

# EDUCATION AND THE STATE: THE USES OF MARXIST AND FEMINIST APPROACHES IN THE WRITING OF HISTORIES OF SCHOOLING<sup>1</sup>

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Over the last hundred years, the state has become increasingly involved in ever more complex systems of schooling. By the mid-1980s, public outlays on education represented 6.5% of the GNP and 13.2% of all public spending in Australia, 7.2% and 12.7% respectively in Canada, 5.2% and 11.3% in Britain, and 5.6% and 18.7% in Japan.<sup>2</sup> The nineteenth century, a crucial period in histories of mass education systems, is also seen as a period of fundamental social change by theorists of the state. There is, however, little agreement on how one can conceptualize the state, let alone its links with the education system. Yet it is impossible to avoid using such theories; and the theory one uses strongly influences what one seeks out as important historical evidence.

Since the late 1960s, "revisionist" historians of education have benefited from increasingly sophisticated marxist debates about the nature of the capitalist state. But just as perfection appeared to be within reach, a veritable revolution became visible in the social sciences. One major source of upheaval came from a number of "post-structuralist" writers, Foucault prominent among them, who mounted a frontal attack on contemporary social theory, alleging that marxists and their opponents shared a host of flawed fundamental methodological assumptions. More significant again was a widely-based feminist critique, which documented, with increasing clarity, the fact that most social theory gave little purchase on the life experience of women.

Observing the radical inadequacy of existing social theory, many feminists have argued that women have to leave behind "male-stream" concepts and construct a new social theory from the ground up. Here, I will adopt a different approach, and examine the usefulness of some methodological critiques of marxist theories to feminist debates about the relationship between patriarchy and the state. This is done not simply in order to clarify the issues and make it easier for historians to take account of both the capitalist and the patriarchal nature of the state. On a good day, comparisons such as this can suggest new strategies in contemporary political debates. Where does patriarchal power come from? Are there some systematic contradictions within patriarchy which women can exploit? Can state agencies be more or less patriarchal? How can we tell? Can feminists change the state from within? What difference is it going to make, and to whom?

This paper consists of four parts. The first part sketches out a schematic map of the links between education and the state in advanced capitalist countries. The second lists some major problems which afflict marxist theories of the state, and points to some ways in which these problems have been resolved. Part three outlines the ways in which feminist historians and theoreticians, in attempting to

remedy the absence of women from political theory, can fall into the same methodological holes. The last section formulates some principles around which a theory of a patriarchal and capitalist state could be built. Throughout, the emphasis is on the gender aspect of patriarchal relations. The age dimension, which is particularly significant for any discussion of schooling, will be dealt with elsewhere. While many of the issues raised in this paper are relevant to foucaultian and other discourse-theoretical discussions of the nature of power in modern society, I will not, except for a few brief comments, refer to these approaches here.

### **Education and the State**

In the past as today, the state has played a significant role in the social environment of schools. From the eighteenth century, in the Old World as in the New, it made a crucial contribution to the eventual triumph of capitalist social relations, and to rebuilding a patriarchal social order on a new base. Outside Europe, the state played a major part in the forcible creation of new capitalist societies. Structural economic and political changes which brought chaos into the lives of whole populations were accompanied by more intimate intrusions into people's lives. Enclosures, dispossession of Aboriginal lands, property-based male franchise and master and servant acts went hand in hand with legislative regulation of marriage, assisted immigration, and legislative edicts concerning who was adult, citizen, infant, criminal, or mad.

Throughout this turbulent period, the state was called upon—by the powerful, but often also by the oppressed—to deal with the social upheavals it helped to create. Mass education systems became one of the arenas where competing social groups attempted to allay their fears and realize their dreams and aspirations. The state became involved in this project in many different ways. On the most obvious level, it subsidized, took over, and built schools. But state involvement with schooling went much further. In many ways, the hotly contested building of education systems was at one and the same time a process of building the capitalist state and its citizens. The creation of new elected or nominated bodies to oversee schools, the formation of local councils which could assume responsibility for collecting and distributing education rates, the growth of educational bureaucracies, the taking over of family-run schools, new directives about who precisely would qualify as an elector, school visitor, adult, qualified teacher, parent, or pupil, and what their roles, rights and duties would be, all helped to elaborate the scope and form of state action. In addition, educational reform built state knowledge as well, and in a double sense. In systematic schooling, the state created a new fertile field for gathering statistical and other information about the population. At the same time, the appropriation of state-generated knowledge—the curriculum—became an important dimension of citizenship.<sup>3</sup>

## **Revising Marxist Theories of the State**

When, in the late 1960s, "revisionists" reopened debates about the use of theory in the writing of education history, the treatment of "the state" was one of their prime targets. Whatever their theoretical bent, they objected to the uncritical use, by many of their colleagues, of the everyday ideology of a pluralist, liberal-democratic state. The revisionists argued that underneath comforting pronouncements about a democratically accountable state arbitrating between a range of pressure groups, carrying forward the democratic spirit of the age, or moved by a surge of liberalism, lay a complex system of power with a strong bias against the working class.

Yet the problem was that in marxist theory, on which most of the revisionists drew, conceptualizations of the state were relatively underdeveloped and open to challenge. At present, after two decades of rigorous and fruitful developments, there is still little agreement among various marxist scholars about what precisely should be investigated by theories of the state, and how it should be examined. This is not the place to summarize the contributions of different authors and the debates these inspired.<sup>4</sup> Rather, I will present a schematic outline of "instrumentalist" and "structuralist" approaches to the state, and of their standard critiques. While these approaches rarely exist in a pure form in contemporary marxist writings, they did influence a generation of historians, and continue to have important resonances in feminist theoretical literature.

### **Instrumentalist Theories**

"Instrumentalist" theories focus on the personnel of state institutions. The state is capitalist because its key functionaries come from the capitalist class, and there are many interconnections between state institutions and major corporations. Even when they are not actually born into bourgeois families, top bureaucrats are trained and recruited carefully so that they identify with the interests of capital. In turn, because of their personal links with the ruling class, the men who head government departments make sure that the state understands and supports capitalist interests. These interests are then reflected in appropriate decisions (and non-decisions) of state agencies. Some authors, often identified with a "class-theoretical" approach, extend this analysis to point out that the powerful links which bind the state and capital are not merely individual. The capitalist class as a whole (or monopoly capital) exerts considerable leverage simply by virtue of the economic power it holds. In the background hovers the threat of an investment strike by capital should the state not carry out policies considered congenial to it.<sup>5</sup>

The instrumentalist approach is, more often than not, based on behaviourist psychology. It concentrates overwhelmingly on concrete, observable behaviour of individual actors in the making of decisions over which there is a visible

conflict of interest, seen as express policy preferences and revealed by political participation.

