency, and indeed agency in political and professional spheres in general. The development of the corporate form of ownership of the means of production implies new forms of social relations. Corporate ownership is accompanied by the extension of bureaucratic forms of government, and the rise of a scientific and technological establishment located in a variety of organisational forms. An integration of the functions of 'ruling' in the society emerges. The organisation of relations and activities in all spheres becomes increasingly differentiated as specialised practices, in government, management and the professions, in ideological processes and in education. These came over time to form a loosely integrated apparatus in which forms of action are characteristically in words or mathematical symbols. This apparatus I shall call the 'ruling' apparatus, where in the economic context of Marxist thought 'ruling' identifies the processes and functions which reserve and control the means of production in the interests of a class. The ruling apparatus of contemporary capitalism comes into view as such in a special way from the standpoint of women of the dominant classes, since they have been excluded from all but subordinate and generally menial positions within it.

3. The rise of the corporation, the externalisation of property and the changing role of the family in the reproduction of the ruling class

The development of the corporate forms of ownership and economic agency increasingly separate the spheres of economic relations of the family and household unit. The social construction of the individual man as agent or actor arises at the juncture of the two spheres. The forms of

property and the social relations of the economy organise domestic labour in relation to the individual man in determinate ways. Under capitalism these relations are in a continual process of change producing an ever-increasing concentration of capital. Quantitative changes have been accompanied by major modifications in the forms of property ownership, in the organisation of the market and of finance and commercial processes, as well as of management and technology. These modifications have also radically modified the organisation of the middle-class family.

The externalisation of the relations of inter-dependency which were earlier primarily market relations began to develop as an externalisation of property relations and an objectification of managerial and organisational processes. The continuity of accumulation of capital so precariously provided for by individual forms of property were externalised as corporations, trusts, cartels, joint stock companies, etc. Markets organised earlier as a series of independent transactions are progressively integrated as a single sequence of ordered transactions from original seller to final destination. This required coordination at a different level than could be met by economic units tied in to the household and family. Economic organisation became increasingly separated from the local organisation of the household. Men moved to and fro between the two 'levels' of organisation, participating in each. With the rise of corporate forms, they became the agents of capital by virtue of their positions in an organisation, whatever their capacity. Director, manager, so-called owner—the relations, powers and activities of each are features of large-scale organisation. Their relations, roles, performances, are mediated by the corporation as a property-holding form. The new forms of property are a differentiated structure externalising property relations as a system of specialised roles.

Over time the corporate form becomes the legal constitution for all sizes of business, although for small business it is elective. Organisationally it completes the separation of family and household from economy—or rather from the economy as differentiated and specialised processes. Economic relations became increasingly differentiated and specialised at an extra-local, national and international level. Earlier, forms of externalised economic relations depended upon networks of kinsfolk in varying degrees. Among the middle class, the family was a broader conception than the household representing an organisation of common interests vested in more than one privately owned enterprise or professional occupation. The separation of family and business world was blurred. Economic organisation was supported and organised by kin and familial relations. The primarily domestic work of women was not isolated from the relational politics of business—quite apart from other ways in which women's skills could be involved in business enterprise. The advancement and security of the family involved the active participation of women in more than one way. Allegiances, decisions about character, the backdoor

informational processes known as gossip—these were all part of the ordinary world in which business was done and were integral to it. But the corporate form supplants these processes with its own. Those employed must owe allegiance to the organisation and not to family. Specific competences and qualifications become of greater importance than family ties. Alliances established within the business structures and networks themselves become more central than alliances in the local area or within a kin network. As the economic process is sealed off, women in the household are isolated from it. The middle-class domestic world becomes truly privatised. The locus of advancement for the individual ceases to be identified with his family connection and with the advancement of the kin constellation. It becomes identified with his individualised relation to the corporate enterprise. It is this which later becomes institutionalised as a career. The domestic labour of the middle class household is increasingly organised as a personal service to the individual man. Its relation to the business enterprise in which he is actor arises in how the household work and organisation is subordinated to its requirements as they become his.

The relation through which men appropriated women's labour is changed. It is no longer part of the organisation of an economic enterprise in which women are included. Now an individual man appropriates as his the work done by his wife or other women of his family. The individual man becomes the enterprise so far as the family is concerned. The earliest and most typical form of this is that of the individual professional. It becomes general as the *career* rather than individual ownership structures the entry and activity of the individual as economic agent. As the corporate form of *organising* agency and ownership become primary, the individual's agency and relation to the means of production are *organisationally* mediated. The relation of appropriation becomes highly *personalised*. It becomes a general form characterising the relations of middle-class women and men in work situations in the home and outside.

This is visible in many forms. It is there, for example, in what we do not know about women in the past. It is present for example in our ignorance until recently of the fact that the figure of the British astronomer William Herschel concealed that of a second astronomer, his sister, Caroline, who shared his work, perhaps shared his discoveries, made discoveries of her own, kept house for him and acted as his *secretary*.¹⁷ When a group of eminent sociologists wrote accounts of how one of their major pieces of work was done, some described a very substantial contribution by their wives. No one raised questions then about the fact that the husband appropriated that work as his and that the wives' work contributed to the advancement of their husbands' careers and reputations and not to theirs." The middle-class relation of appropriation by men of women's work is incorporated into *professional*, bureaucratic and managerial organisation. It appears as a differentiation of women's and men's roles

providing for the structuring of a career for men in positions which are technically specialised and superordinate, and a truncated structure of advancement for women in positions which are skilled but ancillary and subordinate to those of men, and, of course, low paid. Women were and are secretaries, graduate nurses, dental hygienists, and elementary classroom teachers. Men were and are managers, doctors, dentists and principals and vice-principals of elementary schools. Prentice's study of 'the feminisation' of teaching in nineteenth-century Canada indicates that as the school system expanded, the structuring of women's and men's roles was consciously designed to permit men in the teaching profession a career and salaries at a professional level. This was possible only by allocating a substantial part of the work to women teachers whose rates of pay were depressed and whose advancement was limited.¹⁹ Until recently these forms of employment for middle-class women were institutionalised as a transitional status between childhood and marriage. Possible competition and social contradiction between women's occupational status and subordination to the husband after marriage were avoided by terminating employment on marriage or by ensuring that married women did not occupy professional positions of any authority.²⁰

In these developments we find the social and material bases of the form of family which we have taken as typical and which we are only now becoming aware of as a distinct historical and cultural form in moving away from it. This is the household and family organisation which is a distinct economic unit, primarily a 'consuming' unit—i.e. one in which women's domestic labour producing the subsistence of its individual members depends upon a money income. Household and family are increasingly tied to the individual man's career and less to an interlinking of family relations and enterprises. Household and family are enucleated. The interests of the wife are held to be intimately bound up with her husband's career. In various ways she is expected to support him morally and socially as well as through the ways in which her domestic labour ensures both his ordinary physical well being and his proper presentation of self. His career should pay off for her increments of prestige in the relevant social circles and in home furnishings, a larger home—in general in the material forms in which his advancement in the organisation may be expressed in relations between neighbours, friends and colleagues. As corporations increase in size and the managerial structure is increasingly objectified, a sharp contradiction arises between individual autonomy and subordination to authority. For men there is a peculiarly difficult combination of the need to exercise initiative, to give leadership, and to take risks as ingredients of a successful career and the requirements of conformity to organisational exigencies, norms and criteria of achievement in a hierarchical structure. Hence tension management comes to be seen as an important responsibility of middle-class wives.

As the professional, government and corporate apparatus becomes consolidated as a ruling apparatus, forms of action in words and symbols become a fully differentiated form. Language is constituted as a discrete mode of action. This requires a division of labour which will organise and provide for the necessary material aspects of communication. Processes of action which are merely communicative depend on specific divisions of labour as well as a technology. Hence the elaboration of clerical work. But women's domestic labour also comes to be organised specifically to service this conceptually organised world of action.

