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**Marx, Realism and Foucault:
An Enquiry into the Problem of
Industrial Relations Theory**

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Department of Industrial Relations and Organisation Behaviour
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For

Richard Hyman

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Declaration

Some of the ideas expressed in this thesis were worked out in an earlier form.

- An earlier version of Chapter 2 was presented at the Annual Realism and the Human Sciences Conference, St Catherine's College, Oxford University, July, 1992.
- Part of Chapter 5 was published as pp. 107-116 of my 'The Politics of Organizational Analysis'. *Organization Studies*, vol. 14, no.1, 1993: 93-124.
- An earlier version of the concluding parts of Chapters 3 and 6 were published as my 'The State: A Comment on Abrams, Denis and Sayer'. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 5, no. 3, September 1992: 358-377.

Summary of Thesis

This thesis constructs a model of the material causes of the capacity of individuals to act at work, by using the ontology of scientific realism to facilitate a synthesis between Marx and Foucault. This synthetic model is submitted as a solution to the long-standing problem of Industrial Relations theory, now manifest in the deconstruction of the organon of 'control'.

The problems of 'control' are rooted in the radical concept of power and traditional, base/superstructure, interpretations of Marx. Developing an alternative to the last provides the means of transcending the limitations of the first and the second. A realist, chronological-bibliographic reading of Marx provides an alternative to traditional interpretations, by creating a novel concept of his object, his initial explicandum and his putative explicans. This reading identifies a fresh problem with his model of capital: it cannot explain how labour is organized into a productive power and subsumed to capital.

Foucault provides the means of resolving these deficiencies of Marx's explicans. A realist interpretation turns Marx and Foucault around to face each other, renders them compatible and establishes points of contact between their work. Together they constitute a model of the operative logic of production relations capable of explaining the organization of labour, its subsumption to capital and the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state. On this basis, the contemporary form of the problem of Industrial Relations theory is explained.

Chapter 1

The Problem: The Thesis

Introduction

This thesis is the culmination of research that began as an investigation into the long-standing problem of Industrial Relations theory (henceforth, 'IR'). This proved to be a Pandora's box of problems. Unpacking them led me to develop a model of power by using the ontology of scientific realism to facilitate a synthesis between Marx and Foucault. This Chapter reconstructs the development of my thinking, from the initial problem to its putative solution.

The most immediate and striking feature of the problem of IR theory is the unmistakable *déjà vu* feeling it elicits. It is periodically rediscovered, the field is surveyed and the anxious theorist is reassured that, yes indeed, there is a theory—or even theories—of IR (Dabscheck 1983; Adams 1988). The problem subsides and life goes on as before, until the next wave of *angst* over the seeming absence of a credible theory of IR. This periodicity is important to note, for it points to the shifting nature of the problem of IR theory and suggests a stationary, intractable and hitherto undiscovered cause.

Rather than rehearse this large, impressive and familiar repertoire¹ I shall begin by condensing my understanding and assessment of it into a series of propositions, each of which stimulate a further question. These propositions and questions provisionally define

¹See, for example, Akroyd (1974), Adams (1988), Allen (1971), Banks (1970), Blain (1978), Bray and Littler (1988), Bray and Taylor (1986), Brocklesby (1983), Brown (1978), Clegg (1975), Dabscheck (1983), Dunlop (1977), Edwards (1986,1989), Fatchett and Wittingham (1976), Flanders (1975), Fox (1966, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1979, 1985b), Gabriel (1978), Giles and Murray (1988a), Goodman and Armstrong (1975), Guille (1984), Hare (1943), Hill and Thurley (1974), Hyman (1975a, 1978, 1980, 1982a), Kerr (1978), Kirkbride (1985), Laffer (1968), Littler et al. (1989), LSE (1974), Lumley (1979), Marsden (1982), McNulty (1968), Roche (1986, 1991), Schienstock (1981), Shimmin and Singh (1973), Singh (1976), Strauss and Feuille (1978), Whyte (1965), Winchester (1983), Wood et al. (1975), Wood (1976, 1979).

the contemporary nature of the problem of IR theory. Much could be, and has been, written contesting these and similar propositions. I pose them starkly however, to declare my stance, because I consider them to have been sufficiently well-established elsewhere and because I believe the key to understanding the cause of the problem of IR theory lies in their interrelationship, not their minutiae.

Although the problem of theory is a leitmotif to the history of the study of labour, contemporary discussion has focussed on the 1970s' critique of the Oxford School approach to the study of IR in Britain and the ensuing radical alternative (Bugler 1968; Lawrence 1979; Clegg 1990; Allen 1971; Fox 1966, 1974, 1985b; Hyman 1975a, 1975b, 1977, 1978). This alternative remains the touchstone and inspiration of those who aspire to extend this critique to the orthodox approaches still practiced in North America and Australasia, where its pertinence is acknowledged (Strauss and Feuille 1978; Brocklesby 1983; Bray and Taylor 1986; Giles and Murray 1989). For this reason, I take as my reference point, and assume the reader is familiar with, the radical critique of the Oxford School.

The Problem of IR Theory: A Provisional Statement

Proposition 1 *The work of Richard Hyman is of singular importance to understanding the problem of IR theory (Hyman 1971, 1972, 1975a, 1975b, 1977, 1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1982a, 1982b, 1987, 1989a, 1989b, Hyman and Brough 1975, Hyman and Fryer 1975).*

This is true for two reasons:

- a. He is unique in critiquing each facet of the Oxford School: rule/regulation, empiricism, pluralism, and pragmatism (Wood 1979: 48).
- b. He reconceptualized IR away from the study of rules, or job regulation, and towards the study of the processes of control over work relations (Hyman 1975: 12).

This much is recognised: but what is the connection between his critique and his alternative?

Proposition 2 *Despite their obvious differences, there are many similarities between (a) traditional IR and the radical alternative, (b) the Oxford School and the Warwick School (Wood and Elliot 1977; Fox 1979; Clegg 1979; Winchester 1983; Lilja 1983; Griffin 1986; Zeitlin 1987; Clegg 1990).*

a. Traditional and radical approaches examine the same range of things, but evaluate them differently. As Fox (1979: 105) acknowledges, much work remains to be done on the relationship between traditional (pluralist) IR and its radical alternative.

b. Whatever its more recent interests, the establishment of the Industrial Relations Research Unit at Warwick, in 1970, consolidated the research tradition of the Donovan Commission, which was heavily influenced by the Oxford School (Lilja 1983).

These similarities, between traditional and radical IR, the Oxford School and the Warwick School, are often noted: but what is their cause?

Proposition 3 *The radical alternative to the study of IR is subsumed under labour process analysis and the organon of 'control'.*

The 1970s' radical critique of IR was part of a broader critique which was worked through several 'discourses of production,' blurring their disciplinary boundaries and creating common ground among them: the organon of 'control' (Cohen 1989). The radicalization of IR theory (Allen 1971; Hyman 1975a; Fox 1974, 1985b) coincided with the discovery of the 'labour process' in Marx, via Braverman (1974). Workplace IR and labour process became synonymous. Such was the strength of association between 'control' and 'labour process' that 'control of the labour process' was construed as the *modus operandi* of workplace IR for a generation of radical scholars. This—note—despite the fact that 'control' scarcely appears in Braverman (1974).

What, then, stimulated the association between 'control' and 'labour process'?

Proposition 4 *The radical critique of traditional IR and the alternative of 'control' have exhausted their possibilities. This is evident in criticisms of labour process analysis (Cressey and MacInnes 1980; Littler and Salaman 1982; Burawoy 1984, 1985; Kelly 1985; Storey 1985, 1989; Edwards 1986; Thompson 1986; Friedman 1987; Cohen 1987; Bray and Littler 1988; Knights and Willmott 1990; Littler 1990).*

These criticisms suggest that 'control' cannot adequately:

- a. explain who is controlled, by whom, how and why,
- b. explain the dual-nature of production, i.e., the coexistence of creation and alienation, empowerment and repression, cooperation and resistance,²
- c. establish the relationship between the micro and the ⁹micro, the subjective and the objective, the internal and the external, agency and structure, an economic workplace and political state,
- d. define 'labour process'.

These problems are often noted: but what is their cause?

Proposition 5 *The radical critique of traditional IR is flawed. Its weaknesses resolve into the problematic relationship between IR and Marxism (Wood 1976; Hill 1976; Wood and Elliot 1977; Oostermeyer 1978; Hyman 1980; Marsden 1982; Griffin 1986; Edwards 1986; Foster 1989).*

The most systematic, influential and popular Marxist approach to the study of IR remains Hyman (1975a). Given this, I want to draw attention to three points:

²This problem of explaining the dual-nature of production is evident in the widespread rejection of Marx's concept of the relationship between the formal and the real subsumption of labour to capital. I discuss this in detail in Chapter 4.

- a. Hyman stresses the book's provisional and tentative nature, the product of 'one individual's insights and interpretations at a particular point in time' (Hyman 1975a: 6), and hopes it will be rendered redundant by 'stimulating more, and better, Marxist scholarship in IR' (Hyman 1975a: x).
- b. Hyman significantly modifies and qualifies his earlier position in a 1980 essay which acknowledges the problematic relationship between Marxism and IR and questions the ability of the first to explain the last.
- c. Any assessment of the relationship between IR and Marxism must acknowledge Paul Edwards's attempt to develop a non-Marxist materialist approach to the study of work relations (Edwards 1986). I note, without comment, the following features of this approach:
 - i. it makes no direct reference to any work by Marx, nor does it engage with Hyman's Marxist concept of IR, but is influenced by Cohen's (1978) defence of traditional Marxism, and
 - ii. this operationalisation of traditional Marxism is remarkable for being described as an attempt 'to turn around the whole [labour process] area and repossess it for mainstream IR' (Foster 1989: 235).

In little over ten years, then, there has been a movement from an overtly Marxist approach to IR (Hyman 1975a), to a more circumspect '*towards* a materialist analysis' (Hyman 1980, my emphasis), to Paul Edwards's overtly non-Marxist materialist approach to the study of work relations (Edwards 1986). I make these points to emphasise the provisional, problematic, and unfinished nature of the debate between Marxism and IR.

What is the cause of the problem between IR and Marxism?

Proposition 6 *It is impossible to isolate the problem of IR theory.*

A seeming prerequisite of investigating the problem of IR theory is the ability to demarcate it from other disciplines and *their* theoretical problems—e.g., industrial sociology, organizational analysis, labour process analysis, human resource management (henceforth, ‘HRM’)—each concerned with a similar substantive area: the organization and control of production (Hyman 1982a; Donaldson 1985; *OS* Symposium 1988; Knights and Willmott 1990; Keenoy 1990a, 1990b; Marsden 1993). This is increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

These discourses do not simply coexist, they succeed and subsume each other: organizational analysis subsumed industrial sociology (Burawoy 1979: 6 and xiii; Hyman 1982b), labour process analysis subsumed radical IR, and HRM *attempts* to subsume traditional IR (Keenoy 1990a 1990b; Guest 1987 and 1991). These discourses of production can be considered horizontally—side-by-side above production—and vertically—as superimposed layers or sediments. The problem of IR theory is only partly visible, buried beneath subsequent developments, such as labour process theory and the ‘new’ HRM. However, if we take the view that each discourse manifests an underlying common problem—the nature of which I aim to discover—then ‘control’ may provide an entrée. But what is the nature of this common problem?

Control, Power and Theory

The critique of the Oxford School created a radical analysis of IR which was subsumed by labour process analysis and the organon of control—now itself subject to heavy criticism. The contemporary form of the problem of IR theory is the crisis of ‘control’. I shall argue that the limitations of the organon of control are rooted in (a) the radical concept of power, which grew out of the critiques of empiricism and pluralism, and (b) the interrelated

problems of defining the object of investigation ('IR') and determining its means of analysis ('theory'). I argue these points in turn and, in the process, establish a connection between these propositions.

a. The organon of control is rooted in the radical concept of power, which grew out of the critiques of empiricism and pluralism.

Control is the use of power. The concept of power operationalised by the organon of control is the radical version condensed by Steven Lukes (Lukes 1974).³ The innovation of the radical concept of power is the notion of real or objective interests: 'A exercises power over B when A effects B in a manner contrary to B's interests' (1974: 34). To advance this argument, it is necessary to ask: From whence came the radical concept of power? It grew out of the interrelated critiques of pluralism and empiricism (Miliband 1973; Hyman 1975a, 1978). The pluralist concept of power is based on an empiricist epistemology: the actual or threatened use of sanctions is regarded as an experimental test of power (Hyman 1978: n. 36). The critique of empiricism widened the scope of enquiry to latent, unobservable conflict and to the role of ideology in shaping perceptions and preferences contrary to the real interests of those who hold them. For this reason, the radical concept of power and the concept of ideology are interdependent and mutually-supportive.

This concept of power, in terms of objective interests and subjective misconceptions, owes much to base/superstructure interpretations of Marx. Object-ive interests are located in the economic base; subject-ive perception of these interests is obscured by an ideological superstructure (Burawoy 1984: 27). Marxian analysis of their conflicting real interests deduced an imperative, at the point of production, for capital to control labour and for labour to resist that control. The radical concept of power is the connection, noted in Proposition 1,

³The radical concept of power was summarised and condensed—not *created*—by Lukes.

between Hyman's critique and his alternative. 'Control' developed within IR via his critique of the pluralism and empiricism of the Oxford School. It was because the discovery of the 'labour process' within Marx coincided with the emergence of the radical concept of power that 'control of the labour process' became the object of study for a generation of radical scholars (Proposition 3).

The radical formulation of power, in terms of control vs. resistance, is regularly confounded by empirical evidence, which consistently shows that managers are seldom interested in control *per se* and that workers are often complicit in the practices radical analysis suggests they should be resisting (Burawoy 1979; Cressey and MacInnes 1980; Storey 1980 and 1983; Edwards 1986). The radical concept of power certainly improves upon the pluralist concept of power, but criticisms of 'control' suggest that a residuum needs explaining:

i. the coexistence within production of creation and alienation, empowerment and repression, cooperation and resistance:

Calm surfaces with barely a political ripple disturbing them, just as much as scenes of heroic struggle to the political death are something to be explained, not something to be taken for granted (Clegg 1989b: 111).

ii. the relationship between between the micro and the micro, the subjective and the objective, the internal and the external, agency and structure, an economic workplace and political state. *

b. The deficiencies of the organon of control are rooted in two interrelated problems, which permeate the literature on IR theory: (a) defining the nature of the object of investigation ('IR') and (b) determining its means of analysis ('theory').

