CRITICAL SOCIAL RESEARCH
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PART 3 GENDER

3.1.Introduction

In this part of the book a number of critical research studies that concentrate on gender oppression are examined in detail. The examination is focused on the methodology rather than the substantive issues; however, methodology and substance are interrelated and the following analyses show how methodic practices are combined with underlying presuppositions in order to generate a critical investigation of substantive issues relating to gender.

A central concern of much research analysing gender oppression is the representation of women's views and perspectives. A widely adopted mode is to undertake and present research in which women speak for themselves about women's realms. An early 'classic' of this type was Ann Oakley's (1974a) research into housework which addresses domestic labour from the point of view of housewives.

Oakley explicitly adopted a feminist approach. To propose an academic research endeavour premised on a feminist perspective was, at that time, a radical step in itself. As will be shown, her feminist methodology was of necessity entwined with a more conventional positivistic analysis. For Oakley, feminism was an alternative perspective to the scientistic 'male paradigm'. Although noting alternative prescriptions for women's liberation (Myrdal & Klein, 1956; Firestone, 1972; Rowbotham, 1973), she felt no need to address the differences in feminist perspectives which were to become so hotly debated for the best part of a decade.

For Oakley (1973, p. 3), feminism is not a set of values but a perspective on social analysis which 'consists of keeping in the forefront of one's mind the life-styles, activities and interests of more than one half of humanity—women.' The detailed analysis of her methodology reveals her concern with reaching the real feelings of her interviewees. Guided by a notion of sisterhood, Oakley deliberately sets aside the manipulative approach embodied in the conventional interviewer–interviewee relationship.

Cynthia Cockburn's (1983) *Brothers* also used ethnographic interviewing. Hers was a feminist study of a male realm which examined the processes by which men excluded women from craft unions and thus high-paid skilled employment and how they identified their exclusivity with their maleness. Her account lets the men talk about how they see their world and how they legitimate the exclusion of women in terms of an engagement with capital. She situates her ethnographic material in a historical context which addresses the particular history of the print trade from which her subjects are drawn and the wider history of women's employment. Her study is thus firmly located in a broad socio-economic and political context. Ethnographic material provides details of actual experiences. These serve as insights into the structural and historical processes. While the reported experiences are located in a specific milieu they also inform the understanding of the nature of the oppressive structure and its historical genesis. In reporting the ethnography, the spoken accounts are included both to illustrate the text and as a basis of an analysis of the structural forms. The methodological tactic Cockburn used to deconstruct social relations was to reveal and analyse contradictions which were evident in both what respondents did and in what they said. The contradictions were examined to see how they related to the

ideological forms legitimating the oppressive structures. Cockburn argues that her empirical material only makes sense when examined in terms of a dual system of oppression: capitalism and patriarchy.

Letting women speak for themselves was a research technique used by Sally Westwood (1984) in her study of the role of work in the making of women's lives. In *All Day Every Day*, Westwood adopts a participant observation role, rather than depth interviews, in her analysis of the interrelationship between oppression of women at home and at work. Like Willis (1977) she reveals how the participants collude in their own oppression. Like Cockburn she focuses on contradictions and like Oakley she regards the women she talks about as friends to be treated sympathetically not subjects to be engaged and exploited. Ethnographic study, then, reveals women's lived experience of patriarchal oppression (Oakley, 1973; Westwood, 1984). The ethnographic strategy of letting women talk for themselves makes women and women's concerns visible.

An alternative strategy for making women visible is the reconstruction of history from a feminist perspective. Historical reconstruction is a key to both reversing the marginalisation of women in dominant 'male history'; cataloguing the nature and extent of male oppression; and as a means of exploring the evolution of oppressive structures. This is achieved by either re-constructing the conventional concerns of history showing the role of women and/or the impact of events on women, or by writing the history of women's realms hitherto ignored. Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed (1987) in writing about the women's movement in Pakistan reconstruct an historical account of the role of women in the struggle for the independence of Pakistan and their subsequent oppression under the new Islamic conservatism initiated during the Zia regime

Joanna Liddle and Rama Joshi combined an ethnographic approach which let women speak for themselves with an historical analysis which involved the historical reconstruction of a neglected realm, the history of female power in Asia. Their socialist feminist analysis of women in India sets the ethnographic study, based on unstructured interviews, in a historical context. The experiences of women professionals is set against a background of the struggle for Indian Independence and the subsequent attempts of the new capitalism mixed with traditional patriarchy to restrict and exclude women from economic and social power through seclusion. Like Cockburn (1983) they suggest a dual system of oppression of women. However, they adopted an alternative to Cockburn's tactic for deconstruction. Instead of focusing on contradictions they addressed prevailing myths in order to suggest the ideologically constituted interests which are encapsulated in these uncritically accepted myths.

3.2 Perspectives

3.2.1 Introduction

There are a number of different feminist views about the nature of and mechanisms for the oppression of women. A lot of prefixes have been added in various combinations to feminism: socialist, Marxist, bourgeois, radical, materialist, positivist, idealist. Unfortunately, these labels have not always been used to mean the same thing, nor are they mutually exclusive. More profoundly, the theoretical positions embodied in different perspectives are not entirely distinct. In practice, too, feminists with very different epistemological perspectives collaborate in combating gender oppression and there is a tendency for research endeavours to adopt a plurality of perspectives in exploring a substantive area of enquiry. Thus no set of definitions will be entirely satisfactory. The following outline of different perspectives is, however, intended to help the potential critical social researcher grasp the key points of debate within feminism.

'Traditional' feminism around 1970 directly reflected the women's movement of the 1960s. It emphasised 'sisterhood' in redefining women's relations to one another and the 'personal' realms in drawing attention to women's position. Feminism, really for the first time, began to directly engage

oppression of women rather than their social disadvantage (Oakley, 1974a). Women's movements and feminist thought earlier in the century had tended towards the advocacy of the equality of opportunity for women in a man's world. These, so-called, liberal or bourgeois feminists[1] wanted equality for women within the existing social system (Mary Wollstonecraft; Elizabeth Cady Stanton; Harriet Taylor Mill).

The feminist positions which were emerging in the early 1970s were opposed to reformism arguing that the position of women cannot be changed within prevailing social structures because it is capitalism and/or patriarchy which ensures the oppression of women. Only a fundamental change in social relations will provide women with equality.

A fierce debate about the nature of women's oppression, the means of analysis and the direction of feminist politics erupted in the mid-1970s and lasted for around ten years to the mid 1980s (Vogel, 1984). The debate has been characterised in a number of ways, most often it is seen as embodying a split between socialist and radical feminists. The former are presented as seeing capitalism as the basis of oppression while the latter see patriarchy as the fundamental oppressive mechanism. While class and gender constitute the major axis of this debate, in reality the distinction is much more blurred and the debate far more subtle. Although it is not the intention of this book to rehearse theoretical debates, which have in any case been well documented elsewhere, a brief characterisation of the different positions does provide a context for the examination of different methodologies.

3.2.2 Socialist feminism

Socialist feminism is a general term for those feminists who see capitalist relations of production as important to an analysis of the oppression of women. In essence, socialist feminism argues that the position of women cannot be divorced from a Marxist analysis of capitalism. Generally speaking, their are two basic versions of this approach.

First, a view which suggests that productive relations within capitalism underpin the oppression of women. This might better be better referred to as 'a socialist class analysis of the oppression of women'. The approach is based on Engels (1884) analysis of gender oppression in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. Engels offers a materialistic explanation which shows the relationship between the ownership of private property and the ideological subordination of women. His analysis is important to socialist women as it is virtually the only account within 19th century Marxism of relations between the sexes and of the possibility of social advance united with sexual emancipation. Engels argued that emancipation of women depends on their full integration into social production. Human reproduction is identified along with production as constituting the material basis of society. Engels argued that the origin of the monogamous family and its attendant domination of women by men results from the emergence of private property. Private property is at the root of class differences and the oppression of women is thus linked to the emergence of socio-economic classes and resolvable only through class conflict.

Although this approach has been recently reworked and developed (Sayers *et al*., 1987) it has had a mixed reception even in socialist circles. Kautsky regarded it with suspicion and in the USSR until recently, Engels' concentration on sex/love was seen as individualistic, and outside the province of the state (Millett, 1969). Lenin, however, endorsed *The Origins* as did Eleanor Marx and Rosa Luxemburg among other prominent female Marxists (Draper & Lipow, 1976). Simone de Beauvoir (1952), on the other hand, saw Engels as an economic determinist, while more recently, Millet (1969), Eisenstein (1979b) and Vogel (1984) have pointed to contradictions in his analysis. More recent proponents of the approach which see gender divisions as a by-product of class processes (Seccombe, 1974; Zaretsky, 1976) have been attacked for ignoring the benefits to men of patriarchal oppression (Cockburn, 1983).

On balance, socialist feminists prefer a view which gives as much weight to feminist as socialist concerns (Hartmann, 1979b) and the tendency in the 1980s is a view which argues that women are oppressed by both productive and reproductive relations within capitalism. This approach has a number of variants. First, is the view that women are oppressed by class relations (as are men) but that within classes they are oppressed by gender relations which cannot be reduced to class terms. Second, women are oppressed by both capitalism and by patriarchy. This second form, which might be regarded as the dominant approach of socialist feminism has developed two ways of combining a Marxist class analysis with a feminist gender analysis of society.

One approach posits a fusion of the two oppressive mechanisms and argues in terms of capitalist patriarchy which emphasises 'the mutually reinforcing dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual structuring' (Eisenstein, 1979b, p. 5). The capitalist patriarchy view argues that women are exploited as labourers in class terms but are also oppressed by patriarchy. This oppression reflects the hierarchical relations of the sexual (and racial) division of labour and society which defines people's activity, desires, and so on according to their biological sex. This sexual division separates men and women into their respective hierarchical sex roles and structures their related duties in the family domain and within the economy. The sexual division has evolved from ideological and political interpretations of biological difference that men have chosen to interpret and make political use of.

The view argues that capitalism 'needs' patriarchy in the sense that patriarchy provides the necessary order and control. Male supremacy involves a system of cultural, social, economic and political control. The capitalist concern with profit and patriarchal concern with sexual hierarchy are inextricably connected (but cannot be reduced to each other), patriarchy and capitalism become an *integral process*: specific elements of each system are necessitated by the other (Eisenstein, 1979b, p. 28).

Patriarchy provides the sexual hierarchical ordering of society, but, as a political system, cannot be reduced to its economic structure. Capitalism, as an economic class system, driven by the pursuit of profit feeds off the (prior) patriarchal ordering. Together they form the political economy of the society, not merely one or another, but a particular blend of the two. The view suggests that a reformulation of the idea of class is required which takes into account the complex reality of women's lives in capitalist patriarchy.

The other approach to combining a Marxist class analysis with a feminist gender analysis of society is to adopt a *dualist* thesis which sees capitalism and patriarchy as separate but interrelated oppressive structures. The dual approach requires that social structures and practices are viewed both in terms of gender and class oppression (Hartmann, 1979a; Cockburn, 1983). This reverses the intention of socialist feminism to dissolve the distinction between the radical feminist gender-oriented perspective and the socialist or Marxist class-oriented perspective. Dualist approaches have been criticised for proposing a mysterious coexistence of unrelated explanations of social development. Each of the dual realms remain relatively autonomous and the unsatisfactory analysis of patriarchy that derives from radical feminism and the gender blind analysis of class that derives from Marxism remain more or less in tact (Young, 1981; Vogel, 1984).

Although the view that women are oppressed by patriarchy and capitalism, either through some kind of fusion of the two mechanisms or through the workings of two relatively autonomous realms, has been the dominant approach of socialist feminism it is regarded as unsatisfactory in developing a 'unified materialist perspective on women's liberation' (Vogel, 1984, p. 28) not least because it pays only lip service to racial oppression.

3.2.3 Radical feminism

Radical feminism, a multi-faceted perspective, argues that at root, women are oppressed by men. Radical feminists see it as a mistake to subsume the oppression of women under class oppression. There are, arguably, two basic forms of radical feminism, the idealist and the materialist approaches.

Idealist radical feminists make up the bulk of what is usually referred to as radical feminism. In the early 1970s they were often referred to simply as feminists and have more recently been called (rather inappropriately) *cultural feminists*. They adopt a view that the biological differences between men and women constitute an impassable barrier for cognition (for this reason idealist radical feminists are sometimes referred to as biological feminists). In effect, idealist radical feminists adopt an ascriptive and separatist approach (Rich, 1977; Morgan, 1978, 1982; Daly, 1979, 1984; Spender, 1980, 1982, 1984; Orbach, 1981; Arcana, 1983; Griffin, 1984a, 1984b). They posit a view which suggests that women are biologically different and as a consequence are psychologically different and thereby have a view of the world which is ungraspable to men. It is this innate difference (which usually projects men in negative ways emphasising aggressiveness, insensitivity and egocentrism, and women in positive ways) which excludes men from female perspectives and which has led men, in the past, to dominate and oppress women.[2]

Another form of idealist radical feminism occurs in what has been labelled psychoanalytic feminism. The approach, which was particularly strong in France[3] in the 1970s and subsequently in Italy and the United States, derives from the work of the French post-Freudian psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. He argued that 'woman' or 'femininity' are radical symbols contradicting the patriarchal 'symbolic order'—signs, codes and rituals expressed linguistically which make up the terms in which we operate in society. Women from childhood are not allowed to develop, indeed, it is argued that women have never existed because they have had to use male points of reference. Psychoanalytic feminism is thus concerned with the masculinity in women's heads that results from them being in a patriarchal society. It is not initially concerned with the material conditions of women's lives, nor with discrimination which can be changed by legislation. Psychoanalytic feminism argues that women must re-evaluate their own worth, celebrate their own bodies, and generally learn to appreciate and nurture their womanness. Strategies to do this include psychoanalysis, women-only spaces, redefinition of sexuality, breaking with dependence on men, and developing new concepts and language.

Materialist radical feminism also sees the oppression of women as primarily an oppression by men. However, it is opposed to idealist radical feminism because it argues that such oppression is rooted in social relations and not biology. Materialist radical feminism therefore does not advocate 'cultural separatism'. Materialist radical feminism proposes that radical changes in social relationships between men and women, and thus of radical changes in society, are the only long-term solution to the oppression of women.