It is a condition of a man's being able to enter and become absorbed in the conceptual mode that he does not have to focus his activities and interest upon his bodily existence. If he is to participate fully in the abstract mode of action, then he must be liberated also from having to attend to his needs, etc. in the concrete and particular. The organization of work and expectations in managerial and professional circles both constitutes and depends upon the alienation of men from their bodily and local existence. The structure of work and the structure of career take for granted that these matters are provided for in such a way that they will not interfere with his action and participation in that world. Providing for his liberation from the Aristotelian categories (of time and space) . . . is a woman who keeps house for him, bears and cares for his children, washes his clothes, looks after him when he is sick and generally provides for the logistics of his bodily existence.**

The home then becomes an essential unit in organising the abstracted modes of ruling in the context—the necessary and ineluctable context—of the local and particular.

These changes introduce a new subordination of the home to the educational system. The technological, accounting and communicative practices of the emerging ruling apparatus require appropriate skills as a condition of entry and of action in its modes. Language skills, indeed perhaps just those styles of speech identified originally by Bernstein as an elaborated code,²² are essential to participation in this form of action and being. The work of mothering in relation to the work of the school becomes an essential mediating process in the production and reproduction of class relations among the bourgeoisie and the working class.²³

The educational system and access to the educational system mediated and controlled by family, home and, above all, by the work of women as mothers, comes to provide the major transgenerational linkage of class. Children are no longer prospectively actors in the moving history of family relations entwined with property and economic enterprise. Sons are no longer prospectively those who will carry on family businesses and hence provide for the continuity of capital built in the work of one generation forward towards the next. Daughters are no longer those who will consolidate alliances or relations linking social, economic and political relations into a network of kin. Children progressively become the object of parental

work, particularly the work of mothers, aimed at creating a definite kind of person, with distinct communicative skills in speech and writing and with capacities to take advantage of an educational process through which boys will have access to career-structured occupations and girls will have access to men with career-structured occupations.

At a certain point there appears to be a reversal in the relation between the domestic unit and the economic organisation. At the outset of the development of capitalist property relations, the family/household unit supported and was subordinated to the economic enterprise. With the increasingly sharp separation of household and family from a role in the social construction of property relations and the declining significance of the broader social network based on kin and family, the original relation becomes reversed. Economic activity more and more takes the form of paid employment and the career is a means of private accumulation. For the managerial or professional employee of corporation or the state, the salary is a means of building personal and family assets—a home investment, life insurance, a better pension, leisure 'capital'—a summer cottage, a boat, etc. The emergence of the sphere of 'personal life' which Zaretsky attributes to the appearance of industrial capitalism as such seems rather to be a later development.²⁴ It seems to be correlated with this shift from economic agency directly identified with the individual capitalist as property-owner, to the form of agency mediated by the corporate form of property holding. 'Personal life' becomes the object of investment. Salaries, their increments and careers build private assets rather than the advancement of an enterprise with which the small capitalist is identified as an individual. Such accumulation of private wealth has been organised in relation to the marital unit. New forms of matrimonial property legislation are sought to accommodate these newer patterns. These changes indicate that capital no longer depends upon the family to constitute those forms of property relations enabling the individual man to act as an individual property-owner yet providing for the perpetuation of capital beyond the lifetime of the individual. They indicate that the property holding form constitutive of capital is fully separated from dependency upon the economic persona of the individual subsuming the family organisation which earlier provided for its continuity.²⁵

4. The extra-local social organisation of the dominant classes

We have proceeded with the analysis of the bourgeois and middle-class family as an aspect of the organisation of a dominant class. We have also taken for granted that the organisation of a class, of the dominant class at least, is an actual activity or activities, that it involves work, that it is continually produced and reproduced with respect to how the means of production are controlled. We have been viewing the middle-class family as an active part of the internal organisation of the class and, most recently,

in relation to the social organisation of preferential access to the educational system. We have focused also upon changes taking place in capitalism which arise from its essential dynamic. The latter feeds effects to the 'surface' creating problems, new alignments and divisions requiring an active work to reorganise the intra-class relations of the ruling class. The family and the work of women in the family have been central in the work of organising and re-organising the internal structure of the dominant classes, as a class. A major change in the basis of the dominant classes has been the progressive reorganisation of property relations and the emergence of a differentiated basis of class, giving rise to sections structured as differentiated forms of agency in relation to the division of property functions represented by the corporate form. These changes continue with a movement towards an increasingly hierarchical organisation more and more tightly articulated to the structures of financial capital.²⁶

In this section we will draw attention to the relation of this ruling apparatus and the general social relations of capitalism to relations among particular people necessarily always located in particular places, viewing the world from their actual bodily location and in very ordinary ways, eating, fucking, suffering, giving birth, loving, hating, working, living and dying. The organisation of these relations—the ways in which the living of particular individuals is organised in relation to the abstracted generalised relations of exchange and ruling is a major work of the family and in particular of the middle-class family under capitalism.

A major shift took place in the basis of dominant class organisation with the emergence of a class based on the extra-local organisation of commodity exchange relations and the organisation of financial and mercantile activities at an international and national level. This shift is the basis of a developing centralisation of the ruling class in Europe as well as the formation gradually of international linkages. Marshall has pointed out that the class structure of Britain, as he observed it in the 1940s and 1950s was distinctly differentiated with respect to local and national structures. The dominant classes (a term he did not use) were organised nationally, whereas the working class was still locally and regionally organised.²⁷ The significance of dialects and 'accents' in England was the expressive aspect of this structure. In North America, the organisation of the ruling class in the late nineteenth century had more regional structures, sometimes cross-cutting national boundaries, as for example the west coast elite of the ruling class based on lumber, railroads and coal linked California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Though the north-eastern establishment of the US exercised a centralising pull, the geographical dispersion of its bases prevented the increasingly extra-local and abstracted forms of property, finance, marketing and management from developing the strongly centralised organisation of the ruling class characteristic of Britain. In Canada the indigenous development of class is

given a distinctive character in the late nineteenth century by the intersection of the leading section of the Canadian ruling class with that of Britain. But whether centralised or regional, the generalised and abstracted relations of commodity exchange progressively detached the dominant classes from particular localities and regions and from the organisation of class relations on a local basis. Hence intra-class relations had to be reformed on the national or non-local level. These relations had also to be organised in and as part of an actual everyday world, a world inhabited by particular individuals, embodied, who necessarily exist in local and particular places. The social organisation of the ruling *trans-local* class must be accomplished at the *local* and *particular* level in the everyday world. The everyday world and its order had to be redesigned so as to realise in *local* settings the properties, settings and order of a non-local, abstracted general order. Class as an everyday social phenomenon came to consist of highly developed codes of dress, manners, etiquette, furnishings, organising practices of exclusion and inclusion and the ordering and control of the settings in which intra-personal encounters occurred. Everything that we have laughed at about women in reading novels, fashion magazines and the like becomes less silly and more intelligible when we see that this is what is and was going on. The attention to fashion, the eagerness to learn and imitate what is being worn this season in New York, in London, in Paris, these were part of the formation of a non-locally organised class as a lived everyday world. These are part of the social organisation of the ruling class *as a class*. Davidoff has stressed this change in the local organisation of class relations in her study of the *Best Circles* in nineteenth-century London. She describes how rules of access to privatised settings and to social circles provided a new basis of class organisation. Kin relations could be treated selectively, those that were advantageous could be exploited while others were dropped. Barriers against newcomers could be more effectively maintained.²⁸

So there is a change in the internal organisation of the ruling class away from localised and localising networks of kin and towards a distinctly created order of relations and settings, a definitely stylised, expressive and staged everyday world, identifying, marking, and re-forming intra-class relations, and securing and *organising closure* of the interpersonal relations of the ruling class. The elaboration of a code, or a system of codes in furnishing and dress styles, in etiquette, conversation, etc., provided for mutual recognition among members of the class and the routine accomplishment of social 'circles' as a hierarchy within the ruling class. Entry to the best, or even the next best, circles depended upon already being a member in the sense of knowing how to recognise and to reproduce the expressive codes which announced membership and having therefore capacity to participate in the circles defined by their codes. Subordinate sections of the ruling class oriented towards the styles,

manners and etiquette as a means of establishing in their local setting their claim to membership in it. Through these means too they sharply differentiated themselves from others in their local community whose local economic and social roles might be little different from theirs.