Without dismissing the undoubted significance of personal links between state functionaries and the dominant economic class, the explanatory power of instrumentalist theories is open to many criticisms. Capitalists do not always act capitalistically, and class origins are not necessarily a sure guide to political reliability: Fred Engels ran the family factory in Manchester, and Sir John Kerr who, as Australian Governor General, dismissed the Labor government which appointed him, was a boilermaker's son from Balmain (in the days when Balmain was a working-class suburb).<sup>6</sup> Establishing the "class belonging" of politicians, the military, technocrats, and various ideologues, as well as of the policies they dream up, has proved to be notoriously difficult. Even more fundamentally, it has been argued that the personal links between capitalists and the state are not the cause but the effect of the functioning of the system. In this view, state institutions are not neutral agencies which can be used, with equal efficacy, by whoever captures them. Power resides not in the people themselves but in the structures which they inhabit, and which systematically favour some interests and social groups over others. Indeed, some of the most significant effects of the capitalist state cannot be ascribed to the conscious actions or decisions (or non-decisions) of any one group or individual.

But there is a further fundamental problem (which seriously affects structuralist accounts as well). However we understand the selection of state bureaucrats, their ability to act in the interests of capital is far more problematic than it at first appears. The "ruling class" is not a monolithic bloc, and it is by no means certain that, on all but the most essential issues, its various fractions manage to reach agreement about exactly what their interests are, let alone organize to assert these interests and actually impose them on the state.<sup>7</sup> Nor is it certain that different groups of capitalists do indeed have common interests on many specific issues. In Australia, a classical example of this is the long-standing conflict between pastoral and manufacturing capital over free trade versus protectionism. In addition, the short-term interests of individual firms do not always coincide with the long-term interests of the capitalist class—nor, indeed, are the interests of capitalists, as upholders of male dominance, always in harmony with their interests as owners of capital and employers of labour. In this situation, the capitalist state would be a failure if its functionaries meekly executed every order given them by individual capitalists or organizations representing them. In order to serve capital, the state routinely needs to intervene not only against members of the subordinate class, but also against particular capitalists and individual members of the dominant class.

To take account of such arguments, some theoreticians in both the instrumentalist and the structuralist traditions posit the necessity of "relative autonomy" of the state in order that it can arbitrate between competing capitalists and fractions of capital in the long-term interests of the capitalist class as a whole. For some, capitalist competition and exploitation are inherently self-destructive; the state

(or some other external force) is necessary to impose the interests of capital in general and to ensure the survival of the system over the long term.

And indeed the state can, and often does, act in the interests of capital without the capitalists being well enough organized to work out what this interest is and what should be done about it. A classic example of this was Roosevelt's New Deal reforms in the United States in the 1930s, which were almost unanimously condemned by the business community, but which most now agree created the basis of successful economic expansion after the war. According to "structuralist" theories of the state, such interventions happen not merely because far-sighted and friendly bureaucrats organize it that way, but also because the routine workings of state (or other) institutions themselves bring up particular problems and a limited range of "reasonable" ways of dealing with them. The instrumentalist focus on behaviour, decisions, and politics systematically underestimates these crucial dimensions of state power.

### **Structuralist Theories**

Writings within this tradition concentrate both on the effects and the origins of state structures. Once in place, the argument goes, state institutions and the logic within which they operate are such that, regardless of individual bureaucrats, they act to reproduce capitalism and to exclude substantive alternatives. But how do these structures come to be as they are? According to an influential group of theorists, the form and functions of the state can be derived from the logic and requirements of the capitalist mode of production.<sup>8</sup> While some accounts see this process as essentially unproblematic, critics of structuralist approaches, as well as more sophisticated structuralist formulations themselves, identify a range of serious difficulties in the project of state intervention on behalf of capital.

At the most elementary level, many authors argue that it is simply impossible to speak of "economy" (or "capital") as separate from the state: "economic" events often have a major political impact, and the state makes many crucial economic interventions. More fundamentally, attempts to derive the form and function of the capitalist state from class relations or even from economic class relations alone, have been criticized for leaving out the decisive structuring power of other social relations, forces, and movements. But the problems do not stop here. Instrumentalist writings have been criticized for assuming that it is easy for state bureaucrats to work out—and to reconcile—the short and long-term interests of different fractions of capital. Structural forces acting on behalf of capital are not spared the same problems:

Since the conditions of existence of capital are neither unitary nor mutually consistent and since the course of capital accumulation is relatively open, it is imperative to specify which particular conditions contingently necessary for a given course of accumulation are being secured in what respects, over which time period, and to what extent.

The very complexity and contradictoriness of these conditions of existence and the range of potentially viable paths of accumulation invalidate all attempts to suggest that the state in capitalist societies is unequivocally and universally beneficial to capital.<sup>9</sup>

On the contrary, it can be argued convincingly that the "logic of capital" itself (whatever it is), which is supposed to be used as the starting point for derivations of state forms, imposes severe limits on state power.<sup>10</sup> The most obliging state is unable to remove the basic contradictions of capitalism; attempts to resolve one crisis often precipitate another.<sup>11</sup>

If capital cannot be conceptualized as a coherent and unified force, neither can the state. Rather, various authors suggest that the state is necessarily fragmented and fissured. It comprises a plurality of hybrid institutions and their class unity, if any, far from being pre-given, is a continuing problem and must be constituted politically: the very form of the state problematizes its functionality for capitalism. In this situation there is a need for political/executive and/or cross-cutting networks that can co-ordinate the activities of different parts of the state.<sup>12</sup>

In the end (as some historians have argued all along) the basic coherence of the policies of particular states and institutions and their usefulness to the interests of the capitalist class in specific historical conditions cannot be taken for granted. Rather, it is one of the crucial things to be explained. There is no *a priori* reason to assume that just because an institution exists it is "functional" to capital (or to patriarchy). It might be just as useful to think that institutions like prisons—and schools—fail their constituencies but limp along because no alternative can be found or because conflict over alternatives is too great to be mediated into compromise.<sup>13</sup> The end result of state actions will lie somewhere on a continuum between optimization of competing capitalist demands and minimization of class conflict, or a muddle of inconsistent policies; between a smooth reproduction of capitalist dominance and working-class subordination, or the mutual ruin of the contending classes.

One useful example of this kind of approach, particularly pertinent in an age of increasing awareness of ecological issues, is an article by Fred Bloch on political choice and the multiple logics of capital. Drawing on the work of Karl Polanyi, Bloch argues that, in spite of their different political orientations, Thatcherite conservatives and many marxists share a fallacious view of the "logic of capitalism" as capable of informing a coherent, sustainable social whole. According to Bloch, empirical evidence suggests on the contrary that the behaviours of economic actors do not, by themselves, aggregate into a whole that is either rational or sustainable: left to themselves, unregulated forces of capital might well wipe out the host population and its environment within a couple of generations. Rather, various forms of state intervention are indispensable in the creation of coherent and viable social structures of accumulation. In turn, this variable but necessary input of state regulation means that the "logic of capital"

cannot, by itself, determine anything; there are as many logics as there are alternative social structures of accumulation.<sup>14</sup>

The historical considerations relevant to understanding state structures in different places at particular points in time become even more pertinent when looking at the process of historical change. Functionalist accounts (marxist or otherwise) in particular have been notoriously weak on this point. Yet this precisely is the area of most interest to historians of nineteenth-century schooling. To them, accounts which suggest that state structures can be derived from the functions of a fully-fledged capitalist economy are of little use, since part of their brief has been to unravel the ways in which the state formed one of the *pre-conditions* for the dominance of capitalist relations, and the emergence of economic categories like “free labour” or “world markets,” in the first place.

