

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Marxist Development Theory and State Formation:

A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment.

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements**

for the degree of Master of Philosophy

in Development Studies

at

Massey University

By

Huntley Lloyd Rayne Wright

1995

320.5322
Wri

DC20

CONTENT:

Abstract	i
Preface	iv
Introduction	x

Part 1: Marxist Development Theory: Crisis or Misinterpretation?

1. Prologue: the impasse.	2
i. Historical and transhistorical categories.	2
ii. The impasse in development sociology.	22
2. Capitalism and capitalist development.	41
i. Ideal-typical forms of capitalist development.	44
ii. The desocialization the economic base.	57

Part 2: Beyond the Debate?

3. Elements in Marx's Materialism.	75
i. Marx's object domain.	79
ii. Science, Ideology and Critique.	89
4. "The political state and the dissolution of civil society".	113
i. The State as a Relation of Production.	115
ii. Capitalism's Estranged 'Logic of Essence'.	132

Part 3: Capital and State Formation.

5. Commodities, labour and the state: Toward a point of departure.	148
i. Commodities and labour.	153
ii. Abstract labour and the isolated individual.	176
iii. The circulation of money and commodities.	185

6. "Liberty, Equality, Property, and Jeremy Bentham".	202
i. Capital and the state.	202
7. Conclusion.	236
8. Bibliography.	266

Abstract

First and foremost, it is argued that contrary to traditional interpretations of Marx's work, his sociology does not provide a recipe for advancing a putative set of universal categories. The categories of the forces and social relations of production and the ideal superstructures are transhistorical categories. Taken alone, these categories are independent of any particular society and as such, have almost no explanatory value. This means, that to equate the productive forces with 'things', the social relations with economic relations and the superstructure with a 'relatively autonomous' level, irrespective of their particular mode of production, is at the same time to fetishize them.

In terms of state formation, Marxism's failure to grasp this point reflects an inability to develop a mode of abstraction which is able to avoid arriving at a generic, dualistic notion of the state 'in general'. The result is a dehistoricizing one: since conventional historical materialism takes the appearance of an isolated 'economic' sphere and an isolated 'political' sphere as a characteristic common to all human productive forms, this specifically capitalist form of appearance is transposed from a determinant historical form to a property political forms 'possess' transhistorically.

The task which Marx set himself was to explain what definite form of labour organizes surplus value, capital, private property and the state as its outcome? In terms of the state, Marx was never to answering this question in anything like the detail in which he traced the development of surplus value and capital. Nonetheless, what we have in Marx's writing is a unity between object and method. Thus, while it is true that comparatively little attention is paid to bourgeois society as an effective phenomenal form, the analytic foundations for such a critique is clearly articulated.

Thus, while part one of the present thesis is concerned with the impasse in Marxist development theory, parts two and three focus on Marx's theories of circulation, the labour theory of value and the law of equivalence in exchange. It is argued that the foregoing moments are organically linked via the category of abstract labour. However, because Marxists' have failed to grasp the originality of this category, they have also failed to identify the object of Marx's work. Furthermore, it is only through the category of abstract labour that we are able to develop a theory of state formation which can encompass the differences presented by the modern state in relation to all antecedent forms, and which does not, therefore, arrive at a generic notion of the state 'in general' (Colletti, 1972:8).

This thesis is thus a study of Marx's ideas. It draws on a variety of texts, ranging from such early works as 'The Holy Family' (1844) through to the 'Marginal Notes of Adolf Wagner' (1880). How I interpret and link these ideas is by no means original, but is greatly influenced by the writings of Derek Sayer, Lucio Colletti, Ben Fine and Henry Bernstein.

Huntley Wright

25 May, 1995

Preface

"That there is a crisis and a sense of impasse in the sociology of development field is generally accepted. There is less argument, however, concerning the precise nature of the crisis and how to go beyond it" (Mouzelis, 1988:23).

"If the evolution of capitalism is viewed as a process in which an 'economic' sphere is differentiated from the political, it follows that an explanation of that evolution entails a theory of the state and its development" (Wood, 1981:82-83).

The above quotes define the scope of this thesis. The first conveys the sense of crisis in Marxist development theory. The second defines the specific area the present thesis is concerned with: state formation, broadly conceived as the evolution of what Perry Anderson (1974:11) has called "the intricate machinery of [capitalist] class domination".

As noted by Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer (1985:1-13), sociology, since its beginning, has recognized a unifying logic between modern state formation and capitalist development. For Max Weber (1961:249), "it ... [was] the closed nation state which afforded to capitalism

its chance of development", while for Karl Marx, bourgeois society "must assert itself in external relations as nationality and internally it must organize itself as state" (Marx and Engels, 1846:98; see also Corrigan and Sayer, 1985:1).

However, despite both theorists indicating a definite "organic unity" between the state and capitalist development, mainstream Marxist political theory, taking Frederick Engels' "political testament" ('Anti-Duhring', 1894:306-308) as its point of departure, is characterized by the "transposition" of the historical content of the modern capitalist state to the state 'in general' (Colletti, 1972:105-106). As a result, Marxist political theory has tended to allow an *a priori* "determination of the essence" to transcend its discussions on the state, in so far as the "specific autonomy of the political and economic" enters into the equation as an undiscussed assumption (see Poulantzas, 1973:130-137). Within this framework, the crucial question of why, in this particular society does political power assume the form of a centralized state power (?), is superseded by the arbitrary question of the degree of independence enjoyed by the state.

No concept of the state 'in general' can be exhaustive of the empirical features which define its particular form. It is impossible, in logic, to specify the individual

members of a class of phenomena from what they have in common. If we are to assume therefore, that the essential function of the modern capitalist state is contained within the category of the state 'in general', then the social relations not specified within the generic category of the state - i.e. what distinguishes the modern state from all antecedent forms - is excluded from our analysis by conceptual fiat. Furthermore, there remains only one way out of this methodological trap: to add another category of 'essential being', that of a class state, as the final (i.e. "in the last instance") function for all forms of political power, irrespective of the social organization of production underlying it. For example, according to Nico Poulantzas (1973:43), this 'final function' was the maintenance of a "formations unity". This means that irrespective of the actual form political power takes - i.e. feudal or capitalist - it's final function is to maintain the unity of a social formation.

If the characteristics which define the members of a particular class of phenomena are pushed beyond their legitimate parameters, and are presented as "inviolable natural laws on which society in the abstract is founded" (Marx, 1858:258), then there can be no basis for a qualitative historical distinction between the members this class of phenomena (Fine, 1984:148; see also, Marx, 1858:258). The specific social character of political power, is that which accords to it a definite historical

characterization. By transposing the social character of the modern capitalist state - its appearance of separation - to the generic category of the state 'in general', this historically specific form of appearance is not only regarded as a necessary condition of the bourgeois polity, but it acquires the fixity of a necessary condition for all antecedent manifestations of political power. Otherwise put, once we conflate the social and historical with that which is abstract and transhistorical, we lose sight of the specificity of the various forms of political power, and hence the "essential difference" between them. In short the state becomes "something altogether unhistorical" (Marx, 1858:258).

The present thesis attempts to break with this 'tradition' by demonstrating that for Marx the modern state form is an emphatically historical category and not a synonym for any and all forms of political power. Drawing on a variety of text's, I endeavour to show that for Marx, modern state formation is in fact essential to, and inseparable from, the actual configuration of capitalist development, and is not a 'superstructure' in the normal sense of this theoretically over burdened term.

The following is a lengthy, holistic, examination of the canons of historical materialism. The aim of this essentially textual and reflective discussion is to address the current impasse in Marxist development theory and to

present some tentative suggestion as to how an analysis of state formation in developing societies may proceed. Importantly, I attempt to address both problems in a manner that is in direct contrast to the current, 'post-Marxist', framework of debate, which, as I understand it, not only threatens to exclude Marx from its terms of reference, but also from the range of theoretical possibilities.

By focusing on Marx's text's I do not seek to substantiate any definitive "reading" of him, nor is any particular text assumed to occupy a privileged position. Rather, recognizing that the current crisis is as much a reflection of changing circumstances as it is a fault of any particular tradition, I focus on the works of Marx in order to shed some light on our current circumstances. It acknowledges, that the concerns of the present-day development specialist differ markedly from those which preoccupied the pioneering work of Paul Baran, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein. Now we are confronted by different manifestations of capitalism's social relations, which take different phenomenal forms, and which require different historical categories for their analysis.

This practice of rereading Marx in the light of 'new' anomalies is not new. It is well-known, for example, that in order to prepare himself for the task of writing 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism' (1916), Lenin found it necessary not only to revisit Marx's

'Capital', but in order to appreciate the pivotal "first chapter" he also found it necessary "to understand the whole of Hegel's logic" (Lenin, 1915:180), from which his 'Philosophical Notebook' (1915) emerged. With this in mind, and taking into account the 'post-Marxist' framework of the current debate, retracing this well-charted path would appear to be a legitimate and worthwhile enterprise.

Introduction

In a lecture delivered to the students of Sverdlov University (11. July. 1919), Lenin remarked "that nearly all political disputes and differences of opinion now turn upon the state", and in particular "the question what is the state?" (Lenin, 1919:639). Contemporary political disputes continue to focus on this question, however historical materialism (and political theory 'in general') remains ambiguous to what the state actually represents, and more importantly, it is quite incapable of explaining why, in this particular society, social power manifests itself in a centralized politico-juridical state. For example, Bob Jessop, writing some seventy years after Lenin, openly acknowledges that the question, 'What is the state' (?), continues to be "the first most fundamental problem facing all theories of the state" (Jessop, 1990:339); while legal theoretician, Ben Fine (1984:152), notes that while historical materialism has sufficiently captured "the class content of the state", it has yet to "explain why class rule should assume the particular form of state power". He adds: "feudalism, for instance, was manifestly a class society but the state form was largely undeveloped" (Fine, 1984:152). Thus, as Marx (1867:153) himself once said, "this ... is the nut we have to crack!"

Of course Marx, Engels and Lenin are all, in

themselves, sources of much of the ambiguity which surrounds both questions. Regrettably Marx never did write his proposed fourth book on the state (see Marx, 1858:105); while the sheer weight of 'Capital', and its preoccupation with capital in its various economic forms of appearance, certainly lends a degree of superficial credence to the view that the economic 'laws' governing production are the "alpha and omega" of proper historical materialist concern (Sayer, 1985:224). However, to suggest, as Engels did (1893:510-511), that Marx largely "neglected the formal side" of the "political, juridical and other ideological notions" - "the way in which these notions came about" (Engels, 1893:510-511), is not entirely true. Certainly, it cannot be said that the historical abstractions found in Marx's post-1858 writings, or those found in Lenin's 'Development of Capitalism in Russia' (1899) and his 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism' (1916), traced the possibility for development of the form of law and the form of the state in any detail compared to that in which they traced the development of capital (see Marx, in Sayer, 1985:224; see also Fine, 1984:134; and Sayer, 1985:222-225). Nonetheless, it is the position of this author, and indeed, the basis of this thesis, that what we have in Marx's mature writings is the anatomy, the physiology of bourgeois society (Burgerliche Gesellschaft, or 'civil society'). Thus, while it is true that comparatively little attention is paid to bourgeois society as an effective phenomenal form of the social relations of

commodity exchange, the analytic foundations for such a critique are contained within the interstices of the 'Grundrisse' (1858) and 'Capital' (1865, 1867 and 1878). As Martian Nicolaus (1972:52) puts it, "Marx's theory of the sphere of circulation, together with the theory of production, provides, implicitly, the basis for a theory of forms of state ... But it would need to be developed" (see also, Fine, 1984:134-136; and Sayer, 1987:138-141). It is with this "need to be developed" that the present thesis is concerned.

It is only with the 'Grundrisse' (1859), and the works that follow, that Marx's critique of the categories of economic theory 'in general', as distinguished from any one particular political-economic theory, shifts from the commodity and its illusory form in the sphere of exchange, to the relations of exchange as a phenomenal form of the social relations of commodity production. The theory of capitalist development he now develops, no longer draws a distinction between different levels of reality, but between a phenomenal level of exchange and an essential level of production. The latter is understood as "the totality of ... relationships which the bearers of ... production have toward nature and one another" (Marx, 1865:957). In other words, Marx no longer distinguishes between a base and a superstructure in any 'normal', atomistic sense of this unfortunate term, but between the social relations of production, their actual empirical form

of appearance and their corresponding categories of thought, or, put another way, between an object's form and its manifest content. The question now being posed is this: under what historical conditions, under what particular ensemble of social relations, does human labour organize capital, private property, law and the state as its particular social forms of intercourse?

Placed in the context of 'Capital', and its "subject of study", the foregoing question reads like this:

"political economy has now achieved an analysis, however incomplete, of value and the magnitude of value, and has discovered the content hidden within these forms. But the economists have never mooted the question of why the content should assume these forms; why labour should be represented by the value of the product of labour and the quantity of labour (as measured by its duration) by the magnitude of the value of that product" (Marx, 1863:55).

It is precisely this distinction between labour power and labour, and the realization that questions pertaining to it lie beyond the scope (can "never [be] mooted") of an economic science, which sets 'Capital' apart from Marx's earlier writings. According to him, capitalist control of surplus appropriation, is made possible via the lack of any means of subsistence among a section of society, who, as a

direct consequence can only obtain a share of the social product through the disposal of their capacity to labour. Thus, in both bourgeois society and the forms of science corresponding to it, human labour is predicated on its treatment as objectified labour, as a commodity of exchange. This means that the exchange relation between labour and the owner of the means of labour assumes the form of appearance of an exchange between buyer's and seller's of commodities. According to Marx, this appearance of an equal and free exchange between individual property owners (human labour power is now property) masks the unequal appropriation between classes.

Thus, in bourgeois society, and its theoretical equivalent, 'civil society' (i.e. as depicted in Rousseau's 'Contract Social' [see Marx, 1858:83-83]), the social relations of commodity production are confronted in a form which is only superficially true. Now, it is my contention that this, the analytic basis of Marx's theory of surplus value, and subsequently the 'law' of equivalent exchange, is not an attempt to replace one collection of economic concepts with another. Surplus value, abstract labour, private property and capital are not 'things', and as such they cannot be subjected to "fixed, cut-and-dried definitions that are valid for all time [i.e. transhistorical]" (Engels, 1894:103). They are the expression of a "definite social relation ... pertaining to a particular historical social formation, which simply

takes the form of a thing" (Marx, 1865: 953). Otherwise put, what Marx offers is not an economic science, nor a "general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical" (Marx, 1877:355), but rather an alternative view of capitalist society. Presupposing this view is the assumption that the form of appearance of 'things' (i.e. value, as confronted in the form of money) does not directly coincide with its essence. Rather, the discrepancies between an object's essence and its appearance is in fact a necessary consequence of the very nature of the essence. Value, in other words, is not money, nor is capital the sum total of the material means of production, these being the forms in which value and capital assume at the surface level of exchange. It follows that for Marx (1865:956), political economy does not merely "interpret, systematize and turn into the apologetic" of capital by intellectual faux pas. Rather, he took this logic of essence - the necessity of an object's essence to "appear as something other than itself" - to be characteristic of bourgeois society itself. As Sayer (1987:140) puts it, "'abstraction', 'idealization', 'reification' [and fetishization] were for Marx... intrinsic to the perverted 'logic of essence' of capitalism, characteristic of the estranged, alienated ways in which bourgeois social relations manifest themselves to consciousness in all spheres of social life" (see also, Colletti, 1972:78-79). Most importantly this is no illusion. For example, writing on the general formula of

capital (i.e. M-C-M), as it makes its appearance in the sphere of exchange, Marx notes:

"capital in general, as distinct from particular real capitals, is itself a 'real' existence. This is recognized by ordinary economics, even if it is not understood, and forms a very important part of its doctrine of equilibrations etc. For example, capital in this general form ... forms the capital which accumulates in the banks or is distributed through them" (Marx, 1858:449-450).

Given, that capitalism's estranged logic of essence may depict a social reality which is superficial, yet immensely plausible, theoretical categories, including those of historical materialism, may actually misrepresent the very social reality they seek to understand. Speaking this time on value, the corollary of this conception of capitalism and its 'logic of essence' is predictable: "I do not", Marx writes, "start out from 'concepts', hence I do not start out from 'the concept of value'. What I start out from is the simplest social form in which the labour-product is presented in contemporary society, and this is the commodity". With respect to the state, if under certain conditions, essential relations assume a form of appearance which may be misleading (and, Marx's critique explains why this may be so), why does historical materialism (and political theory in general) appear quite content with

noting the apparently self-evident 'existence' of a 'thing', a distinct public sphere or institution known as the 'state', and proceed to analyze it as such? Why, in contrast to Marx's declared point of departure, does Marxist political analysis proceed on the basis that "the specific autonomy of the political and economic" is a phenomenon which, as such, does exist? In short, why does Marxist political analysis insist on "placing itself on the standpoint of the finished phenomena" (Marx, 1878:220), by beginning not with 'real life', but with abstract, ahistorical definitions and concepts?

Social forms, such as the 'economy' and the 'state', appear as "autonomous neighbours" when they are both spatially and temporally separated across time and space, for this means we miss the inner-connections between them - the movement of value (Marx, 1858:90; see also Marsden, 1992:369). Furthermore, for Marx, this semblance of independence is no illusion, but is rather the expression of the form in which the social relations of production actually confront the individual, who in turn must act in relation to them. Thus, it is the position of this author, that the state, like value, can only be grasped when all *a priori* concepts, and supposedly self-evident truths pertaining to it, have been abandoned. It must, in other words, be liberated before any theoretical reconstruction can take place. Thus, what I propose is this. The totality of bourgeois society, like its various constitutive forms,

for example, the commodity, capital, law and the state has a dual character: in its content it is the totality of the social relations of commodity production and in its phenomenal form it is society confronted as the sum total of free, equal, property owning individuals bearing rights. Bourgeois society is thus both base and superstructure, but it is only one dimension of the former, the superficially experienced dimension. Otherwise put, it is a characteristic of the capitalist social relations, that they are incapable of articulating an independent phenomenal expression in their immediate form. With respect to labour, Marx exemplifies:

"In Europe during the Middle Ages, all [persons] are dependent ... They enter into the social mechanism as services in kind and payments in kind. The natural form of labour, its particular form, is here the immediate social form of labour - in contradistinction to what happens in a society organized on the basis of commodity production, where abstract labour, its generalized form, is the immediate social form of labour" (Marx, 1867:47).

In sum, an historical materialist theory of state formation must be based on a critique of the concepts of political science, or jurisprudence. This means, it is not simply a matter of proceeding in a manner that is analogous to Marx's critique of the categories of political

economy, of merely crowning commodity production with a type of state. Rather, all determinations must be critically interrogated within the same analytic process, from which Marx sought to grasp the contradictory character of capital, value, and so on.

Developing the foregoing argument has required six chapters, the first, of which is a prologue introducing two important themes: the first relates to what is plainly the theoretical core of the present thesis, namely Marx's mode of enquiry, and in particular his hitherto undervalued distinction between historical categories and their generic, transhistorical, representation and the second concerns the current crisis in Marxist development theory, in which David Booth's important contribution 'Marxism and Development Sociology: Interpreting the Impasse', (1985), is given particular attention. I argue that mainstream Marxist development theory is premised on a fetishized understanding of the internal relationship between the categories of historical materialism, and their necessary anchorage within the very basis of Marx's substantive sociology. Concerning Booth's contribution to the debate, it is suggested that, although capturing the sense of non-resolution which pervades the sociology of development, the essentially 'post-Marxist' thrust of his critique is built on the very same fetishized foundations as the various approaches he criticizes. The corollaries of this have been, firstly a completely distorted framework of

debate, which threatens to exclude Marx himself from the range of theoretical possibility, and secondly the terms of debate have been reduced to a choice between "history and structure, absolute determinism and irreducible contingency, pure theory and unalloyed empiricism" (Wood, 1990:128).

Chapter two develops this line of critique in relation to the categories essential for an historical materialist account of state formation - the relations of production, the forces and relations combination and the base/superstructure relation. I argue that in each case Marxist development theory perpetuates what Sayer (1987) has aptly called the violence of capitalist abstraction: under the guise of theoretical practice, determinate historical categories are "surreptitiously" carried over into transhistorical abstractions, thereby rendering natural specific forms of social life, which belong to bourgeois society in absolute. In short, the forces and relations of commodity production, and the 'economic base' and 'political superstructure', are defined in a manner which excludes by conceptual fiat any serious attempt to come to terms with the multiple societal forms that have emerged in the course of capitalism's advance. For example, the inner-content of the modern state is that which accords to it a specific social character. If the elements which make up this inner-content, for example the semblance of independence enjoyed by the modern institutions of state,

are taken at face value and are uncritical integrated into the category of the state 'in general', then this determinate historical form will appear as a necessary condition for any and forms of society. As a result, Marxist political analysis has been preoccupied with arbitrary attempts to demarcate superstructures as 'non-economic' institutions in societies where a clearly identifiable and 'separate' economy quite simply does not exist (see Sahlins, 1972:185-186).

Such a *a priori* constructs ignore that it is impossible, in logic, for a general concept of the state or the economy to be exhaustive of the elements which may define their particular form. However, none of this is to suggest that all is lost, nor that it is time to "settle accounts with .. our past master". Quite the contrary, for the way out of this impasse is already manifest in the methodology of historical materialism. What I propose, is that Marx's understanding of capitalism's estranged logic of essence points to an analytically superior version of historical materialism, which, to paraphrase Colletti (1972:8), is able to encompass the differences presented by a particular form of state in relation to all antecedent forms, and does not therefore, arrive at a generic, fetishized, conception of the state 'in general'. I outline this reading of Marx in Chapter Three, defend it in Chapter Four and in Chapters Five and Six I attempt to develop its logical consequences with regard to the analysis of state formation. In essence

I argue that just as money, rent and profit are appropriate forms of appearance for the 'economic' expression of value and surplus value, which in turn are not immediately disclosed within these forms, so it is with the state. That is, the appearance of a qualitatively distinct, more or less enclosed, separate politico-juridical state, is the other side of the same phenomena. They are, in other words, different expressions of the same historical social relations of production.

The final chapter attempts to tie the overall argument of the present thesis together. This I hope to achieve by reaffirming how the ideas presented may be developed so as to further advance our understanding of capitalist development and state formation in the periphery. I suggest that the true significance of Marx's approach does not lie in actual forms discussed - i.e. money, capital, the state, and so on - but in their position with respect to Marx's distinctive methodology, and the alternative sociology of capitalism it articulates. In short, it is held that the means to overcome the current impasse does not necessarily require the integration of procedures from other methodologies, many of which rest on the very same fetishized foundations as mainstream Marxist development theory. Rather, the solution is already manifest in the methodology of historical materialism, and the "guiding thread" for the analysis of the essential relations of capitalism it provides.

None of what is argued here pretends, nor seeks to be original. My influences are many, and I shall acknowledge those who have been most influential. In terms of Marx's method, the numerous Marxologies of Derek Sayer, and his collaborator, Philip Corrigan are, to my mind, unique in their ability to capture that aspect of his sociology which, as Sayer (1987:xi) himself puts it, "is most innovative and emancipatory". Secondly, Lucio Colletti's, 'From Rousseau to Lenin ...' (1972), remains for me the 'classic' study of Marx and Lenin, to which all empirically minded historical materialist's are deeply indebted to. Thirdly, the path-breaking work of Henry Bernstein and those directly influenced by him - Peter Gibbon, Michael Neocosmos and Filomeno Aguilar - has proved most helpful in clarifying how the ideas presented here may be made applicable to the study of capitalist development and state formation in developing societies. Fourthly, exploratory studies by Ben Fine ('Democracy and the Rule of Law' [1984]) and Philip Abrams ('Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State' [1980]), have greatly contributed to my understanding of the actual dimensions of bourgeois political power. Lastly, works by Richard Johnson, Ellen Meiksins Wood, Marshall Sahlins, Alex Callinicos, Nico Mouzelis, Richard Marsden and John Taylor have all been influential at specific points and have all contributed to the final shape of the present thesis.

Finally, one preliminary clarification is required. It is now common practice to replace the sexist language of Marx with gender-neutral terms and references. There can be no doubt that it is in the area of the social relations of gender, that Marx and historical materialism in general, is least illuminating. However, this lack of understanding is no intellectual error, but is intrinsic to the very nature of reality itself, and is therefore an internal feature of all scientific approaches founded upon this reality. This situation cannot be redeemed by merely replacing sexist terms and references. Indeed, this may in fact direct attention away from language as a reified social form which accords to the social relations of gender their appearance of "natural, self-understood forms of social life". If we are to criticize the immediate forms of social consciousness and the sexist theories and ideologies predicated upon their acceptance, then Marx's failure to penetrate the phenomenal forms of patriarchy should be illuminated, rather than hidden. Thus, I do not attempt to sanitize Marx's language.

Part 1:

Marxist Development Theory:

Crisis or Misinterpretation?

Chapter 1:

Prologue: the impasse.

In this chapter, my aim is to introduce the theoretical core of the present thesis, Marx's distinction between transhistorical and historical categories: the former consisting of generic categories which can be validly applied within all modes of production; the latter consists of categories corresponding to definite historical conditions (see Marx, 1880:198-201; and Sayer, 1983:14-15).

i. Historical and transhistorical categories.

In the 'Postface' to 'Capital Volume Two' (1878), Marx articulates what Johnson (1983:156) has described as "a uniquely complete but typically condensed account" of the moments which make up his method. Marx writes:

"Of course the method of presentation must differ formally from the method of investigation. The aim of investigation is to appropriate the matter in detail, to analyze its various developmental forms, and to trace the inner connexions between these forms. Not until this preliminary work has been effected, can the

movement as it really is be suitably described" (Marx, 1878:873).

Here Marx highlights what Johnson refers to as "two broad domains of method" - i.e. "the method of presentation" and "the method of investigation" - which in turn, consists of four "moments" or "stages". These can be listed as follows:

A). Moments in the Mode of Investigation;

1. "appropriate the matter in detail": historical research;
2. "analyze its various developmental forms": Abstract historically; and
3. "trace the inner connexions between these forms": uncover the essential relations.

B). Moments in the Method of Presentation;

4. grasp "the movement as it really is": presentation and validation.

Earlier state formation was defined in a manner which attempted to convey an imagery of movement: as an alien force standing 'above' society, of which the content and extent of this alienation is not fixed but is formed (see Fine, 1984:152; Corrigan and Sayer, 1985:2-4; and Anderson, 1983:17-20). Furthermore, underpinning this definition, is a view of Marx's method which posits an "organic unity" between the capitalist social relations of production,

their economic and politico-juridical empirical forms of appearance and their corresponding categories of thought (see Colletti, 1972:3-16 and Sayer, 1987:83 -97). Now, if both statements are accepted, then, in the light of the foregoing list, I would suggest that in order to "suitably describe" state formation as a social and historical process - and few would regard it as otherwise - we must "analyze its various developmental forms" and "trace the inner connexions" between them. Put otherwise, we are concerned at this point with moments two and three of Marx's mode of enquiry, and hence, with the form and derivation of historical abstractions.

Here we arrive at the heart of Marx's thinking: in what sense are categories historical and scientific, and in what sense are abstractions ahistorical and ideological? Let us deal with the former first.

Marx's understanding of historical knowledge is constituted by two intersecting premises. In the words of Johnson, these are:

1. "abstractions are historical, in the fullest sense, because they are found in actual forms of social organization"; and
2. "such abstractions must also grasp the possibility, eminence, direction or tendency of further development" (Johnson, 1983:180).

Let us then, look at each premise in relation to moments two and three of Marx's mode of enquiry.

In the opening pages of the 'German Ideology' (1846:35-37), Marx and Engels begin their introduction to the 'Premises of the Materialist Conception of History' by announcing what is clearly their point of departure:

"the premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and material conditions of their life, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity" (Marx and Engels, 1846:37).

Furthermore, similar, indeed abbreviated, announcements open both the '1857 Introduction' and 'Capital Volume One' (1867). In the former, Marx declares:

"the object before us [is] ... material production ... Individuals producing in society - hence socially determined individuals - is, of course, the point of departure" (Marx, 1858:83);

and in 'Capital':

"the subject of study in the present work is the capitalist method of production, and the relations of production and exchange appropriate to that method" (in Marx, 1878:862).

Each of the foregoing statements have as the object before them not society 'in general', but a particular, that is, actually existing, social form of production: "a definite mode of life" (Marx and Engels, 1846:36), or, put another way, "material production", defined as the "appropriation of nature on the part of an individual within and through a specific form of society" (Marx, 1858:87). Considering the polemical context in which each of the introductory statements are presented in, the ensuing question is predictable: who, in contrast to Marx, reduces their analysis of society, to society 'in general'? The answer is twofold: firstly, in 'German Ideology' (1846) it was those idealist philosophers who regard the factor of 'consciousness' as separate from their material surroundings (see Marx and Engels, 1846:34-37; and Colletti, 1972:3-4); and secondly, in the '1857 Introduction' it was those economists who, by concentrating exclusively on the material, view society in terms of the atomistic "conceits of the eighteenth century Robinsonades [such as Rousseau's, 'Contract Social']" (Marx, 1858:83). Let us first consider Marx's polemic with German Philosophy.

For Marx, generic categories, whether they be labour

'in general', property 'in general', or the state 'in general', cannot in themselves, provide complete descriptions of actual social forms and, more particularly, the essential relations which accord to them their specific socio-historical character - i.e. that which stamps them as belonging to a particular society. In short, they are simple abstractions; they grasp only one side of any given object, namely those generic elements which are independent of any one particular society or, more specifically, are common to all empirical objects of any single class of phenomena irrespective of the social relations underlying them (see Colletti, 1972:5-8; Sayer, 1983:77-80; and 1987:54-58).

This is not to suggest that generic categories do not have a legitimate place in historical materialism. After all, as Colletti (1972:8) points out, "individual fact, in its unique, absolute singularity, is as generic as the abstract genus". Thus, in 'German Ideology' (1846), Marx and Engels write:

"They [simple abstractions] ... serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to indicate the sequence of its separate strata" (Marx and Engels, 1846:43).

Importantly, however, the authors' go on to warn that "these abstractions in themselves, divorced from real

history, have no value whatsoever... They by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history" (Marx and Engels, 1846:43; see also Marx, 1858:105-107). Put otherwise, simple abstractions need to be approached with the utmost caution, in that they have as a corollary of their level of generality an immensely dangerous degree of superficial plausibility (Sayer, 1987:143). In short, they mislead: "what begins", Marx writes, "as 'peeling out' the common elements ends as 'abstracting away' everything else" (Marx, 1858:257). Speaking about capital, the corollary, according to Marx, is that it is "conceived as a thing, not as a relation".

Although the foregoing critique was directed at Smith's conception of capital, Patrick Murray (1990:128-129) suggests, that the analytic basis on which it rests - the historical/ transhistorical distinction - "germinates" in Marx's critique of German Philosophy. For example, 'The Holy Family' (1844), presents a celebrated critique of the methodological protocols of German idealism, in which the fallacy of reification is given particular attention. Under the subtitle 'The Mystery of Speculative Construction' (1844:57-61), Marx takes the generic concept of fruit and, by way of satire, suggests:

"If from apples, pears ... I form the general idea 'Fruit', if I go further and imagine that my abstract

idea 'Fruit', derived from real fruit, is an entity existing outside me, is indeed the true essence of the pear, the apple, then - in the language of speculative philosophy - I am declaring that 'Fruit' is the 'Substance of the pear, apple. I am saying therefore that to be a pear it is not essential to be a pear" (Marx, 1844:57-58).

Despite the difficulty (and residual Hegelianism) of its language, Marx is saying something like this: speculative philosophy involves a process of abstraction whereby a generic feature of a particular class of phenomena - in this case, fruitiness as a generic element common to all forms of fruit - is taken *a priori* as constituting the 'real essence' of an apple or pear. That is, apart, and distinct from, its actual empirical form - i.e. as an apple or pear. For Marx, this is comical, in that an apple or a pear has no existence, except in their form as an apple or a pear. Put otherwise, the generic category of fruit, contrary to Hegelian speculation, exists only in the sense that it classifies a particular class of phenomena (ie. fruit), yet it does not refer to any real essence of fruit - as an apple or pear etc. For example, using the words of Sayer (1987:55), "we have not, for instance, adequately defined a lemon, in any empirical sense, when we say it is a fruit. Part of any adequate empirical description of a lemon would include, for example, its colour". However, the colour yellow, although essential to defining a lemon, is

not subsumed under the concept of 'fruit', and cannot be derived from it. Similar arguments, we shall see, apply when attempting to grasp the logic of modern state formation.

If an object is defined from the standpoint of those features it shares with all other objects, then the contradictions inherent in that object are presented in such a manner that allows the 'logic' of its development/transcendence to be contained within the category itself. For example, in Hegel private property appeared not as a social relation particular to capital, but as the 'rational' and 'natural' form in which person's appropriate objects; as "the absolute right of appropriation which man has over all things" (Hegel, in Marx, 1865:752). The only question then becomes whether a person's 'right' of possession is being protected. Otherwise put, the contradictions are presented from the beginning in a form which allows an *a priori* unity to work itself out: "at this point", Marx writes, "positive law must enact its status since nothing further on this topic can be deduced from the concept" (Marx, 1865:753).

If private property is regarded as a natural relation between persons and things, then, in terms of non-capitalist forms of production, we can only assume that its non-appearance is due to the imposition of external obligations. Thus, the only conclusion Hegel could have

drawn was that law is required to protect this 'natural right' from further external obligations.

Now, it follows, that if the modern state is defined in abstraction from those features which accord it a social character - for instance, its phenomenal separation from the 'economic' sphere - then, any attempt to grasp it as an organic product particular to this form of society, can only proceed via two equally fallacious (fetishistic) assumptions. These are: first, the assumption that those features which distinguish the modern state from all antecedent political forms can be deduced from what they have in common - clearly a manifestly absurd proposition; and second, that the socio-historical features of the modern state form - i.e. its phenomenal separation - are characteristics of all political forms. If the historic content of the modern state is conflated with the transhistorical content of the state 'in general', then historical investigation is effectively reduced to a relatively simple process (and an inherently teleological one) of demonstrating that the modern state is the expression of something already contained within itself. In short, we confront the modern state not as a real object, but rather as an ideal form of state, the state 'in general' - that is, as "a small number of determinant, abstract, general relations" (Marx, 1858:100).

The foregoing argument may appear somewhat elementary

52

and banal. However, this tendency to conflate the simple and general (transhistorical) with that which is particular, and hence, historical and social, is at one and the same time to dehistoricize them. It is to deny their historical anchorage within a particular form of society. We have seen, for example, that it is precisely in this sense that Marx takes Hegel to task for seeking to grasp private property transhistorically, as the "absolute right of appropriation man has over all 'things'" (Marx, 1865:752). According to Marx (1865:752), private property, "a very recent product", is, for Hegel, "not a particular social relationship, but rather a relationship of man as a person to 'nature'". He adds:

"this is an extraordinarily naive confession for 'the concept' to make, and proves that the concept, which makes the blunder right from the start of taking a particular legal notion of landed property which belongs to bourgeois society as absolute, understands 'nothing' of the actual configuration of this landed property" (Marx, 1865:752-753).

In the four volumes of 'Capital', Marx was to undertake an elaborate critique of the form and derivation of this type of abstraction, which I shall come to in due course. The point I want to make here is this. From the foregoing passage, it should be clear that Marx is in no way denying the reality of "a particular legal notion of landed

property". Indeed, its juridical expression is essential in defining the form of property particular to the organization of capitalist production. Rather, the point is, that by seeking to explain the essence of private property transhistorically, the historical significance of say, "the Acts for the Enclosure of the Commons" (see Marx, 1878:794-813), cannot be grasped without assuming *a priori* the existence of capitalist structures and capitalist motivations, i.e. the "absolute right of appropriation man has over all 'things'". Thus, the critical question of why, in this specific form of society, does appropriation take the form of private property, remains begged. Questions pertaining to the "actual configuration" of this particular form of property simply drop out of the equation, only to reemerge as self-evident truths (see Marx, 1858:105-106; and Sayer, 1987:128).

In sum, to grasp such categories as private 'property' and the 'state' ideally, is at one and the same time to conflate 'private' property with property 'in general' and the 'modern' state with the state 'in general'. As a consequence, it is impossible to comprehend the intrinsic relationship between this process of abstraction and the social relations of capitalist production and hence the former cannot be explained as an "organic product" of the latter. If this is accepted, then the ensuing question is again predictable: in the words of Colletti (1972:5), "can we conclude that for a scientific

approach it suffices to concentrate exclusively on the material?".

To reiterate an earlier point, Marx's mode of enquiry is fundamentally concerned with grasping a phenomenon in "its various developmental forms". As Johnson (1983:171) notes, this stress on the various forms of development a particular class of phenomenon is capable of assuming, is a direct reflection of Marx's refusal to reduce the "inner workings of a given phenomenon" to a "small number of determinant, abstract, general relations such as [the] division of labour, money, value, etc." (Marx, 1858:100). In short, his conception of the concrete as "a unity of the diverse", is first and foremost an anti-reductionist principle (Johnson, 1983:161). Furthermore, and in the words of Johnson (1983:161), it is for precisely this reason that Marx was "suspicious of procedures which 'generalize' by seeking in different forms of development only common elements".

It was on the basis of this anti-reductionist principle that Marx criticized the leading exponents of political economy for their "crude materialism". He argued, that by seeking in diverse phenomenon only common elements, political economy did nothing other than reduce the complex social relations of commodity production to those which characterize simple commodity exchange. Since the latter, according to Marx (1865:442 and 444), "appears long before

capital has subjected production to its sway and is in fact "older than the capitalist mode of production" itself, the dehistoricizing effect it has on the former is inevitable. Thus, instead of disentangling what is genuinely historical from that which is transhistorical, for example why should labour be represented by the value of its product, the inner workings of capital are presented in a manner which allowed an *a priori* unity to work itself out. As a result, social forms belonging to bourgeois society in absolute appear to acquire "the fixity of the natural forms of social life", in that their "essential difference" is lost with their identification with antecedent social forms (Marx, 1867:49). Arising from this error of abstraction, is the replacement of determinate historical forms with such unitary abstractions as labour 'in general' and the state 'in general'. For example, gone is the real significance of wage labour as against slave labour and the modern state as against the feudal monarch. As Marx (1858:87) himself argued, the result is a conservative one: in the hands of Smith and Ricardo, capitalist production becomes "encased in [the] eternal natural laws independent of history, at which opportunity bourgeois relations are then quietly smuggled in".