In the main, materialist radical feminism takes a critical (and often Marxist) framework and develops it in terms of the precedence of gender over class oppression. There is often a dualism in this approach which sees gender as related to but somehow prior to, and distinct from, class oppression. Radical materialist feminists sometimes refer to themselves as *Marxist* feminists as opposed to *socialist* feminists because they prefer to take on board Marx's analytic framework and dialectical methodology rather than his socialist or class theory (Delphy, 1985).

Materialist radical feminism is similar, in its materialist orientation and dialectical analysis, to a 'capitalist patriarchy' approach to socialist feminism. However, contrary to socialist feminism, materialist radical feminists (such as Christine Delphy) argue that feminism and Marxism will not be integrated by adding patriarchy to capitalism. Nor is it possible to see how class and gender oppression interrelate until women's oppression is understood. Further, feminism cannot simply use the concepts

developed for the analysis of class oppression in its analysis of patriarchy because such concepts actually obscure gender oppression,

Socialist feminism then differs from idealist radical feminism because it adopts a materialist dialectical analysis and does not accept that gender is the sole or primary determinant of women's oppression. Socialist feminism differs from materialist radical feminism in more subtle ways, but primarily socialist feminism argues that sexual oppression within classes is (at least in part) a structural effect of capitalist relations. (Patriarchy then is interrelated with capitalism). Materialist radical feminism, argues that patriarchy and capitalism are separate forms of oppression (and that, chronologically, patriarchy precedes capitalism).

3.2.4 Conclusion
While Marxist analysis tends to assume the oppressive nature of class, feminists have expended considerable effort arguing that gender is an oppressive mechanism. Even as we go into the last decade of the twentieth century there is still considerable resistance to the idea from both women and men. Feminists still have to constantly reassert the sexist nature of society and will have to continue to do so in the face of post-feminism.

Feminists are divided over the operation of gender oppression. For some, it is fundamentally down to the dominance exercised by men. For others, it is intertwined with class-based oppression, or at the very least cannot be seen in isolation from the structural organisation of society. Women have been systematically denied access to resources and thus to power. There is also considerable disagreement among feminists about suitable political tactics and the nature of the transformation that is being sought. A liberal democratic view asks no more than equal opportunity and access to resources. A more politically radical perspective declares such view bankrupt within the given socio-economic structure. Socialist feminism broadly requires an economic and gender transformation. Radical feminism argues the transformation must be directed to a new politics of gender, possibly achievable only through separatism (see Segal, 1987).

While class and gender have provided the major axis of the debate and the focus of most of the antagonisms between different feminist perspectives, the debate has also been cross-cut by issues of race and sexuality. These have grown in prominence since the mid-1980s and have provided a basis for a redirecting of feminist analyses and a shift away from approaches that emphasise a unitary perspective to those which suggest the need for a multi-faceted analysis. For example, it is increasingly clear that the absence of black women in feminist discourses cannot be resolved by simply adding to existing corpus of knowledge, but that feminism must integrate the experiences of black women and take on board an understanding of racially constructed gender roles (Joseph, 1981; Moraga & Anzaldua, 1981; Carby, 1982; Davis, 1982; Jones, 1982; Parmar, 1982; Bourne, 1983; Dill, 1983).

The critical studies of gender oppression examined below do not include idealist radical feminism. Such approaches tend to be conservative and politically reactionary. They do not tend to address the historically specific nature of social structures nor to undertake a materialist analysis of empirical data. Instead, they are transhistorical analyses that rely heavily on idealist notions of inherent psyche. When not rooted in biological determinacy, radical feminism invokes cultural separatism. Like many multiculturalists, the radical feminist construction of cultural absolutes ironically reflects the sexism and racism of the New Right (see section 4.2, below). In short, idealist radical feminism is incompatible with critical social research because (despite misleading titles (Firestone, 1971)), it does not undertake a dialectical analysis of historically specific social relations.

Ann Oakley—Sociology of Housework

3.3.1 Introduction

Ann Oakley's (1974a) *The Sociology of Housework* is an early example of critical research which analyses gender oppression.[4] She regards as axiomatic that women are discriminated against; that gender differences are cultural; and that it is desirable that changes in women's position should be brought about (Oakley, 1974a, p. 190). She takes up the issue of the invisibility of women and women's concerns in both society at large and the discipline of sociology in particular. The sexism of society, she maintains, is reflected in the sexism of sociology.

Oakley's study is indicative of the dynamic nature of critical social research. Feminist theory and analysis is now much more sophisticated than then and Oakley's analysis of the sexist nature of sociology and its indifference to women's work are, as she admits, naïve by current standards. This does not deflect from the fact that they were apposite comments in the early 1970s. Indeed, fifteen years on from publication, sociology is only now seriously addressing its sexist (and racist) bias and the reality of women's domestic labour has hardly changed, even if feminist interest in the debate has waned. That she would research and report the topic differently if she were to do it again (Oakley, 1985, p. xii)) does not detract from the critical nature of the study. The critical aspect of any work has to be judged in relation to the context of its time. Although somewhat imprecise about her feminist epistemology and reticent in her critique of positivism *The Sociology of Housework* none the less illustrates the critical process at work and provides a useful historically situated example of the development of gender-based critical social research. A view attested to by the re-publication of the book in 1985 with a new preface.

The social, political and academic context in which the work was undertaken inhibited a forceful assertion of her critique. Indeed, the research took place at a time when sexism was not a widely recognised concept outside the women's movement. Feminists employed the term, but in society in general there was a low level of critique of sexism. In the academic sphere of sociology it was a term neither widely used nor understood, indeed it was actively resisted in many quarters.

Oakley's empirical analysis of housework differed from prior work in two respects. First it treated housework as a job in its own right and not an extension of the woman's role as wife or mother. As such it disputes the biological determinist presupposition that women are reproducers and nurturers for whom housework is a natural extension of their maternal role. Second, it addressed housework from the point of view of those who did it, in this case housewives with young children. It thus provided a woman's perspective on housework and offered a correction to the distorted male-oriented perspective. As such it opposed the compliant approach of previous research by women on housework who, while arguing that housework is work, also accepted that to analyse it as such would mean a fundamental critique of patriarchal ideology.

3.3.2 Subject group and approach

The Sociology of Housework is based on tape-recorded two-hour-long interviews conducted in 1971. The sample, selected from the medical records of two general practices, consisted of forty London housewives, born in Britain or Ireland, and aged between 20 and 30 all of whom were mothers of at least one child under five. The sample came from two different areas of London, one a predominantly working-class area, the other a middle-class area, and the sample was divided into two equal halves according to class, the designation of which was based essentially on the husband's occupation.[5]

There is an apparent ambivalence in Oakley's approach to her research topic. She was restrained by the academic rigours of doctoral research in the early 1970s while also wanting to develop a feminist perspective on research. The preponderant approach to social research in Britain at the time emphasised

the 'scientific' collection of standardised, statistically analysable, objective data. Validity, reliability and representativeness were the watchwords of this scientistic approach in which the researcher/interviewer was to be a neutral data-collecting instrument sucking in information from a compliant and willing subject/interviewee. Researchers were expected to be unbiased and 'value free'. The interpretation of data was supposedly not to be influenced by the researcher's own perspective.

Accordingly, Oakley described her work as an exploratory pilot study which is a prelude to the development of precise hypotheses for examination or for the testing of theory derived inductively from empirical data (Oakley, 1974a, p. 30). The reported aims of her research are to describe the housewife's situation and the housewife's attitude to housework; to examine patterns of satisfaction; and to suggest possible hypotheses to *explain* differences between housewives' attitudes to housework and the housework situation. She construes her empirical data in scientistic terms arguing, somewhat tenuously, that her sample is unlikely to be unrepresentative. She concentrates on 'factual' questions susceptible to incorporation into rating scales (of satisfaction with housework, etc.) which 'minimizes the task of interpretation' and regrets the lack of additional judges to validate her scales (Oakley, 1974a, p. 36). Oakley presents her material both qualitatively and quantitatively. The discussion includes direct quotes from respondents alongside tables of sample percentages. She relies heavily on the construction of cross-tabulations usually of dichotomized or trichotomized variables which are subjected to chi-square tests of statistical significance.[6] These simple categories are based on her judgement of responses to specific questions, sometimes supported by additional material that emerged in the interview. She provides illustrative material, often lengthy quotes from respondents, as examples of how she classified respondents. Analysis of aggregate data is also augmented by quotes from her respondents and is usually set in the context of other published work from related fields

The following excerpt which considers the monotony of housework tasks is an example of the kind of quantitative/qualitative analysis Oakley undertakes:

> Dissatisfaction is higher among those who report monotony. Eighty per cent of the women who said 'yes' to the monotony question are dissatisfied with housework, compared to forty per cent of those who said 'no'. (This difference is significant at the five per cent level). The conclusion to be drawn is that monotony is clearly associated with work dissatisfaction, and this is supported by the large number of housewives who mentioned monotony *spontaneously* at various points in the interview. A cinema manager's wife and a toolmaker's wife provide examples
>
> I like cooking and I like playing with the children, doing things for them—I don't like the basic cleaning. *It's boring, it's monotonous*.
>
> It's the monotony I don't like—*it's repetitive and you have to do the same things each day*. I suppose it's really just like factory work—just as boring. (Oakley, 1974a, p. 81)

Oakley concludes that when the percentage of housewives in her sample experiencing monotony, fragmentation of work tasks, and pressures of speed is compared with assembly workers (from Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968a) there is a close match between the inherent frustrations of assembly-line work and housework which gives substance to feminist claims that housework is alienating.

3.3.3 The 'male' paradigm
Although Oakley adheres to conventional reporting for much of the study she is sceptical of the positivist approach and the 'male-paradigm' of scientistic research. From the outset there was a tension

between the scientistic context and the feminist critique of sexism embodied in the societal and sociological view of housework.[7]

In the *Sociology of Housework* Oakley (1974a) voices two concerns about the taken-for-granted scientistic paradigm. First, an internal critique, which suggests that concerns with reliability and, more particularly, representativeness of the research are emphasised to the possible detriment of the validity. While large size samples reduce sampling error and therefore provide a more substantial basis for statistical generalisations, this does not in any way guarantee valid conclusions and many factors mediate against unbiased results from large samples: notably non-response; incomplete sampling frames; lack of 'rapport'; and 'hired hand effect' (as Roth (1966) called it). Oakley (1974a, p. 33) argues that studies should be assessed in terms of the objectives they set themselves and not in terms of standardised ideals of statistical generalisability.

Second, and more importantly, Oakley (1974a) questions the whole idea of collecting comparable and statistically analysable objective data from her interviewees. Developing this point, Oakley (1981) sees 'objective data gathering' as part of a 'male paradigm' of science which is concerned much more with 'objectivity, detachment, and hierarchy' than individual's concerns. The 'male paradigm' proposes 'science' as an important cultural activity and this reflects 'a masculine social and sociological vantage point' rather than to a feminine one (Oakley, 1981, p. 38).

In terms of research procedures, the 'male paradigm' is encapsulated in the paradox of the 'perfect interview'. Conventional wisdom (Goode & Hatt, 1952; Kahn & Cannell, 1957; Moser, 1958; Sellitz *et al.*, 1965; Galtung, 1967; Sjoberg & Nett, 1968; Benney & Hughes, 1970; Shipman, 1972) demands that the interview should be a data-collecting instrument which works unidirectionally (interviewee to interviewer) and in which the interviewer is in control and the interviewee socialised into the role of information provider. The interview should be conducted dispassionately in order that 'objective' and statistically analysable data can be collected. The success of the interview depends on good 'rapport' between interviewer and interviewee, in which the interviewee is manipulated in a kindly and sympathetic way to provide the desired information. 'Rapport', then, is not about an interrelationship between the interviewer and interviewee but about manipulation of the interviewee. The interviewer must, however, avoid 'overrapport' as this might jeopardise the 'objectivity' of the process. The balance between intimacy and objectivity is not just a fine line, but argues Oakley, is contradictory.

At root, the 'male paradigm' denies the relevance of the personal. Subjectivity is derided. Emotions and feelings are treated with scorn. The personal is not a constituent of knowledge according to this scientistic paradigm. Oakley argues against the 'male paradigm' that feminist research, in taking the personal seriously, must not only be unafraid of a more intimate relationship with subjects but must be prepared to become involved with respondents in a non-hierarchical way. The interviewer must be prepared to 'invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship' (Oakley, 1981, p. 41).[8]

The 'use of prescribed interviewing practice is morally indefensible' (Oakley, 1981, p. 41) because it undermines the feminist reassessment of the interrelationship of women with one another that are encapsulated in what Oakley describes as the nebulous but important concept of 'sisterhood'. Thus she could not adopt an exploitative attitude to interviewees as sources of data.

She suggests that the, 'general and irreconcilable contradictions at the heart of the textbook paradigm' (Oakley, 1981, p. 41) are exposed when matched against her own experiences (chiefly Oakley, 1979) which showed that, in repeated interviewing, being asked questions by subjects was a frequent occurrence and it would have been impossible not to provide information, pass opinions, and so on, as the women involved wanted information (about childbirth) they did not have, and felt they could not seek elsewhere. To remain detached and non-committal would have undermined the 'rapport'. The contradiction of the 'male paradigm' is also apparent in the comments made by people who recount

research experience (Bell & Newby, 1977; Bell & Encel, 1978). They show that there is a disjunction between the reality and the textbook prescriptions which fail to engage the political contexts of research.

More specifically, she argued that depth interviews which explored an area of concern were far better than standardised interviews which used single item indicators. She noted, for example, that in a reply to a simple question 'Do you like housework?' middle-class women were far more likely to give a negative answer than working-class women. On probing, however, Oakley's interviewees clearly undermine the view that the 'unhappy housewife is a purely middle-class phenomenon'. The attitudes of working-class women to the different tasks which make up housework is very similar to the middle-class group. Oakley suggests that this apparent contradiction is illustrative of a 'methodological moral', that simple questions produce simple answers.