An essential part of an account that can explain change is some notion of historical agency. Here again, the structuralist approach leaves much to be desired. In instrumentalist descriptions of the state, the bourgeoisie were accorded the status of a historical subject, but the working class, on the whole, missed out. In many structuralist theories, the agency of individual capitalists (or even of their class) disappears as well. It is the complex logic of capitalism, inscribed in various state institutions, which makes things happen; individuals are simply bearers of the structural relations in which they are situated; the social structure does not have a creative subject at its core.<sup>15</sup>

Both instrumentalist and structuralist accounts tend to suggest that the state gets its own way, whether as a repressive apparatus or an unrelenting instrument of hegemony (or, as some post-structuralists suggest, a creative force of rationalization, unfreedom, and surveillance). There is little sense (or even an outright denial) of ordinary people as subjects (albeit socially constructed and historically specific ones), of contestation, change, or revolutionary potential. Since it is assumed that the state in one way or another belongs to the ruling class, there are few criteria for judging better or worse courses of action, better or worse institutional forms.

### **Beyond Instrumentalist and Structuralist Theories of the State**

The ongoing critique of both instrumentalist and structuralist approaches to the state has made a significant impact on recent marxist work. Two themes in particular have received attention. The first is a focus on the state, as well as on the economy, as an arena of class struggle. The second is an emphasis on the need to deepen the democratic character of existing institutions. Both imply an understanding of the state as a site of struggle, contestation and resistance, and a view of state institutions as capable of improvement. Both have been part of a particular “class theoretical” approach to the state.

In the first place, these critics argue, before one can observe and analyze *struggle between* classes, there has occurred a long and by no means predictable struggle about the political *constitution* of these classes.<sup>16</sup> This observation is no less pertinent to analyses at the level of abstract relations of production. Histori-

cally, there were no pre-existing classes-in-themselves waiting to be turned into classes-for-themselves. In country after country, it was only after much and varied struggle with the local people that new capitalist employers found enough men, women, and children who depended on wages alone for their subsistence, and could conceivably be described as "abstract labourers." For similar reasons, any discussion of "class interests" needs to take account of the fact that the reference points for the calculation of class interests do not arise, ready-made, out of the ruins of feudalism, but have to be forged in a continuous historical process of struggle and negotiation.<sup>17</sup>

The state plays an important role in this process, but is conceptualized in a distinctive way. "Politics is not simply the organisation of class power through the state by dominant capitalist-class groups, and the use of that power to manipulate and repress subordinate groups."<sup>18</sup> Rather, it has been the site of continuous struggle between different powerful interests over the way decisions are made and institutions are shaped to deal with what are seen as social problems. The state provides and shapes much of the political space for class struggle, not least through the "structural selectivity" of its various parts. But in the process, the state itself is made and remade. This approach thus emphasizes not just the structural conditioning of social life, but also the ongoing historical transformation of structures by conflict, social movements, and class struggle.<sup>19</sup>

Equally importantly, it implies that there *are* gains to be made, political spaces to be conquered within an otherwise hostile environment. In spite of its many severe biases, then, the state does not belong to the bourgeoisie; the germs of socialism can be present in the democratic structures of the old order. It follows that, while it is important to set up alternative bases of power outside the state, *all* democratic concessions, whether inside the state institutions or outside of them, should be strenuously defended.

What might all this theorizing involve in practice? To give one example, it is possible to argue, as Gidney and Lawr do in their innovative work on nineteenth-century Canada, that people in various localities begged the central administration to issue detailed bureaucratic guidelines about the precise operations of schools.<sup>20</sup> But it is also possible to argue that, within a different dimension of power, an administrative framework or discourse was created where radically different options (which might have been more congenial to the locals) were impossible or impractical.<sup>21</sup> What is more, at a further remove, other decisions and non-decisions were made (such as those which set the particular course of economic development of a region) which presented both the administrative framework makers and the local school trustees with some pressing common problems not of their own making.<sup>22</sup>

### **Whatever Happened to Women?**

We have seen that for marxist theoreticians, there has been a lively debate among authors who emphasize one or more aspects of a problematic well summarized in Marx's famous dictum:



Men make their own history; but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.<sup>23</sup>

However meritorious such debate, many have taken it literally—they looked at how men make their own history, and helped perpetuate a remarkable blindness to the making of history of—and by—women.

In reading overviews of marxist theories of the state, one is struck by a conspicuous—albeit unremarked upon and unexplained—absence of women. The world of the instrumentalist theorist is indeed overwhelmingly populated by men. Women do look out of place in the old monied ruling class (men's) clubs of London, New York, or Melbourne, the Cabinet meeting, the High Court, and the Board of Directors. In Australia recently, Melbourne's first woman lord mayor, Lecki Ord, recalled that when she was first elected to her office she asked the waiter at a reception for a drink. Firmly but politely, he refused: "Sorry, they are just for the official party."<sup>24</sup>

In the mid-1980s, when women in western countries were expected to celebrate the achievement of formal equality with men, the Congress of the United States contained 4% women, as did the Parliament of Japan. In Australia, 9% of the members of Federal and State parliaments were women. Australia, Japan, and Italy had no female generals, and the United States 0.6%. In Britain, three out of one hundred judges were female, compared to five in Australia and seven in the United States. In Australia, men held eighty-six out of one hundred jobs as administrators, executives, and managers<sup>25</sup>; in 1984, eighty-three out of one hundred Australian economists were male. Men, it turns out, own most of the world's wealth. Feminists freely acknowledge that women are rarely seen in the corridors of power<sup>26</sup>—indeed they have, more often than not, been the first to draw attention to this fact. But they do not therefore conclude that "women's issues" have no place in theories of the state. Rather, feminists insist on finding out why glaring gender inequalities exist, what their significance is, and how they can be removed.

For their part, most structuralists have quietly given up calling the family an ideological state apparatus, whose function, according to Althusser, was the smooth reproduction of capitalist relations of production.<sup>27</sup> Yet they rarely mention the fact that state legislation in the nineteenth century not only helped to ensure the triumph of capitalism and the continued dominance of the bourgeoisie, but it also denied women the vote, restricted their property rights and employment opportunities, institutionalized unequal pay, helped perpetuate women's subordinate position within the family, and often brutally suppressed women's attempts to change their lot. Even those enlightened theoreticians who talk about the state as an object and arena of class struggle have only recently begun to include "social movements" as participants in such struggles. Most still tend to assume that all good things, like extensions of the franchise and of

democracy in general, come from the working class and its allies, and ignore issues such as strong labour movement opposition to many aspects of women's rights.

