3. Colonization and Housewifization

The Dialectics of 'Progress and Retrogression'

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, it is possible to formulate a tentative thesis which will guide my further discussion.

The historical development of the division of labour in general, and the sexual division of labour in particular, was/is not an *evolutionary* and peaceful process, based on the ever-progressing development of productive forces (mainly technology) and specialization, but a violent one by which first certain categories of men, later certain peoples, were able mainly by virtue of arms and warfare to establish an exploitative relationship between themselves and women, and other peoples and classes.

Within such a predatory mode of production, which is intrinsically patriarchal, warfare and conquest become the most 'productive' modes of production. The quick accumulation of material wealth – not based on regular subsistence work in one's own community, but on looting and robbery – facilitates the faster development of technology in those societies which are based on conquest and warfare. This technological development, however, again is not oriented principally towards the satisfaction of subsistence needs of the community as a whole, but towards further warfare, conquest and accumulation. The development of arms and transport technology has been a driving force for technological innovation in all patriarchal societies, but particularly in the modern capitalist European one which has conquered and subjected the whole world since the fifteenth century. The concept of 'progress' which emerged in this particular patriarchal civilization is historically unthinkable without the one-sided development of the technology of warfare and conquest. All subsistence technology (for conservation and production of food, clothes and shelter, etc.) henceforth appears to be 'backward' in comparison to the 'wonders' of the modern technology of warfare and conquest (navigation, the compass, gunpowder, etc.).

The predatory patriarchal division of labour is based, from the outset, on a structural *separation* and *subordination* of human beings: men are separated from women, whom they have subordinated, the 'own' people are separated from the 'foreigners' or 'heathens'. Whereas in the old patriarchies this separation could never be total, in the modern 'western' patriarchy this separation has been extended to a separation between MAN and NATURE. In the old patriarchies

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(China, India, Arabia), men could not conceive of themselves as totally independent from Mother Earth. Even the conquered and subjected peoples, slaves, pariahs, etc., were still visibly present and were not thought of as lying totally *outside* the *oikos* or the 'economy' (the hierarchically structured social universe which was seen as a living organism (cf. Merchant, 1983)). And women, though they were exploited and subordinated, were crucially important as mothers of sons for all patriarchal societies. Therefore, I think it is correct when B. Ehrenreich and D. English call these pre-modern patriarchies gynocentric. Without the human mother and Mother Earth no patriarchy could exist (Ehrenreich/English, 1979: 7–8). With the rise of capitalism as a world-system, based on large-scale conquest and colonial plunder, and the emergence of the world-market (Wallerstein, 1974), it becomes possible to *externalize* or *exterritorialize* those whom the new patriarchs wanted to exploit. The colonies were no longer seen as part of the economy or society, they were lying outside 'civilized society'. In the same measure as European conquerers and invaders 'penetrated' those 'virgin lands', these lands and their inhabitants were 'naturalized', declared as wild, savage nature, waiting to be exploited and tamed by the male civilizers.

Similarly, the relationship between human beings and external nature or the earth was radically changed. As Carolyn Merchant has convincingly shown, the rise of modern science and technology was based on the violent attack and rape of Mother Earth – hitherto conceived as a living organism. Francis Bacon, the father of modern science, was one of those who advocated the same violent means to rob Mother Nature of her secrets – namely, torture and inquisition – as were used by Church and State to get at the secrets of the witches. The taboos against mining, digging holes in the womb of Mother Earth, were broken by force, because the new patriarchs wanted to get at the precious metals and other 'raw-materials' hidden in the 'womb of the earth'. The rise of modern science, a mechanistic and physical world-view, was based on the killing of nature as a living organism and its transformation into a huge reservoir of 'natural resources' or 'matter', which could be analysed and synthesized by Man into his new machines by which he could make himself independent of Mother Nature.

Only now, the dualism, or rather the polarization, between the patriarchs and nature, and between men and women could develop its full and permanent destructive potential. From now on science and technology became the main 'productive forces' through which men could 'emancipate' themselves from nature, as well as from women.

Carolyn Merchant has shown that the destruction of nature as a living organism – and the rise of modern science and technology, together with the rise of male scientists as the new high priests – had its close parallel in the violent attack on women during the witch hunt which raged through Europe for some four centuries.

Merchant does not extend her analysis to the relation of the New Men to their colonies. Yet an understanding of this relation is absolutely necessary, because we cannot understand the modern developments, including our present problems, unless we include all those who were 'defined into nature' by the modern capitalist patriarchs: Mother Earth, Women and Colonies.

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The modern European patriarchs made themselves independent of their *European* Mother Earth, by conquering first the Americas, later Asia and Africa, and by extracting gold and silver from the mines of Bolivia, Mexico and Peru and other 'raw materials' and luxury items from the other lands. They 'emancipated' themselves, on the one hand, from their dependence on European women for the production of labourers by destroying the witches, as well as their knowledge of contraceptives and birth control. On the other hand, by subordinating grown African men and women into slavery, they thus acquired the necessary labour power for their plantations in America and the Caribbean.

Thus, the progress of European Big Men is based on the subordination and exploitation of their own women, on the exploitation and killing of Nature, on the exploitation and subordination of other peoples and their lands. Hence, the law of this 'progress' is always a contradictory and not an evolutionary one: progress for some means retrogression for the other side; 'evolution' for some means 'devolution' for others; 'humanization' for some means 'de-humanization' for others; development of productive forces for some means underdevelopment and retrogression for others. The rise of some means the fall of others. Wealth for some means poverty for others. The reason why there cannot be unilinear progress is the fact that, as was said earlier, the predatory patriarchal mode of production constitutes a non-reciprocal, exploitative relationship. Within such a relationship no general progress for all, no 'trickling down', no development for all is possible.

Engels had attributed this antagonistic relationship between progress and retrogression to the emergence of private property and the exploitation of one class by the other. Thus, he wrote in 1884:

> Since the exploitation of one class by another is the basis of civilization, its whole development moves in a continuous contradiction. Every advance in production is at the same time a retrogression in the condition of the exploited class, that is of the great majority. What is a boon for the one is necessarily a bane for the other; each new emancipation of one class always means a new oppression of another class (Engels, 1976: 333).

Engels speaks only of the relationship between exploiting and exploited classes, he does not include the relationship between men and women, that of colonial masters to their colonies or of Civilized Man in general to Nature. But these relationships constitute, in fact, the hidden foundation of civilized society. He hopes to change this necessarily polarized relationship by extending what is good for the ruling class to all classes: 'What is good for the ruling class should be good for the whole of the society with which the ruling class identifies itself' (Engels, 1976: 333).

But this is precisely the logical flaw in this strategy: in a contradictory and exploitative relationship, the privileges of the exploiters can never become the privileges of all. If the wealth of the metropoles is based on the exploitation of colonies, then the colonies cannot achieve wealth unless they also have colonies. If the emancipation of men is based on the subordination of women, then women cannot achieve 'equal rights' with men, which would necessarily include the right to exploit others.[1]

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Hence, a feminist strategy for liberation cannot but aim at the total abolition of all these relationships of retrogressive progress. This means it must aim at an end of all *exploitation* of women by men, of nature by man, of colonies by colonizers, of one class by the other. As long as exploitation of one of these remains the precondition for the advance (development, evolution, progress, humanization, etc.) of one section of people, feminists cannot speak of liberation or 'socialism'.

Subordination of Women, Nature and Colonies: The underground of capitalist patriarchy or civilized society

In the following, I shall try to trace the contradictory process, briefly sketched out above, by which, in the course of the last four or five centuries women, nature and colonies were externalized, declared to be outside civilized society, pushed down, and thus made invisible as the under-water part of an iceberg is invisible, yet constitute the base of the whole.

Methodologically, I shall try as far as possible to undo the division of those poles of the exploitative relations which are usually analysed as separate entities. Our understanding of scholarly work or research follows exactly the same logic as that of the colonizers and scientists: they cut apart and separate parts which constitute a whole, isolate these parts, analyse them under laboratory conditions and synthesize them again in a new, man-made, artificial model.

I shall not follow this logic. I shall rather try to trace the 'underground connections' that link the processes by which nature was exploited and put under man's domination to the processes by which women in Europe were subordinated, and examine the processes by which these two were linked to the conquest and colonization of other lands and people. Hence, the historical emergence of European science and technology, and its mastery over nature have to be linked to the persecution of the European witches. And both the persecution of the witches and the rise of modern science have to be linked to the slave trade and the destruction of subsistence economies in the colonies.

This cannot be a comprehensive history of this whole period, desirable though this might be. I shall mainly highlight some important connections which were crucial for the construction of capitalist patriarchal production relations. One is the connection between the persecution of the witches in Europe and the rise of the new bourgeoisie and modern science, and the subordination of nature. This has already been dealt with by several researchers (Merchant, 1983; Heinsohn, Knieper, Steiger, 1979; Ehrenreich, English, 1979; Becker *et al*, 1977). The following analysis is based on their work.

The historical connections between these processes and the subordination and exploitation of colonial peoples in general, and of women in the colonies in particular, has not yet been adequately studied. Therefore, I shall deal with this history more extensively.

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The Persecution of the Witches and the Rise of Modern Society
Women's productive record at the end of the Middle Ages

Among the Germanic tribes who occupied Europe, the house-father (*pater familias*) had power over everything and everybody in the house. This power, called *munt* (Old High German) (*mundium* = *manus* = hand), implied that he could sell, bill, etc., wife, children, slaves, etc. The *munt* of the man over the woman was established through marriage. The relationship was one of property rights over things, which was founded on occupation (kidnapping of women), or purchase (sale of women). According to Germanic law, the marriage was a sales-contract between the two families. The woman was only the object in this transaction. By acquiring the *munt*-power, the husband acquired the right over the wife's belongings, as she was his property. Women were lifelong under the *munt* of their men – husband, father, son. The origin of this *munt* was to exclude women from the use of arms. With the rise of the cities since the thirteenth century and the emergence of an urban bourgeoisie, the 'whole house' – the earlier Germanic form of the extended family and kinship – began to dissolve. The old *potestas patriae*, the power of the father over sons and daughters, ended when they left the house. Wives were put under the *munt* or guardianship of the husband. However, if unmarried women had property of their own, they were sometimes considered *mündig* (major) before the law. In Cologne, unmarried women who followed some craft were called *selbstmündig* in 1291 (Becker *et al*, 1977: 41). The laws prevailing in the cities, as well as some laws for the countryside, freed women in the crafts from the *munt* or dependence on a father or husband.

The reason for this liberalization of sexual bondage has to be seen in the need to allow women in the cities to carry on their crafts and businesses independently. This was due to several factors:

1. With the extension of trade and commerce the demand for manufactured goods, particularly clothes and other consumer goods, grew. These goods were almost exclusively produced in the household of craftsmen and women. With the growth of money-supply in the hands of the patricians, their consumption of luxury goods also grew. Costly clothes of velvet and silk, lace collars, girdles, etc., became the fashion. In many of these crafts women were predominant.

However, in Germany, married women were not allowed to carry out their business or any property transaction without the consent of their husband, who continued to be their guardian and master. However, craftswomen or businesswomen could appear before a court as witnesses or complainants, without a guardian. In some cities the businesswomen or market-women were given equal rights with the men. In Munich it was stated that 'a woman who stands in the market, buys and sells, has all rights her husband has'. But she could not sell his property.

The independence of the medieval crafts- and market-women was not unlimited; it was a concession given to them because the rising bourgeoisie needed them. But within the family the husband retained his master role.