In this type of class organisation, being an outsider is a distinct way in which class is experienced. Being present and yet knowing oneself to be an outsider and knowing oneself to be known as an outsider, who does not know how to speak, does not know how to dress, does not know how to address the appropriate topics appropriately, does not recognise the differentiating signals of dress, does not know which fork to use, or what a finger bowl is for, or how to speak or not to speak to servants, who does not know what to wear at what times of day, and in what settings—these were features of the social organisation of the ruling class at this extra-local level. In this way an extra-local everyday world is formed building in rules of exclusion and inclusion as codes and knowledge of codes.

At the stage of entrepreneurial capitalism, the small town was still an important locus of extra-local class formation. Though members of the bourgeoisie and middle class looked towards a centre such as Boston or New York or London in terms of fashion and culture, the actual locus of organisation was decentralised. The structure of entrepreneurial capitalism relates locally organised enterprises via market and monetary processes which are extra-local. But market functions themselves were enterprises located in towns and cities and tied into a locally organised class structure. At this stage of capitalism we find the work of producing class and class relations and intra- and extra-class relations within the local community. We can identify this localised organisation of class in novels such as those of Mrs Gaskell and Anthony Trollope in England, or of Sara Jeanette Duncan in Canada. Typical is the interplay between local neighbourhood, kin and political relations. At this stage (which of course did not develop nor disappear at the same time everywhere) there is a direct transfer from the relations generated by the economic organisation of the community to its political and civil relations. The local social organisation of the ruling class is largely the work of the women and implicates the family and familial relations. The boundaries are drawn by admission into the family setting, a family setting which is specifically designed and organised so as to intersect with and create the class linkages and allegiances coded in furniture, styles of meals and serving meals, conversational topics, and so on. The domestic labour of the middle-class woman and her servants were directed of course towards the comfort and health of her family members, but also and very importantly towards maintaining the material aspects of the codes articulating the family setting and social process to the extra-local organisation of class.

The basis of the family and domestic organisation of classes as an extra-local structure within the local setting changes with the change from

entrepreneurial forms of capitalism to the corporate form. A study of the history of Glossop shows a sequence from the emergence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century of a multitude of small manufacturers owning small shops who at the outset worked along with their wage-labourers, through the consolidation of larger units on which a *local* bourgeoisie was established, to the shift away from that to an externally structured strata of salaried managers linked to the rise of what Birch calls *combinations*.²⁹ These are changes which shift the locus of economic organisation as a practice of management and of relations among the differing functions of the economic process out of the local community.

This progressive transposition of economic functions from individual enterprises locally organised to corporate form organised at the national or international level is the same movement which creates the salaried middle class. C. Wright Mills has described this change statistically for the United States in the changing ratios of salaried professionals and managers to independent businessmen and *professionals*.³⁰ It is a change also in the basis of class organisation, hence the work of the middle-class family in constituting the internal relations of class is modified accordingly.

Mills represents this as a decline of the old middle class and indeed it is.³¹ But it should be emphasised also that it is a social re-organisation of the internal relations of the bourgeoisie and middle class in response to changes in economic organisation. New forms of local relationship emerge. The relations of the abstracted economic forms are no longer an active and integral process of neighbourhood and community relations. Now they must be expressed and organised as an everyday world in the local setting. The house, household, furnishings become a key then to forms of relations between neighbours in which house properties lie alongside one another so to speak, unrelated by the various working relations which linked members of a community in the earlier period. In this setting their relations are mediated by the visible signs which constitute for each other their mutual class status and hence bring into being the actual social organisation of class and its internal structures *as status*.

The suburb becomes an alternative mode of constituting the extra-local relations of the dominant classes. Suburban enclaves establish distinctive types of housing, types of schooling, and exclude 'undesirables' by informal real estate practices and zoning regulations restricting the financial basis of the area. This type of suburban development constitutes a total environment controlled with respect to the bases of participation. The control is built into the material environment and the use-value it embodies. Restricting entry provides for residents a controlled social environment which ensures that others are at least minimally appropriate as class associates and that as far as children are concerned the contacts they make, the associations they form and what they learn informally, will be

within the desired class level. These forms of class residential organisation correspond to the abstracted form of organisation arising with the corporate form of capitalism in a way that is analogous to how science fiction writers have imagined that an alien form of life might reproduce its specialised and controlled climatic form and air supply in a variety of specific local settings.

The process then is one of constructing the social relational basis of a class that is no longer organised on a local basis in relation to land and local organisation of general market processes, but on a basis of modes of identifying persons in terms of performance in social occasions, knowing how to behave, how to dress, how to appear, and therefore upon behaviours which can be learned even though access to opportunities of learning may be restricted. Identification of class membership is no longer particularistic but is based upon and constitutes persons as kinds of currency whose value is determined by qualifications, by styles, by dress, and by knowing how and what to say, how to participate. The inculcation of this rather specialised **culture** requires intensive training, much of which is done in the early years of life prior to the child's going to school. The articulation of such trained and specialised behaviours to types of formally organised settings such as schools is part of the social construction of class transgenerationally, the social construction aspect of the distinctive mode in which the dominant classes are organised in contemporary corporate capitalism. It establishes both a relatively closed system of entitlement to settings and occasions provided by the various forms of corporate enterprise, including those of university and school, and an interchangeability of persons corresponding to the generalisation and interchangeability of settings and occasions established by the generalisation of corporate forms of organisation.

5. A contradiction within the dominant classes and its management

The emergence and progressive integration of the new form of ruling apparatus, distinctively a communicative practice, is also an ideologically informed and organised practice. It is socially organised to be differentiated and separable from particular individuals, and particular places. We can find in Weber's analysis of the bureaucratic type of authority, the essential prescription for the formation of a managerial or administrative structure serving the objectives of an enterprise quite separate from and independent of the objectives of those who 'perform' it, its employees make its objectives theirs and thereby bring it into being. The bases of access to positions in the ruling apparatus change. As these no longer clearly differentiate on sex lines, but call for technical knowledge, qualifications and so forth, the barriers to women's entry are weakened. In response the barriers are artificially and actively reinforced and ideological forms aimed specifically at the organisation of middle-class women's

relation to the ruling apparatus are developed.

The earlier form of economic agency constitutes the biological differences of sex as components of individual private property among the bourgeoisie. As property functions are transferred to the corporation and as the state and professional apparatus grows concurrently, skills acquired through education become increasingly important. So does the formation of the person socialised to roles structured now by the planful and rationally ordered logic of corporate action rather than the individual skills and working relations of actual individuals as actors in a given enterprise. The general capacity to participate in an elaborated world of literate action becomes essential. With these developments, the original basis of married women's exclusion as a component of property relations is no longer a barrier. The 'natural' basis of differentiation between the sexes was fundamental to the economic and political organisation of pre-capitalist social formations. With the rise of capitalism the basis of differential power and participation in civil society begins to dissipate. The barriers become weak. Major women novelists of the nineteenth century stood on the margins of power sensing in themselves unused capacities for participation. Their intellectual powers, their energetic intelligence, and exceptional language capacities gave them a natural access to an arena in which they could not act. The social barriers placed on them by their sex emerges in the work of Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, and others, as a powerful contradiction generating the movement of their novels and the tragic dilemmas of their heroines. The period which first sees a theory of the education of women specifically recommending training for subordination, domesticity and personal servitude to men, notably of course the teachings of Rousseau, also sees the counter-statement in the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. The rise of capitalism rather than instantly precipitating women into the private sphere seems rather to initiate a struggle on one side to reinforce and re-organise the barriers to women's participation and on the other to break through barriers already weakened by the advance of capitalism on the other.