This dissatisfaction with direct questioning is also manifested in her inclusion of an adapted 'Twenty Statements Test' (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954; McPartland & Cumming 1958; Kuhn, 1960) as a research tool. About half way through the interview the forty women were given a test of 'self-attitudes'. Oakley asked her respondents for ten (rather than twenty) written statements beginning 'I am...' which she wanted them to write as quickly as possible 'as though describing themselves *to* themselves rather than to anybody else' (Oakley, 1974a, p. 121). Kuhn and McPartland's idea was that such a technique, contrary to direct questioning, allowed the salience of an attitude to become apparent. Oakley uses the responses to show that working-class women are more likely to refer to themselves in terms of a domestic role than are the middle-class women, the latter tending more to refer to their personality traits. The use of this device, although firmly underpinned by the intention to provide objective measurable criteria is indicative of Oakley's desire to discover what is central to the women's own perspective. The interpretive-objectivist tension inherent in the Twenty Statements Test (Meltzer *et al*., 1975; Couch *et al*., 1986) is indicative of the methodological ambiguity in the book as a whole.

The Sociology of Housework represented the first approximation to a research style more fully discussed and developed by Oakley some years later. The approach, which was evident 'between the lines' (Oakley, 1985, p. xi), sets aside the prevailing objectivism of standard empirical enquiry. Oakley abandoned conventional interviewing ethics and did not treat the women interviewed simply as data providers. She adopted the view that the subjectivity of the subject is intrinsic to feminist analysis of social experience. Her approach gave more prominence to the subjective situation of women in both sociology and in society in general. Interviewing women was a strategy for documenting women's own accounts of their lives with the interviewer providing a vehicle for promoting a sociology for women. Thus the interviewer is no longer a data-collecting instrument for researchers but has become 'a data-collecting instrument for those whose lives are being researched' (Oakley, 1981, p. 49).

3.3.4 Sexism in sociology and consciousness raising

A fundamental element of Oakley's work is a critique of the sexism of sociology. This is evident not only in the 'male paradigm' of knowledge[9] but also in terms of the substantive issues explored by sociology. The academic sexism she reveals owes much to three factors: the traditional concerns of sociology encapsulated in the perspectives of the aptly named 'founding *fathers'*; the sex of the majority of sociologists; and the tendency of functionalist sociology (dominant in the USA and UK in the 1960s) to reproduce the status quo, especially the ideology of gender roles, which it assimilates uncritically from the wider society. Sociology is male-oriented. It focuses on the interests and activities of men in a gender-differentiated society. Women are rendered invisible.

What little work has been directed to housework has invariably been done in the context of the family and it has tended to a view which suggests that there is more equality in the marriage relationship than hitherto (Blood & Woolf, 1960; Fletcher, 1962; Bott, 1971; Young & Willmott, 1973). Oakley's

empirical work denies this presumption. Her respondents show that a fundamental separation remains within the family unit with home and children remaining the woman's primary responsibility (Oakley, 1974a, p. 165).

Essentially, Oakley argues that sociologists bring to their data their own values which repeat the popular theme of gender difference. There has been little interest in researching housework as such and even less concern with women's views of housework. This lack of interest taken in housework by the sociological establishment she sees as indicative of its intrinsic sexism.

Sociology, despite its studies of the socialization of girls (Hartley, 1966; Joffe, 1971; Weitzman *et al.*, 1972) has failed, Oakley argues, to critically transcend mere commentary on the long period of apprenticeship of girls to the housewife role. Her interviewees provide substance for the view that girls are socialised to a feminine role in which housewifery and self-determination are blended together. The pervasive sexist ideology encumbers women's awareness of their subservient and exploited role by coalescing their labour with their self-perception as wives and mothers. Thus, 'housekeeping behaviours' tend to be developed as 'personality functions' (Oakley, 1974a, p. 114). This ideology is manifested in the self-discipline that many of her sample imposed upon themselves through routines and standards 'inherited' from mothers.

Oakley uses her material not simply to provide a female perspective on housework which hitherto had been more or less ignored, but also to present a political case, guided by feminist principles, to 'liberate' women from the structural oppression that the pervasive concept of domesticity consigns them to. The presentation and examination of women's feelings and attitudes about housework is used to cast doubt on the dominant and pervasive notion and to suggest a strategy for action. She is concerned to explore the extent of anti-sexist consciousness among women and thus suggest the most suitable tactics for liberation. She sees a goal of feminist research the fostering among women of 'an understanding of the social and economic forces that mould their role in society, and the ways in which this role is potentially open to change' (Oakley, 1974a, p. 190).

She found that her interviewees held conservative views, preferring to retain differences between men and women, particularly the retention of what they saw as the traditional privileges of femininity (such as priority over a seat on a crowded bus). They tended to hold contradictory views about their role as housewives. One apparent contradiction was the general dislike of housework but not a denial of the housework role. More profoundly, there were marked contradictions in respect of their work contribution and their status. Women who clearly ran the home talked of their husbands as the natural head of the household; those who complained about their husbands' lack of involvement in domestic tasks referred to women liking housework; those who complained of greater freedom for men in marriage regarded their own restriction to the home as natural.

The acceptance of these contradictions encumbered any acceptance of feminist perspectives as resolving the contradictions required a fundamental critique of their existence and of the position of women. As a response to this Oakley argued for the need for consciousness raising among women. She suggested her own survey had inevitably sparked off such consciousness raising simply by getting the housewives in her sample to talk about what they did.

There was, however, another political lesson for feminists to learn. Her respondents were unsympathetic to the Women's Liberation Movement (which they tended to see in terms of banal media images and stereotypes) and unresponsive to feminist concerns because they felt that activists were scornful of housework and only concerned with paid work. There was no point of contact, no empathy, between housewives and feminists. Oakley found this disappointing given that 'at the present time there is an increasing vogue for seeing housewives at the centre of women's revolutionary potential' (Oakley, 1974a, p. 193). She argues that it is optimistic to expect 'total liberation from a divisively feminine

upbringing in a decidedly sexist culture'. This should not, however, deter a striving for liberation a major tool of which is a 'comprehensive understanding' of the way in which women 'internalize their own oppression'. Structures which oppress women 'cannot be altered unless there is a prior awareness among women of the need for change' (Oakley, 1974a, p. 195).

Thus consciousness raising should focus on housework and not motherhood or sexuality. It should not simply ridicule media stereotypes of the housewife, rather it should uncover and analyse 'the need to *be* a housewife which is at the heart of the female predicament'. The unintended collusion of women in their own subordination, Oakley suggests, would be realized by this means and the 'deconditioned' wife would become a potential revolutionary (Oakley, 1974a, p. 196).

3.3.5 Conclusion

The critical nature of Oakley's work is evident in a number of ways. She clearly objects to the spurious objectivity of the positivistic scientific method which she refers to as the 'male paradigm' of research. Her focus is a critique of conventional interviewing techniques but underpinning it is a severe doubt about the nature of the knowledge so generated and the ethics of a male-oriented exploitative process. Her intention is to go beyond an account of housework as the work of housewives and to locate it in the context of the patriarchal family. She reconceptualises housework, on the one hand, in the same terms as any other paid work, and, on the other, as a series of tasks. Although the deconstruction of the concept of housework could have been developed further,[10] she does provide a basis for examining the contradiction between the role and the work.

Oakley locates housework in the wider context of economic, social and political structures, pointing to the socialisation of girls to the role of housewife and the pervasiveness of patriarchal ideology which coalesces femininity with housewifery. Although using statistical techniques her concern is not to draw cause-and-effect relations but to provide some insights to the world of domestic labour from the point of view of the women who do it. Her aggregate material is thus always supplemented by qualitative excerpts.

The work is not pitched 'objectively' (except in as far as was necessary for academic recognition) but is geared to political ends which are predicated upon a feminist view of women's oppression. Her analysis of housework is in direct conflict with others who have looked at family relations without transcending taken-for-granted views of the permanence of patriarchal relations.

3.4 Cynthia Cockburn—*Brothers*

3.4.1. Introduction

Cynthia Cockburn's *Brothers* is a feminist study of the impact of new technology on the work situation of highly paid skilled print compositors. The compositor,[11] who throughout the history of printing in Britain has almost exclusively been male, enjoys a patriarchal craft culture with a strong trade-union identification. The tenacity by which compositors have held onto their craft identity marks them out as unique. However, Cockburn argues that despite the lack of typicality they offer an excellent illustration of the processes of change that lead to the dissolution of a craft and the effects of that dissolution. Examining the changing world of the compositor engages the questions 'What alternatives are open to such men? What sense do they make of what is happening to them? What will influence their political decisions and trade-union strategies?' (Cockburn, 1983, p. 4).

Cockburn sees her subjects not just as skilled craft workers but as men too. She is as concerned with the gender relations at work and at home as she is with the conventional class relations. The experience of class, Cockburn argues, cannot be understood without reference to sex and gender (Rubin, 1975). She

thus combines a Marxist analysis of class with a socialist-feminist analysis of sex/gender. It is not satisfactory to see sex/gender divisions as a by-product of class processes (Seccombe, 1974; Zaretsky, 1976). To argue that capital exploits women as cheap labour which is resisted by male workers overlooks the 'social and political benefits accruing to men of all classes of women's long subordination' (Cockburn, 1983, p. 6).

Cockburn is clear from the outset that she adopts an explicit Marxist historical materialist method. She is equally clear that this should be applied to a sex/gender as well as a class dimension. She thus proposes a dual class and gender analysis.

> Using a historical and materialist *method* that does not differ from marxist method, we can none the less model the world in an alternative way. Marxist historical materialism speaks of a mode of production. Feminist historical materialism proposes that there exists as well, as in all societies, *a sex/gender system* which determines the social categories that people of different sexes fill. (Cockburn, 1983, p. 6)

She takes the view that biological sex differences are socially constructed into gender differences. The study of the print compositors reflects the 'constitutive process' (Williams, 1961) in the historical evolution of classes (in capitalism) and genders (in patriarchy). The capital–labour struggle over the control of technology, skill and trade unionism is both about the forging of class character and the process by which men and women define each other as genders. Capital holds the initiative over workers and, by securing privileged access to money, men hold the initiative over women.

Within the male bastions of the craft unions there evolves a 'masculine' self-image with its attendant desire to 'keep' a wife who ministers to his needs at home in a strictly gender defined division of labour. This, Cockburn argues, cannot be explained by class theory but requires reference to a sex/gender system. Cockburn thus operates with an explicit dualist system (Hartmann, 1979) of class and of sex/gender rather than a single social system, capitalist patriarchy (Eisenstein, 1979), which combines both mode of production and sex/gender system. Cockburn argues further, that neither class nor gender analysis makes any sense without the other.[12]

Cockburn is aware that attempting a dual analysis is difficult because 'thinking in terms of two systems at once is not easy', especially to 'marxists who have such a well developed sense of the class system'. A century of experience of distinguishing a 'mode of production' has led us to '*expect* to find an economic base, a set of practices that produce wealth and distribute goods'; political institutions 'for controlling class conflict'; 'physical forces mobilised in class struggle'; and the material expressions of a class manifest ideologically (Cockburn, 1983, pp. 194-5).

Thus when a feminist and Marxist analysis are attempted simultaneously the former is often subordinated to the latter (Hartmann, 1979a) and consequently men's contribution to exploitation and oppression is ignored. This is partly due to a lack of confidence in defining the location of a sex/gender analysis. It appears that all the practices and institutions (even the bastion of feminism, the family) are already integrated into the class analysis which raises questions about the arena for the operation of patriarchy. Cockburn's resolution questions the notion of autonomous oppressive realms. She argues that it is as mistaken to see patriarchal oppression only in terms of the family or sexual relations as it is to suppose that capitalist power is exercised only in the factory. The sex/gender system operates in all the same structures as does class relations.

> We don't live two lives, one as a member of a class, the other as a man or a woman. Everything we do takes its meaning from our membership of both systems.... Feminism, like marxism, is a world view and its subject is the world itself: a totality. The two systems are, at bottom,

conceptual models, each explaining different phenomena. We need them both. (Cockburn, 1983, p. 195)

In her analysis of the particular workplace occupied by male compositors, events, she argues, can only be understood if read from both a class and a gender perspective.

3.4.2 Technology, control and working practices

Cockburn (1983, p. 86) develops a totalistic approach in that she sees the struggle over the control of the work process as an integral feature of the recurrent crises endemic to the capitalist process. Capitalist development is characterised by cycles of boom and depression.[13] To prevent a deterioration in profit ratios capital has to assert control over the labour process, to override the human priorities of the workers by the imperative of productivity. Thus technology plays a key role in the struggle between capital and labour, and consequently in capitalist development. Photocomposition and computer technology in the print industry cannot be seen as standing alone. They are an integral part of the politics of control which is intrinsic to the continual crises of capitalism. The cyclical nature of capitalism, rooted in its inherent contradictions, is an economic presupposition which informs Cockburn's analysis. It is in this context which the struggle for the control of the work situation is enacted. This struggle for control is not, however, just one that operates on a class dimension but is also manifest on a sex/gender dimension.

Technological innovation is not a new weapon of capitalism; it has always been the tool used by capital to strike at the heart of craft power, and nowhere more so than in the print industry. Cockburn describes the historical context of her ethnographic study in order to reveal the continued process of struggle over technology and the consequent effect on the constant reappraisal of the job. She focuses on working class practices in relation to new technology as this both grounds the analysis empirically and allows an examination of the divisive forces acting within the working class itself.

For example, in the 1890s with the patent of the linotype machine, capitalist employers attempted to divide labour by deskilling, and thereby usurping craft control. The technical know-how needed to operate a linotype machine however enabled the craft unions to retain control of the labour process and undermine the potential increased 'productivity' offered by the 'hot metal' process. This control was abetted by the lack of female labour (due to a number of factors including male hostility, the perceived 'heaviness' of the work, and legislation which restricted female night-work) and the continued success in denying the access of unskilled labour to the compositors' closed craft shop.[14]

The history of printing shows a conscious activism and a fundamental presupposition that there exists a state of conflict between printers and employers (Sykes, 1967). Capitalist owners continually attempted to undermine the exclusivity, and hence power, of the skilled print workers, hoping to cheapen the value of labour power. Any incursions were met with considerable vigour by the chapels. Cockburn outlines a class-based analysis of the emerging crisis faced by printworkers, drawing on notions of labour aristocracy (Hobsbawm, 1964; Foster, 1974; Stedman-Jones, 1975; Lenin, 1977), dequalification and deskilling (Braverman, 1974; Brighton Labour Process Group, 1977; Elger, 1979). However, despite the sophistication of the class analysis it is not, Cockburn argues, adequate alone as it ignores the sex/gender dimension.