Tucked away in a footnote to Hyman's 1980 circumspect review of the troubled relationship between IR and Marxism is a clue to the cause of the limitations of 'control' and the radical concept of power. It is the ill-defined nature of 'IR' which makes any 'search for a radical redefinition of "IR" ... self-defeating':

The formulae 'processes of control over work relations' *fails* ... because the principles of inclusion and exclusion which determine the normal usage of the term 'industrial relations' are themselves theoretically inadequate (Hyman 1980: 55, n. 20, my emphasis).

I interpret this to mean that the problem of 'control' is the ill-defined nature of 'IR'. There is a relationship between the problem of understanding *what* is controlled and explaining *how* it is controlled. This argument applies with equal force to labour process and organizational analysis.⁴

I want to suggest that the problem of theorizing *about* IR is a problem between epistemology and ontology, i.e., between determining the means of analysis ('theory') and defining the nature of the object of investigation ('IR'). Traditionally, this relationship is understood within a theory/practice dichotomy. Theory is opposed to practice, equated with the impractical, often pejoratively labelled 'sociology' and construed as a threat to the disciplinary integrity of IR (Eldridge 1975; Wood 1976; Roche 1986; Wood and Elliot 1977). The critique of empiricist epistemology in IR, during the 1970s, demolished this theory/practice dichotomy by demonstrating the conceptual-mediation of observation (Hyman and Fryer 1975; Hyman 1975a, 1978). But the problem remains in two other forms. First, recognition of the impossibility of theory-neutral observation undermined confidence in empirical work, lest it be tainted with 'empiricism,' and encouraged a retreat into the relative safety of 'theory'. This problem is most evident in abstract, Marxist approaches to IR: 'the integrity of Marxist analysis is indeed inversely related to the specificity of the concrete issues which concern the student of IR' (Hyman 1980: 127). Second, a mistaken belief that observation is conceptually-*determined* led IR to lapse into relativism: all paradigms are equally valid perspectives, immunised against criticism by their apparent incommensurability. This problem is evident in the remarkably peaceful coexistence of unitary, pluralist and radical perspectives towards IR. Relativism drew the

⁴For example, Craig Littler (1990: 77) notes: 'there is still no clear conceptualisation of the labour process itself, nor of its fundamental elements'. For a discussion of the problem of defining 'organization,' see Burrell and Morgan (1979), Clegg and Dunkerley (1980), *Organization Studies* Special Issue (1988) and Marsden (1993).

teeth of the radical critique, which was accommodated as but another perspective towards the same object.

I have condensed my understanding and assessment of the problem of IR theory into a series of propositions which point to the limitations of the organon of 'control': an inability to explain the dual-nature of production and to connect a series of dichotomous spheres. I have argued that these limitations are rooted in the radical concept of power upon which 'control' is based, base/superstructure interpretations of Marx and the difficulty of determining what is controlled (ontology) and how it is controlled (epistemology). I propose this as a provisional statement of the contemporary nature of the problem of theory which continues to dog—not only IR—but also labour process analysis, organizational analysis and, more recently, HRM.

But this tell us little. What sort of a problem is it and how might it be analysed and resolved? To define the problem more precisely and to identify its means of analysis I believe it is necessary to clarify the relationship between epistemology and ontology and, thereby, establish criteria by which theorizing *about* IR can be evaluated. We cannot reasonably assess existing IR theory and develop our own until we understand the nature of theory and theorizing.

I aim to do so by explicating the ontology of scientific or critical realism and developing its epistemological and methodological implications. While realism has steadily grown in influence over the past thirty years, it has made little headway in IR. For this reason, some introductory remarks about this ontology may be helpful.

1. I am interested in realism because I believe it provides the means of transcending the limitations of the radical concept of power and, thereby, the problems of theory I have identified in the organon of control. These means are contained in its understanding of the relationship between objects and models, causation and explanation, pure and applied research. It is my purpose in this Chapter to extract these means. In doing so, I will propose that the problem of IR theory be analysed using a novel form of inference—retroduction.

2. It is important to be clear: realism is not a prescription for a changed natural scientific practice. Rather, it claims to make explicable what natural scientists have *always* practiced and to correct philosophical misconceptions of that practice.

3. Realism is especially relevant to the social sciences because it provides an alternative model of scientific practice to the positivism that has been so thoroughly debunked. I think the current lack of such an alternative is an important component of the problem of theory in IR, and elsewhere.

4. The applicability of realism to the problem of IR theory, as formulated in this thesis, is contingent on the validity of naturalism, i.e., a belief that social objects can be studied in the same way as natural objects. It might be claimed that this is a philosophical problem which has been solved by realists (Bhaskar 1978b, 1989a, 1989b). However, I shall point to a problem with their supposed solution and argue that it is an integral component of the problem of IR theory. This problem concerns the relationship between realism and its supposed social scientific exemplar—Karl Marx. I postpone an examination of this issue until late in the Chapter because, to understand it, it is first necessary to establish realism *per se*. Suffice to note, at this point, that the debate over naturalism has hitherto been conducted on positivist terms and that realism entirely changes these terms.

4. Realism is not without its critics.⁵ I am one of them. Rather than present and respond to these criticisms, my account of realism attempts to anticipate them and remove their grounds. This is particularly evident in my development of the epistemological and methodological implications of realism.

I first present the ontology of realism, explain its relevance to the problem of power, and then develop its epistemological and methodological implications. On this basis, I return to my provisional statement of the problem of IR theory and build on Jeffrey Isaac's use of realism to critique the three 'faces' of power, set out in his *Power and Marxist Theory: A Realist View* (Isaac 1987a).

The Ontology of Realism and the Nature of Power⁶

The ontology of realism is founded on the belief that the ultimate objects of scientific investigation—e.g., quarks, DNA, magnetic and gravitational fields—are not merely convenient fictions: they really exist and act independently of our knowledge of them. Like all philosophies, realism is difficult to define and summarize because it developed in opposition to alternative positions and is woven into the broad fabric of philosophy. We can best establish what realism *is* by saying what it is not. Realism developed as a critique of and an alternative to the positivist understanding of explanation and the empiricist understanding of causation. I begin, therefore, by describing these.⁷

⁵See, for example, Chalmers (1988), Lovering (1990), Shoter (1990), Burawoy (1987), Saunders (1986), Saunders and Williams (1986).

⁶The following account of realism draws on Keat and Urry (1975), Bhaskar (1978a, 1979, 1986, 1989a, 1989b), Harré (1972), Sayer (1984) and Outhwaite (1987).

⁷A note on terms. I am aware that 'empiricism' and 'positivism' are contested. My concern here is to present a clear and accessible account of realism, not to engage the debate over the meaning of these terms. To this end, I employ the basic distinction between the ontology of empiricism and the epistemology of positivism. They are often confused. All positivists are empiricists, but not all nonpositivists are nonempiricists.

Positivism is a theory of knowledge or epistemology. It is based on the belief, among positivist philosophers, if not scientists, that the ideal form of explanation is a deductive-nomological argument (henceforth, 'D-N'). In such an argument, the event to be explained or predicted is deduced from a universal, covering law and a set of conditions. To use Outhwaite's (1987: 7) example, the freezing of a car radiator is explained by the general law governing the behaviour of water plus the low temperature last night. The relationship between the explicans (premisses) and the explicandum (conclusions) of a D-N argument is one of logical necessity.⁸ Thus:

explicans (premisses)	water freezes at 0° C (law)
	it was freezing last night (condition)
explicandum (conclusion)	therefore, the water in the car radiator froze

The positivist concept of the D-N form of inference has the following corollaries:

- a. scientific method entails observing regularities between types of events, formulating hypotheses about these conjunctions, testing them by observation and experiment, and presenting results as proven laws from which further deductions can be made.
- b. explanation and prediction are symmetrical: the premisses of a D-N argument, laws and antecedent conditions, are a basis for both predicting an event yet to occur and for explaining that event after its occurrence.
- c. the logic of discovery, one's reasons for proposing an hypothesis, and the logic of proof, one's reasons for accepting it as true, once suggested, are identical.

⁸Given their frequent appearance in this thesis, these terms are worth defining: Explicandum—"The fact, thing or expression to be explained or explicated". Explicans—"The explanatory part of an explanation; in the analysis or explication of a concept or expression, the part that gives the meaning" (O.E.D.).

Any theory of knowledge presupposes a theory of being or ontology. Positivism presupposes an empiricist ontology. Empiricism is based on the belief that (a) the real objects of scientific investigation are objects of actual or possible experience, and (b) a Humean, constant-conjunction understanding of causality, according to which causation is a relationship between discrete events, cause and effect. The positivist understanding of explanation is rooted in a Humean understanding of causality, 'according to which all we can ever observe is the constant conjunction of events, such as freezing temperatures and burst radiators' (Outhwaite 1987: 7). Laws, which form one part of the explicans in a D-N argument, are statements about Humean regularities. We observe that water freezes when its temperature falls to 0°C and formulate a law that when the latter happens, so does the former (Outhwaite 1987: 21). This understanding of causation and explanation is important to note for it is the centre around which the debate between accounts of natural and social science has revolved and it is the target of the realist critique.

We can contrast positivism and realism thus: Positivism asks, How is knowledge to be verified? Realism reverses the question: let us assume that science is valid—after all, planes fly, atomic bombs explode; what must the world be like for scientific activity—experiments, the application of scientific knowledge, scientific education—to be necessary? I consider them in turn, drawing on Bhaskar (1978a).

a. The Experiment

The experiment is important because it is the point of intersection between the empiricist understanding of causality and the positivist understanding of explanation. A positivist law is based on a constant conjunction of events which are reproduced in an experiment. These events do not occur on their own, however, but as a result of the conditions of the experiment. They are made by the scientist, not given in nature. The experimenter produces a pattern of events to identify the mode of operation of a natural mechanism, but does not

produce the mechanism itself. For experimental activity to be intelligible, therefore, the natural mechanism and the empirical regularities by which it is identified must be independent, ontologically distinct, entities. The object of experimental activity cannot be events and their conjunctions, as the positivist supposes, but must be the structures and mechanisms which generate them.

b. The Application of Scientific Knowledge

Although knowledge of natural mechanisms is established in experimentally closed conditions, it is applied in open systems devoid of constant conjunctions. We must assume, then, that these mechanisms exist and act outside of the conditions by which they are identified. Scientific laws cannot refer to constant conjunctions; they must refer to the activity of causal mechanisms, which exist independent of any particular sequence of events or particular outcome of that activity. If this were not the case, we must conclude either that science has discovered no laws or that nothing governs phenomena in open systems.

c. Scientific Education

Experimental activity involves sense perception. Only if we perceive something do we experience it. It is to develop their powers of recognition that people undergo a lengthy education to become scientists. Just as structures and mechanisms are distinct from the patterns of events they generate, so events are distinct from our experience of them. In a world without people there would be no experiences and few, if any, constant conjunctions, but things would continue to act.

Bhaskar concludes that experimental activity, the application of experimental knowledge and the necessity of scientific education presuppose two pairs of ontological distinctions: between (a) structures/events and (b) events/experiences. Put another way, we can distinguish between three ontologically-distinct levels of reality:

1. real, non-empirical, networks of organically-connected *structures* ('the real'),
2. which take the form of *events* ('the actual'),
3. some of which are conceptually-mediated in *experience* ('the empirical').

Hence, 'the empirical is only a subset of the actual, which is itself a subset of the real' (Bhaskar 1989a: 190). Bhaskar's use of 'real' in this context is unfortunate because he is 'not saying that experiences are *less* real than events, or events less real than structure' (Bhaskar 1978a: 58).

The ultimate objects of scientific enquiry are not patterns of events, but the structures and mechanisms that generate the flux of empirical phenomena. These objects are real, but rarely manifest and, more rarely still, empirically identified. They are intransitive and structured. Intransitive, in that they exist independent of human activity. Structured, in that mechanisms, events and experiences are interrelated, but distinct and irreducible: structures can exist but counteract and so produce no actual events, and events can occur without being experienced (Bhaskar 1989a: 16). It is normally only in the laboratory, argues Bhaskar, where the scientist intervenes to trigger the mechanism under study and prevent interference with its operation, that causal mechanisms, whose operation is described in laws, become manifest and empirically accessible (Bhaskar 1978a: 46). Only when the ontological stratification of reality is recognised can we understand the effort involved—'in experimental design and scientific education'—to make human experience epistemically significant in science (Bhaskar 1978a: 35).

This, then, is what the natural world must be like for science to be necessary.

The ontological stratification of the world, into the real, the actual, and the empirical, is the basis for realism's rejection of positivism and empiricism. The objection to the positivist account of explanation rests on a rejection of its basis, the Humean understanding of

causation. Realism substitutes a 'natural necessity' understanding of causation, according to which an object's capacity to act, or power, is intrinsic to its internal structure and mechanisms (Harré and Madden 1975). The nature or constitution of an object and its causal powers are interrelated: 'A plane can fly by virtue of its aerodynamic form, engines, etc., gunpowder can explode by virtue of its unstable chemical structure ... If the nature of an object changes then its causal power will change too; engines lose their power as they wear out' (Sayer 1984: 96). Given the stratification of reality, this capacity to act—or power—exists independently of its exercise, and of experience of the conjunctions of its phenomenal forms. Causal powers may exist unexercised, be exercised unrealised, and realised unperceived or undetected (Bhaskar 1989a). Whether a causal power is activated and what effects it ~~has~~ is contingent upon the conditions in which it works, e.g., gunpowder must be dry for it to explode. It is for this reason, that when we activate a mechanism we ensure that the conditions are those which will have the desired effect (Sayer 1984). ✕✕

It is important to understand that the positivist concept of the D-N form of inference is founded on the Humean concept of a causal law. If this constant conjunction understanding of causality is invalid, then events cannot be deduced from covering laws of the type, 'if A, then B,' and the positivist concept of the D-N form of argument is invalid. This type of inference, the realist argues, confuses reasons for expecting an event to occur with an explanation of *why* that event has occurred. Discovery of a regular relationship between two kinds of phenomena certainly gives us reason to believe that they are causally connected, but the realist also wants to know the intervening mechanisms which generate the phenomena we are trying to explain (Keat and Urry 1975). A D-N argument establishes relations of logical necessity between explicans (premisses) and explicandum (conclusions). It provides a way of logically deriving the explicandum statement from the explicans statement, but it does not tell us what determines or produces the explicandum event. A realist argument attempts to discover the relations of *natural* necessity that exist in the physical world, i.e., to

explain the real underlying mechanisms, and their conditions of operation, which generate the phenomena we are trying to explain. For realism, therefore, constant conjunctions are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the existence of a causal law (Bhaskar 1978a). It is because of these objections to the empiricist concept of causation and the positivist concept of explanation that realism rejects the D-N form of inference. I want, however, to add a note of qualification. I have two objections to the positivist concept of the D-N form of inference. First, it assumes that it is adequate for both the discovery of laws and their empirical testing. Second, it operationalises an erroneous concept of law. I shall later argue that, provided we distinguish between discovery and proof and substitute a realist for an empiricist concept of law, the D-N argument is a valid form of inference which can be invoked to elaborate and test theories—if not to create them.