This struggle has focused particularly on women's education. The conception of a specialised education for women preparing them for domesticity points to a new need to plan and organise women's relation to the home. Importantly also, it provides that the very ideological channels through which women's potential access to a wider arena opens, should be those through which they would learn the practice of their confinement. Ideological organisation has been central in organising the role and social relations of bourgeois and middle-class women. It has been of special significance for women whose material situations have been such that they could make the everyday realisation of ideological forms an objective. They could adopt styles of being, manners, etiquette, dress, moral relations, in accordance with ideological developments. Intra-class

relations were increasingly ideologically organised. Ideological forms began to shift the basis of culture from the inherited forms of previous generations, passed from mother to daughter, to an orientation towards the authority of print and hence of ideology generated within the ruling apparatus itself by specialists of various kinds—by authorities in women's feelings; by experts in women's physiology, biology and sexual capacities; by writers of fiction who created the mirrors in which women sought to discover their reflection; by the makers of moral tales who prescribed the forms of heroism and sacrifice proper to women; by the physicians who packaged ideology and treatment for the nebulous but real suffering arising from the regime of ideological living. Over the shifting requirements of changing social relations of capitalism, ideologies continue to design and redesign the modes of women's subordination and service to the ruling apparatus.

The importance of the domestic labour of dominant class women and of their subordination to the economic and political roles played by men and to the work of organising intra-class relations, has been secured using ideological as well as other means of class control. As education became the key link in the access to economic agency women's access to education had to be regulated. Steps were taken to exclude women from professional, bureaucratic and political positions as these were found to be vulnerable. Active forms of ideological and state repression responding to incursions by middle-class women were developed. For example, the rise of women novelists in the nineteenth century elicited, as Showalter has shown,³³ a critical enterprise amounting almost to censorship on the part of male publishers and literary leaders. Typically 'female' styles and topics were institutionalised in the novel through the influence of men whose critical treatment laid down the topics women writers could properly address, how they could address them, and the range of feeling and moral issues which could properly be taken up by the woman writer.

Over time an educational system was put in place which systematically differentiated boys from girls. Girls were streamed into programmes ensuring their disqualification from the kinds of advanced training giving access to the professions. The hidden curriculum trained them to be responsive and open to the ideological initiatives and technical practices increasingly originating in experts located in academic settings—instructors on home management, child rearing, interpersonal relations in the family, and the like. Women's post-secondary training came to focus largely within the arts and social sciences, or in subordinate forms of professional training such as nursing, pharmacy and teaching. School and post-secondary education emphasises women's language abilities, their knowledge of social science, art and literature, and trained them to respond and to make use of the work of experts. Women are prepared for their ancillary clerical roles in management. They are provided with the language skills needed to

give the 'cultural background' on which their future children's success in school will depend. They are also trained to respond to the work of psychological and sociological experts, to psychiatry, and to medicine as authorities and to make practical use of their understanding of the new ideologies produced by such specialists. Women of the dominant classes learned to treat the academic and professional sources of guidance with deference and to look to the expert for guidance in child rearing and in the management of interpersonal relations in the home. They learned in university the essential conceptual organisation articulating their daily work lives in the home to categories and concepts of the scientific establishment. They learnt indeed to think in terms of role and interpersonal relations, to analyse their situation and work in these terms, hence not to see what they were doing as work, to understand it as 'love', as 'role structures' and 'interpersonal processes'. They learned to look for problems and issues as these were analysed and constituted by experts. These skills are pieces of an ideological organisation linking the private domestic sphere to the professional bureaucratic and managerial controls of the ruling apparatus. The ideological organisation coordinated and coordinates the family and women's role in relation to the changing and various needs of the ruling apparatus. Education not only ensured that women would not end with the types of skills giving them an undeniable claim to entry as active participants to the ruling apparatus, but also laid down specific ideological controls through which the changing relations of a rapidly shifting capitalist development could be reformulated and reorganised as they were fed through to the family and to women's work in the family. Women learned in post-war North America, a 'feminine mystique' extolling the devotion of women to children, husband and suburban home.³³ Middle-class women were learning and participating in a work role ancillary and subordinated to the educational system. The ideological organisation provided the organisational linkage which seemed like no linkage at all. The 'causal' rhetoric of psychology and sociology was a one-way street. What mothers did affected how children did in school. What went on in the home was the 'wild' factor uncontrolled by the hierarchical structure of the educational process. Ideological organisation originating in a scientific establishment and mediated by the mass media came to coordinate the private and state sectors of responsibility for children, as indeed in other spheres.

These relations among ideological organisations, a family form subordinating women in a subcontractual relation³⁴ to a ruling apparatus of government, management and professions mediated as personal services to husband and children, and an educational system preparing them for these family functions and for the essentially subordinate clerical and professional roles middle-class women came to play, are the matrix of the experience of patriarchy among middle-class women. The authority of

men over women is the authority of a class and expresses class 'interest'. The inner complicity of women in their own oppression is a feature of class organisation. The concept of 'patriarchy' explicates as a social relation between women and men the conjunction of institutions locking middle-class women into roles ancillary but essential to the ruling apparatus and specifically silencing them by giving them no access to the ideological, professional and political means in which their experience might be communicated to other women.

6. The working-class family: the emergence of women's dependency on men

Dependency of married women, and particularly women with children on men and men's salaries or wages is a feature of both middle-class and working-class family relations in contemporary capitalism. This is not simply a matter of universal family form characteristic of a species rather than a culture or mode of production. Women's dependency must be seen as arising in a definite social form and, we have suggested, organised rather differently in differing class settings and relations. One view identifies the emergence of this type of family organisation with the rise of capitalism. As the productive process is increasingly taken over by the industrial organisation of production, the family becomes a consuming rather than a producing unit, and women's domestic labour ceases to play a socially productive role and becomes in the working class a personal service to the wage earner. Her domestic labour reproduces the labour power of the individual worker.

But as we acquire more historical knowledge of women we find that the sharpness of this supposed historical moment becomes blurred. The emergence of the dependent family form is slow and seemingly contingent upon elaborations and developments of the original separation of domestic economy from the industrial process. As we explore the dynamic process at work we can recognise a contradiction in the rise of capitalism so far as women and their relation to the family are concerned. It seems that the same industrial capitalism leading apparently to a restriction and narrowing of the scope of women's work in the home and to her and her children's dependency on a man's wage, is also a process which potentially advances women's independence by making it in principle at least possible for women to earn enough to support themselves, perhaps even to support their children. Productive labour formerly tied to **sex** differences by different physical and biological situations and also by the intimate ties of skills which were earlier a true specialisation of persons from childhood or youth on. As production is increasingly mediated by machine technologies and increasingly organised as a form of enterprise specifically separated from particular individuals and their local relations, it is also increasingly indifferent to **social** differentiation, such as gender or **race**.³⁵ At every new

level in the development of productive capacity in capitalism, this contradiction is apparent. Capitalism continually represents the possibility of women's independence and at the same time engenders conditions and responses which have constituted a fully dependent form of family unit. It seems then that the dependency of both middle-class and working-class women on the individual man's salary or wage must be examined in relation to the organisation of the labour market and employment possibilities for women outside the home.

Over time working-class and middle-class patterns of family organisation have become more alike with respect to the wife's dependency on her husband's wage or salary. But the history of that relation is very different. The earlier civil status of a man simply obliterated his wife's as she was subsumed in the family economic unit identified with him. She had no place in civil society, no capacity for economic action, at least so long as she was married. What she produced, what she earned, if she did earn, was his. Later her domestic labour becomes subordinated to the enterprise of his career, and employment outside the home is organised to ensure that the jurisdiction of male authority and appropriation of women's labour both inside and outside the home do not interfere with one another. Dependency is part of a perpetuated pattern of excluding women and married women in particular from functioning as independent economic agents.

This history of the present family form among the working class is very different. It does not begin with women's exclusion from economic activity and it does not involve the formation of a property-holding unit identified with the man. The legal forms were the same and those gave men the right to women's earnings, but the actual practice and organisation of work relations and economic contributions did not conform to the bourgeois or middle-class pattern. The exclusive dependency of women on men's wages is only gradually established and is differently structured. For working-class women, dependency is directly on the man's wage-earning capacity and role and a man's status and authority in the family is directly linked to his capacity to earn.