With the foregoing argument, the abstractions (rational) I am referring to are those general preconditions of all human production. All production involves some form of labour process in which raw materials

are transformed into useful products, via the instruments of production (see Marx, 1867:170-172). In the words of Marx, "this is an everlasting nature imposed condition of human existence" (Marx, 1867:177). It follows, if all production contains elements which can be validly applied across all modes of production, then such elements exist as transhistorical categories. Like the generic concept of fruit, the 'general conditions of all production' (transhistorical categories) exist as simple abstractions: "the so-called general preconditions of production", Marx writes, "are nothing more than those abstract moments with which no real historical stage of production can be grasped" (Marx, 1858:88). Indeed, their ahistoricity is the corollary of their level of generality. For example, all labour, as noted by Sayer (1983):128), "is useful, but it is never only this, and no empirical form of human labour can therefore be sufficiently described by its useful features alone". In other words, the transhistorical category of labour 'in general', like property 'in general', requires a substantive definition that accounts for the social relations through which it derives its particular form - for instance, wage labour or slave labour:

"labour", Marx writes, "which is nothing but an abstraction and taken by itself cannot exist at all, or, if we take what is actually meant here, the entire productive activity of man, through which his

metabolic interchange with nature is mediated. But this is not only divested of any social form and specific character; ... it is lifted out of society altogether and defined ... external[ly]..." (Marx, 1865:954).

Material 'things', or activities (i.e. the sum of the material and produced means of production), can only become a productive force when employed within and through a specific form of society. For example, Marx (1865:954), writing on capital, notes that it "is not a thing, [but] ... a definite social relation of production pertaining to a particular historical social formation, which simply takes the form of a thing and gives this thing a specific social character". However, in the hands of Smith, capital is "lifted right out of society" and defined in relation to nature as "accumulated (realized) labour (properly, objectified labour), which serves as the means for new labour (production)" (Smith, in Marx, 1858:257). Capital is thus reduced to the status of an instrument of labour. In Marx's own words, Smith's conclusion is predictable:

"capital would have existed in all forms of society, and is something altogether unhistorical ... Capital would only be a new name for a thing as old as the human race, since every form of labour, including the least developed ... presupposes that the product of labour is used as means for direct living labour"

(Marx, 1858:257-258).

In sum, the material elements of production are those which are common to all human productive activity, irrespective of the particular mode of production in which they receive their historical characterization. Furthermore, in a manner that is similar to Hegel's treatment private property, Smith's analysis of capital has a dangerous level of superficial plausibility. As Marx's himself puts it:

"If, the, the specific form of capital is abstracted away, and only the content [accumulated labour] is emphasized, as which it is a necessary condition for all human labour then of course nothing is easier than to demonstrate that capital is a necessary condition for all human production" (Marx, 1858:258).

Importantly, Marx adds: "the catch is that if all capital is objectified labour which serves as the means of new production, it is not the case that all objectified labour which serves as the means for new production is capital Capital is conceived as a thing, not as a relation" (Marx, 1858:258).

The same argument applies with equal force to the state. For example, if the state is defined as an institution in which all the contradictions of a social formation are condensed (i.e. Poulantzas, 1975:47-51), it

does not follow that all 'comparable', albeit less comprehensive institutions for example, households and kinship groups, are institutions of the state. Paraphrasing Marx (1858:258), if the social character of the state is abstracted away and only its material content is emphasized, then the state will appear as a necessary condition for all complex social orders, that is, irrespective of the social relations underlying it. Thus, in a passage which I believe provides a more appropriate bench-mark for an historical materialist theory of capitalist development than the "thumbnail sketch" presented in the '1859 Preface', Marx warns:

"in the succession of the economic categories, as in any other historical, social science, it must not be forgotten that their subject - here, modern bourgeois society - is always what is given in the head as well as in reality, and that these therefore express the forms of being, the characteristics of existence, and often only individual sides of this specific society ...; this holds of science as well" (Marx, 1858:100).

In sum, if we view the supposed essence of a phenomenon as directly coinciding in either its ideal moment or material moment, we necessarily impose a dualistic separation between the production of 'things' on the one hand, and the production of human relations on the other. At the societal level, this in turn imposes a separation between the social

relations of production, their economic and politico-juridical forms of appearance and their corresponding categories of thought. Furthermore, this separation is no illusion, but is precisely the form in which the capitalist social relations of production actually appear at the surface level society (see Colletti, 1972:7-8; and Sayer, 1987:84-88). For example, writing on commodity-producing labour (i.e. abstract labour), Marx exemplifies:

"indifference towards specific labours corresponds to a form of society in which individuals can with ease transfer from one labour to another, and where the specific kind is a matter of chance for them hence of indifference. Not only the category, labour, but labour in reality has here become the means of creating wealth in general, and has ceased to be organically linked to particular individuals in any specific form" (Marx, 1858:104).

Clearly, if we are to show the misleading nature of the theories and ideologies predicated on the plausibility of capitalism's phenomenal forms, then we must "avoid postulating 'society'... as an abstraction" (Marx, 1844a:299). This means, that in order to arrive at a determinant form of society, we must take the relations of production and their empirical forms of appearance together. That is, the form of appearance of an object is

no less real than the social relations it gives expression to, but it can only be explained in reference to these relations. Similarly, the social relations of a particular society cannot be viewed independently of their forms of appearance, for it is in this form that they are encountered by "real, living individuals". They act, in other words, as real constraints on human behaviour.

It would appear then, that the development of Marx's materialism was predicted on the evolution of a new mode of enquiry, secured by a new method of abstraction. To be more specific, he required an approach which could grasp the differences in form a specific phenomenon assumes when articulated within a definite totality of social relations: "the totality of these relationships", Marx writes, "which the bearers of this production have toward nature and one another, the relationships in which they produce, is precisely society" (Marx, 1865:957).

To place the foregoing arguments within the context of Marx's own categories would be to anticipate chapters three, four and five. Instead, what I propose is that for the remainder of part one we consider the relevance of these arguments on what has been described as the current impasse in Marxist developmental theory. I shall try to show, that Marx's critique of approaches which over-simplify complex differences, thereby dehistoricizing them, is not limited to bourgeois political and economic

theory. In fact, many influential currents of Marxism reproduce the very same errors in two important respects: they reduce complex differences and they render natural historically specific social relations.

ii. The Impasse in Development Sociology:

First a point of clarification: what immediately follows is a discussion of Booth's (1985) analysis of the impasse in Marxist development theory. This analysis is immensely valuable for its timeliness, clarity and concise argument. However, I am not overtly concerned with Booth. I do not, for example, discuss the responses and debate his paper has inspired (see Sklair, 1988; Vandergeest and Buttel, 1988; Mouzelis, 1988 and Corbridge, 1990). Rather, I discuss Booth's analysis, for he shares a view of the world which I see as not only reproducing the mistakes of the various approaches to development he criticizes, but it is also one that does great violence to the categories of historical materialism.

In 'Marxism and Development Sociology: Interpreting the Impasse' (1985), Booth attempts to articulate the underlying causes for the current impasse. According to him, the key problem is "Marxism's metatheoretical commitment to demonstrating the 'necessity' of economic and

social patterns, as distinct from explaining them and exploring how they may be changed" (Booth, 1985:761). Symptomatic of this imprisonment, Booth argues, is a tendency for Marxist-influenced development theory to exhibit a type of system teleology and functionalism, which is derived, superficially I must add, "from the methodology of Marx's 'Capital'" and the belief "that the significant characteristics of national economies and social formations may be read off from the... laws of the capitalist mode of production" (Booth, 1985:773).

According to Booth, dependency Marxism is fatally flawed, in that it is supported by a theoretical 'bluff'; the concept of dependence is validated by a process of "circular reasoning, fallacious inferences from empirical observations and a weak deductive base" (Booth, 1985:726). The alternative, Warren's return to traditional Marxism, is similarly unsatisfactory. As noted by Booth, commentaries on Warren's thesis have tended to note that the postulations of Warren and Frank "mirror one another's weaknesses" (see Bernstein, 1979; and Lipietz, 1982). However, he argues, this needs to be pushed further "so that we are asking not just in what sense both Frank and Warren are wrong, but in a deeper sense, why they are wrong?" (Booth, 1985:773).

The major weaknesses of Warren's thesis - articulated in 'Imperialism and Capitalist Industrialization' (1973) and

'Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism' (1980) - is a blindness to systematic variations in development, economic reductionism and an evolutionary prejudice. Thus, like Frank's conception of dependency, Warren's formulation - the progressive thesis (see Sender, 1980:xiii) - is wrong, according to Booth (1985:774), because it is not possible to grasp the dynamics of development by deduction from the category of the productive forces.

For Booth, the modes of production literature (for example; Laclau, 1971; Banaji, 1977 and Taylor, 1979), the debate it has inspired and its non-resolution (see Foster-Carter, 1978), has failed to provide the much sort after middle ground between the polar positions of Frank and Warren. By articulating a Marx/Bukharin/Lenin discourse on the 'laws of motion' of the capitalist mode of production, Ernesto Laclau (1971), for example cannot, without a recourse to teleology, specify how the mechanisms of export capital are translated in the local dynamics of a specific social formation. The corollary of this is twofold: firstly, at a higher level of abstraction, the structures of underdevelopment are theorized in a manner that prescribes an *a priori* unity within the category of imperialism itself; and secondly, at a lower level of abstraction, when the actual form of capitalism's productive relations are shown to be at a variance with the 'needs' of imperialism, 'theoretical practice' gives way to the endless proliferation of taxonomic categories - i.e.

'disguised proletarian', 'semi-proletarian' and 'wage-labour equivalent'. In short, imperialism is treated as a living entity with certain 'needs', which if expressed, produces definite outcomes. Furthermore, when combined with the supposedly restricting effect of 'non-capitalist' socio-economic relations, this *a priori* system of 'needs' has a considerable degree of taxonomic flexibility, which in turn goes along way to explaining why articulation theory has proved popular amongst Marxists working in 'difficult' social formations.

Booth's summary criticisms of Marxist-influenced development theory are not new. Individually, outstanding contributions by Gabriel Palma (1981) on dependency Marxism, Aidan Foster-Carter (1978) on articulationism and Bernstein (1979) on Warren's traditionalism, all point to the same anomalies. However, what distinguishes Booth's approach from these contributions is his attempt to articulate why these old fallacies persist, and more particularly, why they are consistently reproduced under new guises (Booth, 1985:776). For Booth, the problem is again twofold and is manifested at two different levels of abstraction: firstly, at a higher level of abstraction, there exists a tendency to view the logic of capitalist development as not only explicable but necessary; and secondly, at a lower level of abstraction, Booth maintains that Marxist-influenced development theory displays a form of functionalism and system teleology which is inherent in all

Marxist discourse. With respect to the first argument, Laclau (1971) is wrong simply because it is not possible to grasp the dynamics of a social formation from the capitalist mode of production and its 'laws of motion'. Similarly with dependency Marxism: "picking off and lumping together reprehensible features of different types and stages of capitalist growth is not far removed ... from the Warrenite ... procedure of lumping together various characteristics of different national economies and conceiving them as aspects or results of some 'law' or other of the unfolding of capitalism" (Booth, 1985:774). The second, and unifying argument, is derived from the work of Hindess and Hirst (1977), that is Marxist-influenced development theory systematically neglects certain issues due to the ontological privileging of a specific notion of causality - the mode of production "as a totality which has inscribed in its structure certain necessary effects" (Booth, 1985:773). As a result, there exists a rationalist tendency to view the mode of production as directly "mappable" on to the social formation. Booth exemplifies:

"that Marxist theory systematically neglects certain kinds of issues [is] because of a belief derived from the methodology of Marx's 'Capital' that the significant characteristics of national economies and social formations may be read off from the characteristics, especially the 'laws of motion' of the capitalist mode of production" (Booth, 1985:773).

For Booth (1985:773), this criticism most fully "encapsulates the limitations of Warren's contribution ... : its blindness to systematic variation in development experience".

Though I agree with many of the summary criticisms made by Booth, there exists one major problem with his mode of analysis and hence the points of reference for debate established by him. By accepting the terms of reference established by Hindess and Hirst (1975, 1977 and 1978), Booth, like them, assumes that historical materialism begins, '*post festum*', with concepts: due to a commitment to a world which is only discursive, the concepts of historical materialism are treated as merely analytic devices devoid of any historical content. Otherwise put, he confuses "metatheoretical" protocols with ontological categories, and hence the actual configuration of the latter as the forms of expression of a definite form of society. Consequently the implicit, but far-reaching slide from recognizing similarities within diverse social formations to prefiguring these similarities with specifically capitalist structures and motivations - thereby universalizing the phenomenal forms of capitalism - is assumed to be the logical outcome of something internal to theory itself. Paraphrasing Marx (1858:90), it is as if the rupture between theoretical categories and the social reality they seek to understand, has "made its way

not from reality into the textbooks, but rather from the textbooks into reality, and as if the task were the dialectic balancing of concepts, and not the grasping of real relations".

For some this may appear as a somewhat banal textual quibble. However, by failing to recognize the historicity of ideas and categories, which in Sayer's (1987:126) words, "inescapably partake of the social reality which they seek to depict", their fetishization and subsequent universalization is reduced, as mentioned, to something which is akin to a mere intellectual error. As a result, it is impossible to relate this process of objective abstraction or fetishization to specifically capitalist social conditions, and hence to consider the possibility that it is an organic product of this particular form of society. The corollary of this, is a sterile debate in which the range of theoretical possibility is necessarily reduced to a simple "either..." "or..." problematic. For example, witness the framework for debate, as defined by Hirst (1977) and Hindess (1978):

"either, economism, or the non-correspondence of political forces - that is the choice which faces Marxism" (Hirst, 1977:131).

"the choice for Marxism is clear. Either we effectively reduce political and ideological phenomena

to class interests determined (basically by the economy) ... Or we must face up to the real autonomy of political and ideological phenomena" (Hindess, 1978:96-97).

"either economism: political and cultural means of representation are determined by the economy. Or the means of representation are not determined by the economy and there is no necessity for the political and cultural representation of classes and their interests" (Culter et. al., 1976:226).

Within this framework, it is just not possible to reject a crude base/superstructure model without abandoning all totalizing narratives of history, and the materialist connection between specific forms of development they attempt to bring into relation (Wood, 1990:128; see also Corrigan and Sayer, 1978:198-199). Furthermore, this tendency to dichotomize the range of theoretical alternatives, is not limited to post-Marxist critiques of Marxism, but is internal to all 'New Times' modes of criticism, which regard theory and history as separate domains of discourse (see McLennan, 1991:49-52).

Now, it has been mentioned that, for Booth(1985:773), the 'problem of necessity' is most fully encapsulated within Warren's contribution to Marxist development theory. The central problem therefore, is to ascertain whether

Warren's methodology, and the traditional position he exemplifies, is congruent with the methodology of historical materialism, as depicted here. Quite clearly, I am of the view that Warren's blindness to systematic variations in the actual configuration of capitalist development, is not derived from the methodology of Marx's 'Capital'. Rather, I would suggest, that the 'problem of necessity' arises when historically specific social relations are displaced from their ontological mooring within a particular social form, and are hitherto prefigured in all epochs of production. Otherwise put, to view the productive forces as material 'things', and to postulate their development as the 'prime governor' of historical change, is to conflate the historical with the transhistorical by dehistoricizing a phenomenal form which belongs to bourgeois society in absolute. Furthermore, this dehistoricization is no intellectual *faux pas*, but is intrinsic to a society in which the social relations between individuals assume the form of "material relations between persons" and "social relations between things" (Marx, 1867:46). Let me exemplify.

For pedagogic purposes, it is possible, I believe, to draw parallels between Warren's, 'Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism' (1980) and G.A. Cohen's, 'Karl Marx's theory of History: A defence' (1978), in so far as both advance an "old-fashioned historical materialism . . . , in which history is fundamentally, the growth of human productive power, and

forms of society rise and fall as they impede that growth" (Cohen, 1978:x). It is, of course, not possible to survey every aspect of Warren's (1980) and Cohen's (1978) impressive contributions to Marxism. Nevertheless, there exists one pivotal determination which concerns us here: that is, the desocialization of the economic base.

Both Warren and Cohen seek to advance a technological interpretation of historical materialism, where "the fundamental starting point for the development of Marxist and working class strategy must be the recognition that in general a progressive position is one that advances the development of the productive forces" (Sender, 1980:xiii). Indeed, as Gregor McLennan (1989: 68) has noted, Cohen goes so far as saying that if historical materialism is to be a strong theory of history, then it must be of the type he advances. While Warren's (1980:152-156) dismissal of Laclau's, Poulantzas' and Claude Meillasoux's contribution to the "literature on [the] 'preservation'" of non-capitalist modes of production, is of a similar sentiment.

In the light of the theoretical anomalies within the modes of production literature, there may indeed be some substance to this view. However, this is as far as my agreement goes, for, in order to advance a technological reading of Marx, the material base of society must be narrowly conceived so as to include the material forces of

production only: namely, "those facilities and devices which are used in the process of production ... the means of production on the one hand, and labour power on the other" (Cohen; in Sayer, 1987:142). As noted by Wood (1981:70), the corollary of this, is a theoretical obligation to "treat the material as if it were only externally related to the social and as if it had a life of its own, subject to laws of motion different from historical principles" (Wood, 1981:70). Thus, from the central proposition that the "productive forces tend to develop throughout history (the Development Thesis)" (Cohen, 1978:134; see also Sender, 1980:xiii), 'traditional' Marxism is required to postulate, or at least acknowledge, a natural dynamic which is intrinsic to the development of the productive forces, yet can be distinguished from the social and historical. For Cohen, this postulation is representative of the 'development thesis', which states:

- (1) "Men are ... somewhat rational".
- (2) "The historical situation of men is one of scarcity".
- (3) "Men possess intelligence of a kind or degree which enables them to improve their situation" (Cohen, 1978:152).

Proposition (2) is the essential element of this thesis. For Cohen, scarcity can be defined as "given men's wants

and the character of external nature, they cannot satisfy their wants unless they spend the better part of their time and energy doing what they would rather not do, engaged in labour which is not experienced as an end in itself" (Cohen, 1978:37).

Now, let us approach the problems associated with this position by beginning, not with Marx, but with an appreciative critic of Marxism, namely Marshall Sahlins, who in 'Stone Age Economics', develops two intersecting arguments. With the first, he shows that it is a form of "bourgeois ethnocentrism" to define scarcity as an "intrinsic property" corresponding to the level of development of the productive forces. For Sahlins, scarcity is a "relation between means and ends" (Sahlins, 1974:5). Understood in this sense, non-capitalist societies are the "original affluent society" (Sahlins, 1974:2) in that, material needs are met with only modest amounts of necessary labour, thereby allowing adequate time for the pursuit of cultural activities, or, in Marxist terms, social labour. Material scarcity alone therefore, does not provide a transhistorical motive to increase the productive capabilities of such societies.

With the second, and much neglected argument, Sahlins attacks the fetishized foundations on which both modern economics and traditional Marxism rest. He proposes, that "if economics is the dismal science, the study of hunting

and gathering economies must be its most advanced branch" (Sahlins, 1972:1). Modern economics, since Adam Smith, has indoctrinated a position whereby scarcity is measured by "the application of scarce means against alternative ends to derive the most satisfaction possible under the circumstances" (Sahlins, 1972:4). Having established this, both modern economics and traditional Marxism, Sahlins writes:

"look back upon hunters. But if modern man, with all his technological advantages, still has not got the wherewithal, what chance has the savage with his puny bow and arrow? Having equipped the savage with bourgeois impulses and palaeolithic tools, we judge his situation hopeless in advance" (Sahlins, 1972:4).

Despite the difficulty of his language, Sahlins is saying something like this: by defining scarcity as an "intrinsic property of technical means", as opposed to a "social relation between means and ends", the categories of modern economics are premised on an ahistorical conception of historical development. By analyzing individuals and events in abstraction from their social/cultural processes, 'homo economicus' arrives at the various social forms of contemporary society, not as the outcome of a complex historical process, but as histories point of departure. Thus, bourgeois postulations on the actual configuration of modern society are fundamentally flawed, in that they begin

not with traditional society, but with traditional society made up of modern individuals. Similar arguments apply to Cohen's postulation of a general (transhistorical) human interest in the development of the productive forces: traditional Marxism remains trapped within the circularity of placing itself on the standpoint of the finished phenomenon, at which point the processes of development being studied "have already acquired the fixity of natural forms of social life" (Marx, 1867:49). Paraphrasing Marx (1867:49), from here all that is left to do, is to decipher not the history of these processes of development (for they are regarded as something natural and/or immutable), but their meaning.

Sahlins, concerned with recasting the basis of analysis for hunting and gathering societies, attributes this fetishism to "bourgeois ethnocentrism" and does not consider its manifestation as a product internal to bourgeois society itself. Nevertheless, as is clearly indicated, definite parallels exist between elements of Marx's critique of political economy and Sahlins' objections to modern economics. Furthermore, these parallels are of particular relevance to Marxist development theory. Let me exemplify.

In the opening section to this chapter attention was drawn to Marx's analysis of the general conditions of production, conceived as transhistorical abstractions,

which due to their level of abstraction, do not in themselves describe any empirical reality: that is, "the general preconditions of all production are nothing more than abstract moments with which no historical stage of production can be grasped" (Marx, 1858: 88). The categories of political economy, according to Marx, treat the process of producing capital abstractly; independent of "the particular form it assumes under given social conditions" (Marx, 1867:177). Smith, for example, defined capital as "accumulated (realized) labour (properly, objectified labour), which serves as the means of new labour" (Smith, in Marx, 1858:257). According to Marx (1858:257), "this refers to the simple material of capital [i.e. as merely an instrument of production], without regard to the formal character without which it is not capital". The corollary of this, is that the determinate historical character of capital is "surreptitiously" transposed into a transhistorical abstraction: "capital", Marx writes, "would only be a new name for a thing as old as the human race, since every form of labour, including the least developed ... presupposes that the product of prior labour is used as means for direct, living labour" (Marx, 1858:258). Thus, a historically determined social relation is transposed into "a condition perennially imposed by nature upon human life, and is therefore independent of the forms of social life" (Marx, 1867: 177).

Similarly, what applies to Smith's conception of

capital, applies with equal forces to Hegel's conception of private property. With Hegel, and classical jurisprudence more generally, we have seen that private property appeared as a natural relation between people and nature, which was 'corrupted' by traditional moral and/or 'traditional' cultural practices. As a result, all antecedent forms of property are grasped not in their particular socio-historical form, but as mere distortions of private property. It seemed, in other words, that the appearance of private property was the point of departure for an analysis of history, as opposed to an outcome of it.

Paraphrasing Wood (1981:71), to abstract historically, as opposed to reifying an abstraction, is not a question of distinguishing the form of capital from its underlying matter, but matter in capitalist form distinguished from matter in the abstract. As Marx (158:107-108) himself puts it, "the point is not the historic position of economic relations in the succession of different forms of society ... Rather, their order within modern bourgeois society". Like both political economy and classical jurisprudence, traditional historical materialism also conflates this distinction. As a result, and under the guise of 'conceptual rigour', the elements of a phenomenon which accord to it its socio-historical character - for instance, that "the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of labour" (Marx and Engels, 1848:487) - are transposed into transhistorical

abstractions.

With regard to traditional historical materialism, this essentially empiricist, teleological approach to historical development arises from a misunderstanding of the relationship between capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production. Capitalism, according to Marx (1858:105), can provide the "key" to "all vanished social formation", however, only in the sense that it is an actually existing social form which has given rise to its own historical categories. The point, is not that capitalism is prefigured in the interstices of non-capitalist forms of production. On the contrary, capitalism represents an historically specific transformation, which actually exists. As noted by Sayer (1987:143), failure to recognize this point "seriously jeopardizes Marxism's claims to be either historical or materialist in any empirically sense".

By challenging Booth's understanding of the concepts of historical materialism, I am not attempting to jettison the general thrust of his argument: "that in a number of respects it is the intellectual framework of Marxism, and not the shortcomings of this or that particular perspective, that is to blame for the stagnation and lacunae in current sociological development research" (Booth, 1985:762). Indeed, those problems discussed in relation to traditional historical materialism, have

reached their epitome in the discourse of articulation theory, where the model of articulated structures, levels and instances, can be abstracted in such a manner so as to contain bits of any or all modes of production. However, the object of this chapter has been to introduce the theoretical core of the present thesis, and hence the impasse in Marxist development theory, as I understand it. It has been argued that, by taking as his point of departure the work of Hirst and his collaborators, Booth's mode of analysis begins with their *a priorism*: a commitment to a world which is only discursive and the assumption that historical materialism begins with concepts. The corollary of which is a distorted framework of debate which threatens to exclude Marx from the range of theoretical possibilities. By seeking to avoid the all-purpose charge of teleology and functionalism, this chapter has attempted to present one possible reason for the current impasse: a misunderstanding of Marx's concepts and their grounding in a critique of capitalism's forms of appearances - i.e. its "natural forms of social life". Furthermore, precisely because the process through which these forms acquire their apparently fixed, "immutable", character is internal to the nature of bourgeois reality itself, the categories of both modern economics and traditional historical materialism have a dangerous level of superficial plausibility. "If", Marx writes, "we erroneously regard the value form of the labour product as the one and only form of social production, fixed for all time by nature's immutable laws,

we are perforce ignoring the particular differential characteristics of the form of value" (Marx, 1867:55; see also Sayer, 1987:143). The following chapter sets out to develop this criticism in relation to those concepts essential to the analysis of state formation: the relations of production and the economic base and the political superstructure.

Chapter 2:

Capitalism and capitalist development.

As was clearly indicated in the previous chapter, the impasse, as I understand it, is of a methodological kind. By methodology, I am referring to views about the relationship between "historical categories and accounts at different levels of abstraction" (Johnson, 1983:166). Questions of central importance are: what is the object of knowledge? How do we construct explanations? Why are some causes more important than others? How do we evaluate research results? How do we devise analytic categories which satisfactorily capture new historical dimensions?

As its object of knowledge, Marxist development theory is concerned with identifying "the limits of the logically possible" within a particular social form, while empirical research is conducted so as to reveal "the selection of phenomena from the logically possible which have been actualized" (Kitching, 1987: 43). Indeed, to assume otherwise (as was the case with speculative/idealist philosophy), is to suggest that historical thinking can take place ahead of actual social development, a manifestly absurd proposition.

At the level in which the social relations of a particular society are actually formed (i.e. state formation and/or capital formation), the foregoing objective implies the construction of historical topologies that grasp "the possibility, immanence, direction or tendency of further development" (Johnson, 1983: 180). However, for critics of Marxism, such as Giddens (1981), Hindess and Hirst (1977) and Booth (1985), the construction of historical topologies, by Marxists, necessarily implies a teleological bias and an implicit form of evolutionism (Giddens, 1981:69-75). Indeed, many passages in Marx are open to this criticism and many versions of Marxist development theory, Warren's being the best recent example, are quite overtly evolutionist and teleological. However, within Marx's own analytic practice there is ample textual support for reading him in a manner that is quite explicitly anti-evolutionist. For example, his critique of political economy proceeds precisely by abandoning the *priorism* of those economists who, by "abstracting away" the specific social character of capital, "smudge over all historical differences and see bourgeois relations in all forms of society" (Marx, 1858: 105). For Marx, there is "always ... an essential difference", which if ignored leads to an evolutionary approach to historical development, in which "the latest form regards the previous ones as steps leading up to itself, and ... always conceives them one-sidedly" (Marx, 1858:106). Thus, to

borrow the words of Mouzelis (1981:357), I would suggest that "it is not the typology *per se* which leads to teleological explanations, but rather the manner in which it is used to account for the transition from point A to point B". Whether one arrives at point B via a linear causality, is determined by the point in which historical investigation is entered into. For example, if we take the apparent reality of the modern states 'separation' from capitalism's 'economic base' "not as a historic result, but as histories point of departure" (Marx, 1858:83), then the aspect which marks the formers specific social (bourgeois) character will appear as a necessary condition for any and all forms of society. Recently, this has been most comprehensibly demonstrated by Robert Brenner (1989), who argues that any approach to history which takes for granted the appearance of a particular social form assumes precisely that which is in most need of explanation (see Brenner, 1989:229).

What follows sets out to develop this point in relation to those categories essential to the analysis of state formation: the relations of production and the base/superstructure metaphor. I take each category individually and discuss their treatment, and subsequent dehistoricization, by Marxist's, under the sub-headings of ideal-typical conceptions of capitalism and the reductionism and universalization of the base and superstructure. It is argued that not only do the various

approaches to development misconceive the categories of historical materialism, but they also make fetishes of them by identifying them with specifically capitalist forms of appearances. Essentially, as mentioned, this form of theoretical practice eschews a tendency, when approaching third world social formations, to prefigure the social relations of capital into non-capitalist modes of production. In Anderson's (1974:403) words, the result is "a colour-blind materialism, incapable of appreciating the real and rich spectrum of diverse social totalities within the same temporal band of history, thus inevitably end[ing] in a perverse idealism".

i. Ideal-Typical Forms of Capitalist Development.

In 'Industrialism, Development, and Dependence' (1982), Henry Bernstein maintains that the "methodology of historical materialism suggests that there can be no universal 'model' of capitalist development, disregarding the specific historical conditions, forms, and mechanisms through which it occurs" (Bernstein, 1982:227). Here Bernstein is objecting to Warren's and Arghiri Emmanuel's tendency to view development (Warren), or underdevelopment (Emmanuel), by reference to an "implicit model of 'normal' [Western] capitalist development" (Bernstein, 1982:227). For example, in comparing the general effects of colonialism on the African Gold Coast and the Romanian

peasantry, Warren's (1980:128-138) mode of argument amounts to asking "whether the situation is better or worse (in terms of GNP) than it would have been in the absence of colonialism or other outside intervention?" (Lipietz, 1982:54).

By taking as a point of reference a 'general concept of capitalism', empirical enquire into the actual form of development - its contradictions and its limitations - are already contained in the concept itself. With Warren in particular, it has been shown that the contradictions to be transcended are presented in such a manner that an *a priori* unity is allowed to unfold itself. For example, he attributes all the positive aspects of capitalist development to the expansion of the productive forces, whilst all the negative effects are attributed to corruptive factors external to this expansion. For instance, Warren concludes 'Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism' (1980), by informing us that "major policy blunders" have in some cases lead to the "squandering of many of the benefits of Third World post-war economic development"; a different approach, he argues, "would have permitted the promotion of a more efficient and humane [form of] capitalist development" (Warren, 1980:253-254). An approach which is, of course, contained within the concept of capitalism itself, namely the expansion of the productive forces. Thus, capitalist development, its contradictions and its limitations, take on a purely

contingent character, as if one can be separated from the other, only to be brought into relation via the intervention of progressive or regressive policies.

This tendency to prefigure a potential state of affairs, so as to compare the past or the present, provides no basis for dealing with reality. In the pervious chapter, it was argued that this process is symptomatic of the fetishized foundations on which the categories of traditional historical materialism are built. But what of articulation theory? As we shall see, the same arguments not only apply, but in many respects, this a *priori* determination of capitalism's logic of essence has reached its apotheosis within the discourse of articulationism.

In 'Feudalism and Latin America', Laclau (1971) subjected dependency theory in general, and Frank in particular, to a trenchant critique. Laclau's principal point of contention is Frank's (re)definition of capitalism as "foreign exploitative economic activity" (Frank, 1969:351). The principal problem with this conception is that, by analyzing capital from the standpoint of the circulation of money and commodities, capital is grasped not as a social relation pertaining to a particular mode of production, but in its generic form as it appears within the sphere of circulation (see Marx, 1867:141). For Marx, this "general formula of capital" requires "no further conditions for its existence" than "those necessary for the

simple circulation of commodities and money", and hence "it is older than the capitalist mode of production" itself (Marx, 1865:442). The point being that "money and commodities are not, from the first, capital", but "have to be transformed into capital" (Marx, 1878:791). Thus, their mere circulation does not necessarily correspond to a mode of production founded upon the capital-labour relation.

By defining capital from the standpoint of simple circulation, Frank's definition of it, corresponds not to capital as a social relation, but to a productive activity, which, according to Marx (1865:442), is equally capable of existing on "the basis ... of the primitive community, slave production, small peasant and petty-bourgeois production". The "essential difference", in other words, is forgotten. Thus, in the hands of Frank, capital is reduced to the status of a 'thing', that is the circulation of commodities and money.

Laclau's criticisms are, then, both valid and important. However, his own thesis is most vulnerable at precisely the point in which his claims are most forcibly presented. That is, concerning the nature of capitalism, or more specifically the 'non-capitalist' nature of Latin America. For example, Laclau, as mentioned, correctly points out that by restricting his analysis of capital to its appearance in the sphere of circulation, Frank fails to realise that the integration of Latin America into the

world economy may in fact reinforce traditional relations of production. However, if such relations are not capitalist, it does not necessarily follow that they were feudal. Indeed, the 'reinforcing', or 'continued persistence' of traditional forms of production becomes a theoretical anomaly only in reference to a model, or standard from which peripheral formations are supposed to deviate. Otherwise put, Laclau, and articulationism as a whole, is bedeviled with tacit teleological assumptions about what capitalism looks like. Capitalist development, therefore, is reduced to a process of accumulating a number of *a priori* constructed variants - labour, non-labour, raw material, and the means of production - which are not only generic categories of production 'in general', but also it is precisely in this generic form that capital first appears at the level of surface society. This process of reconstructing empirically existing modes of production by positing *a priori* the categories of production 'in general' can only be self-defeating, for it amounts to implying that the essential differences between actual modes of production can be inferred from the categories which they have in common (Marx, 1867:177; and Sayer, 1983:110).

Laclau's argument concerning the feudal character of Latin America, is based on three assumptions: 1) surplus appropriation of agriculture is secured by coercive sanctions, 2) that labour rent embodies surplus labour, and 3) that, for Marx, capitalism is a mode of production in

which the "fundamental economic relationship is constituted by the free labourer's sale of his labour power, whose necessary precondition is the loss by the direct producer of the means of production" (Laclau, 1971:25). It follows, that "the specific expression of feudal and semi-feudal relations ... have been preserved and reinforced long after the effective penetration of the capitalist mode of production" (Laclau, 1971:25). Read at a formalist level, this conception - restricted and uneven development, as a determination of the articulation of more than one mode of production - seems quite consistent with the general thrust of 'Capital', and in particular, Marx's distinction between the real subsumption of labour to capital and the formal subsumption of labour to capital. However, critical to my argument, is that Marx makes it quite clear that with the formal subsumption of labour to capital, antecedent organizations of labour do not disappear. True, there is always an essential difference. However, this difference does not necessarily find expression at the surface level of society. Just as money, "the final product of the circulation of commodities, is the first phenomenal form of capital" (Marx, 1867:131), antecedent organizations of labour not do not disappear with emergence of capital as the fundamental social relation, rather they form the general categories of its surface appearance. For example, writing on the formal subsumption of labour to capital, Marx notes that it does not:

"in itself imply a fundamental modification in the real nature of the labour process. On the contrary, the fact is that capital subsumes the labour process as it finds it... The work may become more intensive, its duration may be extended, it may be more continuous or orderly under the eye of the interested capitalist, but in themselves these changes do not effect the character of the actual labour process, the actual mode of working" (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:32);

and, in the first volume of 'Capital':

"of course, the general nature of the labour process is not altered in any way because the worker engages in it on behalf of the capitalist instead of his own behalf. Nor is the particular way in which boots are made or yarn is spun altered, primarily by the fact the capitalist has intervened ... The capitalist has to begin by taking labour power as he finds it ...; and he must, therefore, be satisfied with labour as it exists" (Marx, 1867:177-178).

The point I am making, is that adjacent to the very core of the articulation problematic are two tacit assumptions which render it conceptually indifferent to the discrepancies between the inner-content of capital and the form it assumes at the surface level of society. These assumptions are:

1. an essentialist conception of the peasant class, designated by a specific form of production - petty commodity production; and
2. a belief that the peasantry is historically bound to disintegrate under the 'full' penetration of the capitalist relations of production.

Thus, questions pertaining to the continued existence of what appears as peasant forms of labour, despite the global dominance of capital, are central to the articulation problematic. However, "this persistence or conservation becomes an anomaly only with reference to a certain standard from which the third world is said to deviate" - Western capitalism (Aguilar, 1989:44). Consequently, the 'persistence' of peasant forms of labour becomes a problem because they are assumed *a priori* not to exist.

As noted by Filomeno Aguilar, this raises an important epistemological problem: "how do we know the peasantry is about to or ought to be dissolved" (Aguilar, 1989:44)? Indeed, one can only affirm this by implicitly reifying a general concept of capital - "taking it as immediately specifying an empirical particular" (Sayer, 1989:56). However, to do so would be to disregard the fact that capitalist development in the third world is qualitatively different from the developmental experience of early Western Europe (see Taylor, 1979:103).