### **Is There a Patriarchal State?<sup>28</sup>**

Evidence such as this, alongside the silence of most existing theory on the question of gender, has led feminists to argue that the state is not only capitalist but patriarchal, and that this fact has far-reaching political and methodological significance. In recent years, many excellent books and articles on this topic have been published.<sup>29</sup> I will not attempt here an overview of this literature, but rather explore possible parallels between varieties of marxist theorizing and what could be seen as instrumentalist, structuralist, and "gender conflict" approaches to the patriarchal state. It is true that the increasing sophistication of feminist theory is more often than not due to debates and political campaigns quite independent of marxist controversies. Nevertheless, it is likely that even feminist writers hostile to marxist theory have been indirectly influenced by theoretical models developed and employed within this tradition, and can profitably be warned against falling into some of the same methodological traps. Equally importantly, the schematic comparison of marxist and feminist approaches to the state can be a fruitful source of ideas for further research.

### **Instrumentalist Arguments and Unresolved Questions**

The personnel of the state is not only recruited predominantly from the bourgeoisie and those sympathetic to it; its upper echelons are overwhelmingly staffed by men. In all western countries, there are few women ministers, presidents, directors of education, inspectors, treasurers, members of royal commissions, professors, and school principals. Until the turn of the century, most women were not even rank-and-file voters. During the period when the state assumed a monopoly of legitimate violence, the armed forces and the police were—and are—overwhelmingly staffed by men. In curriculum materials (a form of state-supplied and examined knowledge), women have been either absent altogether, exhorted to cherish their subordinate status, or represented in positions of even less power than they in fact hold.

What are the implications of this? On an individual level, some authors argue that women do not have powerful female role models to guide them in their own aspirations. As a result, they tend to be satisfied with the same dependent, inferior roles that their mothers filled before them. Even with higher aspirations, women stumble as they try to chart an unfamiliar path into new regions of the public sphere. More generally, other writers claim, the prevalence of men in positions of power means that male (or patriarchal) economic and other interests are emphasized, elaborated, and promoted, while those of women are neglected

or marginalized. While both kinds of arguments have proved useful in feminist struggles, their explanatory power is severely limited.

Explanations in terms of sex-role stereotypes tend to concentrate on individuals and their behaviour, and imply that there is only one role model for women and one for men. Critics point out that this tends to ignore class, racial, and ethnic differences, as well as the power relationship between groups of men and women. In the final analysis, women are blamed for their own oppression—they help to enforce sex-role stereotypes because of erroneous ideas in their own heads. And while things happen to sex-roles—they are modernized as a result of industrialization, for example—there is no space for conceptualizing the conflict-ridden dynamics of gender relations as an engine of social change. At the same time, non-behavioural phenomena, such as meaning and the subconscious, are largely ignored. This has led, among other things, to simplistic assumptions about the effectivity of overt messages of school readers and other curriculum materials.<sup>30</sup>

But even a case for the patriarchal nature of the state on the grounds of the dominance of men in positions of power needs to be far more complex than it at first appears. Why could not women run oppressive patriarchal institutions, from reformatories and schools for servants to corporations and national governments, themselves? Why should Margaret Thatchers make a difference? And how can we realistically assess the obstacles facing “femocrats” embarking on a programme of institutional change? Connected to this, does the fact that a sprinkling of women have recently been assuming positions of power within the state constitute a proof that some state institutions have ceased to be patriarchal or are less patriarchal now than they used to be? Or are these changes part of a transformation of one kind of patriarchy to another? What additional evidence would we need to make a case one way or the other?

In any case, is the overwhelming dominance of men in positions of power the cause or the consequence of the patriarchal nature of the state? Are state institutions patriarchal because they are staffed by men, or are they staffed by men because they are patriarchal? And finally, how exactly do the male bureaucrats work out what the “interests of patriarchy” (or of men in general) are? Indeed, are the interests of men and of patriarchy always the same? And do all men have the same patriarchal interest? The most satisfactory answers to questions such as these have been supplied by writers within what could be called a “gender conflict” approach, which will be discussed in the last section of this paper.

### **Structuralist Arguments and Unresolved Questions**

Structuralists emphasize that it is necessary to make a distinction between social structures and the people that make them work; and that structural effects are not only more powerful than the inclinations of individuals, but often not directly attributable to the decisions of any one person or group of people. There

are several ways in which structuralist arguments about a patriarchal state could be formulated. In the first place, focusing on effects, we could try to demonstrate that state structures oppress women directly and/or that the state is patriarchal because it supports non-state institutions which perpetuate the oppression of women. Secondly, we could examine the gendering of particular occupations, institutions, and positions of power. Last, we could look for structural causes of the patriarchal nature of the state, perhaps in the guise of an impersonal logic of patriarchy which would provide a constraining framework within which state institutions operate and policies are formulated. Here in particular, as I will argue later, feminists have posed a profound challenge to the marxist emphasis on class and the "public sphere."

Until recently, legislation and bureaucratic regulations in probably all western countries bristled with provisions which openly and blatantly discriminated against women. Thus in Australia in the first decades of this century, women were excluded from tests for admission to the Third Division of the Commonwealth and Second Division of the state public service. It was from these divisions that officers were recruited to the upper echelons of the bureaucracy. From 1915 to 1949 women were simply not allowed to enter the Commonwealth Third Division. Until 1966 the Commonwealth Public Service prohibited married women from any permanent employment.<sup>31</sup> Until the late 1960s, women, but not men, were compelled to resign from Australian education departments on marriage (although they could continue working for years on a "temporary" basis); women were barred from the positions of principal in all but the smallest mixed schools; and women received less pay for the same work as men.

In divorce proceedings the legal system not only upheld the "double standard" of sexual morality, but did not recognize women's unpaid contribution to the household unless it could be described as men's work; the criminal system did not penalize many forms of violence against women; a whole plethora of laws, regulations, and institutional forms aimed at the policing and reproduction of sanctioned forms of (hetero)sexuality.<sup>32</sup> Under the 1915 Victorian Crimes Act, for example, men committed a criminal offence if they had, or attempted to have, intercourse with a female under the age of seventeen years. For the purposes of the Act, however, "the expression 'female' does not include a female who with her consent has previously had intercourse with a male person."<sup>33</sup> And if the laws openly discriminated against women, other laws made sure that, for many years, only men were allowed to interpret them. In New South Wales, for example, women were not permitted to enter legal practice until 1921. Insofar as such legislation has been gradually replaced by more equitable provisions, the sexism of the system has been blunted. Nevertheless, even today, when explicit legislative and administrative discrimination against women is becoming less common, the administrative Social Security Act (1947) continues to be exempt from the provisions of the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act (1984).<sup>34</sup> In plain language, while it is illegal for Australian employers to snoop around trying

to find out who sleeps with whom in the homes of their employees, the Department of Social Security can do so with regard to many pension recipients.

But the structuralist case does not stop here. In many instances, discrimination against women also operates indirectly, most frequently by assuming that "normal" citizens, employees, and politicians are male, and that children and male breadwinners have a resident, unpaid housewife taking care of their needs.<sup>35</sup> Even the language we speak (and learn to use "properly" at school) is rarely neutral. In English, for example, women can never be quite sure whether they are in fact as well as in theory included in statements such as "the progress of man," "any man may apply," or "the student can be confident that he will be treated fairly." Similarly, women have often found it difficult to clearly and effectively formulate their demands given the absence of a publicly shared discourse expressing their particular interests.