The skilled workers saw women as a distinct problem—as almost an underclass 'below' the unskilled. Women have quite openly been excluded and seen as rivals for jobs. The aggressiveness shown by craftsmen and their unions towards women is projected as an inevitable by-product of the men's class struggle with the employers (who wanted to use women as a source of cheap labour). This, Cockburn argues, is illusory as men used different arguments against women than against other male

rivals for jobs and they 'expressed the interests of men in the social and sexual subordination of women' (Cockburn, 1983, p. 151). Drawing on specific historical events which pitted men against women in the print trade and resulted in the virtual exclusion of the latter, Cockburn shows that the three-cornered struggle between employers, male and female workers only makes sense if a sex/gender analysis is combined with class. For example, capitalists were not interested in having women enter the trade other than as a cheap source of labour. When a national conference of print compositors hypocritically passed a motion in 1886 agreeing to accept women into the trade but only on equal pay rates with men (although simultaneously denying the suitability of women for the work) they were creating a situation in which employers would never take on women. The apparent egalitarianism of the motion belies its clear intention to retain an all-male bastion.

That women have been employed in printing in fewer numbers than men, earned lower wages for 'equivalent work', and been ghettoised in lower status occupations, is not entirely the fault of the capitalist. Working men have had a hand in it. At root, the exclusion of women reflects a patriarchal ideology that hides behind class interests. Cockburn adopts a hegemonic view of ideology (Gramsci, 1971), arguing that, although ideologies are grounded in material practices and that in the last resort the material world provides the limits of ideological change, ideology is not determined by material forms. Material forces are 'riven by contradictions' and it is in the engagement with these contradictions that people are able, collectively, to develop their ideology.

Male hegemony holds women in compliance by making alternatives unthinkable and is thus as effective as bourgeois hegemony in its control of the working class. The patriarchal ideology of the compositor is encapsulated in the idea of essential gender attributes, the complementarity of males and females, and a dualist view of women as people to be protected or to be used. Essentialism and complementarity are functional ideologies, with which women collude, which deny inequality and prefer the inevitability of the gender status quo.

Cockburn analyses her material to try and draw out the meanings that the men are constructing about their changed situation and the ideology they are constructing and deploying to stave off their loss. The printing industry in general is having to fight against do-it-yourself printing, electronic media, and so on. Unemployment is high and the position of labour weakened. Computerisation offers productivity gains that far outstrip the gains that could have been made from mechanical typesetting. Women cannot be excluded on spurious grounds (strength, concentration, lacking basic skills). The structure of patriarchal rights have been undermined by legislation and state policy and this is reflected in a growing female self-consciousness.

3.4.3 Contradiction

Cockburn's study, which was carried out between mid-1979 and late 1981, draws principally on fifty, lengthy, semi-structured interviews with compositors in four newspaper companies, two on Fleet Street (Mirror Group and the Times) and two London regionals (King & Hutchins Ltd. and Croydon Advertiser Ltd.). Her questions focussed on eleven key areas:

apprenticeship, the old technology, the new technology, the firm, women as competitors and colleagues, union policies, relations with less skilled men, feelings about class, homelife and domestic relationships, the newspaper as product, and the future of work for compositors. (Cockburn, 1983, p. 9)

The interviews were structured around '72 basic questions' which she asked in any order that fitted the conversational approach of the interview, which began with the general questions of how and why the subject came to be in the trade.

Cockburn also interviewed management, shop-floor union representatives, some women members of the NGA as well as men and women members of the less skilled union NATSOPA. All the subjects have in common experience of the 'hot metal' process of type preparation for letterpress printing and experience or anticipation of a transfer to 'cold' computerised photocomposition. The interviews allowed her to construct specific case studies of the incorporation of new technology in the four newspaper groups. She noted the circumstances, reasons, key decisions, style of introduction, and degree of resistance that accompanied the installation of new technology.

What Cockburn seeks from the tape-recorded and carefully transcribed interviews is not a catalogue of percentages summarising her basic questions but the revelation of contradictory actions and attitudes evident in the work process. The compositors in her study are faced by contradictions that are both a result of material working practices and of ideology. For example, the work environment in which the men operate the new technology is cleaner, quieter and more comfortable and the work itself is lighter and less onerous. The result is higher productivity for less effort and yet, contradictorily, it is regarded as less satisfying. This reflects a historically established contradiction. On the one hand compositors have high regard for the idea of craft excellence and hard work, while on the, they realise that it is a work ideology that accentuates self-exploitation. Cockburn argues that it is the very mechanism of contradiction that prompts a redirection or ideological change.

The identification of contradictions reflects Oakley's (1974a) analysis but Cockburn makes them a much more central concern. To conceptualise contradiction, she argues, involves a dialectical way of thinking which emphasises process. 'Events and interconnections not linear causality unfold and one form replaces another, denying it and yet developing out of it' (Cockburn, 1983, p. 11). This synthetic view of contradiction involves a view of dialectics which presupposes that all phenomena contain their opposites (Mao, 1971; Hegel, 1974; Engels, 1975). The inherent contradiction can lead to a rupture given changing external circumstances. The nature and timing of any break, however, is not determined by external pressure but is contingent upon the form of the contradiction itself. There is no end to this process as the resulting synthesis contains its own negation. Thus dialectical analysis is not about establishing causal links but proposes a 'theory of the relation between knowledge and the world and between phenomena and the sense we make of them' (Cockburn, 1983, p. 11).

Cockburn aims to reveal the contradictions operating in the world of the print compositor, not just in abstract theoretical terms, but in terms of the direct experiences and reflections of her subject group. Her account of the compositors' world and the contradictions that operate in it is thus generously laced with direct quotes from the interviews which reveal contradictions in the men's ideas, opinions and actions. For Cockburn, contradictions were not problems to be resolved, they became the goal of the research.

The increased participation of women in printing upsets the gender separation and accompanying image men have of women. The image that women are either 'pure' and family oriented or 'loose' and available on demand (by men) is upset by having women work alongside men in what used to be a male bastion in which these simple stereotypes were common currency for idle conversation. The arrival of women in the workplace means that the male image is contrasted by the woman's own definition of her sexuality. As a competitor for jobs she must be taken seriously and cannot be seen as a sexual pawn which he can 'protect and cherish' (Cockburn, 1983, p. 187). This fundamental contradiction which has arisen as a result of males being unable to sustain an exclusive bastion in the face of new technological innovations has far reaching consequences. Compositors are faced with more than an economic threat to their jobs, they face a threat to the sexual structuration of their whole world. Thus Cockburn is led, by the impact of new technology, into 'a study of the making and remaking of men' (Cockburn, 1983, p. 3).

3.4.4 Deskilling

The remaking is enacted at one level in the acquisition of new skills, of prime importance is the skill to touch-type on an electronic QWERTY keyboard. This they learnt, in the main, from women instructors. Such skills the compositors regarded as deskilling. The new technology was intangible, if anything went wrong with a keyboard or terminal the men were unable to repair it or carry out routine maintenance. Except for their aesthetic appreciation, their old hard-won skills were irrelevant. Their new skills are by no means exclusive or indicative of a trade. The men feel they are craft frauds. This reskilling has the direct effect of emasculation, the male compositor feels that the new technology has turned the craft into a 'woman's job' and with it the mystique of the crafts*man* has gone (Cockburn, 1983, p. 104).

The issue of skill and deskilling is of central significance in the particular case of the impact of computerised technology on the print compositors craft, but it also has much wider consequences. At one level deskilling is about attempts by capital to undermine the power of craft unions. Deskilling according to the standard Marxist theorists is about control manifested in the standardisation of routines, disassociating the labour process from the skills of the worker, managerial organisation, and efficient division of tasks into unskilled components.[15] But, Cockburn argues, this analysis rather oversimplifies the situation relating to the British print compositor. To understand it better it is necessary to carefully analyse the concept of skill.

The concept of skill is of central importance in understanding the internal divisions in the working class. Skill operates in a complex way in respect of both class and gender divisions. Skill as an abstract category needs to be examined in relation to work practices, in short skill, as an empty abstraction, has to be filled in terms of empirical work practices. At one level, skill is the individual's accumulated experience that adds up to the total experience of the worker. Second, skill refers to that which is necessary to perform a given job. This may or may not match the worker's skill. Third, skill has a political dimension, being that which a group of organised workers can defend against challenges from employers and other groups of workers. Initially, in printing, the three aspects of skill were in harmony but with the advent of computerised photocomposition the three aspects are no longer synchronous. The new technology has seen a sharp distinction arise between 'skill in the man' and 'skill in the job' with the union struggling hard to hang on to 'skill as a class political concept'.

Skill, has a fourth dimension. It is also a sex/gender weapon. The skill attributed to a job (and hence the status of the job) has much more to do with the sex of the person doing it than the real demands of the work (Rubery and Wilkinson, 1979; Phillips and Taylor, 1980; Coyle, 1982). Compositors are faced with accepting that their new job is deskilled or acknowledging that many women are as skilled as men. This dilemma is reflected in bitterness voiced by the men.

A fifth dimension of skill is its social status. Skilled craft work sets the worker above other manual workers. The acknowledged loss of skill goes hand in hand with a loss of self-esteem and status amongst other male workers. The perceived social decline is accentuated because women are equally able to do the job, and, this time, have access to it. In making the old skills redundant the new technology has left the compositor confused about the standing of their work. They see the job as upgraded in terms of its new office environment, but as downgraded in terms of skill. Where this leaves them in terms of social status is a problem they find difficult to resolve.

So the question of skill is as much about gender as it is about class. Cockburn was able to draw out this dual impact in her interviews as she focussed on the issues of union amalgamation and the impact of new technology on skill differentials.

3.4.5 Conclusion

Cockburn shows, through situating the empirical data, in a wider social context that men have created an economic, political, social and physical position of advantage for themselves over women. This is encapsulated and perpetrated in patriarchal institutions varying from general political structures, through the nuclear family, to the specific exclusivity of male clubs and, in the case of the study group, print chapels. In short working-class women are doubly trapped.

Cockburn's study engages prevailing studies of male work by addressing it from a gender perspective as well as in class terms. Work for Cockburn, is integral to the self-identity of the workers. She thus addresses the changes to the long-established skilled occupation brought about by new technology in terms of the remaking of self-image. At the heart of this remaking is the concept of skill. Cockburn deconstructs the abstract notion of skill to reveal its multi-faceted nature which incorporates economic and political dimensions as well as that of performance. The analysis of skill makes sense only as part of a holistic appreciation of the compositor's job. Cockburn's holistic analysis is both structural and historical, tracing the development of the print trade as it relates to their evolution of capitalist and patriarchal forms. The way she is able to reveal the tensions between material practices and ideological forms is through the examination of contradictions that emerge from her ethnographic interviews. These contradictions become the focus of the study and provide a means of linking the particular ethnographic material to the wider socio-economic and political structures that impinge on the world of work and the gender relationships that it supports.

3.5 Sallie Westwood—All Day Every Day

3.5.1 Perspective

In her study of female factory workers Sallie Westwood (1984) looks at the way paid employment and family commitments come together to make women's lives. Westwood's empirical study focuses attention on the lives of women on the factory shopfloor. Women are subjected to patriarchal and capitalist oppression, and, for a good many of the women she researched, racial oppression as well. She argues that feminist analysis must take account of both class and race as well as gender.

Women, she argues, are exploited through the capitalist mode of production which, in selling their labour power, gives them their class position. In addition, women are workers in the home where they are also exploited through the gift of their domestic labour to men. Both situations are oppressive, and conceptually it would be possible to distinguish two systems of oppression. However, Westwood suggests that capitalism and patriarchy bear on each other and are not easily divided between home and workplace. Indeed, she went first to the workplace rather than the home in order to 'seek out patriarchy' (Westwood, 1984, p. 3).[16]

The inextricable link between patriarchy and capitalism Westwood sees as encompassed in the dual relation of women to class. They are working-class wage-earners but the wages they earn are not equivalent to a living wage and this leads to a tendency to marriage as a means of accessing higher wage income. This results in a second relationship to class through a relationship with a male wage which in itself reinforces the dependence and subordination of women to men.

Westwood argues that both capitalism and patriarchy[17] effect women's subordination. She does not see capitalism or patriarchy as wholly autonomous nor reducible one to the other.[18] For her, patriarchy (which includes material control and exploitation and a legitimating ideology) and mode of production are 'simultaneously one world and two, relatively autonomous parts of a whole which has to be fought on both fronts'. She sees the lives of her subjects as 'encompassed by patriarchal relations, which are part of "patriarchal capitalism"' (Westwood, 1984 pp. 5-6).

Race provides a further dimension. Westwood argues that feminists cannot afford to ignore race nor simply tack it on to analyses of gender oppression. Nor, she argues, is it a good idea to consider race along with class and gender as a triple oppression. It has been hard enough for feminist socialists to bring class and gender together in a way which allows them to hold onto the complexities of both. Instead of a 'triple oppression' model it is more illuminating, if more complicated, to try and see contradictory and complementary relationships between the areas of class, race and gender as they relate to ongoing struggles. This she attempts to do by grounding her analysis of the politics of race, class and gender in the lives of women in the factory.[19]19

3.5.2 Approach

Her approach was to see at first hand what was involved in the world of work on a factory shopfloor. Through the auspices of a local contact, Westwood was able to gain access to a hosiery factory, 'Stitch Co.' in 'Needletown' where she spent a year from March 1980 to May 1981 on the shopfloor.

> For some reason, the idea of an anthropologist studying the culture of the shopfloor by hanging around the coffee bar, lurking in the lunch canteen and sharing a few 'risque' jokes, appealed to management who saw my immersion as a baptism of fire. (Westwood, 1984, p. 2)

Her participant observation study involved talking, watching, listening and working, and generally joining in the life of the shop floor. Her account is thus based on her own observation and what she was told by, or overheard from, the women she worked with. Westwood addresses the situation on the shopfloor and then turns to the domestic sphere. As the study progressed Westwood developed friendships and was able to participate more and more in the domestic and social life of the women and this provided insights into the oppression and exploitation experienced by women in the home. This direct observation out of the workplace was augmented by the plentiful accounts of domestic labour and motherhood which are major topics of conversation on the shopfloor. Throughout she illustrates her analysis with excerpts from discussions and quotes from the participants.