Quite clearly, the above discussion gives raise to questions pertaining to whether the framework of the articulation of more than one mode of production provides an adequate conception of the multiple social forms actualized by history. As mentioned articulationism is based on the proposition that the mode of production can be abstracted in thought via the existence of a combination of labour processes, each of which can be identified by a check list of elements: labour, non-labour, the means of production and the raw material. However, in an important debate, Mouzelis (1980) critiques articulationist John Taylor ('From Modernization to Modes of Production': 1979) for his failure to present an adequate criteria for distinguishing the relations of production from the labour processes: "Taylor's formation [the above check-list] does not make it clear when and under what conditions different relations of production constitute a different mode" (Mouzelis, 1980:366). Indeed, Marx would appear to dismiss any such distinction as superfluous. Writing on the production of surplus value (1867:169-193), he exemplifies: "when we eat bread, its taste does not tell us who grew the wheat. So, likewise, when we study the labour process, it does not tell us under what conditions the process is carried on: whether under the lash of the overseer of slaves, or under the sharp eyes of the capitalist" (Marx, 1867:177; see Corrigan, 1977). Concerning Taylor's formulation, the question which follows from this is

predictable: "why under feudalism, is wage labour a separate labour process but lineage production under capitalism a separate mode?" (Mouzelis, 1981:366).

In response to Mouzelis' criticism, Taylor writes: "the most important point for analysing the determinants of restricted and uneven development is not to focus on the articulation of the modes of production, but on the articulation of a capitalist mode with non-capitalist divisions of labour and labour processes" (Taylor, 1981:389). This statement is in direct contrast to the discourse of 'From Modernization to Modes of Production' (1979), where, for example, Taylor writes: "as opposed to the notion of underdevelopment, we will argue ... a social formation is dominated by an articulation of at least two modes of production" (Taylor, 1979:102). It is within this discourse that Taylor attempts to explain such structural features of underdevelopment as urban unemployment, capital accumulation, class alliances, class ideologies and political instability (see Taylor, 1979:265-275). However, leaving this inconsistency momentarily behind, Taylor goes on to argue that when analysing the articulation of the modes of production we must proceed by identifying the social relations which secure the overall reproduction of the social formation. That is, the social relations which secure the extraction of surplus labour. After all, "Marx", Taylor writes, "did this when analysing the relations of production which govern the extraction under which ground

rent was levied" (Taylor, 1979:152)

With respect to Marx, Taylor is quite correct in arguing that within a particular social formation there exists a combination of labour processes, under the dominance of a determinant social relation. For example, in the 'Grundrisse' (1858), Marx writes: "In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relation thus assigns rank and influence to the others.." (Marx, 1858:106-107). However, it is unclear how Taylor can deduce a totality made up of structures, levels, instances and modes of production from such statements. Indeed, as I understand it, it is not a question of the articulation of several modes of production dominated by one. Rather, it is a question of different organizations of labour assimilated to the specific character of the form of production which prevails in that social form.

The point I am attempting to reinforce is that, although Marx recognized that 'non-capitalist' forms of social life continued to articulate within essentially capitalist forms of production, this does not entail the *a priori* existence of a non-capitalist mode(s) of production. After all, "bourgeois society is itself only a contradictory form of development" (Marx, 1973:105), and is therefore capable of mutating in many different forms. This point is raised by Aguilar (1989), Corrigan (1977), Warren

(1980), Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985) and Levin and Neocosmos (1989) who, for example, view such supposedly 'semi-feudal' relations as "the extraction of rent, the monopolisation of land, the use of extra-economic forms of coercion of labour and the support of a reactionary state, as perfectly consistent with the capitalist relations of production" (Levin & Neocosmos, 1989:242 see also Aguilar, 1989:44-49, Corrigan, 1977:441-452, Warren, 1980:156, Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985:169-172). What is important is not the question of whether extra-economic forms of coercion are capitalist or feudal, but rather what is the essential difference when traditional extra-economic forms of coercion are assimilated by capital, which in turn become premises of its own existence?

The above argument may appear trivial, however, it is important in that articulationism is based on a misreading of the classics. For example, in the 'Introduction' to Marx's 'Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations' (1965), Eric Hobsbawm, recognizing the fallacy of positing abstract-formal models for particular historical epochs, writes: "pre-class society forms a large and complex historical epoch of its own, with its own history and laws of development ..." (Hobsbawm, 1965:51). He goes on:

"not only does ... [this] help us dismiss such primitive arguments as those which deny the novelty of capitalism because merchants existed in ancient Egypt

... but it draws attention to the fact that the basic social relations which are necessarily limited in number, are 'invented' and 'reinvented'... and that all monetary modes of production ... are complexes made up from all sorts of combinations of them" (Hobsbawm, 1965:59).

Hobsbawm's point is clear: a mode of production is constituted by a limited number of social relations, which are capable of assuming a multiplicity of social forms. The methodological implication of this proposition is clear: at the level of theory, no one particular form of structural arrangement can be prefigured *a priori* within a specific social formation. Indeed, this proposition can only be evaded by implicitly reifying the general category of the social relations and taking them "as immediately specifying an empirical particular" (Sayer, 1989:56). As a result, the study of capitalist development is effectively reduced to the search for such factors as the prevalence of wage labour. One possible alternative to this essentialist and *a priori* conception is to view the relations of production as any social relation which is essential to, and therefore a production relation of, a particular mode of production (Sayer, 1987:76). Since no general concept can be exhaustive of the empirical characteristics which define a particular social relation, the question of what is and what is not a social relation would have to be made the subject of historical analysis.

Not to anticipate, I will content myself here with giving only a brief indication of what the above conception implies. Firstly, by defining the social relations of production, as any relation essential to a given mode of production, "we can no longer assume that terms like forces and relations of production, or base and superstructure, refer unambiguously ... to different, and mutually exclusive, bits of empirical reality as they would in an atomistic ontology" (Sayer, 1987:22). In turn, this "undermines the [very] possibility of erecting any general theory of the base/superstructure relation" (Sayer, 1987:83). Second, we can no more designate a particular type of 'state' as capitalist, as we can a particular type of production. Just as capital may assimilate apparently traditional social relations which in turn become premises of its own existence, so it is with the state.

ii. The Desocialization of the 'Economic Base'.

Firstly, a point of clarification: although concerned with the base/superstructure relation, this section proceeds under the heading 'The Desocialization of the Economic Base' for a specific reason. Not only am I concerned with conventional Marxist understandings of the

economic base and the political superstructure, but I am also concerned with the various forms of Post-Marxism, which have rejected this distinction in favour of concepts which imply a notion of 'causality' comparable to Hindess and Hirst's postulation of a "necessary non-correspondence" between the economic and the political (see Culter et. al, 1978:128; for critical comment, see Corrigan and Sayer, 1978; Elliott, 1986; Geras, 1987 and 1988; and Wood, 1986). Although I in no way defend conventional understandings of the base and superstructure relation, it is held that by refusing to admit that what they reject in Marxism is not secondary but essential, the various forms of post-Marxism merely reproduced the fetishisms associated with this unfortunate metaphor, thereby aggravating the present crisis in Marxism (see Corrigan and Sayer, 1978:204-211).

The perspective from which Marx approached his later studies was that of starting with a critique of the economic forms of "the capitalist method of production, and the relations of production and exchange appropriate to that method" (Marx, 1878:862) - i.e. "the commodity, ... and its further developments, the money form and capital form, etc." (Marx, 1867:55; see also, 1880:198-201). Earlier it was suggested that the sheer weight and comprehensiveness of this critique has given rise to the impression that 'the economic' is "the alpha and omega" of proper historical materialist concern (see Sayer, 1985:224). Consequently, Marxists have tended to adopt a

position whereby they treat the economic 'base' and the legal and political 'superstructures' as qualitatively distinct, more or less discrete, separate entities. This applies most obviously to orthodox conceptions of the base and superstructure relation. However, it is also true with respect to those interpretations which speak of legal/political structures, instances and levels, which are held to be determined 'in the last instance' by the economic 'base'.

The justification for this atomization of society into primary and secondary levels is, in most cases, quite arbitrary, and largely dependent on supposedly self-evident truths. In 'Reading Capital' (1978), Althusser and Balibar for example, spend a good deal of time and intellectual energy demonstrating that production relations are property relations, but in a sense, that is distinct from the juridical representation of private ownership: "where the relations of production are concerned", Althusser (1979:177) writes, "we can draw one conclusion ...: they relate to the superstructural forms they call for as so many conditions of their own existence". He concludes: "the relations of production cannot therefore be thought in their concept while abstracting from their specific superstructural conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1979:177). Such "dialectic[al] balancing of concepts", via a general '*rechtsfrei*' definition of the 'conditions of existence', may represent an outstanding example of

philosophical reasoning, the consequence, however, is paralysing: where for Marx the category of 'superstructure' is descriptive of the various phenomenal forms the 'base' itself assumes in social consciousness, Althusser takes this separation at face value and reifies it as a "theoretical axiom" (Sayer, 1987:143). Importantly, this argument applies irrespective of whether this relationship between economic base and its 'conditions of existence' is regarded as determinant or purely contingent (non-corresponding); whereas the first gives way to a linear relationship between the economic relations of production and their 'conditions of existence', the second sees only empirical collisions. Thus, the "essential difference", that is, the form of appearance of a 'separate' economy, whose counter-form is an equally 'separate' political state, remains an undiscussed assumption.

Within Marxist development theory, the most widely held view of the base/superstructure relation is that which, in Althusser's (1978:97) words, conceives the mode of production as "constituted by a certain type of complexity, the unity of a structured whole containing ... levels or instances which are distinct and 'relatively autonomous', and co-exist within this complex structural unity, articulated with one another according to specific determinations, fixed in the last instance by the level of the economic". Let us, then, consider more closely the

manifestation of this conception, and in particular its phenomenal basis in capitalism's forms of appearance. Again it is helpful to recall Taylor's (1979) formulation.

Taylor (1979) argues that in terms of the transition from one mode of production to another, it is the political and ideological instances which are the most important, in that, they determine the degree to which the capitalist mode of production can effectively penetrate a particular social formation. The conclusion which follows from this is predictable: the "articulation of a mode of production in a social formation [can] produce tendencies whose perpetuation depends on the development of particular conjunctures" (Taylor, 1979:168).

The critical distinction here is between the mode of production and the social formation, or put another way, between structure and conjuncture. According to Taylor (1979: 124-125), the mode of production is a 'structure in dominance' which does not exist in any empirical sense. For the Althusserian, what does exist, is the social formation, which, in a particular conjuncture, consists of a "complex totality containing a number of different practices - economic, political, ideological and theoretical - whose unity constitutes ... social practice" (Taylor, 1979:106). The popularization of this dualism, particularly amongst Marxists working in 'difficult' social formations, was perpetuated by the fact that the leading exponents of the

articulation debate (the exception being Pierre-Philippe Rey) wrote very little history (see Wood, 1990:126-128). In practice, however, it did little to shift the terms of reference away from orthodox understandings of the base and superstructure relation. As noted by Wood (1990:127-128), Marxism could, for a time, "eschew 'crude economism' ... without abandoning the crudely mechanical model of base and superstructure". All that was required was to "adopt the sharp Althusserian dualism between structure and history, absolute determinism and irreducible contingency" (Wood, 1990:128).

That this conception retains what is essentially a mechanical base/superstructure relation illustrates a lapse in Althusser's logic. It has been mentioned, that for Althusser and Balibar (see 1978:215), whether a mode of production is capitalist or feudal is determined by the specific connection between the "common features" of labour, non-labour, the means of production and the property connection. However, underlying this formulation, is a conception of society in the abstract. For example, according to Balibar (1978:209), "what makes the comparisons [between modes of production] possible at the level of structure [is] the search for the invariant determinations (for the 'common features') of 'production in general', which does not exist historically, but whose variants are represented by all the historical modes of production". The lapse in their logic is this: just as the

general concept of fruit cannot be taken to describe all empirical forms of fruit, no general category of labour, property and so on, can sufficiently describe all empirical phenomena subsumed under them. It is not logically possible, for example, to distinguish between wage labour and slave labour from what they have in common - i.e. both being useful forms of labour (Sayer, 1987:56).

Those who adopt Althusser's rigid distinction between the mode of production and the concrete social formation can only avoid this methodological trap by implicitly reifying the elements contained within the abstract-formal model of the mode of production, including the various levels or instances contained within it. The corollary of this is that both the political level and the economic level are implicitly taken as immediately specifying an actual empirical form (Sayer, 1987:56). For example, if the political level of our abstract-formal model of the capitalist mode of production is seen to be constituted by certain 'invariants', which structurally correspond to this mode of production, then it follows that whether a state is capitalist is not determined by its internal relationship to the social relations of this society, but because it displays certain structural features. Furthermore, this reduction of historical analysis to a search for certain *a priori* constructed invariants, is not an example taken from some less favourable tradition within Marxism, but is precisely the position adopted by Poulantzas in his

description of European absolutism (Poulantzas, 1973:157-167). As pointed out by Wood (1990:129), it is of little wonder, therefore, that this uneasy synthesis between "structure and history", and "absolute determinism and irreducible contingency", simply breaks down when moving from the abstract-formal structures of the mode of production, to the concrete social formation.

For Taylor, this move is guided by what he refers to as "conjunctural analysis". This begins by establishing the elements which constitute the "contemporary economic system" (Taylor, 1981:386) - labour, the means of production, non-labour, property and the dominant form of appropriation - followed by the combination of labour processes, from which the class structure can supposedly be deduced. On 'establishing' what I would regard as the generic elements of any and all modes of production (the above), Taylor suggests that by specifying these elements, it is possible to determine the reproductive requirements of the determinant mode of production, from which the political representation of classes and class alliances can be deduced. Having specified these particular forms, Taylor argues that it becomes possible to manufacture specific generalizations on the likely development strategy pursued (Taylor, 1981:386-389). Concerning articulationism's tendency to reify abstract concepts, the problematic moment within this mode of analysis, is the process whereby the reproductive requirements of the capitalist mode of

production are 'established'.

Any attempt to duplicate this move from the abstract-formal mode of production to the concrete social formation, can only succeed by erecting a structure/conjuncture analogy. The latter contains the structural (generic) elements contained within the abstract-formal mode of production - labour, property, and so on -, whilst the former contains everything not included in the latter. For example, the juridical definition of labour as wage labour and property as private property, that is, attributes not contained within the generic categories of labour 'in general' and property 'in general' (see Comninel, 1987:84-90). In turn, this effectively drives a wedge between the material moment of a given phenomena, and the social (historical), moment of the same phenomena. It follows, that by viewing the mode of production as an articulation of structural (generic) features which, on contact with another mode of production, can produce certain transitional tendencies, the expression of these tendencies can only be explained in reference to itself or its presupposition. Thus, in the hands of Taylor (1979), as was the case with Laclau (1971), imperialism, as the requisite condition for the penetration of export capital into third world formations, is necessarily transposed from an historical category to an omniscient entity with clearly defined 'needs'.

If the logical consequences of Taylor's (1979:235-275) argument are correct, then the actual configuration of such diverse social phenomena as urban unemployment, capital accumulation, class alliances and the political representation of classes, cannot be 'explained' without recourse to the 'needs' of imperialism. Furthermore, since 'superstructures' cannot be held to intervene in a 'structure' which they are constitutive of, then the supposed relative autonomy of the political and the ideological, under the guise of conjuncture, becomes a mere rhetorical flourish.

Critic's of this approach, Mouzelis (1983; and 1990), for example, have tended to attribute this dualism to the problematic manner in which Marxists move "from philosophical considerations about the social being ... to more historical sociological considerations" (Mouzelis, 1990:45). Here, Mouzelis is referring to the philosophical materialism, epitomized in the works of the young Lenin and Georgi Plekhanov, in which Marx is seen to have inverted Hegel's idealism. In the 'Preface' (1873) to the second German edition of 'Capital', Marx found with Hegel that the "dialectic stands on its head" and "it must be turned the "right way up again if you want to discover the rational kernel ..." (Marx, 1878:873). Following such statements, Lenin (1908) was one who exemplified the view that Marx "takes matter as primary and regards consciousness, thought, sensations, as secondary" (Lenin, 1972:46). At the

level of society this separation - material/ consciousness - imposes a "distinction between the economy on the one hand and the political, religious, and kinship institutions on the other" (Mouzelis, 1990:46). In the light of the inherent determinism associated with this separation, and its tendency toward epistemological closure, Mouzelis, and post-Marxism in general, reject all notions of a base/superstructure relation (Mouzelis, 1990:47).

Such rejections are of course, reasonably familiar (see Acton, 1962:167-169). Indeed, the reasoning behind them, would at one level, find support from many working within the broad parameters of historical materialism. After all, if Althusserian Marxism has shown us one thing, it is that we cannot take history and theory as wholly separate domains of discourse, and hence we can no longer establish the logical necessity for the primacy of material production in the analysis of social life, and in particular, social life outside of the parameters of capitalism. As Sayer puts it:

"we can no more conclude from the undeniable fact that there can be no social life without production, the consequence that the mode of production therefore determines any other area of social life, than we can conclude from the equally true proposition that there can be no social life without language, the corollary that social structures are determined by the laws of

grammar" (Sayer, 1984:148).

However, Sayer, in contrast to the likes of Mouzelis and Booth, resists the temptation to reduce the economic determinism associated with conventional understandings of the base and superstructure to mere philosophical or metatheoretical considerations. In other words, like Colletti, Fine and Wood, he rejects what essentially amounts to suggesting that Marxism's persistence with this theoretical burden arises from a romantic attachment to it. Rather, he attempts to explain this persistence as a product intrinsic to the character in which the social relations of bourgeois society manifest themselves at the surface level of society: "the economy", Sayer (1987:140) writes, "- itself one such reification, and perhaps the most bedazzling and spectacular of all - is far from the only production in this illusion. Nor is 'it', itself explanatory of the mystification. Our social relations are".

Post-Marxism's failure to recognize this "nexus of relationship" between the social relations of production, their empirical forms of appearance and their corresponding theoretical categories, means any rejection of the base/superstructure model - generally conceived as technological determinism - can only proceed by replacing old false alternatives with new ones. For example, other schools of Marxism - Alan Lipietz (1987), and the

Regulation school, for instance - have rejected Marx's supposedly 'economic' theories of the labour theory of value, surplus value and alienation, choosing instead to focus on 'regime's of accumulation' and 'modes of regulation'. The former, "describes the long term stabilization of the allocation of social production between consumption and accumulation" (Lipietz, 1987:14); while the latter, "describes a set of internalized rules and social procedures" which ensure the unity of a given regime of accumulation and which "guarantee that agents conform more or less to the schema of reproduction in their day to day behaviour" (Lipietz, 1987:14).

On the one hand, it must be conceded that this shift in focus has seen the construction of a technically sophisticated theory of crisis formation, which not only surpasses many aspects of Marx's theories of value and surplus value, but is also capable of confronting bourgeois theories of equilibrium on their own ground. On the other hand however, it is incomplete: without critically interrogating such categories as the 'regime of accumulation' within its social and historical context, the social relations in which these mechanisms are embedded, continue to be treated as something external. At best, spatially and temporally 'separate' spheres of consumption and accumulation may intervene with one another, but they do so as independent, autonomous neighbours. This is in direct contradistinction to Marx, who, by grasping the

essential relations between these spheres, was able to argue that although consumption and accumulation exist side by side, spatially and temporally apart, they are social forms of the same social relations, and hence organically related. In this case, revision has merely perpetuated the very fetishistic tendencies that Marx was attacking - those practices through which the phenomenal forms of capitalism come to be regarded as externally related, static (immutable), spheres.

This is not to say that Marx's theories of value and surplus value are without problems. Rather, the point is that Marx's mode of enquiry is intimately and necessarily related to a particular view of reality, which, in the words of Murray, is "typified in the phrase 'the essence must appear as something other than itself (namely the phenomena)'" . Hence, Marx's method can not be abstracted from this particular view of reality. Nor can Marxists simply substitute or integrate theoretical categories offered by alternative methodologies, which may correspond to a different view of reality.

Returning to the 'political', the same argument must apply: the phenomenal forms of capital may disguise the social relations they give expression to; categories built on these phenomenal forms - i.e. 'regime's of accumulation' - cannot, therefore, be regarded as adequate concepts of these social relations. It follows that, replacing the

base/superstructure relation with such concepts as the 'mode of domination' (Mouzelis, 1990), 'hegemony' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) and the 'necessary non-correspondence' of the political and ideological (Hindess and Hirst, 1976), all of which are derived from other methodologies, merely perpetuates the fetishistic foundations on which conventional understandings of the base and superstructure relation were built. At best, such categories as Laclau's and Mouffe's (1985) reworking of the concept of 'hegemony', may further our understanding of political power 'in general'. Nonetheless, it does not explain why bourgeois political power assumes this particular form of state power.

The very notion of an economic science - the notion that it is possible to isolate, so as to study, the economy - is the "organic product" of a particular phase in the actual formation of capitalism, whose counterpart and presupposition is the selfsame notion of a political science - the notion that it is possible to separate the state from the social structures of the society in which it operates (see Fine, 1984:10-11). Indeed, political sociologist, W.G. Runciman (1963:32), would have us believe, that it is this "distinction ... which makes possible a sociology of politics" (see also, Abrams, 1988:59).

However, notions which isolate the 'economic' and the

'political', whether that be in the form of a conventional base/superstructure model or in the form of the concept of hegemony, serve only to transhistorize the social character of the state - its appearance of separation - rather than to clarify it; that is, neither brings us any closer to answering the question, what is the state? Ironically, the familiar charge that historical materialism neglects certain issues because of the closed nature of its discourse, can be seen to apply with equal force to the very same theories which claim to have moved beyond it: a discourse which allows the notion of a separate economic sphere and an equally separate political sphere to enter into their discussions as an *a priori*, assumes precisely that which needs to be explained.

With a more realistic conception of the conditions of production, one which does not reduce it to its material content (but is both social and historical), there is no need to displace the social relations from their central position within historical materialism. Thompson captures the essence of this formulation when he argues that capitalist social formations are not merely "capital in the totality of its relations", but rather "that the logic of [the] capitalist process has found expression within all the activities of society, and [has] exerted a determining pressure upon its development and form: hence entitling us to speak of capitalism, or of capitalist societies" (Thompson, in Wood, 1990:134). It is in this sense that

Marx (1858:277) spoke of capital in its "totality and extent".

In sum, the reductionism associated with conventional understandings of the base and superstructure arises when we abstract *a priori* the material elements of production alone, thereby ignoring that material production is simultaneously a production of ideas and hence human relations. Clearly, we cannot arrive at a determinate society without taking both together. Thus, to merely replace this simplification of social life with a model that posits no necessary relationship between material production and the production of ideas does little to break with this method generic abstraction.

Part 2:

Beyond the debate?

Chapter 3:

Marx's Materialism.

In chapter one a number of objections were raised concerning Booth's (1985) response to the current impasse in Marxist development theory. It was argued that his attempt to identify the underlying causes of the current impasse in development theory represented a statement of ambition rather than actual achievement. Moreover, the re-emergence of 'traditional' Marxist problems, for instance, the fetishism of the capitalist categories of production, within the various forms of post-Marxism, suggests that, rather than surpassing traditional areas of debate these have been reinstated as legitimate problems of enquiry. The point of this critique was not to reject the general thrust of Booth's argument: "that in a number of respects it is the intellectual framework of Marxism as such, and not the shortcomings of this or that particular perspective, that is to blame for the ... lacunae in current sociological development research" (Booth, 1985:762). Rather, the point was this: "intellectual frameworks", historical materialism or otherwise, are not mere collections of free-floating analytic devices. For Marx, they are "the abstract ideal expressions of [the] social relations. Indeed, [theoretical] categories are no

more eternal than the relations they express" (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:126). In other words, our theoretical categories are not self-enclosed autonomous spheres, but are historical and must therefore be transitory. The result of neglecting that "this holds for science as well", has been a completely distorted framework of debate in which the terms of reference have been reduced to a simple 'either.. or..' range of theoretical possibilities. It is with some justification, therefore, that what follows can be seen as a critical reflection on traditional Marxist themes: ideology, science, methodology and concept construction.

For Marx, then, any discourse on method also implies a particular assumption about the nature of reality. Thus, the underlying purpose of this chapter should be clear: borrowing the words of McLennan (1989:204), it is to "encourage a sense of depth of the traditional theories", so that my statement on how a theory of state formation might be developed does not collapse into a "an expression of sheer ambivalence". The first question, then, pertains to the issue of historical materialism as a closed or open discourse.

Questions of causality and determination are never far from the surface in sociology and they lie at the heart of current debate on Marxism, post-Marxist and development theory (see Corbridge, 1990:628-633; and Mouzelis,

1990:22-41). For post-Marxists, Laclau and Mouffe (1985), historical materialism is an inherently closed and mechanistic discourse, characterized by an essentialist and reductionist conception of the social totality. Their target is not the empirical proposition that in a capitalist society the economy tends to dominate. Rather, they object to any proposition which posits the dominance of a particular sphere of social life at the level of discourse.

In direct response to this critique, Norman Geras (1988) argues, that the interpretation of Marxism, presented by the Laclau and Mouffe, marginalized such thinkers as Marx, Lenin, Trostsy and Gramsci, who set themselves against epistemological closure (see Geras, 1988:43-44). In the hands of these thinkers, historical materialism, according to Geras (1988:32), in no way conforms to "the impoverishing caricature of the Marxist tradition" presented by Laclau and Mouffe (Geras, 1988:32).

If one accepts Geras' line of argument, then the central problem is to ascertain whether it is the open or closed variants of historical materialism which are more congruent with Marx's method, and the particular view of reality it implies. Addressing this is the aim of what follows. Reflecting Sayer's influence, I argue that if one views historical materialism in terms of an "object domain" of "production and reproduction of real life" and a mode of

analysis of "empirical history informed by critique", then one is forced to conclude that it is the closed, rather than the open, substantive discourses which have done enormous violence to what is most "innovative and emancipatory" in Marx's sociological thought. Importantly however, Marx was not an historian in the 'formal' sense. Indeed, he was dismissive of what he saw as "history for its own sake". Thus, in order to substantiate the forgoing proposition, it is necessary to show that Marx's method is itself intimately bound up with his substantive historical sociology - his appreciation of the specificity of the logic of bourgeois society. As Johnson (1983:153) more sharply puts it:

"if, his [Marx's] theory is historical and his history theoretically organized, how is this fusion or relation achieved" (Johnson, 1983:153)?

I argue that not only does Marx insist on establishing the facts, but he also insists on establishing the appropriate theoretical categories. To do this he not only required an understanding of the logic of such categories as labour, capital and value, and but also he had to determine whether their logic expressed the workings of capitalism.

i. Marx's object domain.

Due partly to Marx's voluminous legacy there exists a number of antinomies which have received considerable attention and debate. One such antimony is the perceived contradiction between Marx's allegedly dogmatic statements on historical materialism, like those presented in the '1859 Preface', and his subtle empirical practice of it, most notably in 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' (1852), 'The Civil War in France' (1871) and in his discussions on the effects of legalisation on the working day, in 'Capital Volume One' (1867). For empirically minded Marxist's, such as Sayer, one possible solution to this antimony, is to view historical materialism as a guiding thread to the empirical study of history, as opposed to a substantive theory of it. I believe the following will substantiate this argument.

In an often cited letter to the editor of the *Otyecestvenniye Zapisky*, Marx (1877) writes:

"By studying each of these forms of evolution separately and then comparing them one can easily find the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by universal passport of a general

historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical" (Marx, 1877:355).

For Cohen (1978:i), as with Althusser, the above passage is seen to be warning "against a possible misuse of theory", similar to Lenin's remark that history "is always richer in content, more varied, more one-sided more lively and subtle than any theory could hope to convey" (Lenin, in Cohen, 1978:i). At one level I agree. However, by failing to consider the methodological implications of this passage, Cohen misplaces the central polemic, in that Marx is not merely stating that history is more complex than any theory can convey. Rather, he is warning against a "certain pre-emptive use of theory" (Sayer, 1987:11), namely that which "metamorphoses" Marx's "historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into an historico-philosophic theory of marche generale [general path] imposed by fate upon every people" (Marx, 1878:354).

The practice of metamorphosing Marx's work has a long and established tradition within historical materialism. After-all, retrospection is essential to the process whereby each generation appropriates their intellectual heritage. Thus, it is understandable that since the 1960's western Marxology has largely been concerned to bring to Marx a "standard of clarity and rigour" (Cohen, 1978:ix). First was Althusser's 'symptomatic' reading of the classics

- Marx, Lenin, Maa and Gramsci - and second was Cohen's attempted restoration of traditional historical materialism. Both of which have influenced Marxist development theory, clearly demonstrated by Taylor's (1979), Bernstein's (1979), and Leys' (1983) polemics with Marxist accounts of underdevelopment, in which Frank in particular, was criticized for his less than rigorous application of Marx's 'economic' categories.

Although marked by a great deal of controversy, epitomized in Thompson's 'The Poverty of Theory' (1978), this practice has had a positive impact on Marxism. Not only has it encouraged closer scrutiny of the canons of historical materialism, but the outcome, as noted by Anderson (1983:26), is that "theory is now history, with a seriousness and severity it never was in the past; as history is equally theory, in all its exigency, in a way that it typically evaded before". However, it must be noted that in their haste to arrive at a definitive account of Marx - one which transcended Stalinist dogma, while leaving in place many of its "comforting landmarks" - the possibility that Marx never intended his categories to convey a standard of "clarity and rigour" is simply overlooked (see Sayer, 1987:18-19). Let us, then consider this possibility by taking Althusser's and Balibar's, 'Reading Capital' (1979), as an example.

In 'Reading Capital' (1979), Althusser and Balibar

firstly seek, to establish the terrain of historical materialism within a problematic that is anti-empiricist and anti-idealist. Secondly, they seek to introduce a new conception of the mode of production, which is "constituted by a certain type of complexity, the unity of a structured whole containing levels or instances which are distinct and 'relatively autonomous'... fixed in the last instance by the level or instance of the economy" (Althusser and Balibar, 1979:97).

Before discussing the latter point, a brief digression into Althusser's epistemology is necessary. According to him, the problematics of empiricism and idealism regard science as a process of abstracting the 'essential' from the 'unessential', and the problem of knowledge is accordingly seen as one of guaranteeing the validity of concepts in capturing the essence from the real. Against this, Althusser distinguishes between the abstract-formal analysis of the mode of production and the analysis of concrete social formations. For Althusser, the mode of production, and its construction, is an internal matter which does not involve any reference to the real object. Consequently, not only does he impose on Marx a rigorous distinction between the real object and the object of knowledge, but he also imposes a conception of science conceived as a process "which takes place entirely in thought" (Althusser, 1979:73-78 see also Hindess & Hirst, 1975:1-5).

The justification for this distinction is derived from the '1857 Introduction', where, in the section on 'The Method of Political Economy', Marx discusses two moments in the analysis of society: i. "a small number of determinant, abstract, general relations such as division of labour, [and] money.." are abstracted from "the real and concrete" and ii. these "abstracted determinations lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought" (Marx, 1858:100-101). It is the latter moment which Marx qualifies as "scientifically correct" (Marx, 1858:101), hence providing, superficially at least, the textual sanction for Althusser's *a priori*ism, expressed, at its extreme with Balibar's attempt to deduce a general theory of all modes of production from five formal (generic) variants (Sayer, 1979:28).

Returning to the second point, Althusser's conception of the mode of production as a structured whole determined in the last instance by the economy, is derived from his attempt to systematize what he patronizingly referred to as Engels' "genial theoretical intuitions" (Althusser, 1969:128). For example, in his famous letter to Bloch, Engels (1890b) maintains that to conceptualize the economic as the only "determining feature" of history, is to transform the materialist conception of history, as developed by Marx, into a "meaningless, abstract, and absurd phrase" (Engels, 1890b:475). For Engels, "we make

our own history, but in the first place under very definite presuppositions and conditions. Among these, the economic ones are finally decisive. But the political ... also play[s] a major part, although not a decisive one" (Engels, 1890b:475-76). It follows: "Marx and I are partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due. We had to emphasise this main principle in opposition to our adversaries" (Engels, 1890b:477). Similarly, in a letter to Conrad Schmitt, Engels (1890a) maintains that although "the material form of existence is the *primum agens* [primary factor] this does not exclude spheres of ideas from reacting upon it in their turn, though with a secondary effect.." (Engels, 1890a:472).

Read at a formalist level the latter statements would appear to provide textual support for Althusser's theory of relative autonomy, and indeed they do. However, what is largely ignored by him, and which bears directly on the conventionalist nature of his epistemology, is Engels' denial that Marx and himself provided nothing more than a guiding thread to historical study. This is most emphatically stated in his letter to Schmidt:

"..our conception of history is above all a guide to study, not a lever for construction after the manner of the Hegelians. All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of existence of the different

formations of society must be individually examined before the attempt is made to deduce from them the political.." (Engels, 1890a:473).

However, instead of this "the younger Germans simply make use of the phrase, historical materialism ... in order to get their relatively scanty historical knowledge into a neat ... system as quickly as possible" (Engels, 1890a:473). Similarly, in a letter to Bloch, Engels (1890b), after conceding that Marx and himself were "partly to blame" for the economic determinism associated with the younger Marxists, writes: "but when it was a case of presenting a section of history, that is a practical application, the thing was different and there, no error was possible" (Engels, 1890b:477). As examples of this application, Engels directs Bloch's attention to 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' (1852) and the first volume of 'Capital', both of which are seen "as an epitome of historical materialist analysis" (Sayer, 1987:13). This is consistent with Marx's reference to the '1859 Preface' as a summary of his "guiding principle" (Marx, 1859: 262), and his advice that those "who really wish to follow me will have to decide to advance from the particular to the general (Marx, 1859:261). Similarly, in the 'German Ideology' (1846), Marx and Engels write:

"empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification

and speculation, the connection of the social and political ... with production" (Marx and Engels, 1846:41).

The above can, of course, be countered by the fact that Marx held a particular view/prognosis on the likely course of future events/developments similar to those outlined in the '1859 Preface'. However, as noted by Sayer (1987:13), "this is not quite the same as a systematic theory". Indeed, recent work by Shanin (1984) and Corrigan and Sayer (1987) on Marx's later writings (1871-1882), has comprehensively shown that he was willing to modify, and even abandon, his theoretical propositions in the light of new empirical evidence. This is a point alluded to by Engels (1894) in the preface to 'Capital Volume Three': "concepts", Engels writes, "are also subject to change and reformation; they are not encapsulated in rigid definitions, but rather develop in their process of historical and logical formation" (Engels, 1981:103). It follows that one will not find in Marx "fixed, cut-and-dried definitions that are valid for all time" (Engels, 1894:103).

This difference between those who seek definitive, "cut-and-dried" definitions, and Marx's own analytic practice, can be further illustrated by his use of the term 'social formation'. For example, in the 'Grundrisse', Marx writes:

"In all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others" (Marx, 1858:106-107).

As was argued in Chapter Two, the above passage does not imply the articulation of more than one mode of production in a particular social formation. Rather, it is a question of "different branches of production assimilated to the specific character of the branch that predominates in that social form" (Wood, 1990:133). The point I now wish to add, is that this has additional warrant when it is considered that the term 'social formation' is translated from the phrase *Gesellschaftsformen*, which also translates as 'forms of society' and 'social forms'. Hence, to paraphrase Wood (1990), the foregoing passage implies that:

1. forms of society refers to something like feudal society or capitalist society, in which the logic of a particular organization of labour finds expression in the activities of that society. It is not, in other words, an individual and unique social event or form, but a collection of social forms which are distinguished by virtue of a shared socio-historical logic; and

2. the point of this example is to stress the inner-

connection between the social forms of a particular epoch, not the heterogeneity of the social formation.

Clearly, in the hands of Althusser, the social formation has suffered the same fate as many of Marx's concepts: it was never intended to carry the elaborate theoretical schemata it has been forced to take on (Wood, 1990:133). This should not be interpreted as a mere textual quibble, nor should it be dismissed on the grounds of empiricism, for in fact the empiricism resides in persisting with the view that history and theory are separate domains of discourse.

The above emphasis on historical and empirical research, cannot be dismissed, as does Cohen, on the grounds of Engels' lack of conceptual rigour, for, as noted by Callinicos (1985) and Sayer (1987), such references are too common in the works of Marx and Engels to be dismissed as a mere antinomy. What follows not only attempts to show that Marx's sociology is necessarily historical, but also that any failure to grasp the socio-historical pregnancy of his categories is, at one and the same time, to reproduce the bourgeois separation between economics and politics, nature and history.

ii. Science, ideology and critique.

Ideology refers roughly to a set of ideas "characterized by its overall falsity" (Sayer, 1983:8). Contemporary Marxists, such as Godelier (1972:337) and Sayer(1983:8), have rightly tended to stress that for Marx ideology does not arise from an error of perception, but rather from an accurate perception of the form in which the social relations of production are actually confronted. In other words, ideology contains what Sayer (1983:8) describes as a level of "practical adequacy", which "allows men and woman to conduct and make sense of their everyday life". It acts, in other words, as a real constraint on human behaviour and as a real mediation between both individuals and groups.

This "practical", dare I say materialist, conception of ideology is developed from Marx's 'labour theory of value', and in particular his analysis of commodity fetishism: that is, the process whereby subjective, social labour, assumes the phenomenal form of a quality internal to the product of labour itself, and in turn, these 'things' acquire the appearance of an independent form of social life, endowed "with lives of their own, and able to enter into relations between men and woman" (Marx, 1867:45; and Colletti, 1972:78). In this sense, fetishism,

alienation, or reification - very recent products - are most appropriately conceived as particular forms of ideology, in so far as they correspond to specific ways in which social being is articulated in consciousness: "the foregoing analysis [of commodity fetishism]", Marx writes, "has shown that this fetishistic character ... is the outcome of the peculiar social quality of labour which produces commodities" (Marx, 1867:46).

Now, if commodity fetishism is not a characteristic of all social forms of production, and clearly the foregoing passage suggests that for Marx it is not, then to conceptualize ideology transhistorically, as a social universal, is clearly not in line with his usage of the term. In fact, I would suggest that ideology has suffered the same fate as many of Marx's categories. As Sayer puts it:

"[For Marx] its [ideology] primary use was adjectival and descriptive of qualities - illusoriness, class bias, etc. - which some particular historical forms of consciousness had, it has become reified as itself descriptive of a supposed real entity, a noun which sails through history innocent of any reference to real individuals" (Sayer, 1987:95).

