Marxist feminism (information and evaluation)

Socialist feminists aver that women are members of social classes, significantly affecting gender relations which change as the class structure does. Capitalism is the main beneficiary of women’s subordination - said subordination has several social functions: women are a source of cheap labour as they are dependent partially on husbands; a reserve army of labour for economic booms and recession since their role is primarily in the home; They reproduce the labour force through unpaid domestic labour i.e. nurturing and socialising children to become the next generation of workers, additionally.

By maintaining the current workers – their husbands, Ansley (1972) says wives are ‘takers of shit’, consequently they should overthrow capitalism.

Conversely, Barrett (1980) proposes a non-economic factor that is also key to subordination and must be subverted: the ‘familism’ ideology. Wherein the nuclear family and its sexual division of labour is rooted in normality, Portrayed as the only place where women can be fulfilled through motherhood, sexual satisfaction and intimacy.

Additionally, Mitchell (1975) notes Freud’s psychoanalytic theory: in that even if capitalism were overthrown, Ideas about femininity are implanted deeply in women’s subconscious mind, complicating the subversion of capitalist ideology.

Ultimately, Marxist feminists seek a revolution to a communist society. Whereby a communally owned means of production will eliminate gender inequalities. They typically seek more sweeping changes whilst socialist feminists argue the possibility of change within a democratic system.

A02
+ They emphasise structural factors such as the paramount economy.
- Yet don’t explain subordination in non-capitalist societies though Marxist feminists only seek to explain the position of women in contemporary capitalist society.
- Hartmann (1981) claims Marxism is ‘sex-blind’ (men could also perform unpaid domestic labour).
- Additionally, they ignore how men oppress women independently of capitalism.
- It’s not proven that unpaid domestic labour is the most cheap.

Way of reproducing labour power e.g. It could be done more cheaply through the market or state provision i.e. publicly funded nurseries.
+ Conventional Marxists can’t explain why sexual discrimination exists.

Whilst socialist feminists emphasise ‘sex’ and ‘class’. 
Black feminism (information and evaluation)

Brewer (1993) views the basis of Black feminist theory as an 'understanding of race, class and gender as simultaneous forces'. They are disadvantaged due to being black, women, and w/c - with each inequality reinforcing and multiplying each other.

Mirza (1997) proposes a need for distinctive Black British feminism since they can oppose the distorted ideology; offer 'other ways of knowing' and invoke 'critical race/gender reflexivity into mainstream academic thinking'. Specifically, they can subvert the image of black British women as passive victims of racism, patriarchy and class inequality; The sexually available exotic other; the controlling asexual mother; And show how they've been 'brave' enough to develop alternative family forms promoting women's autonomy; To oppose activities of police and immigration authorities and tell their own story.

Collins (1990) argues a 'racist bias' in feminist theory which has 'suppressed Black women's ideas'. Being white m/c woman-centric, Hooks (1981) agrees, claiming black women in the USA didn't unite for women's rights since they didn't view 'womanhood' as key to their identity. And points to Sojourner Truth in the nineteenth century. Who responded to white males in 1852 at a women's rights movement in Ohio stating that she could 'work as hard as any man' and if black males did succeed they'd dominate women similarly. Additionally, Collins (1990) says slavery shaped all relationships black women had e.g. with employers and families.

Given their employment in white families, black women could see 'white power demystified' and subsequently develop a 'distinct' view of the contradictions between the dominant groups' actions and ideologies.

AO2
+ Black feminists focus on race in contrast to 'sisterhood' as with the mainstream. Murphy claims black women's splinter groups has led to analyses recognising the importance of ethnicity. + Bourne (1983) claims the neglect of racism is an example of irony. Since black culture heavily influenced the women's movement (slogans, organisational blueprints). Additionally, white feminists are lukewarm with racism since subverting it would significantly alter the power structure granting them social, political and economic privileges. - Anthias claims the racism model ignores Britain's 'non-black' minority women. Such as the Chinese; obligations and obedience varies according to culture and ethnicity.