Westwood argues that what she intended was to grasp a specific cultural space and this required immersion in the life of the shopfloor. She is unimpressed by critics of participant observation who argue that the method is unreliable, ungeneralisable, intrusive and subjective. For her, it is the only methodic practice that possibly allows one to inhabit and record a cultural space. Westwood hoped to be able to illuminate the lived experiences of women workers who come together to generate and sustain a culture, a world of symbols and meanings which has to be unravelled. But, she notes,

> lived experience, everyday life, the 'real' world, are not simple unambiguous phenomena which can be easily caught and reproduced in the pages of books. Life does not lie around like leaves in autumn waiting to be swept up, ordered and put into boxes. The drama of everyday life is richly textured, multifaceted and dense and we cannot hope to make sense of our world and, more, interpret it, without a coherent theoretical understanding. (Westwood, 1984, p. 3)

On the other hand Westwood has no intention of fetishising theories, but rather hopes that her work will contribute to feminist theories and politics because it reveals the complexities of women's subordination through a study rooted in women's lived experiences.

Her focus tends to be on the way that women, through shopfloor culture, resist the pressures of capitalism and patriarchy—features common to all the women. Throughout, she addresses the differences in lived experiences of the white and non-white women in the factory. She does not assume that their sex determines their gendered roles but acknowledges that these are racially constructed (Parmar, 1982).

3.5.3 Resistance and feminine culture: contradiction and collusion

Westwood provided a description of the company and its paternalistic attitude. She outlined the general patriarchal nature of the factory and gave a detailed description of the organisation of work and the system of remuneration, known as 'the minutes',[20] in the finishing department in which she worked. Essentially, women were segregated into areas which reflected their perceived domestic role, were closely supervised and poorly paid. Males tended to be in control, for example the all-female finishing department had a male manager who referred to the women as 'girls', and the workers relied on male maintenance technicians who were in a position to affect the women's bonus earnings.

Like Cockburn (section 3.4), Westwood focuses her analysis on the 'inherent contradictions of women's lives under conditions set by patriarchal capitalism'. The nature and operation of some of these contradictions are revealed in the detailed examination of female shopfloor culture. Shopfloor culture is oppositional on the one hand, in that it resisted management control and the union hierarchy, but binds its creativity securely to an oppressive version of womanhood in its reassertion of notions of femininity. For example, feminine culture was affirmed through the domestication of the work situation, notably claiming 'possession' of machines and chairs and decorating them with icons of domestic life and family ties (or some form of sentimental surrogate); through the wearing of house slippers at work; and the manufacture of elaborate aprons from oddments which served as a means by which women workers insisted upon their 'womanhood' and, thereby, their selfhood' in an alien and masculine environment (Westwood, 1984, p. 22).

Forms of resistance also reflected this culture of femininity. Although the women very occasionally resisted 'the minutes' by refusing to work, resistance, in the main, took less dramatic forms tolerated by the company. For example, it was embodied in a system of 'informal economics'. The shopfloor was a marketplace for outside goods brought in and for catalogue sales, and a forum for generating 'selling parties'. The repair and alteration of clothes, the making of clothes for personal use on company machines and sometimes in 'company time', rather than lunch breaks, also took place. Small domestic appliances were brought in for mechanics to repair.

The constant reassertion of a culture of femininity led the women to collude with male definitions of a subordinate version of woman tied 'to domestic labour in the home'. The shopfloor is the site in which patriarchal ideologies and the materiality of patriarchy is reproduced. Female shopfloor culture established a female realm, but in terms that represented male constructs of femininity with its consequent exploitative domestic labour and nurturing obligations and its subversion of creativity and sisterhood. The collusive nature of the resistant shopfloor culture was apparent (for both white and non-white workers) in its celebration of marriage, the family and motherhood. Marriage was construed in romantic terms and seen as both liberating and transformative. Marriage transformed 'girls' into 'women', that is, wives and mothers. The notion of motherhood was central to the contradiction in women's lives. Shopfloor culture celebrated motherhood as the final stage in the process of becoming a woman and in so doing colluded with patriarchal ideology. Such a woman is a 'gendered subject' defined in her reproductive not productive role.

While biology makes women reproducers it is patriarchal ideology that institutionalises motherhood and heterosexuality and creates the myth of the maternal instinct with its consequent burden of nurturing. Patriarchal ideology treats motherhood as natural and the majority of women Westwood studied had absorbed this view. A pregnancy was greeted with virtual universal approval and celebrated with gifts. The positive aspects were highlighted and the potential physical dangers, the pain and the psychological upheavals were ignored or glossed over.

Westwood's study, like Willis's (1977) study of how working-class lads get working-class jobs, reveals how women collude in their own oppression through the reproduction of patriarchal ideologies in the expression of their resistance to capitalist exploitation. In exerting some independent economic control over their own lives the women developed a shopfloor culture which, rather than overtly promote solidarity and strength, embraced romance and sexuality and reproduced the myths and stereotypes of male-female relationships.21

3.5.4 Method: the 'hen party'

Westwood's participant observation thus focused on the contradictions in the lived experiences of the women. Her approach to participant observation differs fundamentally from the conventional approach[21] in two important ways. First, she sees no requirement for a detached, balanced view of the social situation she is and ideologies.

It is axiomatic both for Westwood, and for the women themselves, that the world is constructed and controlled by men. Westwood then addresses the way this male domination is played out in everyday structures, be they the disputes over 'the minutes', a wedding celebration on the shopfloor, or a night on the town. Westwood is not bothered about a 'balanced' view in the sense of comparing male and female perceptions, nor is she willing to remain a detached and uninvolved observer. The women are her friends[22] and she is quite prepared to overtly act in a way that engages male ideology and may serve to inform her friends.

The way she differs from the conventional approach and the essentially critical nature of her work can best be revealed by taking an example and analysing how her a critical interpretation is developed. Westwood (1984, pp. 112–126) described in detail the traditional celebration and ritual[23] connected to matrimony using as a case study the double marriage of twins (Tessa & Julie). This 'rite of passage' for brides was a taken-for-granted element of shopfloor life. Work was more or less suspended and management were tolerant of the ceremony. The celebration (usually on a Thursday) traditionally involved intending brides dressing in elaborate costume made by the other women on their units. The fancy dress constituted a comment on the bride's sexuality. Both twins were already living with boyfriends and Tessa was pregnant. This meant that both costumes could be suggestive without causing offence. Julie was dressed in a lewd St. Trinian's outfit and Tessa in an outrageous 'oversize Babygro'.

Dressed in these costumes, the twins received visitors and practical gifts (such as Pyrex dishes and tea towels), and supplied 'gooey cakes' for their friends. At lunch the unit went to the nearest pub and the brides were plied with drink. On leaving the pub the twins were, as was traditional, tied, with yards of binding, to the railings near the pedestrian bridge over the dual carriageway next to the factory. It was pouring with rain. Their mother laughed at their plight and photographed them. The twins were left to struggle free. When they reappeared in the department bruised, cut and bedraggled they were greeted with laughter not sympathy. Then they were bundled into a large wheeled basket normally used for moving work or scraps around the factory and pushed at increasing speed around the department. The screaming twins looked terrified, and after the hectic ride eventually came to an end, the exhausted, pale and giddy twins were helped to the canteen and given coffee much to the amusement of the other women.21

The twins, unable to do any work, left the factory at 4.30 with their presents. However, the celebration was not at an end; the evening's hen-party was to follow. The party of twenty-four women 'pub crawled' round an established circuit attracting the hoots and whistles of passing men. The women were 'high on friendship' and were 'loud, noisy and abusive, shouting at passing cars, the police and anyone in range and enjoying every minute of this freedom' and 'sense of power'. 'The term "girls" was forgotten, left inside the factory; out on the street in force, we were women'.

At a crowded 'fun pub' a host disc-jockey invited brides-to-be on stage. The twins were encouraged to lay on their backs and wave their legs in the air while 'The Stripper' music was playing. Their friends egged them on, wanting them to strip, and the twins became embarrassed. Eventually, the party arrived at a night club. Although excited, the sight of two bouncers on the door subdued the group and they made a rather meek entrance. Some of the women danced 'with impassive faces around their handbags' while the men at the bar made sexist comments about the appearance of the women. Tessa, on overhearing one of the men told him to 'fuck off' and then said to Westwood, 'They make me sick, that's all they think about.' 22

> I agreed with Tessa and felt my anger rising to explosion-point as we made our way to and from the bar amid a sea of such comments. We were in a cattle market....22
> As we were dancing our group was approached by three large drunken men who started to make remarks about legs and 'tits' and who lurched towards us, prompting me, my anger now very visible, to tell them loudly to 'piss off' which was applauded and cheered by my friends who could hear me, it seemed, above the disco and the drunken roar.

At midnight a 'seedy, fat' dinner-jacketed compère called each bride in turn onto the stage and subjected them to a humiliating titillation scene which involved eventually placing a garter on the bride's thigh in return for a bottle of Asti Spumante. The twins who were last on stage were more resistant to being messed about than the other punters. After leaving the stage Julie was angry. 'Did you see that, Sal ? ... I'll punch his face in. I don't like him, dirty ol' man.' The evening ended at three in the morning. The following day at work most of the party-goers had hangovers although all agreed that the night before had been enjoyable.

3.5.5 Analysis: reflexivity and totality

Westwood argues that both the ceremony and the 'hen party'[24] are deeply contradictory events. The ritualised celebration involved both ambiguous symbolism and women in a celebration of their own oppression in marriage. The making of elaborate fancy dress emphasised the creative skills and abilities of the women on the unit but the celebration of their skills and ingenuity were, however, manifest in demeaning costumes for the brides. The workplace ritual contained 'powerful sexual imagery' which related to the women becoming sexually active as wives, where their sexuality was mediated by men and this was reflected in the fancy dress.[25]

Marriage was clearly equated with bondage 'and the binding of a woman to a man'. While the women were bound 'they also sought to struggle free—thereby securing for the bride a new freedom'. The woman's struggle was enacted in public. It was as though the whole exercise was a shaming experience, a 'way of showing women as harlots and witches', which was also symbolised in the costumes worn by the brides.[26] These images represent the enduring myths which surround women's sexuality. Such myths are not simply benign but are part of the subordination of women which the shopfloor workers collusively re-presented in the ritual (Westwood, 1984, p. 119).

The 'hen party' made 'a statement about solidarity and affection between women'. A night out presented the women with the opportunity to get together, free of the confines of home and work. Westwood argued that the events clearly showed that the women gained strength and support from the occasion and that the solidarity would remain important to the bride despite her marriage. This, Westwood argues, reasserted the sisterhood of women. However, like the other aspects of the bride's ritual, it had 'deeply ambiguous elements'. The sisterhood generated was 'undercut by the sexism of the setting' clearly evident in the male-constructed stereotypical events to which the women were subjected. 'Men were the ever-present, all-pervading context which surrounded the hen party'.

The 'powerful sexist ideologies' invaded an event which gives power to women through their solidarity. While the evening overall clearly emphasised the distance between 'the world of women and the world of men' the women were 'placed in a situation of competition for male attention' and were drawn into a chauvinistic culture which emphasised caricatured sexual relations. Such relations are of course regarded as 'natural' not socially constructed. The events of the evening reflected the power of men to trivialise and denigrate women.

Westwood's analysis differs from the conventional ethnographic analysis in that it does not just examine the ritual celebration of marriage but addresses the events as contradictory expressions by women of patriarchal oppression. Westwood might have simply described the ceremonial events and then drawn out the meaning of the ritual for the participants. She might have focused on the solidarity of the women as a celebration of women *qua* women. Instead, by concentrating on the contradictions, she was able to show how the manifestations of sisterhood and the celebration of woman was directed in ways which were informed by patriarchal ideology.

The focus on contradictions both enables and draws upon two other aspects of her research, a reflexive attitude and a totalistic perspective.23

Although Westwood makes no attempt at a 'value free' research study, this in no way inhibits her reflexivity. The focus on contradictions as a way of making sense of the lived experiences spurs a constant reflexive re-examination of the events, both in terms of her own involvement and her taken-for-granted understanding of the meanings of these events for the participants. It also provides her with the framework for engaging ideology which she regards as rooted in a hegemonic 'common-sense' (Gramsci, 1971).

For example, it would have been easy for her to regard the women's idea of marriage and family as romanticised and myopic. However, she notes that23

> I came slowly to appreciate, as they did, that the ideological and material parameters of their lives presented marriage and children not as burdensome and oppressive, but as liberating events—part of the great adventure of life. In taking hold of these moments, young women locked themselves into domesticity and subordination in just the same way that young men, taking hold of manual labour as their moment of liberation from boyhood, locked themselves into dead end jobs with low wages.[27] (Westwood, 1984, p. 103)

This was not just an acceptance of the subject's point of view and a representation of the meanings that the subject conferred on marriage. Marriage was emphasised and enshrined in the shopfloor culture of femininity and it would have been easy for Westwood to have simply presented this in terms of group ritual. She went further, however, to analyse the 'good reasons' why the women should embrace both marriage and men, despite its apparent contradictions.[28]

The reflexive process of analysing contradictions enabled Westwood to make structural connections through digging deeper which the ostensive celebration of marriage, surrounded by an explicit gloss of romance, only hinted at. For example, engagement was not simple-minded romanticism but was underpinned by economic constraints which necessitated an alliance between men and women if a reasonable standard of living was to be enjoyed. Engagement and marriage, according to the women interviewed by Westwood, was a strategy adopted by women to get away from parental control, to exercise some (localised) power in a male-dominated world, to gain access to the resources controlled by men, to improve their bargaining position *vis-à-vis* men, and thus to realise some of the benefits of society.

In short, the reflexive analysis of contradictions requires a totalistic perspective (as we saw in Cynthia Cockburn's (1983) analysis, section 3.4). Westwood adopts a totalistic approach in which the

substantive question of why women have a dual relation to class is the focal point. This dual relation to class cannot be answered through the 'crude economism of "cheap labour" arguments', instead it is linked to the 'power of sexist and racist ideologies to affect employers and unions' and thus the way people are 'positioned in the labour markets' (Westwood, 1984, p. 232).