Most feminist work exploring these themes anticipates common criticisms of structuralist approaches and incorporates a strong historical emphasis. In other words, an examination of particular social structures is almost always accompanied by a curiosity about their historical genesis. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, for example, argue that the elaboration of the public sphere in nineteenth-century England was at the same time the creation of a particular form of masculinity. Men created public institutions as masculine spaces; the very presence of women could detract from the solemnity of office, the authority of the law.<sup>36</sup> Even in the absence of explicit regulations it became "natural" for men and not women to fill particular positions: sensible, well-mannered women did not apply; the odd female eccentric who did was rejected as self-evidently unsuitable.<sup>37</sup>

The way in which different localities are gendered is clearly revealed in times of crisis and transition. Thus in *Brothers*, a classic study of British printing unions, Cynthia Cockburn argues that there is no technical reason why women should not become printers, particularly since many already possess keyboard skills similar to those the job now requires. For the male printers, however, the employment of women is profoundly threatening, since their identity as males and as skilled craftsmen is at least partly built around the absence of women from the trade.<sup>38</sup> Similar issues come into the open whenever single-sex schools contemplate "going coed." Would the presence of girls in the grounds of an elite boys' school destroy the ethos of the college? Or could things remain much as they were provided the number of girls did not exceed one-third of all students? Conversely, apparently spontaneous attacks by male passers-by on women-only marches, as well as the continued violence directed at gay men and women, indicates how some single-sex groupings are perceived as threatening to the present gender order, while others are regarded as profoundly supportive.

The patriarchal role of the state can also be seen outside of the direct effects of its own actions. In one of her pieces, for example, Mary McIntosh argues that women are much less subject to direct intervention by the state than are men.<sup>39</sup> This, however, does not necessarily mean that women are less affected by the

state. In order to find out, we need to ask not simply "how does the state oppress women?" but also "what part does the state play in establishing and sustaining systems in which women are oppressed and subordinated to men?" She suggests that the two key mechanisms through which the state perpetuates patriarchy are the family household and wage labour. In both cases state policies are premised on the model of a dependent housewife who, even when she enters the paid work-force, does not have to rely on her wages alone to reproduce her labour-power.

There are some examples of historical and theoretical work on the links between schooling and patriarchy which use a similar approach. Schools are patriarchal institutions not merely because they are overwhelmingly run by men, use sexist teaching materials, and treat girls in a discriminatory way, but also because schools tend to structure the work patterns of the pupils' mothers. Anna Davin and John Hurt are among scholars who have documented the profound and disruptive effect of compulsory schooling on the ability of poor women in late nineteenth-century England to cope with housework and childcare.<sup>40</sup> In a more exotic form, Alison Griffith and Dorothy Smith have outlined a theory of mothering as a discourse partly constructed by the institutional order of the school.<sup>41</sup> In turn, students are assessed, at least in part, on the "quality" of mothering they receive. The British sociologist, Basil Bernstein, is just one author who has gained fame through his attempts to link school success, via patterns of speech, with a "proper" family environment.

Examples given so far refer to the structural effects of state institutions and policies. Is it possible to speak of structural determinants as well? Is there, in feminist theory, some equivalent of the pervasive logic of capital accumulation which is a property of the uncoordinated interaction of many capitals, and which enters strongly into any political and bureaucratic calculations the state can make? In fact, different strands of feminist theory, often implicitly, argue for just such a case, but in markedly different ways. Men's appropriation of women's unpaid labour, sexuality, "emotional economy," psychology, the unconscious, or the dynamics of mothering are just some of the ways this has been done.<sup>42</sup>

Only a minority of these arguments have to do with the public sphere on which the gaze of theorists of the state has been traditionally riveted. Nancy Chodorow, for example, has argued that "mothering" is not simply at the receiving end of other structural influences in our society. Rather, it is a social structure in its own right, one which generates its own structural influences and affects other regions of society. According to Chodorow, a crucial differentiating experience in male and female development arises out of the fact that women, universally, are largely responsible for early child care and for (at least) later female socialization. The experience of mothering, in turn, is different for males and for females and accounts for some basic gender-based differences in personality. What is more, "mothering" is driven by forces largely invisible to behaviourist psychology. This is partly because a lot of the crucial character

formation happens before babies acquire language, but above all because most of its key dynamics are hidden from conscious thought.<sup>43</sup>

### Beyond Instrumentalist and Structuralist Theories

Feminists have often asked: What function does the state perform in reproducing patriarchy? How is this function carried out? Implicit in such an approach is the assumption that women are objects or victims. A whole host of useful questions is ruled out of order, such as: How efficient is the state at being patriarchal? How do different parts of the state support but also undermine each other? Why do women accept their role? What do they get out of it? How do various social mechanisms bind women while also changing and providing space for greater autonomy as well as enforcing new kinds of dependence? How are messages sent out about femininity decoded by women?<sup>44</sup> There are many reasons why we should take such “disorderly” questions seriously.

In the first place, the bureaucrats might simply be unable to design policies which, when implemented, actually assist their patriarchal projects. Thus politicians might make speeches strongly supporting the maintenance of the family household and even formulate policies along these lines, but the actual effect of the policies might be the opposite of their avowed intention: just because the legislators want something to happen, and say so, does not mean that they actually manage to work out policies and put in place structures which accomplish what they want done. This might be because of sheer incompetence, because bureaucrats sabotage their plans, the task is too difficult, or because there are no clear answers to working out precisely what is “in the interests of patriarchy,” or even what would reproduce healthy nuclear families.

At the same time the answers, definitions, and solutions of one agency or ministry can, and frequently do, conflict with those of another. Indeed, even the definitions of “woman,” “mother,” “child,” “adult,” or “citizen” are not uniform across different agencies and pieces of legislation. This means that, as in the case of arguments regarding the “capitalist state,” any coherence and functionality of the state with regard to a particular form of patriarchy needs to be proved in specific historical conditions, rather than assumed *a priori*—and particularly after feminists have been at work rebuilding little corners of the bureaucracy.

Because of the peculiarities of their trade, historians and anthropologists are often the first to call attention to such issues. Penny Roberts, for example, argues that “some recent studies [on Africa] have particularly drawn attention to the role of lineage elders or of the state (traditional or modern) in affecting to ensure, through law, the reproduction of gender relations....None seem to demonstrate that the state has been unequivocally successful in sustaining the patriarchal basis of marriage.”<sup>45</sup> Another anthropologist, Maila Stivens, refers to the contention of some British feminists that the state helps reproduce women’s subordination within the family. In Malaysia, she argues, this is not the case; the Malaysian state cannot be simply characterized as patriarchal, intent on the subordination

of women to the family. "While family has often been an explicit object of policies, the effects of such policies have often been piecemeal and highly contradictory. Moreover, throughout this process, family forms are highly contested."<sup>46</sup> I would argue that a methodology which revealed inconsistencies and contradictions in the "patriarchal" orientations of the state in Asia and Africa would do the same for countries in the West. And indeed, there exists a wealth of historical and other evidence to support such a case.