Realism, Epistemology and the Nature of Theorizing

Realism is not a theory of knowledge. It is a theory of being. We can expect it to have epistemological consequences, but it is questionable if these have been developed as much as we might hope. Realism's success in undermining the ontological foundations of positivism has not been matched by success in developing an alternative epistemology and method. I want to piece together such an alternative by establishing a connection among the following disparate elements: the realist concept of natural necessity (Bhaskar 1978a; Harré and Madden 1975), the retroductive mode of inference (Hanson 1958, 1961, 1969a and b), analogical reasoning (Tsoukas 1991), the criterion of 'interest' (Davis 1971), the D-N form of inference and retrodiction and prediction. An understanding of their interrelationship, I shall argue, clarifies the nature of theory and theorizing in a way which is helpful to a more precise formulation of the problem of IR theory.

For the moment, I am concerned with the process of *creating* hypotheses or theories, not with their subsequent empirical application and testing. The positivist account of the D-N

mode of reasoning, it should be noted, assumes discovery and proof are sides of the same process, because it assumes that the only logical reason for proposing an hypothesis is that certain considerations lead one to think it is true (Hanson 1958: 1076). But these assumptions are wrong. Typically, an hypothesis is proven long after its creation, by different people. D-N accounts begin with the hypothesis as given; they say nothing about the process of discovery in science.⁹ Indeed, as I shall show, for the realist, the D-N form is logically incapable of explaining the creation of hypotheses about causal laws, for two reasons. First, a law cannot be inferred by reasoning from the particular to the general, because a law is not a summary of data: it is an explanation of data (Hanson 1958: 1082). Second, scientists do not create laws by reasoning from hypothesis to observation statements: they create them by reasoning from problem to putative explanation. It is because of the mistaken assumption that discovery and proof are different ways of looking at the same process that little is known about the actual process of theory construction. This neglect leaves the impression that discovery is an inexplicable process attributable only to individual inspiration. For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to rectify this impression. I want to make a start by establishing a connection between realist ontology and ‘retroduction’: an additional type of inference, first identified by Aristotle and developed by Peirce and Hanson, ‘that develops from some commonly accepted proposition until reasons are found that may alter the acceptance or understanding of the original proposition’ (O.E.D.)¹⁰ To understand retroduction, it is necessary to distinguish between the logic of inquiry or discovery, i.e., one’s reasons for entertaining an hypothesis as plausible; and the

⁹These accounts ‘begin with the hypothesis as given, as cooking recipes being with the trout as given. In an occasional ripple of culinary humour, however, recipes sometimes begin with “First catch your trout”. The [D-N] account describes a recipe physicists often use after catching hypotheses. However, the ingenuity and conceptual boldness which mark the whole history of physics show more clearly in the ways in which scientists *caught* their hypotheses, than in the ways in which they elaborated these once caught’ (Hanson 1958: 1083). My primary interest, in this thesis, is with the ‘catching’ of hypotheses.

¹⁰I have developed this argument from an observation by Derek Sayer: ‘there is, I think, a clear connection between the realist view of explanation as the elucidation of (real) structures and mechanisms and the retroductive account of theory construction developed by Pierce and Hanson’ (Sayer 1979a: 174, n. 15). Sayer admits to not having ‘worked out’ this connection. I attempt to do so here.

logic of proof, i.e., one's reasons for believing that the referent of the hypothesis actually exists and acts in the postulated way. Not only may these reasons differ, they typically have a different logical form: retroduction, and retro- and pre-diction (Hanson 1958). I examine them in turn. I concentrate on the first because my primary concern in this thesis is the logic of discovery.

Retroduction: The Logic of Discovery

What are the characteristics of reasoning behind the original suggestion of an hypothesis?¹¹ Hanson notes that all important scientific reasoning is *a posteriori*. Scientists do not reason from explicans to explicanda, but from explicanda to explicans. A theory is built-up 'in reverse'—retroductively; it is 'a cluster of conclusions in search of a premiss' (Hanson 1958: 90). A retroductive inference takes this form:

1. some surprising phenomena, P_{123} , are observed
2. P_{123} would be explicable *if* H were true
3. hence, there is reason to think H is true¹²

The realist ascribes cause by invoking real, and sometimes invisible, entities whose characteristics, properties and powers are capable of explaining the problematic phenomena. For the realist, then, retroduction is a mode of inference by which empirical things are explained by postulating (and, subsequently, demonstrating) the existence of real generative mechanisms. A realist retroductive argument takes this form:

1. some surprising phenomena, P_{123} , are observed
2. P_{123} would be explained *if* H were to exist and act in the postulated way
3. hence, there is reason to think H exists and acts in this way.

¹¹I construe an hypothesis as a provisional theory and, as I explain below, a theory and a model are the same. I therefore use 'hypothesis,' 'theory,' and 'model' interchangeably in this thesis.

¹²This is adapted from Hanson (1958: 1086-1087). As Hanson notes, the surprise may be the fact that the phenomena are at variance with existing theories.

This inference is not a deduction, since *H* is not contained in *P*₁₂₃. Nor is it an induction, since *H* will not emerge from any number of repetitions of *P*₁₂₃. *H* is not an empirical generalisation at all: it is a putative explicans (Sayer 1979a: 116). Although there is no logical necessity between *P* and *H*, retroduction is nonetheless a form of logical inference, ‘asserting its conclusions only problematically, or conjecturally, it is true, but nevertheless having a perfectly definite logical form’ (Peirce, cited in Hanson 1958: 1087). Hanson’s distinction between the three forms of inference is worth noting: ‘deduction proves that something *must* be; Induction shows that something *actually is* operative; [Retroduction] merely suggests that something *may be*’ (Hanson 1961: 85).

To sustain the connection between realism and retroduction, I shall argue that the last is a mode of inference consistent with the natural necessity understanding of causation of the first: the logic of the retroductive argument attempts to replicate or model the logic of the object under investigation. The connection I wish to establish rests on the following realist requirement of an explanation:

answers to why-questions (that is, to requests for causal explanations) require answers to how- and what-questions. Thus, if asked *why* something occurs, we must show *how* some event or change brings about a new state of affairs To do this, it is necessary to discover *what* the entities involved are: to discover their nature or essences (Keat and Urry 1975: 31).

Knowledge of *what things are* is produced by modelling; knowledge of *how things act* is produced by devising laws. I consider the nature of models and laws in turn, then the process of modelling or theorizing.

A model attempts to represent the nature of the object postulated in explanation of the explicandum. Realism refers to modelling as epistemic or ‘object constitution’ (Outhwaite 1983): ‘to conceptualise in opposition to the empirical *melange*, a non-empirical but real (stratified) subject of enquiry, designating the proper focus of scientific thought’ (Bhaskar 1986: 105, n.4). Modelling is done by making ‘real’ (as opposed to positivism’s nominal) definitions, i.e., statements which attempt to describe the constitution of the postulated

object, the basis of its causal powers. For example, 'a real definition of water would be that its molecules are composed of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen' (Outhwaite 1987: 45). The abstractions of modelling (or 'object constitution') are not generalisations from the empirical, nor are they concepts under which similar categories of events are grouped: they are attempts to designate the necessary connections between internally- or organically-related elements of an object. A theory is a model with existential commitments, in which the posited entities and described mechanisms, which may well be nonempirical, are conceived as real. On this basis, the theory/model distinction collapses, for both attempt to describe the internal structure of objects. Henceforth, I shall use 'theory' and 'model' interchangeably. The important distinction is between a theory or a model and a law, which I consider next.

Once we know an object's constitution, i.e., what it is, we can hypothesize about its capacity to act or power, i.e., what it has done, can do, and may do. Knowledge of an object's capacity to act is expressed in laws. A law is a statement which makes a claim about the capacity to act of some mechanism. It does not make any claims regarding the exercise of that capacity on any particular occasion (Bhaskar 1978a: 95). It is because knowledge of 'how' is based on knowledge of 'what' that modelling or object constitution is a vital part of scientific discovery.

According to this juxtaposition of realism and the retroductive mode of inference, when faced with a problem, the scientist conjectures about objects which, *if* they were to exist and act in the postulated way, would explain the explicandum. How does this help us understand the process of theorizing? Any number of things *could* exist, so how are theoretical conjectures created and by what criteria do we choose among competing conjectures? I want to answer these questions by establishing a connection between retroduction, analogical reasoning and the criterion of 'interest'. This connection is based on recognition that a

prerequisite of knowing a nonempirical object, and how it can act, is the ability to envisage the possibility of its existence—literally, to *imagine* it: ‘form a mental image or concept of, picture to oneself (something nonexistent or not present to the senses’ (C.O.D.). Imagination is stimulated and guided by interest and analogy. Let me explain.

Interest is ‘a quality exciting or holding the attention’ (C.O.D.). To stimulate interest, a theoretical conjecture must question what we take-for-granted and recognise as the empirical. Interest is a tension between theoretical knowledge, distilled into a conjecture, and empirical knowledge, distilled into an assumption. Recognition of interest is a stimulus to uncover the conditions of existence of the questioned assumption and to work through the implications of the newly awakened doubt by explaining the tension (Weick 1989: 525). This works at successive levels of reality. As knowledge deepens and a new stratum of reality is discovered, it becomes the phenomenon to be explained, *ad infinitum*, as explanations are sought at increasingly deeper strata. If we construe the empirical as the observable and observation as conceptually-mediated, then we must recognise that the empirical world is fuzzy, changing with our theoretical knowledge.

This understanding of ‘interest’ helps explain two characteristics of theorizing. First, theorists are usually pleased and non-theorists are usually worried when their assumptions are questioned (Weick 1989: 525). Second, the impact of a theory has little to do with its truthfulness:

It has long been thought that a theorist is considered great because his theories are true, but this is false. A theorist is considered great, not because his theories are true, but because they are *interesting* ... a theory can continue to be found interesting even though its truth is disputed—even refuted! (Davis 1971: 309).

Since the referent of *H* typically cannot be directly observed, initial insights into the nature of objects are generated by analogy, i.e., by reasoning from the known, the empirical or the source, to the unknown, the theoretical or the target. Analogy is a form of inference consistent with retrodution (Harré 1972). A model is typically created via analogical

reasoning, which aids the imagination by bestowing objects with ‘existential plausibility’ (Tsoukas 1991; Bhaskar 1986: 55 and 68). The theorist models by designing, conducting and interpreting ‘imaginary experiments,’ in which the model is a surrogate for the imagined object (Weick 1989: 519).

Let me now return to the relationship between logical and natural necessity, between retrodution and realism. The aim of theorizing is to ensure that relations between the concepts constituting the model correspond to relations between elements constituting the postulated object. Theorizing or modelling is the creation of those real definitions which refer most accurately to their presumed ontological referents. A model is plausible when its logical structure mirrors that of the imagined object: modelling is a search for symmetry between object and model. It is for this reason that the criteria invoked most often in the imaginary experiments of theoretical work are aesthetic: a model is plausible when it is beautiful (Weinberg 1992).¹³

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Finally, the interrelationship between the realist conception of causality and the retroductive conception of explanation has two implications for concept formation. First, the internally-related nature of objects dictates that our concepts of them be flexible and interdefined, rather than mutually-exclusive or externally-related. Second, because theory maps real relations, rather than simply provides a framework for ordering observation, and because an understanding of what a thing is, is a prerequisite to understanding what that thing can do, conceptual precision and careful description is critical.

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¹³Beauty: ‘a combination of qualities that pleases the intellect or moral sense’ (C.O.D.). I support this claim below with reference to the discovery of the double helix. See also n. 15.

Retrodiction and Prediction: The Logic of Proof

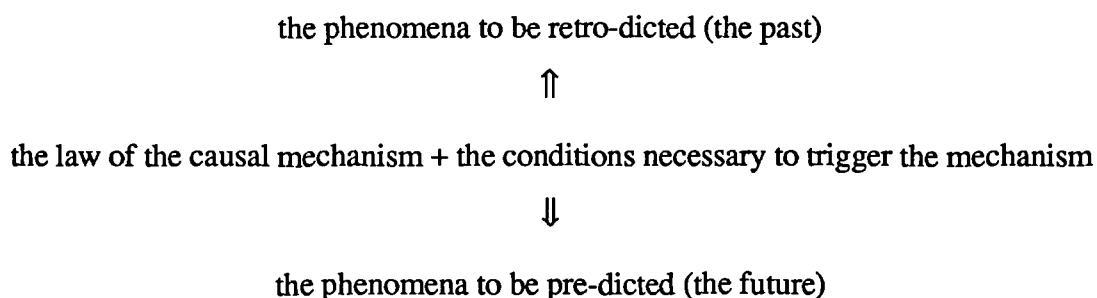
Let us assume that we have retroduced the existence of an object and, via imaginary experiments, developed a plausible and aesthetically pleasing model of its causal mechanisms. What makes it reasonable to propose *H* is analogical. Analogy, however, cannot establish the truth of a model: whether the postulated real object is like our model can be decided only by empirical testing (Bhaskar 1989a: 20). Though imagined for theory construction, the reality of hypothetical entities must be demonstrated as the explicandum is explained. There are two ways by which retroduced theories can be empirically applied and tested: (a) retrodiction, ‘the explanation or interpretation of *past* action or events inferred from the laws that are assumed to have governed them’ (O.E.D., my emphasis), and (b) prediction, ‘the action of predicting or foretelling *future* events’ inferred from the laws that are assumed to govern them (O.E.D., my emphasis). Let me develop the meaning of these terms by examining the root of these prefixes: dicta or dictum. A dictum is a statement in a modal proposition. A modal proposition is an expression of modal logic. And modal logic is a logic of necessity and contingency, of ‘must be’ and ‘may be,’ between a hypothetical premiss and a hypothetical conclusion (O.E.D.). Retro- and pre-dictions are modal propositions: they make claims about the relationship between a causal law and past and future events.