3.5.6 Praxis

Westwood's praxiological analysis is evident in her unambiguous revelation of sexist and racist practices, in her direct intervention within the research context to engage them, and in her wider political concerns. Throughout her account she relates incidents of racism and sexism. The latter were evident in her description of the 'hen party', for example, she constantly emphasised the 'seediness' of the night-club compère and the 'tits and bums' language of the male punters in order to highlight the direct and oppressive sexist context. Her own interventions were direct responses to situations that affected her and as a sounding board for a growing vocalisation among her friends, again evident in the night-club scene. Throughout the book Westwood makes explicit political points which she brings together in her conclusion which argues for a feminist fight on a number of fronts in order to tackle the impoverishment of women that sexist and racist ideologies applied to the class situation of women workers have resulted in. Attacks have to be made on the ghettoisation of low-paid work, on white male privileges in highly paid skilled work, and against low pay for women. Her study revealed that while their was a degree of solidarity and sisterhood among the women, the trade union, informed by sexist and racist ideologies, negotiated enormous wage differentials on the spurious grounds of skilled work. Thus, suggests Westwood, the fight against low pay is bound up with a fight against the ideologies of the unions.24

Furthermore, Westwood suggests that feminism must address issues beyond the concerns of middle-class whites. Apart from the obvious neglect of racism, there seems little connection with the lives of working-class women. For example, calls to develop sisterhood seem strange to working-class women who spend much of their lives in a mutual dependency culture with other women. Similarly, to be told that women are powerless, does not fit the experiences of working-class women who feel they have control over their own part of the world, separate from men.

In conclusion Westwood argues that, in the face of Thatcherism, 'We must support and protect the efforts being made by those working at the local level, in the unions and left Labour councils, who are trying to forge meaningful alternatives' (Westwood, 1984, p. 241)

3.6 Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed—Women of Pakistan

3.6.1 Introduction

In their commission to write about the 'embryonic women's movement' in Pakistan, Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed (1987) develop an alternative strategy for making women visible. Their concern is not with an ethnographic account of the organisation and functioning of the women's movement but an historical analysis of the genesis and evolution of the movement in relation to the socio-economic and political structures that serve to oppress women.

Mumtaz and Shaheed were an integral part of the women's movement in Pakistan. For them it was important not only to raise some of the issues confronting the women's movement but also to encourage other women to write on the women's issue in order that a deeper understanding could be evolved. This aim to generate the basis for a deeper understanding led them to provide a broad social and political context in which to locate their account of the rise and activities of the Women's Action Forum rather than simply document the short history of the organisation and their role in it.

3.6.2 History writing

In attempting to provide this wider context Mumtaz and Shaheed became aware that no record of the history of women's struggles for their rights and their involvement in politics existed. This they had to piece together from 'scattered facts and footnotes'. Their research draws on published academic sources and bibliographies (including, Ahmed, 1975; Burki, 1980; Epstein & Watts, 1981; Syed, 1984; Jayawardena, 1986; Mathur, undated;); newspapers and periodicals; conference and other unpublished papers; constitutions, position papers and other documents of women's groups; government publications; legal ordinances and orders; and articles of the Constitution of Pakistan. As such, they admit it is only the first reconstruction of the struggle.

In their reconstruction they acknowledge that they confronted only some of the issues facing the movement in Pakistan as their priority was to 'inform and to record events which, from today's perspective, appear important' (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987). Clearly this is an historicist approach to history writing. The procedure is historicist in its reconstruction of the past in terms of the present. This is not a critical approach in itself. It becomes a critical approach if it does three things. First, it adopts a critical perspective (*Weltanschauung*) through which to generate an alternative history. Second, it addresses historical events in terms of their relation to prevailing social practices and examines the extent to which prevailing structures are sustained through them. Third, in analysing the relationship between history and structure it digs beneath the surface appearance to reveal the nature of oppressive mechanisms.

The procedure adopted by Mumtaz and Shaheed was to work from the general to the particular. They begin their report with a wide general political history of Pakistan from pre-independence through the Pakistan Movement, the establishment of the separate state of Pakistan, and the recent history up to the early 1980s. This general political history was refined in stages (subsequent chapters) addressing, ever more closely, the oppression of women. The second stage of this historical reconstruction involves the production of a general social historical profile of Pakistani women. The third stage looks specifically at the impact of British imperialism on Muslim women in the Indian sub-continent. The fourth stage deals with the gradual progress of women's rights in the new Pakistan up to the establishment of Zia's military dictatorship. Stage five concentrates on how the Islamicisation process during the Zia period affected women in general. The sixth stage addresses the establishment of the Women's Action Forum in response to this. Finally, two specific issues concerning the restrictions on women in the Zia period are examined more closely. These are the efforts to veil and seclude women and the systematic reduction of women's legal status.

The approach, then, is to start with a broad historical perspective which addresses the position of women and progressively focus down on specific issues. In this manner the issues are contextualised both historically and structurally. The particular impact of the Women's Action Forum can then be assessed as a historically specific institution. The study was shaped by two considerations: first, the concerns of the Women's Action Forum; second, the relevance of Islam.

3.6.3 Women's rights and the Islamicization process

A fundamental question that their analysis needed to address was 'whether Islam's relevance to politics in general and women in particular was only temporary, created by an unelected authoritarian government seeking legitimacy through religion, or whether there was a deeper issue' (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987, p. vii).

The focus of conventional histories of Pakistan have been in terms of its relationship with India, the struggle for democracy, and the friction between the centralised state and the provinces. The nature, role

and use of Islam by political forces and its relationship to the women's struggle has not been the focus of attention and thus the authors had to reconstruct a history from an entirely different perspective.

Mumtaz and Shaheed show that the women's struggle has been intertwined with the nationalist struggle (at least until independence) and then with democratisation up to the mid-1970s. Only in the Zia period has there been an overt struggle with conservative forces of Islam. However, Islam has had a much longer impact on Muslim social and political life and is seen as running parallel to Muslim women's struggle in the sub-continent. Despite its lack of overt prominence in conventional histories, their research indicates that Islam has been a recurrent theme in the political awakening of Muslim Indians, both progressive and conservative, and has had a concomitant effect, which has not always been negative, on the women's struggle. Only since independence in 1947 has Islam been increasingly hijacked by reactionary forces. Ironically, the very people whose conservative interpretation of Islam led them to oppose the creation of Pakistan came to power in the Zia regime. This new conservative intelligentsia are alienated from the earlier West-educated élite and instead of looking to indigenous cultural and historical roots have turned to religion. The result is that the only version of Islam that has flourished is 'conservative, bigoted and fanatical' and Pakistan seems to be 'in the grip of the unenlightened and the closed-minded'.

Indicative of their critical historicism is the way in which Mumtaz and Shaheed analyse the legislative changes that affected women's rights. They do not just provide an account of what appear, from a current perspective, to be important legal changes and judicial decisions but also investigate what impact these had in practice and how they were implemented given the socio-economic conditions of women's lives.

Mumtaz and Shaheed illustrate two important aspects of this. First, they explore the perspective adopted by Pakistani women in their campaign for greater rights. There has been, they argue, little overt conception of the women's struggle as being one against a patriarchal system. Women have tended to think in terms of a gradual and natural evolution of their rights. This was a situation which seemed to be occurring in the nationalist struggle. However, the women who were active and who were affected by greater freedom in the nationalist struggle and then by greater restrictions in the Islamicisation process inaugurated by Zia in 1979, were urban upper-middle-class women in the main and the impact of the legislative gains had not filtered through to the majority of Pakistani women.

Second, the life experiences of Pakistani women did not match their changed legal status. Mumtaz and Shaheed show that the reality of the patriarchal system is such that the majority of women are entirely economically and socially dependent on men and, while they have more rights in theory, in practice they are unable to demand them for fear of 'reprisals'. The constraints on women imposed through *purdah* extend to both private and public spheres and are legitimated by a web of myths that bolster patriarchal power and undermine women's access to the basic means of production and thus to political power.

The legal changes and the patriarchal dependency have themselves been mediated by changes in the social infrastructure. Capitalisation of agricultural production, industrialisation, migrant labour, inflation, education and the emergence of new classes within Pakistan and the international effect of unequal development all have an impact on the position and participation of women in society, not least because 'economic imperatives in Pakistan are pushing an ever greater number of women onto the labour market'. The study takes into account these infrastructural developments as they have an impact on the entrenched patriarchal system.[29]

Mumtaz and Shaheed addressed the impact of colonialisation. Again they might simply have recorded the role the British Raj played in 'liberating' women by logging the contributions made by the imperialists, such as the banning of *sati* and the promotion of women's education. However, like Liddle

and Joshi (1986) (Section 3.7, below) they critically assessed the nature of the imperialist contribution and showed that during British rule women's legal status was little improved, and that changes were made in the context of a colonial power concerned with its own self-interest and profitability. Promoting education served the dual purpose of propagating ideology and providing an administrative class to serve the needs of the empire. Legal changes were related to criminal law, revenues, land tenure and such areas that affected the economic concerns of the imperialists. Interpersonal relations, disposition of property, and so on, were left untouched and in the hands of Muslim religious law. The only salient contribution of the British in this sphere was to act to deprive Muslim women of their right to inherit property by imposing Hindu custom. It was only in the last years of British rule, when after agitation from Muslim women, the Muslim Personal Law (1937) was passed which permitted Muslim women to inherit property, although not agricultural land.

In their examination of the reactionary interpretation of Islam as far as women's rights were concerned under the Zia dictatorship, Mumtaz and Shaheed again dug beneath the surface of appearances. The campaign extolling people to be more Islamic was, they showed, quite clearly skewed as the impact fell far more heavily and one-sidedly on women. Interpretations of the Qur'an were hypocritical and biased in favour of female subjugation. Suddenly the struggle for women's rights was pushed into a debate about Islam.

Instead of arguing that this shift represented the victory of conservative patriarchal forces *per se*, Mumtaz and Shaheed examined the political expediency involved in the Islamicisation process. At one level such expediency was to ensure support from conservative forces, and while some ordinances had grave repercussions, legal decisions neutralised them to some extent. At another level, the Zia government tried out policies by implementing them without and resolutions, edicts or written commands to try and see what kind of reaction would ensue. For example, women stopped being recruited to banks, which were all nationalised, for a year (1982-83) without any government directive being issued in writing. No explanation was offered and after protests by women the directive was withdrawn as mysteriously as it was issued.

3.6.4 Conclusion
In providing an account of the emergence of the Women's Action Forum, Mumtaz and Shaheed have adopted a feminist perspective which reconstructs history in terms of the concerns of women and in so doing is a critique of taken-for-granted sex-blind political history. This radically different perspective on conventional history is developed critically through the adoption of a totalistic perspective which links the specific history of the Women's Action Forum with the wider women's struggle. It focuses on the emergence of a patriarchal Islamic economic and political system and the impact that it has on women. They dig beneath the surface of, for example, government directives to show the differential impact on women. Patriarchal ideology is revealed in the Islamicisation process with its consequent material affect on women.

Their study has a praxiological element summed up by their analysis of the way forward for the women's movement. They argue that a shift has occurred in the women's movement of the mid-1980s in Pakistan with more emphasis on women's rights, a greater degree of militancy, and an 'increased consciousness of the need to mobilize greater numbers of women from all classes'. However, they argue that on the basis of their analysis, if the women's movement wants to replace patriarchy, rather than simply improve their lot within it (a tenuous aim as the Zia government has shown) then they need to recognize that patriarchy 'is not the only form of oppression it will have to fight against'. Patriarchy, they argue, has been absorbed into tribalism, feudalism and now capitalism and while it is possible to distinguish patriarchy in theory, in practice it is inseparable from these socio-economic systems and

opposition to one implies opposition to the other. So the women's movement, while remaining autonomous, must not remain forever isolated. Meanwhile, women must struggle as it is less burdensome than immobile silence.

3.7 Joanna Liddle & Rama Joshi—Daughters of Independence

3.7.1 Introduction
Joanna Liddle and Rama Joshi (1986) undertake an ethnographic and historical analysis of the impact of class and caste on women's subordination in India. Their ethnographic study looks at the lives of professional women. They locate these women's experiences 'in the context of the social structures in which they occur to show that the experiences are not merely personal and individual but part of a wider pattern of social relations' (Liddle & Joshi, 1986, p. 10).

The ethnographic study is paralleled by an historical analysis. Their approach to the history of women's oppression is similar to that of Mills (see section 2.4). The substantive question they raise is 'why are women subordinate in the sex/gender system'? They address this through the examination of a number of less extensive but related questions which address a number of different facets of the overall area of enquiry. For example, they ask, what is the basis of the relationship between gender and caste in India?[30] What have been the main influences in freeing women from the constraints of the caste system? What are the social processes that link gender with the particular system of class which began to develop as a result of British imperialist intervention?

The historical analysis addresses both the recent history of colonialism (and nationalism), particularly the impact of the British Raj on upper-caste women, and the longer-term struggle between female and male power principles in the sub-continent.

Liddle and Joshi show that the development of the women's movement in India over the last century, like in Pakistan (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987), has been inextricably linked with the nationalist movement. The organised women's movement, like the nationalist movement, was dominated by the urban English-educated middle class and they tended to see custom rather than men as the prime enemy of women's freedom. The major concerns of the movement, property rights, widow remarriage, dowry and polygamy, primarily affected the higher castes and middle class. Thus, until the mid-1970s, the women's movement, which has waxed and waned with the nationalist struggle, tended both to underplay the impact of gender domination subordinating it to imperialism, and to neglect the impact of class and caste on women's subordination.

On a longer view, they show that the subordination of women was crucial to the development of caste hierarchy, with struggles over the maintenance of the caste system being associated with constraints on women. The development of a class system had contradictory effects. Although acting to reinforce women's subordination albeit in different forms, it also provided an escape from the patriarchal caste restrictions for a small number of educated middle class women.

3.7.2 Power
Underpinning all this is the core construct of power. The question of power is crucial for Liddle and Joshi, as it was for Mills in his analysis of American society. While Mills considered power in terms of the exercise of social and political control and linked it with corporate wealth, Liddle and Joshi are concerned with idea of female power. They argue that female power, which has a long history in Asia, is regarded as strong and has been seen as a threat by men. Male dominance over women has been established by suppressing female power. This suppression has occurred in the caste suppression of women and in the patriarchal family organisation, which is neither universal nor natural, but has been

the site of the struggle to restrain female power. This is contrary to Western notions where females are regarded as 'weak' and in need of protection.