2. The second reason for this relative freedom for women in commerce and crafts was a shortage of men at the end of the Middle Ages. In Frankfurt the sex

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ratio was 1,100 women for 1,000 men, according to a thirteenth-century census; in Nuremberg (fifteenth century), the sex ratio was 1,000 men to 1,207 women. The number of men had diminished due to the crusades and constant warfare between the feudal states. Moreover, male mortality seems to have been higher than female mortality 'because of the men's intemperance in all sorts of revelries' (Bücher, quoted in Becker *et al*, 1977: 63).

Among the peasants in South Germany, only the eldest son was allowed to marry because otherwise the land would have been divided into holdings too small to be viable. Journeymen were not allowed to marry before they became masters. The serfs of the feudal lords could not marry without the consent of their lords. When the cities opened their doors, many serfs, men and women, ran away to the cities; 'city air makes men free' was the slogan. The poor people in the countryside had to send their daughters away to fend for themselves as maidservants because they could not feed them until they were married.

This all resulted in an increase in the number of unattached, single or widowed women who had to be economically active. The cities, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries did not exclude women from any craft or business which they wanted to take up. This was necessary as, without their contribution, trade and commerce could not have been expanded. But the attitude towards the economically independent women was always contradictory. In the beginning the crafts' guilds were exclusively men's associations. It seems they had to admit some craftswomen later. In Germany this did not occur before the fourteenth century. Mainly weaver-women and spinsters and women engaged in other branches of textile manufacture were allowed to join guilds. Weaving had been in the hands of the men since the twelfth century, but women did a number of ancillary jobs, and later also female master weavers are mentioned for certain branches like veil-weaving, linen-weaving, silk-weaving, gold-weaving, etc., which were only done by women. In Cologne there were even female guilds from the fourteenth century.

Apart from the crafts, women were mainly engaged in *petty trade* in fruits, chicken, eggs, herrings, flowers, cheese, milk, salt, oil, feathers, jams, etc. Women were very successful as peddlers and hawkers, and constituted a certain challenge to male traders. But they did not engage in foreign trade though they advanced money to merchants who traded with the outside markets.

> The silk-spinners of Cologne often were married to rich merchants who sold the precious products of their wives in far-off markets in Flanders, England, at the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, at the big fairs in Leipzig and Frankfurt (Becker *et al*, 1977: 66–67).

Only one merchant woman is mentioned who herself travelled to England in the fifteenth century: Katherine Ysenmengerde from Danzig (Becker *et al*, 1977: 66–67).

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, the old European order collapsed and 'there came to be a European world economy based on the capitalist mode of production' (Wallerstein, 1974: 67). This period is characterized by a tremendous expansion and penetration of the rising bourgeoisie into the 'New Worlds', and by pauperization, wars, epidemics and turbulence within the old core states.

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According to Wallerstein this world economy included, by the end of the sixteenth century, north-west Europe, the Christian Mediterranean, Central Europe, the Baltic region, certain regions of America, New Spain, the Antilles, Peru, Chile and Brazil. Excluded at that time were India, the Far East, the Ottoman Empire, Russia and China.

Between 1535 and 1540, *Spain* achieved control over more than half the population of the Western Hemisphere. Between 1670–1680, the area under European control went up from about three million square kilometres to about seven million (Wallerstein, 1974: 68). The expansion made possible the large-scale accumulation of private capital 'which was used to finance the rationalization of agricultural production' (Wallerstein, 1974: 69). 'One of the most obvious characteristics of this sixteenth century European World Economy was a secular inflation, the so-called price revolution' (Wallerstein, 1974: 69). This inflation has been attributed, in one way or the other, to the influx of precious metals, bullion, from Hispano America. Its effect was mainly felt in the supply of foodgrains available at cheaper prices. 'In those countries where industry expanded, it was necessary to turn over a larger proportion of the land to the needs of horses'. Grain then had to be bought in the Baltic at higher prices. At the same time, wages remained stagnant in England and France because of institutional rigidities, and even a decline in real wages took place. This meant greater poverty for the masses.

According to Wallerstein, sixteenth-century Europe had several core areas: northern Europe (Netherlands, England, France) where trade flourished, and where land was used mainly for pastoral purposes, not for grain. Rural wage-labour became the dominant form of labour control. Grain was imported from Eastern Europe and the Baltics – the periphery – where 'secondary serfdom' or 'feudalism' emerged as the main labour control. In northern and central Europe this process led to great pauperization of peasants. There seems to have been population growth in the sixteenth century and the pressure on the towns grew. Wallerstein sees this population pressure as reason for out-migration. 'In Western Europe there was emigration to the towns and a growing vagabondage that was "endemic" ' (Wallerstein, 1974: 117). There was not only the rural exodus due to eviction and the enclosure system (of the yeomen in England), 'there was also the vagabondage "caused by the decline of feudal bodies of retainers and the disbanding of the swollen armies which had flocked to serve the kings against their vassals" ' (Marx, quoted by Wallerstein, 1974: 117).

These wanderers – before they were recruited as labourers into the new industries – lived from hand to mouth. They were the impoverished masses who flocked around the various prophets and heretic sects. Most of the radical and utopian ideas of the time are concerned with these poor masses. Many poor women were among these vagabonds. They earned their living as dancers, tricksters, singers and prostitutes. They flocked to the annual fairs, the church councils, etc. For the Diet of Frankfurt, 1394, 800 women came; for the Council of Constance and Basle, 1500 (Becker *et al*, 1977; 76). These women also followed the armies. They were not only prostitutes for the soldiers but they also had to dig trenches, nurse the sick and wounded, and sell commodities.

These women were not despised in the beginning, they formed part of medieval

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society. The bigger cities put them into special 'women's houses'. The church tried to control the increasing prostitution, but poverty drove too many poor women into the 'women's houses'. In many cities these prostitutes had their own associations. In Church processions and public feasts they had their own banners and place – even a patron saint, St Magdalene. This shows that up to the fourteenth century prostitution was not considered a bad thing. But at the end of the fourteenth century, the Statues of Meran rule that prostitutes should stay away from public feasts and dances where 'burgers women and other honorable women are'. They should have a yellow ribbon on their shoes so that everyone could distinguish them from the 'decent women' (Becker *et al*, 1977: 79).

The witch-hunt which raged through Europe from the twelfth to the seventeenth century was one of the mechanisms to control and subordinate women, the peasant and artisan, women who in their economic and sexual independence constituted a threat for the emerging bourgeois order.

Recent feminist literature on the witches and their persecution has brought to light that women were not passively giving up their economic and sexual independence, but that they resisted in many forms the onslaught of church, state and capital. One form of resistance were the many heterodox sects in which women either played a prominent role, or which in their ideology propagated freedom and equality for women and a condemnation of sexual repression, property and monogamy. Thus the 'Brethren of the Free Spirit', a sect which existed over several hundred years, established communal living, abolished marriage, and rejected the authority of the church. Many women, some of them extraordinary scholars, belonged to this sect. Several of them were burnt as heretics (Cohn, 1970).

It seems plausible that the whole fury of the witch-hunt was not just a result of the decaying old order in its confrontation with new capitalist forces, or even a manifestation of timeless male sadism, but a reaction of the new male-dominated classes against the *rebellion* of women. The poor women 'freed', that is, expropriated from their means of subsistence and skills, fought back against their expropriators. Some argue that the witches had been an organized sect which met regularly at their 'witches' sabbath', where all poor people gathered and already practised the new free society without masters and serfs. When a woman denied being a witch and having anything to do with all the accusations, she was tortured and finally burnt at the stake. The witch trial, however, followed a meticulously thought-out legal procedure. In protestant countries one finds special secular witch-commissions and witch-commissars. The priests were in constant rapport with the courts and influenced the judges.

One prosecutor, Benedikt Carpzov, first a lawyer in Saxonia, later professor in Leipzig, signed 20,000 death sentences against witches. He was a faithful son of the protestant church (Dross, 1978: 204).

If someone denounced a woman as a witch, a commission was sent to that place to collect evidence. Everything was evidence: good weather or bad weather, if she worked hard or if she was lazy, diseases or healing powers. If under torture the witch named another person, this person was also immediately arrested.

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The Subordination and Breaking of the Female Body: Torture

Here are the minutes of the torture of Katherine Lips from Betzlesdorf, 1672:

> After this the judgement was again read to her and she was admonished to speak the truth. But she continued to deny. She then undressed willingly. The hangman bound her hands and hung her up, let her down again. She cried: woe, woe. Again she was pulled up. Again she screamed, woe woe, lord in heaven help me. Her toes were bound . . . her legs were put into Spanish boots – first the left then the right leg was screwed . . . she cried, 'Lord Jesus come and help me . . .' She said she knew nothing, even if they killed her. They pulled her up higher. She became silent, then she said she was no witch. Then they again put the screws on her legs. She again screamed and cried . . . and became silent . . . she continued to say she knew nothing . . . She shouted her mother should come out of the grave and help her . . .
>
> They then led her outside the room and shaved her head to find the stigma. The master came back and said they had found the stigma. He had thrust a needle into it and she had not felt it. Also, no blood had come out. Again they bound her at hand and feet and pulled her up, again she screamed and shouted she knew nothing. They should put her on the floor and kill her, etc., etc., etc. . . . (quoted in Becker *et al*, 1977: 426ff).

In 1631 Friedrich von Spee dared to write an anonymous essay against the tortures and the witch-hunt. He exposed the sadistic character of the tortures and also the use the authorities, the church and the secular authorities made of the witch hysteria to find a scapegoat for all problems and disturbances and the unrest of the poor people, and to divert the wrath of the people from them against some poor women.

> 31 October 1724: Torture of Enneke Fristenares from Coesfeld (Münster)
> After the accused had been asked in vain to confess, Dr Gogravius announced the order of torture . . . He asked her to tell the truth, because the painful interrogation would make her confess anyway and double the punishment . . . after this the first degree of torture was applied to her.
>
> Then the judge proceeded to the second degree of torture. She was led to the torture chamber, she was undressed, tied down and interrogated. She denied to have done anything . . . As she remained stubborn they proceeded to the third degree and her thumbs were put into screws. Because she screamed so horribly they put a block into her mouth and continued screwing her thumbs. Fifty minutes this went on, the screws were loosened and tightened alternately. But she pleaded her innocence. She also did not weep but only shouted, 'I am not guilty. O Jesus come and help me.' Then, 'Your Lordship, take me and kill me.' Then they proceeded to the fourth degree, the Spanish Boots . . . As she did not weep Dr Gogravius worried whether the accused might have been made insensitive against pain through sorcery. Therefore he again asked the executioner to undress her and find out whether there was anything suspicious about her body. Whereupon the executioner reported he had examined everything meticulously but had not found anything. Again he was ordered to apply the Spanish Boots. The accused however continued to assert her innocence and screamed 'O Jesus I haven't done it, I haven't done it, Your Lordship kill me. I am not guilty, I am not guilty!' . . .

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This order went on for 30 minutes without result.

Then Dr Gogravius ordered the fifth degree:

The accused was hung up and beaten with two rods – up to 30 strokes. She was so exhausted that she said she would confess, but with regard to the specific accusations she continued to deny that she had committed any of the crimes. The executioner had to pull her up till her arms were twisted out of their joints. For six minutes this torture lasted. Then she was beaten up again, and again her thumbs were put into screws and her legs into the Spanish Boots. But the accused continued to deny that she had anything to do with the devil.

As Dr Gogravius came to the conclusion that the torture had been correctly applied, according to the rules, and after the executioner stated the accused would not survive further torturing Dr Gogravius ordered the accused to be taken down and unbound. He ordered the executioner to set her limbs in the right place and nurse her (quoted in Becker *et al*, 1977: 433–435, transl. M.M.).