Marx held a position whereby the basis of people's consciousness lay in their experience. The object of this

theoretical stance, is a practical one: "to illuminate the terrain of struggle by viewing modes of production not as abstract social structures but as they actually confront people who must act in relation to them" (Wood, 1981:77). Importantly, this essentially materialist view of the relationship between the social relations of production, their empirical forms of appearance and their corresponding categories of thought, conveys an imagery quite different from that of illusion and reality: on the one hand, it rids the imagination of a linear causality between two supposedly external spheres and on the other, it adds to the arguments presented in Chapter One, namely that Marx's critique of idealism involves something quite different from the simple inversion of idealism's "supposed order of priorities" (Sayer, 1989:85). Rather, his denial of the primacy of the ideal is based on the view that material production is simultaneously the production of ideas. Marx's critique is thus a denial of the very existence of the ideal as a separate sphere of social life (see Colletti, 1972:3-10; Fine, 1984:95-100; Sayer, 1983:8-11; and 1987:84-88). The conclusion which follows from this is self-evident: Marx must accept a position whereby experience itself constitutes the "principle means of ideological production". After-all, to do otherwise "would be to concede precisely the independence of consciousness from experience denied in Marx's critique of idealism" (Sayer, 1983:8). For example, in a passage to which I shall return, Marx can clearly be seen to root the fetishistic

character of commodity production in the social forms which individuals actually confront/experience the social relations of commodity production:

"the producers do not come into social contact until they exchange their labour products, the specifically social character of their labour does not manifest itself until exchange takes place ... That is why the social relations connecting the labour of one private individual with the labour of another, seems to the producers, not direct social relations between individuals at work, but what they really are: material relations between persons and of social relations between things" (Marx, 1867:46).

Later I discuss this passage more fully, and in particular its concluding remark. The point I want to emphasize here is this. If Marx's aim was to establish the inner-connection between the social relations of production and their empirical forms of appearance, then an explanation of ideology must take the form of abstracting those processes, within the real, which gives rise to its deceptive form of appearance. As Fine puts it:

"the surface form of an object is no less real than its inner content, but it can only be explained in reference to its inner content. Similarly, the inner content of an object cannot be envisaged independently

of its surface form, as if one can be separated from the other" (Fine, 1984:98).

In short, Marx's discourse on method must contain a model of the 'logic of essence'. Moreover, this model cannot, of course, assume an unproblematic (one to one) relationship between the appearance of an object and the object's essence. Hence, Marx must, as Murray (1983:496) puts it, "work with a non-traditional model [of the 'logic of essence'] which conceives of the discrepancies between essence and appearance to be a necessary consequence of the very nature of the essence" - i.e. intrinsic to the social relations themselves (see also Sayer, 1979:30-31 and 1983:8-10).

To suggest that Marx's theory of commodity fetishism contains an essence/appearance distinction, is not only to suggest that his theories of abstract labour, value and surplus value are structured along similar lines, but it also implies that the very core of 'Capital' - his theories of surplus value - leans heavily on Hegel's view of the logic of essence, namely that "the essence must appear as something other than itself (the phenomena)" (Murray, 1983:496). Indeed, if this was not so, that is, if "the form of appearance of things directly coincided with their essence", then "science", according to Marx, "would be superfluous" (Marx, 1865:956).

Given this chain of corollaries, and in particular their link to Hegel's view of the logic of essence, it is understandable that the foregoing argument is not without its critics. Callinicos (1983:130-134), for example, accepts that the essence/appearance distinction is critical for Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism. However, he suggests: "no great damage would be done to 'Capital' by the excision of commodity fetishism; as I have shown elsewhere ['Is There a Future for Marxism', 1982:119-129] it is an error to believe that the essence/appearance contrast is a central organizing figure of Marx's discourse" (Callinicos, 1983:130). What does this mean? Among other things, it means that Callinicos is committed to a theory/history distinction, and as such he is unable to use an essence/ appearance distinction. Importantly, this is not to suggest that his position is necessarily an incorrect one. Rather, what is important is the way in which he does this. With a mere footnote, Callinicos effectively removes a central pillar on which the whole of edifice of 'Capital' rests: namely, Marx's theories of value and surplus value. Let me exemplify.

For Marx, the chief failing of political economy was its improvised analysis of the commodity. However, according to him (1867:55), this is not a mere intellectual error, for "there is a deeper reason". As was developed in Chapter One, methodology, according to Marx, not only implies a discourse on method, but it also implies a

particular assumption of the nature of reality. It follows, that the reason for the improvised analysis of political economy lies in the fact that:

"the labour product is [not only] the most abstract, but [it is] also the most highly generalized, form taken by that product in the bourgeois system of production ... If, therefore we erroneously regard the value form of the labour product as the one and only form of social production, fixed for all time by nature's immutable laws, we are perforce ignoring the peculiar differential characteristics of the form of value, and consequently those of the commodity form, and of its further developments, the money form, the form of capital etc." (Marx, 1867:55).

Thus, due to their analysis of the commodity, and in particular the magnitude of value, political economy never discovered the form of value which manifests itself in the form of exchange value. That is, exchange value as the "form of appearance, an autonomous mode of presentation" of something contained within the commodity, namely value (Marx, 1880:198). Hence, we arrive at the point of departure for Marx's theory of surplus value: "the economists have never even mooted the question of why labour should be represented by the value of the product of labour, and the quantity of labour by the magnitude of the value of that product" (Marx, 1867:55).

To say therefore, that "no great damage will be done to 'Capital' by the excision of commodity fetishism", is to assume that Marx's discourse is as atomistic as the various phenomenal forms he sort to bring into relation. Thus, Callinicos is most certainly wrong. As Marx himself puts it, "my analysis of the commodity does not stop at the dual mode in which the commodity is presented, [but] presses forward, [for] in [this] ... dual nature there is presented the twofold character of labour". However, none of this is to suggest that Marx's analysis of the commodity, his concept of abstract labour, and his theories of equivalence in exchange, value and surplus value are not without their problems. Rather, Callinicos is wrong for believing that Marx's method can be divorced from the forms reflected in it. Intellectual evasion of this type merely hides the current crisis in Marxism, thereby prolonging its persistence. As support for this point, consider the following statement by Colletti. Although his polemic is directed at Baran and Sweezy, the point is nonetheless an important one:

"Baran and Sweezy, in their introduction to 'Monopoly Capitalism', inform their readers in a brief note that they are not going to utilize the concept of surplus value ... [Whether they are right or wrong], for the moment, we can suspend judgement. But where they are certainly wrong, is in believing ... that the central

pillars on which Marx's theoretical edifice rests can be removed, and the whole construction still remain standing. This type of behaviour is not merely one of illusion. By refusing to admit that what it rejects in Marx's work is not secondary but is essential, it avoids and thereby aggravates the crisis of Marxism as a whole" (Colletti, 1977:340-341).

A lengthy quote, but one that is justified by the pertinent point it makes: it is "absolutely absurd" to adopt a position which is predicated on "the demolition of the entire foundations of Marx's analysis", and at "the same time pretend that this is the best way of shoring up Marx" (Colletti, 1972: 341). What I want to show is that the essence/appearance distinction is in fact a central organizing principle of Marx's discourse. On establishing this, I do not pretend that Marx's theories of value and surplus value can be verified in any empirical sense. However, it is possible, I believe, to demonstrate two important points: firstly, Marx did not hold the views which both his follower's and his critic's have commonly ascribed to him and secondly, that many Marxist's have shown themselves incapable of grasping the particular view of reality implied in Marx's analysis, and hence its potential for further development in terms of a theory of state formation. It is my judgement, therefore, that in the light of the theoretical contortions characteristic of much post-Marxist theorizing, historical materialism needs to

pause so as to explore how aspects of this method, and in particular its corresponding view of reality, maybe more productively employed.

If Marx's legacy can be divided into stages, then most Marxist's would concur that his mature stage (1857-1880) is initiated on establishing what in 'Capital' is the 'double character of labour': "the best points in my book", Marx writes, are: "(1) the double character of labour, according to whether it is expressed in use value or exchange value (all understanding of the facts depends upon this ...)" (Marx, 1867a:226-227). However, the elaboration of what is later shown to be the canonization of Marx's transhistorical/ historical distinction is by no means immediate. In fact, it is indicative of one of several much neglected methodological developments which took place between the drafting of the '1857 Introduction' and the publication of the First Volume of 'Capital' (1867). For example, by 1857, Marx had clearly uncovered the need to distinguish the historical from the transhistorical, and hence, the actual form of labour from labour power: "whenever we speak of production", Marx writes, "... what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development - production by social individuals" (Marx, 1858:85). However, despite this he remained uneasy with the level of "abstractiveness" such categories as 'labour', 'labour as such' and 'labour pure and simple' appeared to manifest themselves. Of particular concern, was the

manifestation of bourgeois forms of labour in what Rubin (1928:44) usefully described as "physiologically equal labour". Marx exemplifies:

"this example of labour shows strikingly how the most abstract categories, despite their validity - precisely because of their abstractiveness - for all epochs, are nevertheless, in the specific character of this abstraction, themselves likewise a product of historic relations and possess their full validity only for and within these relations" (Marx, 1858:105).

The reason for Marx's uneasiness is this: on the one hand, all labour is physiologically useful, and is therefore common to all forms of society, on the other hand, however, in its "specific character" the abstraction of labour 'in general' would appear to possess a degree of historicity within the social relations of bourgeois society (see Mandel, 1967:81-82; and Sayer, 1987:127-128). Otherwise put, it is unclear whether labour 'in general' is a transhistorical category or an historical category. In 'Capital Volume One', however, this is no longer the case. As Sayer (1987:128) puts it, Marx "develops a new conceptual apparatus founded upon the scrupulous distinction of the historical and transhistorical referents of such notions". He continues: "those senses in which the abstraction 'labour' does genuinely apprehend 'an immeasurably ancient relation valid in all forms of

society' are grasped in the transhistorical concept of useful or concrete labour" (Sayer, 1987:128). Importantly, useful labour, is no more a free-floating device than its historical genus - i.e. abstract labour. Rather, the point is that in its content useful labour is what is genuinely a social universal, the "material side which all human labour possesses irrespective of its social form" (Sayer, 1987:128). For example, in a letter to Kugelmann (1868), Marx writes:

"Every child knows ... that the mass of products corresponding to the different needs require different and quantitatively determined masses of the total labour of society. That this necessity of distributing social labour in definite proportions cannot be done away with by the particular form of social production, but can only change the form it assumes, is self-evident. No natural laws can be done away with. What can change, in changing historical circumstances, is the form in which these laws operate" (Marx, 1868:246).

The next question, then, is to explore the underlying reason for this hardening up of the transhistorical/historical distinction, and more specifically its development as a systematic strategy, which is equally evident in Marx's concepts of 'use value' and 'exchange value', 'useful labour' and 'abstract labour' and the material and the social composition of the form money, the

form of property and the form of capital. Here, a brief genealogical digression is unavoidable.

The very first page of the '1857 Introduction' states that although "individuals producing in society" is the proper point of departure this is not to be understood in terms of the atomistic "conceits of the eighteenth century Robinsonades, ... which brings naturally independent, autonomous subjects into relation and connection by contract" (Marx, 1858:83). For Marx, "this illusion has been common to each new epoch", and it is "only in the eighteenth century, in 'civil society', do the various form of social interconnectedness confront the individual as a mere means toward his purposes, as external necessity" (Marx, 1858:84). He criticizes Smith and Ricardo for standing "with both feet on the shoulders of the eighteenth century prophets" and taking the appearance of the 'isolated individual', "not as a historic result, but as histories point of departure" (Marx, 1858:84).

Having found Smith's and Ricardo's point of departure to be unsatisfactory, Marx proceeds to set himself a practical problem: "whenever we speak of production ... what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development" (Marx, 1858:85). Yet, how does one analyze production correctly? Marx proposes two possibilities: "it might seem ... that in order to talk about it at all we must either [1] pursue the process of

historic development through its different phases"; or "[2] declare before hand that we are dealing with a specific historic epoch such as e.g. modern bourgeois production" (Marx, 1858:85). For Marx, both are unsatisfactory. The first is a generic account which is incapable of encompassing the differences presented by one object in respect to all others; while the second is equally problematic, in that complete individual fact is as generic as its abstract genius.

There is, however, a third possibility, namely the abstraction, or logical universal, which represents what is common to all forms of production, or those features which are necessary in order to conceive of production at all. Marx's interest in 'production in general', however, is not simply an attempt to solve a problem of logic. Rather, his interest lies in "sift[ing] out by comparison" what is common to "all epochs of production", from what is different, and more particularly, that which constitutes their development - i.e. their "essential difference". Thus, he writes:

"production in general is an abstraction, but a rational abstraction in so far as it really brings out and fixes the common element and thus saves us repetition" (Marx, 1858:85)

In other words, abstractions are rational when they

identify those elements of a phenomena which are present irrespective of the form that phenomena takes. However, Marx warns:

"even though the most developed languages have laws and characteristics in common with the least developed, nevertheless, just those things which are not general and common must be separated out from the determinations valid for production [that is] their essential difference is not forgotten" (Marx, 1858:85).

For Marx, the supposed "profundity" of political economy, which demonstrates the "eternity and harmoniousness of the existing social relation", consists precisely in "forgetting" this distinction (Marx, 1858:85).

As noted by Sayer (1983:78), the foregoing argument amounts "to an embryonic formulation of the distinction between historical and transhistorical categories". It is "embryonic", in so far as it is yet to attain the "rigour and sharpness of 'Capital'".

Marx's critique of political economy proceeded not only in the sense that he replaced erroneous economic categories with better ones, but also in the sense that he disclosed the form of societal logic which provides the foundation for the emergence of such erroneous categories. In his critique of the 'Trinitarian Formula'

(1865:953-970), for example, Marx did not merely demonstrate that the three 'sources of revenue' - capital/interest, land/ground-rent and labour/wages - are the necessary forms of appearance of surplus value, but he also showed how such 'things', whose mutual relationships are like "lawyer's fees, beetroot and music", can acquire the "fixity of natural forms of social life" (Marx, 1865:953-957).

To some this example of the two moments in Marx's critique may appear somewhat elementary. However, the point I wish to emphasize is this. If we were to take Marx's 1857 position as the apotheosis of his critique, we are perforce committed to a discourse on method which is yet to link the abstractions of political economy to the capitalism's alienating logic of essence. This in turn implies that the phenomenal basis of the categories of political economy are derived from an insufficient consideration of historical fact, a mere intellectual *faux pas*. Repeating an earlier quote, it is "as if this rupture had made its way not from reality into the textbooks, but rather from the textbooks into reality" (Marx, 1858:90). The conclusion which follows from this is predictable: simple abstractions, although rational when they correspond to the general transhistorical features of production 'in general', become ideological when they are allowed to stand for historical detail (Johnson, 1983:172). The second moment in Marx's critique, that which links ideas to the social relations,

has no place in this formulation, it simply drops from view.

As a procedural device, this embryonic formulation may appear a reasonable one. It is, after-all, an open and undogmatic basis for a materialist sociology, "a not unreasonable 'guiding thread'" (Sayer, 1987:148). However, in terms of the relationship between historical research and the employment of theoretical concepts, the reasoning behind is circular: that is, the consequence of allowing rational abstractions to stand in for historical detail is that an "empirical residuum" is left which resists explanation - the essential difference is forgotten. But when, and why is an abstraction pushed beyond its legitimate use? Moreover, what would led us to this judgement? (for this argument see Murray, 1983:490-494). The only possible answer is this: by conceptualizing 'capital' as a 'thing', Smith pushes the rational abstraction of accumulated labour beyond its legitimate use. How do we know this? Because his abstraction fails to account for all of the phenomena, in that an empirical residuum remains which resists explanation (Murray, 1983: 490). Given the seriousness with which Marx treated the works of Ricardo and Smith, I find it difficult to accept that his method of critique can be faulted on such an elementary point.

In essence this problem relates to the question posed

in the introduction to this chapter, namely if Marx's "theory is historical and his history theoretically organized, how is this fusion or relation achieved" (Johnson, 1983:153)? Earlier it was suggested that contrary to those who regard people's action in, and consciousness of the world as autonomous spheres of social life, Marx accepted a position whereby experience itself "is the principle means of ideological production". As noted by Sayer (1979:31), this in turn implies that "an explanation of ideology must take the form of an excavation [abstraction] of those mechanisms, within the real" (Sayer, 1979:31), which account for its deceptive form. However, clearly this process of 'unearthing' involves something other than a mere distinction between logical universals and logical truths.

For Marx, as already observed, individual phenomenal forms may misrepresent the very reality we seek to understand: "this finished world of the commodities", Marx writes, "this money form, is the very thing which veils the social character of individual labour, and therewith hides the social relations between individual producers" (Marx, 1867:49). As a consequence, if historical materialism is not to repeat the mistake of taking abstract, ahistorical definitions as its point of departure then, in order to analyze a particular social form systematically, all preconceived notions of it must be abandoned. "If we have to analyze the 'commodity'", Marx writes, "... we have to

withhold all relationships which have nothing to do with the present object of analysis" (Marx, 1880:199). This in turn implies that Marx's process of abstraction cannot take the form of ascending from the transhistorical to historical, for such an ascent implies a preconceived conception of what distinguishes the individual members of a particular class of phenomenon. Let me exemplify, taking Marx's 1867 point of departure (as elaborated in his 'Notes on Adolph Wagner', 1880) as an example.

If we are to understand how the mere possession of a sum of value grants access to surplus value, then a point of departure which begins with the economic expression of value - i.e. profit - would be completely unsatisfactory. Value is an emphatically historical category and is hence, "incapable of independent phenomenal expression in its immediate form" (Sayer, 1983:17). Thus, to identify the rate of surplus value with the rate of profit is as implausible as the identification of price with value. Furthermore, we cannot begin with use value, for although being something which is actual, it is common to all useful products of labour and is therefore independent of any particular society. Thus, in April 1858, Marx writes:

"the first category in which bourgeois wealth presents itself is that of the commodity. The commodity itself appears as unity of two aspects. Its use-value, i.e. object of the satisfaction of any system whatever

human needs This material side, which the most diverse epochs of in common... lies beyond political economy" (Marx, 1858:881);

and in 1880:

"I do not start out from concepts, hence I do not start out from 'the concept of value', and do not divide these in any way. What I start out from is the simplest social form in which the labour-product is presented in contemporary society, and this is the commodity" (Marx, 1880:198).

Unlike value, which, as mentioned, is strictly an historical category and is thus incapable of independent expression in its immediate form, the commodity is something actual which is characterized by a transhistorical category (use value) and an historical category (exchange value). Thus, directly proceeding the foregoing passage, Marx writes:

"I analyze it, right from the beginning, in the form in which it appears" (Marx, 1880:198). Here I find that it is, on the one hand, in its natural form, a useful thing; on the other hand, it is a bearer of exchange value, and from this viewpoint it is itself exchange value" (Marx, 1880:198).

Had Marx failed to arrive at this starting point, and began not with the commodity as something 'actual', but with its use value, then exchange value, instead of being grasped as the phenomenal form of value, would have appeared to achieve the same level of "practical truth" that he had earlier recognized (1857) with the category of 'labour as such'. Thus, returning to our example, Marx's analysis does not stop with the disclosure of the commodity's double character, for:

"further analysis of the latter [exchange value], shows me that exchange value is a form of appearance, the autonomous mode of presentation of the value contained in the commodity, and I then move on to the analysis of the latter" (Marx, 1880:198).

Of course, to assume otherwise - i.e. that the essence of a commodity's value resides in it being exchange value - is to suggest that the form of appearance of things directly coincides with their essence. Thus, the commodity can only be use value or value. As Marx (1880 :198) himself puts it, "it is presented as double what it is, as soon as its value possesses a form of appearance proper, that of exchange value, different from its natural form". He concludes:

"hence I do not divide value into use value and exchange value ... I divide the concrete social form of the labour product; 'commodity' is, on the one

hand, use value, and on the other hand, 'value', not exchange value, since the mere form of appearance is not its proper content" (Marx, 1880:198).

To debate at this point the empirical validity of Marx's theory of value and of surplus value would be to anticipate arguments which are yet to developed. However, at this point it can be said that given the significance which Marx places on his critique of the Ricardian view of value, it is difficult to accept that 'Capital' merely represents the replacement of unhistorical categories with historical ones. What I have sought to show is that Marx's method is not only empirical in the sense that the 'facts' must be presented correctly (historically), but also in the sense that before theoretical categories can be productively employed, they need to be "critically interrogated and historically situated" (Sayer, 1987:140). To do this not only requires an understanding of the logic of such categories as value, capital and surplus value, but also it must be determined whether their logic expresses that which can be found to be characteristic of capitalist society. Thus, as noted by Fine (1984:95), what Marx "offered [was] a social critique of economics in general, and not just an internal critique of one economic theory by another".

In sum, the ontology of economics, whether in its classical, Keynesian, or modern reincarnation, is

empiricist. This means, the social is conceived as an articulation of empirical regularities directly coinciding with a mass of 'isolated' individuals, events and 'things'. Thus, "things which are organically related" are brought "into an accidental relation, a mere reflective connection" (Marx, 1858:88). The result is a blindness to the inner-connections between the social relations of production and their empirical forms of appearance; that is, individuals are abstracted from their social, dare I say materialist, context, whilst material things are abstracted from the social relations that produce them. Capping this process of double dehistoricization off, is the postulation of a *a priori* models in which theories of 'rational action' are developed so as to explain not "their history (for they are regarded as immutable), but their meaning" (Marx, 1867:49). Taking the form of money as an example, let me exemplify.

If a phenomenon's essence is seen to directly coincide with the phenomenon itself, then any attempt to explain why money functions as money, is restricted to what is directly observable - i.e. money is money because it is durable, exchangeable, convenient, and so on. Thus, the social relations of production repeatedly slip through this 'logic of essence'. As a consequence, this relation between individual producers is abstracted in the form of arbitrary, self-evident 'needs', 'rights' and/or personality traits. What are in fact, determinate

historical forms, are thus surreptitiously carried over into transhistorical relations between human beings and nature.

If the foregoing critique is paradigmatic, that is applicable not only to the form of money, but also to the commodity, capital, labour and value, then in my judgement, there can be no theoretical or methodological justification for restricting it to the analysis of capitalism's economic forms. What historical materialism is missing is an explanation, beyond reification, of why the social relations of capitalist production assume two different, opposing forms: as a relation between things (the economy) and a relation between persons (the polity). The following chapter attempts to put in place some parameters for such an explanation.

Chapter 4:

The "political state and the dissolution of civil society".

In addressing the question, what is the state (?), it would not be unreasonable to suggest that, despite being rich in agendas, the actual performance of twentieth-century political sociology has been decidedly poor. Indeed, as a particular discourse on reality, which posits the separation of the political as something distinct from the social, it is still best represented by the fragmentary and historically specific observations of Max Weber (see Abrams, 1988:59).

If this lack of theoretical development was a reflection of something internal to the categories of political sociology itself, then Marxism, political sociology's only serious alternative, may have some reason to be smug. Clearly however, this is not the case. Indeed, Colletti (1972:185) once went as far as to suggest that, in so far as "'political theory' in the strict sense is concerned, Marx and Lenin have added nothing to Rousseau". Whether Rousseau did in fact "sketch the first and basic chapters of a critique of modern bourgeois society"

(Colletti, 1972:185) is neither here nor there. Rather, both statements must be seen as deliberate attempts at provocation. In Colletti's (1977:331) own words, they were "intended to draw attention to a particular fact - the weakness and sparse development of political theory in Marxism". In other words, "you can also read it as a way of saying that Marxism lacks a true political theory" (Colletti, 1977:331).

No better example of this predicament was the debate on the nature of the state's supposed 'relative autonomy' which, in the end, served to collapse the identity of state, as opposed to clarifying it (see Wood, 1990:126-129). For example, in the work of Hindess and Hirst, what was initially the absolute determination of the mode of production as an articulation of externally related levels or instances, gave way to the absolute contingency and the necessary non-correspondence of the economic and political. Thus, in the face of this challenge, and in particular what it implies, the rejection of class politics, the question, "What is the state (?)" remains the "first and the most fundamental problem facing all theories of the state" (Jessop, 1990:339).

i. The state as a relation of production.

In so far as Marxism is concerned, much of the ambiguity which surrounds this question can be traced to Marx himself. Regrettably, time prevented him from undertaking the full critique of 'civil society' that he had promised; while the sheer extent of 'Capital', and its preoccupation with the economic expression of the relations of production, certainly gives the impression that the economic is the over-riding concern of historical materialism. However, to suggest, as Engels did (1893:510-511), that Marx largely "neglected the formal side" of the "political, juridical and other ideological notions" - "the way in which these notions came about" (Engels, 1893:510-511), is not entirely true. Certainly, it cannot be said that Marx traced the possibility for development of law and the state in any comparable detail to that which he traced the transformation of money and commodities into capital (see Marx, in Sayer, 1985:224; see also Fine, 1984:134; and Sayer, 1985:222-225). Nonetheless, it has been argued that what we have in Marx's mature writings is a discourse on method, which also implies a particular view on the nature of reality: the necessity of a phenomenon to assume a distinct phenomenal form (Murray, 1983: 496). Thus, whilst it is true that in 'Capital', comparatively little attention is paid to bourgeois society

as an effective phenomenal form of the social relations, the foundations for such a critique are contained within it. According to Nicolaus (1972:52), it is this aspect of Marx's method which "need[s] to be developed".

Thus far, chapters one, two and three, have all suggested that for Marx, material production - i.e. "individuals producing in society" - is dominant not in the sense that it stands apart from, or is more important than, forms of consciousness, but rather in the sense that these are precisely forms of material production, the attributes of a particular organization of labour. As a consequence, ideas on justice, laws, state and so forth, can best be regarded as abstract ideal expressions of the social relations of production. They are the politico-juridical forms of capital and abstract labour. However, in stating this we have by no means arrived at 'the State', but at different forms of appearance taken by the social relations particular to commodity production. To move beyond this point, we have to demonstrate that, like their economic equivalents, particular juridical-political forms are historical and transitory. This requires an explanation, beyond reification, of how politico-juridical forms of 'material' relations become the institutional arrangement recognized as 'the state' (Marsden, 1992:360). In this chapter I address the first part of this issue, which in turn requires that we explore how, on the basis of historical materialism, is the apparent, yet phenomenal

appearance of an estranged economic private sphere and an equally estranged politico-juridical sphere - uncritically integrated into both Marxist and non-Marxist generic definitions of 'the state in general' - to be understood? On the one hand, how is it to be critiqued as an estranged form of appearance and on the other hand, how can it be explained as a 'real' empirical manifestation of the social relations of commodity production at a particular stage in their 'evolution'?

The fact that these questions emerge automatically if one works through both the older and more contemporary non-Marxist discussions of the state, in no way means that their foundation in Marxist theory is a mere formality (see Fine, 1984:68-79). Quite the contrary, as noted by both Fine (1984) and Sayer (1987), if an historical materialist theory of the state is to emerge, then it must be based on a critique of the phenomenal forms which bourgeois politico-juridical theory is predicated on. It follows, that the "object before us" can only be "individuals producing in society - hence socially determined individual production" (Marx, 1858:83). The problem which must be posed is, under what social relations does the labour of individuals organize law and state as two of its possible products? The first stage of enquiry must be to explore whether the state form is in fact internally related to the social relations of production (the object), noting that it is only on establishing this that we can approach the

question of its appearance of separation.

Political sociology, according to Abrams (1988:59), "springs from the separation of the political - and more especially the state - from the social". He adds: "it is constructed as an attempt to give a social account of the state with the latter envisaged as a concrete political agency or structure distinct from social agencies and structures of the society in which it operates, acting on them and acted by them" (Abrams, 1988:59). Traditionally Marxist theories of the state have been presupposed, "superficially at least", on a similar distinction. In the words of Abrams (1988:59), "most varieties of Marxism assume that adequate political analysis must, as Marx put it, proceed on the basis of 'the actual relation between the state and civil society, that is their separation'". Within this framework - namely, the base and superstructure as conventionally drawn - the central problem is the degree of independence enjoyed by the state. Furthermore, Abrams (1988:59) notes, "even when Marxist writers, such as Poulantzas, overtly reject this framework they do so only to substitute for the separation of the state and civil society a problematic formulated as 'the specific autonomy of the political and economic' within the capitalist mode of production" (see Poulantzas, 1968:46).

It is well known that for Marx the bourgeoisie were the first truly dominant class in history. For example, in

direct contrast to feudal Europe, where the social allocation of resources and labour were secured through such mechanisms as religious obligation and direct political intervention, here, under the social relations of bourgeois production, the powers of surplus appropriation need not involve such forms of direct political dependence (see Anderson, 1974:403). That is, they are based on contractual relations between 'free' and 'equal' commodity owners: "the guardians of the commodities", Marx writes, "... must reciprocally recognise one another as private owners. This, legal relation, which secures outward expression in a contract, is ... voluntary" (Marx, 1867:59).

As noted by Colletti (1972:105-106), it is only in this sense, that Marx spoke of bourgeois class interests taking the illusory form of 'universal' or 'general' interests. However, this nexus of relationship, between the buyer and seller of labour as two incommensurable elements, and their appearance as property owners having equal rights, which in turn renders them commensurable, has proved difficult to understand, precisely because the phenomenal appearance of a separate economy and a separate polity has been allowed to enter into our discussions on the state as an *a priori*. In the haste to arrive at a particular 'type' of class state, the very feature which stamps it as something internal to this particular society, is transposed into a feature of the state 'in general',

irrespective of the social regime underlying it. In this way, law and state are grasped from the standpoint of their material features alone - i.e. as an armed force. The fact that particular social forms only become state forms when they are "monopolized by a particular section of society" and "rendered autonomous of ... living labour power" (Marx, 1865: 953), is thus excluded from our analysis by conceptual fiat (see Marx, 1865:953-953; Colletti, 1972:106-107; and Sayer, 1987:143).

This tendency to conflate the historical with the transhistorical has acted as a real constraint on the development of an historical materialist theory of state formation for, in the words of Colletti (1972:105-106), "it is impossible to relate this process of objective 'abstraction' or 'sublimation' to specifically capitalist economic-social conditions, and hence to explain it as an organic product of this particular type of society". Thus, in its current form, Marxist 'political' theory, although capable of explaining the class content of the state, the question of why class power should assume this particular form of state remains begged.

As mentioned, for Marx, fetishism was not a simple matter of intellectual error. Rather, as Marsden notes (1992:369), specific social forms - production, exchange and distribution being prime examples (see Marx, 1858:88-90) - appear external and independent when they are

spatially and temporarily separated, thus causing us to miss the inner connection between them (Marsden, 1992:369). According to Marx (1858:99), this is true of "the two determinants of exchange value", money and commodities: "if", Marx writes, "we fix our attention on the two particular phenomenal forms which the expanding value alternately assumes in the circulation which makes up its life, we arrive at these two propositions: 'Capital is money' and 'Capital is commodities'" (Marx, 1867:139).

Of course, capital is not a thing, and hence, as Marx (1878:791) himself puts it, "money and commodities are not, from the first capital", but "they have to be transformed into capital". In this sense, Marx is redirecting our attention to the question of how the abstraction of capital in the form of money and commodities is to be historically understood. However, so long as we continue to see capital as a thing, that is, if exclusive attention is paid to its material form, then the conditions of this transformation - the historical processes which give rise to its independent expression - will appear external and only contingently related (Marx, 1858:88; and Marsden, 1992:368-369). I shall argue that this is also true of social being and social consciousness.

At this point, it is appropriate to reiterate what has plainly been the foundation of my understanding of the categories of historical materialism: namely, that Marx's

materialist understanding of ideological production, and more specifically its manifestation within experience itself, meant that it was necessary for him to adopt a position which posits an internal relationship (organic unity) between people's consciousness of the world and their actions in it (see Sayer, 1983:8). As Marx himself puts it, "men who produce their social relations ... also produce ideas, categories, that is to say the abstract ideal expressions of these same social relations" (Marx, in Johnson, 1982:162). Thus, contrary to traditional (empiricist) discourses on method, which regard ideas/commonsense and logic/science as separate domains of rationale, for Marx no such separation exists. That is to say, 'ordinary' people theorize, and it is in this sense that theoretical categories are internally related to, and constitutive of, the social relations of production, as opposed to external descriptions of them. For this reason, categories are an inseparable part of our social reality, and like it, they are something to be explained and not taken for granted. Thus, as Sayer (1987:131) puts it, "to show capitalism's phenomenal forms to be mystifying is implicitly to criticize the immediate 'social forms of consciousness' - and the theories and ideologies predicated on their plausibility - in which these forms are 'spontaneously' grasped".

In chapters one and two, it was argued that this internal relation/"ensemble" between the social relations

of production, their manifested phenomenal forms and corresponding categories of thought, has been misconceptualized by Marxist development theory. Whereas for Marx, the social relations of production are defined a posteriori, as "individuals in mutual relations, which they produce and reproduce anew" (Marx, 1858: 712), past and contemporary understandings of historical materialism have (miss)defined them in a manner which replicates capitalism's fetishized forms of social life. As a direct consequence, the forces of production, as summarized by Marsden (1992:359), "are construed as physical 'things' that drive the relations of production; relations of production are construed narrowly and equated with economic relations or the economy and superstructures are construed as a set of non-economic institutions externally and contingently connected to the economy".

This atomization of social life, is indicative of a society in which its members are "ruled by abstractions". As Fine (1984:135) puts it, "far from exchange co-ordinating the needs of one producer directly with those of another through the direct exchange of use-values, their needs are related only through the equation of their products as values". Marx was to present, of course, the economic expression of this rule by abstraction in considerable detail. Indeed, the whole thrust of 'Capital' was to develop a theory of surplus value which demonstrated that private property, rent, interest, profit and wages

were necessary forms of its surface appearance. What Marx was only to indicated however, was the politico-juridical expression of this rule. The corollary being, 'that historical materialism is missing an explanation, beyond reification, "of how 'ideal' forms of 'material' relations become the institutional nexus recognized as the state" (Marsden, 1992:360; see also Fine, 1984:5; Corrigan and Sayer, 1985:7-8; Sayer, 1987:109-112 and Thompson, 1965: 82-83).

Up to this point, it has been suggested that, as far as Marx's method is concerned, it is impossible to arrive at a determinant social form - i.e. the modern bourgeois state as against the kinship unit - without taking 'being' and 'consciousness' together. If we isolate, that is, abstract, either being or consciousness alone, the real object under consideration, in this case the state, is substituted for a generic conception of the object 'in general'. In other words, an *a priori* unity is allowed to infiltrate the initial stages of category formation as a premise. Using the words of Sayer, the conclusion which follows from this is predictable:

"law, state, and so on have no existence independent of people's 'material connection'. This is why ... they cannot in themselves be seen as the motive forces of history. Like 'consciousness', they have no existence 'in themselves'; to treat them as

independent entities is to reify them" (Sayer, 1987:89).

To this point, I have spoken largely in terms of being and consciousness - descriptive terms which are themselves somewhat abstract. For the remainder of this section, I will focus more directly on the category of the relations of production and, in particular, the deconstruction of their exclusive (reified) association with the economy or economic relations.

For both Sayer and Fine, those social relations "demonstrably entailed in a given mode of production" (Sayer, 1987:75), constitute the material base of society, of which economic forms are but one expression (Sayer, 1987:77 and Fine, 1984:95-100). In this sense, the important point, as noted by Fine (1984:96), "is not the verbal definition of 'economics' but the theoretical differentiation between the content of capitalist society - i.e. social relations of production - and its forms of appearance, i.e. value, money, capital etc,. For example, what amounts to a redefinition of what constitutes the 'economic', is most clearly stated in the 'Grundrisse' (1858), and later, in 'Volume Three of Capital' (1865):

"human life has from time immemorial rested on production, and, in one way or another, on social production, whose relations we call, precisely,

economic relations" (Marx, 1858:489);

and in 'Capital' (1865):

"the totality of these relationships which the bearers of this production have towards nature and one another, the relationships in which they produced, is precisely society, viewed according to its economic structure" (Marx, 1865:957).

To debate whether the terms 'state' and 'economy' should be restricted to their respective forms of appearance - i.e. as law, capital, etc. - or their constitutive social relations is, as I see it, neither here nor there. Rather, the point is this: the articulation of this ensemble of social relations, constitutes what Marx saw as the "material groundwork of society". Crucially for my argument, the social relations which make up this substratum are real enough, but not necessarily in the sense that we can see them - a prime example being surplus value and abstract labour. Rather, as Fine (1984:99) has pointed out, they are real in the sense that "they act as a real constraint on human behaviour and as a real mediation between human beings" (Fine, 1984:99; see also Sayer, 1983:136). They have, in other words, causal powers. Thus, to borrow the words of Sayer (1987:76-77), "what Marx is doing... is not, as with 'traditional historical materialism', reducing social relations to economic

relations ... He is precisely redefining 'economic' relations - and thus the 'economic sphere'... - as comprising the totality of social relations, whatever these maybe, which make particular forms of production possible".