The dependence of the mother-children unit on the male wage earner emerges rather slowly. Scott and Tilly have identified a distinct form of working-class and petty bourgeois family economy in which each member earns and contributes to a common fund out of which the family needs are met. They argue that although a relatively small proportion of married women were employed in industry until relatively late in the nineteenth century, the pattern of women not contributing actively to the household economy comes very late. A wife who did not earn or otherwise contribute directly to the family means of subsistence and who had to depend upon her husband's wage was most definitely undesirable. Married women worked outside the home, and brought money or goods into the home in

all kinds of ways.³⁶ They took in lodgers. Some had gardens and produced for their families and sold the small surplus; or they baked and sold the product. Women were small traders, peddlars, and scavengers. They went into domestic service, took in laundry, were seamstresses, labourers on farms, took in homework and worked in factories.

Children too were essential contributors to the family economy. They might be employed in factory work but there were also a variety of opportunities for casual labour such as running messages. In addition there were many tasks around the house which children could perform while parents were at work outside. They did housekeeping, looked after younger children, fetched water, gardened and did other odd jobs.

With the institutionalisation of universal education, children cease or have already ceased to be regular wage earners contributing to the family wage from early in life. They cease progressively to contribute to the everyday work activities of household work and childcare. The withdrawal of child labour from the household as well as from the labour force required the presence of mothers in the home. Indeed the home comes to be organised around the scheduling of school and work so that the mother is tied down to the household in a way which was in fact new. Both husbands and children might come home for a mid-day meal. The school imposed standards of cleanliness which themselves represented a serious work commitment on the part of women who had to pump and heat water for washing. In the school context the child appears as the public 'product' of a mother's work. Her standards of housekeeping and childcare began to be subject to the public appraisal of the school system through the appearance and conduct of her child in the school. The working-class home as a work setting began to be organised by a relation to the school as well as the place of work. The school itself set standards for women's work as mothers and in various ways enforced them.

7. The patriarchal organisation of the working-class family

The dynamic processes of capital accumulation involve an increasingly extensive use of machines making labour more productive. From these processes, two consequences flow for working-class women. The first is a tendency of machines to displace labour, generating over time a surplus labour population. This functions as a reserve army of labour in relation to the opening up of new areas of capital investment. The expansion of markets and of opportunities for investment regards the actual appearance of a surplus as such, but the steadily increasing rate of unemployment over time identifies a tendency which cannot be wholly suppressed and is quickened by the monopolistic process of corporate capitalism. The emergence of a permanent surplus labour population is relatively independent of unemployment created in the crises which periodically throw capitalist economies into recession. The presence of this 'reserve

army of labour' tends to sharpen the competition of workers for jobs and hence to lower the price of labour-power (the wage). A second consequence is that technological advances have also made differences in physical strength and in skills developed over a lifetime of practice of decreasing significance in the productive process. Parallel to the developments of capitalism which among the ruling class make participation in the exercise of power indifferent to sex, is a development of the productive process rendering it too increasingly indifferent to the sex of the worker. Hence as the surplus labour population increases and competition sharpens, women come into competition with men for jobs. The traditionally lower wages of historically disadvantaged groups such as women and blacks gave them an advantage in competing for jobs which employers had no hesitation in deploying to their own advantage.

Through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this problem was a recurrent theme in male working-class views concerning women in the labour force and in the policies of trade and labour unions. The issue for men was not only that of jobs. It was also the implications for the family and for men's traditional status in the family. Various nineteenth century writers, including Marx himself, saw women's participation in industry as destructive of their 'natural' female virtues and modes of being. These 'virtues' were intimately tied to notions of passivity and subordination and a restriction of women's spheres of action to a narrow conception of the domestic. Both working class and middle class were marked by the prohibition for women (and for children) of self-knowledge of their sexuality and control of their own bodies. The physical fragility of women, their supposedly natural weakness, is also related to the ways in which women's physical existence was subordinated to that of the husband and children.³⁷

When women were employed outside the home and could earn a wage sufficient for independence, their departure from the ideals of femininity became a subject of reprobation. Of the early nineteenth century, Malmgreen writes:

There was a psychological as well as an economic basis for the male worker's uneasiness, for the chance to earn a separate wage outside the home might free wives and daughters to some extent from the control of their husbands and parents. The piteous image of the sunken-cheeked factory slave must be balanced against that of the boisterous and cheeky 'factory lass'. Lord Ashley, speaking on behalf of the regulation of child and female labour in factories, warned the House of Commons of the 'ferocity' of the female operatives, of their adoption of male habits—drinking, smoking, forming clubs, and using 'disgusting' language. This, he claimed, was 'a perversion of nature', likely to produce 'disorder, insubordination, and conflict in families'.³⁸

The voice here is that of the ruling class, but on this issue the working-class man and the ruling class were united. Malmgreen notes that in the early

nineteenth century this view appears particularly prevalent among leading artisans in the working-class movements of Britain in that period.³⁹

This stratification of the labour force within those trades and industries organised by craft unions survives in the differing job classification, which, for example, separates bartenders and chefs from waitresses and cooks. These divisions have their base in the internal division of labour resulting from differentiating tasks requiring specialised capacities from those which 'anyone' could do.⁴⁰ The internal differentiation becomes the basis of a stratified labour force separating a central workforce. This comes about in part as the outcome of union struggles, particularly in the early part of the twentieth century.⁴¹ The central labour force is 'insulated', to use Friedman's terms⁴² from the 'reserve army of labour'. It has access to the internal labour market of the corporation and hence to possibilities of mobility within the workplace. Pensions and other benefits have been won and seniority in transfers, layoffs and rehiring has been established; working conditions are regulated to some degree. By contrast, the peripheral labour force is defined by categories of dead-end jobs in the corporation and in localised small industries and service businesses with fluctuating labour needs.⁴³ It is not insulated from the reserve army of labour—indeed it is in part constitutive of that reserve. Workers tend to be bottled up in the peripheral labour force by lack of differentiating skills or experience. Rates of turnover, unemployment and underemployment are endemically high. Wages are low, benefits lacking or inadequate, working conditions poorly regulated.

Advances for workers according to Friedman have been won through struggle.⁴⁴ The struggle for a family wage and to reduce the competition of capitalist with man and family for women's labour is the obverse of the struggle to secure stability, good wages, benefits, to control working conditions, on the part of what becomes the 'central' section of the labour force. The central section is characterised by union organisation whereas the peripheral labour force has been relatively less organised. Struggles which have made gains for the central section of the labour force have also been part of the organisation of a racially and sexually segregated labour force. Under Gompers' leadership, the trade-union movement in North America became for women a systematic organisation of weakness relative to men and a systematic organisation of preferential access to skills and benefits for white men. There was little interest in unionising women other than as a means of control. There was fear that bringing numbers of women into a union would result in 'petticoat government'. Women's locals were sometimes given only half the voting power of men on the grounds that they could only contribute half the dues.⁴⁵ The Canadian Trades and Labour Congress in the early twentieth century had as an avowed goal that of eliminating women, particularly married women, from the work-force. In Britain, though women had a longer history of

trade-union organisation and there was an entrenched though small number of women in leadership positions, there was a similar lack of interest in actively organising women workers or in representing their distinctive interests.⁴⁶

Struggles to restrict women's participation and particularly married women's participation in the labour force went on under various guises. Union efforts alone could not have been effective in reconstituting the family in a way that fixed women's dependence on men's wages. At that period, however, the state begins to enact legislation in various ways constitutive of a family in which dependency of women and children, or conditions become legally enforceable and are progressively incorporated into the administrative policies of welfare agencies, education, health care, etc. There is an implicit alliance forming during this period between the state and the unions representing predominantly male working-class interests in the subordination of women to the home and their elimination from an all but marginal role in the labour force.

The emergence of national and international markets and financial organisations, of an organisation of productive process implanted into local areas rather than arising indigenously, conforming to standardised technical plans and standardised machines, tools and other equipment, and of a universalising and managerial and technical process, called for a new kind of labour force. Similar exigencies arose also in relation to the military requirements of imperialist expansion and the devastating wars resulting from the conflict of rival empires. This new labour force had to be capable of entering the industrial process anywhere in the society. The need was not only for technically skilled workers, but more generally for a *universalised* labour force, stripped of regional and ethnic cultures, fully literate, English-speaking, familiar with factory discipline and the discipline of the machine and, in relation to the military enterprise in particular, physically healthy. In the production of this labour force, mothering as a form of domestic labour was seen as increasingly important. The mother's ancillary role *vis-à-vis* the school and the school as means of setting standards for children's health, cleanliness and character has been mentioned before. The liberation of women for work in the home became an objective of the ruling class of this period.⁴⁷ Here then we find steps taken to reduce the competition of industry and home for women's labour. Legislation restricting the length of women's working day, night shift work, the physical exertion which could be required of women, was passed.