Liddle and Joshi argue that the historical analysis of the female power principle and the opposition to it embodied in the dominant male structures, particularly the patriarchal family, are crucial for both an understanding of the subjects of their ethnographic study and for the lessons that Western feminists can learn from the Indian experience.

Their historical analysis is contingent upon the assertion of a female power principle. It provides the basis for a critical historicist reconstruction that engages dominant ideological forms. They concentrate on reconstructing the history of female power particularly as it relates to family structure and religious culture. Tracing the history of the unique cultural heritage of women in India is not easy as most written history is recorded by men and represents predominantly male concerns. To get beneath the surface of the dominant history requires finding 'alternative sources such as later written history, oral history, archaeological evidence, and surviving religious practices and social organisation' (Liddle & Joshi, 1986, p. 51).

They argue that although the idea of the male as the dominant source of power attained supremacy in India, as it did in the West, this followed a struggle in which the female power principle was accommodated into the patriarchal culture and remained visible (which is what makes it distinct from its Western counterpart). For example, in the residual elements of pre-brahmin religious symbolism the goddess is powerful and not suppressed by the power of male gods. Only in the dominant brahmin religious forms (which suppose the dominance of the male) does the powerful, and usually malevolent, goddess become controlled by her male partner. The result is that given a cultural heritage of female power, male dominance over women is exercised in different ways to that found in the West.

Control over women's power is manifested in the caste system.[31] Liddle & Joshi undertook an analysis of brahmin religious writings to show how the position of women was related to the concentration of economic power within the caste system. For example, as material prosperity came to be monopolised by the higher castes, women were seen as a potential source of loss of property and wealth as they might marry out of caste. They were therefore refused inheritance rights, reduced in social status and made increasingly dependent on men. This was legitimated in terms of the uncontrollable and damaging power of women, whose strength and unbridled sexuality would threaten the social order. Women's power was used to legitimate the economic concentration of power in the upper castes (strict control of women was only something the upper castes could afford to do).

The adaptability of brahmin patriarchy is attested to in the way it inverted the legitimation for restrictions on women in the wake of various Muslim invasions (where restriction on upper caste women was then seen as protection from abduction and rape) and in their assimilation, contrary to their basic patriarchal philosophy, of popular goddess cults.

The rise of the middle class, in response to the administrative needs of the British Raj, was based on caste divisions. The urban middle class imposed similar strictures on women as did the rural upper castes and tended to build on caste-based gender divisions (Bhasin, 1972; D'Souza, 1980). None the less, alternative opportunities arose for women through the development of the middle class, which was an embryonic force for change and provided the potential for economic independence for women. It is no accident that the women's movement was led and drew heavily on the urban middle class. However, while it has been possible for educated middle-class women to gain limited access to the professions because the social groups to which they belong are developing a class rather than a caste power and status system, this should not be seen as a march towards modernism in the wake of Western ideas. The class system does nothing to diminish male control and the access of women to the higher echelons of the professions and the freedom that goes with it is still limited by various forms of male control.

3.7.3 Ethnography and professional women

In their ethnographic study, Liddle and Joshi focus on the change that occurs when women struggle to emerge from domestic seclusion to professional employment. Professional women were chosen as subjects because they address the analytic questions of the relationship between gender and class/caste. Their move from high-caste seclusion to professional employment engages questions about the link between caste and gender subordination and allows an insight into what happens when this link is strained, adapted or broken in the transition to a class society. These professional women have been subjected to the dual process of Sanskritisation (restriction of higher caste women) and Westernisation (adoption of Western cultural norms) (Srinivas, 1962).

The ethnographic work, carried out in 1977, involved the researchers talking to 120 college-educated women employed in Delhi in one of four professions; education, medicine, civil service and management. The subjects from a variety of religions, were aged between 22 and 59, and came from most states in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan and from a variety of urban and rural backgrounds. Most of the subjects were selected at random, although this was in order to obtain a wide variety of respondents rather than for purposes of generalisation of statistical results. Liddle and Joshi make no attempt to generalise the findings to other groups nor to claim that professional women represent a vanguard in the struggle for women's freedom from oppression.

The sample of lecturers was selected randomly from one of the two universities in Delhi and three of its related co-educational colleges and came from twenty different subject disciplines although the arts and social sciences predominated. Thirty doctors ranging from house surgeons to professors were similarly selected at random from the staff lists of three state-owned and three private hospitals in Delhi. A similar-sized random sample, taken of all the women civil servants listed as working in Delhi, included under-secretaries to joint secretaries in fifteen different ministries. The women managers constituted a non-random snowball sample (initially based on graduates of the Delhi Management Department's MBA course) who worked in five private and eight state-owned companies of various sizes. The refusal rate was low at around 5 per cent.

Data was collected by three methods. First, a structured questionnaire seeking standard classificatory data, mailed to the potential respondents prior to the interview. Second, a semi-structured interview relating to four major areas of enquiry and containing specific questions on actual experiences and the attitudes of others. Third, an unstructured interview with six topic areas and suggested questions designed to explore the respondent's general approach to the position of women, how they saw the social world and their place in it. This interview was sensitive to, and dependent upon, leads provided by the subjects. Besides the authors, a male interviewer was also used to collect information. There were no discernible differences in the kinds of information gathered by the interviewers in respect of their gender or race.

Drawing on the experiences of their subjects, which they quote for illustrative purposes, Liddle and Joshi describe the expectations forced on higher-caste women. These include economic restrictions such as prohibition of work outside the home, and restrictions on their sexuality, notably early marriage and a life of penance for widows who are not permitted to re-marry. Their subjects' experiences show that seclusion, although occurring in varying degrees, is about how women should live in a patriarchal society. Seclusion privatises women and restricts them to the domestic sphere thus making them both sexually and economically dependent; effectively making women the sexual property of men (Hartmann, 1981). Liddle and Joshi describe and analyse both the pre-employment controls imposed on the women and also the mechanisms used by men to control professional women and thus maintain male domination in the class structure.

Liddle and Joshi have a wealth of material which they use to explore the emergence of the women from seclusion to professional employment. In practice, their subjects reveal that economic independence and family support are necessary in order for their determination to resist subordination to manifest itself in action. For example, 'Puja Shukla', a brahmin high-caste woman, only broke out of the seclusion enforced on her at the death of her husband. As a result of her determination to write books while secluded in the home, she gained a university lectureship. This resulted in her family changing from implacable opposition to her seeking employment to pride at her prestigious position. Further, from being a brahmin widow she took control of her own sexuality by marrying a non-Brahmin, a foreigner of her own choice.

None the less, while achieving a degree of economic independence and social-class status, women still provide men with status in the class system, albeit in ways different from those in the caste system, but are still subject to restrictions which have essentially the same economic and patriarchal basis. For example, 'Veena Goyal' a financial manager noted

> Women aren't suitable for marketing because they have to travel, so I chose an office job in finance in a housing company. The touring aspect is the most satisfying part of the job; when you see work being executed and people living in the houses. But mobility's a great hindrance for women. For instance, on tour they don't see women's motive as work, only immorality. (Quoted in Liddle & Joshi, 1986, p. 138)

3.7.4 Engaging the myths

Liddle and Joshi, similarly to Mills, raise certain preconceptions or myths about the oppression of women in India and provide an alternative analysis based on their ethnographic research as well as a wide variety of documentary sources.

For example, they analyse the myth of the emancipatory impact of British colonialism. The British claimed, and were often believed, to be a liberating force for women in India (in particular, the banning of sati—widow burning). British liberalism in respect of women was, however, less extensive in theory and practice than claimed and, more importantly, it was dependent upon British financial interests. The impact of colonialism was therefore selective and not always progressive, especially in the personal realm. The matrilineal system of the Nayars, for example, was eradicated as a result of concerted legal and economic action by the British, supported by the patrilineal groups, who regarded the Nayar family and its system of inheritance as alien.

Ambiguity was also evident in the nationalist movement's attitude to women's issues. Women's causes were supported when they furthered the nationalist cause but resulted in split support when they posed a direct challenge to male privilege. While female suffrage was supported, the Hindu Code which related to the personal areas of marriage and inheritance was resisted. The area of personal law reform exemplified the divergence of nationalist and feminist concerns. The women's movement went into decline following independence, universal suffrage, and a constitutional guarantee of sex equality in all realms of life. However, in practice, women were clearly not as 'free' as men on either the personal or structural levels.

More fundamentally, Liddle and Joshi address some of the cultural ideas, stereotypes and myths which inform the position of professional women in the gender and class hierarchies, examining the context of the development of the myths and the relationship between them and the socioeconomic lives of the women. Their data shows that women become aware of the contradiction between their own experience and the construction of that experience within a male-oriented gender ideology. They know that the stereotypes of women form part of a gender ideology which is specific to class, cultural and national context. They know that the dominance by men is a social process, not a natural one.

Three major myths were identified by Liddle and Joshi's respondents as contributing to the ideology of gender: women's inferiority, subservience and domesticity. These myths are created, or at least sustained, in a number of specific ways. The idea that women are intellectually inferior or less competent is sustained by the active exclusion of women from many areas of education, training and employment. These restrictions mean that women have less opportunity in employment, which in turn fosters the myth of female domesticity. In turn, the requirement for women to work, unacknowledged, in the domestic sphere, with its inevitable drain on stamina, further fuels the myth of women's weakness. The myth that women are naturally subservient is a legitimation for the existing social order in which men have economic and sexual control. These myths, of course, serve men through greater leisure time, domestic and personal services, priority in education and employment, and gender dominance. And each myth is easily countered empirically, for example, by the everyday sight of working-class women doing heavy labouring jobs on building sites and to powerful images in Indian religion of strong female goddesses.

The women in the study operated on a number of different ways in respect of these myths. While accepting the social (male) construction of femininity they would sometimes regard themselves as deficient when their experiences were at variance with the constructions and thereby collude unknowingly. At other times they would collude consciously 'keeping to themselves the evidence which contradicts men's deficient knowledge of them' (Liddle & Joshi, 1986, p. 194). For example, 'Shikha Munshi' said

> Men often can't handle an intelligent woman. They expect them to be inferior. If they're not they can't be natural with them. Senior colleagues will not talk to me in Japanese because I speak it better. I have to play down my ability, otherwise it creates problems. (Quoted in Liddle & Joshi, 1986, p. 178)

In short, Liddle and Joshi's ethnographic analysis shows that men's dominant position in the social hierarchy as far from natural but based on the control of women's sexuality, itself based on the control of economic resources. The impact of the West on women's liberation is at best ambiguous. Women's resistance to oppression in India neither began nor ended with the British women's intervention, but had its roots in the Indian social structure and cultural heritage. The psychological basis for women's individual resistance is drawn from the Indian cultural heritage of female power rather than Western 'liberal' ideas. International capitalism binds the gender and social hierarchies together. That women's experiences are not purely personal but are crucially related to the social structure is shown in stark relief when the Indian economy is seen in the context of it subordination to Western financial interests. Ideologically, cultural imperialism introduced the notion of female inferiority into Indian culture. On a material level, the gender division is maintained and legitimated in imperialism by giving men priority in scarcity.

3.7.5 Conclusion

Liddle and Joshi's research leads them to the view that the socio-economic hierarchy and the gender hierarchy are distinct but interrelated aspects of women's subordination. Neither form of oppression is primary. The link between them is historical not logical (Barrett, 1980). In this respect they adopt a dualist socialist feminist approach (Cockburn, 1983) and are opposed to views which argue that the gender hierarchy exists independently of the class hierarchy (Leonard, 1982). Their data shows that isolating either system of oppression leads to a failure to understand the reality of women's lives.

Daughters of Independence is not only a critical study in terms of its analysis of the oppressive structure of Indian society as experienced by women, its critique is also linked to practice. Throughout,

the authors refer to the lessons that can be learned from history, not only for Indian women but also for women in the West. These are linked to the particular experiences and tactics adopted by the women in the study who have broken out of the socially constructed role expected of them. The authors argue that whether or not social movements exist for the promotion of women's rights, in the last resort women have to take these demands into their own homes, as these, as much as wider social structures, are sites of oppression. The tactics adopted by the women, and their outcomes, provide data for practical recommendations.

In all cases the women in the sample engaged oppression through individual initiative, although often supported by another member of the family. Sacrifice, compromise and resistance were approaches adopted by different members of the sample. Sacrifice is encouraged in middle-class society as it is a means of oppressing women and embodies the self-negating ideology of Hinduism. Although essentially inhibiting the woman's potential and freedom, is also a form of resistance in the last resort as it can be used to deprive others as well as oneself. However, it is essentially mutually destructive and is only effective in struggle when used collectively as a form of passive resistance. Compromise is only effective from an established power base, and most women in the sample were already established in their profession before they married. Compromise was managed most effectively when women established their position in the marriage relationship prior to getting married. Not surprisingly older brides were in the strongest position. Resistance usually takes the form of rejecting the expectations of society and family, particularly by denying marriage or by leaving a marriage relationship when personal oppression becomes intolerable.

The political lessons of India's history and the experiences of the sample indicate that women's liberation requires both collective social change and individual personal change. This involves: first, negotiating changes at a personal level with family members; second, making sure that when alliances are formed with other movements the specific differences between groups is clearly confronted; and third, realising that there are differences between different class groups within the women's movement.

3.8 Conclusion

These critical studies of gender oppression have involved a wide variety of data collection techniques including structured questioning, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Once again, however, it is not the method but the methodology that is crucial to the critical process. The authors held varying views on patriarchy and its relationship with the class structure and, to a lesser degree, with racial oppression. In each case, though, patriarchal oppression was analysed in terms of material practices, rather than an idealisation of patriarchal domination. The historically specific manifestations of sexist oppression were related to broader social structures: Westwood, for example, located the shopfloor rituals as part of the collusive process that reproduces female domestic labour; and Mumtaz and Shaheed addressed the repression of women in Pakistan in terms of the right wing's appropriation of the Qur'an to legitimate its grasp of political power.

These empirical studies embodied three projects. First, they set the practices in stark relief and revealed them as clearly sexist. Oakley, in the early 1970s, had to expend considerable effort revealing the continuing sexism inherent in the process of domestic labour. Her analysis of housework and her critique of sociology were both attacked because of her 'biased' feminist views. Although the situation had changed somewhat by the 1980s, neither Cockburn nor Westwood in Britain, nor Mumtaz and Shaheed or Liddle and Joshi discussing the Indian subcontinent, could take sexist practices for granted.