Concerning the form of the base and superstructure relation, the corollary of the foregoing presentation is again predictable: "the superstructure", Sayer writes, "... is simply the ideal form in which the totality of 'material' relations which make up the 'base' itself are manifested to consciousness, not a substantially separable order of reality" (Sayer, 1987:84). This interpretation of what Marx understood by the "material groundwork of society", is, according to Sayer (1987:76), "devastatingly simple". However, as a statement with clear ontological commitments describing the basic formation and movement of society, it is complicated by two intersecting propositions. Firstly, Sayer's a posteriori definition of social relations of production allows him to regard state and law as essential relations of capitalist production, in that "it could not proceed in their absence" (Sayer, 1987:110). Secondly, Sayer argues that the structure of the base/superstructure relation corresponds to Marx's view of the relationship between being and consciousness, and hence, relationship between form and content. Paraphrasing an earlier quote, this implies that law and state, like 'consciousness, have no independent existence of peoples

materialist connection: "to treat them as independent entities is to reify them" (Sayer, 1987:89). Understood in this sense, Sayer reasons that the superstructure is a "set of phenomenal forms the 'base' itself assumes in social 'consciousness', whose 'ideality' in capitalism lies precisely in its appearance of separation from people's 'materialistic connection'" (Sayer, 1987:143). Thus, the 'superstructure' would appear to include not only such phenomenal forms as exchange value, money and price, but also the ideal manifestations of the selfsame relations the former give expression to - i.e. the institutions of state and law - which may in themselves be essential relations of capitalist production. This maybe too fine a point, but I suspect Sayer's frequent use of quotation marks in the last quote reflects his unease with including references to the 'base', 'consciousness', 'ideality' and 'materialistic connection' within the same formulation. I doubt whether he intends to employ a category of the social relations which could be more or less indiscriminately satisfied by random empirical evidence. Thus, if only to gain some consistency, it is worth pausing to consider this relationship more closely.

Following Marsden (1992:360), I would suggest that Sayer's first proposition is "ontologically flat". It conveys, analytically at least, an horizontal imagery of the state/civil society relationship. Proposition two, on the other hand, has "ontological depth". It casts a

vertical imagery of the relations of production and their forms of appearance (see Sayer, 1987:84). Understood in this sense, the former has as its problematic the apparent, yet phenomenal, separation of the polity and the economy, the historicity of which is nicely summed up by Thompson (1965:82-83): "the very category of economics - the notion that it is possible to isolate economic from non-economic social relations, that all human obligations can be dissolved except the cash-nexus - was the product of a particular phase of capitalist evolution". Importantly however, it is vital to note that this "evolution" is not purely contingent - something which happens once - but is constantly reproduced by "abstract", juridic individuals engaged in the (daily) act of commodity exchange. As Marx himself argues: "the attributes of the juridical person [are] precisely [those] of the individual engaged in exchange" (Marx, 1858:246). It follows that, with respect to proposition two, it is the 'State', understood as an "illusory community" of 'abstract individuals', which becomes the central problem. Thus, of the two qualifications, which refers to the ideological superstructure: "the state or the dichotomy between civil society and the state" (Marsden, 1992:360)?

In a society organized upon the basis of commodity production, the organization of productive labour - that is, its immediate social form - takes the form of abstract labour: "the general exchange of activities and products",

Marx writes, "which has become a vital condition for each individual - their mutual inner connection - here appears as something alien to them, autonomous, as a thing" (Marx, 1858: 157). What I want to suggest, and later develop, is that the state and its corresponding juridical subject, not only 'mirror' labour in the abstract but that they express two sides of the same social individual. Whereas abstract labour represents the social form through which the appropriation without equivalence of the products of labour is mediated, the institutions of state represents the form through which the appropriation of the powers of labour are mediated. As support for this formulation, consider the symmetry of Marx's language in the following passage:

"Although individual A feels a need for the commodity of individual B, he does not appropriate by force, nor vice versa, but rather they recognize one another reciprocally as proprietors, as persons whose will penetrates their commodities. Accordingly, the juridical moment of the person enters here" (Marx, 1858:243).

This should not be seen to suggest that abstract labour is a necessary precondition for the emergence of the juridical individual. Nonetheless, just as "the concept of value precedes that of capital but requires for its full development a mode of production founded on capital" (Marx, in Fine, 1984:147), abstract labour precedes the juridical

individual, but requires for its full development the conditions which give rise to the juridical individual (Fine, 1984:146).

To summarize how the object domain of an historical materialist theory of state formation might be characterized: the material base of bourgeois society has a dual character. In its content, it is the totality of the social relations of commodity production, and in its phenomenal (actual) form it is the conception of society as the sum total of free, equal, commodity-owning individuals bearing rights. Thus, the material basis of society, is, as Sayer suggests, both base and superstructure, but it is only one dimension of the base, namely that which is immediately experienced. From the uncritical point of view of conventional understandings of the base and superstructure, the economic and the political exhaust the content of the material basis of society. As a result, the social relations of production are necessarily limited to their economic/material forms of appearance, whilst their non-economic/ideal forms of appearance are regarded as secondary and only externally related to the 'economy' (Marsden, 1992:359; and Sayer, 1987:134-135). It should come as no surprise therefore, that the categories of traditional historical materialism are insensitive to the alienation inherent in capitalism estranged logic of essence and hence, is unable to see that this is precisely the domain of a Marxist science.

ii. Capitalisms Estranged 'Logic of Essence'.

To reiterate, Marx's understanding of the base and superstructure relationship hinges on two key points. Firstly, law and state cannot be discounted as mere fictions, nor can they be idealized as "eternal truths". Rather, they are essential relations of capitalist production, precisely in the sense elaborated by Sayer (1987:75): "it could not proceed in their absence". From this perspective, ideas concerning the 'equality' in exchange between capital and labour, cannot be regarded as a conscious disguise or fraud on behalf of the ruling class. This is to say, they arise out of the capital-labour relation itself; they are the "objective thought-forms" which make a particular form of production possible (Marx, 1867:50; see also Fine, 1984:99). Secondly, in a society organized upon the basis of commodity production, and where abstract labour is the immediate social form of labour, the social relations of production manifest themselves in phenomenal forms which may conceal their true identity. The external appearance of a separate 'economic' domain, which is seen to exhaust the 'private' side of society, and the appearance of an equally separate 'political' domain, which is seen to exhaust the public side of society, is perhaps the most spectacular example of this - i.e. the necessity

of an object to appear as something other than itself.

Together, both points imply that the proper object of an historical materialist theory of state formation is not, as conventional political theory suggests, the reality of the institutions or agencies of law and 'state as such'. This is not to suggest that they are unimportant, nor is it intended to deny their actual reality. Rather, it is the reality of their abstraction from living labour power, and their subsequent reification in the form of a separate political state, which is at issue (Sayer, 1987:109; see also Abrams, 1988:63-64). If this is the proper object of an historical materialist theory of state formation, then what is its proper domain? In terms which go a long way toward answering this question, Abrams', in his seminal, yet trenchant, 'Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State' (1988), provides us with some hints:

"the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is. There is a state-system: a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centred in government ... There, is, too a state idea, projected, purveyed and variously believed in different societies at different times. We are only making difficulties for ourselves in supposing that we have also to study the state [as an] entity ... over and above the state-system and the

state-idea. The state comes into being as a structuration within political practice: it starts its life as an implicit construct: it is then reified ... and acquires an overt symbolic identity... The task of the sociologist is to demystify; and in this context that means attending to the senses in which the state does not exist rather than to those in which it does" (Abrams, 1988:58).

What follows, aims to go beyond the 'idea of the state', to show that the proper domain for an historical materialist theory of state formation is "the manner and means by which the idea of the existence of the state has been constituted, communicated and imposed" (Abrams, 1988:69). I attempt to do this, by discussing the relationship between Abrams' (1988) trenchant understanding of the 'idea of the state', and Sayer's (who was a pupil of Abrams) deconstruction of the categories of historical materialism. Following Marsden (1992) and Denis (1988), it is argued that with Abrams we find a seminal definition of this object-domain, whilst Sayer's deconstruction of conventional understandings of the base and superstructure relationship provides the means to integrate it within the categories of historical materialism.

According to Abrams (1988:69), the principle feature of Marxist discussions on the state is the problematic, yet

undiscussed assumption, that it is somehow at one and the same time an 'illusory community' of 'abstract individuals' and a real entity which does as such, exist (see Poulantzas, 1973:44). To use the words of Abrams (1988:69), there would appear "to be compelling reasons within Marxism for both recognising that the state does not exist as a real entity, that it is at best an 'abstract-formal' object, as Poulantzas puts it, and for nevertheless discussing the politics of capitalist societies as though the state is indeed a thing...". This imperceptible duality has an important corollary: instead of analyzing the historical genesis of the 'idea of the state', the inner-connection linking the structuration of political practice to the capitalist social relations of production is simply passed over. As a result, ideas on justice, democracy, ownership and so forth, instead of appearing as what they are ("social relations between individuals at work"), are abstracted from people's "materialist connection" and reified in the palpable form of an autonomous 'level' or 'instance', thereby acquiring a life of their own (Abrams, 1988:69-71; see also Sayer, 1987:143; and Fine, 1984:205).

For Abrams, the reification of the 'idea of the state' is articulated via an implicit process of "misplaced concreteness" (see Abrams, 1988:58 and 73). He suggests that the "sheer powerfulness of the state" has an important corollary: "we have", Abrams writes, "been trapped both in political sociology and in Marxism by a reification which

in itself seriously obstructs the effective study of a number of problems about political power" (Abrams, 1988:63). Echoing Marx's (1867:49) "natural, self-understood forms of social life", Abrams (1988:63-64) reasons that Marxists have been "hypnotized" in according to the 'idea of the state' too much concreteness - i.e. structure (see Abrams, 1988:74). Abrams argues, that "instead of directing their attention to the manner and means by which the idea of the state is constituted ... they have come down more or less in favour of the view that the existence of the 'idea of the state' does indicate the existence of a substantial real structure" and that this is the proper domain of historical materialist concern.

Thus, for this reason, and in a manner which is comparable to Marx's insistence that historical analysis must begin not with concepts but with real life, Abrams suggests that we abandon 'the State' as a material object of study in favour of studying "politically organized subjection" (Abrams, 1988:63). This is not to suggest that we abandon the question, 'what is the state'? Quite the contrary: "I am proposing", Abrams writes, "only that we should abandon the state as a material object of study whether concrete or abstract, while continuing to take the idea of the state extremely seriously" (Abrams, 1988:75). Abrams best exemplifies the logic behind this point via an analogy with Poulantzas' 'Political Power and Social Classes' (1974) and the sociology of religion. He writes:

"try substituting the word god for the word state throughout 'Political Power and Social Classes' and read it as an analysis of religious domination and I think you will see what I mean. The task of the sociologist of religion is the explanation of religious practice (churches) and religious belief (theology): he is not called upon to debate, let alone to believe in, the existence of god" (Abrams, 1988:79-80).

Understood in the foregoing sense, Abrams is in no way denying, for example, the existence of Lenin's (1917:389) "special bodies of armed men having, prisons, etc. at their command". Rather, what he rejects is the *a priorism* which merely takes the 'idea of the state' as signifying nothing other than the domain of "special bodies of armed men, prisons, etc.". , thereby ignoring the processes whereby an armed force is rendered autonomous of living labour power - i.e. reified as a "power standing above" it (Abrams, 1988:69; see also Lenin, 1917:388)

Now, from the foregoing argument it should be apparent that there exists a clear convergence between Abrams' 'idea of the state', and Sayer's deconstruction of conventional understandings of the base and superstructure relationship, discussed in the previous section (see Corrigan and Sayer, 1985:7-8; Sayer, 1991:247). Indeed, in 'The Great Arch:

English State Formation as Cultural Revolution' (1985), Corrigan and Sayer acknowledge that the terms in which Abrams develops the 'idea of the state' goes a long way "towards defining the project of ... [their] book". That being, "to go behind the 'idea of the state', to show it as a construction, to decode its message of domination" (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985:8). However, there also exists a significant difference between them which concerns the question of how the 'idea of the state' acquires its public reification.

For Abrams, the reification of the idea of the state - i.e. its "structuration", pure and simple - is a categorical error, a mystification, arising from tensions between theory, history and practice. On the one hand, he suggests that Marxist theory needs "the state as an abstract-formal object in order to explain the integration of class societies" (Abrams, 1988:70), and "the state as a real concrete object, the immediate object of political struggle", on the other (Abrams, 1988:70). The conclusion which follows from this is a contentious, yet predictable one: "to opt for political struggle", Abrams writes, "thus becomes a matter of participating in the ideological construction of the state as a real entity" (Abrams, 1988:70).

The general thrust of Abrams' attempt to 'destructurize' Marxist state theory, is, in my view, an

accurate appreciation of one of the main problems affecting Marxist political theory: the tendency to regard ideas on freedom, justice and rights as signifying nothing other than the state as a concrete structure, and that this structure is the real object of analysis (Abrams, 1988:69; see also Corrigan and Sayer, 1985:7-8). However, despite this, I now want to suggest that Abrams' arguments concerning the 'idea of the state' fail to overcome the reification he so trenchantly locates. Furthermore, exploring this anomaly not only helps, as mentioned, to clarify Sayer's position, but it also helps to demonstrate the importance of understanding how Marx himself regarded the relationship between the social relations of production, their empirical forms of appearance and their corresponding categories of thought.

From the proceeding discussion, it should be apparent that in referring to the state as an 'abstraction', what Abrams has in mind is "a substantial real structure", and by this he is referring to "an ideological hidden organisation": "[it is], Abrams writes, "this hidden structure of power centres [which] appears to be what is meant by the state" (Abrams, 1988:74; see also Marsden, 1992:364). This is further supported, by the simple fact that by abstraction he could not mean 'idea', for this would be to deny the routines and rituals of state any causal powers. Thus, if the abstraction of the state is in an important sense ideological, then, as mentioned, its

reification as "an organized political force in its own right", can only serve "to make its ideological pretensions more credible" (Abrams, 1988:69 and 72). In short, the 'idea of the state' is established as the object of study, via a rejection of 'the State' as a real entity (see Marsden, 1992:364).

Understood in the foregoing sense, Abrams' formulation has one major drawback: in rejecting 'the State' as an abstraction, he also rejects the possibility of the social relations of production assuming a form of appearance, whose 'ideality' "lies precisely in its appearance of separation from people's 'materialist connection'" (Sayer, 1987:143). Otherwise put, in rejecting the state as an abstraction, Abrams rejects the very possibility of the social relations of production assuming both empirical and non-empirical forms of appearance. As a result, the 'idea of the state' is rendered indifferent to the social relations it gives practical expression to (Marsden, 1992:364).

With the foregoing criticism, I am not suggesting that Abrams fails to recognize the existence of a relationship between the emergence of the 'idea of the state' and the evolution of the capitalist mode of production. For an historian of his calibre and stature, such a suggestion would be both disrespectful and absurd. The point is that, as far as Marx was concerned, it was not merely enough to

get the facts straight, but he also insisted on getting the appropriate categories as well, and to do this he had to determine whether the logic of such categories as value, labour and capital, expressed capitalism's estranged logic of essence. By rejecting the possibility that the social relations of production may assume the form of non-empirical objects or structures there exists "a danger that the idea of the state [maybe] denied its ontological foundation, [and as a result] regarded as a free-floating reification, a category mistake, rather than an internal form of manifestation of the social relations of production". In short, it becomes impossible to determine whether the logic articulated within the 'idea of the state' is consistent with the essential forms of capitalist society.

Theoretical categories cannot be considered historical, purely because they are arrived at via a 'recovery of history' (see Johnson, 1983:179-180). As far as historical materialism is concerned, it is not nearly enough to grasp the social relations of production in terms of their "different degrees of development", they must also be grasped in terms of their "historically specific arrangements and combinations" (Johnson, 1983:182-183). This, according to Marx (1858:106), requires "the comprehension of its structure". By rejecting the possibility of comprehending the state with regard to its structure, the terms in which Abrams articulates the 'idea

of the state' clearly fall short of Marx's criteria of exhaustiveness: that is, of not only getting the facts straight, but also getting the appropriate categories as well. It is only with the latter that we are able to generalize between different forms of development.

Sayer, in contrast to Abrams, retains Marx's 'structural premise' (Sayer, 1987:41-43, 130-131 and 138-140). For him, the "idealism of the state" is the reification of the juridical subject, and the "materialism of civil society" is the fetishism of the productive forces. The first inverts the relationship between the social and the ideal, and the second inverts the relationship between the social and the material. On the one hand, this means, that whereas for Abrams the abstraction of the state referred exclusively to structure, for Sayer it is an ideal form that is abstracted from its origin in people's materialist connection, thereby acquiring a life of its own. On the other hand, by arguing that the base/superstructure relation is identical to the relationship between being and consciousness, Sayer is able to reason that, like the social individual, there is only one ensemble of social relations which are fetishized as being and reified as consciousness. Thus, just as consciousness is an essential, albeit non-empirical, moment in the same social individual, law and state are non-empirical moments of the same ensemble of social relations which give rise to such empirical moments as

labour, money and capital. In short, Sayer retains both the 'idea of the state' and the state as the structuration of political practice, by insisting that one cannot be envisaged independently of the other.

According to my account, the 'economic' and the 'political' are but two expressions of the "myriad forms" the social relations of commodity production take. As Fine (1984:135) puts it, "just as value, money and capital are not things but economic expressions of definite productive relations, so too private property, law and the state are not impersonal abstract entities but juridic expressions of the same relations". This is not to suggest that they cannot be distinguished for analytic purposes. That would be absurd. After all, as Colletti (1972:11) notes, "a work of art or science, such as Balzac's 'Comedie Humaine', is not the French railway system". The point is that, the categories of 'state' and 'economy' should be restricted to their respective forms of appearance, as opposed to the social relations of production they are expressions of. Put otherwise, economic forms are empirical manifestations of the social relations, which find expression as a relation between things. They are, in other words, empirical things capable of becoming capital, for example, the commodity and money. Conversely, politico-juridical forms are empirical manifestations of the same social relations of production, which find expression as material relations between persons, for example, the rights of property, contract and

exchange (Denis, 1989:348; and Marsden, 1992:362). From this perspective, state and law may best be conceived as "discursive mediums" through which conflicting 'rights' to social labour are defined, and hence, contested (Marsden, 1992: 362).

Thus, to return to the opening question, 'what is the state'? Just as capital is a social relation carried in the form of money, the state is a social relation carried in the form of law (Fine, 1984:146): "in the state", Marx writes, "... man is regarded as a species being, he is the imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty, ... deprived of his real individual life and endowed with an unreal universality" (Marx, 1843a:154). This "unreal universality" is, of course, the legal subject "divorced from the material circumstances and social relations which concretely make them what they are" (Sayer, 1987:104). The 'ideality' of the state 'as such' is thus an 'illusion', but the 'idea of the state' is a definite political reality, precisely in the sense elaborated in the previous section: "it acts as a real constraint on human behaviour and as a real mediation between human beings" (Fine, 1984:99). As Marsden puts it:

"production relations are obscured by the twin facades [of reification and fetishism], which cause us to conceptualize them dichotomously. These dichotomous

categories are expressed in juridic discourse. This discourse is what Abrams refers to as the 'idea of the state' and what legal pluralists refer to as the 'ideology of legal centralism'" (Marsden, 1992:365).

In the previous section, it was argued that the object of an historical materialist theory of state formation is the reality of the apparent separation of the institutions of state from living labour power. It can now be seen, that the domain of this theory resides in the practical examination of the emergence and reproduction of the definite conditions of labour, which organize law and state as its products. As Fine (1984:204) puts it, Marx's point was "not simply to reject the category of human labour generated within classical jurisprudence ... but rather to specify the definite historical relations under which it operated, such that private property, law and state emerged as its product".

The final part of this thesis is concerned with precisely this question. However, before we begin to investigate the points of departure for an analysis of state formation, the logical limits of what can be done at this level of abstraction need to be noted: if historical analysis is required so as to reveal how and through what mechanisms particular political forms are "concretized" then, at this level of abstraction, it is only possible to provide the general points of departure for category

formation and to determine whether their logic is consistent with the inner workings of capitalism.

Part 3:

Capital and state formation.

Chapter 5:

Commodities, labour and the state: Towards a point of departure.

For Marx, capitalist society constitutes a privileged place within the 'evolution' of social (human) production. In a celebrated passage, he explains:

"bourgeois society is the most developed and most complex historic organization of production. The categories which express its relations ... thereby also allow insights into the structure and the relations of production of all vanished social formations ... Human anatomy contains a key to understanding the ape. The intimations of higher development among the subordinate animal species, however, can be understood only after the higher development is already known" (Marx, 1858:105).

Marx recognises that there are similarities among the various historical organizations of production. For example, most Marxists would agree that it is the relationship between "the owners of the conditions of production" and the "immediate producers" which reveals

"the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social edifice" (Marx, 1865:927). However, in the '1857 Introduction' (1858:106) Marx warns that such similarities must be "taken ... with a grain of salt" and not "in the manner of those economists who smudge over all historical differences and see bourgeois relations in all forms of society" (Marx, 1858:105). In other words, there is "always... an essential difference" (Marx, 1858:106) which, if ignored, leads to a generic conception of society, in which "the latest form regards the previous ones as steps leading up to itself, and... always conceives them one-sidedly" (Marx, 1858:106).

Similar arguments, it has been suggested, apply to the state. For example, most Marxists would agree that "the specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of the direct producers" (Marx, 1865:927) explains how a particular form of political domination is organized. Thus, the categories which give expression to the social relations of capitalist domination, also allow insights into antecedent political forms. However, following Marx's logic, it remains important that if we are to trace the inner connexions between these forms of domination and production, then we must categorically recognize, for example, that neither the absolutist state, nor the kinship unit, are politico-juridical states in the same sense as the modern capitalist state (Sayer, 1987:139). As Sayer (1987:139) puts it, "we are dealing ...

with entirely different relations, which take different phenomenal forms, and demand appropriate and specific historical categories for their analysis".

By taking as my point of departure, Marx's analysis of the commodity form, the remainder of this thesis presents some provisional suggestions as to how an historical materialist critique of the modern political state may proceed. My purpose, is to elicit from Marx's analysis of the productive relations the process whereby the selfsame social relations which give rise to value and private property, money and law and capital and the state, take the estranged form of appearance of a "social relation between things" and "material relations between persons". In doing this I hope to establish a foundation from which to offer some tentative suggestions as to how a general historical materialist discourse, appropriate for the study of state formation in developing societies, maybe developed.

Expressed concisely, the aim of this part is to investigate the possibility for articulating a theory of state formation which does not postulate, and hence arrive at, a generic (i.e. economistic or idealistic) conception of the state, but is capable of grasping a determinate form of the state. In undertaking this task, it is necessary to begin by addressing the following problem: if state and law articulate as essential relations of commodity production, then the 'general' nature of how this relationship is

established must be developed.

First, to reiterate, for Marx, "all science would be superfluous if the form of appearance of things directly coincided with their essence" (Marx, 1865:956; see also Colletti, 1972:78). Yet, as we have seen, this is precisely the task which Smith and Ricardo set themselves in their analysis of value:

"by annulling the nominal diversity between real value and market value, between exchange value and price" - thus expressing the value in the labour-time itself instead of a specific objectification of labour-time, say, gold and silver - they also put aside the actual difference and contradiction between price and value" (Marx, 1858:138).

This criticism is, of course, applicable to all modes of enquiry which assume that knowledge is manifested at the level 'experience', and can hence be unproblematically abstracted from it (Johnson, 1983:167; see also Murray, 1983:496). Science, in other words, becomes a process of directly relating essence and appearance: "the vulgar economist", Marx writes, "has not the faintest idea that the actual everyday exchange relations need not be directly identical with the magnitudes of value" (Marx, 1868:247). He adds: "the point of bourgeois society consists precisely in this, that *a priori* there is no conscious social

regulation of production" (Marx,1868:247).

This brings me to the main argument I want to develop concerning the derivation of a point of departure for a theory of state formation. Just as Marx could not content himself with the division of value into use value and exchange value, thereby directly relating essence and appearance, we cannot content ourselves with noting the self-evident existence of a separate instance, or level consisting of 'the State', in so far as those features which distinguish it from all antecedent political forms, may have, at this point in the analysis, already acquired the "fixity of the natural forms of social life". Thus, if we are to avoid the mistake of taking abstract, ahistorical, definitions as our point of departure, then, like Marx, the starting point for our analysis must be the "capitalist mode of production, and the relations of production and exchange appropriate to that method" (Marx, 1878:862). We must, in other words, begin with the social relations of commodity production and this requires that we begin with the "simplest social form in which the labour-product is presented in contemporary society, and this is the commodity" (Marx, 1880:198).

i. Commodities and Labour.

That the relations of 'domination' and 'production' articulate as different facets of the same "ensemble" of the productive relations, and hence that their inner connection is hidden in the commodity form, has thus far occurred to only a few Marxists theoreticians of law, most notably Evgeni Pashukanis (*Law and Marxism*, 1924) and Isaac Rubin (*Essays on Marx's Theory of Value*, 1928). Due to this lack of attention it is worth pausing to consider this relationship more closely, and to examine its position with respect to Marx's overall critique of bourgeois society.

In the 'Preface' to *Capital Volume One* (1867), Marx announced that his "subject of study ... is the capitalist method of production, and the relations of production and exchange appropriate to that method" (Marx, 1878:862). He then begins with the commodity, and works his way through each of its "further developments" - the form of money, capital, and so on. Finally, some seven hundred and ninety-one pages later, he reaches the 'Secret of Primary Accumulation' (1878:791-813), disclosing at last the fundamental conditions required for capitalist production. He writes:

"The process which clears the way for the capitalist system, therefore, can be nothing less than the

process whereby the worker is divorced from ownership of the means of labour" (Marx, 1878:791-792).

and:

"The so-called primary accumulation, therefore, is nothing other than the historical process whereby the producer is divorced from the means of production" (Marx, 1878:792).

Having 'deconstructed' the phenomenal forms of bourgeois society into their determinant relations of production, thereby disclosing the fundamental conditions for capitalist production, Marx's critique represents a revolution in historiographic practice. Paraphrasing Sayer (1987:135), so long as we remain at the level of surface appearances, and continue to see capital fetishistically, as a thing, any analysis of form and extent of capitalist development will be limited to such factors as prevalence of wage labour, the degree to which exchange is mediated by the circulation of money, or the development of a certain type of technology. However, if Marx is correct, and capital is not a thing but is a definite social relation which simply takes the form of a thing, then we are perforce directed to the actual processes which give rise to capitalist production. In other words, the central historiographic problem becomes a question of how the various social forms of bourgeois society are "constituted,

communicated and imposed". Hence, the paradigmatic importance of Marx's analysis of the 'Bills for Enclosure of Commons'. He writes:

"we are not concerned here with the purely economic causes of the agricultural revolution. Our present interest is in the forcible means that were used to bring about the change" (Marx, 1878:801);

Later he concludes:

"the advance that had been made in the eighteenth century is shown in this, that law itself has now become the instrument by which the theft of the people's land was achieved ... The parliamentary form of this robbery was to pass Acts for the enclosure of commons" (Marx, 1878:802-803).

In sum, Marx's 'Capital' combines not only a critique of political economy in the sense that abstract, ahistoric, categories are replaced with historical ones, but also in the sense that by determining whether the logic of his categories expresses the inner workings of capitalism, Marx was able to disclose what form of society provides the basis for the emergence of an independent economic sphere. Thus, if the economic and the political are indeed two expressions of the same social relations, then in order to put forward some suggestions as to how a theory of the formation of the latter should proceed, we must return to

the commodity form. This is not to suggest, however, that we take Marx's analysis of the commodity form, money form, and so on, as providing a helpful analogy, in which theoretical 'reconstruction' becomes merely a matter of substituting or integrating concepts and categories offered by the procedures of other methodologies. Rather, the point is, if state and law articulate as essential relations of capitalist society, then we must work out from the logic of commodity production those conditions which correspond to the genesis of a particular political form.

For Marx, the commodity form, the "economic cell form" of bourgeois society, contains in micro-form, the key to grasping the inner content of its "further developments", namely the value form, the money form and finally, the form of capital (Marx, 1867:55). Just as these economic forms are not things, but are the economic expressions of a definite social relation of production, law and state are not illusions or mirages but are "abstract ideal expressions of these same social relations" (see Fine, 1984:97).

To expand: under the capitalist relations of production the production of a commodity is at one and the same time the realization of surplus-value. Put otherwise, the products of labour in addition to being use value - a useful thing - also assume a specific form of value - exchange value. Turning on the transhistorical/historical

distinction, the commodity, according to Marx (1880:198), exists as a "useful thing, alias use-value" and as "a bearer of exchange value". The latter, however, directly coincides with the former, in that the exchangeability of a particular commodity is explained in reference to its usability: "exchange-value shows itself as the quantitative ratio, the proportion, in which use-value of one kind are exchanged for use-values of another kind" (Marx, 1867:4). Given Marx's view that the essence of a particular social form, value in this case, must necessarily take the form of a distinct estranged form of appearance, the corollary is again predictable: "[the] commodity is, on the one hand use-value, and on the other hand, value, not exchange-value, since the mere form of appearance is not its proper content" (Marx, 1880:198). In his celebrated critique of 'The Trinity Formula', Marx explains:

"first we have the use-value, land, which has no value, and the exchange-value, rent; here, then, a social relation, conceived as a thing, is placed in a relationship of proportion with nature; i.e. two incommensurable magnitudes are supposed to have a proportionate ratio" (Marx, 1865:956).

The value of political economy, according to Marx (1867:54), lies in its analysis, "however incomplete", of the "hidden content" of the magnitude of value: that is, value as a derivative of the total amount of labour time

incorporated into the commodity. Its incompleteness however, arises from the fact, that use-value and exchange-value are assumed to have a proportionate ratio, and hence commensurable magnitudes. Value, and its "hidden content" therefore, is reduced to the sum total of the material requisites of the conditions of production - i.e. raw material, the price of labour, machinery, and so on. Accordingly, "the economists [Smith and Ricardo]", Marx writes, "have never even mooted the question why the content should assume these forms; why labour should be represented by the value of the product of labour, and the quantity of labour (measured by duration) by the magnitude of the value of that product" (Marx, 1867:55). This neglect, according to Marx, does not arise from a conceptual oversight. Rather, "there is a deeper reason":

"the value form of the labour product is the most abstract, but also the most generalised, form taken by that product in the bourgeois system of production, which derives therefrom its peculiar stamp as a specific kind of social production, and thus receives its specific historical characterisation. If, therefore, we erroneously regard the value form of the labour product as the one and only form of social production, fixed for all time by nature's immutable laws, we are perforce ignoring the peculiar differential characteristics of the form of value" (Marx, 1867:55).

Here, Marx's point is this: instead of beginning with the commodity as a concrete social form of the labour product, political economy, or in this case, the Ricardian theory of value, begins with the commodity in its finished form as value. As a result, the fundamental contradiction between price and value is rendered natural, in that, the nominal difference between real value and market value, between exchange value and price, is seen to reside in the amount of labour-time invested in the commodity itself. Thus, the commodity's price, its expression in money, is seen to be determined by the magnitude of value - abstract labour time. In a letter to Engels (1858a), Marx exemplifies:

"(1) Value. Purely reduced [by Ricardo] to the quantity of labour. Time as the measure of labour. Use-value - whether considered subjectively as usefulness of the work, or objectively as utility of the product - appears here simply as the material presupposition of value, which for the time being drops completely out of the determination of the economic form. Value as such has no other 'material' but labour itself" (Marx, 1858a:106).

To grasp the form of an object materially is at the same time to dehistoricize it, to deny its social basis. However, if Marx is correct and exchange-value "is only the mode of expression, the phenomenal form, of something

contained in it [value], yet distinguishable from it" (Marx, 1867:) then, as mentioned, there can only be one question to guide the abstraction of this "distinguishable form": "as values", Marx writes, "[why are] commodities ... nothing but particular masses of congealed labour time" (Marx, 1867:8)?

As Colletti (1972:78-92) has argued, central to Marx's analysis of this problem are the categories of 'fetishism', 'reification', and/or 'alienation': that is, the processes whereby the subjective, or social content of human labour is expressed at the level of surface appearances, as a property intrinsic to the products of their labour. In turn, the latter are "personified", in the sense that they appear to take on their own subjective identity (see Colletti, 1972:78). In Marx's own words, fetishism, "consists in regarding economic categories, such as being a *commodity* or *productive labour*, as qualities inherent in the material incarnations of these formal determinations or categories" (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:40). In the 'Theories of Surplus Value' (1863), he exemplifies:

"where labour is in common [communal], the relations of men in their social production do not manifest themselves as 'value' of 'things'. Exchanges of products as commodities is a method of exchanging labour, [it shows] ... the dependence of the labour of each upon the labour of others [and corresponds to] a

certain mode of social labour or social production ... [Here] the social character of labour is represented as a 'property' of the things; and inversely, that a social relation appears as a relation of one thing to another" (Marx, in Colletti, 1972:78).

Importantly, Marx insists that there is more involved here than a "pure[ly] subjective illusion which conceals the deceit and the interests of the ruling class" (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:42). Furthermore, he is not suggesting that the structure of capitalist production produces its own misconceptions (Marx, 1865:957-958). In Marx's own words, the point is, that "the way of looking at things arises out of the relationship itself; the latter is an expression of the former, not vice versa" (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:42). In 'Capital Volume One' (1867), he explains:

"the producers do not come into social contact until they exchange the products of their labour, the specifically social character of their individual labour does not manifest itself until exchange takes place... That is why the social relations connecting the labour of one private individual (or group) with the labour of another, seem to the producers, not direct social relations between individuals at work, but what they really are: material relations between persons and social relations between things" (Marx, 1867:46).

That commodity producing labour manifests itself in the consciousness of its participants as a "social relation between things", has thus far received considerable attention from Marxists. For example, Cohen, Althusser and Godelier have all offered accounts of commodity fetishism which are in many ways outstanding. However, as Fine (1984:136) has pointed out, its juridical-political equivalent, "material relations between persons" - and the symmetry of Marx's language suggests that they are equivalents - has received comparatively less attention. Indeed, the inner connection between these two 'different', opposing forms, remains largely misunderstood.

Thus, it is to this less well charted area that we must now turn. Earlier it was maintained that in order to answer the question, "why labour should be represented by the value of the product of labour, and the quantity of labour ... by the magnitude of the value of that product", Marx not only required "a new type of abstraction", but more precisely he needed a mode of enquiry which was capable of eliciting from an object those features which distinguish it from all antecedent forms. He required, in other words, a new mode of enquiry which did not, to use the words of Colletti (1972:8), "arrive at the generic, idealist notion of society 'in general', but rather hangs on to this determinate society, the particular object in question".

What I now want to suggest, is that the above point of departure for the abstraction of value has a much neglected juridical-political equivalent: that is, what are the actual circumstances under which a group of peoples can take a sufficient view of themselves and their material conditions, to see their "mutual relationships" as "material relations between persons"? The analytic foundation from which to answer this question lies, as mentioned, in the juridical-political moment contained within Marx's category of abstract labour.

It has been shown that the commodity is something definite which is constituted by a transhistorical moment (use-value) and an historical moment (exchange-value). Embodied in this "twofold character" is a second distinction, which, in Marx's (1867:10) own words, provides the pivot on which "a clear understanding of political economy turns" (see also Marx, 1867a:226-227). This pivot is the twofold character of labour, expressed in the categories of useful labour and abstract labour. Let us deal with the former first.

As mentioned, for Marx, useful labour is that aspect of labour which produces use-value and is therefore a general condition of all human production (Marx, 1867:10). To use Marx's (1867:13) own example, the use-value of linen, for instance, requires for its production a

particular type of productive activity, namely weaving. Similarly, tailoring is the particular productive activity required for the production of the use-value of a coat. Thus, from the standpoint of use-value, weaving and tailoring are both productive activities "whose utility is ... represented in the use-value of its product, or the labour which... manifests itself by making its product a use-value" (Marx, 1867:10). Furthermore, just as the use-value between various types of commodities can be qualitatively distinguished, weaving and tailoring differ, in that, they are no more commensurable than their respective products - i.e. the linen and the coat (see Marx, 1867:10-13; and Sayer, 1983:17). Useful labour is, in short, a transhistorical category. Marx exemplifies:

"As creator of use-values, as useful labour, labour is a necessary condition of human existence, and one that is independent of the forms of human society; it is ... a necessity imposed by nature itself" (Marx, 1867: 12).

From the foregoing quote it should be clear that the category of useful labour is relatively straightforward, and indeed, arbitrary (Sayer, 1983:18). This is of course, the corollary of its level of generality. However, given that all human labour is useful, it is never only this, and hence, no definite organization of labour can be suitably grasped by its utility alone. Thus, what is required is an

abstraction which encompasses the differences presented by one organization of labour with respect to all antecedent forms - for example, the organization of labour which produces exchange-value (ie. wage labour) against that which produces 'social use-value' (ie. labour in kind).

Turning to commodity production, the process of producing exchange-value is abstracted by Marx via the concept of abstract labour. In the words of Colletti (1972:78), abstract labour is "what is equal and common to all concrete human labouring activities (carpentry, weaving, spinning, etc.) when their activities are considered apart from the real objects (or use-values) to which they are applied and in terms of which they are diversified". It is thus, an emphatically historical category. Marx exemplifies:

"When the useful character of the labour products vanishes, the useful character of the labour embodied in them vanishes as well. The result is that the various concrete forms of that labour disappear too; ...they are one and all reduced to an identical kind of human labour, abstract human labour" (Marx, 1867: 6).

Thus;

"Tailoring and weaving, through qualitatively

different productive activities, are both a productive expenditure of the human brain, muscle, nerve, hand, etc., and in this sense are both human labour. They are merely two different ways of expanding human labour power" (Marx, 1867:13).

When one abstracts from the product of labour its material conditions of production one also abstracts the useful character of that labour, that is, the character which differentiates one form of labour from another. In other words, from the standpoint of commodity production, the various forms of useful, incommensurable, labour, are rendered commensurable, in that, they are regarded as "merely ... different ways of expanding human labour power". As Marx (1868:247) himself puts it, "the reasonable and the necessary in nature asserts itself only as a blindly working average".

Despite Marx's clear intent to separate categorically that aspect of labour which is general from that which is social and historical, the foregoing conception is apt to mislead: the category of abstract labour is interpreted in a manner which is of a piece with the category of useful labour (see Colletti, 1972:79; and Sayer, 1983:19). For example, in 'The Theory of Capitalist Development' (1942:30), Paul Sweezy argued that "abstract labour is abstract only in the quite straightforward sense that all special characteristics which differentiate one kind of

labour from another are ignored". Too true. However, he wrongly concludes: "abstract labour, in short, is, as Marx's usage quite clearly attests, equivalent to 'labour in general'" (Sweezy, 1942:30; and Colletti, 1972:79).