In these changes we see under a different aspect some of the same developments we have described earlier, in relation to the changing basis of the social organisation of the dominant class. It is the period during which in the United States the corporations began to predominate. Various legislative steps and administrative developments re-organised, at least

the legal and administrative basis of the family and united the interests of the AFL type of union with those of the section of the ruling class represented by the state. Laws which earlier entitled husband and father to appropriate both his wife's and his children's earnings disappeared. New legislation was passed requiring men to support their wives and children, whether they lived together or not,⁴⁸ and administrative processes were developed to enforce the law. Laws such as these became the bases of welfare policies both during the depression years and later. They are built into the welfare practices of today, so that a man sharing the house of a woman welfare recipient may be assumed to be supporting her and her children, hence permitting the suspension of welfare payments to her.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the state entry into the socialisation of children through the public education system provided an important source of control. Davin has described the early twentieth century policies for educating working-class girls. They are in line with ruling-class interest in a healthy working class and stress the girl's future role as mother.⁵⁰ As secondary education developed streaming patterns similar to those characterising the experience of middle-class women prevented working-class women from acquiring the basic manual and technical skills on which access to skilled and even semi-skilled work in industry came increasingly to depend. Vocational training became almost exclusively a preparation for clerical employment.

The depression years established a clear conjunction between the interests of organised labour and of the state (and of some sections of the ruling class) in as far as possible eliminating married women from the labour force. The state adopted various measures designed to ensure that one wage would provide for two adults and their children (some of the legislation mentioned above was passed during the depression years). The emergence of Unemployment Insurance and Pension Plans created an administrative organisation building in the wife's dependency on her husband. In the United States, job creation programmes omitted to create jobs for women.⁵¹ The man as wage earner and the woman as dependent became the legally enforceable and administratively constituted relation. In this way the increasing costs of reproducing the new kind of labour force including the costs of women's specialisation in domestic labour would be borne by the working man and his wage. As Inman points out:

The law makes it mandatory on the husband to 'support' the woman in this workshop (the home), and their children. And while the 'support' the husband gives his wife must come out of production, and the owners of the means of production are not unaware of her existence, and while they also know that children must be raised if the supply of labour and soldiers is to remain adequate to their needs, yet the working man who is the support of his family is not secure in this amount.⁵²

It would be, however, a serious mistake to see these reactions as merely the expression of a patriarchal impulse. Women's domestic labour was of vital and survival value to the family unit. Subsistence was still dependent upon the work of women in a way which it is no longer. The adequacy of shelter, the preparation and cooking of food, including making bread, the making and maintenance of clothing, the management of the wage, are crucial. The availability of a woman's unpaid labour was highly consequential to the household standard of living. The physical maintenance of the male breadwinner was an essential feature. When food was short, women and children would go without to ensure that the 'master' got enough, or at least the best of what there was. As the family was increasingly integrated into the monetary economy, the role of women was more and more that of managing and organising the expenditures of the wages. Women became experts in managing and experts also in going without themselves.⁵³ It seems likely that at a certain point the requirements of domestic labour began to come into direct competition with work outside the home. A family could manage better if the mother did not go out to work, but was able to devote herself full-time to domestic labour and the production of subsistence. The concentration of the wage earning function in the man also liberated women's domestic labour to maintaining and increasing the family's standard of living. More time spent in the processing of food, more time to give to mending and making clothes, more time to give to cleanliness and maintaining of warmth and shelter resulted in material improvements in the family's standard of living. Where men could not earn enough, women with young children were confronted with the dilemma of whether to go out and earn what little they could so that the children could eat, running the risks that lack of adequate care for the children created, or whether to stay home and give the children adequate care when they could not get enough to eat.⁵⁴ The improvement over time in men's wages reduced, though it has not eliminated, this dilemma. It is implicit in the situation of working classes because it is always present in the wage relation. As real wages decline, the spread of families in which the wife goes out to work increases. The family is always dependent upon the state of the economy and of the particular industry in which the man works, and upon which his role and livelihood and his family depend.

Characteristic also of the working-class family, in which the man is the breadwinner, and the women and children are dependent, is a marked subordination of women to men's needs. Control over funds is a distinct male prerogative. A husband's resistance to his wife's going out to work goes beyond the practicalities of the family's economic well-being.⁵⁵ Working-class women learn a discipline which subordinates their lives to the needs and wishes of men. The man's wage is his. It is not in truth a 'family' wage. Varying customs have developed around the disposal of this. Sometimes there appears to be a survival of the older tradition

whereby the wife takes the whole wage and manages its various uses, including a man's pocket money. But it is also open to men not to tell their wives what they earn and to give them housekeeping money or require them to ask for money for each purchase. It is clearly his money and there is an implicit contract between a husband and wife whereby he provides for her and her children on whatever conditions he thinks best and she provides for him the personal and household services that he demands. The household is organised in relation to his needs and wishes; meal times are when he wants his meals; he eats with the children or alone as he chooses; sex is when he wants it; the children are to be kept quiet when he does not want to hear them. The wife knows at the back of her mind that he can, if he wishes, take his wage-earning capacity and make a similar 'contract' with another woman. As wages have increased, the breadwinner's spending money has enlarged to include leisure activities which are his, rather than hers—a larger car, a motorcycle, a boat and even the camper often proves more for him than for her, since for her it is simply a transfer from convenient to less convenient conditions of the same domestic labour as she performs at home.

Unemployment of the man has a shattering effect on this type of family. Men's identity as men is built into their role as breadwinner, as spender in relation to other men, as patriarch within the family. The extent to which their masculinity is dependent upon capitalism appears powerfully in the context of unemployment when the claims and entitlements built into the 'contract' are undermined. No matter how hard wives may attempt to replicate the forms of the proper relation, over time the situation itself falsifies their efforts and it is apparent to both.

This situation is often represented as one which is somehow the product of women's arbitrary ill-will. But as we begin to understand the basis of the patriarchal structure of the working-class family in its relation to capital and the founding of masculine identity on the wage and the wage relation imported into the home, we can see that it is not a matter of choice for the unemployed workers' families. Rather the underlying basis of relations has changed. The man is not what he was, his relations are not what they were, because the material determinations outside his control and the control of members of his family are not what they were. Hence his moral claims, his right to authority, based on these material relations, are undermined. He was not what he thought he was. His masculine identity, his authority over his wife and children, his status with other men, was always based on relations outside the family and not within his grasp. His masculinity was not really his after all.⁵⁶

For working-class women, this relation has a political dimension. The discipline of acceptance of situations over which they have no control and the discipline of acceptance of the authority of a man who also has in fact no control over the conditions of his wage-earning capacity, is not

compatible with the bold and aggressive styles of political or economic action necessarily characteristic of working-class organisation. Women's sphere of work and responsibility is defined as subordinate to that in which men act and it is indeed dependent and subordinate. The children's well-being, the production of the home, these require from women a discipline of self-abnegation and service as exacting as that of a religious order and just as taxing emotionally. Masculinity and male status is in part expressed in men's successful separation from the subordination of the sphere of women's activity as well as the visibility of his success in 'controlling' his wife (what may go on behind the scenes is another matter). The fact that the wage relation creates an uncertain title to male status and authority by virtue of how its conditions are lodged in the market process and exigencies of capital, make the visible forms of relations all the more important. Men subordinate themselves in the workplace to the authority of the foreman, supervisor and manager. A condition of their authority in the home is this daily acceptance of the authority of others. They assume also the physical risks and hazards of their work. (Indeed as Willis shows these became the basis of a distinctively masculine identity on the shop floor.)¹¹ They live with the ways in which capital uses them up physically and discards them mentally and psychologically. They undertake a lifetime discipline also, particularly if they elect to marry and support a wife and children. That responsibility is also a burden and it can be a trap for working-class men as much as for working-class women. Through that relation a man is locked into his job and into the authority relations it entails. His wife's subordination, her specific personal and visible subservience, her economic dependence, is evidence of his achievement. Her 'nagging', her independent initiatives in political or economic contexts, her public challenges to his authority—these announce his failure as a man. In the political context, we find a subculture prohibiting women's participation in political activity other than in strictly ancillary roles essentially within the domestic sphere. When for example women organised militant action in support of the men striking in the Flint, Michigan strike in 1937, they had to go against norms restraining women from overt forms of political action.