Remarkable little is said about retrodiction in the literature on realism. Considerably more is said in criticism of the D-N form of inference and its more obvious corollary—*prediction*. This imbalance has left the impression that prediction should be rejected as a test of the veracity of a theory and an ambiguity as to the nature of its replacement. I suggest that this imbalance is one reason for the difficulty in recognising the practical utility of realism. To correct this imbalance, I want to make the following points.

First, it is notable that Hanson, on whom I have relied to separate the logics of discovery and proof, rejects the D-N form of inference *only* as an explanation of discovery in science. This form continues to be helpful, he insists, in elaborating a theoretician's retrodeduced hypothesis or theory (Hanson 1958: 1081).

Second, I see no reason why the elaboration of a retrodeduced theory by D-N arguments should not generate predictions nor why these predictions should not be used to test the theory's veracity—provided we substitute a realist for an empiricist concept of law. A prediction is a deduction, from a law, of what will logically follow if both (a) the mechanisms referred to by a law, and (b) the conditions necessary to activate or trigger the mechanisms exist. The experiment is designed to test the law by creating the conditions which trigger the mechanisms to which it refers. If the prediction fails to materialise then either the conditions were not successfully created or some part of the law must be erroneous. In the last case, since the law encapsulates the theory, the theory itself must be revised to explain the unfulfilled prediction, or, failing this, rejected.

Third, it is important to understand that prediction and retrodiction have the same—deductive nomo-logical—form. What matters is the logical necessity between the law, its necessary conditions and the pre- or retro-diction: 'the temporal issue is irrelevant' (Sayer 1979a: 140). Thus:



Causal laws have governed the past, just as they will govern the future; and past and future events are equally admissible as evidence of the veracity of a (realist-type) law. A D-N argument, based on a retroduced law, is equally capable of predicting the future and retrodicting the past, and both are acceptable tests of the veracity of the operationalised law.

Regardless of whether we use a theory to retrodict the past or to predict the future behaviour of an object, it will be accepted as true to the extent that it satisfied the following criteria:¹⁴

a. Consistency

The theory should be internally consistent. The propositions which constitute the theory must not contradict each other. Having retroduced the existence of the object, therefore, its model must be systematically elaborated and the model's inner consistency examined for logical contradictions.

b. Exhaustiveness

To be a plausible conjecture a theory must explain at least some of the phenomena posing the initial difficulty. To be accepted as true, the explicans must be developed until the residuum resisting explanation is accounted for and the explicandum is fully explained.

c. Independence

The explicans must be tested in explanation of phenomena independent of those which constitute the original explicandum. 'If *H* is meant to explain *P*, then *H* cannot itself rest on the features in *P* which required explanation' (Hanson 1961: 88). To use Hanson's example, an hypothesis about the colour and odour of atoms of chlorine (*H*) cannot be tested by reference to the peculiar colour and odour of chlorine (*P*) (Hanson 1961: 88).

¹⁴These criteria come from Hanson (1958 and 1961), by way of Sayer (1979a).

Interpretation and application of these criteria will vary according to the science and its object, in two senses: First, no science can demand more precision than its object allow (Isaac 1987a: 12). Second, the test of a theory must be so constructed that the result is causally dependent on the nature of the object, rather than by following a preordained 'scientific method'.

Retrodiction, generating theoretical knowledge of the necessary power of structures, and retrodiction and prediction, generating concrete knowledge of their contingent modes of operation, are distinct explanatory tasks which are usually conducted by distinct groups of people, pure and applied scientists, who possess different dispositions and skills. Nevertheless, realism conceives science as a continuous process which consists of these stages:

- a. identification and description of the explicandum, i.e., formulating the nature of the problem;
- b. retroducing the existence of an imagined object and developing a plausible model of its capacity to act or power;
- c. checking the reality of the postulated object and its causal mechanisms via retrodiction and prediction, whereupon
- d. it becomes the phenomenon to be explained, *ad infinitum*.

The essence of science

lies in the movement at any one level from knowledge of manifest phenomena to knowledge ... of the structures which generate them. As deeper levels of reality are successfully identified, described and explained, knowledge at more superficial levels is typically revised, corrected or more or less drastically recast, issuing in a characteristic pattern of description, explanation and redescription for the phenomena understood at any one level of reality (Bhaskar 1986: 63).

This completes my account of the ontology of scientific realism and its epistemological and methodological implications.

An Illustration: The Double Helix

I now want to extrapolate and develop the main points of the preceding realist account of theorizing. As a means to this end, I shall criticise Phillips and Pugh's (1987) account of scientific method in *How to Get a Ph.D.* It is important to do so, for several reasons. First, their book translates the D-N form of argument, which I have just criticized as an acceptable logic of discovery, into 'a practical, realistic understanding of the process of doing research for a doctoral degree' (back cover). I propose to examine the problem of IR theory using the retroductive mode of inference. It is prudent, to say the least, for this Ph.D thesis to defend its advocacy of retroduction in the face of their positivist prescriptions (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 13). Second, while their book does not pretend to be an authority on epistemology and its philosophical suppositions can easily be undermined, this still leaves the question: what is the equivalent realist guide to theorizing? The philosophy of realism offers little practical guidance on this matter. In criticizing Phillips and Pugh, I intend to forge some rules of theorizing which can be operationalised in this thesis. Third, I believe Phillips and Pugh misrepresent the scientific method. What I have to say by way of correction will have a substantive impact on my analysis of the problem of IR theory, in particular, my interpretation of Marx. Finally, I want to comment on their interpretation of the discovery of the structure of the DNA molecule for, much later in the thesis, I shall develop an analogy between this structure and the object structuring the capacity to act at work.

The influence of the D-N form of argument is evident in Phillips and Pugh's conflation of the method of discovery with the method of verification and their conflation of the process of research with its product (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 13-15). This double conflation leads them to construe scientific method as a way of 'writing-up' research, rather than a way of carrying it out, and to construe the process of research as a mysterious and inexplicable 'behavioural-psychological' process. To illustrate the distinction between 'writing up' the

‘output’ of science and the ‘behavioural psychological’ process that produces it, Phillips and Pugh contrast Crick and Watson’s paper, in which they published their model of the DNA, with Watson’s *The Double Helix*, in which he explains their discovery of the structure of this molecule (Watson 1968). I shall argue to the contrary: this contrast illustrates my preceding account of theorizing. I want to make the following points in support of this contention:

1. The ‘output’ of Crick and Watson’s research is a 900-word paper, typed on a Saturday afternoon, and published in *Nature* (Watson 1968: 221-222). Their method, what Phillips and Pugh call a ‘psychological behavioural process,’ is described in Watson’s *The Double Helix*, which begins: ‘Here I relate my version of how the structure of the DNA was discovered’ (Watson 1968: xi). *How* Crick and Watson discovered the structure of the DNA molecule is precisely their method. How they did it tells us something both of the then state of biology and how the DNA molecule works. This is why *The Double Helix* is a ‘fascinating book’ (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 15), and why the path of reasoning—or rather, the logic of the process it depicts—is every bit as important as its terminal. Part of Watson’s motive in writing *The Double Helix* was to correct the widespread misconception of ‘the scientific method’: ‘I believe, there remains general ignorance about how science is “done”’ (Watson 1968: xii). ‘As I hope this book will show, science seldom proceeds in the straightforward logical manner imagined by outsiders’ (Watson 1968: xi). It is precisely because the imaginative process of discovery is mystified, by practical guides such as *How to Get a Ph.D.*, that reflexive accounts such as *The Double Helix* are necessary.¹⁵

¹⁵This comment of the physicist, Richard Feynman, to James Watson on a draft of *The Double Helix* is worth noting: ‘Don’t let anybody criticize that book who hasn’t read it through to the end The people who say “that is not how science is done” are wrong ... When you describe what went on in *your* head as the truth haltingly staggers upon you and passes on, finally fully recognized, you are describing how science *is* done. I know, for I have had the same beautiful experience’ (Feynman to Watson, cited in Gleick 1992: 386).

2. Phillips and Pugh reduce the method of discovery to the method of verification or empirical testing; Watson clearly distinguishes between them. Crick and Watson discovered the structure of the DNA, but did not demonstrate its existence. It was empirically verified only later, by other people. It was Maurice Wilkins and his collaborators, not Crick and Watson, who 'established beyond any doubt that the essential features of the double helix were correct' (Watson 1968: 225); and Rosalind Franklin 'who extended our qualitative ideas about helical construction into a precise quantitative picture' (Watson 1968: 226).

3. No empirical testing was involved in the discovery of the structure of DNA. Crick and Watson's conceptual innovation of the double helix was achieved by imaginary, not empirical, experiments: 'Francis and I were going to solve the DNA structure by model building' (Watson 1968: 130). In place of pen and paper and conceptual writing, however, Crick and Watson's 'main working tools were a set of molecular models superficially resembling the toys of preschool children' (Watson 1968: 50). Their conjectures were judged according to aesthetic criteria. For example: 'uniquely beautiful' (ibid: 36), 'elegant' (ibid: 75), 'too pretty not to be true' (ibid: 210), 'the beautiful new structure' (ibid: 213) and 'when she [Rosalind Franklin] had done something very pretty' (ibid: 226)

4. Their model had an impact not because it was true, but because it was 'interesting'. Watson comments on Linus Pauling, a competitor in the race to discover the structure of the DNA: his 'language was dazzling and full of rhetorical tricks' (Watson 1968: 38). One of his rhetorical tricks was use of the criterion of 'interest,' which Watson and Crick self-consciously borrow and use in the opening lines of their famous article in *Nature* (Watson 1968: 38 and 222): 'This structure has novel features which are of considerable biological interest' (Watson 1968: 222, my emphasis).

I make these points because ‘we cannot improve the theorizing process until we describe it more explicitly, operate it more self-consciously and decouple it from validation more deliberately’ (Weick 1989: 516). Conflating discovery with verification, construing scientific method as ‘a way of *writing up* research rather than a way of carrying it out’ (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 15, their emphasis), construing carrying it out as an inexplicable psychological-behavioural process rather than—what it is—an analogical-retroductive process of imaginative thought, is a problem because it hinders an understanding of the dialectic between thinking and its expression (in words, symbols, images) in the retroductive process of discovery. This is especially debilitating to an understanding of theorizing in the social sciences, where the internal relations of an object can be expressed only in words and where modelling takes the form of conceptual writing, editing and revision.

These connections are belatedly recognised by Phillips and Pugh, not under ‘scientific method’ (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 13-15), however, but under ‘writing the thesis’ (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 58-62), where they acknowledge that: ‘*If it is the case that writing leads to discovery and not, as is generally supposed, that discoveries merely need to be put into writing, this may in part account for the experience of writing the thesis as the most difficult part of the work*’ (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 59, my emphasis). To foster an understanding of the connection between writing and discovery and to maintain the distinction between discovery and verification, I shall condense the preceding discussion of analogical-retroductive and deductive-nomological reasoning into the following realist rules of theorizing, to be operationalised in the remainder of this thesis:

Some Rules of Theorizing

1. A theory is a model with existential commitments, not simply a framework for ordering observation.
2. Modelling is the creation of those real definitions that refer most accurately to their presumed ontological referents. It is a process of mentally sifting and selecting the pieces that fit the model. Modelling is editing.
3. Theorizing is driven by the desire to discover plausible explanations to interesting problems.
4. The logic of discovery, reasons for suggesting H as a plausible hypothesis, and the logic of proof, reasons for accepting H as a true explanation, may differ.
5. The logic of discovery is not deductive-nomological (Phillips and Pugh 1987: 13, after Popper), but analogical-retroductive (Bhaskar 1986: 61, after Aristotle, Pierce and Hanson).
6. The analogical-retroductive process of discovery is a dialectic between thinking and its expression in words, symbols and images. It operates according to the principle: 'How do I know what I think, until I see what I say?' (E.M Forster, cited in Cheney 1983)
7. The logic of proof is deductive-nomological. Prediction and retrodiction share this logical form.
8. The retroductive mode of inference is not an inexplicable 'psychological-behavioural' process, but 'proceeds according to definite and formulable rules, within which the hunch, the insight, the flash of Archimedean inspiration have to operate' (Sayer 1979a: 115). It can, therefore, be reconstructed and evaluated.
9. Theorizing is stimulated and guided by interest and analogy and adjudicated by aesthetic criteria.
10. Creating conjectures, via imaginary experiments, is as important as testing them, via empirical experiments.
11. An interesting, but false, theory may be as valuable as a dull, but true, theory.
12. 'Interest' signals a tension between theoretical knowledge, distilled into a conjecture, and empirical knowledge, distilled into an assumption.

13. What makes it reasonable to propose *H* is analogical in character. Analogies cannot establish the truth of a model, only empirical testing can.

14. A theory will be accepted as true to the extent that it satisfies the criteria of consistency, exhaustiveness and independence.

15. The result into which the logic of discovery disappears is not the conclusion of a D-N argument, it is a conceptual model depicting the causal mechanism of some object. It is this model that must be 'written-up'.

Retroduction is a free movement of imaginative thought limited only by the nature of the object under investigation. An explicandum is a cluster of conclusions in search of a premiss (Hanson 1958). For these reasons: (a) the introduction to an investigation can be written only when it is concluded, and (b) the logic and shape of the investigation is the mirror image of the logic and shape of the object. Therefore, (c) explicating the logic of the investigation and formulating the problem are sides of the same retroductive process, and (d) the formulation of a problem contains the means of its resolution. By explicating the logic of my inquiry, therefore, I can formulate the problem of IR theory more precisely and identify its means of resolution. To this I now turn.

A Cluster of Conclusions in Search of Premiss

Earlier in this Chapter, I provisionally formulated the problem of IR theory in terms of a residuum resisting explanation by analyses which operationalise the radical concept of power. I suggested that the deficiencies of 'control' are related to the problematic relationship between ontology and epistemology, i.e., the difficulty of defining the object of investigation ('IR,' i.e., what is controlled) and determining its means of analysis ('theory,' i.e., explaining how it is controlled). I now want to use the preceding account of realist ontology and its epistemological implications to formulate more precisely the nature of this

'cluster of conclusions in search of a premiss' and to identify its means of resolution. I shall do so by advancing a series of conjectures.