Burning of Witches, Primitive Accumulation of Capital, and the Rise of Modern Science

The persecution and burning of the midwives as witches was directly connected with the emergence of modern society: the professionalization of medicine, the rise of *medicine* as a 'natural science', the rise of *science* and of *modern economy*. The torture chambers of the witch-hunters were the laboratories where the texture, the anatomy, the resistance of the human body – mainly the female body – was studied. One may say that modern medicine and the male hegemony over this vital field were established on the base of millions of crushed, maimed, torn, disfigured and finally burnt, female bodies.[2]

There was a calculated division of labour between Church and State in organizing the massacres and the terror against the witches. Whereas the church representatives identified witches, gave the theological justification and led the interrogations, the 'secular arm' of the state was used to carry out the tortures and finally execute the witches on the pyre.

The persecution of the witches was a manifestation of the rising modern society and not, as is usually believed, a remnant of the irrational 'dark' Middle Ages. This is most clearly shown by Jean Bodin, the French theoretician of the new mercantilist economic doctrine. Jean Bodin was the founder of the quantitative theory of money, of the modern concept of sovereignty and of mercantilist populationism. He was a staunch defender of modern rationalism, and was at the same time one of the most vocal proponents of state-ordained tortures and massacres of the witches. He held the view that, for the development of new wealth after the medieval agrarian crisis, the *modern state* had to be invested with absolute sovereignty. This state had, moreover, the duty to provide for enough workers for the new economy. In order to do so, he demanded a strong police which above all would fight against witches and midwives who, according to him, were responsible for so many abortions, the infertility of couples, or sexual intercourse without conception. Anyone who prevented the conception or the birth of children he considered as a murderer, who should be persecuted by the

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state. Bodin worked as a consultant of the French government in the persecution of the witches, and advocated torture and the pyre to eradicate the witches. His tract on witchcraft was one of the most brutal and sadistic of all pamphlets written against witches at that time. Like Institoris and Sprenger in Germany he singled out women for his attack. He set a ratio of 50 women to one man for the witch persecutions (Merchant, 1983: 138). This combination of modern rationality, the propagation of the new state and a direct violent attack on the witches we also find with another great master of the new era of European civilization, namely Francis Bacon (cf. Merchant, 1983: 164–177).

Similarly, there is a direct connection between the witch pogroms and the emergence of the professionalization of *law*. Before that period, the German law followed old Germanic custom; it was people's law or customary law, but not a discipline to be studied. But now Roman law was introduced, most of the universities established a law faculty and several universities, like the university of Frankfurt, consisted in fact only of the law faculty. Some contemporaries complain about the universities:

> They are good for nothing and train only parasites who learn how to confuse the people, how to make good things bad and bad things good, who withhold what is rightful from the poor and give what is not his right to the rich (Jansen, 1903, quoted in Hammes, 1977: 243; transl. M.M.).

The reason why the sons of the rising urban class were flocking to the law faculties was the following: 'In our times jurisprudencia smiles at everybody, so that everyone wants to become a doctor in law. Most are attracted to this field of studies out of greed for money and ambition' (ibid.).

The witch trials provided employment and money for a host of lawyers, advocates, judges, councils, etc. They were able, through their complicated and learned interpretations of the authoritative texts, to prolong the trials so that the costs of the trial would go up. There was a close relationship between the worldly authorities, the church, the rulers of the small feudal states and the lawyers. The latter were responsible for an inflation of fees, and filled their coffers by squeezing money from the poor victims of the witch-hunt. The fleecing of the people was so rampant that even a man like the Elector of Trier (the Archbishop of Trier was one of the seven princes who elected the German Kaiser), Johann von Schoenburg, who had himself had several hundred people executed as witches and sorcerers, had to check the robbing of the widows and orphans by the learned jurists and all others connected with the witch trials. Some of the rulers set up accountants to check what the various officials had done with the money extracted and the fees they had demanded. Among the costs for a trial were the following:

- for the alcohol consumed by the soldiers who pursued a witch;
- for the visit the priest paid to the witch while in prison;
- for the maintenance of the private guard of the executioner.

(Hammes, 1977: 243–257).

According to Canon Law, the property of the witch was to be confiscated, irrespective of whether there were heirs or not. The bulk of the confiscated property, never less than 50 per cent, was appropriated by the government. In

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many cases, all that was left over after the deduction of the costs for the trial went to the state treasury. This confiscation was illegal, as the 'Constitutio Criminalis' of Emperor Charles V proclaims in 1532. But this law had only paper value.

The fact that the witch-hunt was such a lucrative source of money and wealth led in certain areas to the setting up of special commissions which had the task of denouncing ever more people as witches and sorcerers. When the accused were found guilty, they and their families had to bear all the costs of the trial, beginning with the bills for alcohol and food for the witch commission (their *per diem*), and ending with the costs for the firewood for the stake. Another source of money was the sums paid by the richer families to the learned judges and lawyers in order to free one of their members from the persecution if she was accused as a witch. This is also a reason why we find more poor people among those who were executed.

Manfred Hammes has brought to light yet another dimension of the 'political economy' of the witch-hunt, namely, the raising of funds by the warring European princes to finance their wars, particularly the Thirty-Year War from 1618–1648. From 1618 onwards, the Law of Charles V, prohibiting the confiscation of property of witches and sorcerers, was virtually abandoned and witch-hunts were specifically organised or encouraged by some of the princes in order to be able to confiscate the property of their subjects.

Hammes gives us the example of the city of Cologne and the dispute that arose between the city fathers and the Elector Ferdinand of Bavaria – the ruler of the diocese. The city of Cologne, a rich centre of trading and industries, had remained neutral for a long time during the Thirty-Years War. (In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the city had seen a flourishing trade – mainly in silk and textiles.)[3] Nevertheless, the city had paid considerable sums into the war fund of the Emperor. This was made possible by an increase in taxes. When foreign armies were marauding and looting the villages, many rural people fled into the free and neutral city. The result was a scarcity of food supplies which led to tensions among the people and even to open riots. At the same time the witch trial against Catherine Hernot[4] started, which was followed by an intense witch-hunt. When the first judgements were pronounced, the Elector Ferdinand of Bavaria, who had to pay his armies, presented a bill to the city authorities. In this bill he claimed that all the property of executed witches should be confiscated and go to the exchequer. The city council tried with all means to prevent the implementation of this ordinance. They asked their lawyers to make an expert study of the law. But the Elector and his lawyers finally proclaimed that the bill was an emergency measure. Since the evil of witchcraft had assumed such dimensions in recent times, it would be politically unwise to follow the letter of the law (namely, Constitutio Criminalis of Charles V prohibiting confiscations) word by word. However, the lawyers of the city were not convinced and they suggested a compromise. They said it was fair and just that the persons who had been involved in the witch trial, the lawyers, executioners, etc., would get a fee as compensation 'for their hard work and the time they had spent on the trial'. The Elector, as he could not press money out of the urban witch-hunt, confiscated all the property of the witches executed in the rural areas of the diocese.

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But not only the feudal class (particularly the smaller princes who could not compete with the rising bourgeoisie in the cities, or the bigger lords), but also the propertied classes in the cities were using the confiscation of witch-property as a means for capital accumulation.

Thus, in Cologne itself in 1628, ten years after the beginning of the war, the city authorities had introduced the confiscation of witch-property. One of the legitimations forwarded by the lawyers of Cologne was that the witches had received a lot of money from the devil and that it was perfectly in order that this devil's money be confiscated by the authorities to enable them to eradicate the evil breed of sorcerers and witches. In fact, it seems that in some cases the cities and the princes used witch-pogroms and confiscations as a kind of development aid for their ruined economies. The city fathers of Mainz did not make much fuss about legal niceties and simply asked their officials to confiscate all property of the witches. In 1618, the Monastery of St Clare of Hochheim had donated them 2,000 guilders for the 'eradication of witches'.

There is a report of the Bailiff Geiss who wrote to his Lord of Lindheim asking him to allow him to start with the persecution because he needed money for the restoration of a bridge and the church. He noted that most of the people were disturbed about the spreading of the evil of witchcraft:

> If only your Lordship would be willing to start the burning, we would gladly provide the firewood and bear all other costs, and your Lordship would earn so much that the bridge and also the Church could be well repaired.
>
> Moreover, you would get so much that you could pay your servants a better salary in future, because one could confiscate whole houses and particularly the more well-to-do ones (quoted in Hammes, 1977: 254; transl. M.M.).

Apart from the big bloodsuckers – the religious authorities, the worldly governments, the feudal class, the urban authorities, the fraternity of jurists, the executioners – there grew up a whole army of smaller fry who made a living out of the burning witches. Begging monks wandered around and sold pictures of the saints which, if swallowed by the buyers, would prevent them from being afflicted by witchcraft. There were many self-appointed witch-commissars. Since the authorities paid fees for the discovery, the arrest and the interrogation of witches, they accumulated money by wandering from place to place instigating the poor people to see the cause of all their misery in the workings of the witches. Then, when everybody was in the grip of the mass psychosis, the commissar said he would come to eradicate the pest. First, the commissar would send his collector who would go from house to house to collect donations to prove that the peasants themselves had invited him. Then the commissar would come and organize two or three burnings at the stake. If someone was not ready to pay, he was suspected of being a sorcerer or a witch or a sympathizer of the witches. In some cases the villages paid a sum to the commissar in advance, so that he would not visit their village. This happened in the Eifel village of Rheinbach. But five years later the same commissar came back and, since the peasants were not ready to yield a second time to this blackmail, he added more death sentences to the record of 800 he had already achieved.

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The hope of financial gains can be seen as one of the main reasons why the witch hysteria spread and why hardly any people were acquitted. The witch-hunt was business. This is clearly spelt out by Friedrich von Spee who finally had the courage, in 1633, to write a book against this sordid practice. He notes:

- the lawyers, inquisitors, etc., use torture because they want to show that they are not superficial but responsible lawyers;
- they need many witches in order to prove that their job is necessary;
- they do not want to lose the remuneration the princes have promised for each witch.

To summarize we can quote Cornelius Loos who said the witch trials 'were a new alchemy which made gold out of human blood' (Hammes, 1977: 257). We could add, out of female blood. The capital accumulated in the process of the witch-hunt by the old ruling classes, as well as by the new rising bourgeois class is nowhere mentioned in the estimates and calculations of the economic historians of that epoch. The blood-money of the witch-hunt was used for the private enrichment of bankrupt princes, of lawyers, doctors, judges and professors, but also for such public affairs as financing wars, building up a bureaucracy, infrastructural measures, and finally the new absolute state. This blood-money fed the original process of capital accumulation, perhaps not to the same extent as the plunder and robbery of the colonies, but certainly to a much greater extent than is known today.

But the persecution and torture of witches was not only motivated by economic considerations. The interrogation of witches also provided the model for the development of the new scientific method of extracting secrets from Mother Nature. Carolyn Merchant has shown that Francis Bacon, the 'father' of modern science, the founder of the inductive method, used the same methods, the same ideology to examine nature which the witch-persecutioners used to extract the secrets from the witches, namely, torture, destruction, violence. He deliberately used the imagery of the witch-hunt to describe his new scientific method: he treated 'nature as a female to be tortured through mechanical inventions' (Merchant, 1983: 168), as the witches were tortured by new machines. He stated that the method by which nature's secrets might be discovered consisted in investigating the secrets of witchcraft by inquisition: 'For you have but to follow and as it were hound out nature in her wanderings, and you will be able when you like to lead and drive her afterward to the same place again . . .' (quoted by Merchant, 1983: 168). He strongly advocated the breaking of all taboos which, in medieval society, forbade the digging of holes into Mother Earth or violating her: 'Neither ought a man to make scruple of entering and penetrating into these holes and corners, when the inquisition of truth is his whole object . . .' (Merchant, 1983: 168). He compared the inquisition of nature to both the interrogation of witches and to that of the courtroom witnesses:

> I mean (according to the practice in civil causes) in this great plea or suit granted by the divine favour and providence (whereby the human race seeks to recover its right over nature) to *examine nature herself* and the arts upon interrogatories . . . (Merchant, 1983: 169).