Union organisation is based upon and enhances the separation and powers created by the wage relation. Obviously and simply the union is an organisation of wage-earners. The individualised appropriation of the wage by he or she who earns it is institutionalised in a collective organisation of workers attempting to control the wage and the conditions under which it is earned. Wives and families dependent upon the wage have no title to represent their interests. I am not suggesting that these interests are always ignored. I am pointing rather to how collective policy and decision-making of wage earners institutionalises an individual worker's exclusive right to a wage. The separation of the sphere of economic action

from the domestic is completed. The interchange between the two is a matter for the individual wage earner. The consequences of union decisions and policies are consequences for wives and families, but they have no voice other than through the individual wage earner. In strike situations women may organise to support within the sphere of domestic activity; or they may be accessible to manipulation by management propaganda and have even occasionally developed organised oppositional strikes. Both are aspects of a single underlying relation and both conform to the appropriate boundaries and relations of women's political activity *vis-à-vis* men's.

Earlier we cited Malmgreen's description of an instance of ruling-class fear of the 'ferocity' of female operatives. Lord Ashley clearly identified the subordination of women to men in the home with their political suppression. The ideology of the weak and passive women, needing protection and support and subordinated 'naturally' to the authority of men in the home, as it was adopted by working-class men and working-class political and economic organisations, served to secure the political control of one section of the working class by another. In the first part of the nineteenth century in England, working-class women had been active in radical politics.³⁸ Their subordination to men in the family was perfected progressively over the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth. It is integral to the attempt of the ruling class to establish a corporate society. The range of organised working-class action is narrowed progressively to economic organisation restricted to the workplace. A whole range of concerns and interests arising outside the workplace in relation to health, housing, pollution, education, remain unexpressed or expressed only indirectly. Localised neighbourhood and community concerns have yet to develop an organised and continuing political voice. Inadvertantly working-class men combine to suppress and silence those whose work directly engages them with such problems and concerns. Indirectly and through the mechanism described above they come to serve the interests of a ruling class in the political and economic subordination of half the working class.

8. *Patriarchy and Class*

At the outset we confronted the terms 'patriarchy' and 'class' as key terms in contrasting and opposed accounts of women's inequality in contemporary capitalist society. Resolution of the opposition has been sought in an empirical questioning of family organisation as a basis for women's subordination to men. As we have examined the development of a form of the family in which women depend upon men and the ideological and political institutions enforcing it, we can begin to see patriarchy (in the sense of men's political and personal domination over women) in relation to class as part of the institutions through which a ruling class maintains

its domination. At different stages in the transformation of property relations from the individual to the corporate form, bourgeois and middle-class women have been subordinated to the changing requirement of class organisation and of the transgenerational maintenance of class. For working-class women we have seen the emergence of a dependent form of family subordinating women to men, locked in by legal and administrative measures instituted by the state and a stratified labour market fostered by trade unions, capitalists and the state. These are the institutional forms which have secured the uses of women's domestic labour in the service of a ruling apparatus, ensuring and organising the domination of a class over the means of production. They are political institutions in the sense in which the women's movement has come to understand that term, where it refers to the exercise of power as such whether it is a feature of specialised political institutions such as political parties, government and the like, or of less formal interpersonal processes.

Throughout the foregoing analysis we have been aware of capitalism as continually generating changes in material conditions and of these changes as they are fed through to the 'surface' necessitating innovations, adaptations, re-organisation. Forms of political and ideological organisation relatively successful in stabilising the position of the dominant classes at one point may at the next confront situations in which they are no longer effective or appropriate. This today is surely the situation with respect to women. The institutions of patriarchy organise and control in a material context other than that they can handle effectively. The ground has shifted under our feet.

We have pointed to a major contradiction arising for both middle-class and working-class women as capitalism advances. It is the contradiction between a developing and essential indifference of capital to the sex of those who do its work, and the gender organisation of the domestic economy as an integral part of the reproduction of class. With the rise of corporate capitalism the balance begins to shift away from the domestic. Women's exclusion becomes then a political institution built into the organisation of education, into the uses of power characteristic of the self-governing process of professions and professional organisations, and of union organisation, and into other institutional processes. Earlier the contradiction emerges as a latent and sometimes actual competition between the domestic and the political economies for women's labour—a competition resolved for some time by restricting women's success to the labour force after marriage and in general to a limited range of occupations with an earning capacity below that enabling them to maintain a family unit without a husband. The political aspects of women's subordination are the institutions of patriarchy. But they could not have been effective without a corresponding material base.

Earlier women's domestic labour was essential to subsistence. It had no

substitutes. It has also been essential to advances in the family standard of living which would have been originally unobtainable without the interposition of women's work in the home. Women of both the middle class and working classes at different income levels could by their personal skills, their hard work and commitment, take the wage and salary, purchase materials and tools and combine these with labour and skill—their knowledge of cooking, cleaning, managing, laundering, shopping, etc.—to produce a subsistence level or better, essential for family health, comfort and under minimal income conditions, for survival. In the households of the dominant classes the production of the 'coded' settings expressing class status also depended upon women's skills and labour, although until the first decade or so of the twentieth century much of that labour would have been that of hired domestic servants.

Over time the labour women contributed to the domestic production of subsistence was displaced by labour and skill embodied in the product of industry. Progressively capital has inserted a labour process embodied in the commodity into the home and has reorganised the work process there as it has reorganised so much in every part. At some point what women can contribute in the form of labour no longer balances off what she can earn and hence add to the purchasing power of the family. The wife can no longer significantly reduce costs to the wage earner by contributing more of her labour to the household process. This moment is not single nor simple since it is also related to income levels and the standard of living at which the family aims. Nonetheless the basic process is one which increases the significance of a monetary contribution and depresses the significance of skilled domestic labour. Additional money comes to be the primary if not the only means of improving the family's standard of living or of avoiding economic hardship. The exigencies of care of small children comes to be the chief claim reserving women from labour force participation.

Along with the transfer of labour and skill in the production of subsistence from housewife to product, the market process provides increasingly for the daily needs of individuals. Many functions earlier belonging to the home have been socialised in various ways—cleaning clothes, cooking and feeding, care of the sick, of the old and handicapped, amusement, social life, etc., have become commercial or state services. Even though recently state support in some areas has been reduced or withdrawn, the massive transfer from the domestic to the social realm still generally holds. In practice this means, among other things, the existence of alternatives where formerly there were none. This is consequential in particular for men for whom the home no longer represents the sole and exclusive source of food, shelter and comfort. For men the assumption of the 'burden' of a family no longer so clearly provides a standard of well-being and comfort which would otherwise be unobtainable.

For women of the dominant classes the importance of their local work in the maintenance of class relations has declined. The rise of suburbia first transferred some elements of the formation of the extra-local forms of class to the selective processes of the real estate market and the **organisation** of stylistic and price enclaves as neighbourhoods of similar kinds of people. The further detachment from the local of the ruling apparatus accords for men increasing importance to linkages based on their business or professional associates. There is at first a characteristic split between the zones of social activity of men and women. Men's is increasingly articulated to their work and women's increasingly in relation to their work and responsibilities in the suburban territory of childcare and the eight-to-six working week of women at home. This split becomes visible in social settings in the conversational separation of men from women. The **evolution** of the ruling apparatus as an elaborately interlaced network of the state, managerial, financial and professional division of the work of ruling is more and more divorced from specific local places and individuals rooted as such in neighbourhood and community. This evolution diminishes the significance of family and family-formed transgenerational linkages for the dominant classes.