The second project of these studies was to relate specific practices to much wider structures of oppression. Sexist practices do not stand in isolation but are part of a broader process of oppression and

only have meaning within the totality. This involved various constructions of the relationship between production and reproduction: between class and patriarchy (Oakley, Cockburn, Mumtaz and Shaheed); between patriarchy, class and race (Westwood); and between patriarchy class and caste (Liddle and Joshi); and the way they were legitimated ideologically. While women are oppressed by men they are not oppressed in isolation from other social structures. The historical primacy of one form of oppression or another is not the issue. These studies were not concerned with establishing the mythological past of female oppression nor constructing idealisations of the oppressive process. Rather, where they addressed history it was in terms of the particular ways in which women became oppressed, how the oppressive practices were developed and legitimated. For example, Liddle and Joshi explored the way the Brahmins incorporated goddess cults; and Cockburn looked at the techniques employed by the compositors to exclude women. The success of these practices historically, and the continued employment of sexist practices could not be seen as somehow internal to specific institutions but only as sustainable in terms of broader legitimations encapsulated in patriarchal ideology. Patriarchal ideology was seen not as a transhistorical form but as interlinked with class (and racist) ideologies.

The third project of the studies was, in revealing the nature of the practices and their structural significance, to provide a basis for challenging sexism and undermining patriarchal oppression. Oakley, for example, called on the Women's Liberation Movement to change emphasis to incorporate the interests of housewives; Westwood proposed support for local anti-sexist anti-racist initiatives; and Mumtaz and Shaheed set out, in the first place, to documents the history of the women's movement in Pakistan.

In all these studies, then, the intention was to get beneath the surface and reveal the true nature of patriarchal oppression. It meant deconstructing historically specific forms of patriarchy by analysing particular practices, a process confounded by the parallel operation of class (and racial) oppression. The observed practices were given new meaning through the reconstruction that dissolved taken-for-granted sexist practices and male priorities.

Patriarchy oppresses women by rendering them invisible and their views trivial. Making women visible and re-presenting women's perspectives are a major part of feminist critical research. Oakley pioneered in addressing housework as work and investigating it from the point of view of the women who do it. She developed a sympathetic ethnography which countered the spurious 'scientism' of the male paradigm. Critical ethnography has emerged as one of two widely used methods for feminist critical research. Cockburn, for example, concentrated on in-depth interviews while Westwood preferred participant observation.

The other major approach is the development of women's history and Mumtaz and Shaheed's study is one among many examples. Women's history counters the marginalisation of women in dominant history. This is done by recasting history to take account of women's roles: reconstructing it in terms of women's rather than men's concerns; or by writing the history of women's realms.

Ethnographic approaches are often combined with historical analysis as in Liddle and Joshi's *Daughters of Independence* and Cockburn's *Brothers*. Ethnographic material, detailing actual practice, serves as insights into the operation of oppressive structural and historical processes.

Unravelling myths and exposing contradictions provides the major ways through which feminist critical social research enables the dialectical deconstructive process. Stereotypes and anomalies are located structurally and this provides the basis for revealing the operation of patriarchal ideology. Detailed analysis of the operation of legitimating practices reveals the nature of the oppressive mechanism.

The next part undertakes a similar examination of how racial oppression has been approached by critical empirical analysts.

[1] The term bourgeois feminism, because of the apparent naïvety of the bourgeois feminist position, has become a derogatory term and one applied rather loosely in debates and so on. Consequently, feminists who do not seem to be arguing the same line (such as de Beauvoir and Firestone), and indeed, feminists who would seem to be radical or socialist feminists, sometimes get labelled as bourgeois feminists. This makes the term a rather slippery one and perhaps best avoided. The situation is further complicated by two other elements. First, approaches which seem overly biologically deterministic, despite apparent 'revolutionary' content, are usually referred to as bourgeois, as they delimit, in effect, the possibility of social change (e.g. Firestone, 1972). Second, approaches which adopt a positivistic methodology (sometimes called positivistic feminism) are also sometimes referred to as bourgeois. Positivist feminism tends to argue for gender as a generic variable to be considered in the same way that (positivist) sociologists treat socioeconomic variables. This approach, then, tends to concentrate on variable analysis within prevailing social structures hence the 'bourgeois' label.

[2] It has been argued that this version of radical feminism is a highly conservative and politically reactionary approach. The approach is, in its extreme separatist form, incompatible with critical social research as it tends not to address the historically specific nature of social structures nor to undertake a materialist analysis of empirical data, instead relying heavily on idealist notions of inherent psyche.

[3] Key figures in the French movement which came to be called *Psyche et Po* (an abbreviation of 'Psychoanalyse et Politique') are Antoinette Fouque and Helene Cixous. Its strong views and 'intellectual terrorism' waged over other feminist groups (including the 'hijacking of the term 'women's liberation movement' by registering it as a trademark and preventing other French feminists from referring to themselves as from the women's liberation movement) led to strong feelings being expressed both for and against psychoanalytic feminism.

[4] Oakley also used her research for a less sociological book on domestic work called *Housewife* (Oakley, 1974b).

[5] Oakley did this for comparative reasons with previously published studies and because her objection to this classificatory device was only at its embryonic stage at the time of the fieldwork.

[6] One critic accused her of burying her substantive material under a mountain of chi-square tables (Hurstfield, 1975).

[7] Indeed reviewers of the book have attacked her lack of 'objectivity' because she was quite open about being a feminist (see Oakley, 1985).

[8] Oakley became 'involved' with her interviewees, where necessary helping out with domestic tasks whilst interviewing and usually enjoyed hospitality ranging from tea or coffee to a meal (Oakley, 1979). In short she broke down the idea of hierarchical relationship of data-gatherer to informant and substituted a two-way interchange of equals. Indeed, four years after the final interview used in her study, she was still in touch with a third of the sample and four had become close friends.

[9] This tends to categorise qualitative methods such as participant observation and small-sample depth-interviewing as 'feminine' and academically less prestigious than 'masculine' quantitative techniques. (Oakley, 1974a, p. 21).

[10] As she acknowledges when she points to 'the rather poor differentiation between key concepts such as "identification" and "involvement" with the housewife role, the enormously important underlying assumption that there *is* a single phenomenon called the housewife role rather than—a distinctly more interesting but difficult possibility—many interpretations in different social groups of what it means to be a housewife.' (Oakley, 1985, p. ix).

[11] The compositor's work consists of typesetting and composition along with a number of lesser tasks. Typesetting is usually via a linotype machine which is a skilled job in as much as the operator has to be

able to operate the keyboard of ninety keys (which is nothing like a QWERTY typewriter keyboard), make decisions about spacing and hyphenation, carry out routine maintenance of the machine. The machine operates as follows. At each keystroke a small brass matrix is released from the overhead magazine, slides down a chute, and collects in an assembler where they may be read as a line. The collected matrices, each representing a letter of the alphabet, have molten lead forced into the characters resulting in a solid slug or 'line o' type' which is ejected into a waiting tray (galley). Composition, in its narrow sense, refers to the process of collecting the set type and assembling it to form a printing surface. The compositor's tasks make demands on physical strength (the assembled type is heavy), numeracy, literacy and aesthetic sense in composing the page. In its broadest sense, compositor refers to an all-round craft worker who undertakes both these and the lesser related tasks.

[12] Indeed, the book is as much about showing the relevance of a sex/gender dimension as it is about the examination of the impact of new technology.

[13] Periods of profitable growth produce full employment and so strengthen the working class. Workers have a choice of jobs, unions can demand high wages and exert a confident sway over the actual process of work. The competition for profits, however, leads to heavier capitalisation by individual firms, or nations, in order to increase their competitiveness. Advanced technology 'saves' on labour and increases a firm's capacity, enabling it to profit by expanding markets. But as more and more capital is drawn into use, production tends to outstrip consumption and the boom to be broken by crisis. The weakest firms go bankrupt. The economy contracts, workers are laid off, unemployment rises and the weakened working class is unable to resist the depression of wages and the intensification of the authority of capital. The units of capital that survive do so by investing in new areas where labour is cheaper, such as the Third World or by developing new technology that cuts the reliance on costly workers. While capitalism needs wealthy consumers, each firm or nation, to remain competitive, needs poorly paid workers.

[14] Elements of current and recent practices are located in the long-established printers' apprenticeship system, the key strategy of which was control of entry of labour to the craft and the job. The strategy was successful in ensuring a shortage of labour in the trade until the 1960s. The strategy was made possible by the pre-capitalist 'chapel' system which, guided by the 'oldest freeman' or 'father of the chapel', operated a system of democratic and collectively binding decision-making. The system became encapsulated in the print unions with the advent of capitalism. The local sections of the National Graphic Association (NGA) are still referred to as 'chapels' with the local shop floor union representatives retaining the title of 'father of the chapel' (FOC). The chapels were exclusive groups of skilled working men. Unskilled male workers were excluded. The entry of women to composition was even more determinedly resisted through both the development of ordnances and by custom and practice which created a hostile setting which it was difficult for women to penetrate.

[15] Thus labour can be recruited, trained and replaced cheaply and can be easily diverted from one task to another. In short, capitalist control of the labour process leads to ever-increasing division of labour and 'degradation' of work (Braverman, 1974). Although deskilling is about job control it also reflects a shift in the interests of capital. The disinterest in craft was accompanied by a similar lack of concern with standards. Instead, the focus of attention was on specialisation, increased productivity and selling.

[16] Westwood reflects Hartmann (1981) and McDonough & Harrison (1978) in directing her study to both home and work. However, Westwood argues that although family, schooling and the media are all responsible in part for the production and reproduction of gender identities, it is the workplace that is central. The workplace operates in two ways. First, women who enter into waged employment 'become workers and therefore classed subjects'. Second, the work-place also 'enshrines the subordination of women' both through the capitalist work process and through the culture that is produced in opposition

to it by the women. Women at work 'receive' a concept of woman, elements of which they adopt and link to a 'feminine' destiny. Being at work is 'most crucially about becoming a woman' (Westwood, 1984, p. 6). This mirrors Cockburn's (1983) view of the relationship between work and self-identity of male print workers (see section 3.4). The collusive nature of this is also reflected in Westwood's analysis, below.

[17] Westwood uses Hartmann's (1981) definition of patriarchy:18

We can usefully define patriarchy as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women... The material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men's control over women's labour power. Men maintain this control by excluding women from access to some essential productive resources (in capitalist societies, for example, jobs that pay living wages) and by restricting women's sexuality. Monogamous heterosexual marriage is one relatively recent and efficient form that seems to allow men to control both these areas. (Hartmann, 1981, pp. 14–15 quoted in Westwood, 1984, p. 5)

[18] It is not altogether clear whether she sees capitalism and patriarchy coming together as 'capitalist patriarchy' (a term she uses but not quite in the same way as Eisenstein (1979)) or sees a dual system of oppression. It would appear that in endorsing Cockburn's (1983) view she tends to the dualist approach but she emphasises the interlocking nature of the two forms of oppression.

[19] Westwood undertakes detailed analysis of the impact of race as well as gender on the lives of the working-class women. She shows how Indian women (as those in her study described themselves) are confronted by different forms of domestic oppression and discrimination at work, as well as the burden of racist oppression. Space considerations preclude a review of this material. The example used below concentrates on sexism, the methodology for the analysis of racism is the same.19

[20] The 'minutes' was slang for the measured day work system in which pay is fixed against a specified level of performance. This requires some form of work measurement and a monitoring process. At StitchCo this involved specifying how many minutes it took to do an operation. Workers were graded and remunerated accordingly with each grade having specific production level which guaranteed the weekly wage which could be augmented by bonuses if targets were exceeded. Women were assessed monthly to see whether they should be upgraded or downgraded. The decision was based on output (taking into account management's responsibility to provide a constant flow of work), timekeeping and general discipline record. Grading was an important part of control as people doing the same job were rewarded differently on the basis of different production targets. 'Making time' occurred when daily targets (for top grades) measured by the 'minutes' actually exceeded the number of minutes in the working day. To fulfil targets, and exceed them in order to gain bonus payments, the worker had to make time for the company by working above, the 'scientifically' determined time for the job (which was in no way generous in the first place) and upon which the labour value and thus price of an article was calculated. Thus top rate targets were blatantly exploitative and the women were well aware of it.

[21] See section 1.4.1

[22] In this respect Westwood reflects Oakley's (1981) approach to researching women (see section 3.3).

[23] This was not unique to the department but seemed to be common to all departments at StitchCo and, according to people who had worked elsewhere, a ritual enacted in similar vein at other hosiery factories in 'Needletown'.

[24] Westwood notes that even its label, 'hen party' tells us a lot about how women are viewed when we compare it with the virile symbol of the stag used for the men's night out.

[25] Even the more conservative costumes for less sexually experienced brides clearly emphasised the sexuality of the women and their availability as sexual objects for their husbands. For example, the use of the contraceptive pill as an item of adornment on most costumes indicated the change of status from 'sexually unavailable girl' to 'sexually experienced woman'.

[26] A typical costume included a long black pointed witches' hat.

[27] Westwood cites Willis (1977) in a footnote.

[28] Westwood's analysis reflects Oakley's (1974a) analysis of the 'need to be a housewife' (see section 3.3).

[29] The authors admit that they do not develop the study of the infrastructural changes in great detail and to some extent undo their totalistic analysis by suggesting that they 'have a logic of their own' (Mumtaz & Shaheen, 1986, p. 3) which modifications in patriarchal norms have followed

[30] In other societies, the constraints on women have been shown by some researchers to be related to their social class position. In India the caste system is confused by the imperialist class system.

[31] Caste is defined primarily by social honour attained through personal lifestyle. There are four main caste distinctions and thousands of sub-castes which operate at a local level. Social mobility is not achieved by individuals in the caste system but by the rise of a complete sub-caste. This is a slow process. A major feature of the patriarchal caste system was control over women's sexuality, which is more rigid and extreme the higher the caste. So as a sub-caste rises in the hierarchy, the women are more tightly constrained. The men benefit at the expense of the women. Other academics have commented on this phenomenon (Hutton, 1963; Yalman, 1968; Das, 1976) but have not analysed its ideological and material basis.