Iris Minor, in her article on working-class women and matrimonial law reform in Britain at the turn of the century, presents a good example of such an approach. According to her, since working-class women had little opportunity to articulate their ideals and politicize their experiences, the social reforms achieved on their behalf were based upon ideological perceptions of their difficulties developed by men and women in other social classes, and did not take adequate account of the lack of economic and other resources available to women in the poorest households. Consequently, the reforms were often irrelevant, had unforeseen consequences, and sometimes constituted a cultural assault upon those they were designed to "help"—those least willing or able to adopt different ways. In many cases, "the impact of social policy, which had been intended to supplement the functions of the family, introduced conflicting demands on all members of the family group and sometimes seemed to threaten the very basis upon which mothers especially had traditionally operated within the household."<sup>47</sup>

Added to problems arising out of the difficulties of formulating "patriarchal" state policies is the fact that there exist many conflicts between different groups of "patriarchs" and of women; policies favourable to one group of men or women might well disadvantage another. Moreover, the interest of men as capitalists might come into conflict with the interests of the same men as defenders of patriarchy. In other words, patriarchy is not simply functional to capitalism, and "capitalist" and "patriarchal" interests are not always the same. Neither does the state treat all women equally. It might well be responsible for strengthening the marriage-family institution for most groups of white women. However, in many western countries, it is the state which obstructs the family reunion of guest workers and immigrants.<sup>48</sup> In Australia, the state gained notoriety through breaking up Aboriginal families by fostering out of their children, and through regulations which did not allow "half-caste natives" to live on Aboriginal reserves. And in South Africa, the state forcibly separates the members of black families through its homelands and employment policies.

Fractions of capital with frequently competing interests and policies form an integral part of sophisticated marxist theories of the state. Recent feminist work suggests that a similar concept (particularly if someone could dream up a more elegant word) might apply to gender relations as well. Such an approach would lead us to identify, in different historical conditions, different fractions both of capital and of patriarchy whose interests would be just as likely to differ as to coincide. Some possible divisions could be discerned between families where



the male breadwinner model is and is not possible; families where wives are in the paid work-force and those where women labour exclusively as housewives; women and households who are and those who are not responsible for dependent children; and women who are and those who are not able to benefit from equal opportunity initiatives formulated around "social mobility" or liberal feminist demands. In addition, significant divisions exist between heterosexual and homosexual women and men, and between women and men of different races, classes, and ethnic groups.

Identifying possible gender-based "fractions," however, would entail more than "getting the theory right." As most activists realize only too well, mobilizing "women," "mothers," or "lesbians" is a complex and highly contested political process, one which cannot be reduced to finding the right verbal formula for putting in motion people with the appropriate set of biological or social attributes. Rather, the contemporary women's movement—its debates, campaigns, and political priorities—plays a crucial role in the historical process of constituting women (or Aboriginal women or black women) as a political category. The extent of any conflict of interest between different groups of women (and of men) will be modified and re-made within the same process, as will various ways of calculating what the interests of different groups of women "really" are.

Let us look at one example of such divisions and alliances. Many official arguments for equal opportunity revolve around the wastage of human capital which occurs when employers do not draw on the pool of available talent among women. In Australia today, there are firms which enthusiastically endorse equal opportunity policies, and spend considerable sums of money advertising these to their peers. In their view, the prejudices of men interfere with the maximization of profit, better utilization of human resources, and more efficient management. Indeed, the carefully selected women do perform better than many men.

For capital-intensive and high technology industries, and those employing high proportions of expensive skilled labour, such arguments are undoubtedly true. The costs and benefits, however, are likely to be quite different in labour-intensive industries traditionally employing female labour. In the Australian textile industry, for example, equal pay has marginally improved the lot of women workers, but can hardly be said to have benefited the employers. It has eaten into profits at a time when competition is tight, helped send some firms out of business, and increased the incentive to employ sweated outworkers. Even with equal pay, most employers in the textile industry continue to exploit to the full patriarchally based structures of authority at the workplace.

In spite of the differences between the two groups of employers, neither group would want directly to advocate that women leave the work-force and return to the home. Yet indirectly, such precisely is the impact of their other demands. Both sectors of the economy try to minimize their tax burden and maximize the direct and indirect benefits they receive from the state. One way in which conservative governments have tried to deal with such fiscal pressures is to cut welfare spending and increase reliance on women's unpaid servicing

labour within the household. In addition, forcing women out of the work-force is seen as a possible way of reducing expenditure on unemployment benefits. As one American policy analyst put it,

if government is to withdraw its support from many of the array of programs that have been developed to assist individuals, the question looms as to who will take the responsibility for the persons previously served by such programs. The reasonable answer, of course, is the family. *If the family is to take over services previously provided by the government then strong, well-functioning family units are needed.*<sup>49</sup>

But how does one encourage healthy families? Now, as in the past, there has been tension between policies and measures which reward “proper” nuclear families, and those which attempt to maintain functioning households at the least cost to the public and with less stringent attention to their moral standing. Frequently, some agencies adopt a more moralizing approach, while others opt for a more needs-based one. Cass et al., in examining Australian public expenditure for the period 1975 to 1980, for example, show how family allowances and dependent spouse rebates, both designed to support families, have different constituencies and effects. The first is a means-tested payment to parents, whatever their marital and workplace status, designed to keep children above poverty level. The dependent spouse rebate, in contrast, was allocated to legally married taxpayers whether or not they had children—in fact, about a third did not. The rebate did not apply to single-parent families, or to those whose income was below the tax threshold. It did, however, provide an incentive for married women to leave the paid work-force.<sup>50</sup>

### **Political Conflict about New Forms of Gender and Age Relations**

In the previous section, I argued that the smooth reproduction of patriarchal structures is an ideal that no actual state is likely to achieve. As in the case of class, even successful policy initiatives may contain germs of their own negation; they may amplify existing contradictions or strengthen oppositional forces. Such issues assume a new significance when they are considered in the historical context of particular societies and social movements. Over the last two hundred years, the state has been the object not only of class but of much gender-based struggle. Many projects of “social control” aimed at women and the family have been fuelled in part by feminist demands and political campaigns, and were in fact also directed against the patriarchal prerogatives of (some) men. Maintenance payments and legislative intervention into family violence—itsself often the result of private contestation of gender relations—are just some examples of this. Is it possible to take this thesis one step further, and argue that the state has played a significant, although not always consistent, role in the complex process of transition from one form of patriarchy to another?