The slow but consistent upward creep of the labour force participation of married women, and indeed of women in general, points to the **diminishing** power of the domestic economy to compete with paid employment for women. The demand for certain types of women's labour increased greatly as corporate capitalism called for clerical, sales and service workers at low cost, a demand which has more and more been met by women. The 'compact' restricting the employment of married women and hence the direct competition of paid employment with the domestic economy controlled by the husband has been weakened and is in decline. The assertion of individual authority by a man in restraining his wife from taking on paid employment outside the home is weakened by the disappearance of complementary restrictions in the work setting. With inflation and increasing levels of unemployment more and more married women enter the labour force. Money earnings are essential to the family and if the man's wage or salary does not bring in enough then women's responsibilities to her home and family are increasingly calling for her to seek employment outside the home.

Nonetheless, the earlier political and ideological accommodations institutionalised in the labour market and the educational system come to function so as to depress arbitrarily women's capacity to earn a living, to survive, to provide for children. Patriarchal institutions continue to reduce women's capacity to compete on the labour market. The **organisation** and perpetuation of a stratified labour force has vested powers and privileges in men which give them an advantage in the context of the

sharpening competition for employment as well as for positions of power and opportunity in the ruling apparatus. In particular the educational system as a whole including both schools and post-secondary institutions of all kinds, is effectively sealed off from initiatives seeking to modify the processes by which it has systematically served to disqualify women at every level of the occupational structure from access to more highly skilled, more advanced and better paid employment. Government attempts to modify women's access to skilled trades had been restrained by business and organised labour and by its own unwillingness to adopt policies which would exacerbate problems of unemployment. Depression has its gender organisation. It appears in the government statistics as the high proportion of women on welfare; in the uses by high school girls of pregnancy as a means of independence through child care payments; in the increased numbers of single parents; in the increases in prostitution; in the increased availability of working-class women for jobs such as office cleaning, textile manufacture, waitressing, where rates of pay are kept down by the vast reserve army waiting in the wings, and the like. It appears also in the increases in violence of parents against children and of husbands against wives, as children and wives with children become a trap.

In these historical movements which transform the internal gender relations of class we can see both the bases among women for a common struggle against patriarchy and the bases for class divisions. In the analysis developed in this paper patriarchy comes into view as located in the same set of institutional processes which organise class hegemony. The ruling apparatus of managerial practices, state, textual discourse, professional organisation and so on is gender organised and still dominated by men. It confronts women of the dominant classes primarily in its gender aspect: its class dimension does not appear. For working-class women, on the other hand, its patriarchal practices are not easily distinguishable from its class rule. Nonetheless there are common bases for struggle against a common enemy. And while the local patriarchal forms of the working class are oppressive to women and have been reinforced and sustained by the patriarchy of the ruling apparatus, they do not take on the same political significance as the coincidence of the local and personal with institutional domination which is the experience of women of the dominant classes. The issues for women of the dominant classes revolve around the possibilities of transforming the internal gender relations of class without transforming class itself. Clearly those for working-class women confront a more fundamental contradiction, particularly as the ambiguous local patriarchal forms of the family are eroded by changes in the bases of the family economy. The women's movement provides for the possibilities both of alliance and of opposition. More important, however, than the almost certainly illusory dream of unity among women, is the creation of a wholly new arena of discourse within which such issues as

these are debated and in which class relations among women are given expression and definition.

NOTES

1. c.f. Christine Delphy's early paper, 'The main enemy: a materialist analysis of women's oppression', Women's Research and Resources Centre, *Explorations in Feminism*, No. 3, 1979.
2. Heidi Hartmann, 'The unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism: toward a more progressive union' in Lydia Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* (South End Press, 1981). An earlier version of this influential paper was published in 1975, pp. 2-41.
3. Zillah Eisenstein, 'Developing a theory of capitalist patriarchy and socialist feminism' in Zillah Eisenstein, ed., *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1979), pp. 5-40.
4. Veronica Beechey's admirable appraisal of the range of feminist thinking on patriarchy concludes with a call to develop a materialist method of analysis integrating 'production and reproduction as part of a single process' and revealing 'that gender differentiations are inseparable from the form of organization of the class structure'. Veronica Beechey, 'On Patriarchy', *Feminist Review*, No. 3, 1979, pp. 66-82.
c.f. Sandra Harding, 'Why has the sex/gender system become visible only now?' in Sandra Harding and Merill B. Hintikka, *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Science* (Dordrecht, Holland, D. Reidel Publishing, 1983), pp. 311-24.
Gayle Rubin originated this concept with her paper, 'The traffic in women: notes on the "political economy" of sex' in Rayna Rapp Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157-210.
7. V. Beechey, op. cit.
8. See Rayna Rapp's critique of the acceptance of 'the family' as a natural unit and her recommendation that we view it rather 'as a social (not a natural) construction, the . . . boundaries (of which) are always decomposing and recomposing in continuous interaction with larger domains'. Rayna Rapp on 'household and family' in Rayna Rapp, Ellen Ross and Renate Bridenthal, 'Examining family history', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1979, pp. 174-200, and her more recent 'Family and class in contemporary America: Notes toward an understanding of ideology' in Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom, eds., *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions* (New York, Longmans, 1982).
Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1968).
10. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
11. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1976).
12. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of a Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus, (Harmondsworth, Middx., Penguin Books, 1973).
13. Examples of an extensive debate include: Margaret Benston, 'The political economy of women's liberation', *Monthly Review*, September 21, 1969, pp. 13-27; Peggy Morton, 'Women's work is never done', in *Women Unite* (Toronto, the Women's Press, 1972), pp. 45-69; John Harrison, 'The political economy of housework', *Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists*, Winter 1973, pp. 35-52; Wally Seccombe, 'The housewife and her labour under capitalism',

- New Left Review* **83**, January–February 1974, pp. 3–24; Jean Gardiner, 'Women's domestic labour', *New Left Review*, January–February 1975, pp. 47–59. This is only a partial list. The most recent contribution to the discussion is a collection of papers edited by Bonnie Fox, *Hidden in the Household: Women's Domestic Labour under Capitalism* (Toronto, the Women's Press, 1980).
14. Engels, op. cit., p. 77.
 15. Peter Dohkin Hall, 'Marital selection and business in Massachusetts merchant families, 1700–1900' in M. Gordon, ed., *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1978).
 16. Christine Delphy's analysis of marriage as establishing a relation of appropriation between man and woman appears to be based on the middle-class family. Delphy, 'Continuities and discontinuities in marriage and divorce' in Diana Leonard Barker and Sheila Allen, eds., *Sexual Divisions and Society: Process and Change* (London, Tavistock Publications, 1976), pp. 76–89.
 17. H.J. Mozaus, *Women in Science* (Cambridge, Mass., The M.I.T. Press, 1974), pp. 182–90.
 18. Philip E. Hammond, *Sociologists at Work: Essays on the Craft of Social Research* (New York, Basic Books, 1964).
 19. Alison Prentice, 'The feminization of teaching' in S. Trofimenkoff and A. Prentice, eds., *The Neglected Majority* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1977), pp. 49–65.
 20. Kathleen Archibald describes this development in her study of gender in the Canadian Public Service, *Sex and the Public Service: A Report to the Public Service Commission of Canada*, Information Canada, 1973, pp. 14–17.
 21. Dorothy E. Smith, 'Women's perspective as a radical critique of sociology', *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1974.
 22. Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control: Theoretical Studies Towards a Sociology of Language* (St. Albans, Paladin, 1973).
 23. Dorothy E. Smith, 'Women's work as mothers: A new look at the relation between family, class and school achievement', paper presented at the meetings of the Western Association of Sociology and Anthropology, Brandon, Manitoba, February 1983.
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38. Gail Malmgreen, *Neither Bread Nor Roses: Utopian Feminists and the English Working Class, 1800-1850*, in 'Studies in Labour History' pamphlet, John L. Noyce, publisher, Brighton, UK, 1978, p. 23.
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