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Nature would not yield her secrets unless forcibly violated by the new mechanical devices:

> For like as a man's disposition is never well known or proved till he be crossed, nor Proteus ever changed shapes till he was *straitened* and *held fast*, so nature exhibits herself more clearly under the *trials* and *vexations* of art (mechanical devices) than when left to herself (quoted by Merchant, 1983: 169).

According to Bacon, nature must be 'bound into service', made a 'slave', put 'in constraint', had to be 'dissected'; much as 'woman's womb had symbolically yielded to the forceps, so nature's womb harboured secrets that through technology could be wrested from her grasp for use in the improvement of the human condition' (Merchant, 1983: 169).

Bacon's scientific method, which is still the foundation of modern science, unified knowledge with material power. Many of the technological inventions were in fact related to warfare and conquest, like gunpowder, navigation, the magnet. These 'arts of war' were combined with knowledge – like printing. Violence, therefore, was the key word and key method by which the New Man established his domination over women and nature. These means of coercion 'do not, like the old, merely exert a gentle guidance over nature's course; they have the power to conquer and subdue her, to shake her to the foundations' (Merchant, 1983: 172).

Thus, concludes Carolyn Merchant:

> The interrogation of witches as symbol for the interrogation of nature, the courtroom as model for its inquisition, and torture through mechanical devices as a tool for the subjugation of disorder were fundamental to the scientific *method as power* (emphasis added) (Merchant, 1983: 172).

The class which benefited from this new scientific patriarchal dominance over women and nature was the rising protestant, capitalist class of merchants, mining industrialists, clothier capitalists. For this class, it was necessary that the old autonomy of women over their sexuality and reproductive capacities be destroyed, and that women be forcibly made to breed more workers. Similarly, nature had to be transformed into a vast reservoir of material resources to be exploited and turned into profit by this class.

Hence the church, the state, the new capitalist class and modern scientists collaborated in the violent subjugation of women and nature. The weak Victorian women of the nineteenth century were the products of the terror methods by which this class had moulded and shaped 'female nature' according to its interests (Ehrenreich, English, 1979).

Colonization and Primitive Accumulation of Capital

The period referred to so far has been called the period of *primitive accumulation of capital*. Before the capitalist mode of production could establish and maintain itself as a process of extended reproduction of capital – driven by the motor of surplus value production – enough capital had to be accumulated to start this

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process. The capital was largely accumulated in the colonies between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Most of this capital was not accumulated through 'honest' trade by merchant capitalists but largely by way of brigandage, piracy, forced and slave labour.

Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English merchants went out to break the Venetian monopoly of the spice trade with the East. Most of the Spanish-Portuguese discoveries were inspired by the motive to find an independent sea-route to the Orient. In Europe, the result was a price revolution or inflation due to 1. the technical invention of separating copper from silver; 2. the plundering of Cuzco and the use of slave labour. The cost of precious metal fell. This led to the ruination of the already exhausted feudal class and of the wage earning craftsmen. Mandel concludes:

> The fall in real wages – particularly marked by the substitution of cheap potatoes for bread as the basic food of the people – became one of the main sources of the primitive accumulation of industrial capital between the sixteenth and eighteenth century (Mandel, 1971: 107).

One could say that the *first phase of the Primitive Accumulation* was that of merchant and commercial capital ruthlessly plundering and exploiting the colonies' human and natural wealth. Thus, there had been 'a marked shortage of capital in England' about 1550:

> Within a few years, the pirate expeditions against the Spanish fleet, all of which were organised in the form of joint stock companies, changed the situation . . . Drake's first pirate undertaking in the years 1577–1580 was launched with a capital of £5,000 . . . it brought in about £600,000 profit, half of which went to the Queen. Beard estimates that the pirates introduced some £12 million into England during the reign of Elizabeth (Mandel, 1971: 108).

The story of the Spanish Conquistadores, who depopulated regions like Haiti, Cuba, Nicaragua completely, and exterminated about 15 million Indians is well known. Also, Vasco da Gama's second arrival in India in 1502–1503 was marked by the same trial of blood.

> It was a kind of crusade . . . by merchants of pepper, cloves and cinnamon. It was punctuated by horrible atrocities; everything seemed permissible against the hated Moslems whom the Portuguese were surprised to meet again at the other end of the world . . . (quoted from Hauser in Mandel, 1971: 108).

Commercial expansion from the beginning was based on *monopoly*. The Dutch drove out the Portuguese, the English, the Dutch.

> It is, therefore, not to be wondered that the Dutch merchants, whose profits depended on their monopoly of spices obtained through conquests in the Indonesian archipelago went over to mass destruction of cinnamon trees in the small islands of the Moluccas as soon as prices began to fall in Europe. The 'Hongi Voyages' to destroy these trees and massacre the population which for centuries had drawn their livelihood from growing them, set a sinister mark on the history of Dutch colonization, which had, indeed, begun in the same style. Admiral J.P. Coen did not shrink from the extermination of all the male inhabitants of the Banda islands (Mandel, 1971: 108).

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The trading companies – the Oost-Indische Companie, the English East India Company and Hudson Bay Company and the French Compagnie des Indes Orientales – *all combined the spice trade with the slave trade*:

> Between 1636 and 1645 the Dutch West India Company sold 23,000 Negroes for 6.7 million florins in all, or about 300 florins a head, whereas the goods given in exchange for each slave were worth no more than 50 florins. Between 1728 and 1760 ships sailing from Le Havre transported to the Antilles 203,000 slaves bought in Senegal, on the Gold Coast, at Loango, etc. The sale of these slaves brought in 203 million livres. From 1783 to 1793 the slavers of Liverpool sold 300,000 slaves for 15 million, which went into the foundation of industrial enterprises (Mandel, 1971: 110).

Mandel and others, who have analysed this period, do not say much about how the colonizing process affected women in the newly-established Portuguese, Dutch, English and French colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin and Central America. As the merchant capitalists depended mainly on brute force, outright robbery and looting, we can assume that the women were also victims of this process.

The recent work done by feminist scholars has shed more light on to these hidden sides of the 'civilizing process'. Rhoda Reddock's work on women and slavery in the Caribbean shows clearly that the colonizers used a diametrically opposed value system *vis-à-vis* the women of the subjugated peoples as that *vis-à-vis* their 'own' women. Slave women in the Caribbean for long periods were *not* allowed to marry or to have children; it was cheaper to import slaves than to pay for the reproduction of slave labour. At the same time, the bourgeois class domesticated its 'own' women into pure, monogamous breeders of their heirs, excluded them from work outside their house and from property.

The whole brutal onslaught on the peoples in Africa, Asia and America by European merchant capitalists was justified as a *civilizing mission* of the Christian nations. Here we see the connection between the 'civilizing' process by which poor European women were persecuted and 'disciplined' during the witch-hunt, and the 'civilizing' of the 'barbarian' peoples in the colonies. Both are defined as uncontrolled, dangerous, savage 'nature', and both have to be subdued by force and torture to break their resistance to robbery, expropriation and exploitation.

Women under Colonialism

As Rhoda Reddock (1984) has shown, the colonizers' attitude to slavery and slave women in the Caribbean was based clearly on capitalist cost-benefit calculations. This was particularly true with regard to the question whether slave women should be allowed to 'breed' more slaves or not. Throughout the centuries of the modern slave trade and slave economy (from 1655 to 1838), this question was answered not according to the principles of Christian ethics – supposedly applicable in the 'Motherlands' – but according to the accumulation considerations of the capitalist planters. Thus, during the first period, from 1655 to the beginnings of the eighteenth century, when most estates were smallholdings with few slaves, these planters still depended, following the peasant model of reproduction, on the natural reproduc-

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tion of the slave population. The second period is characterized by the so-called sugar-revolution, the introduction of large-scale sugar production in big plantations. In this period, beginning around 1760 and lasting till about 1800 slave women were actively discouraged from bearing children or forming families. The planters, as good capitalists, held the view that 'it was cheaper to purchase than to breed'. This was the case in all sugar colonies whether they were under catholic (French) or protestant (British, Dutch) dominion. In fact, slave women who were found pregnant were cursed and ill-treated. Moreover, the backbreaking work in the sugar plantations did not allow the slave women to nurse small babies. The reason behind this anti-natalist policy of the planters are expressed in the statement of one Mr G.M. Hall on Cuban planters:

> During and after pregnancy the slave is useless for several months, and her nourishment should be more abundant and better chosen. This loss of work and added expense comes out of the master's pocket. It is he who has to pay for the often lengthy care of the newborn. This expense is so considerable that the negro born on the plantation costs more when he is in condition to work than another of the same age bought at the public market would have cost (G.M. Hall, quoted by Reddock, 1984: 16).

In the French colony of St Dominique the planters calculated that a slave woman's work over a period of 18 months was worth 600 Livres. The 18 months were the time calculated for pregnancy and breast feeding. During such a time the slave woman would be able to do only half her usual work. Thus, her master would lose 300 Livres. 'A fifteen month old slave was not worth this sum' (Hall, quoted by Reddock, 1984: 16). The effect of this policy was, as many observers have found, that the 'fertility' of slave women was extremely low during this period and far into the nineteenth century (Reddock, 1984).

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, it became evident that Western Africa could no longer be counted upon as fertile hunting ground for slaves. Moreover, the British colonizers saw it as more profitable to incorporate Africa itself into their empire as a source of raw material and minerals. Therefore, the more 'progressive' sections of the British bourgeoisie advocated the abolition of the slave trade – which happened in 1807 – and the encouragement of 'local breeding'. The colonial government foresaw a number of incentives in the slave codes of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to encourage local breeding of slaves by slave women on the plantations. This sudden change of policy, however, seems to have had little effect on the slave women. As Rhoda Reddock points out, in the long years of slavery the slave women had internalized an anti-motherhood attitude as a form of resistance to the slave system; they continued a kind of birth strike till about the middle of the nineteenth century. When they became pregnant, they used bitter herbs to produce abortions or, when the children were born, 'many were allowed to die out of the women's natural dislike for bearing them to see them become slaves, destined to toil all their lives for their master's enrichment' (Moreno-Fraginals, 1976, quoted by Reddock, 1984: 17). Rhoda Reddock sees in this anti-motherhood attitude of the slave women an example of 'the way in which the ideology of the ruling classes

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could, for different though connected material reasons, become the accepted ideology of the oppressed' (Reddock, 1984: 17).

The colonial masters now reaped the fruits – or rather the failures – of treating African women as mere conditions of production for capital accumulation. The problem of labour shortage on the plantations in the Caribbean became so acute, due to the slave women's birth strike, that in Cuba virtual 'stud farms' were established and slave breeding became a regular business (Moreno Fraginals, quoted by Reddock, 1984: 18). Rhoda Reddock summarizes the changing policy of the colonizers regarding slave women's procreative capacities in the following manner:

> As long as Africa was incorporated in the capitalist world economy only as a producer of human labour, there was no need to produce labour locally. Through the use of cost-benefit analysis the planters had taken the most profitable line of action. When this was no longer profitable for them, they were surprised by the resistance shown by the slave women who . . . recognized clearly their position as the property of the plantation owners. The fact is, that for more than 100 years, the majority of slave women in the Caribbean were neither wives nor mothers and by exercising control over their reproductive capabilities were able to deeply affect the plantation economy (Reddock, 1984: 18).

These more than a hundred years that 'slave women in the Caribbean were neither wives nor mothers' were exactly the same period that women of the European bourgeoisie were domesticated and ideologically manipulated into wifehood and motherhood as their 'natural' vocation (Badinter, 1980). While one set of women was treated as pure labour force, a source of energy, the other set of women was treated as 'non-productive' breeders only.