If we see patriarchy as a historically specific form of gender relations in which women are subordinate to men, it is possible to argue that, over the period covered by most histories of education in the west—the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries—there have existed at least three distinct forms of patriarchy. The first was a feudal form of patriarchy—“patriarchalism”—characterized by the personal rule of the father over a household of women, servants, and children of both sexes (and extended into patriarchal relations between social classes). The second, the “patriarchal capitalist” form of patriarchy, was characterized by legislatively sanctioned civil inequality between men and women alongside gradual equalization of men’s formal (bourgeois) rights. Behind men’s formal equality under the law lay unequal exchange in the sphere of wage labour; for women, in addition, there was the unequal exchange between a wage-earning husband who considered his wage to belong to him personally, and not equally to his wife (and children) who engaged in unpaid domestic labour to maintain the household. In the last, “liberal capitalist” form of patriarchy, men and women gradually achieve equal status under the law. In the economic sphere, both men and women continue to be subject to the unequal exchange inherent in wage labour; in the domestic sphere, women continue to perform the bulk of unpaid domestic labour.<sup>51</sup>

The transition from one form of patriarchy to another was far from peaceful or predictable; the final result was the outcome of complex struggles, alliances, hopes, and anguish both in the public and the private spheres. One such crisis, associated with the transition from “feudal patriarchy” to a “patriarchal capitalist” form of patriarchy in Britain, is described by Barbara Taylor in her book, *Eve and the New Jerusalem*.<sup>52</sup> The author has argued convincingly that competing strategies designed to deal with the demise of “patriarchalism” formed an explosive core of early nineteenth-century labour struggles. The divisions and alliances between women, men, employers, and state institutions that this process engendered were far from simple or stable. Utopian Socialists and other minority radical groups struggled for some decades to resolve the crisis by constructing a new, egalitarian gender order in place of the one which was so obviously disintegrating. Owenites in England, and the followers of Saint-Simon, *Enfantin*, and Fourier on the continent, established model communities and attempted, unsuccessfully, to win the whole labour movement to a feminist solution: the unionization of women workers, the introduction of equal pay, the socialization of housework, and universal franchise.

Most of the craft unions, on the other hand, advocated the exclusion of women and children from the paid work-force and the payment of a “living wage” to male breadwinners. (In the process, they excluded the remaining female members from their own ranks.) Only fifty years previously, most working men would have adamantly defended their wives’ right and duty to contribute to the family’s monetary income. Now, the majority of poor families continued to rely on child and female labour—but increasingly saw this as bringing shame to the male head of the family. Having lost the battle for equal rights, most working

women joined with their menfolk and supported the "ideology of domesticity" and a male breadwinner wage as the best in a narrow range of unhappy options. As many pointed out, it was a risky strategy: great numbers of women did not have husbands, lovers, or fathers who were willing or able to support them and their children; the most respectable families were at the mercy of epidemics, industrial accidents, and trade fluctuations.

The employers themselves were divided as well. Many large manufacturers and their conservative allies tended to support female labour as a part of their anti-union stance. Some small masters, presumably, were opposed to the employment of female labour because they wanted to avoid the competition of cheaply-made goods and to give their employees and themselves decent wages. Yet others, the Owenite minority, advocated equal pay for men and women.

The state entered into this process in many complex ways. In supporting the economic interests of one group of men it helped undermine the patriarchal prerogatives of another and was responsible, albeit in an indirect way, for some aspects of the crisis of family life observed in the early nineteenth century. In turn, the state became the object of demands by a variety of social groups for amelioration of the crisis it helped to precipitate. State institutions became one arena where the new order was forged. In other words, the nineteenth-century British state institutions can be seen as actively (if often indirectly) helping to undermine one form of patriarchy and fumbling around in the search for a way of the social upheaval which accompanied this change. In the process, the institutions themselves assumed new—gendered—forms.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that, consciously or not, historians employ a range of conceptualizations of the state in their work. For this reason alone, it is important to clarify the concepts which underpin debates about the historiography of compulsory schooling. Within the marxist theoretical stream, there is a tradition of debates about the nature of the capitalist state. Feminist theoreticians have shown that these theories need fundamental revising because of their neglect of women and of gender issues. Yet there is not, so far, a coherent body of theory on the patriarchal state. Indeed, the same stages of debate which marxist theory has traversed can be discerned, although less clearly, in feminist writings about the state. Instrumentalist, structuralist, and class/gender conflict approaches have all proved helpful in thinking about the histories of schooling. Yet a number of problems remain to be clarified. Among these is the precise identification of different forms of patriarchy, examination of the composition, interests, and actions of different gender-based "fractions" of various populations, and a thorough analysis of the gendering of the public and private spheres.

In this process historians will, of necessity, play a part. There is now widespread agreement about the impossibility of constructing a general theory of the state, whether patriarchal or capitalist, and the corresponding need for

historical specificity. If historians are informed about significant theoretical issues, they can not only employ up-to-date theory in their own writing, but resolve some of the theoretical puzzles which only empirical research can address. Moreover, the histories of schooling might contain some essential pieces of the complex jigsaw linking class and gender relations.

We should seek to understand how schools enter into the process of creating, transforming, and reproducing gendered institutions, social structures, populations, subjectivities, and relations of production. For example, the successful enforcement of compulsory schooling legislation seems to be linked closely to the generalization of a particular kind of family economy, one built around the male breadwinner wage. Both this family form and compulsory schooling in turn seem to be linked to the great demographic transition at the turn of the century, which reduced the number of children per family from more than six to fewer than three. Such complex interaction between the labour movement, family economies, gender, class and age relations, demography, and compulsory schooling is a crucial aspect of the history of schooling. In describing it, historians of education are likely to find themselves in the thick of theoretical debates.

## NOTES

1. This paper is part of a larger project which I am conducting with Dr Ian Davey of Adelaide University. His view of some of these issues is outlined in "Capitalism, patriarchy and the origins of mass schooling," *History of Education Review* 16, 2 (1987): 1-12. P. Miller, "Historiography of compulsory schooling: what is the problem?" *History of Education* 18, 2 (1989): 123-44 summarizes some of our basic concerns.
2. *Unesco Statistical Yearbook 1987*, Table 4.1
3. For an elaboration of these themes, see in particular B. Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871* (London, Ont.: Falmer Press/Althouse Press, 1988).
4. Particularly useful overviews of marxist theories of the state are M. Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); B. Jessop, *The Capitalist State* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1982); and B. Frankel, *Beyond the State? Dominant Theories and Socialist Strategies* (London: MacMillan, 1983). In the following section, I have drawn extensively on all three.
5. In the *Communist Manifesto*, the state was seen as the executive of the ruling class, carrying out, to the best of its ability, the needs and desires of the bourgeoisie. Marx himself used far more complex models in his own historical writings.
6. And some of my best friends went to the Methodist Ladies' College and other elite private schools.
7. "Fraction" is a technical term used to designate different forms of capital—such as banking, manufacturing, pastoral, or mining—which can and often do have conflicting interests and demands with regard to issues such as tariffs, trade or fiscal policies, or labour relations.
8. Writers in this tradition, however, differ in their assessment of what exactly it is that needs to be explained (state as the "ideal collective capitalist," "statehood," the bourgeois democratic republic) and what should be the starting point(s) of the derivation (the