Conjecture 1 *Like the other 'faces' of power (Lukes 1974), the radical concept of power is rooted in an empiricist ontology (Isaac 1987a). This shared ontology, which remains unscathed by the critique of its corresponding epistemology, is the cause of the similarities between traditional and radical approaches to the study of IR, between the Warwick School and the Oxford School, and the deficiencies of 'control.'*

The critique of traditional IR took issue with its pluralist concept of power and its empiricist epistemology, but it left unscathed the ontology they express. Radicalism and pluralism agree on two, related points. First, causality is a matter of regular conjunctions between temporally and spatially distinct events, cause and effect, or *A* and *B*. Second, if the behaviour of *A* regularly antecedes the behaviour of *B*, then *A* is more powerful than *B* (Isaac 1987a). Radical analysis retains pluralism's $A \Rightarrow B$ formulation of power, but differs in two respects. First, it has different assumptions about the real or objective interests of labour and capital, based on a different—radical or Marxist—analysis of society. Pluralism construes interests as shared or, at least, reconcilable; radicalism construes interests as conflicting. This difference is set out in Fox (1974) and Hyman (1975a): 'between these two classes there exists a radical conflict of interests, which underlies everything that occurs in industrial relations' (Hyman 1975a: 23). Second, on the basis of this understanding of conflicting interests, radical analysis differs from pluralist analysis in imputing to *A* the motive to control the behaviour of *B*, and in imputing to *B* the motive to resist. This shared understanding of causality between pluralist and radical concepts of power is, I suggest, the basis of the oft-noted similarities between pluralism and radicalism, between the Oxford School and the Warwick School (Wood and Elliot 1977; Lilja 1983; Zeitlin 1987).

This 'control vs. resistance' schema is contradicted by empirical studies which reveal the dual-nature of production relations: the coexistence of creation and alienation, empowerment and repression, cooperation and resistance (Cressey and MacInnes 1980; Edwards 1986). Let me cast this problem retroductively using Hanson's schema—'some surprising phenomena, P_{123} , are observed'. In this case, the surprising phenomena are the unexplained dual-natured organization of production. This surprises because it is at variance with existing theory—with what I have called the organon of control and the radical concept of power. It is this variance that has stimulated criticism of 'control' and led some to abandon labour process analysis. Let me identify this as part of the explicandum of the thesis. What needs explaining is the mechanism responsible for the dual-nature of production, the coexistence of empowerment and repression, creation and alienation, cooperation and resistance.

Conjecture 2 *The ontology of realism provides the basis of a concept of social power with the capacity to transcend the limitations of the radical concept of power and 'control'.*

To advance this conjecture, I must tackle the question postponed thus far: Can society be studied in the same way as nature? (Bhaskar 1989a: 66). The debate stimulated by this question has been dominated by a disagreement between two positions: naturalism, a belief that there is a unity of method between natural and social science, and anti-naturalism, a belief that they have very different methods because of the contrasting nature of their objects, nature and society. In assessing this debate, it is important to note that both sides have accepted the positivist account of natural science, together with its implicit ontology. Anti-naturalists have been less concerned with developing an alternative to empiricist theories of existence and causality, than with limiting positivism's intrusions into social science and developing an alternative (hermeneutic) method. They have ceded natural science to positivism. Realism's conception of the practices of natural science entirely

changes the terms of the debate and warrants a reconsideration of the question of naturalism (Bhaskar 1989a and b).

The realist, anti-positivist, naturalist argument has two main components: (a) there is not one criterion for the ascription of reality to postulated objects, but two—perceptual and causal (Bhaskar 1989b: 194, n. 16); (b) social objects are as real as natural objects, not because we can perceive them, but because they have causal powers (Isaac 1987a). Much depends here on what we mean by ‘social object’. I use the term to refer to a matrix of purposeful activity regulated by a structure of internal relations. A relation, R_{AB} , is internal, if, and only if, A would not be what it is but for its relationship to B . For example, the relations between master and slave, landlord and tenant, employer and employee, husband and wife are internal because each pole of the relation is necessary for the existence of the other (Bhaskar 1989a and b).¹⁶ A network of internal relations is a social structure; conversely, individuals are elements of structured or internal relations. Thus, slavery, the capitalist mode of production and kinship, for example, are social objects. Ontologically, social objects are no different from, i.e., no less real than, many objects of natural science, e.g., magnetic and gravitational fields. There may, however, be differences in how we know them.

If this argument holds—and I return to it below—then realism’s understanding of causality or power entails a new concept of *social* power. We can reason, analogically, thus: Just as the power of a cell is given by the structure and causal mechanism of the body’s DNA, so the power of individuals is given by the structure and causal mechanism of the ‘DNA’ of the social object they constitute. To explain their power we must do for social what Crick and Watson did for natural organisms: elucidate the structure and mechanisms which facilitate and constrain their actions. (I return to the DNA analogy in Chapter 7).

¹⁶Conversely, a relation, R_{AB} , is *external* if A and B can exist without the other. For example, the relations between two strangers passing in the street is external. Their relation is contingent or fortuitous.

'Power' is a causal concept. The concept of social power I now want to develop rests on a distinction between three types of causes:

- a. material: the elements or matter from which an action is produced,
- b. efficient: the agency by which an action is produced, and
- c. final: the end or purpose for which a thing is done.¹⁷

These distinctions entail three others: between the capacity to act and its exercise, power and domination, and behaviour and agency. I examine them^m in turn. In so doing, I shall relate Isaac's criticism's of the radical concept of power to its appearance in IR. The concept of final cause is an addition to his argument.

1. The capacity to act and its exercise.

The first[?] is a necessary property of the social structure individuals constitute; the last[?] is a contingent property of their deployment of this capacity. Both[?] are causes: material and efficient. A capacity to act may not be exercised, or it may be exercised without producing an empirical effect, e.g., because of a countervailing power or the ineptitude of the actor.

I argued earlier that pluralism and radicalism share an empiricist concept of causation or power: to say that the employer has power over the employee means that the behaviour of the employer causes—or regularly antecedes—the behaviour of the employee. For realism, in contrast, the internal relation between employer and employee is the *material* cause of the behaviour of both the employer *and* the employee; the specific way in which the employer and the employee choose to act out this relationship is the *efficient* cause (Isaac 1987a: 85-86). An empiricist concept of power, whether pluralist or radical, cannot distinguish between

¹⁷These come from Aristotle, via the O.E.D.

the capacity to act and its exercise because it does not distinguish between material and efficient causes.

2. Power and domination.

As and Bs both have the capacity to act by virtue of the internal relations they constitute. But it does not follow that they have *equal* capacities. Internal relations may bestow asymmetrical capacities which allow As to dominate Bs. The actions of both employer and employees, for example, are constrained and facilitated by the internal relations among them, but these relations bestow very different capacities to act: ‘the capitalist is just as enslaved by the relationships of capitalism as is his opposite pole, the worker, *albeit in a quite different manner*’ (Marx 1866: 990, my emphasis). Power is a necessary and ubiquitous feature of social existence: domination is not.

Because it conflates material and efficient causes, or the capacity to act and its exercise, the radical concept of power cannot distinguish between power and domination. Power is always ‘power over’ or domination, i.e., the control of a subordinate by a superordinate. I want to suggest that this helps account for (a) Hyman’s inability to find a contemporary instance of ‘power for’ (Hyman 1975a: 26-27); (b) the close association between ‘control’ and ‘labour process’. The discovery of the labour process in Marx, via Braverman, coincided with the emergence of the radical concept of power. The first was read in the context of the last and ‘control vs. resistance’ was construed as the *modus operandi* of the labour process (Proposition 3). I shall argue that, because it cannot distinguish between power and domination, the radical concept of power is unable to detect the presence of a more insidious form of domination than ‘control’ allows.

3. Behaviour and agency.

The distinction between behaviour and agency rests on the concept of final cause, i.e., the end or purpose for which a thing is done. Agency, unlike behaviour, is purposeful or intentional. The intent or purpose of the agent is one cause of the act or agency. To understand how the capacity to act is exercised by agents, therefore, we must understand their purpose, e.g., their motives, understandings and reasons. Because the radical concept of power conflates material and efficient causes it cannot recognise the significance of final causes. Rather than encourage an empirical investigation of the purposes of agents, the radical concept of power encourages their theoretical imputation, e.g., the motive for the capitalist to control and for the worker to resist.

4. The distinction between the capacity to act and its exercise, and between material, efficient and final causes, entails a particular understanding of the relationship between social structure and human agency, and how it should be studied.

Understanding of this relationship has been bedevilled by reification, the belief that social structure determines the actions of individuals, and voluntarism, the belief that individuals create social structure (Reed 1988).¹⁸ According to the realist concept of power, individuals do not create social structure (the error of voluntarism), because it pre-exists them. Rather, they reproduce and, occasionally, transform social structure. Social structure does not determine the actions of individuals (the error of reification), because it is both the medium and effect of that action. Rather, social structure both facilitates and constrains human action. Structure is the condition of agency, and agency is the condition of structure (Bhaskar 1989a, 1989b). 'Power' is the point of intersection of agency and structure.

¹⁸'Reification': 'treating abstract collective entities, which are the creations of human activity, as the active agencies in social relations and in consequence, devaluing the part played by human actors' (Hyman (1975a: 13). In Chapter 6, I will utilise a different interpretation of reification: 'to convert an abstraction into a thing' (C.O.D.).

To explain what happens in the social world we must understand the three causes of action: material, efficient and final, i.e., the objective social structure that constrains and enables the capacity of individuals to act together with ‘the subjective meanings through which individuals assess, interpret and actively construct their patterns of action within the given structures’ (Keat and Urry 1975: 193).

A corollary of this position is a distinction between pure or theoretical and applied or empirical social research. The primary object of theoretical analysis is the internal relations among people which structure their capacity to act. The primary object of empirical research is the contingent, negotiated and purposeful exercise of this capacity. This realist conception of the relationship between agency and structure enables us to accept both the subjective and objective aspects of social existence without conflating them (Bhaskar 1989b: 133; Isaac 1987a: 56).

Let me return to the qualification to this argument. There is a significant difference between arguing that a social object is analogous to a natural object, and arguing that a social object is as real and real in the same sense as a natural object. For realism to be applicable to the problem of ‘power,’ naturalism must be true; and for naturalism to be true, these social objects must exist. But realism is a philosophy, not a science; it tells us only that a social science is logically possible, not that it actually exists. We might agree on this possibility, but want to reserve judgement until such an object has been discovered and proven to exist. I return to this problem at the conclusion to this Chapter. In the meantime, I proceed on the assumption that social objects are *analogous* to natural objects.

Conjecture 3 The fundamental problem facing theorists of IR, or the politics of production, is to identify the material causes of the capacity of individuals to act at work. This is the problem of ‘object constitution’: ‘to conceptualise in opposition to the empirical

melange, a non-empirical but real (stratified) subject of enquiry, designating the proper focus of scientific thought' (Bhaskar 1986: 105, n.4).

Let me relate this discussion of 'power' to calls to develop an understanding of the 'politics of production,' which have grown out of criticisms of 'control' (Burawoy 1985; Hyman 1980; Hyman 1989b). I want to make two points. First, it should be clear from the preceding that 'power' is not a specific kind of practice (i.e., it is not 'politics'): it is an integral part of *all* social practices (Isaac 1987a: 75):

If by politics we denote structured power relationships, then politics occur within every type of social institution ... Hence within economic organizations one may identify the politics of production (Hyman 1989b: 202).

Understanding 'power' and the 'politics of production' are identical problems. Henceforth, I shall use them interchangeably. Second, 'power' can no more provide a substantive explanation of social phenomena than 'cause' can provide a substantive explanation of natural phenomena (Isaac 1987a: 140). 'Power' has explanatory value only when attached to a model of the social object in question.¹⁹ We must ask: whose power, to do what, by what means, and why? To explain the politics of production, first we must constitute in thought, i.e., model, the social structure, and its causal mechanisms, which bestows individuals with the capacity to act—or not—at work. This is the problem of 'object constitution'.

I suggest that this is the problem common to the discourses of production (which I mentioned in Proposition 6). It has appeared in a number of guises. It is evident in an inability to adequately define 'industrial relations,' 'organization,' 'labour process,' and 'human resource management' (Hyman 1980 and 1989b; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980; Burrell and Morgan 1979; Bray and Littler 1988; Keenoy 1990a and b). The situation is

¹⁹It is for this reason that my main concern is with the model typically attached to the radical concept of power and not with 'power' *per se*.

analogous to the fable of the blind men and the elephant, each of whom try to imagine the identity of the animal before them on the basis of their experience of its particular parts (Morgan 1986: 340-343). These discourses of production, centred on 'control,' express and attempt to understand aspects of a common social animal whose existence and powers we have yet to fathom. This area of commonality underlies the overlap and convergence among these discourses and their increasingly circuitous definition of concepts.²⁰ It is the basis also of the corresponding similarity among attempted theoretical solutions to this problem.²¹ This is not to claim that these discourses lack an 'object' or that the problem is unique to analyses of production. Given the conceptual mediation of perception, it is impossible to think without a 'theoretical object,' however implicit and underdeveloped it may be. Indeed the objects of these discourses are often refined and complex. Complaints over theory, however, suggest that they are not explanatorily *significant* objects of enquiry (Bhaskar 1989a: 85).

Realism teaches us that hypotheses about what an object can do must be derived from an understanding of what that object is. Unsuccessful causal hypotheses are usually rooted in inaccurate real definitions. Definitional exactitude is not pedantic: to know what a thing *is*, is a prerequisite of knowing what it can *do*. The relevance of object constitution to an understanding of power helps account for the problem, identified earlier, of defining the object of investigation ('IR') and determining its means of analysis ('theory'). In both radical IR and labour process analysis there is a relationship between the ambiguity of *what* is controlled ('IR', 'labour process') and an explanation of *how* it is controlled (Hyman 1980: 55, n. 20). The 'what' and the 'how' of the problem of IR theory are ontological and

²⁰A trend was thus set for the 1970s, with "work," "industry," and "organization" appearing interchangeably or in various combinations in the titles of the new literature' (Hyman 1982b: 89).

²¹For example: an historical materialist analysis of organization as a theoretical object (Clegg and Dunkerley 1980), a political economy of production (Burawoy 1985), a theory of workplace relations (Edwards 1986), and a political economy of industrial relations (Hyman 1989b).

epistemological sides to the task of object constitution or modelling which is so necessary to understanding the politics of production. There are two obstacles to modelling the social relations which structure the capacity to act at work: (a) ontological—a flat, empiricist ontology, and (b) epistemological—a dichotomous conceptual orthodoxy centred on the civil society/the state axis. I explain them in turn.