It is, indeed, an irony of history that later in the nineteenth century the colonizers tried desperately to introduce the nuclear family and the monogamous marriage norm into the ex-slave population of the Caribbean. But both women and men saw no benefit for themselves in adopting these norms, and rejected marriage. Now their own double-faced policy boomeranged on the colonizers. In order to be able freely to exploit the slaves, they had for centuries defined them outside humanity and Christianity. In this they were supported by the ethnologists who said that the negroes did not belong to the same 'species' as the Europeans (Caldecott, 1970: 67). Hence, slaves could not become Christians because, according to the Church of England, no Christian could be a slave.

When, around 1780, the new Slave Codes began to encourage marriage among the slaves as a means to encourage local breeding of slaves, the slaves only ridiculed this 'high caste' thing and continued with their 'common law' unions. This meant that each woman could live with a man as long as she pleased; the same also applied to the man. Slave women saw the marriage tie as something that would subject them to the control of one man, who could even beat them. The men wanted more than one wife and therefore rejected marriage. The missionaries and planters who tried to introduce the European middle-class model of the man-woman relationship were exasperated. A church historian, Caldecott, eventually found an explanation for this resistance to the benefits of civilization in the

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fact that negroes were not able to 'control their fancy' (their sexual desires), and therefore shrank from constancy: 'With them it is the women as much as the men who are thus constituted; there is in the Negro race a nearer approach to equality between the sexes than is found in the European races . . .' (Caldecott, quoted by Reddock, 1984: 47). 'Equality between the sexes', however, was seen as a sign of a primitive, backward race, a notion which was common among nineteenth-century colonizers and ethnologists.

That equality of men and women is a sign of backwardness and that it is part of the 'civilizing mission' of the British colonialialists to destroy the independence of colonized women, and to teach the colonized men the 'virtues' of sexism and militarism are also clearly spelt out by one Mr Fielding Hall in his book, *A People at School*.[5] Mr Hall was Political Officer in the British colonial administration in Burma between 1887–91. He gives a vivid account of the independence of Burmese women, of the equality between the sexes, and of the peace-loving nature of the Burmese people which he ascribes to Buddhism. But, instead of trying to preserve such a happy society, Mr Hall comes to the conclusion that Burma has to be brought by force on the road of progress: 'But today the laws are ours, the power, the authority. We govern for our own subjects and we govern in our own way. Our whole presence here is against their desires.' He suggests the following meaures to civilize the Burmese people:

1. The men must be taught to kill and to fight for the British colonialists: 'I can imagine nothing that could do the Burmese so much good as to have a regiment of their own to distinguish itself in our wars. It would open their eyes to new views of life' (*A People at School*, p. 264).
2. The women must surrender their liberty in the interests of man.

Considering equality of the sexes a sign of backwardness, this colonial administrator warned: 'It must never be forgotten that their civilization is relatively a thousand years behind ours.' To overcome this backwardness, the Burmese men should learn to kill, to make war and to oppress their women. In the words of Mr Hall: 'What the surgeon's knife is to the diseased body that is the soldier's sword to the diseased nations'. And again:

> . . . the gospel of progress, of knowledge, of happiness . . . is taught not by book and sermon but by spear and sword . . . To declare, as Buddhism does, that bravery is of no account; to say to them, as the women did, you are no better and no more than we are, and should have the same code of life; could anything be worse?

He also seeks the help of ethnologists to defend this ideology of Man the Hunter: 'Men and women are not sufficiently differentiated yet in Burma. It is the mark of a young race. Ethnologists tell us that. In the earliest peoples the difference was very slight. As a race grows older the difference increases.' Then Mr Hall describes how Burmese women are eventually 'brought down' to the status of the civilized, dependent housewife. Local home-industries, formerly in the hands of women, are destroyed by the import of commodities from England. Women are also pushed out of trade: 'In Rangoon the large English stores are undermining the

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Bazaars where the women used to earn an independent livelihood.'

After their loss of economic independence, Mr Hall considers it of utmost importance that the laws of marriage and inheritance be changed, so that Burma, too, may become a 'progressive' land where men rule. Woman has to understand that her independence stands in the way of progress:

> With her power of independence will disappear her free will and her influence. When she is dependent on her husband she can no longer dictate to him. When he feeds her, she is not longer able to make her voice as loud as his is. It is inevitable that she should retire . . . The nations who succeed are not feminine nations but the masculine. Woman's influence is good provided it does not go too far. Yet it has done so here. It has been bad for the man, bad too for the woman. It has never been good for women to be too independent, it has robbed them of many virtues. It improves a man to have to work for his wife and family, it makes a man of him. It is demoralising for both if the woman can keep herself and, if necessary, her husband too. (*A People at School*, p. 266).

That the African women brought to the Caribbean as slaves were not made slaves because they were 'backward' or less 'civilized' than the colonizers, but on the contrary were *made* 'savages' by slavery itself and those colonizers is now brought to light by historical research on women in Western Africa. George Brooks, for example, shows in his work on the *signares* – the women traders of eighteenth-century Senegal – that these women, particularly of the Wolof tribe, held a high position in the pre-colonial West African societies. Moreover, the first Portuguese and French merchants who came to Senegal in search of merchandise were totally dependent on the cooperation and goodwill of these powerful women, who entered into sexual and trade alliances with these European men. They not only were in possession of great wealth, accumulated through trade with the inferior parts of their regions, but had also developed such a cultured way of life, such a sense for beauty and gracefulness, that the European adventurers who first came into contact with them felt flabbergasted. Brooks quotes one Rev. John Lindsay, chaplain aboard a British ship, as having written:

> As to their women, and in particular the ladies (for so I must call many of those in Senegal), they are in a surprising degree handsome, have very fine features, are wonderfully tractable, remarkably polite both in conversation and manners; and in the point of keeping themselves neat and clean (of which we have generally strange ideas, formed to us by the beastly laziness of the slaves) they far surpass the Europeans in every respect. They bathe twice a day . . . and in this particular have a hearty contempt for all white people, who they imagine must be disagreeable, to our women especially. Nor can even their men from this very notion, be brought to look upon the prettiest of our women, but with the coldest indifference, some of whom there are here, officers' ladies, who dress very showy, and who, even in England would be thought handsome (Brooks, 1976: 24).

The European men – the Portuguese and French who came to West Africa first as merchants or soldiers – came usually alone, without wives or families. Their alliances with the 'ladies' or *signares* (from the Portuguese word *senhoras*) were so attractive to them that they married these women according to the Wolof style,

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and often simply adopted the African way of life. Their children, the Euroafricans, often rose to high positions in the colonial society, the daughters usually became *signares* again. Obviously, the Portuguese and the French colonizers did not yet have strong racist prejudices against sexual and marriage relationships with West African women, but found these alliances not only profitable, but also humanly satisfying.

With the advent of the British in West Africa, however, this easy-going, catholic attitude towards African women changed. The British soldiers, merchants and administrators no longer entered into marriage alliances with the *signares*, but turned African women into prostitutes. This, then, seems to be the point in history when racism proper enters the picture: the African woman is degraded and made a prostitute for the English colonizers, then theories of the racial superiority of the white male and the 'beastliness' of the African women are propagated. Obviously, British colonial history is as discreet about these aspects as the Dutch. Yet Brooks says that the institution of 'signareship' did not take root in Gambia because it was

> stifled by the influx of new arrivals from Britain, few of whom, whether traders, government officials, or military officers – deviated from 'proper' British behaviour to live openly with Euroafrican or African women, whatever they might do clandestinely. British authors are discreet about such matters, but it can be discerned that in contrast to the family lives of traders and their *signares*, there developed . . . a rootless bachelor community of a type found elsewhere in British areas of West Africa. Open and unrepentant racism was one characteristic of this community; two others were reckless gambling and alcoholism (Brooks, 1976: 43).

These accounts corroborate not only Walter Rodney's general thesis that 'Europe underdeveloped Africa', but also our main argument that the colonial process, as it advanced, brought the women of the colonized people progressively down from a former high position of relative power and independence to that of 'beastly' and degraded 'nature'. This 'naturalization' of colonized women is the counterpart of the 'civilizing' of the European women.

The 'defining back into nature', or the 'naturalization' of African women who were brought as slaves to the Caribbean is perhaps the clearest evidence of the double-faced, hypocritical process of European colonization: while African women were treated as 'savages', the women of the white colonizers in their fatherlands 'rose' to the status of 'ladies'. These two processes did not happen side by side, are not simply historical parallels, but are intrinsically and causally linked within this patriarchal-capitalist mode of production. This creation of 'savage' and 'civilized' women, and the polarization between the two was, and still is, the organizing structural principle also in other parts of the world subjected by capitalist colonialism. There is not yet enough historical research into the effects of the colonizing process on women, but the little evidence we have corroborates this observation. It also explains the shifts in colonial policy towards women – following the fluctuations of the accumulation process – which Rhoda Reddock observed.

Thus, Annie Stoler (1982) has found that, at the other end of the globe in Sumatra in the early 20th century, the Dutch followed a similar double-faced policy regarding women:

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> At certain junctures in estate expansion, for example, women ostensibly recruited from Java as estate coolies were in large part brought to Sumatra to service the domestic, including sexual, needs of unmarried male workers and management. Prostitution was not only sanctioned but encouraged . . . (Stoler, 1982: 90).

The driving motive for these planters, as was the case with the French or English in the Caribbean, was profit-making, and this motive, as Annie Stoler remarks, explains the fluctuations in Dutch colonial policy *vis-à-vis* women. In the colonial records, the 'issues of marriage contracts, sickness, prostitution, and labour unrest appear as they relate to profit; married workers during the first decade of the century were considered too costly and therefore marriage contracts were difficult to obtain' (Stoler, 1982: 97).

Obviously, to make women prostitutes was cheaper, but then, when almost half of the female workers in North Sumatra were racked with venereal disease, and had to be hospitalized at the company's expense, it became more profitable to encourage marriage among the estate workers. This was between the 1920s and 1930s. Whereas in the first phase, migrant women were good enough to do all hard labour on the plantations, now a process of housewifization took place to exclude resident women from wage-labour on the estates. Annie Stoler writes:

> At different economic and political junctures in plantation history, the planters contended that (1) permanent female workers were too costly to maintain, because of the time they took off for child-birth and menstruation, (2) women should not and could not do 'hard' labour, and (3) women were better suited to casual work (Stoler, 1982: 98).

That this introduction of the image of the 'weak woman' was a clear ideological move which served the economic purpose of lowering women's wages and creating a casual female labour force becomes evident from the statistics. Thus, in the Coolie Budget Report of 1903, it is stated that only one per cent of total available working-days were missed because of pregnancy (Stoler, 1982: 98).

Rhoda Reddock also, in the later parts of her study, gives ample evidence of this process – around the same time, in the British Crown Colony of Trinidad – of excluding women from wage-labour proper and of defining them as 'dependents' (Rhoda Reddock, 1984).

Also, in the case of the Dutch colonizers, profit-making was the overall objective, and the contradictory values and policies regarding their own 'civilized' women back home and the 'savage' women in Sumatra constituted the best mechanism to ensure this. The fact that they used two diametrically opposed sets of values to the two sets of women obviously did not give them any pangs of conscience. Prostitution became a public issue only when it was no longer profitable to recruit women as prostitutes. Again here we have to stress that the emergence of the Dutch housewife, the stress on family and homemaking 'back home', was not just a temporal coincidence but was causally linked to the disruption of families and homes among estate workers in the Dutch colonies.

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Women under German Colonialism

Whereas the examples of British and Dutch colonial policy regarding women given above mainly focus on the colonial side of the picture, the following example, based on Martha Mamozai's study of the impact of German colonialism on women, includes the effect of this process also on the German women 'back home'. This account will, therefore, help us to perceive more fully the double-faced process of colonization and housewifization.