The major flaw in Sweezy's conception, is that he conflates that aspect of labour which is transhistorical with that which is historical. He is thus unable to explain why and how, in this form of society, human labour takes this particular abstract form? Indeed, he is forced to suggest that, under the social relations of capitalism, history has somehow reached the point whereby 'historical' abstractions exist in the empirical realities of its various social forms: "the reduction of all labour to a common denominator ... is not an arbitrary abstraction", but "rather, as Lukacs correctly observes, an abstraction 'which belongs to the essence of Capitalism'" (Sweezy, 1942:31; and Colletti, 1972:80). Abstract labour is thus reduced to what Colletti (1972:80) has called a "mental generalization": that is, a purely "physiological" construct which has no empirical reality independent of the concept of useful labour (Colletti, 1972:80-81; see also Rubin, 1928:132 and Sayer, 1983:19).

With respect to capitalist state formation, this dehistoricization of the category of abstract labour is especially problematic, in that it forecloses *a priori* the positing of two decisive questions which require answering

if we are to grasp the inner-connection between the social relations of capitalist production and their politico-juridical manifestation. In the words of Colletti (1972:82), these questions are:

1. "how [is] this abstraction of labour ... produced";
and
2. "what it really means"?

Taking the former first, all social production involves a division of labour which is, in turn, determined by the articulation of a definite ensemble of social relations (see Marx, 1857:83-85; and 1867:50-54). Indeed, for Marx (1857:84), "production by an isolated individual outside society ... is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other". Importantly however, this is not to suggest that all historical products of human labour take the form of a commodity. To use Marx's (1867:50-51) own example, the forms of dependence which characterized Medieval Europe for instance, were directly social, in so far as useful labour (the activity of labour required for the production of use value) and socially necessary labour (the specific activity of labour required for the production of a socially necessary use value) were embodied in one and the same act. Marx exemplifies:

"In Europe during the Middle Ages ... it is not

necessary that labour and the products of labour should assume fantastic shapes differing from their real ones. They enter into the social mechanism as services in kind and payments in kind. The natural form of labour, its particular form, is here the immediate social form of labour" (Marx, 1867:51).

and later, he explains:

"Forced labour can [of course] be measured by time, just as easily as commodity-producing labour; but the serf knows that what he is expending in the service of his lord is a definite quantity of his own labour" (Marx, 1867:51).

In other words, the social relations which characterized feudal production appeared in their concrete form, as direct social relations between persons and did not take the form of appearance of social relations between things: "the tithe which must be handed over to the priest is a more tangible reality than his reverence's blessing" (Marx, 1867:51). This is in direct contrast to what happens in a social formation organized upon the basis of commodity production, and where abstract labour is the immediate social form of labour. Here labour is not directly performed in accordance with the demands of a tangible form of personal dependence. That is to say, the various forms of personal dependence confront the commodity producing

individual "as a mere means toward his private purposes, as external necessity" (Marx, 1858:84). As Marx (1867:46) himself puts it, "useful objects... become commodities because they are the products of the labour of individuals or groups of individuals working independently of one another". Accordingly, the labour of a single individual does not necessarily correspond to the total amount of labour expended in production. Rather, it is the "sum total of the labour of all these private individuals" which "makes up the aggregate of social labour" (Marx, 1867:46). Thus, to reiterate an earlier formulation, it is precisely in this sense that the totality of commodity production takes the form of appearance of an 'economic system', devoid of any conscious form of social regulation (Marx, 1868:247). This is clearly brought out by Marx in the following passage:

"On the one hand labour must, as ... useful labour, satisfy a social demand ... On the other hand labour can only satisfy the manifold wants of the producers who perform it, in so far as each particular kind of individual or private useful labour is exchangeable for every other particular kind ... Such an equalisation of utterly different kinds of labour can only be achieved by ... reducing them to terms of that which they all share as expenditures of human labour power - abstract human labour" (Marx, 1867:47).

Now, from the foregoing quote Marx's essential thesis should be abundantly clear. Under the social relations of commodity production, where one incommensurable item is exchanged for another incommensurable item, the products of labour must take the form of appearance of comparatively commensurable items. In short, an abstract measure is required, in so far as the various forms of useful labour expended in production, must take the form of appearance of "homogeneous human labour" (Marx, 1867:47) - i.e. a quantity of money representing abstract labour time: "along with the useful qualities of the products themselves", Marx writes, "we put out of sight both the useful character of the various kinds of labour embodied in them and the concrete forms of that labour; there is nothing left but what is common to them all ... human labour in the abstract" (Marx, 1867:16; see also Colletti, 1972:83). Thus, far from being a mere "mental generalization", abstract labour is nothing other than the form which commodity producing individuals actually experience surplus value. This concretization of value in the daily act of exchange, is best exemplified by Marx in 'Capital Volume One':

"when ... human beings bring their labour products into relation with one another as values, it is not because they recognise that they are no more than the material wrappings for this or that amount of homogeneous labour. On the contrary, exchanging labour

products of different kinds one for another, they equate the values of the exchanged products; and in doing so they equate the different kinds of labour expended in production, treating them as homogeneous labour. They do not know their doing this, but they do it" (Marx, 1867:47).

Abstract labour is, therefore, "as much a social product as language" (Marx, 1897:47). Indeed, to view it as otherwise - as "equivalent to 'labour in general'" - is to comprehend social labour, as deriving from its material attributes alone, and hence neglect that aspect of it which stamps it as an organic product of this particular form of society. Put otherwise, in abstracting from concrete labour the sociality of their labour, the producers simultaneously abstract that aspect of their labour which is subjective, the moment which differentiates their various activities (Colletti, 1972:83).

This brings us to the second question; what it really means? By beginning with the commodity in its finished form, that is, at the point in which it is exchanged, those features which it requires before it can be exchanged (i.e. a commensurable exchange value) have, according to Marx (1867:49), "already acquired the fixity of the natural forms of social life". It acquires this "immutable" form of appearance precisely because the finished product is the "embodiment of abstract human labour", that is, human

labour as separate from real empirical individuals, in which all trace of the "purpose, mode of operation, substance, means and results" (Marx, 1867:13) of concrete useful labour disappears. Hence, at the point of exchange, the social character of private or individual labour is equated (i.e. reduced) with all that remains, namely abstract labour time: "the labour-time expressed in exchange value", Marx writes, "is the labour-time of an individual ... It is the labour time of an individual, his labour-time, but only as labour-time common to all; consequently it is quite immaterial whose labour-time it is" (Marx, in Colletti, 1972:83-84). Put otherwise, commodities are values, in so far as the various forms of individual (and socially useful) labour appear as the manifestation of "undifferentiated human labour", and are hence regarded as separate from that aspect of the commodity which incurs exchange value. The latter being nothing more than the social expression of labour which has been applied to a thing, and cannot therefore contain the useful aspect of that labour (Marx, 1867:57). As Colletti (1972:83) puts it, "abstract labour, in short, is alienated labour"; in it that aspect of labour which is creative and sensory becomes reified and is seen to reside in the products themselves. Consequently, the worker appears as nothing more than an abstract quantity of reified labour. Thus, as Marx (1867:54) himself concludes, "the life process of society ... will not lose its veil of mystery until it becomes a process carried on by a free association

of producers, under their conscious and purposive control".

To conclude, abstract labour is manifested in the form of value particular to commodity production: when individuals exchange the products of their labour, the sociality of their labour disappears, and hence nothing is left but value as the materialization of a certain amount of abstract labour time. In Marx's (1867:49) own words, "it is precisely in this absurd form that the relation between their own private labour and the collective labour of society disclose itself to them", that is, as "material relations between persons and social relations between things".

For Marx, this fetishism reaches its "zenith", or "apotheosis", with the full development of the capitalist mode of production, and more specifically, in the form of money particular to it. In 'Capital Volume One', Marx exemplifies:

"it was only the common expression of all commodities in money which led to their being recognised as 'values'. But this finished form of the world of commodities, this money form, is the very thing which veils instead of disclosing the social character of private or individual labour, and therewith hides the social relations between producers" (Marx, 1867:59).

To summarize: for the commodity producers, the product of their labour has no immediate use value. Rather, its use value is that it has exchange value, and is consequently a means of exchange: "their exchange", Marx writes, "brings them into relation with one another as values, and realises them as values" (Marx, 1867:60). Commodities, therefore, must be realized as values, before they can acquire a use value. However, if Marx is correct, and the products of human labour are by nature incommensurable, then the crystallization of this form of exchange not only requires that the products of labour be placed in a proportionate ratio which allows their "comparative commensuration", but also that they be reduced to their most general (transhistorical) form - namely, that which is given in the magnitude of their value: "no commodity is a general equivalent, the result being that commodities have no form under which they can be equated as values and have the magnitude of their values compared" (Marx, 1867:61). The 'form of money', therefore, is not manifested in its durability or its utility, these being a generic feature of exchange mediums 'in general'. Rather, in this form of society, the function of money is to accord to value an independent expression: "a social relation, a definite relation between individuals appears as a metal, a stone, as a purely physical, external thing which can be found, as such, in nature" (Marx, 1858:239). In sum, money is the expression of a definite social relation which is not immediately identified within it.

We have already discussed in depth the economic expression of this process of abstraction and I do not intend to pursue this subject further. However, what Marx only touches upon is that in order to exchange one commodity for another, the various parties involved must recognize each other as private owners (see Marx, 1867:59). What I now want to suggest is that the abstraction of labour does not merely articulate at the immediate level of production and exchange. Rather, in a broader sense, it is also manifested in the mutual recognition of private property, and in the voluntary act of contract. Put otherwise, and leaving aside the contentious term 'law', I want to suggest that the 'law of value' requires for its full development, in the form of surplus value, the rule of law. In other words, the 'law of value' and the rule of law are premises on each others existence (see Marx, 1867:59).

ii. Abstract labour and the isolated individual.

To this point it has been established that the generalized form of value, as the material expression of undifferentiated human labour, not only "mirrors" what Rubin (1928:44) termed "physiologically equal labour", but also acts as a form of material socialization, in which the

social character of labour is reified and is seen to reside in the labour products themselves: "they [the producers] continue to believe without qualification that the specifically social character of mutually independent acts of individual or private labour consists in their general likeness as human labour, and assumed in the labour product the characteristic form of value" (Marx, 1867:48). The articulation of this relationship is expressed through the mechanisms of exchange, as the concrete form of dependence, by price, as the indicator of this relationship, and by money, as the universal symbol which accords to value an independent expression. In sum, value is a social relation between commodity producing individuals, which assumes two different, opposing forms: a social relation between things and a material relation between persons.

Importantly, for Marx the necessity of value to assume two distinct phenomenal forms, is not perpetuated by a simple misappropriation of 'reality', but is intrinsic to the 'reality' of commodity production itself. For example, in a polemic against socialist, Thomas Hodgskin, Marx (1863) states:

"Hodgskin says that the effects of a certain social form of labour are ascribed to objects, to the products of labour; the relationship itself is imagined to exist in material form ... Hodgskin regards this as a pure subjective illusion which

conceals the deceit and the interests of the exploiting classes. He does not see that the way of looking at things arises out of the relationship itself; the latter is not an expression of the former, but vice versa" (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:42).

This, then, is the crux of both Marx's theories of value and of fetishism (see Colletti, 1972:88-89). Put simply, the concept of value is not the rate of profit, nor is it the law of the tendential fall in the rate of profit. It is the reified form of social labour, in which the social character of labour appears as nothing more than an abstract quantity of reified labour (see Marx, 1867:53). "Thus", as Marx (1867:45) himself concludes, "the mystery of the commodity form is simply this, that it mirrors for men the social character of their own labour, mirrors it as an objective character attaching to the labour products themselves, mirrors it as a social natural property of these things".

We have seen that the realization of value, as a definite expression of a social relation between things, requires that the owners of commodities enter into an exchange relation as mutually independent beings whose wills reside in the objects of exchange (Marx, 1867:59): "[the] same division of labour that turns [people] into private producers also frees the social process of production ... from all dependence on the wills of those

producers" (Marx, 1867:61). However, as Marx (1867:59) was well aware, "commodities cannot make their own way into the market" (Marx, 1867:59). If all products of labour are things, and as such are "passive in man's hands", then the act of commodity exchange, and hence the realization of value, is predicated by an exchange relation between acting subjects. I want to suggest that for Marx this material relation between persons, which "secures outward expression in a contract" (Marx, 1867:59), represents the politico-juridical expression of reified human labour, and that it is precisely here that we find the basis for offering some suggestions as to how a theory of state formation may be developed (see Fine, 1984:136-137).

Under the social relations of commodity production, the materialization of exchange value is structured by the comparative commensuration of unequal labour products. Corresponding to this structure is a specific point of reference which makes this equalization possible. This being that individual owners "confront one another as mutually independent persons" (Marx, 1867:63). Writing on the historicity of exchange value, Marx elaborates:

"Objects in and by themselves exist apart from man, and are therefore alienable by him. If this alienation is reciprocal, all that is requisite is that human beings shall tacitly confront one another as individual owners of such alienable objects, and shall

thus confront one another as mutually independent persons" (Marx, 1867:63).

For the individual the will to enter into an exchange relation is not motivated by a difference in 'needs'. This is to say, even if this difference constitutes the initial reason for action, exchange, as a means to satisfy different needs, is a feature common to all forms of exchange, and is therefore independent of any one particular form - or, put another way, is common to all forms of exchange. What is decisive, in the sense that it distinguishes the process of producing exchange value from all antecedent forms of exchange, is that the parties involved take on an identical social and formal quality. Paraphrasing Marx (1867:59), this quality is that the owners of commodities have a social will which requires that they act in a manner that neither "appropriates the commodity of the other, nor parts with his own, except by means of an act performed with mutual consent". Put simply, they must mutually recognize one another as the owners of private property. The relations of property, therefore, appear not as a social relationship, but as "the absolute right of appropriation which man has over all things" (Hegel, in Marx, 1865:752).

As noted by Fine (1984:10-14), it is in this domain of apparent freedom of the subject of exchange, in both its economic and politico-juridical expression, that we find

the origins of not only political economy and classical jurisprudence, but also more contemporary social and political theories based on categories of 'social action'. With respect to the sociology of development, examples include David McClelland's (1970) categories of 'achievement motivation' and Bert Hoselitz's (1963) 'ideal-typical index' of 'pattern variables'. What McClelland and Hoselitz share with their classical ideologues is that their theoretical categories are engendered via the same process of abstraction which characterize such legal categories as 'individual freedom' and 'equality'. That is, particular forms of bourgeois social life are grasped in their abstract (ideal) form as a natural relation between individuals and things, which have been hitherto 'corrupted' in all antecedent forms of social life. In the words of Fine (1984:103), it seems, "in other words, as though private property [or, for that matter, achievement motivation, universalism, or entrepreneurialism] was a starting point for analysis, even though its realization only came at the end of history, with what was seen as the lifting of constraints upon it". This tendency to reduce such complex issues as capitalist development to a few behavioural principles is extraordinarily naive, in that it takes a quite particular notion of capitalistic behaviour (i.e. entrepreneurialism) and understands nothing of the social processes which have given rise to it.

In contrast, by beginning like Marx did, with a determinate form of society, and more precisely its "simplest social form", we have seen that, like the products of their labour, the producers also appear as a double. In their natural form - as useful labour - they are the purposive (sensory) creators of useful things, and in their abstract form - as abstract labour - they are the mere expenditure of human labour power. Furthermore, our analysis of abstract labour shows that for Marx it is "the autonomous mode of presentation of the value contained in the commodity" (Marx, 1880:198), the realization of which requires that commodity be brought into relation with a general equivalent - i.e. an abstract measure.

Paraphrasing Fine (1984:137), this relationship is presented as a double, when the individual is no longer able to fulfil her or his needs as a basic right, and hence, translate their rights back into the fulfilment of their needs. As soon as the individual takes the form of appearance of the legal subject - that is, when "the various forms of social connectedness confront the individual as [her or his] ... external necessity" (Marx, 1858:84) - the mutual relations between individuals are transubstantiated into material relations between mutually independent, and identical units - i.e. as owners of things. If Marx is correct, and this "particular legal relation" finds expression in the form of contract, which is in turn a "voluntary relation", then clearly this

process of transubstantiation presupposes restraint: "[the producers] must reciprocally recognise one another as private owners" (Marx, 1867:59). Indeed, if the category of contract, as a joint act of mutual recognition, is to be viewed as the fundamental requisite for the rule of law, then clearly it is a form of reified intercourse which could not articulate without restraint. As Marx (1867:59) himself put it, the producers "must behave in such a way that neither appropriates the commodity of the other, nor parts with his own, except by means of an act performed by mutual consent". Furthermore, what emerges from this relationship is by no means a simple relation involving the direct suppression of one party by another, or indeed, a subjective relation concealing the interests of a particular class. Rather, in its concrete form it is a voluntary relation based on mutual obligation.

Now, according to Marx (1867:62), "money crystallises as a necessary product of exchange". He explains:

"The historical broadening and deepening of exchange develops the contrast between use-value and value, a contrast already latent in the very nature of commodities. The necessity for giving an external expression to this contrast, for the purposes of commercial intercourse, promotes the establishment of an independent form of commodity value" (Marx, 1867 :62).

The same, I would suggest, can be said for the politico-juridical expression of the same ensemble of productive relations. With the broadening of this exchange relation, and hence the politico-juridical expression of it, the rules by which it is conducted must be made more rational and general. Just as commercial intercourse may promote the independent expression of value, contractual relations "assume the independent form of a third party" (Fine, 1984:137), thus creating the conditions whereby exchange and its law of "comparative commensuration" - between commodities, on the one hand, and between commodity owners, on the other - operates. Importantly, this is not to suggest that the various politico-juridical forms merely reflect the economic expression of the social relations of capitalist production. Nor does it in any way presuppose that contract will inevitably develop into law. After all, as Marx was well aware, money does not necessarily develop into capital. The point is, to paraphrase Fine (1984:137), that just as money, interest and profit are appropriate phenomenal forms of value, so it is with the legal contract and the form of law, that is, both legal relations articulate an internal logic which is capable of according to the relations of private property an independent expression as something other than themselves.

Thus, contract and law are not, from the first, the state, any more the means of domination 'in general' are.

Rather, they have to be transformed into the forms of state. However, dispute this Marxist theories of law and the state tend to regard the emergence of the state as a mere extension of law. As a result, they ignore that there exists a whole epoch of political accumulation which, like the period of 'primary accumulation' analyzed by Marx (1878:790-847), is not the outcome of capitalist state formation, but is the point of departure for it. In contrast to such views, the above argument suggests that the move from contract to law and from law to the state is similar to the transition from money to capital, in that, a lower, simpler, form of social life is transformed into one that is higher and more complex (Fine, 1985:146).

iii. The circulation of money and commodities: from law to state.

For Marx, the specific moment which accords to the social forms of money and of capital their socio-historical character, did not drop from the sky, nor can it be found in nature. Rather, in the words of Fine (1984:146), "money is a developed form of value and capital is a developed form of money". They are, therefore, "as much a social product as language" (Marx, 1867:47), and as such, capital is the realization of a quality which is implicitly contained within the form of money, yet is distinct from it. In the 'Grundrisse', Marx exemplifies:

"Money as capital is an aspect of money which goes beyond its simple character as money. It can be regarded as a higher realization; as it can be said that man is a developed ape. However, in this way the lower form is posited as the primary subject, over the higher" (Marx, 1858:250-251).

As soon as money acquires a form of appearance proper, that of a determinant of exchange value, it not only becomes independent of the sphere of circulation, but it also capable of maintaining and developing itself. In this sense, the social form of money is no longer money, rather it is the first phenomenal form of capital, in that, it "is posited as the primary subject, over the higher". This is not to suggest that money disappears. Quite the contrary, the 'functionality' of money as money is persevered, in that, the inner-changes which money as capital is required to perform alters nothing of its surface form. It remains, in other words, that the form in which money as money and money as capital is actually confronted, may in each case, be identical: "if we ignore the material substance of the circulation of commodities", Marx writes, " ... we see that its final product is money. This final product of the circulation of commodities is the first phenomenal form of capital" (Marx, 1867:131). And again, in the 'Grundrisse', he writes:

"As soon as money is posited as an exchange value which not only becomes independent of circulation, but which also maintains itself through it, then it is no longer money ... but is capital. That money is the first form in exchange value proceeds to the character of capital, and that, hence, the first form in which capital appears is confused with capital itself, or is regarded as the sole adequate form of capital" (Marx, 1858:259).

With respect to developing an appropriate framework for the study of modern state formation, the profound significance of the foregoing conception is this. If money is the first phenomenal form of capital, and if the primary distinction between them is nothing more than a difference in their respective forms of circulation, then at the level of appearances, the circulation of money as capital does not necessarily assume a phenomenal form different from those "antediluvian" forms of mercantile or usurer capitalism. The latter being generic forms of capital, in that, they require "no other conditions for [their] ... existence" than "those necessary for the simple circulation of commodities and money" (Marx, 1865:442). In Volume One of 'Capital', Marx exemplifies:

"Buying in order to sell, or, to express the matter more fully, buying in order to sell at a higher price, M-C-M [or Money-Commodity-Money], would seem, of

course, to be the only one form of capital, namely mercantile capital, ... [for] industrial capital, too, is money, which transforms itself into commodities, and then, by sale of these commodities, transforms itself back into more money than before..." (Marx, 1867: 141).

The point to be emphasized here, is that the formula M-C-M, the actual social form of mercantile capital, is, in Marx's (1867:141) own words, "the general formula of capital, as it makes its appearance within the sphere of circulation". However, capital in this transhistorical sense, predates the capitalist mode of production, and "is in fact the oldest historical mode in which capital has an independent existence" (Marx, 1865:442). Thus, the specific moment which accords to money-capital its socio-historical character - its essential difference - must, as Marx (1867:141) himself puts it, "take place somewhere between the buying and the selling, outside the sphere of circulation, [and] do[es] not affect the form of this movement". The essential difference, in other words, is not manifested in the sphere of circulation and hence may not be apparent at the surface level of society.

At this stage, to say more about the profound significance of this conception would be to anticipate the latter part of this section. At this point, I wish to state, that the foregoing argument is paradigmatic, and

applies to all forms of development in which the two extremes are mediated through the same identical surface form. Just as the circulation of mercantile capital and commodity producing capital share identical extremes, so it is with law and its apotheosis, the state. In this case, the two extremes in this process are mediated through the rights of freedom, equality and equivalence in exchange. Their form of appearance, in other words, is identical. The corollary of this organic unity between the transformation of money to capital and from law to state, is that the logic behind Marx's understanding of the money-capital relationship provides the key to establishing the essential difference between the legal form and the state form. Let us, then, explore this relationship.

When the only precondition required for the circulation of commodities, is given in the commodities use value, then the sole function of money is to act as the sanctioning instance: "the simplest form of the circulation of commodities is ... the transformation of a commodity into money, and the retransformation of money into a commodity; selling in order to buy" (Marx, 1867:131-132). Here, circulation is represented by the formula C-M-C: "the transformation of commodities into money, selling, and the transformation of money into commodities, buying" (Marx, 1865:443; and, 1867:134). For Marx, this is characteristic of most exchanges in non-capitalist social formations. Whether this is an accurate characterization is another

question and one that is outside the scope of this paper. For our purposes, the critical point is this. If the desire to consume the objectification of another persons useful labour is the ultimate reason for entering into an exchange relation, then the necessary requisite for exchange is already given in the commodity form itself, that is, its natural form, in a word, its use value (see Marx, 1867:134; and 1865:442-443). Thus, as the sanctioning instance, money is merely called upon to mediate the movement between the two extremes, and hence, is confined to the sphere of circulation. There is, in other words, no "principle of self-renewal". As Marx (1858:254) himself puts it, "commodities constantly have to be thrown into it from the outside, like fuel into a fire. Otherwise it flickers out in indifference".

Now, viewed from the standpoint of the legal subject, the circuit, C-M-C, requires an association between acting subjects whose labour has been expended in a form that is useful to others. In other words, the simple circulation of commodities corresponds to the move from private owner, to a 'legal contract', or, more appropriately, a voluntary relation of will (whatever form that may take), to private owner (Fine, 1984:149; see also Marx, 1867:59-60). As mentioned, the ultimate aim of exchange is the private consumption of use values. The actual act, therefore, has both a starting and a finishing point, it is "transitory". Thus, following the same line of reasoning, the circulation

of law, like money, is at this stage confined to the sphere of circulation in that its sole function is to mediate the transfer of use values: "if one property owner", Fine writes, "forms a contract with another, then the legal moment disappears as soon as the contract is fulfilled and the parties to it step outside this relation and turn to the direct satisfaction of their respective needs" (Fine, 1984:149). This point is vital, for it implies that law, like money, has very definite limits placed upon its potential for further development: when an exchange agreement serves merely to facilitate the recognition of the right of ownership, and hence, bring about the exchange of this right, then, clearly it vanishes with the final act of the movement, that is, the disposal of the commodity. As we shall see, the state, like capital, has no such limits.

Returning to an earlier point, for Marx, the circulation of merchant and/or commercial capital, in the form of money->commodities->money (M-C-M), is both distinct from, and compatible with, the circuit C-M-C. With respect to the circulation of law, and later, its subsumption under the state, it is essential that we grasp the logic which underpins this observation. Let us firstly consider what the two forms have in common.

Each circuit, C-M-C and M-C-M, can be analyzed from the standpoint of what Marx (1867:133) calls their "antithetical phases". These are, C-M, sale, and, M-C,

purchase. Thus, when we consider each phase it is clear that on the one hand, the two extremes (i.e. C->C; and M->M) are in both cases identical; and hence, the subjects of exchange must "confront one another wearing the same economic masks": that is, one of the exchanging parties is a buyer, another is a seller, while a third, the merchant, performs both the acts of buying and selling. Thus, the final act of exchange or, as Marx puts it, the "aggregate" of the "two antithetical phases", is, in each case, the outcome of the circulation process itself - the two acts of purchase and sale.

According to Marx (1867:133), what distinguishes the circuit, C-M-C, from the circuit, M-C-M, is "the inverted order of the succession of the two phases". In other words, the circuit C-M-C begins with an object which is useful to someone other than the owner, and ends with an object that has a use-value. The commodity's 'exchange value' is thus an expression of something already given to it.

In contrast to the simple exchange of commodities, the mode of exchange which underpins commercial capital (the simple exchange of money and commodities), is organized on the basis that both the first and final acts in the exchange relation correspond to a definite value form: that is, money is exchanged for a commodity, which is not consumed, or indeed, desired, but is retransformed into (more) money. Consequently, "the concept of value", Marx

writes, "is involved here in so far as the various commodities are all values and therefore money" (Marx, 1865:447). This is in direct contradistinction to the circuit C-M-C, in so far as here (M-C-M) the exchange of use values is clearly not the ultimate purpose. Rather, as Marx (1867:135) himself puts it, the "leading motive, the purpose which actuates it [exchange], is... exchange value". In 'Capital Volume Three', he exemplifies:

"Its [merchant capital] form is always M-C-M; money, the independent form of exchange value, is the starting point, and the increase of exchange value the independent purpose. Commodity exchange itself ... becomes simply a means of increasing wealth, and not just wealth, but wealth in its general social form as exchange value" (Marx, 1865:443).

The circuit M-C-M, is not, in other words, dependent on a "qualitative difference", which is given in the commodity form itself - that is, its use-value. Rather, when the two extremes are both money, the only way that they can be distinguished is by the difference in their respective magnitudes, that is, a commodity is purchased for one ounce of gold with the aim of selling it for two ounces of gold. Importantly however, the change in magnitude produced by this movement - and it is a movement - is yet to acquire the characteristics required for commodity producing surplus value. Indeed, for Marx (1867:136-137) it

represents a particular, parasitic form, of surplus value.

He writes:

"This increment ... is what I call surplus value. The value originally advanced ... not only remains intact while in circulation, but in the course of circulation [it] undergoes a change in the magnitude of its value, adding to itself a surplus value, or expanding itself. It is this movement that converts it into capital" (Marx, 1867:136).

Here, then, we have the essential difference between the circuits C-M-C and M-C-M. With the first, the product of one kind of useful labour replaces that of another kind. The actual movement of the labour product presupposes an agreement that the extremes are of equal value, in so far as they embody the same amount of social labour - i.e. a quantity of wheat is deemed to be equivalent to so many items of clothing. Under this exchange relation, clearly no more value is withdrawn from circulation than what is initially put into it. As Marx (1867:143-144) himself puts it, "exchange [is] nothing but a metamorphosis, a mere change in the form of the commodity". Consequently, no surplus value is created, which, in turn, renders the accumulation of capital a logical impossibility. With the second (M-C-M), however, exchange is an end in itself. The commodity's value, in other words, is not set before it enters into the sphere of circulation, in so far as the

conditions required for a change in the magnitude of value is derived from, and is dependent on, the movement itself.

Thus far, the foregoing analysis of the circulation of money and commodities, in the form of C-M-C and M-C-M, has attempted to show why, and how, Marx came to regard commercial capital as "the first independent mode of existence of capital in general" (Marx, 1865:455). To summarize: the circuit M-C-M is initiated via the movement of a 'physical thing' (i.e. gold, as a physical property of money), which ultimately comes back in the same 'physical' form (i.e. gold) (Marx, 1867:135). At first glance it would thus appear as a tautology, in that, the form in which the two extremes manifest themselves are identical. However, to have the same, or equivalent, thing returned is not the "leading motive, the purpose which actuates" this movement. Rather, money is advanced with the expectation of receiving a greater return, the magnitude, of which, is determined by an abstract measure (i.e. a change in the weight of gold representing the movement of the commodity). In short, "the value originally advanced ... adds to itself a surplus value or expands itself" (Marx, 1867:136). "It is this movement", Marx (1867:136) adds, "that converts it into capital".

Clearly, the production of this particular, generic, form of capital is dependent on the movement of money and commodities between two spheres of production. Yet, at the

same time, it acquires, according to Marx (1865:455), a degree of "independence vis-a'-vis its extremes, and these are the exchanging producers themselves". In other words this independence, expressed in the form of money, does not arise from the exchange relation between the producers. Rather, it is through the movements of "a third party", the merchant who, by comparing money and prices so as to appropriate the difference, establishes the principle of equivalence in exchange (Marx, 1867: 447). Thus, if commercial capital is the prevailing form of capital, then it is only through trade that the product of labour can realize itself as value. Furthermore, it is for precisely this reason that commercial wealth, according to Marx (1865:445), can be regarded as "synonymous with the non-subjection of production to capital": that is, capable of expanding on the basis of a mode of production that is independent of it, and where production remains oriented toward the production of use value (see Marx, 1865:445).

Viewed juridically, it is obvious that this particular form of surplus value, must find an adequate expression on the subjective side, an expression which makes possible the association between money, as the "general mode of existence" of capital, and the commodity, as its "particular mode of existence". Thus, if we fix our attention on the forms of appearance which capital assumes within this sphere of circulation, we see that this association is presented as a double: "'Capital is money';

and 'Capital is commodities'" (Mill, J, in Marx, 1867:139). However, paraphrasing Marx (1858:239), to be capital is to be no more a "natural attribute" of money, than it is for money to be a "natural attribute of gold and silver". Thus, the phenomenal expression of 'Capital as money' and 'Capital as commodities', does not arise from nature, but from the totality of the exchange relations between commodity owners themselves, and is hence the result of a social process. The corollary of which is, that the first and final act of the exchange relation presupposes the articulation of a definite legal order. For example, we have noted that the act of exchanging a physical thing (i.e. gold) for a commodity, with the aim of retransforming the latter into the very thing which initiated the movement, is both absurd, and without purpose, unless, of course, the difference between the two extremes can be socially verified/reified as differing in value. As Fine (1984:149) puts it, "both the beginning and end of this process [i.e. M-C-M] require the existence of law; for money - unlike objects of direct need - retains its function as money only in the context of a definite legal order which guarantees the functioning of a particular commodity as money", that is, legal tender.

The fixing of abstract measures, together with ensuring the 'peaceful' transformation of the labour product into a commodity (i.e. the 'pacification' of distant peoples) indicates an organic unity between the

implementation of the 'law' of equivalence in exchange and the implementation of the rule of law (as it first appears in the sphere of circulation). Indeed, the existence of formal weights and measures, and later, the full money form, presupposes the articulation of this exchange nexus (see, Fine, 1984:149).

Thus, it can be said that the first typifying feature of political accumulation, its normative standardization, is synonymous with the extension of simple commodity exchange. Importantly, this does not mean that one is a necessary pre-condition of the other. The two forms may develop in concert, or a long historical process may separate their formation. The point is, that the establishment of a 'normative form' of legal authority is the most appropriate means to permit the comparative commensuration of completely incommensurable use values.

Despite this inner-connection between the articulation of commercial capital and the articulation of a normative form of law, their dependence on the sphere of circulation means the existence of the latter, like the former, is a precarious one (Fine, 1984:150). For Marx, one of the essential conditions for the emergence of a centralized state apparatus, is the production of surplus value over and above the immediate needs of the exchanging parties. However, if the production of surplus value remains dependent on the circulation process and as a result,

wealth is determined by the catalytic actions of the merchant, then, the legal authority remains "dependent on a voluntary transfer of surplus product from the producers to the legal authority" (Fine, 1984:150). Furthermore, the actual content of law is purely 'economic', in the sense that its sphere of influence is dictated by the movement of commodities and money, and the realization of surplus value. This means that, once the exchange relation between the parties is concluded, thereby allowing them to withdraw from the circulation process, the parties involved also move beyond the reach of law.

Now, to return to an earlier point, the role of commercial capital, in the hands of the merchant, is simply to mediate the exchange of commodities between two extremes, that is, the producers themselves. Consequently, it is independent of production, and hence it can not master the conditions of production it does not create. The historical expansion of commercial capital is thus an insufficient basis from which to explain the transition from one mode of production to another. As Marx (1865:445) himself puts it, "the independent development of commercial capital stands in inverse proportion to the general economic development of society" (Marx, 1865:445). Later, he explains:

"how far it [commercial capital] leads to the dissolution of the old mode of production depends

first and foremost on the solidity and articulation of this mode of production itself. And what comes out of this process of dissolution, i.e. what new mode of production arises ... does not depend on trade, but rather on the character of the old mode of production itself" (Marx, 1865:449).

The problem of how, in developing social formations, the 'persistence' of 'peasant' or petty-commodity forms of production have influenced the actual form capitalist production assumes within these societies, has been the subject of much debate within Marxist development theory. However, having earlier outlined my position on this question, I do not intend to pursue it any further. Rather, for our current purposes, the critical issue is this: for Marx there is no basis for assuming a linear relationship between the existence of merchant capital and the historical emergence of capitalist production proper.

If law is not, from the first, the state, but has to be transformed into it, then it follows, that the state is no more the mere sum total of all laws, than capital is the sum total of the material and produced means of production; they are both definite social relations of production corresponding to a definite form society. Furthermore, the transformation, or the subordination of money and commodities to capital can only take a place under definite historical conditions, which may or may not be present (see

Marx, 1876:791-793). This applies with equal force to the transformation from law to state. In the words of Fine (1984: 149), "as soon ... as law not only becomes independent of property owners themselves but maintains and develops itself through the process of circulation, then it no longer remains law but becomes state".

Chapter 6:

"Liberty, Equality, Property, and Jeremy Bentham": Political Privatization and the Capitalist State Form.

i. Capital and the State

Before going any further the limits of this analysis should again be reiterated. At this level of theoretical enquiry, an analysis of the social forms of commodity production can only identify "the limits of the logically possible", while "history reveals the selection of phenomena from the logically possible which have been actualized" (Kitching, 1987:43; see also Sayer, 1987:131-132). Thus, questions pertaining to the "possibility or impossibility" of the forms of money, capital, law and the state, requires an investigation of the actually existing social relations of production, which ultimately consists "of the actions of real, living, individuals" (Sayer, 1987:132; see also Kitching, 1987:43; and Aguilar, 1987:45,47). As Marx (1858:461) himself was well aware, such an analysis is "a work in its own right", and one which has proved to be beyond the remit of this thesis. Nonetheless, this does not alter the fact that "the

subject, society, must always be kept in mind as the first presupposition" (Marx, 1858:102).

From the standpoint of commercial capital, capital can simply be defined as a sum of money invested with the expectation of a greater return, or capital = exchange value = profit (M-C-M+) (see Marx, 1858:251). Although a tautology, in the sense that capital presupposes itself in the form of profit, it is important to register that this is no illusion, but is in fact the generic form of capital, as it first appears in the circulation of commodities and money. Otherwise put, it is a transhistorical feature of capital 'in general', and is therefore common to all material forms of capital, irrespective of the mode of production underlying it. For example, with reference to merchant capital, Marx exemplifies:

"within the capitalist mode of production ... commercial capital appears simply as capital in a particular function. In all earlier modes of production, however, commercial capital rather appears as the function of capital par excellence" (Marx, 1865:444).

Thus, with particular reference to the manner in which Smith and Ricardo traced the history of capital, Marx concedes that "there is no problem at all in understanding why commercial capital appears as the historic form of

capital long before capital has subjected production to its sway" (Marx, 1865: 444). However, in a complementary passage from the 'Grundrisse', he warns:

"If it is said that capital is exchange value which produces profit ... then capital is presupposed in its explanation, for profit is a specific relation of capital to itself. Capital is not a simple relation, but a process, in whose various moments it is always capital" (Marx, 1858:258).