Conjecture 4 *The ontological obstacle to modelling the causal mechanisms of production is a flat, empiricist ontology, which remains unscathed by the critique of its corresponding epistemology. To theorize about the politics of production, we must start afresh on the basis of a realist ontology (Bhaskar 1986: 105).*

The above metaphor of the blind men and the elephant is apt: we are all blind in the face of nonempirical objects. To understand the object structuring the politics of production, we must first imagine the possibility of its existence. This cannot be done within the constraints of a flat, linear, empiricist ontology (Bhaskar 1986: 105). To imagine objects and to create plausible models of them we must recognise their ontological depth. ‘Depth’ is a metaphor. It aids the imagination by giving it space in which to model, i.e., to represent an object in three-dimensions, on a smaller scale (C.O.D.). Ontological depth releases imagination from the confines of empiricism’s ontology so that it can be guided by realism’s concept of causality. We are free to contemplate, and subsequently required to demonstrate, the existence of causal connections among diverse and apparently discrete things. This will prove important because it entails a new way of imagining the spatial and temporal dimensions of social power.

Conjecture 5 *The epistemological obstacle to modelling the causal mechanisms of production is a dichotomous conceptual orthodoxy, centred on the civil society-the state axis.*

To understand the politics of production, we must first conceptualize how the capacity to act at work is socially structured (Hyman 1989b: 202). Criticisms of 'control' pose this question: How does the radical concept of power conceptualize social relations of production? It does so in terms of an object-ive base and a subject-ive superstructure. The base/superstructure metaphor

is commonly interpreted as saying that any society can be divided into two parts, an 'economic structure'—the 'infrastructure or 'base'—and a legal, political and ideological 'superstructure'. The base has primacy in that it conditions or determines the superstructures which rise' on its 'foundation' (Sayer 1975: 792).

Earlier, I established a connection between base/superstructure interpretations of Marx and the radical concept of power: object-ive interests are located in the economic base, subject-ive perception of these interests is obscured by an ideological superstructure (Burawoy 1984: 27). The base/superstructure metaphor has some important corollaries: the separation of civil society from the state, the economic from the political, the private from the public; the conflation of power with state power, law with state law; and the separation of law from politics (Santos 1985: 300-2). Life within the workplace is private and economic; life outside is public and political. This dichotomization creates the problem of establishing the correspondence, independence or 'relative autonomy' of these contingently connected, internal/external, private/public, economic/political spheres (Santos 1985, Meiksins-Wood 1981, Burawoy 1985). It is because of the connection between the radical concept of power and traditional, base/superstructure interpretations of Marx and 'control' that this problem afflicts radical IR and labour process analysis (Cohen 1989; Storey 1985; Edwards 1986; Griffin 1986; Knights and Willmott 1990). It is just these dichotomies, therefore, and the academic division of labour and compartmentalization of analysis constructed upon them,

that attempts to understand the politics of production challenge and must overcome (Hyman 1989b: 202).

Conjecture 6 *These concepts have a real basis, i.e., they are concepts of something. They are not merely conceptual dichotomies: they are real dichotomies, falsely conceptualized. What needs explaining is the mechanism generating them.*²²

Where have these conjectures taken us?

Let me reiterate. Earlier in this Chapter, I posed the problem of IR theory in terms of the limitations of ‘control,’ i.e., its inability to explain the dual-nature of the organization of production, and the radical concept of power upon which it is based. Using realism, I concluded that to transcend these limitations and to understand the politics—or ‘power’—of production first we must ‘constitute in thought,’ or model, the enduring social relations which structure the capacity to act at work. To understand who exercises power and why (efficient and final causes), we must first understand the structures and mechanisms which cause the capacity to act (material causes). This is the most immediate task facing theorists of the politics of production. I identified two obstacles to achieving this task: (a) a flat or empiricist ontology, which denies imagination the space in which to model, and (b) a dichotomous conceptual orthodoxy, centred on the civil society/the state axis, which obscures our view of this object by compartmentalizing analysis. I conjectured that these are not simply conceptual dichotomies to be reconceptualized, but concepts of real dichotomies in need of a substantive explanation.

²²I owe this point to Richard Hyman.

This argument establishes a connection between ‘control,’ the radical concept of power and base/superstructure interpretations of Marx. The problem of ‘control’ is firmly rooted in the problem of traditional Marxism. Developing an alternative to the last, I suggest, is a *means* of resolving the first. It is partly for this reason, I believe, that Marxists have struggled for years to overcome this cluster of problems. It is nicely summarized by Burawoy as the ‘depoliticisation of production’ and the ‘overpoliticisation of the state’ (Burawoy 1985). The crux of the problem of ‘control,’ he argues, is the base/superstructure metaphor and its ‘erroneous, simplistic, and unexplored assumptions not only about the nature of the state and the workplace but also about the relationship between the two’ (Burawoy 1984: 27). We must, says Burawoy (1984: 46), discard the

base/superstructure scheme in which the economic base is the locus of laws, of objective forces, while the political and ideological superstructures are the arena of will, of subjectivity ... [and] ... develop a true political economy of production, one that incorporates ideological and political dimensions as well as the material practices that constitute the economic dimension. We must curb the imperial ambitions of the concept of control and unveil its hidden secrets (Burawoy 1984: 27).

This ambitious objective—which is no less than to find an alternative to traditional Marxism—is a concise statement of the problem of IR theory examined in this thesis.

But there is a serious problem here.

This realist formulation of the problem—and, therefore, any resolution based on this formulation—is valid only if naturalism is valid: if social objects are as real and as knowable as natural objects. But realism establishes that social objects *can* exist in the same way as natural objects, not that they do; it establishes that a social science is *possible*, not that it exists. Indeed, realist philosophers are hard-pressed to identify these social objects and social scientists—with one notable exception, which I discuss next—and to describe, in practical terms, what a realist social science would look like.

The exception is Karl Marx. His concept of science and concept of society are regarded as an exemplar of realism (Keat and Urry 1975; Sayer 1979a; Bhaskar 1989a; Isaac 1987a). But I want to draw attention to two problems regarding the relationship between Marx and realism.

First, Marxism and realism are used to defend and legitimate each other. This is wrong. Realist interpretations of Marx's concept of *science*, must confront the problems of Marx's discredited concept of *society*. The tension between them is not confronted. For example, Isaac uses Marx to defend a realist concept of power, but notes: 'I will make no attempt to corroborate or defend the substantive validity of Marxism as a theory of power' (Isaac 1987a: 109). Marxism may be a science, he argues, but it doesn't follow that it is a *valid* science (Isaac 1987a: 192).

Second, although Marx is regularly cited by realists as the exemplar of a realist concept of the social and a realist concept of science, realism has done remarkably little to change our understanding of Marx's analytic. For the most part, rather than realism being used to explain Marx, Marx is used to illustrate realism. Realism's effect, if not its intention, has not been to produce a viable alternative to traditional Marxism, but to legitimate it as science.

Conjecture 7 *A realist interpretation of Marx entails he be read chronologically-bibliographically. This reading entirely changes our understanding of his analytic and provides the basis of an alternative to traditional, base/superstructure, interpretations of his work with the potential to transcend the limitations of the radical concept of power and 'control'.*

There is one important exception this trend among realist-Marxists—the work of Derek Sayer: his account of Marx's method (Sayer 1979a, 1979b) and his demonstration of the analytical foundations of historical materialism—which critiques Cohen's defence of

traditional Marxism (Sayer 1987). Sayer's work is interesting because it offers a novel account of Marx's method and it points to a connection between this method and its creation. This connection is important because it indicates how an alternative to traditional readings of Marx can be developed. It is relevant because such an alternative can provide the means of transcending the limitations of 'control'.

The connection I have in mind is not obvious in Sayer, for two reasons. First, he is ambivalent towards realism. The main text of *Marx's Method* contains only two brief references to realism (Sayer 1979a: 114, 140), which establish that 'Marx held what modern philosophers of science term a realist conception of explanation' (Sayer 1979a: 114).²³ Sayer's other references to realism occur in notes,²⁴ which add that Marx practices 'a retroductive mode of theory construction' (Sayer 1979a: 174). Sayer's only references to realism in *The Violence of Abstraction* (1987) occur in a digression from its main argument, where he notes: 'To defend realism, whether as a philosophy of science or in relation to Marx's method, is beyond the remit of this book' (Sayer 1987: 125). Second, I believe Sayer's *Marx's Method* is inaccurately titled. Its Introduction states that the book is concerned with the method of Marx's science, primarily its method of enquiry. It is important, however, to distinguish between epistemology and method *per se*. For the most part, *Marx's Method* is concerned with Marx's epistemology, or, as Sayer puts it, his 'conception of explanation'. Only a small proportion of the book, part of Chapter 5, is concerned with Marx's method. In this Chapter, Sayer demonstrates conclusively that Marx's method is retroductive in form. It is this insight I want to build on, by arguing thus:

²³At this point, Sayer refers the reader to Keat and Urry (1975), Bhaskar (1975), Harré (1970 and 1972).

²⁴See notes 13, 14, 15, 27 and 32 on pp. 174-176. I should add that Sayer regards his notes 'as an essential component of the book' (Sayer 1979a: x).

1. Let us grant that Marx is a realist—without presupposing the validity of either the ontology or the substance of his science—and that he operationalises the retroductive mode of inference.²⁵

2. In the light of my earlier account of the logic of discovery and modelling, let us construe Marx's method, less grandly and more prosaically than is customary, as *how he did it*: a serendipitous process of thinking, writing, editing and revising—sitting up into the middle of the night scrutinizing the logical structure of other people's work and writing and revising his own. This is conceptual writing or modelling.

3. There is nothing exceptional about Marx's method. It is a dialectic between thinking and writing, with which every theorist, in every science, must grapple. Very little is known about theorizing because most writers' enquiries, their drafts, disappear in their results, the presentation or 'writing up' of these results (Phillips and Pugh 1987). What *is* exceptional about Marx's work is that both kinds of his writing are available for public scrutiny and, therefore, the sequential formulation and development of his thought is plainly visible to those who care to look.

4. Let us consider that work in the light of my account of modelling. These points follow:

- a. an understanding of Marx's retroductive method ('how') changes our understanding of its creation ('what'): a model.
- b. an understanding of Marx's method suggests that his work be read chronologically-bibliographically, from beginning to end, so that we can trace (and reconstruct) the cumulative development of this model.

²⁵That Marx *is* a realist is amply demonstrated (Keat and Urry 1975; Sayer 1979a; Bhaskar 1989a). This is not in doubt, only its *significance* for an understanding of his work.

c. reading Marx in this way, enables us to identify the explicandum from which he retroduced. X

d. having identified his explicandum, we can identify his putative explicans.

e. having identified Marx's explicandum and explicans we can

i. assess the last by its ability to explain the first,

ii. identify deficiencies in his model and contemplate their means of resolution,

iii. recognise the unfinished nature of his work. A model can be reconstructed, developed and applied. An understanding of his explicandum, explicans and the retroductive mode of inference suggests how this might be done.

f. an understanding of the relationship between his explicandum and explicans requires and facilitates a reappraisal of the relationship between the young, 'philosophical,' and the later, 'economic,' Marx. It establishes continuity where traditional Marxism sees rupture.

I shall show how the results of a realist, chronological-bibliographic reading of Marx entirely changes our understanding of his work and how this understanding can help resolve the cluster of problems formulated in this Chapter. I shall argue that:

a. this realist reading:

i. produces a novel understanding of Marx's initial explicandum and his putative explicans,

ii. produces a novel understanding of the deficiency of his explicans,

b. Marx's initial explicandum and problematic explicans are identical to:

i. the dichotomous conceptual orthodoxy, centred on civil society and the state, which I have identified as an epistemological obstacle to understanding the politics of production, and

ii. the residuum resisting explanation by 'control,' i.e., the dual-nature of the organization of production.

c. Foucault provides the means of resolving the problems of Marx's explicans and, thereby, of explaining his initial explicandum. On this basis, the two problems noted above can be explained.

An Outline of the Thesis

On this basis, let me present the sequence of the argument developed in subsequent Chapters.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 present the *results* of my realist, bibliographic-chronological reading of Marx's work between 1843 and 1873.

I begin, in Chapter 2, by examining the competing claims as guides to Marx's analytic of his 1857 *Introduction* and 1859 *Preface*, because this is pivotal to the rest of the thesis (Marx 1857, 1859a). The problems of the radical concept of power and the organon of control are rooted in the base/superstructure metaphor of the *Preface*. If this *Preface* stands as a valid guide to Marx's analytic, these problems must remain. Chapter 2 examines the bibliographic relationship between the *Grundrisse* notebooks (Marx 1858), and their *Introduction*, and *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy (Marx 1859b)*, and its *Preface*. It argues against the *Preface* and in favour of the *Introduction* as a guide to Marx's analytic. On this basis, it construes Marx's object in three-dimensional terms as the surface, structure and movement of society and reformulates his explicandum and explicans. The argument of the thesis develops within this framework.

Chapter 3 examines Marx's 1840s essays to identify and reconstruct his explicandum, which it construes as the alienated, narcissistic individual of modernity, constituted by the 'essential relationship' between civil society and the state. It suggests that this is identical to the dichotomous conceptual orthodoxy centred on the civil society/the state axis which I

have identified as an obstacle to understanding the politics of production. This understanding of Marx's explicandum challenges the Manicheism of traditional interpretations of the relationship between civil society and the state and suggests that (a) Marx regards them as equally problematic, mutually-interdependent, coeval spheres, and (b) the need to explain their 'essential relationship' was the impetus to his life's work.

Chapter 4 examines and reconstructs Marx's explicans, which it construes as capital—at rest, a social structure (relations of production); in motion, a complicated social process (mode of production). It depicts (a) the relationship between concepts of apparently discrete *things* and establishes them as internally-related elements constituting the internal structure of society (relations of production), and (b) the relationship between concepts of apparently discrete *processes* and establishes them as dimensions of the *same* process—that which mediates between the internal structure and outer surface of this object and generates the seemingly discrete 'civil society' and 'political state' (mode of production). The Chapter concludes that (c) Marx's explanation of this structure and his explanation of this process have a common problem: the need to explain how labour is organized and subsumed to capital, (d) this problem is identical to the residuum resisting explanation by 'control', and (e) Foucault provides the means of resolving this problem with Marx's explicans and—thereby—of explaining his initial explicandum and the problems of 'control'.

A prerequisite of using Foucault to assist Marx is to confront and resolve (a) the widespread assumption that Marxian and Foucauldian social theory are fundamentally incompatible, and (b) the problematic relationship between realism and Foucault. Chapter 5 presents a realist reading of Foucault. It argues that this reading revises our understanding of his work, removes the grounds for the assumption of the incompatibility of Marx and Foucault and it establishes a *prima facie* case for their complementarity.