Germany entered the race for the looting and distribution of the world rather late. The German Colonial Society was founded in 1884, and from then until the beginning of World War I – a direct result of the inter-imperialist scramble for hegemony among the European nations – the government of the German Reich encouraged the establishment of German colonies, particularly in Africa.

Mamozai's study shows that colonization did not affect men and women in the same way, but used the particular capitalist sexual division of labour to bring the labour power of Africans under the command of capital and the White Man. As usually happens with conquerors, invaders and colonizers, the Germans who first came to West Africa as planters around the 1880s came mostly as single men. As had happened with the Portuguese and French men in West Africa, they entered into sexual and matrimonial relations with African women. Many formed regular families with these women. After some time, it became evident that these marriages would eventually lead to a new generation of 'mixed blood' Euroafricans who, following the patriarchal and bourgeois family laws in Germany, would be Germans with full economic and political rights. There were heated debates about the 'colonial question' or the 'native question' in the German Reichstag which centered, on the one hand, on the question of 'mixed marriages' and 'bastards' – hence on the concern for the privileges of the white race – on the other, on the production, subjugation and disciplining of sufficient African labour power for the German estates and projects.

Governor Friedrich von Lindquist expressed the 'bastard-question in South West Africa' in the following manner:

> The considerable preponderance of the white male over the white female population is a sorry state of affairs, which, for the life and the future of the country will be of great significance. This has led to a considerable number of mixed relations, which is particularly regrettable because, apart from the ill-effects of the mixing of races, the white minority in South Africa can preserve its dominance over the coloureds only by keeping its race pure (quoted by Mamozai, 1982: 125; transl. M.M.).

Therefore, in 1905 a law was passed which prohibited marriages between European men and African women. In 1907, even those marriages which had been concluded prior to this law were declared null and void. Those who lived in such unions, including their 'bastards', lost the rights of citizens in 1908, including the voting right. The objective of this law was clearly the preservation of property rights in the hands of the white minority. Had the Afro-Germans had the rights of German citizens and voting rights, they could, in the course of time, have outnumbered the

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'pure' whites in the elections. The laws, however, prohibiting marriages between European men and black women did not mean that the Reichstag wanted to put restrictions on the sexual freedom of the colonizing men. On the contrary, the German men were even advised by doctors to recruit African women as concubines or prostitutes. Thus, one Dr Max Bucher, representative of the German Reich wrote:

> Regarding the free intercourse with the daughters of the land – this has to be seen as advantageous rather than as damaging to health. Even under the dark skin the 'Eternal Female' is an excellent fetish against emotional deprivation which so easily occurs in the African loneliness. Apart from these psychological gains there are also practical advantages of personal security. To have an intimate black girl-friend means protection from many dangers (quoted by Mamozai, 1982: 129).

This means black women were good enough to service the white men as prostitutes and concubines, but they should not become proper 'wives' because this would, in the long run, have changed the property relations in Africa. This becomes very clear in a statement of one Dr Karl Oetker who was Health Officer during the construction of the railroad between Dar-es-Salaam and Morogoro:

> It should be a matter of course, but may be stressed again, that every European man who has intercourse with black females has to take care that such a union remains sterile in order to prevent a mixture of races, such a mixture would have the worst effect for our colonies, as this has been amply proved in the West Indies, Brasil and Madagaskar. Such relationships can and should only be considered as surrogates for marriage. Recognition and protection by the state, which marriages among whites enjoy, have to be withheld from such unions (quoted by Mamozai, 1982: 130).

Here the double-standard is very clear: marriage and family were goods to be protected for the whites, the 'Master Men' (Dominant Men). African families could be disrupted, men and women could be forced into labour gangs, women could be made prostitutes.

It is important not to look at this hypocritical colonial policy towards women only from a moralistic point of view. It is essential to understand that the rise and generalization of the 'decent' bourgeois marriage and family as protected institutions are *causally* linked to the disruption of clan and family relations of the 'natives'. The emergence of the masses of German families from 'proletarian misery', as one colonial officer put it, was directly linked to the exploitation of colonies and the subordination of colonial labour power. The development of Germany into a leading industrial nation was dependent, as many saw it in those years, on the possession of colonies. Thus, Paul von Hindenburg, the later Reichskanzler wrote: 'Without colonies no security regarding the acquisition of raw materials, without raw materials no industry, without industry no adequate standard of living and wealth. Therefore, Germans, do we need colonies' (quoted by Mamozai, 1983: 27; transl. M.M.).

The justification for this logic of exploitation was provided by the theory that the 'natives' had 'not yet' evolved to the level of the white master race, and that

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colonialism was the means to develop the slumbering forces of production in these regions and thus make them contribute to the betterment of mankind. A colonial officer from South West Africa wrote:

> A right of the natives, which could only be realised at the expense of the development of the white race, does not exist. The idea is absurd that Bantus, Sudan-negroes, and Hottentots in Africa have the right to live and die as they please, even when by this uncounted people among the civilized peoples of Europe were forced to remain tied to a miserable proletarian existence instead of being able, by the full use of the productive capacities of our colonial possessions to rise to a richer level of existence themselves and also to help construct the whole body of human and national welfare (quoted by Mamozai, 1983: 58; transl. M.M.)

The conviction that the white master men had the god-given mission to 'develop' the productive capacities in the colonies and thus bring the 'savages' into the orbit of civilization was also shared, as we shall see later, by the Social Democrats who likewise believed in the development of productive forces through colonialism.

The refusal of the 'native' women of South West Africa to produce children for the hated colonial masters was, therefore, seen as an attack on this policy of development of productive forces. After the rebellion of the Herero people had been brutally crushed by the German General von Trotha, the Herero women went on a virtual birth-strike. Like the slave women in the Caribbean, they refused to produce forced labour power for the planters and estate owners. Between 1892 and 1909, the Herero population decreased from 80,000 to a mere 19,962. For the German farmers this was a severe problem. One of them wrote:

> After the rebellion the native, particularly the Herero, often takes the stand not to produce children. He considers himself a prisoner, which he brings to your notice at every job which he does not like. He does not like to make new labour force for his oppressor, who has deprived him of his golden laziness . . . While the German farmers have been trying for years to remedy this sad state of affairs by offering a premium for each child born on the farm, for instance, a she-goat. But mostly in vain. A section of today's native women has been engaged for too long in prostitution and are spoiled for motherhood. Another part does not want children and gets rid of them, when they are pregnant, through abortion. In such cases the authorities should interfere with all severity. Each case should be investigated thoroughly and severely punished by prison, and if that is not enough by putting the culprit in chains. (quoted by Mamozai, 1982: 52; transl. M.M.).

In a number of cases the farmers took the law into their own hands and brutally punished the recalcitrant women. In the Herero women's stand we see again, as in the case of the slave women, that African women were not just helpless victims in this colonizing process, but understood precisely their relative power within the colonial relations of production, and used that power accordingly. What has to be noted, however, with regard to the comments of the German farmer quoted above, is that although it was the Herero *women* who went on a birth-strike, he refers only to *the Herero* (man). Even in their reporting, the colonizing men denied the subjected women all subjectivity and

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initiative. All 'natives' were 'savages', wild nature, but the most savage of all were the 'native' women.

White Women in Africa

Martha Mamozai also provides us with interesting material about the 'other side' of the colonizing process, namely, the impact the subordination of Africans, and African women in particular, had on the German women 'back home' and on those who had joined the colonial pioneers in Africa.

As was said before, one of the problems of the white colonialists was the reproduction of the white master race in the colonies itself. This could be achieved only if white women from the 'fatherland' were ready to go to the colonies and marry 'our boys down there', and produce white children. As most planters belonged to that band of 'adventurous bachelors', a special effort had to be made to mobilize women to go to the colonies as brides. The German advocates of white supremacy saw it as a special duty of German women to save the German men in the colonies from the evil influence of the 'Kaffir females' who in the long run would alienate these men from European culture and civilization.

The call was heard by Frau Adda von Liliencron, who founded the 'Women's League of the German Colonial Society'. This association had the objective of giving girls a special training in colonial housekeeping and sending them as brides to Africa. She recruited mainly girls from the peasant or working class, many of whom had worked as maidservants in the cities. In 1898 for the first time 25 single women were sent to South West Africa as a 'Christmas gift' for 'our boys down there'. Martha Mamozai reports how many of these women 'rose' to the level of the white memsahib, the bourgeois lady who saw it as her mission to teach the African women the virtues of civilization: cleanliness, punctuality, obedience and industriousness. It is amazing to observe how soon these women, who not long ago were still among the downtrodden themselves, shared the prejudices against the 'dirty and lazy natives' which were common in colonial society.

But not only did the few European women who went to the colonies as wives and 'breeders for race and nation' rise to the level of proper housewives on the subordination and subjection of the colonized women, so too did the women 'back home'; first those of the bourgeoisie, and later also the women of the proletariat, were gradually domesticated and civilized into proper housewives. For the same period which saw the expansion of colonialism and imperialism also saw the rise of the housewife in Europe and the USA. In the following I shall deal with this side of the story.

Housewifization

1st Stage: Luxuries for the 'Ladies'

The 'other side of the story' of both the violent subordination of European women during the witch persecution, and of African, Asian and Latin American women

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during the colonizing process is the creation of the women first of the accumulating classes in Europe, later also in the USA, as consumers and demonstrators of luxury and wealth, and at a later stage as housewives. Let us not forget that practically all the items which were stolen, looted or traded from the colonies were not items necessary for the daily subsistence of the masses, but luxury items. Initially these items were only consumed by the privileged few who had the money to buy them: spices from the Molluccan islands; precious textiles, silk, precious stones and muslin from India; sugar, cacao and spices from the Caribbean; precious metals from Hispano America. Werner Sombart, in his study on *Luxury and Capitalism* (1922), has advanced the thesis that the market for most of these rare colonial luxury goods had been created by a class of women who had risen as mistresses of the absolutist princes and kings of France and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. According to Sombart, the great cocottes and mistresses were the ones who created new fashions in women's dress, cosmetics, eating habits, and particularly in furnishing the homes of the gentlemen. Neither the war-mongering men of the aristocracy nor the men of the merchant class would have had, if left to themselves, the imagination, the sophistication and the culture to invent such luxuries, almost all centred around women as luxury creatures. It was this class of women, according to Sombart, who created the new luxury 'needs' which gave the decisive impetus to capitalism because, with their access to the money accumulated by the absolutist state, they created the market for early capitalism.

Sombart gives us a detailed account of the development of luxury consumption at the Italian, French and English courts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He clearly identifies a trend in luxury-spending, particularly during the reign of Louis XIV. Whereas the luxury expenses of the king of France were 2,995,000 Livres in 1542, these had steadily risen and were 28,813,955 in 1680. Sombart attributes this enormous display of luxury and splendour to the love of these feudal lords for their courtesans and mistresses. Thus, the king's fancy for La Vallière prompted Louis XIV to build Versailles. Sombart is also of the opinion that Mme de Pompadour, the representative of the culture of the *ancien régime*, had a bigger budget than any of the European queens ever had had. In 19 years of her reign she spent 36,327,268 Livres. Similarly Comtesse Dubarry, who reigned between 1769–1774, spent 12,481,803 Livres on luxury items (Sombart, 1922: 98–99).