- tendency of the rate of profit to fall, antagonistic class relations in general, the circulation of commodities); see Jessop, *The Capitalist State*, 83.
9. *Ibid.*, 226.
  10. All of this makes it very difficult to speak, without qualification, about "the interests of capital," and underlines the need to specify what aspects of capital, over what time frame, and to what purpose.
  11. Prominent among authors who emphasize this aspect of the state are Claus Offe and James O'Connor.
  12. Jessop, *The Capitalist State*, 217, 222, 232. A similar point can be made about the "relative autonomy" of the state. This might well be useful to the project of reproducing capital in the long run, but it too needs to be explained rather than assumed. There might well be situations where such relative autonomy, while desirable, cannot be achieved in practice. On the other hand, the same "relative autonomy" might make the project of long-term reproduction of capitalism less predictable and more difficult to control. *Ibid.*, 227.
  13. M. Ignatieff, "State, civil society and total institutions: a critique of recent social histories of punishment," in *Social Control and the State*, ed. Sol Cohen and A. Scull (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 96. Even the much maligned *Schooling in Capitalist America* by S. Bowles and H. Gintis posited the necessity of periodic crises to shake up and overhaul ossified educational bureaucracies.
  14. F. Bloch, "Political choice and the multiple logics of capital," *Theory and Society* 15 (1986): 175-92.
  15. There is some continuity here between those marxists who speak of people as bearers of structural relations or being "inserted into practices" and anti-marxist foucaultian emphasis on constituting individuality through people being "positioned within discourses."
  16. A classic study in this tradition is E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968). A model of a study which pays careful attention to both the class and gender aspects of class formation is the excellent L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: The Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1858* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).
  17. Jessop, *The Capitalist State*, 257.
  18. Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory*, 7.
  19. *Ibid.*, 193.
  20. R.D. Gidney and D.A. Lawr, "Bureaucracy vs. community? The origins of bureaucratic procedure in the Upper Canadian school system," *Journal of Social History* 13 (1980): 438-57. See also "Who ran the schools? Local influence on education policy in nineteenth-century Ontario," *Ontario History* 72, 3 (1980): 131-42.
  21. This is the key theme of Curtis, *Building the Educational State*.
  22. One useful attempt to map out such a multi-dimensional approach is S. Lukes, *Power* (London: MacMillan, 1977).
  23. K. Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, ch. 1.
  24. *The Age*, Melbourne, 3 August 1988, 20.
  25. R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 10, 15.
  26. Except with mops after dark.
  27. L. Althusser, "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses," in L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New Left Books, 1971), 123-73.
  28. Before discussing whether there is in fact such a thing as a patriarchal state, the sensible thing would be to try to define what patriarchy actually is. To do so is to enter a conceptual

minefield. Three approaches to the problem of defining patriarchy are commonly adopted. Patriarchy can be seen as a historically specific (and now obsolete) form of gender relations associated with feudalism. As a consequence, other male-dominated gender systems have to be given different specific names; there is also a need for a collective term designating male-dominated gender orders. Secondly, patriarchy can be used in this last way as a collective designation of male-dominated gender orders, with more specific name-tags being assigned to the different historical and cultural variants. There is a close parallel between this usage (which I will adopt) of the term patriarchy and the marxist term "class society." Thirdly, patriarchy can be used in the sense of "gender order," as a word for the relations between males and females in any and every society. While the term gender order logically draws attention to the possible existence, in past or future, of a gender-egalitarian or female-dominated society, this last usage of the term patriarchy makes a political statement about the male-dominated nature of societies studied so far.

29. See for example C. Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988); A. Showstack Sassoon, *Women and the State* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); C. MacKinnon, "Feminism, marxism, and the state: an agenda for theory," *Signs* 7, 3 (1982): 515-44.

30. For a critique of role model theories in the studies of gender, see for example J. Lowe and S. Franzway, "Sex-role theory: a political cul-de-sac?" *Refractory Girl* 16 (1978): 14-16; Connell, *Gender and Power*, 47-54.

31. J.A. Scutt and D. Graham, *For Richer, for Poorer: Money, Marriage and Property Rights* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1984), 92-3.

32. See for example K. Reiger, *The Disenchantment of the Home; Modernising the Australian Family 1880-1940* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985); J.J. Matthews, *Good and Mad Women: The Historical Construction of Femininity in Twentieth Century Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1984).

33. D. Tyler, "The case of Irene Tuckerman: understanding sexual violence and the protection of women and girls, Victoria 1890-1925," *History of Education Review* 15, 2 (1986).

34. C. Ronalds, *Affirmative Action and Sex Discrimination* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 1987), 159.

35. Even the humble gas company refuses to specify what time in the day its employees will visit consumers, on the assumption that each household possesses a housewife who "does not work."

36. Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

37. In attempting to remove the discriminatory gendering of many institutions, some forms of affirmative action legislation put the onus on state departments or employers to prove that no discriminatory procedures exist simply on the basis that women are not represented proportionately in particular workplaces, even though there might not be any women who have recently applied for the positions and been rejected.

38. C. Cockburn, *Brothers, Male Dominance and Technological Change* (London: Pluto Press, 1983). In the contemporary Australian context, a classic study exploring the same issues is A. Game and R. Pringle, *Gender at Work* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1983).

39. M. McIntosh, "The state and the oppression of women," in *Feminism and Materialism*, ed. A. Kuhn and A.M. Wolpe (London: RKP, 1978).

40. See for example A. Davin, "Child labour, the working-class family, and domestic ideology in nineteenth century Britain," *Development and Change* 13 (1982): 633-52; J.S. Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918* (London: RKP, 1979).

41. A.I. Griffith and D.E. Smith, "Constructing cultural knowledge: mothering as discourse," in *Women and Education; A Canadian Perspective*, ed. J. Gaskell and A. McLaren (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1987).
42. One useful overview of these approaches is B.J. Fox, "Conceptualising patriarchy," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 25, 2 (1988): 163-82.
43. N. Chodorow, "Family structure and female personality," in *Woman, Culture and Society*, ed. M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 43-66; and *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
44. A.S. Sassoon, ed., *Women and the State* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 19.
45. P. Roberts, "The state and the regulation of marriage: Sefwi Wiawso (Ghana), 1900-40," in *Women, State and Ideology*, ed. H. Afshar (London: MacMillan, 1987), 49.
46. M. Stivens, "Family and state in Malaysian industrialisation: the case of Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia," in *Women, State and Ideology*, 91-2.
47. I. Minor, "Working-class women and matrimonial law reform, 1890-1914," in *Ideology and the Labour Movement*, ed. D.E. Martin (Croom Helm, 1979), 103. Similar points are made by P. Thane in "The working class and state welfare in Britain, 1880-1914," *Historical Journal* 27, 4 (1984).
48. For a discussion of these issues, see for example K. Bhavnani and M. Coulson, "Transforming socialist-feminism: the challenge of racism," *Feminist Review* 23 (1986).
49. Quoted in B. Cass et al., "Family policy Halloween: family allowances; trick or treat?" *Australian Quarterly* 53, 1 (1981): 59. Emphasis in the original.
50. *Ibid.*
51. The trajectory for children within the three forms of patriarchy was different. Their short-lived emancipation as individual wage labourers gradually gave way, for good or ill, to the curtailment of their autonomous legal status, and the expansion and consolidation of their status as infants. Gradually, young people were pushed out of waged work as well, and the period of their economic dependence began to expand.
52. B. Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Virago, 1984).