In sum, despite the existence of the general formula of capital in a variety of non-capitalist social formations, "the fundamental conditions requisite for capitalist production" are "by no means given with the simple circular of commodities and money". It is only when money and commodities are transformed into capital as mere moments in the totality of production that the material conditions necessary for commodity production exist. The decisive question which follows from this is predictable: what allows us to speak of a specifically capitalist mode of production, as opposed to various forms of capitalistic behaviour? Noting, that if capital, in its industrial, mercantile or moneylender form, assumes an identical form of appearance within the sphere of circulation - i.e. M-C-M - then, their essential difference must lie outside the immediate circulation of commodities and money, and hence, does not empirically impact on the movement of commodities

and money from the seller to the buyer and vis-a-vis (see Marx, 1867: 141). Their essential difference in other words, is not apparent at the surface level of society and must indeed stand in "inverse proportion" to its "general economic development" (Marx, 1865:445).

The point to be emphasized here concerns the "classical parable" of 'antithesis and contradiction': under the social relations of capitalist production proper, the relations of exchange stand in "inverse proportion" to their actual content. This means, that in their phenomenal form, the needs of the producers are seen to coincide with the product of the other parties' labour and hence the exchange relation between them appears to be co-ordinated by something contained within the commodities itself, namely its use-value. In actual fact, however, the commodities use-value (its natural form) and its exchange value (its social form), are two completely separate forms and are not convertible into one another. The motivation to enter into an exchange relation cannot, therefore, be given in the commodity form itself, but can only be co-ordinated through the comparative commensuration of the products of labour as values, and this requires the mediation of money.

The decisive functional change in the socio-economic structure of society, expressed not only in the transformation of money and commodities into capital, but also in the subordination of law under the state, occurs

with the real subsumption of the labour process to capital and of labour to wage labour - both presupposed by the separation of the direct producer from the means of subsistence. At this point we are, of course, not so much concerned with the actual transformation of money and commodities into capital, but with the subsumption of law by the state. However, if Marxism is to avoid the mistake of "placing itself on the standpoint of the finished phenomena" and take an *a priori* determination of 'the State's' supposed essence as its point of departure, then here to, we must begin our analysis from the forms developed in the previous section.

By endeavouring to add substance to this statement, I hope to demonstrate the true significance of Marx's (see 1846:97-80) supposedly 'problematic' observation that state and law are necessary forms of bourgeois rule. I argue that the problems associated with this observation, the reduction of the social relations to economic relations, are not Marx's. Rather, as Colletti (1972:105-106) notes, such problems arise when Marxists take for granted capitalism's logic of essence without acknowledging the historical specificity of its laws. As a result, the specificity of this relationship is abstracted "as a characteristic of all types of class domination", as opposed to an "organic product of this particular type society" (Colletti, 1972:106; see also Sayer, 1987:109).

To begin, the modern political state is not a mere extension or consolidation of law, nor is it an entirely distinct level. Rather, to use the words of Fine (1984:148), "the state realizes the quality which was only latent in law, that of its independent existence outside the sphere of circulation". We have seen, that value, as the active factor in the circulation of money and commodities (i.e. M-C-M) , requires above all, an independent existence, which can not only be identified at any one time, but can also be measured and socially verified at one and the same time. Only in money and the normative form of law is value able to assume this particular legal form of 'exchange value' (see Marx, 1867:139-140; and Fine, 1984:148-149). Importantly, however, at this particular stage in its development, it cannot be said that exchange value as such is fully realized with the mere circulation of money and commodities. As Marx (1858:254) puts it, commercial capital can "lead to the withdrawal and stockpiling of money, but as soon as money steps back into circulation, it dissolves itself in a series of exchange processes with commodities which are consumed, hence it is lost as soon as its purchasing power is exhausted". Capital on the other hand, is never without substance. In Marx's own words, it is "a process, in whose various moments it is always capital" (Marx, 1858:258).

With the simple exchange of commodities for money, or

money for commodities, exchange value is posited vis-a-vis their respective extremes, as commodities or money, never both. Indeed, as is the case with mercantile wealth, money and commodities articulate as direct antagonisms, in the sense that the realization of exchange value can only take place within the final act of the movement - i.e. purchase or sale. Hence, its realization coincides with the disappearance of money or commodities (Marx, 1858:260) - i.e. the commodity is consumed, whilst money is withdrawn and stockpiled. Only with capitalist production proper is exchange value posited as a double, as commodities and money. As a result, capital is capable of preserving its identity within the sphere of circulation, in so far as it is both commodities and money, and can be identified as such at any point in the moment. Hence, whether in the form of money or commodities, capital is continually posited as exchange value.

The self-perpetuation of capital as exchange value, independent of the sphere of circulation, is thus the first material condition for the transformation of money into capital. In the 'Grundrisse', Marx exemplifies:

"The first quality of capital is this: that exchange value deriving from circulation and presupposing circulation preserves itself within it and by means of it; does not lose itself by entering into it; that circulation is not the movement of its disappearance,

but rather the movement of its real self-positing as exchange value, its self-realization as exchange value" (Marx, 1858:259-260).

As we shall see, this applies with equal force to the circulation of law as state law.

In the state, the 'independent' and self-perpetuating potential latent in law, is 'concretized' with the structuration of a phenomenally separate "state apparatus" (Fine, 1984:148). Furthermore, it is via this semblance of independence that the modern political state carries within itself "the principle of self-renewal". Paraphrasing Marx this means, that the state is capable of preserving its identity within each of the various forms subsumed under it.

With respect to capital, this principle of self-perpetuation - its movement of reproduction - finds expression in the circulation of money and commodities. This is to say, that at any one time capital may or may not exist in these forms. For example, when commercial capital is the prevailing form of wealth, production is yet to absorb circulation as a mere moment in its overall movement of reproduction, but is related to it simply as its given precondition. Under commodity production however, the converse is true. Here, the productive process is completely based on circulation, with the latter being a

mere moment, a transitional phase, in the realization of the commodity and the replacement (reproduction) of the elements required to produce it - i.e. labour, raw materials and so on (Marx, 1865 :445-446). Thus, it is clear that earlier, or "derivative", forms of capital do not disappear with the emergence of capital as the prevailing social relation. Rather, they form the general categories of the surface appearance, the essential difference being, that they now function as but "one of the forms of capital in its movement of reproduction".

Returning to the state, I now want to suggest that with respect to the self-perpetuation of law as state law, the same logic applies. For example, although law is traditionally the first form taken by the state, once it has been subsumed under it, the means of administering law functions as only one of the multiple forms the state assumes in its movement of reproduction. As Fine puts it, "the state constantly changes its particular forms in accord with the new functions it is called upon to perform". Just as capital assumes the forms required for its reproduction - i.e. commodities and money (see Marx, 1858:261-262) - the state may assume the form of legislation, education, bureaucracy, welfare, and police. Moreover, in contrast to law, the state law does not pass from one form to another, thereby losing its identity within them. Rather, it exists at the same time in each of these forms (Fine, 1984:150). For example, when capital

assumes the form of the commodity, it does not become this or that commodity, but rather it becomes the "totality of commodities" (Marx, 1858:262). The same applies to the state. As Fine (1984:150) puts it, "it is the relation of the state's particular forms to the whole that determines the significance of each of its particular forms". Indeed, it is via this historical process of subordination to a centralized state apparatus, that the social forms of education, legislation and so on, acquire a social character which they would not otherwise have - i.e. their essential difference.

If we take for granted that aspect of the state which accords to it a specific social character - i.e. its independence from circulation - then, the historically specific properties of law as state law, will appear to correspond to law as such, and hence, to all modes of production in which some form of law/lore is in operation. The fundamental problem with this fetishism can be expressed in quite simple and concrete terms: an analysis of a particular social formation which takes for granted the appearance of a given social form assumes the very thing which needs to be explained.

In bourgeois society, state as law is an essential relation of capitalist production. As the expression of liberty, property and equality, it is the most appropriate form of bourgeois rule: "the individuals who rule in these

conditions", Marx writes, "... have to give their will a universal expression as the will of state as law" (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:109-110). However, if it is said that this is a property of law 'as such' - a property it acquires in its form as state law - then, this definite relation is dehistoricized as property characteristic of all historical forms of law. As both Fine (1984:150-151) and Colletti (1972:221-225) note, historical materialism's failure to distinguish between law as state law and law as such (law being but one example) has led to much confusion, precisely because the features of law as state law have been abstracted in their reified form as law as such. Consequently, there is a definite tendency to assign to law certain properties and functions, which, in the words of Fine (1984:151), "it acquires by virtue of its placement within the capitalist state as a whole". Since it is this placement which accords to law its social and historical character, to conceive it independently from it, is at one and the same time to "abstract away" that aspect which distinguishes it from all antecedent forms of law/lore.

It is against this dehistoricization of the capitalist state, or, more specifically, the political reformism it has given rise to, which Lenin took as his chief antagonist in 'State and Revolution' (1917). Behind Lenin's violent revolutionary rhetoric, which advocated the complete "destruction of the apparatus of state power", as opposed to merely taking "possession" of it (see Lenin, 1917:

388-391), was a subtle understanding of the nature of capitalist state power, which is often misunderstood. For example, the state, Lenin argued (1917:389), is "a power standing above society and alienating itself more and more from it". He adds: "[this power] consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons etc., at their command". Contrary to conventional interpretations, Lenin is not suggesting that state power, or indeed, the coercive aspect of it, resides in the sum total of armed people and prisons. Rather, it resides in the separation of a standing army from the conscious control of 'the people'. Thus, paraphrasing Colletti (1972:220), the destruction of state power was not for Lenin "the Ministry of the interior in flames", but was rather the destruction of "the diaphragm that separates the working class from power". In Lenin's (1917:421) own words, the destruction of the state "concern[s] the reorganisation of state, the purely political reorganization of society".

Just as the properties of "gold and silver" are not an attribute of money, and labour power is not an attribute of capital, the quantitative number of armed people, laws, and/or schools are not an attribute of the modern political state. Rather, what accords to them their political character, is the process whereby they are "rendered autonomous vis-a-vis living labour power" and are "personified" in the state. It is for this reason that Lenin saw the machinery of state as something which must be

destroyed, as opposed to simply transferred "from one hand to another", in that, bourgeois political power depends on this semblance of independence. The next question then, is to explore this semblance of independence in relation to the essential element within the antithesis, namely the social relations of private ownership of the means of production, and of labour. In doing this, it becomes possible to conclude the present thesis by offering a tentative basis for understanding why the capitalist state should show a definite tendency to assume this particular, i.e. independent, form.

Earlier, we saw how money is transformed into capital; how out of capital, surplus value is created and how, out of surplus value, an increase in the magnitude of capital is created. The whole process therefore, appears to turn on a teleological account of social development, out of which, according to Marx (1878: 790), "we can only make our way by the assumption that, as a prelude to capitalist accumulation, there has been a process of primary accumulation - an accumulation which is not the outcome of the capitalist method of production, but the starting-point thereof". Given the arguments presented in this section, the same must apply with respect to capitalist state formation. Thus, let us consider the moments in this transformation, and then, by retracing our steps, analyze the substantive character of the state.

When the fundamental function of law is to protect private ownership, it also protects:

1. the right of capital and wage labour equally, and hence the ownership of the latter as an exchangeable commodity; and
2. the right of capital to the aggregate product produced in the actual process of commodity production.

To protect private property in land, when that particular form of property corresponds to the private ownership of the means of production and of labour, is, at the same time, to protect the actual process of production - the capital/labour relation: "wage-labour and landed property, like capital", Marx writes, "are historically specific social forms; one of labour, and the other of the monopolized earth, both in fact being forms corresponding to capital and belonging to the same economic formation of society" (Marx, 1865:954).

Crucially for my argument, this does not necessarily entail any outward change in the form of law. Quite the contrary, the fact is that capital subsumes the relations of exchange as it finds them. For example, when production is organized upon the basis of wage labour, labour power is represented by the value of its product and the quantity of total labour invested in it - i.e. a week's wages for a

week's labour. As Fine (1984:115) puts it, "the only question then becomes whether workers receive a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, i.e. whether the exchange of equivalents is in fact upheld". The corollary being, that regardless of the fact that this exchange relation has "no natural basis", at the surface level of society the social relations connecting the owner of labour-power and the owner of the means of production assumes the phenomenal form characteristic of the simple exchange between the buyers and sellers of commodities. This is to say that, since the simple exchange of commodities is motivated by something which is already given in it, then, as the first phenomenal form of capital, the actual exchange between the owner of labour-power and the owner of the means of production acquires the form of an exchange of 'equivalents': "one obtaining money (in the form of a wage) and the other a use-value, labour-power" (Fine, 1984:114).

But in order that the owner of the means of production may find labour power offering itself for sale, certain conditions must exist. That is, definite conditions which, as mentioned, have no "natural basis" and are, according to Marx (1867:156), "manifestly the outcome of an antecedent historical evolution, the product of numerous economic transformations, the upshot of the decay of a whole series of older forms of social production". Firstly, labour power can only assume the commodity form when it is offered for sale or sold as a commodity by its owner. Labour power

must, in other words, be at the disposal of its owner, or, as Marx (1867:153) puts it, "he must be the actual owner of his... own person". Thus, in their mutual relations, the owner of labour and the owner of the means of production meet in the market as "commodity owners having equal rights, distinguished only by this, that one of them is a buyer and one of them is a seller; so that they are equal persons in the eyes of the law" (Marx, 1867:154). Importantly, for such a relation to articulate it must be on the understanding that when the owners of labour dispose of their labour they do so for a specified amount of time: "as an independent person", Marx writes, "he must incessantly cling to his labour power as his own property and therefore as his own commodity; and he can only do this in so far as, when he places his labour at the disposal of the buyer, he does so for a definite period" (Marx, 1867:155). For Marx, it is via this semblance of independence, manifested in the 'right' to dispose or withhold one's labour as a commodity, that a "whole civil society of an epoch [i.e. bourgeois society] is epitomized" (Marx, 1846:79-80). Furthermore, this epitomization must of course, find an adequate politico-juridical expression which makes possible this association between private property owners.

This process whereby incommensurable products are rendered commensurable, not only requires an abstract measure in the form of money, but it also requires an

equally abstract point of reference which makes this 'equality' in exchange possible. For example, in his 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' (1875), Marx writes:

"Right by its very nature can only consist in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals ... are only measurable by an equal standard in so far as they are brought under an equal point of view, are taken from one definite side only, e.g., in the present case are regarded only as workers, and nothing more seen in them, everything else being ignored." (Marx, 1875:9).

This "definite side" is of course, abstract labour. It follows, that the second essential condition for the subsumption of labour under capital, is the presentation of the 'right' to dispose and withhold one's labour as a double: not only must the workers be free to dispose of their labour as a commodity, but also they "must be 'free' from everything else that is not essential for the realization of [their] ... labour power" (Marx, 1867: 156). In other words, labour, like property, must be "freed" from its former "political and social embellishments and association", if it is to acquire the purely economic form of wage labour. Importantly, neither of the parties involved in the purchasing and selling of labour power stop to question why they confront one another in this particular form, in so far as all that is required is that

they recognize one another "exclusively in terms of the property they own and the rights they thereby possess" (Fine, 1984:142).

'Equality' in exchange can only exist when the parties involved take on an identical social quality, thereby making commensuration possible. In terms of labour, the only property which can be subjected to comparative commensuration, the only thing which is common to all forms of labour, is labour-power. Equality in exchange is thus an unequal right for unequal labour: "it recognises", Marx writes, "no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else" (Marx, 1875:9). Beyond its surface appearance, it is thus "a right of inequality" (Marx, 1875:9)

This right of equality is, of course, a particular form of "human association", which, like the conditions that presuppose capitalist production, have "no natural basis", nor are they "met within all modes of production" (of course - since they are expressions of the same historical relations of production). Indeed, what we have arrived at is the repertoire of social forms Marx describes as "liberty, equality, property, and Jeremy Bentham" (Marx, 1867:164). In 'Volume One' of 'Capital', he explains:

"Here [the sphere of circulation], liberty, equality, property, and Jeremy Bentham, are supreme. Liberty,

because the buyer and the seller of a commodity, such as labour power, buy and sell at their own sweet will. They enter into bargains as free individuals, equals before the law. The contract between them is the final outcome of the expression of their joint wills. Equality, because they enter into relations only as owners of commodities, and exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each of them disposes exclusively of his own. Jeremy Bentham, because each of the pair is only concerned with his own interest" (Marx, 1867:164).

If law is to protect the capital-labour relation, then it must manifest itself in two separate moments. Like its antithesis abstract labour, law is thus presented as a double: in its material form, it protects the conditions of production (as capital) over the direct producers, thereby creating the conditions for their monopolization by a "certain section of society"; on the other hand, it represents the abstract, general, i.e. "illusory community" which takes "on an independent existence". The underlying continuities between these two moments are highlighted in a passage from Marx's 'Writings on the Paris Commune' (1871), which, according to him:

"was ... a revolution not against this or that, legitimate, constitutional, republican or Imperialist form of state power. It was a revolution against 'the

State' itself, of this supernaturalist abortion of society ... " (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:112).

The presentation of this "supernaturalist abortion of society", finds expression in the separation between private and public law - between law relating to the reproduction of bourgeois society, and which pivots around private property; and law relating to the structuration of the means whereby public authority is alienated from the people and mediated through the forms of state.

Although this division of law into apparently separate domains makes the relationship between economics and politics appear even more external, the actual processes involved in this transformation are not 'economic'. Quite the contrary, it is a transformation which takes place in the political sphere itself. On the one hand, the subsumption of the moments of production and appropriation under capital, represents what Wood (1981:89) has called the "privatization of political power": "functions formally associated with a coercive political power - centralized or 'parcellized' - are now firmly lodged in the private sphere, as functions of a private appropriating class relieved of the obligations to fulfil larger social purposes" (Wood, 1981:92). On the other hand, the presentation of this double also represents the progressive, yet phenomenal exclusion of direct political power from the sphere of circulation and of equivalence in

exchange. It represents, in other words, the fact that under the social relations of capital, labour in its general form as abstract labour, appears as the immediate social form of labour (see Marx, 1867:51).

As noted by both Wood (1981:92) and Fine (1984:115), this transformation corresponds to a shift in the focus of contending class interests. For example, under the social relations of feudal production, the serf, according to Marx (1867:51), "knows that what he is expanding in the service of his lord is a definite quantity of his labour power". In other words, surplus production in the form of services in kind and/or payments in kind, is also the source and the site of contending class interests. Under the social relations of capital the converse is true, in that the appropriation of surplus value takes place outside of the circulation of commodities and money, and is thus independent of it. Thus, conflict arising over the distribution of surplus production, does not assume the form of a political struggle, in so far as surplus value in the phenomenal form of profit, appears lawful. As a result, the focus of class struggle assumes a purely economic form, pertaining exclusively to whether the principle of equivalence is being upheld - i.e. a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. It is precisely in this sense that Marx, in his 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' (1875: 6), asks "what is [an] 'equitable distribution'". He adds: "do not the bourgeois assert that the present-day distribution is

'equitable'? And is it not, in fact, the only 'equitable' distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production?" (Marx, 1875:6).

This then, is what is meant by the proposition that the state is the realization of something which is only logically possible in law, namely its independence from the sphere of circulation and from the equivalence in exchange. However, as the actualization of something which is by no means inevitable, but is only logically possible, it follows that, like the subsumption of money and commodities to capital, this "political transformation" can only take place under definite historical conditions, of which the following are essential (Fine, 1948:151; see also Wood, 1981:86-89):

1. Direct, personal control over the means of exercising control must be "transformed into the attribute of a unitary state power"; and
2. "feudal dignitaries" must be displaced "by salaried state functionaries, transferring the arms from medieval retainers of the landlords ... to a standing army" (Marx, 1871:483).

In short, the "checkered anarchy of conflicting medieval powers", must be transformed into "the regulated plan of a state power" (Marx, 1871:483). For example, writing on the process whereby "customary law" (i.e. feudal law) was "set

down in writing", historian Marc Bloch (1962:119-120) notes that it corresponds to "an era in which society tends to organize human relations more strictly, to establish more clear-cut divisions between the classes, to obliterate a great many local variations, and finally, to allow change". Clearly this is the outcome of a "period of profound gestation", which may in turn give rise to a multiplicity of state forms. Nonetheless, the essential point is clear: Marx firmly anchors the origins of capitalist state formation in the same "process of primary accumulation" as capital. This point is most clearly developed in Marx's 'Writings on the Paris Commune' (1871):

"the centralized state machinery which ... entails the living civil society ... was first forged in the days of absolute monarchy as a weapon of nascent modern society in its struggle of emancipation from feudalism. The seigniorial privileges of the medieval lords ... were transformed into the attribute of a unitary state power, [thereby] substituting for the checkered anarchy of conflicting medieval powers [with] the regulated plan of a state power, with a systemic and hierarchic division of labour" (Marx, 1871:483).

Regrettably however, 'traditional' historical materialism has tended to view this, and statements of a similar vein (see Colletti, 1972:105-106), as depicting a feature common

to all forms of class domination. As noted by both Colletti (1972:105-106) and Corrigan and Sayer (1987:72-73), such 'class theories' of the state has done enormous violence to what is most innovative in Marx's political thought, for, although capable of explaining that aspect of the state which pertains specifically to its class content, the question of why the state should assume this particular form remains unresolved.

Although the state is, as Lenin suggested, an alien "power standing above society", it does not follow that the form and content of this alienation is without variation. For example, the modern representative state has a quite different point of reference than that of the fascist state. With the latter, quite clearly the state's expropriation of the right to dispose of labour and property assumes quite a different form from the forms of intercourse reified in the notions of freedom and equality in exchange, characteristic of the modern representative state. Furthermore, just as capital subsumes the labour process as it finds it, the state is also capable of subsuming various 'traditional' cultural and political forms, which in turn become premises of its own existence.

With its essential difference manifested in the form and extent of its 'separation' from capitalism's 'economic sphere', the modern political state is the politico-juridical expression of the opposition between itself and

labour. Otherwise put, it represents the same ensemble of social relations, "whose economic expression is the opposition between capital and labour" (Fine, 1981:153). As an example of this organic unity, consider the following passage:

"Where the political state has attained its true development, man - not only in thought ... but in reality, in life - leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly: life in the political community, in which he considers himself a communal being, and life in civil society, in which he acts as a private individual, regards other men as a means ... The relation of the political state to civil society is just as spiritual as the relation of heaven to earth. The political state stands in the same opposition to civil society, and it prevails over the latter ..."
(Marx, 1843a:154);

and, with respect to commodity fetishism, Marx writes:

"In ... [the world of religion], the products of the human mind become independent shapes, endowed with lives of their own, and able to enter into relations with men and women. The products of the human hand do the same thing in the world of communities. I speak of this as the fetishistic character ... " (Marx, 1867: 45).

It is worth noting that in his 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law' (1843:175), Marx remarked that a critique "of religion is the premise of all criticism" (see also Sayer, 1987:104). Leaving aside the residual Hegelianism contained within the first passage, the analogies Marx draws with religion should not therefore, be treated as a mere stylistic flourish, for clearly there is a deeper meaning. Paraphrasing Sayer (1987:104), the significance of religion is that it is itself a "paradigm of alienated consciousness", and hence the fetishism on which it is based is exemplary of all forms of fetishism, abstraction and/or reification.

Thus, to return to the opposition between capital and labour and between the state and labour, the power of the former is manifested in the appropriation of unequal products of labour; whilst the power of the latter is manifested in the appropriation of unequal labour power. As Fine (1984:153) puts it, "just as the right to the products of one's own labour turns 'through its own necessary dialectic' into the expropriation of the products of one's own labour, at the same time the private right of individuals to dispose of their property as they will, turns into the expropriation of this right by the state as the monopolizer of legal authority". On the one hand, capital, according to Marx (1878:791), "presupposes a divorce between the workers and the ownership of the

property through which alone their labour can become effective". On the other hand, the same can also be said of the state. That is, it presupposes the separation of labour from all prior political and social rights, except for the 'right' to own and dispose of one's labour as a commodity. As noted by both Sayer (1987:111-112) and Fine (1984:153), this essential difference is by no means a banal one, for it is precisely this politico-juridical form of human association which distinguishes capitalism from all antecedent class societies.

For Marx then, the state is quite clearly an essential relation of capitalist production, and not a 'superstructure' in any normal sense of this over-theorized metaphor, but precisely in the sense interpreted by Sayer (1987:110): "it could not proceed in ... [its] absence". For example, in animating his emancipatory vision, the underlying continuities between the state and capital as essential relations becomes most evident when Marx applies to the state the "classical parable" of "antithesis and contradiction". He writes: "a revolution against the State itself, this supernaturalist abortion of society, [involves] a resumption by the people for the people, of its own social life" (Marx, 1871:486).

In order to regain conscious control of one's own social life, it must of course, be appropriated from you. Thus, it follows that the state, like capital, is a

creation of something contained in labour. However, once established, it develops in antithesis to it, in that, it becomes "endowed with will and consciousness", which is representative of socially reified human labour (Marx, 1867:138). The corollary of this is that the class content of the state is not manifested in who controls it, nor does it reside in the functions it performs as a bureaucracy, an armed force, a legislative body or an education system. Rather, as Fine (1984:152) notes, it is manifested "in the form of state itself; just as the class character of capital lies not in the fact that it is controlled by capitalist, nor in the functions it performs, but in capital itself as a social relation".

Further weight can be given to the foregoing line of reasoning by reflecting on its immediate political implications. This being, that the actual state apparatus maybe transferred from one group, or one party, to another, who may in turn call upon it to perform a new set of functions. For example, the nationalization of industry. However, it remains the 'State' in so far as its phenomenal independence is maintained. With respect to class struggle, the conclusion which follows from this is predictable: according to Marx,

"the working class cannot simply lay hold on the ready-made state and wield it for their own purpose. The political instrument of their enslavement cannot

serve as the political instrument of their emancipation ... The first condition for the hold[ing] of political power is to transform it's working machinery and destroy it - an instrument of class rule" (Marx, 1871:533);

and from the first draft of the same text:

"all revolutions thus only perfected the state machinery instead of throwing off this deadening incubus. The fractions and parties of the ruling classes which alternately struggled for supremacy, considered the occupancy ... of this immense machinery of government as the main body of the victor" (Marx, 1871:484).

That Marx himself saw this conclusion as a definite advance in his own theoretical development, lies in the fact that the above passage is cited as a necessary corrective to the first edition of 'The Communist Manifest' (see Corrigan and Sayer, 1987 :70-71). For example, in the Preface to the 1872 edition of this text, Marx and Engels write:

"in the view of the practical experience gained, first in the February revolution, and then, still more in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power ... this programme has in some details become antiquated. One thing especially

was proved by the Commune, viz., that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes" (Marx and Engels, in Corrigan and Sayer, 1987:71).

Returning to the parable of "antithesis and contradiction", as the politico-juridical expression of the capital labour relation, the modern political state represents the ultimate "privatization", and/or "socialization", of political power in a reified, specifically capitalist form of appearance (Fine, 1984: 154; see also Wood, 1981:89-90). As a direct consequence, its relationship with both capital and labour is a necessarily contradictory one, precisely in the sense elaborated by Fine (1984:154): "workers need the social power of the state against the private rights of capital, but they do not need the state's alienated form. Capitalists need the state's alienated form as its guarantee against labour, but live in apprehension of its social power". This contradiction is most clearly brought out when the state is called upon to adjudicate in disputes between capital and labour. For example, most would concur, Marxists included, that the legal apparatus of arbitration provides, superficially at least, an important medium in protecting workers from the logical consequences of unfettered capitalism. However, by virtue of its relationship to the state, and hence, the capital labour relation, the actual form of arbitration is at one and the same time a politico-juridical expression of the 'commodities'

exchanged between capital and labour - i.e. money in the form of wages, and labour in the form of abstract labour time. It recognizes, in other words, that in their mutual relations, both capital and labour are exchanging subjects having 'equal rights', distinguished only by their status as a buyer or seller. Consequently, the powers of arbitration are necessarily restricted to disputes arising from the "reciprocal appraisal" of exchange value - i.e. the terms and conditions of exchange. In short, political struggle is directed purely at the nature of the social function in which capital and labour confront one another in circulation - that is, as equal persons. Furthermore, just as profit is seen as a gain resulting not from its relation to capital and surplus value, but by virtue of something posited by nature - for instance, business acumen - so it is when apportioning responsibility for conflict between capital and labour. For example, if it is concluded that the exchange of 'equivalence' is an unequal one, and that the worker receives a wage 'equivalent' which is disproportionate to expended labour power, then, the employers may be deemed responsible and ordered to return the 'balance' - i.e. to uphold the law of equivalence.

Thus, as long as the relationship between capital and labour relations finds expression in the phenomenal form of exchange value, arbitration, the media and the receiving public, will tend to apportion blame to something arising not from the capital-labour relation, for this remains

hidden, but from the nature in which the buyer and seller confront one another. That is, as something which is posited by nature, and independent of capital - i.e. 'greed', sector interest and employer negligence. Class struggle, in other words, is necessarily limited to those moments within a given object which are given at the surface level of society, and hence, are only "spontaneously" grasped.

All this is, of course, not to suggest that Marxist's should abstain from all popular democratic struggles. Indeed, there can be little doubt, I would suggest, that Marx greatly underestimated the subjective and cultural value we attach to the civil liberties which protect us from "unbridled power". However, for all intensive purposes, the issue of political involvement is beyond the remit of this thesis. Rather, for our purposes, the critical point is a far more elementary one. Paraphrasing Marx (1858:258), if the state is defined in abstraction from its contradictory relationship with capital, thus leaving only it's material content to be emphasized, then, in a manner which is comparable to bourgeois economics, the historical presentation of state formation can only proceed under the guise of two equally false inferences. These are:

1. To add to the state a category of 'essential being', namely that of the class state as its elementary function, or a function which it somehow

performs "in the last instance"; or

2. to explain any historical modifications and/or empirical peculiarities, as arising from nature, and therefore independent of theory.

By conflating the historical with the transhistorical, both inference one and two amount to attempting to infer the differences between members of a class from the concept of what they have in common, a "manifestly ludicrous proposition". However, despite the ludicrous nature of this proposition, it continues to prevail within those schools of Marxist development theory which assume that capitalist development and state formation can be 'read off' from the elementary conditions contained within all modes of production.

Thus, to conclude by returning to my initial point of departure, both development theory and Marxist development theory, reflect a tendency to approach the state in a manner that runs counter to its actual formation. Both begin with an examination of the finished product, at which point the social character which stamps the various forms of state as 'State' forms, the social character which they must possess before they circulate as forms of state, have already acquired the fixity of natural forms of social life. But this finished form of the state, this alienated form, is the very thing which veils instead of disclosing, the social character of individual labour embodied in the

state, and as such, it acts to conceal the social relations between private individuals. In short, if the contradictory relation between the state and capital is missed, all is missed.

Conclusion.

As Marx and Engels (1845) intended, the present thesis has sought to develop a number of arguments, which begin not with "arbitrary" concepts, but with "real premises". Contained within these premises are specific knowledge-producing statements which I believe are not unreasonable, and can be "verified [or refuted] in a purely empirical way" (Marx and Engels, 1846:36-37).

First and foremost, it has been argued that Marx's sociology does not provide a set of categories which are universal in their definition and scope. As Sayer (1987:143) puts it, "the conventional concept of the productive forces sheds little light on how the pyramids were built or China irrigated", whilst the concept of the "'economic structure' (or 'property') is of scant use for comprehending societies where surplus extraction is organized through personalized relations of kinship". Similarly, one needs only a fleeting familiarity with Godelier's work in the Highlands of New Guinea (1986), or Sahlins' analysis of 'Stone Age Economics' (1972) to see that the categories of the 'economic' base and 'political' superstructure are of no practical use in a social formation where a 'pure' economy or a 'pure' polity quite simply does not exist: "here ['primitive societies']",

Sahlins writes, "we find no socially distinct 'economy' or 'government', merely social groups and relations with multiple functions, which we distinguish as economic, political, and so forth" (Sahlins, 1972:185-186). Let us then, begin this review by reiterating how Marx himself saw the categories which underpinned his 'materialist conception of history'.

In his opening to '1857 Introduction', Marx contrasts his "real premises" with the "unimaginative conceits of the eighteenth century Robinsonades". His quarrel is with Smith and Ricardo who, according to him, begin not with modern society, but with traditional society made up of modern individuals, or "Robinsons". For example, consider the following passage from Ricardo's, 'On the Principles of Political Economy, and Taxation':

"if we suppose the occupations of the society are extended, so that some provide canoes and tackle necessary for fishing, others the seed and rude machinery first used in agriculture, still the same principle would hold true, that the exchangeable value of the commodities produced would be in proportion to the labour bestowed on their production" (Ricardo, in Carver, 1975:89-90).

Of course, Marx's mature critique of political economy involves more than merely replacing the unhistorical

abstractions of Smith and Ricardo with abstractions that are historical. Paraphrasing Johnson (1983:161), it is not merely that different forms of development are distinguished but that their dynamics and their further capacity for change are also revealed. For Marx, the conditions of logical possibility at issue were a given set of social relations, which achieve their ideological purpose by producing an understanding of society in the abstract. His hypothesis was, that in a society where exchange is not co-ordinated by the direct exchange of use-values between producers, individual 'needs' can only be related to one another through the equation of their products as 'values' (see Fine, 1984:125). Marx's quarrel with political economy was thus a critique of economics in general.

The ontology of economics, whether in its classical, keynesian, or modern reincarnation is empiricist. This means, it conceives the social as the outcome of an ensemble of empirical regularities, which corresponds to a mass of isolated individuals, events and things. Thus, things which maybe "organically related" are brought "into an accidental relation, a mere reflective connection" (Marx, 1858:88). The result is a blindness to the inner-connections between the social relations of production and their empirical forms of appearance. The 'economy' is itself one such reification, in that its formation represents the processes whereby individuals are

abstracted from their social, materialist context, and material 'things' are abstracted from the social relations that produce them. Capping off this process of double abstraction, is the postulation of a *a priori* models in which theories of 'rational action' - i.e. the 'law' of supply and demand - are developed so as to explain not the history of this abstraction, but its meaning (see Marx, 1867:49).

If the essence of a phenomenon is seen to coincide directly with the phenomenon itself, then any attempt to explain the forms and functions of such social forms as money, capital and the state is restricted to what is directly observable - i.e. money is money because it is durable, exchangeable, convenient, and so on. Thus, the social relations which distinguish money as capital from all antecedent mediums of exchange, repeatedly slip through this 'logic of essence'. As a consequence, money as capital, a determinate historical form, is surreptitiously transposed into a transhistorical relation, posited once and for all by nature.

I believe, Marx's '1857 Introduction' can best be read as a response to such "mental simplifications of social life". Exemplifying this is his lengthy discussion on the treatment of the category of labour by political economy. Writing with caution, he noted that in one sense, "the abstraction of the category of 'labour', 'labour as such', labour pure and simple... expresses an immeasurably ancient

relation valid in all forms of society", and as such it "achieves practical truth as ... a category of the most modern society" (Marx; 1858:105). However, in a second sense, Marx argues that such "indifference towards any specific kind of labour" corresponds to an historically specific form of society, "in which individuals can with ease transfer from one labour to another" (Marx, 1858:104). He concludes:

"as a rule, the most general abstractions arise only in the midst of the richest possible development" (Marx, 1858:104).

Thus, "the example of labour shows":

"how even the most abstract categories, despite their validity ... for all epochs, are nevertheless, in the specific character of this abstraction, themselves likewise a product of historic relations, and possess their full validity only for and within these relations" (Marx, 1858:105).

Following commentaries by Mandel (1967) and Sayer (1983), it has been argued that between the writing of the '1857 Introduction' and the publication of 'Capital Volume One' (1867), Marx hardens up his emphasis on the complex nature of social life. Indicative of this, is the disappearance of such ambiguous categories as 'labour as such' and 'labour

pure and simple', which no longer appear in the discourse of 'Capital'. Rather, in their place Marx puts forward a new conceptual apparatus, which is underpinned by the "scrupulous distinction of the historical and transhistorical referents of such notions" (Sayer, 1987:128). This methodological development is clearly stated by him (1867a) in a letter to Engels:

"The best points in my book ['Capital'] are: (1) the double character of labour, according to whether it is expressed in use value or exchange value (all understanding of the facts depends upon this), it is emphasised immediately in the first chapter; (2) the treatment of surplus value independently of its particular forms as profit, interest, ground rent, etc." (Marx, 1867a:226-227).

After 1857, the attributes of labour, conflated by political economy, were subsumed under different concepts. Those attributes which belong to labour as an "immeasurably ancient relation" were subsumed under the concept of useful labour; whilst those attributes of labour required for the production of exchange-value, and which presuppose a "developed totality of real kinds of labour" (wage labour), were subsumed under the concept of abstract labour.

That Marx (1867:10) himself saw the useful/abstract labour distinction as the pivot on which an "understanding

of political economy turns", suggests to me that his distinction between transhistorical and historical categories manifests itself at the very core of his sociology. However, despite this, many Marxists have shown themselves incapable of understanding the full significance of this distinction. Indeed, I have sought to demonstrate that standard interpretations of Marx's distinction between useful labour and abstract labour, between use-value and exchange-value, and between the technical composition and value composition of capital, have given rise to the same fetishistic concepts Marx criticized in political economy. That is, ahistorical, empirically derived notions of the supposed essence of a phenomena - for example, the supposed 'economic' composition of the social relations of production - have been allowed to infiltrate the initial stages of theoretical enquiry as self-evident truths.

In contrast, Marx's object was considerably broader in scope and empirically open-ended. Put simply, it was a given set of social relations between individuals, and between individuals and nature. He begins therefore, not with concepts, but with actual social forms: "the various forms of capital", Marx writes, "as evolved in this book ... approach step by step the form which they assume in the ordinary consciousness of the agents of production themselves" (Marx, 1878:862). At the immediate level of society, capital assumes the form of appearance of a sum of money invested with the expectation of a greater return -

i.e. money = more money.

The first question then, is how is this increment possible? Put otherwise, under what conditions of labour does the mere possession of value produce surplus value as its outcome? Answering this question dominated Marx's mature writings. Indeed, the whole thrust of 'Capital', beginning with the analysis of 'Commodities and Money' (1867:3-128) and concluding with a critique of 'The Trinity Formula' (1865:953-970), was to develop a theory of surplus value which showed profit, ground-rent, interest and wages to be necessary forms of appearance of something not immediately identified within them, namely value.