Chapter 6 develops a synthesis between Marx's law of motion of modern society and Foucault's model of disciplinary power by explaining the three problems in Marx identified in Chapters 3 and 4: the organization of labour, its subsumption to capital, the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state. This synthetic model is the explicans of the thesis. It explains the dual-nature of the organization of production and the conceptual dichotomy centred on civil society and the state, both of which have been identified as a problem by critics of 'control'.

Chapter 7 suggests how this synthetic model might be utilised and tested.

In conclusion, let me add the two points. First, I realise that one does not have to subscribe to realism to advocate a chronological-bibliographic reading of Marx. Oakley (1983), for example, makes an excellent case for doing so. An understanding of Marx's realist ontology and retroductive mode of inference, however, gives such a reading more purpose by alerting us what to look for—the cumulative development of a model of a nonempirical object. Second, I know of no realist guides to the sort of bibliographic-chronological reading of Marx I attempt here.²⁶For this reason, my reconstruction of Marx's model is based almost exclusively on primary sources.

²⁶Bhaskar's references to Marx are remarkably slight. He reworks the same ideas about Marx in his books. Keat and Urry (1975) devote a chapter to 'Marx and Realism,' in which they consider only Marx's later writings (Keat and Urry 1975: 98). My interest in a bibliographic-chronological reading of Marx limits the value of their realist interpretation of his work.

Chapter 2

Marx and Realism:

The 1857 Introduction and the 1859 Preface

Introduction

If the problems of 'control' are rooted in traditional interpretations of Marx, developing an alternative to the last should provide the means of resolving the first. Any attempt to develop an alternative to traditional Marxism must confront the immediate problem of explaining Marx's well-known and undeniable remarks in his 1859 *Preface* upon which it is based (Marx 1859a). These remarks are widely taken to replace those of his 1857 *Introduction*. (Marx 1857).²⁷ Which account—the *Introduction* or the *Preface*—is taken as representative of Marx's actual position has a crucial bearing on how we interpret his analytic. The *Preface* is of pivotal importance. Its metaphor of base and superstructure has been used as a framework within which to interpret Marx's post-1859 work and his intellectual biographical sketch has been used as a teleological lens through which to view his preceding work, much of which, of course, was published long after his death.²⁸ The publication of the *Introduction*, with the *Grundrisse* notebooks, disturbed traditional interpretations of Marx, but this proved temporary.²⁹ The *Preface* survives as the most influential guide to Marx's analytic, as Cohen (1978) bears witness, and it is no exaggeration to say that it stands as an obstacle to developing an alternative to traditional Marxism. If the *Preface* stands, the problems I formulated in the previous Chapter must

²⁷This belief is widespread. See, for example, Sayer (1979a and 1987), Echeverria (1978b) and Vincent-Jones (1987). I argue below against this interpretation of the relationship between the *Introduction* and the *Preface*.

²⁸This is evident, for example, in Nicolaus (1972) who, based on a reading of the *Preface*, concludes that Marx 'viewed most of the early works which have aroused the enthusiasm of contemporary interpreters with skepticism bordering on rejection' (Nicolaus 1972: 307). The date of publication of Marx's 1840s' essays is given in footnote 65.

²⁹The *Introduction* was first published, in German, in 1903, by Kautsky. It was published together with the *Grundrisse* notebooks as a limited, two-volume edition in 1939 and 1941, in Moscow. These two volumes were re-published as one in 1953, in Berlin. A French translation appeared in 1972 and an English translation the following year.

remain. For this reason, I have chosen to begin my realist presentation of Marx's analytic in the middle of his *oeuvre* by examining the bibliographical relationship between the *Grundrisse* notebooks, and their *Introduction*, and *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*, and its *Preface*. These bibliographic details are vital to understanding the complex evolution of Marx's model. In this Chapter, I present a realist interpretation of the *Introduction*, and explain why Marx omitted it, from *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Marx 1859b, henceforth *CCPE*), in favour of the *Preface*. On this basis, I present a novel conception of the object of Marx's investigation, together with his explicandum and explicans which are developed in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively.

The 1857 Introduction

The *Introduction* was written by Marx between late August and mid-September, 1857. It is an unfinished document of 28 pages, consisting of four sections and is Marx's only explicit discussion of the method of political economy. The *Introduction* introduces Marx's first, rough draft of his analytic, the *Grundrisse* notebooks, an amorphous document of 778 pages, written between September, 1857, and June, 1858: 'the only true complete work on political economy that Marx ever wrote' (Nicolaus 1972: 309) and the foundation of his subsequent work (Oakley 1983).³⁰

As we might expect, in the *Introduction* Marx poses the problem which he tackles in the notebooks: the tearing apart by economists of things that are organically connected and their lack of understanding of the 'theoretical method' (Marx 1857: 102). Marx restores the connections between the individual and society (in Part 1) and between production and exchange, distribution and consumption (in Part 2), and establishes what he takes to be the

³⁰It is necessary to make the apparently obvious point that the *Introduction* introduces the *Grundrisse* because at least two commentators, Echeverria (1978b) and Vincent-Jones (1987), maintain that it is a discarded draft of the 1859 *Preface*. I explain the reasons for this below. Suffice to note, at this point, that I accept Nicolaus's position that '... there can be no question ... that the *Introduction* and the main text [of the *Grundrisse*] form an organic whole from the bibliographic, or textual, viewpoints' (Nicolaus 1973: 13).

correct method of examining this ‘organic whole’ (Marx 1857: 100) (in Part 3). Since the *Introduction* preceded any substantive analysis we must regard it as tentative and provisional. Nevertheless, I want to argue that it is an useful guide to Marx’s analysis in the *Grundrisse*.

Commentaries tend to focus on the third section, ‘The Method of Political Economy,’ to the exclusion of the rest of the *Introduction* and the broader context of Marx’s work, by which I mean his 1840s essays and the *Grundrisse* notebooks themselves. I want to argue, however, that an understanding of the relationship between his 1840s’ work and the *Grundrisse* is essential to an understanding of the *Introduction*; and that an understanding of the first two sections, ‘Production’ and ‘The General Relations of Production to Distribution, Exchange, Consumption,’ which summarize this relationship, is essential to an understanding of the third, on method. I start, therefore, with the first section.

Marx begins by criticising a basic premise of political economy: its concept of a ‘civil society’ of free competition in which individuals appear detached from all social bonds. Economists construe production as undertaken by these individuals, project this mythical ‘individual’ into the past, regard it as something posited by nature and so eternalise a particular mode of production. Marx argues against this ‘twaddle’ (Marx 1857: 84). ‘Man,’ this ‘natural individual’ is an historical product of the dissolution of feudalism and the development of new forms of production. The further back in history we delve, the more we find that the individual is dependent on others, a member of a greater whole. Paradoxically, the ‘isolated’ individual’s semblance of independence is a product of modern, developed social relations. The human being is ‘an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society’ (Marx 1857: 84).

The first thing to note is that Marx restores the link between the individual and society. This immediately effects how we conceive production: ‘Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development—production by *social* individuals’ (Marx 1857: 85, my emphasis). This reconception of production as a social activity poses a problem: if production ‘is always production at a definite stage of social development,’ does this mean that ‘to talk about production at all’ we must pursue its historical development? Marx argues that it does not, for we can consider production abstractly, in two stages. First, by comparing particular modes of production we can sift out or abstract the traits, characteristics and elements common to all epochs. These elements are themselves segmented and split into different determinations. Second, once we know which determinations are common to all epochs we can more readily identify those which are unique to the mode of production we happen to be examining, in this case, the modern, bourgeois mode of production. For this reason, while in reality there is only a particular production, ‘production in general’ is a rational abstraction because it conceptualizes the ‘moments with which no real historical stage of production can be grasped’ (Marx 1857: 88).³¹ Marx argues that economists fail to heed the distinction between general and particular determinants when they analyse production and distribution. They correctly establish the preconditions of all production but mistakenly generalize them to all epochs. Confusing the particular with the general enables them to argue that a particular form of production and property is natural and eternal, when it is actually social and historical.

To recap: Marx criticises economists for tearing ‘man’ from ‘society’ and ‘production’ from ‘distribution’ and restores their connections.

³¹These two stages of abstraction are reflected in the Marx’s draft plan of his work at the conclusion of section three: ‘The order obviously has to be (1) the general, abstract determinants which obtain in more or less all forms of society, but in the above-explained sense. (2) The categories which make up the inner structure of bourgeois society and on which the fundamental classes rest’ (Marx 1973: 108). But note: Marx’s plan changes during the course of the notebooks as Marx develops his analysis. This is well documented in Oakley (1983).

In Part 2 of the *Introduction* Marx criticizes economists for conceiving production, distribution, circulation and exchange as ‘independent, autonomous neighbours,’ and for failing to grasp the ‘real relations’ which connect and unify them. He proceeds to show that production and circulation, production and exchange, and production and consumption are internally-related, obverse sides of the same social relations, members of a totality, distinctions within a unity (Marx 1857: 99). The relations and mutual interactions between these ‘moments’ Marx refers to as ‘relations of production’ and they constitute the object of his analysis in the *Grundrisse* notebooks. This is the ‘inner totality’ of which he speaks (Marx 1857: 264). I am interested in Marx’s model of this object.

Marx’s conception of the correct method of political economy follows from this concept of the object of his analysis. Before continuing, therefore, I want to say a few words about the nature of this object by relating Marx’s 1840s’ essays to the *Grundrisse* notebooks. These essays are examined in detail in the next Chapter. The broad argument I want to make here is that Marx incorporates and synthesizes his earlier analyses in the *Grundrisse* and that in so doing he employs a realist concept of science. The *Introduction* must be understood in this context.

What evidence is there that Marx reworked his earlier ideas in the *Grundrisse*? Marx himself tells us that the *Grundrisse* notebooks represent the results of fifteen years’ research, not just the seven or eight years he spent in the library of the British Museum (Marx to Lassalle, November, 1858).³² He records, in the 1859 *Preface*, that when he resumed his economic studies, in London, in 1850, circumstances induced him to ‘start again from the *very beginning*’ (Marx 1859a: 23, my emphasis). These comments suggest

³²All letters refer to the *Marx-Engels Collected Works*.

that Marx reworked his material from 1843 onwards in the *Grundrisse* notebooks; they do not suggest a marked departure from this material.³³ Indeed, we know that both the *Grundrisse* and *Capital* were written with the aid of his 1840s' notebooks. For example, McLellan draws our attention to the fact that 'the beginnings of the *Grundrisse*'s chapter on capital reproduces almost word for word' passages in the Paris manuscripts (McLellan 1973: 303-304).

The bibliographic links between Marx's earlier work and the *Grundrisse* is evident in the first few lines of the *Introduction*, where Marx declares: 'Individuals producing in a society, and hence the socially determined production of individuals, is of course the point of departure'.³⁴ The first two pages of the *Introduction* discuss the individual of 'civil society' under the subtitle, 'Independent Individual. Eighteenth-century Ideas'. As I will demonstrate in the next Chapter, this is, in fact, the problem with which Marx began in *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Law,'* in 1843, and which occupied him for most of the 1840s. Marx objects to 'civil society' because it refers to externally or contingently connected individuals. His use of the term here is all the more remarkable because he had not used it since 1846, in *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels 1846).

Over the course of the fifteen years that went into the making of the *Grundrisse*, Marx develops his analysis from the 'man' of civil society (Marx 1843a), to 'labour' (Marx 1844b), to 'social relations' (Marx and Engels 1846), to 'movement' of these relations (Marx 1847a). 'The only immutable thing,' he concludes in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Marx 1847a: 166), is the abstraction of movement—*mors immortalis*'. In the *Grundrisse*,

³³I thus disagree with Nicolaus who argues: 'The first and most important thing that needs to be made clear about the place which the *Grundrisse* occupied in Marx's intellectual development is that it represents a critique of all those earlier ideas' (Nicolaus 1972: 312).

³⁴Here I quote from the Moscow translation of the *Introduction*, set out in an appendix to Marx (1859b). That by Nicolaus (1973: 83) reads: 'Individual producing in society—hence socially determined individual production— is, of course, the point of departure'.

Marx construes ‘civil society,’ ‘this society of free competition’ (Marx 1857: 83), as the surface or the phenomenon of a process taking place ‘behind it’ (Marx 1857: 255), and explains it in terms of the ‘moving unity’ and ‘inner necessity’ (Marx 1857: 415) of the elements comprising ‘the internal structure of production’. The ‘ultimate aim’ of his analysis, Marx later writes, is ‘to reveal the economic laws of motion of modern society’ (Marx 1867b: 92). *Capital* is where Marx presents this law of motion, but the *Grundrisse* notebooks are ^{where} it is first formulated. In doing so, Marx synthesizes the various internal relations which he had established (in piecemeal fashion) during the 1840s—alienation/private property, property/capital (Marx 1844b), forces/relations of production (Marx and Engels 1846), relations of production/property (Marx 1847a)—into a model of these structures and mechanisms.

During this time, Marx gradually reconceptualizes the ‘civil society’ of external relations between contingently connected individuals as a ‘society’ comprised of internal, necessary relations and practices. We can see evidence of this emerging conception of society as early as 1847, in *The Poverty of Philosophy*:

... society, social relations based on class antagonisms. These relations are not relations between individual and individual [as in ‘civil society’], but between worker and capitalist, between farmer and landlord, etc. Wipe out these relations and you annihilate all society ... (Marx 1847a: 159).

Ten years later, in the *Grundrisse*, the conception is clearer:

Nothing is more erroneous than the manner in which economists as well as socialists regard society in relation to economic conditions Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand ... To be a slave, to be a citizen, are social characteristics, relations between human beings, A and B. Human being A, as such, is not a slave. He is a slave in and through society’ (Marx 1858: 264-5).³⁵

The actions of the abstract, isolated individual of ‘civil society’ are now embedded in internal relations. The relations between master and slave, or capitalist and worker, are

³⁵This quotation, it should be noted, is the source of the realist concept of society.

internal and necessary because the existence of one presupposes that of the other, each 'pole' of the relation cannot exist without the other.