Feminists will not agree with Sombart who attributes this development of luxury which first centred around the European courts and was later imitated by the *nouveaux riches* among the European bourgeoisie, to the great courtesans with their great vanity, their addiction for luxurious clothes, houses, furniture, food, cosmetics. Even if the men of these classes preferred to demonstrate their wealth by spending on their women and turning them into showpieces of their accumulated wealth, it would again mean to make the women the villains of the piece. Would it not amount to saying that it was not the men – who wielded economic and political power – who were the historical 'subjects' (in the Marxist sense), but the women, as the real power behind the scenes who pulled the strings and set the tune according to which the mighty men danced? But, apart from this,

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Sombart's thesis that capitalism was born out of luxury consumption and not in order to satisfy growing subsistence needs of the masses has great relevance for our discussion of the relationship between colonization and housewifization. He shows clearly that early merchant capitalism was based practically entirely on trade with luxury items from the colonies which were consumed by the European elites. The items which appear in a trading-list of the Levant trade include: *oriental medicines* (e.g., aloes, balm, ginger, camphor, cardamon, myrobalam, saffron, etc.); *spices* (pepper, cloves, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg); *perfumes* (benzoin, musk, sandalwood, incense, amber); *dyes for textiles* (e.g., indigo, lac, purple, henna); *raw materials for textiles* (silk, Egyptian flax); *precious metals and jewellery and stones* (corals, pearls, ivory, porcelain, glass, gold and silver); *textiles* (silk, brocade, velvet, fine material of linen, muslin or wool).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many more items were added to this list, particularly items systematically produced in the new colonial plantations like sugar, coffee, cacao and tea. Sombart gives an account of the rising tea consumption in England. The average tea consumption of an English family was 6.5 pounds in 1906. This level of consumption could be afforded in:

1668 by	3	families
1710 by	2,000	families
1730 by	12,000	families
1760 by	40,000	families
1780 by	140,000	families

(Source: Sombart, 1922: 146)

What did this tremendous deployment of luxury among the European rich, based on the exploitation of the peoples of Africa, Asia and America, mean for the European women? Sombart identifies certain trends in the luxury production, which he, as we have seen, attributes to the passions of a certain class of women. They are the following:

1. *a tendency towards domesticity*: Whereas medieval luxury was public, now it became private. The display of luxury does not take place in the market place or during public festivals, but inside the secluded palaces and houses of the rich.
2. *a tendency towards objectification*: In the Middle Ages wealth was expressed in the number of vassals or men a prince could count upon. Now wealth is expressed in goods and material items, commodities bought by money. Adam Smith would say: 'one moves from "unproductive" to "productive" luxury, because the former personal luxury puts "unproductive" hands to work, whereas the objectified luxury puts "productive" hands to work' (in a capitalist sense, that is, wage-workers in a capitalist enterprise) (Sombart, 1922: 119). Sombart is of the opinion that leisure class women had an interest in the development of objectified luxury (more items and commodities), because they had no use for more soldiers and vassals.

   Similar trends can be observed with regard to sugar and coffee. For most people in Europe in the eighteenth century, sugar had not yet replaced honey. Sugar remained a typical luxury item for the European rich until far into the nineteenth century (Sombart, 1922: 147).

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Foreign trade between Europe, America, Africa and the Orient was, until well into the nineteenth century, mainly trade in the above-mentioned luxury goods. Imports from East India to France in 1776 were to the value of 36,241,000 Francs, distributed as follows:

coffee	3,248,000 fr.
pepper and cinnamon	2,449,000 fr.
muslin	12,000,000 fr.
Indian linen	10,000,000 fr.
porcelain	200,000 fr.
silk	1,382,000 fr.
tea	3,399,000 fr.
saltpetre	3,380,000 fr.
Total	*36,241,000 fr.*

(Source: Sombart, 1922: 148)

Sombart also includes the profits made by the slave trade in the figures for luxury production and consumption.[6] The slave trade was totally organized along capitalist lines.

The development of wholesale and retail markets in England followed the same logic from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. The first big urban shops which came up to replace the local markets were shops dealing with luxury goods.

3. *a tendency towards contraction of time*: Whereas formerly luxury consumption was restricted to certain seasons because the indigenous production of a surplus needed a long time, now luxuries could be consumed at any time during the year and also within the span of an individual life.

   Sombart again attributes this tendency – in my opinion, wrongly – to the individualism and the impatience of leisure class women who demanded immediate satisfaction of their desires as a sign of the affection of their lovers.

Of the above tendencies, the tendency towards domestication and privatization certainly had a great impact on the construction of the new image of the 'good woman' in the centres of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, namely, woman as *mother* and *housewife*, and the family as her arena, the privatized arena of consumption and 'love', excluded and sheltered from the arena of production and accumulation, where men reign. In the following, I shall trace how the ideal of the domesticated privatized woman, concerned with 'love' and consumption and dependent on a male 'breadwinner', was generalized, first in the bourgeois class proper, then among the so-called petty-bourgeosie, and finally in the working class or the proletariat.

2nd Stage: Housewife and Nuclear Family: The 'Colony' of the Little White Men

While the Big White Men – the 'Dominant Men' (Mamozai) – appropriated land, natural resources and people in Africa, Asia and Central and South America in order to be able to extract raw materials, products and labour power which they themselves had not produced, while they disrupted all social relations created by the local people, they began to build up in their fatherlands the patriarchal nuclear

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family, that is, the monogamous nuclear family as we know it today. This family, which was put under the specific protection of the state, consists of the forced combination of the principles of kinship and cohabitation, and the definition of the man as 'head' of this household and 'breadwinner' for the non-earning legal wife and their children. While in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries this marriage and family form were possible only among the propertied classes of the bourgeoisie – among peasants, artisans and workers women had always to share all work – this form was made the norm for all by a number of legal reforms pushed through by the state from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. In Germany – as in other European countries – there existed a number of marriage restrictions for people without property. These were only abolished in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the state intervened to promote a pro-natalist policy for the propertyless working class (Heinsohn and Knieper, 1976).

Recent family history has revealed that even the concept 'family' became popular only towards the end of the eighteenth century in Europe, particularly in France and England, and it was not before the middle of the nineteenth century that this concept was also adopted for the households of the workers and peasants because, contrary to general opinion, 'family' had a distinct class connotation. Only classes with property could afford to have a 'family'. Propertyless people – like farm servants or urban poor – were not supposed to have a 'family' (Flandrin, 1980; Heinsohn and Knieper, 1976). But 'family' in the sense in which we understand it today – that is, as a combination of co-residence and blood-relationship based on the patriarchal principle – was not even found among the aristocracy. The aristocratic 'family' did not imply co-residence of all family members. Co-residence, particularly of husband and wife and their offspring, became the crucial criterion of the family of the bourgeoisie. Hence our present concept of family is a bourgeois one (Flandrin, 1980; Luz Tangangco, 1982).

It was the bourgeoisie which established the social and sexual division of labour, characteristic of capitalism. The bourgeoisie declared 'family' a private territory in contrast to the 'public' sphere of economic and political activity. The bourgeoisie first withdrew 'their' women from this public sphere and shut them into their cosy 'homes' from where they could not interfere in the war-mongering, moneymaking and the politicking of the men. Even the French Revolution, though fought by thousands of women, ended by excluding women from politics. The bourgeoisie, particularly the puritan English bourgeoisie, created the ideology of romantic love as a compensation for and sublimation of the sexual and economic independence women had had before the rise of this class. Malthus, one of the important theoreticians of the rising bourgeoisie, saw clearly that capitalism needed a different type of woman. The poor should curb their sexual 'instincts', because otherwise they would breed too many poor for the scarce food supply. On the other hand, they should not use contraceptives, a method recommended by Condorcet in France, because that would make them lazy because he saw a close connection between sexual abstinence and readiness to work. Then Malthus paints a rosy picture of a decent bourgeois home in which 'love' does not express itself in sexual activity, but in which the domesticated wife sublimates the sexual 'instinct' in order to create a cosy home for the hard-working breadwinner who has

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to struggle for money in a competitive and hostile world 'outside' (Malthus, quoted in Heinsohn, Knieper and Steiger, 1979). As Heinsohn, Knieper and Steiger point out, capitalism did not, as Engels and Marx believed, destroy the family; on the contrary, with the help of the state and its police, it *created* the family first among the propertied classes, later in the working class, and with it the housewife as a social category. Also, from the accounts of the composition and condition of the early industrial proletariat, it appears that the family, as we understand it today, was much less the norm than is usually believed.

As we all know, women and children constituted the bulk of the early industrial proletariat. They were the cheapest and most manipulable labour force and could be exploited like no other worker. The capitalists understood well that a woman with children had to accept any wage if she wanted to survive. On the other hand, women were less of a problem for the capitalists than men. Their labour was also cheap because they were no longer organized, unlike the skilled men who had their associations as journeymen and a tradition of organizing from the guilds. Women had been thrown out of these organizations long ago, they had no new organizations and hence no bargaining power. For the capitalists it was, therefore, more profitable and less risky to employ women. With the rise of industrial capitalism and the decline of merchant capitalism (around 1830), the extreme exploitation of women's and child labour became a problem. Women whose health had been destroyed by overwork and appalling work conditions could not produce healthy children who could become strong workers and soldiers – as was realized after several wars later in the century.

Many of these women did not live in proper 'families', but were either unmarried, or had been deserted and lived, worked and moved around with children and young people in gangs (cf. Marx, *Capital*, vol. I). These women had no particular material interest in producing the next generation of miserable workers for the factories. But they constituted a threat to bourgeois morality with its ideal of the domesticated woman. Therefore, it was also necessary to domesticate the proletarian woman. She had to be *made* to breed more workers.

Contrary to what Marx thought, the production of children could not be left to the 'instincts' of the proletariat, because, as Heinsohn and Knieper point out, the propertyless proletariat had no material interest in the production of children, as children were no insurance in old age, unlike the sons of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the state had to interfere in the production of people and, through legislation, police measures and the ideological campaign of the churches, the sexual energies of the proletariat had to be channelled into the strait-jacket of the bourgeois family. The proletarian woman had to be housewifized too, in spite of the fact that she could not afford to sit at home and wait for the husband to feed her and her children. Heinsohn and Knieper (1976) analyse this process for nineteenth-century Germany. Their main thesis is that the 'family' had to be forced upon the proletariat by police measures, because otherwise the propertyless proletarians would not have produced enough children for the next generation of workers. One of the most important measures – after the criminalization of infanticide which had already taken place – was, therefore, the law which abolished the marriage prohibition for propertyless people. This law was passed by the

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North German League in 1868. Now proletarians were allowed to marry and have a 'family', like the bourgeois. But this was not enough. Sexuality had to be curbed in such a way that it took place within the confines of this family. Therefore, sexual intercourse before marriage and outside it was criminalized. The owners of the means of production were given the necessary police power to watch over the morality of their workers. After the Franco-Prussian War in 1870–71, a law was passed which made abortion a crime – a law against which the new women's movement fought, with only small success. The churches, in their cooperation with the state, worked on the souls of the people. What the secular state called a crime, the churches called a sin. The churches had a wider influence than the state because they reached more people, particularly in the countryside (Heinsohn and Knieper, 1976).

In this way the housewifization of women was also forced into the working class. According to Heinsohn and Knieper (1976) and others, the family had never existed among the propertyless farm servants or proletarians; it had to be created by force. This strategy worked because, by that time, women had lost most of their knowledge of contraception and because the state and church had drastically curbed women's autonomy over their bodies.

The housewifization of women, however, had not only the objective of ensuring that there were enough workers and soldiers for capital and the state. The creation of housework and the housewife as an agent of consumption became a very important strategy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By that time not only had the household been discovered as an important market for a whole range of new gadgets and items, but also scientific home-management had become a new ideology for the further domestication of women. Not only was the housewife called on to reduce the labour power costs, she was also mobilized to use her energies to create new needs. A virtual war for cleanliness and hygiene – a war against dirt, germs, bacteria, and so on – was started in order to create a market for the new products of the chemical industry. Scientific home-making was also advocated as a means of lowering the men's wage, because the wage would last longer if the housewife used it economically (Ehrenreich and English, 1975).