Surplus value is created from the unique capacity of commodity-producing labour to produce more value than is required for its reproduction. However, for this to take place certain conditions must prevail. Firstly, production must be organized on the basis of commodity production. Secondly, labour must itself acquire the form of a commodity. Finally, the worker must be divorced from the ownership of the means of labour (see Marx, 1878:790-792). Only when these conditions are present does the "seller of labour power and the owner of money meet in the market place and enter into exchange relations as commodity owners having equal rights, distinguished only by this, that one them is a buyer and the other is a seller; so that they are equal in the eye of the law" (Marx, 1867:154-155).

Crucially for my argument, Marx makes it clear that the foregoing conditions for capitalist production, presupposes a level of development in capacity of labour. He concludes:

"One thing ... is clear. Owners of money or owners of commodities, on the one hand, and persons who own nothing but their labour-power, on the other, are not natural products. The relation has no natural basis, nor is it one that is met in all historical periods. It is manifestly the outcome of an antecedent historical evolution, the product of numerous economic revolutions, the upshot of the decay of a whole series of older forms of social production" (Marx, 1867:156).

Capital, Marx went on to demonstrate, is a social relation: contrary to the form it assumes within the sphere of circulation, capital is not a thing, it is not money or commodities, but rather it is a definite social relation of production corresponding to a particular social formation, which simply takes the form of money and commodities, thereby giving them a social character which they would not otherwise have - i.e. their "essential difference" (Marx, 1865:953; see also Sayer, 1987:133). In a foot note to 'Capital', Marx exemplifies:

"a negro is a negro. He only becomes a slave in

certain relations. A cotton spinning jenny is a machine for spinning cotton. It becomes capital only in certain relations. Torn from these relationships it is no more capital than gold in itself is money or sugar the price of sugar" (Marx, in Sayer, 1987:133).

Here Marx is not, as with Althusserian and traditional theories of historical materialism, reducing social relations to economic and/or technical relations. Rather, he is reconceptualizing capital in a form that explains its immediate appearance within the sphere of circulation. Moreover, the basis of this reconceptualization is paradigmatic. To use the words of Sayer (1987:133), "Marx does the same when he argues exchange-value - in appearance a property of 'things' - to be 'a cipher for a social relation', or that thing-like entity 'the state' to be an abstracted idealized form of class power".

If I am correct, and Marx's critical methodology is internally related to his historical sociology, then the conclusion is self-evident. In the words of Colletti:

"Capital is itself above all a great historical work. All the so-called 'historical' works of Marx, the 'Eighteenth Brumaire', the 'Class Struggles in France' and so on, not only have their roots in 'Capital', ... but are located within the same horizon. To fail to see this ... means in practice to fail to grasp the

historico-social pregnancy of all the economic categories in 'Capital', including the abstract ones" (Colletti, 1972:15).

It is especially ironic that Marxism's failure to grasp this, is largely due to the strategy adopted by Marx to highlight the historicity of the essential relations of capitalism. Citing such famous aphorisms as "human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape", Marx is often seen to adopt a teleological position on the relationship between capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production, and between capitalism and communism. To be fair, capitalism may provide the 'key' to non-capitalist forms of social life, but only in the sense that it has given rise to its own historical categories, whose essential difference Marx is trying to demonstrate by critically applying them to non-capitalist modes of production.

What distinguishes bourgeois society from all antecedent forms of society, is manifested in the fact that social labour, in its general form as abstract labour, is here the immediate form of labour. As a result, social power is maintained through the impersonal medium of private property, and finds expression in the relationship of 'things' to one another; above all, the means of production and labour power (see Sayer, 1987:137; and Fine, 1984:135). Individuals, in other words, are governed by the abstraction of social phenomena from the essential

relations which explain them.

This material relationship between people and 'things' constitutes the 'economy'. However, not from the standpoint of a particular social relationship, but rather as a material relationship between individuals and nature - i.e. as something inherent in human nature or human rationality. This tendency to regard the logic and dynamic of capitalism as something grounded in human nature and/or human 'rationality', is not a fetishism exclusively related to the economy, but is also a feature of other social forms internally related to it, namely state and law.

Regrettably, Marx did not trace the logic and history of the law and the state in anything like the detail in which he traced the development of capital (see Fine, 1984:134). Nonetheless, in the words of Sayer (1987:138), "he clearly identifies both the individualization of people within the 'private' world of 'civil society', and the complementary formation of a 'public' realm, the 'political state', as part of this same nexus of relationship". Also located within this relationship are the politico-juridical categories of "liberty, equality, property and Jeremy Bentham" (Marx, 1867:164).

Both history and sociology have, of course, long acknowledged a relationship between modern state formation and, in terms of contemporary civil liberties, capitalism's

wider social revolutions. At one level, Weber's analysis of the Protestant work ethic, and Foucault's micro-sociology of power have proved more helpful in this area than Marx. However, the main point I wish to make, is that Marx's distinctiveness lies not in what he wrote on the state, but in the "organic unity" between his method and his object and the particular understanding of the material "groundwork of society" which this gives rise to. Marx neither reduces society to the sum total of its individual parts, nor the individual parts to society 'in general'. Rather, the material groundwork of society is viewed as a social totality; it is a synthesis of complex social relations, whose individual significance is determined by their relationship to the whole (see Colletti, 1972:14). In short, Marx's brilliance lies in his transcendence of the individual/society dichotomy: he was able to view material production as being "synonymous" with the (re)production of society itself (Sayer, 1987:77 and 140).

For Marx, individuals "who produce their social relations in accordance with their material productivity also produce ideas, categories, that is to say the abstract ideal expression of these same social relations". This includes, of course, the various forms of consciousness, theories and ideologies a particular society produces. Thus, in 'Capital' we are not only confronted by an "organic unity" between the social relations of production, their empirical forms of appearance and their corresponding

categories of thought, but also between method and object. This means that Marx's arguments concerning the phenomenal basis of such categories as capital and value, their reification as natural forms of social life, also applies to the 'simple' abstractions of class, law, the state and the individual. As Sayer (1987:140) puts it, "we can no more universalize the concept of state, or property, or individual appropriate to the phenomenal forms of capitalist life, than we can the concept of value or capital". He concludes:

"simple abstractions' ... are neither so simple nor so abstract as they at first sight appear. They always articulate, even as they obscure, some more concrete 'substratum' (Sayer, 1987:140-141).

Establishing this helps to explain how Marxists, by failing to grasp the originality of Marx's method, also fail to identify the object of his work. For example, Marx's analysis of the transitory character of the social relations of capital - their tendency for further development - is derived from this view of society as a "unity of heterogeneous elements" (Colletti, 1972:16): "the totality of these relationships", Marx writes, "which the bearers of production have towards nature and one another, the relationships in which they produce, is precisely society" (Marx, 1865:957). It follows, that if society is constituted by a totality of social relationships, then the

move from one social order to another requires a transformation of the social relations in their "totality and extent" (see Marx, 1858:277 and 297). Social change, in other words, implies a movement in the material basis of society and not merely a movement of its base (Colletti, 1972:15).

By failing to identify the methodological assumptions implied within this conception, Marxist development theory, for one, has tended to rely on such *a priori* conceits as the 'negation of the negation', the 'development thesis' and the 'transitional' mode of production, in order to come to terms with the development of capitalism within third world social formations. How social change is translated in the local dynamics of a developing society, is thus reduced to something already contained within the phenomenon of capitalist development itself, namely export capital.

In Chapter Three, it was argued that both conventional and Althusserian interpretations of the fundamental concepts of historical materialism, setting out as they do from the concept of the economy 'in general' and the state 'in general', are built on the same fetishistic concepts Marx criticized in political economy. For example, we have seen that the transcendence of the contradictions resulting from capital, is to a certain extent contained within the concept itself. Thus, when Smith and Ricardo set themselves the task of directly relating essence and appearance, the

contradictions to be transcended are presented in such a manner that an a priori unity is allowed to work itself out: "if it is said that capital is exchange value", Marx writes, "which produces profit, or at least has the intention of producing profit, then capital is already presupposed in its explanation, for profit is a specific relation to capital itself" (Marx, 1858:258). As with the concepts of political economy, the same 'determination of the essence' creeps into standard interpretations of the social relations of production and the base/superstructure relationship: the former are construed narrowly and equated with economic relations and the later are construed as a set of non-economic institutions externally related to the economy.

Where does this leave Marxist development theory today? A decade ago the dominant feature within this area was undoubtedly the emergence of articulationism as a theoretical alternative to the simplistic polarities of Frank and Warren. Today, however, new divisions have emerged which have in many ways grown out of articulationism's failure to fulfil this initial promise. As a result, a 'post-Marxist' current has developed, in which the first premise is that there is no necessary correspondence between the 'economic' and the 'political', and between state formation and class formation (see Booth, 1985). According to this argument, any connection between these spheres is 'discursively' constructed.

As I understand it, this debate surrounding the necessary correspondence and necessary non-correspondence of the economic and the political, has its origins in tensions arising from the Althusserian distinction between the mode of production and the social formation. For Althusser and his followers, the structurally determined mode of production was a purely theoretical construct which did not exist outside the realm of theoretical practice. What did exist, was the social formation as a particular conjuncture capable of combining an infinite number of modes of production and 'relatively autonomous' levels (see Taylor, 1979). Under the guise of this rigid dualism, Marxist development theory could for a time avoid 'crude economism', whilst maintaining a mechanical understanding of the base and superstructure. Indeed, to use the words of Comninel (1987:86), "it is just this degree of descriptive flexibility that makes structuralist analysis so attractive to Marxists working in difficult historical epochs and the contemporary third world". However, as careful observers were quick to point out (see Comninel, 1987; and Foster-Carter, 1974), it was only a matter of time before this uneasy compromise between the structurally determined mode of production and the absolute contingency of the social formation fell apart, in that the former simply cannot engage in the actual processes of development taking place. It should not be surprising therefore, that in the hands of such influential writers as Hindess and Hirst,

what was initially the determinant structure of the mode of production, has now given way to the absolute contingency of a particular conjuncture. Indeed, to use the words of Wood (1990:128), "the post-Marxist assertion of the 'non-correspondence' between the economic and the political, ... as well as the rejection of not only of the crude base/ superstructure model but also of the complex historical materialist insights for which this unfortunate metaphor was intended to stand, are ... simply the other side of the Althusserian coin".

The result of such obfuscations has been a fallacious framework of debate in which theoretical development has been effectively reduced to a choice between concepts: "structure and history, absolute determinism and irreducible contingency and pure theory and unalloyed empiricism" (Wood, 1990:128). Posited in this manner, the terms of debate have scarcely shifted from the false alternatives Althusser sort to overcome, in that the question of the relationship between a 'separate' economic sphere and a 'separate' political sphere, is theorized *a priori* as a feature of society 'in general'. Thus, the historical character of the capitalist state, the character which distinguishes it from all antecedent forms of state, is lost, for at this point it has already "acquire[d] the fixity of the natural forms of social life". As a consequence, questions concerning how the 'idea of the state' - its phenomenal separation - is constituted,

communicated and imposed, remains outside the conceptual framework of debate. All that is left to be specified, concerns not the history of this form of appearance - and the theories and ideologies founded upon it - but its meaning.

Marx fought this fallacy of misplaced concreteness for most of his life. Unlike many contemporary Marxists and post-Marxists, he recognized that the phenomenal forms of capitalism may be systematically misleading. Thus, to begin with concepts as something other than the "first explananda" of historical enquiry, may perpetuate this illusion. Writing on the speculative character of philosophical abstraction, Marx exemplifies:

"Viewed apart from real history, these abstractions have in themselves no value whatsoever. They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material ... But they by no means afford a recipe or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history" (Marx and Engels, 1846:43).

In his later writings Marx developed the thesis that the social relations of capital find expression at one and the same time through the politico-juridical forms of property, law and state and the economic forms of value, money and capital. Under this conception, to equate the superstructure with 'non-economic' institutions is to

neglect that, for Marx, the superstructure is an articulation of phenomenal forms which the social relations assume in social consciousness. Paraphrasing Marx (1865:953), it represents the process whereby the activity of labour is rendered autonomous of living labour power and is personified in the forms of state and capital through this antithesis. Similarly, to equate the social relations of production with ownership relations, is, using the words of Sayer (1987:144), "to replicate bourgeois illusions as to what property is - an unmeditated relation of individuals to things - and comprehensively obscure the wide range of relations, the labyrinth of forms and foci of social power, through which so apparently simple a thing as property is actually constituted".

Rereading Marx is thus a legitimate academic exercise. Certainly, I have found that a return to Marx is not only useful in the sense that it breaks down false polarities but also because it does this by suggesting alternative solutions to contemporary problems. The 'solution' put forward here suggests there is no necessary tension between theory and history or, put another way, between the mode of production and the social formation. To use the words of Johnson (1983:166), "it is better to speak not of 'history' and 'theory', but of historical categories and accounts at different levels of abstraction".

If abstraction is a feature common to all processes of

thought, then the critical question is how does this process take place? Are the abstractions historical or transhistorical? Are they found in actual forms of society? If so, do they grasp a societies tendency for further change, or do they present historically specific relations as relations common to all forms of society? An abstraction which is founded upon the *a priori* separation of the economic and the political is necessarily atomistic: to regard these forms as corresponding to mutually exclusive parts of reality, is to reproduce the mystifications of bourgeois ideology in so far as it fails to treat social production as a totality of social determinations corresponding to a particular form of society and in effect deals with society in the abstract. The 'solution' developed here recognizes that 'Capital' represents the maturation of Marx's critique of the economic forms of bourgeois society and of his analysis of the essential relations that not only give rise to these forms but also accords to them a social character which they otherwise would not have. Thus, the imagery which pervades 'Capital' suggests that the critical distinction is not between primary and subordinate spheres, but between the essential social relations and the form in which these relations manifest themselves at the surface level of society (essential relations/phenomenal forms).

Despite my objections concerning the reduction of the social relations to economic relations, the identification

of the productive forces with physical things and the *a priori* separation of the base and superstructure, critics maybe quick to point out that the distinction between essential relations and phenomenal forms merely replaces one metaphysical dichotomy with another? After all, the approach developed here still requires, analytically at least, that the social forms of property, money, law, the state and capital be separated from the essential relations.

Simon Clarke's, 'Socialist Humanism and the Critique of Economism' (1979:138-156), represents an early attempt to overcome this problem through the adoption of a unitarian approach to the social relations of production. According to Clarke (1979:141), the social relations of production exists as "relations between people who, in a class society, relate to one another as members of antagonistic social classes". He adds: "these relations have political and cultural, as well as economic, dimensions, the unity of which consists in their human character" (Clarke, 1979: 141). He goes on to argue that a critique of the capitalist social relations of production can only take place from the standpoint of those who experience these relations, and that "this experience is not the experience of the atomized individual, but is a class experience". Thus, the relations of production are class relations, and both are broadened to such an extent that they are capable of including all forms of human

experience.

Of course, the unitarian approach is quite correct in that the actual process of production and exploitation is not the whole story of domination. However, to diffuse the category of the social relations so as to include all human experience is to regard politics and law not as forms of appearance of the essential relations, but as essential relations themselves. Thus, in manner reminiscent of Frank's (1969) (re)definition of capitalism as foreign exploitative activity, thereby defining third world formations as capitalist long before capital had subjected production to its sway (see Laclau, 1971:19-38), we enter the transhistorical domain where the definitional criteria of the capitalist social relations is such that it includes any and all forms of human activity (including science).

This concern is not limited to the British radical science movement. In 'Marxism and the Methodologies of History' (1981:17ff), McLennan criticises Sayer for employing an equally broad definition of the social relations which, according to him, could also be satisfied by random empirical evidence. The essential question then, is to determine whether it is possible to maintain the integrity of the categories of historical materialism without emptying them of their social content or defining them out of existence.

Most Marxists would concur that social oppression ultimately depends on the power to appropriate surplus production. Theoretical enquiry therefore, should not be immediately directed at the 'state' as a concrete historical structure, but at the determinations of the state which can be derived from the general concept of capitalist production, and "the relations of production and exchange appropriate to [this] method" (Marx, 1878:862).

Private property, law, the state and capital are appropriate forms of appearance of capitalist production, in that the processes involved in producing surplus-value cannot be immediately identified within them. Thus, the category of 'form' expresses both the basic problem and the essential character of the materialist method: the investigation of the processes involved in the production and reproduction of socialized individuals and the relations between these individuals as they confront one another in the labour process.

The materialist method consists of investigating the forms in which the relations between individuals are expressed and: first, resolving them into their fixed character, a character alienated from the individual and then presented as historically determined, that is having grown out of the relations between individuals and reproduced by human activity; and second, uncovering the inner-connection. Here the point of departure can only be

the present conditions, for it is under these conditions that the transition from a lower, simpler form of social life to one that is higher and more complex is realized. However, the aim of this analysis is not to trace the 'course of history' in retrospect. As Johnson (1983:164) puts it, "modern society is not just a summation of previous development: it is still undergoing change; it still has a characteristic dynamic".

The whole thrust of Marx's 'Capital' is to develop a theory of surplus-value which shows how profit, rent, wages and private ownership in land are necessary forms of appearance of surplus value, and that none of these forms can be immediately identified within it. It is this logic of essence, "the necessity of value assuming a distinct phenomenal form", which explains why things which are organically connected appear to exist along side one another, separate in both time and space and therefore, externally related. The essential relations/phenomenal form dichotomy is a metaphor which gives to these spatially and temporally 'discrete' objects a degree of ontological depth. To use the words of Marsden (1992:369), it "rides the imagination of the constraint of empiricism's flat ontology ..., which sees only 'empirical collisions' between externally related spheres, and creates the space within which to model the inner, necessary connections between apparently discrete, unconnected entities". By working out from the determinations of capital those

conditions which make the genesis of a 'separate' economy and a 'separate' state necessary, it is possible to argue that although both forms are spatially and temporally separated, they are internally related and are forms of appearance of the same social relations.

Marx's rejection of empiricism's model of causality also entails the rejection of the view that cause and effect are separate moments of analysis, and the related belief that prediction and explanation are linear; for if experiences may misrepresent reality and empirical observations are a poor guide to causal mechanisms, then events cannot be 'read off' from the laws of the capitalist mode of production. The historical materialist method, as depicted here, must reason retroductively from empirical appearances to the essential relations: "under what conditions - what relations of production - does the labour of individuals create [organize] private property, law and the state as its products" (Fine, 1983 204)? Historical materialism is concerned with the organic nature of objects, their structure and their capacity for further development. The challenge is to develop models which recognize that although science is not social relations as such, its categories are external descriptions of them. For this reason, scientific categories are something to be explained rather than taken for granted, and their critique opens a window to the 'real', thereby creating concepts that penetrate the surface level of society.

By directing attention to the inner-connections between related social forms, the essential relations/phenomenal form dichotomy differs from more conventional ones not only in the sense that it avoids the tendency to either generalize from the empirical or from concepts under which generic categories and events are grouped, but also in the sense that it avoids the tendency to 'epiphenomenalize' non-empirical manifestations of social relations: "the abstract, though non-empirical, may nevertheless designate what is real" (Bhaskar, 1986:108).

Thus, the true significance of Marx's 'Capital' lies in its unorthodox treatment of the logic of essence, "which can be typified in the phrase 'the essence must appear as something other than itself'" (Murray, 1983:496). I do not pretend that such statements concerning the organic nature of the social, the internal relationship between the social relations and their concepts, will solve every problem within development theory. For example, at no stage have I attempted to address the concerns raised by feminist scholar's. Furthermore, I do not believe that the ideas presented here can be taken as endorsing any definitive approach to the study of capitalist development in the periphery. However, what they can do is clear "the ground a little, and remove some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge" (Locke in Bhaskar, 1989:vii).

To conclude by returning to the question, 'What is the state?' it is important in determining the possibilities and impossibilities of capitalist state formation not to make the mistake of viewing every activity of the state as the manifestation of something already contained in its essence. In order to avoid this mistake, historical materialism needs to recognize the origins of theoretical concepts in forms of experience, which may in turn misrepresent the social relations they seek to understand. With the present thesis, I have sought to demonstrate that arising from the 'division' of politics and the economy are the conditions of existence for a phenomenally separate state, independent from the association between owners of private property. This 'semblance of independence' is not the manifestation of a separate, or 'relatively autonomous' sphere of social life, but is rather the political-juridical expression of the opposition between state and labour, whose selfsame economic expression is the opposition between capital and labour. Just as capital represents the appropriation of labour in an alien form, the 'idea of the state' represents the socialization of labour in an alien, capitalist form.

The actual form and content of the realization of this possibility is never fixed and varies from society to society. Careful historical analysis is thus required, which conceptually reconstructs the genesis of the state's constitutive parts. Such an analysis would trace the

progressive detachment of such social forms as law, bureaucracy and the apparatus of policing from the conditions which prevented them from being carried out as matters of specific private concern, and their centralization as moments in the socialization of labour without equivalent. Even though at this level of abstraction this process cannot be anticipated, it is not an unreasonable starting point for a historical materialist theory of state formation, and can therefore be used as a 'guiding thread' to historical analysis.

In Chapter Five I suggested that not all forms of appearance assumed by the politico-juridical relations of capital are 'modern'. Just as the categories of apparently 'traditional' economic relations do not disappear with the emergence of capital, but become the general categories of the latter's surface appearance, Marx's analysis of the relationship between the "isolated individual" and the modern political state needs to be qualified along similar lines. Put otherwise, there is nothing necessarily 'non-capitalist' or 'semi-capitalist' about traditional forms of identity, culture and power. For example, a legislated 'Council of Chiefs' (as in Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands), is a social form perfectly consistent with capitalist social relations of production. However, as a general category of capital's surface appearance, there is always an essential difference, in that it is its relationship to the whole - in this case, the political

manifestation of the capitalist social relations - which determines its individual significance. Thus, as social forms the modern state may assume, the inner-content of traditional forms of power will undergo a transformation in the functions they are called upon to perform. However, as this transformation is manifested within the inner-content of these forms, it may not necessarily be given at the immediate level of experience. Establishing this essential difference is, as I understand it, the object of a historical materialist theory of state formation.

Bibliography

Concerning the works of Marx, Marx and Engels, and Lenin the date cited is that of writing rather than publication.

Abbreviations:

C.W. Marx, K and Engels, F. Collected Works, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975 onward, to comprise 50 vols. Cited as C.W plus volume number and page number.

S.C Marx, K and Engels, F: Selected Correspondence, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1975. Cited as S.C plus page number.

Works Sited:

Abrams, P. (1988) 'Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State'. The Journal of Historical Sociology, Vol.1 No.1 pp 58-89.

Acton H.B. (1962) The Illusion of the Epoch. London: Cohen and West.

Aguilar, F.V. (1989) 'The Philippine Peasant as Capitalist:

Beyond the Categories of Ideal Typical Capitalism'. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol.17 No. pp41-67.

Althusser, L. (1969) For Marx. London: Allen Lane.

Althusser, L and Balibar, E. (1979) Reading Capital. London: Verso.

Anderson, B. (1983) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso.

Anderson, P. (1974) Passages From Antiquity Feudalism. London: New Left Books.

Anderson, P. (1974a) Lineages of the Absolutist State. London: New left Books.

Anderson, P. (1983) In the Tracks of Historical Materialism. London: New Left Books.

Balibar. (1979) 'On the Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism'. In Althusser, L and Balibar, E. Reading Capital. London: Verso.

Banaji, J. (1977) 'Modes of Production in a Materialist Conception of History'. Capital and Class, No.3.

Bernstein, H. (1979) 'Sociology of Underdevelopment Versus

Sociology of Development'. In Lehmann, D (ed). Development Theory: Four Critical Essays. London: Frank Cass.

Bernstein, H. (1982) 'Industrialization, Development, and Dependence'. In Alavi, H and Shanin, T (eds). Introduction to the Sociology of Developing societies. London: Macmillan Press, 1982.

Bhaskar, R. (1986) Scientific Realism and Human Emancipation. London: Verso.

Bhaskar, R. (1989) Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy. London: Verso.

Bloch, M. (1961) Feudal Society (Vol.1.) London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Booth, D. (1985) 'Marxism and Development Sociology: Interpreting the Impasse'. World Development, Vol.13 No.7 pp761-787.

Brenner, R. (1977) 'The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism'. In Alavi and Shanin (eds), Introduction to the Sociology of Developing Societies. London: Macmillan Press.

Brenner, R. (1985) 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe'. In Aston, T and

Philpin, C (eds). The Brenner Debate. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brenner, R. (1989) 'Bourgeois Revolution and Transition to Capitalism'. Beier, A, Cannadine, D and Rosenheim, J (ed). The First Modern Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Callinicos, A. (1982) Is There a Future for Marxism?. London: Macmillan Press.

Callinicos, A. (1985) Marxism and Philosophy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Callinicos, A. (1987) Making History: Agency, Structure and Change in Social Theory. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Callinicos, A. (1990) 'The Limits of 'Political Marxism''. New Left Review, No.184, pp110-115.

Carver, T. (1975) 'A Commentary on Marx's Introduction (1857) to the 'Grundrisse''. In Carver T(ed), Karl Marx Texts on Method. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Clarke, S. (1979) 'Socialist Humanism and the Critique of Economism'. History Workshop 8, Autumn pp138-156.

Cohen, G. (1978) Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence.

London: Oxford University Press.

Colletti, L. (1972) From Rousseau to Lenin: Studies in Ideology and Society. London: New Left Books.

Colletti, L. (1977) 'A Political and Philosophical interview'. In New Left Review (ed), Western Marxism: A Critical Reader. London: New Left Books.

Comninel, C. (1987) Rethinking the French Revolution. London: Verso.

Corbridge, S. (1990) 'Post-Marxism and Development Studies Beyond the Impasse'. World Development, Vol.18 No.5 pp623-639.

Corrigan, P. (1977) 'Feudal Relics or Capitalist Monuments? Notes on the Sociology of Unfree Labour'. Sociology, Vol.11 pp435-463.

Corrigan, P and Sayer, D. (1978) 'Hindess and Hirst: A Critical Review'. The Socialist Register. London: Merlin.

Corrigan, P. Ramsay, H. and Sayer, D. (1980) 'The State as Relation of Production'. In Corrigan, P (ed). Capitalism, State Formation and Marxist Theory. London: Quartet Books.

Corrigan, P and Sayer, D. (1981) 'How the Law Rules:

Variations on Some Themes in Karl Marx'. In Fryer, B. Hunt, A. McBarnet, D and Moorhouse, B. (eds). Law, State and Society. London: Croom Helm.

Corrigan, P and Sayer, D. (1985) The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Corrigan, P and Sayer, D. (1987) 'Revolution Against the State: The Context and Significance of Marx's Later Writings'. Dialectical Anthropology, No.1 Vol.12 p65-82.

Denis, C. (1989) 'The Genesis of American Capitalism: An Historical Inquiry'. The Journal of Historical Sociology, Vol.2 No.4 pp342-356.

Engels, F. (1884) The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. London: Lawrence and Wishart 1977.

Engels, F. (1890) 'Letter to Schmidt'. S.C pp472-475.

Engels, F. (1890a) 'Letter to Bloch'. S.C pp475-477.

Engels, F. (1894) 'Preface to Capital Volume Three'. In Marx, K. Capital Volume Three. London: Penguin Books, 1981.

Foucault, M. (1979) Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1982) 'Afterword: The Subject and Power'. In Dreyfus, Hans Rabinow, P (eds). Michael Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Sussex: Harvester Press.

Frank, A. (1969) Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution?. New York: Monthly review Press.

Frank, A. (1971) Sociology of Development and Underdevelopment of Sociology. New York: Pluto Press.

Giddens, A. (1979) Central Problems in Social Theory. London: Macmillan Press.

Giddens, A. (1981) A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism. London: Macmillan.

Gibbon, P and Neocosmos, M. (1985) 'Some Problems in the Political Economy of African Socialism'. In Bernstein, H & Campbell, B (eds). Contradictions of Accumulation in Africa: Studies in Economy and State. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Godelier, M. (1972) Rationality and Irrationality in Economics. London: Verso.

Godelier, M. (1972a) 'Structure and Contradiction in Capital'. In Blackburn, R (ed). Ideology in Social Science.

London: Fontana.

Geras, N. (1988) 'Ex-Marxism Without Substance: Being reply to Laclau and Mouffe'. New left Review, No.169 pp36-61.

Hilton, R. (1984) 'Feudalism in Europe: Problems for Historical Materialists'. New Left Review, No.147 pp84-93.

Hindess, B and Hirst, P. (1975) Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hindess, B and Hirst, P. (1977) Mode of Production and Social Formation. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hindess, B. (1978) 'Classes and Politics in Marxist Theory'. In Littlejohn, G et. al. (eds), Power and the State. London: Croom Helm.

Hirst, P. (1977) 'Economic Classes and Politics'. In Hunt, A (ed), Class and Class Structure. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hirst, P. (1985) Marxism and Historical Writing. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Hobsbawm, E. (1965) 'Introduction'. In Marx, K. Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations. New York: International Publishers.

Hobsbawm, E. (1983) 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions'. In Hobsbawm, E and Ranger, T (eds) The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jessop, B. (1990) State Theory: Putting Capitalist States in their Place. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Johnson, R. (1982) 'Reading for the best Marx: History-writing and Historical Abstraction'. In Johnson, R. McLennan, G. Schwarz, B and Sutton, D (eds), Making Histories. Birmingham: Hutchinson and Co.

Kitching, G. (1987) 'The Role of a National Bourgeoisie in the Current phase of Capitalist Development: Some Reflections'. In Lubeck, P (ed), The African Bourgeoisie: Capitalist Development in Nigeria, Kenya, and the Ivory Coast. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Laclau, E. (1971) 'Feudalism and Latin America'. New Left Review, No.67 pp19-38.

Laclau, L and Mouffe C.(1985) Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. London: Verso.

Lenin, V. (1901) 'What the "Friends of the People" Are'. Collected Works, Vol.1. Moscow: Progress Publishers (1960).

Lenin, V. (1915) Philosophical Notebook. Moscow: Progress Publishers (1960).

Lenin, V. (1916) 'Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism'. Selected Works, Vol.1. Moscow: Progress Publishers (1970).

Lenin, V. (1916a) 'Letters From Afar'. Collected Works, Vol.23. Moscow: Progress Publishers (1964).

Lenin, V. (1917) 'The State and Revolution'. Collected Works, Vol.25. Moscow: Progress Publishers (1964).

Lenin, V. (1919) 'The State'. Collected Works, Vol.29. Moscow: Progress Publishers (1965).

Lenin, V. (1908) 'Materialism and Empiriocriticism'. Collected Works Vol.14, Moscow: Progress Publishers (1972).

Levin, R and Neocosmos, M. (1989) 'The Agrarian Question and Class Contradictions in South Africa: Some Theoretical Considerations'. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol.16 No.2 pp230-258.

Lipietz, A. (1982) 'Marx or Rostow?'. New Left Review, No. 132 pp48-58.

Lipietz, A. (1987) A Mirages and Miracles: The Crises of

Global Fordism. London: Verso.

Mandel, E. (1967) The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx. London: New Left Books.

Marsden, R. (1992) 'Responses and Rejoinders, 'The State': A Comment on Abrams, Denis and Sayer'. The Journal of Historical Sociology, Vol.5 No.3 pp358-377.

Marsden, R. (1993) 'The Politics of Organizational Analysis'. Organizational Studies, Vol.14 No.1 pp92-124.

Marx, K. (1843) 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law'. C.W vol.3 pp3-129.

Marx, K. (1843a) 'On the Jewish Question'. C.W vol.3 pp146-174.

Marx, K and Engels, E. (1844) 'The Holy Family'. C.W vol.4 pp9-211.

Marx, K and Engels, F. (1846) The German Ideology. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Marx, K. (1846a) 'Letter to P.V. Annenkov, 28 December'. S.C pp5-20.

Marx, K. (1847) 'The Poverty of Philosophy'. C.W vol.6

pp105-212.

Marx, K. (1847a) 'Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality'. C.W vol.6 pp312-340.

Marx, K and Engels, F. (1848) 'The Manifesto of the Communist Party'. C.W vol.6 pp484-519.

Marx, K. (1852) 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte'. C.W vol.11 pp99-197.

Marx, K. (1853) 'The British Rule in India'. C.W vol.12 pp125-133.

Marx, K. (1853a) 'The Future Results of British Rule in India'. C.W vol.12 pp217-222.

Marx, K. (1857) 'General Introduction to Grundrisse'. In

Marx, K. (1858) Grundrisse. London: Allen Lane, 1973.

Marx, K. (1858a) 'Letter to Engels', 2 April. S.C pp 105-110.

Marx, K. (1859) 'A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy'. C.W vol.29 pp261-265.

Marx, K. (1865) Capital Volume Three. London: Penguin

Books, 1981.

Marx, K. (1867) Capital Volume One. London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1930.

Marx, K. (1867a) 'Letter to Engels, 24 August'. S.C pp226-227.

Marx, K. (1868) 'Letter to Kugelmann, 11 July'. S.C pp245-247.

Marx, K. (1868a) 'Letter to Engels, 8 January'. S.C pp231-233.

Marx, K. (1871) 'The Civil War in France'. C.W vol.22 pp311-359.

Marx, K. (1877) 'Letter to the Editor of the Otyecetvenniye Zapisky, End of 1887'. S.C pp352-355.

Marx, K. (1878) Capital Volume Two. London: J.M Dent and Sons, 1930.

Marx, K. (1880) 'Notes on Adolph Wagner'. In Carver, T (ed). Karl Marx: Texts on Method. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975.

McLennan, G. (1981) Marxism and the Methodologies of

History. London: Verso.

McLennan, G. (1989) Marxism, Pluralism and Beyond.
Cambridge: Polity Press.

McLennan, G. (1991) 'Post-Marxism and Retro-Marxism:
Theorizing the Impasse of the Left'. Sites, No.23 pp46-62.

Mouzelis, N. (1980) 'Modernization, Underdevelopment,
Uneven Development: Prospects for a Theory of Third World
Formations'. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol.7
pp353-374.

Mouzelis, N. (1981) 'Teleology and Uneven Development: A
Reply to Taylor'. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol.8.

Mouzelis, N. (1988) 'Sociology of Development: Reflections
on the Present Crisis'. Sociology, Vol.22 No.1 pp23-44.

Mouzelis, N. (1990) Post-Marxist Alternatives. London:
Macmillan Press.

O'Leary, B. (1989) The Asiatic Mode of Production. Oxford:
Basil Blackwell.

Palma, G. (1981) 'Dependency and Development: A Critical
Overview'. In Seers, D (ed) Dependency Theory: A Critical
Assessment. London: Pinter.

Pashukanis, E. (1924) Law and Marxism: A General Theory. London: Ink Link, 1978.

Poulantzas, N. (1975) Political Power and Social Classes. London: New Left Books.

Rubin, I. (1928) Essays on Marx's Theory of Value. Detroit: Black and Red, 1972.

Runciman, W. (1963) Social Science and Political Theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sahlins, M. (1974) Stone Age Economics. London: Tavistock.

Sayer, D. (1975) 'Method or Dogma in Historical Materialism'. Sociological Review, Vol.23 No.4 pp779-810.

Sayer, D. (1977) 'Pre-Capitalist Societies and Contemporary Marxist theory'. Sociology, Vol.2 No.11 pp149-153.

Sayer, D (1979) 'Science as Critique: Marx vs. Althusser'. In Mepham, J and Ruben, D (eds), Issues in Marxist Philosophy (Vol.3). Sussex: Harvester Press.

Sayer, D. (1983) Marx's Method. Sussex: Harvester Press.

Sayer, D. (1987) The Violence of Abstraction. Oxford: Basil

Blackwell.

Sayer, D. (1990) 'Reinventing the Wheel: Anthony Giddens, Karl Marx and Social Change'. In Clark, J and Mogdil C, and J, (eds). Anthony Giddens: Consensus and Controversy. London: Falmer Press.

Sender, J. (1980) 'Introduction'. In Warren, B. Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism. London: Verso.

Sutcliffe, B. (1972) 'Imperialism and Industrialisation in the Third World'. In Owen, R and Sutcliffe, B (eds). Studies in the Theory of Imperialism. London: Longman.

Taylor, J. (1979) From Modernization to Modes of Production. London: Macmillan Press.

Taylor, J. (1981) 'Underdevelopment and Modes of Production: A Reply to Nicos Mouzelis'. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol.8 No.3 pp381-393.

Thompson, E. (1965) The Making of the English Working Class. London: Victor Gollinscz.

Thompson, E. (1975) Whigs and Hunters. London: Allen Lane.

Thompson, E. (1978) The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays. London: Merlin.

Vandergeest, P and Buttel, F. (1988) 'Marx, Weber, and Development Sociology: Beyond the Impasse'. World Development, Vol.16 No.6 pp683-695.

Wallerstein, I. (1974) The Modern World System. New York: Academic Press.

Warren, B. (1973) 'Imperialism and Capitalist Industrialization'. New Left Review, No.81 pp3-42.

Warren, B. (1980) Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism. London: Verso.

Weber, M. (1961) General Economic History. London: Macmillan.

Wolpe, H. (1980) 'Introduction'. In Wolpe, H (ed), The Articulation of Modes of Production. London: Routledge and Kegan & Paul.

Wood, E. (1981) 'The Separation of the Economic and the Political in Capitalism'. New Left Review No.127 pp66-95.

Wood, E. (1990) 'Falling Through the Cracks: E.P. Thompson and the Debate on the Base and Superstructure'. In Kaye, J and McClelland, K (ed). E.P. Thompson, Critical Perspectives. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wood, E. (1990a) 'Explaining Everything or Nothing'. New Left Review, No.184 pp116-128.

Wright, E.O. Levine, A and Sober, E. (1992) Reconstructing Marxism. London: Verso.