The process of housewifization of women, however, was not only pushed forward by the bourgeoisie and the state. The working-class movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also made its contribution to this process. The organized working class welcomed the abolition of forced celibacy and marriage restrictions for propertyless workers. One of the demands of the German delegation to the 1863 Congress of the International Workingmen's Association was the 'freedom for workers to form a family'. Heinsohn and Knieper (1976) point out that the German working-class organizations, at that time headed by Lassalle, fought rather for the right to have a family than against the forced celibacy of propertyless people. Thus, the liberation from forced celibacy was historically achieved only by subsuming the whole propertyless class under bourgeois marriage and family laws. As bourgeois marriage and family were considered 'progressive', the accession of the working class to these standards was considered by most leaders of the working class as a progressive move. The struggles of the workers' movement for higher wages were often justified, particularly by the skilled workers

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who constituted the 'most advanced sections' of the working class, by the argument that the man's wage should be sufficient to maintain a family so that his wife could stay at home and look after children and household.

From 1830–1840 onwards – and practically until the end of the nineteenth century – the attitude of the German male workers, and of those organized in the Social Democratic Party, was characterized by what Thönnessen called 'proletarian anti-feminism' (Thönnessen, 1969: 14). Their proletarian anti-feminism was mainly concerned with the threat the entry of women into industrial production would pose to the men's wages and jobs. Repeatedly, at various congresses of the workers' associations and party congresses, a demand was raised to prohibit women's work in factories. The question of women's work in factories was also discussed at the 1866 Congress of the First International in Geneva. Marx, who had drafted the instructions for the delegates of the General Council to the Geneva Congress, had stated that the tendency of modern industry to draw women and children into production had to be seen as a progressive tendency. The French section and also some of the Germans, however, were strongly opposed to women's work outside the house. The German section had in fact submitted the following memorandum:

> Create conditions under which every grown-up man can take a wife, can found a family, secured by work, and under which none of the miserable creatures will exist any longer who, in isolation and despair, become victims, sin against themselves and against nature and tar by prostitution and trade in human flesh the civilisation . . . To wives and mothers belongs the work in the family and the household. While the man is the representative of the serious public and family duties, the wife and mother should represent the comfort and the poetry of domestic life, she should bring grace and beauty to social manners and raise human enjoyment to a nobler and higher plane (Thönnessen, 1969: 19; transl. M.M.).

In this statement we find all the hypocrisy and bourgeois sentimentalism which Marx and Engels had castigated in the Communist Manifesto, this time, however, presented by male proletarians, who want to keep women in their 'proper' place. But neither did Karl Marx take a clear and unequivocal position regarding the question of women's work. Although in his instructions to the First International he had maintained that women's and children's work in factories be seen as a progressive tendency, he declared at the same time that night work, or work which would harm women's 'delicate physique' should be reduced. Of course, he also considered night work bad for men, but special protection should be given to women. The tendencies of 'proletarian anti-feminism' were most pronounced among the faction of the German Social Democrats led by Lassalle. At a party congress of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiter-Verein* (ADAV) in 1866, it was stated:

> The employment of women in the workshops and modern industry is one of the most outrageous abuses of our time. Outrageous, because the material conditions of the working class are not improved but deteriorated thereby. Due particularly to the destruction of the family, the working population ends up in such a miserable condition that they lose even the last trace of cultural and ideal

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> values they had so far. Therefore, the tendency to further extend the labour market for women has to be condemned. Only the abolition of the rule of capital will remedy the situation, when the wage relation will be abolished through positive and organic institutions and every worker will get the full fruit of his labour (*Social Democrat*, no. 139, 29 November 1867, vol. 3, app. 1; quoted in Niggemann, 1981: 40; transl. M.M.).

But it was not only the 'reformists' in the Social Democratic Party who held the view that the proletarians needed a proper family, the radicals who followed Marx's revolutionary strategy had no other concept of women and the family. August Bebel and Clara Zetkin who belonged to this wing and who, until then, had been, with Engels, considered the most important contributors to a socialist theory of women's emancipation, advocated the maintenance of a proper family with a proper housewife and mother among the working class. Also Bebel wanted to reduce women's employment so that mothers would have more time for the education of their children. He regretted the destruction of the proletarian family:

> The wife of the worker who comes home in the evening, tired and exhausted, again has her hands full of work. She has to rush to attend to the most necessary tasks. The man goes to the pub and finds there the comfort he cannot find at home, he drinks, . . . perhaps he takes to the vice of gambling and loses thereby, even more than by drinking. Meanwhile the wife is sitting at home, grumbling, she has to work like a brute . . . this is how disharmony begins. But if the woman is less responsible she too, after returning home tired, goes out to have her recreation and thus the household goes down the drain and the misery doubles (Bebel, 1964: 157–8; transl. M.M.).

Bebel did not conceive of a change in the sexual division of labour nor a sharing of household tasks by men. He saw woman mainly as a mother, and did not envisage a change in her role in the future.

This is also the main view held by Clara Zetkin. In spite of her struggles against 'proletarian anti-feminism', she saw the proletarian woman as a wife and mother rather than as a worker. In 1896 she gave a speech at the party congress in Gotha where she formulated the following main points of her theory:

1. the struggle for women's emancipation is identical with the struggle of the proletariat against capitalism.
2. nevertheless, working women need special protection at their place of work.
3. improvements in the conditions of working women would enable them to participate more actively in the revolutionary struggle of the whole class.

Together with Marx and Engels, she was of the opinion that capitalism had created equality of exploitation between man and woman. Therefore, the proletarian women cannot fight against men, as bourgeois feminists might do, but must fight against the capitalist class together with men:

> Therefore the liberation struggle of the proletarian woman cannot be a struggle like that of the bourgeois woman against the man of her class; on the contrary, it is a struggle together with the man of her class against the class of capitalists. She need not fight against the men of her class in order to break down the barriers which limit free competition. Capital's need for exploitation and the

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> development of the modern mode of production have done this for her. On the contrary, what is needed is to erect new barriers against the exploitation of the proletarian woman. What is needed is to give her back her rights as a wife, a mother, and to secure them. The final goal of her struggle is not free competition with man but the establishment of the political rule of the proletariat (quoted in Evans, 1978: 114; transl. M.M.).

What is striking in this statement is the emphasis on women's rights as mother and wife. She made this even more explicit later in the same speech:

> By no means should it be the task of the socialist agitation of women to alienate women from their duties as mothers and wives. On the contrary, one has to see to it that she can fulfill these tasks better than hitherto, in the interest of the proletariat. The better the conditions in the family, her effectiveness in the home, the better she will be able to fight. . . . So many mothers, so many wives who inspire their husbands and their children with class consciousness are doing as much as the women comrades whom we see in our meetings (quoted in Evans, 1979: 114–115; transl. M.M.).

These ideas found a very positive echo in the party, which had in any case, as we have seen, a rather bourgeois concept of women's role as mother and wife. This process of creating the bourgeois nuclear family in the working class and of the housewifization of proletarian women also was not restricted to Germany, but can be traced in all industrialized and 'civilized' countries. It was pushed forward not only by the bourgeois class and state, but also by the 'most advanced sections' of the working class, namely the male skilled labour aristocracy in the European countries. Particularly for socialists, this process points to a basic contradiction, which has still not been solved, not even in socialist countries:

If entry into social production is seen as a precondition for women's emancipation or liberation, as all orthodox socialists believe, then it is a contradiction to uphold at the same time the concept of the man as breadwinner and head of the family, of woman as dependent housewife and mother, and of the nuclear family as 'progressive'.

This contradition is, however, the result of a *de facto* class division between working-class men and women. I disagree with Heinsohn and Knieper (1976) when they say that the working class as a whole had no material interest in the creation of the nuclear family and the housewifization of women. Maybe working-class women had nothing to gain, but working-class men had.

Proletarian men do have a material interest in the domestication of their female class companions. This material interest consists, on the one hand, in the man's claim to monopolize available wage-work, on the other, in the claim to have control over all money income in the family. Since money has become the main source and embodiment of power under capitalism, proletarian men fight about money not only with the capitalists, but also with their wives. Their demand for a family wage is an expression of this struggle. Here the point is not whether a proper family wage was ever paid or not (cf. Land, 1980; Barrett and McIntosh, 1980), the point is that the ideological and theoretical consequence of this concept led to the *de facto* acceptance of the bourgeois concept of the family and of women by the proletariat.

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Marx's analysis of the value of labour power is also based on this concept, namely, that the worker has a 'non-working' housewife (Mies, 1981). After this all female work is devalued, whether it is wage-work or housework.

The function of housework for the process of capital accumulation has been extensively discussed by feminists in recent years. I shall omit this aspect here. But I would like to point out that housewifization means the externalization, or ex-territorialization of costs which otherwise would have to be covered by the capitalists. This means women's labour is considered a natural resource, freely available like air and water.

Housewifization means at the same time the total atomization and disorganization of these hidden workers. This is not only the reason for the lack of women's political power, but also for their lack of bargaining power. As the housewife is linked to the wage-earning breadwinner, to the 'free' proletarian as a non-free worker, the 'freedom' of the proletarian to sell his labour power is based on the non-freedom of the housewife. Proletarianization of men is based on the housewifization of women.

Thus, the Little White Man also got his 'colony', namely, the family and a domesticated housewife. This was a sign that, at last, the propertyless proletarian had risen to the 'civilized' status of a citizen, that he had become a full member of a 'culture-nation'. This rise, however, was paid for by the subordination and housewifization of the women of his class. The extension of bourgeois laws to the working class meant that in the family the propertyless man was also lord and master.

It is my thesis that these two processes of colonization and housewifization are closely and causally interlinked. Without the ongoing exploitation of external colonies – formerly as direct colonies, today within the new international division of labour – the establishment of the 'internal colony', that is, a nuclear family and a woman maintained by a male 'breadwinner', would not have been possible.

Notes

1. The same could be said about the colonial relationship. If colonies want to follow this model of development of the metropoles, they can achieve success only by exploiting some other colonies. This has, indeed, led to the creation of internal colonies in many of the ex-colonial states.

2. The number of witches killed ranges from several hundred thousand to ten million. It is significant that European historians have so far not taken the trouble to count the number of women and men burnt at the stake during these centuries, although these executions were bureaucratically registered. West German feminists estimate that the number of witches burnt equals that of the Jews killed in Nazi Germany, namely six million. The historian Gerhard Schormann said that the killing of the witches was the 'largest mass killing of human beings by other human beings, not caused by warfare' (*Der Spiegel*, no. 43, 1984).

3. The silk spinners and weavers in Cologne were mainly the women of the rich silk merchants who traded their merchandise with England and the Netherlands.

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4. Catherine Hernot had been the postmistress of Cologne. The post office had been a business of her family for many generations. When the family of Thurn and Taxis claimed the monopoly over all postal services, Catherine Hernot was accused of witchcraft and eventually burnt at the stake.

5. I found the astounding extracts from Mr Hall's book in a text entitled *Militarism versus Feminism*, published anonymously in London in 1915 by George Allen and Unwin Ltd. The authors, most probably British feminists, had written this most remarkable analysis of the historical antagonism between militarism and feminism as a contribution to the Women's Movement, particularly the International Women's Peace Movement which tried, together with the International Suffrage Alliance, to bring European and American women together in an anti-war effort. Due to the war situation, the authors published their investigation anonymously. They do not give complete references of the books they quote. Thus Mr Fielding Hall's book, *A Nation at School*, is referred to only by its title and page numbers. The whole text, *Militarism versus Feminism*, is available at the Library of Congress, in Washington DC.

6. This is quite logical because the slaves produced luxury items like sugar, cacao, coffee.

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