Marx regards this ensemble of internal relations—those between production and distribution, exchange and consumption—as 'society' (Bhaskar 1989a: 76-78; Sayer 1987). He construes these relations as real, but nonempirical: 'They can be established as existing only by being thought, as distinct from the subjects which are in these relations with each other' (Marx 1857: 143). It is because this object of Marx's analysis is nonempirical, and therefore invisible to empiricist, commonsense thinking, that Marx, like most scientists, makes extensive use of metaphor. As I explained in Chapter 1, metaphor aids theorizing by transferring explanations from the known to the unknown, thus highlighting the hypothetical objects and mechanisms said to account for the phenomena under study and bestowing them with 'existential plausibility,' as Tsoukas (1991: 570) puts it. These objects and mechanisms are then explained by developing a conceptual model which maps the actual causal relations of this 'organic whole'. It is important to understand that Marx's frequent and vivid use of metaphor is not simply an illustrative device, but an integral component of his mode of theorizing which has to be taken seriously.

The dominant metaphor of the *Grundrisse* notebooks is that of the surface (circulation) and the interior (production) of society. This is their innovative feature. The significance of this metaphor, I believe, is that it bestows the object of Marx's analysis with 'ontological depth,' i.e., it is construed as a real but nonempirical entity, which generates the phenomena observed. This metaphor is Marx's means of imagining and theorizing about the structures and mechanisms which generate the 'civil society' of isolated monads, the explicandum with which he began in 1843 and which forms his 'point of departure' in the *Introduction* (Marx 1857: 83). This interpretation is confirmed by Marx's progress through the notebooks themselves. He proceeds from the surface of society, the chapter, 'On Money,'

to its depths, the chapter 'On Capital,' where he delineates the 'inner connections' between 'relations of production, of distribution and circulation' (Marx 1858: 122). Ontological depth is the novel feature of these notebooks. They represent, says Marx, 'the first attempts at a scientific presentation of an important view of social relationships' (Marx to Lassalle, cited in McLellan 1973: 307). Within them Marx operationalises a realist concept of science.

Marx's 'Method'

I want to develop this argument by examining Marx's concept of the 'method of political economy,' the third section of the *Introduction*. But first it is necessary to settle the question, which method—inquiry or presentation—is Marx talking about in the *Introduction*? Sayer (1979a: 94) argues that the *Introduction* deals only with Marx's method of exposition: 'So far as I am aware nobody has ever explicitly denied that Marx's reflections in the *Introduction* bear primarily on the presentation of his analysis'. I deny this, for two reasons. First, the *Introduction* was written between late August and mid-September, 1857, i.e., prior to Marx's analysis in the *Grundrisse* notebooks and it is hardly likely that he would contemplate his method of exposition before he had anything to present. Second, Marx's extreme self-consciousness about the problem of presenting his work developed only *after* the failure of *CCPE* in 1859 (Oakley 1983: 76 and 115) and in 1857 he did not consciously distinguish between them. I believe that in the *Introduction* Marx recapitulates his earlier analyses, concentrates his mind on the work ahead and sorts out the order of the material before commencing work.

I shall first summarize Marx's concept of the correct method of political economy, then relate it to the structure of his analysis in the notebooks and later present a realist interpretation of this method. Rather than use his hypothetical 'population,' I believe that it is more helpful to use 'civil society,' for it is a neglected fact that 'individuals producing in

a society' (Marx 1857: 83) is Marx's actual 'point of departure,' which he declares in the opening lines of the *Introduction*. This point will prove important. I will argue in the next Chapter that 'civil society' is an integral part of his explicandum and entirely relevant to the problems formulated in Chapter 1.

Let us consider 'civil society,' then, this 'point of departure for observation and conception' (Marx 1857: 101). On the face of it, 'civil society' seems a concept of a very real and concrete thing. Indeed, this is how it is regarded by economists, who construct their theories upon this seemingly solid foundation. 'However, on closer examination this proves false' (Marx 1857: 101). We discover that it is a concept of a very complex set of social relations, which contains within it, or presupposes, concepts of its constituent elements and earlier social relations. To explain 'civil society' we have to unpack these concepts until we arrive at its simplest, most abstract, determinations. Once done, the return journey must be made. We must ascend from simple to advanced concepts, a theoretical movement corresponding to the real historical process (Marx 1857: 102), until we reconceptualize 'civil society' 'as a rich totality of many determinations and relations' (Marx 1857: 100). Through this process we discover that

the concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse. It appears in the process of thinking, therefore, as a process of concentration, as a result, not as a point of departure, even though it is the point of departure in reality and hence also the point of departure for observation and conception (Marx 1857: 101).

Marx's brief description of this two-way movement of abstraction is regularly sifted for evidence of the secrets of his method. But, as far as I am aware, it has never been considered in the context of Marx's realism. I want to argue that Marx's remarks on method in the *Introduction* are an alternative to Feuerbach's empiricist materialism and Hegel's idealist dialectics, this alternative is explicable in realist terms, and realism helps us understand these remarks.

Marx's objection to Feuerbach is that he conceives society as a static entity, when it is actually a product of social activity or practice (Marx 1845: Thesis 1). Hegel has the merit of grasping things as a product of movement but 'makes it seem as if it were merely a matter of conceptual determination and of the dialectic of these concepts' (Marx 1857: 114). It is in this light that we should consider Marx's important distinction between 'the process by which the concrete itself came into being' and 'the process by which thought appropriates the concrete' (Marx 1857: 101). I think that here Marx distinguishes between the ontological or intransitive and the epistemological or transitive dimensions—or, put another way—between the social practices that produce society and the conceptual practices by which we know them. The error of empiricism is to regard theory as a reflection of the concrete. The error of idealism is to regard the concrete as conceptually-determined. Marx's alternative to idealism and empiricism is to argue that reality is conceptually-*mediated*: concepts determine what we can see, but what we *do* see is also determined by the phenomena social relations actually produce. It is because the concrete is conceptually-mediated that it is both 'the point of departure for observation and conception' and 'a process of concentration ... a result' (Marx 1857: 101). Marx describes a movement in thought from concepts of manifest phenomena (the 'empirical' or 'concrete') to the description and explanation of the generative mechanisms of their essential relations. On this basis, knowledge of surface phenomena is then revised and explained. Continuing the metaphor of depth, as we dig deeper, through successive levels of reality, the boundary of the empirical world expands.³⁶ What we recognise as the concrete expands with our theoretical knowledge. The distinction between the ontological and the epistemological, and the conceptual-mediation of perception, is vital to understanding Marx's conception of society and his method of analysing it.

³⁶As Bhaskar (1986: 68) puts it, knowledge 'does not lie exposed on the face of the world prone to the gaze of the casual observer. Rather it is, for the most part, hidden encrusted in things, needing to be excavated in the theoretical and practical labour of the most arduous kind'.

Marx explains ‘civil society’ by developing a conceptual model of its internal structure, which he construes as a real, but nonempirical, social object. The first, downward, path, from the concrete to the abstract, represents the method of critique—indeed Marx refers to his analysis in the notebooks as a ‘critique of the economic categories’ (Marx to Lassalle, 22 February, 1858). As Sayer has demonstrated, critique is a retroductive mode of reasoning, from explicandum or phenomenal forms to provisional explicans, i.e., the mechanisms and conditions sustaining them (Sayer 1979a, 1979b). The second, upward, path, from the abstract to the concrete, represents the process whereby these provisional explicans are tested in explanation of the original problem, according to criteria of exhaustiveness, independence and consistency, which I outlined in the previous Chapter. Marx portrays these movements of thought simply as a movement from the concrete to the abstract followed by a movement from the abstract to the concrete but, in practice, via the ‘imaginary experiments’ alluded to in Chapter 1, it is a constant shuttling back and forth between them—as is evident in the notebooks themselves.

Marx establishes money as a central component of civil life in *The Holy Family* (Marx and Engels 1844c: 109), in 1844, and shows how ‘money is not a thing, [but] a social relation,’ in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Marx 1847a: 145), in 1847. In the *Grundrisse* notebooks, gathering together these thoughts, Marx critiques ‘money’ and examines the ‘process taking place behind it’ (Marx 1858: 255). He shows how exchange-value, or relations between commodities, objectifies relations between people, how it ‘latently contains the opposition between labour and capital’ (Marx 1858: 248), and is ‘nothing more than a mutual relation between productive activities’ (Marx 1858: 160). On this basis, Marx argues that the apparent ‘equality and liberty’ of the ‘independent’ person of ‘civil society,’ first examined in *On the Jewish Question* (Marx 1843b), is an illusory characteristic of these external, money relations—it is merely the freedom to ‘engage in

exchange' (Marx 1858: 163-164). The developed system of exchange is only a semblance of people's actual conditions of existence. These conditions 'explode,' rip-up' and 'dissolve' ties of personal dependence but replace them with objective or external dependency relations which actually oppose these seemingly independent individuals. In arguing thus, Marx shows how the abstraction 'man' is a creation of modern production relations (Marx 1857: 103) which sever the organic links between individuals and society (Marx 1857: 104). Private interest 'is already a socially determined interest' (Marx 1858: 156). This logic of investigation is evident in the order of the notebooks. Marx reasons retroductively, from exchange to production, from the one chapter, 'On Money,' to the other, 'On Capital'; from the surface of society to its interior, where 'entirely different processes go on, in which this apparent freedom and liberty disappear' (Marx 1858: 247).

The distinction between behavioural interactions within 'civil society' and the social relations structuring them, or surface and interior, corresponds to a distinction between applied and theoretical research, between patterns of events and causal laws. Marx writes:

In order to develop the laws of bourgeois economy ... it is not necessary to write the real history of the relations of production. But the correct observation and deduction of these laws, as having themselves become in history, always leads to primary equations—like the empirical numbers e.g. in natural science—which point towards a past lying behind this system. These indications, together with a correct grasp of the present, then also offer the key to the understanding of the past—a *work in its own right* (Marx 1858: 460-461, my emphasis).

If historiography is 'a work in its own right,' *ipso facto*, so too is 'observing and deducing' the laws governing relations of production. But what sort of work is it? As I explained in the previous Chapter, creative conceptual work centres around modelling or 'object constitution'. In the *Grundrisse* notebooks Marx develops a model of the internal structure of society through a critique of the categories of political economy. His concepts are not generalisations from the empirical, nor are they concepts under which similar categories of events are grouped; they are attempts to designate the necessary connections within an internally- or organically-related object, which Marx regards as real.

While Marx certainly talks of the theoretical or conceptual method he seldom describes his work as a ‘theory’. Remarkably, in his entire prodigious output, Marx nowhere speaks of the labour theory of value: always the *law* of value. I want to consider the nature of Marx’s ‘theoretical method’ (Marx 1857:102) and his concept of ‘laws’ by reflecting on Engels’s comment on this law (Engels 1967a), which he found necessary to write because of widespread misunderstanding of what Marx was trying to say.

We misunderstand Marx, says Engels, if we regard value as a ‘mental’ or a ‘logical fact’ (Engels 1967a: 894), or if we consider the law of value as a ‘scientific hypothesis,’ as an ‘illuminating’ and necessary ‘starting point’ in the analysis of exchange, a ‘pure, although theoretically necessary, fiction’ (Engels 1967a: 895). Neither interpretation, says Engels, ‘make[s] sufficient allowance for the fact that we are dealing here not only with a purely logical process, but with a historical process and its explanatory reflection in thought, the logical pursuance of its inner connection’ (Engels 1967a: 895). I interpret Engels’s defence of the law of value in realist terms. The law of value refers to a real, but nonempirical, social substance—capital—which undergoes metamorphosis through various material forms. This is the ‘historical process’ referred to by Engels. ‘Its explanatory reflection in thought, the logical pursuance of its inner connection’ entails developing a model of the internal dynamics of this structure of social relations, this historical process. The law of value refers to the logic of this dynamic process. This logic works through ‘multifarious relations’ which ‘assert themselves without entering the consciousness of the participants and can themselves be abstracted from daily practice only through laborious theoretical investigation.’ (Engels 1967a: 899).

Marx, Hegel and the Dialectic

Marx’s reflections on method in the *Introduction*, together with those few pages of the 1859 *Preface*, to which I will shortly turn, have acquired a disproportionate importance

because they constitute most of what Marx has to say on method. This is a source of much regret and puzzlement among Marxists. Yet there are grounds for doubting the salience of even these brief remarks. The *Introduction* is a preamble to a rough draft of his analytic, written, I believe, to recapitulate his earlier work and to concentrate his thoughts on the work ahead. It was never intended for publication. I shall later recall Prinz's argument that the *Preface* was carefully crafted to meet the conflicting demands of the censor and Marx's supporters in Prussia and must be treated with the utmost circumspection (Prinz 1969). All the words of regret over the absence of a clear statement from Marx about his method and those which squeeze the last ounce of meaning out of the *Introduction* and the *Preface* miss the obvious significance of this absence: Marx wrote next to nothing on method because he opposed in principle all *a priori*, preconstituted methods—dialectical or otherwise—and would have opposed attempts to extrapolate from his work a method of general applicability. Marx construes the dialectical method, of critique-retroduction, as a free movement of the imagination bound only by the nature of the object under analysis (Echeverria 1978a: 254):

Lange is naïve enough to say that I 'move with rare freedom' in empirical matter. He has not the slightest idea that this 'free movement in matter' is nothing but a paraphrase for the method of dealing with matter—that is, the dialectical method (Marx to Kugelman, June 27, 1870).

In the previous Chapter, I suggested that we regard Marx's method of critique-retroduction less grandly and more prosaically than is customary, as a serendipitous process of writing, editing, revising and rewriting—sitting up into the middle of the night scrutinizing the logical structure of other people's work and writing, revising and rewriting his own. This is *how* he worked, as James Watson might put it (Watson 1968: xi). It is a process of conceptual writing or modelling, an *a posteriori* mode of concept formation, the ultimate aim of which is to orient empirical work by indicating 'the points where historical investigations must enter in' (Marx 1858: 460).

This understanding of Marx's method immediately raises the question of the relationship between Marx and Hegel and how we should assess Marx's remarks concerning his use of the dialectical method. On the 16th of January, 1858, while Marx was working on the fourth *Grundrisse* notebook (Marx 1858: 373-479), Marx remarks to Engels that 'In the *method* of working it was of great service to me that by mere accident I leafed through Hegel's *Logic* again' (Marx to Engels, January 16, 1858).³⁷ And in the *Preface* to the second edition of *Capital*, volume 1, Marx claims that Hegel's dialectic 'is standing on its head. It must be inverted, in order to discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell' (Marx 1873: 103). Traditionally, Marx is understood to have placed Hegel right way up by simply reversing the direction of causality between the ideal and the material. I want to make two arguments against this interpretation. First, to simply reverse the direction of causality leaves the material/ideal distinction intact, whereas—as Sayer (1987: 85) argues—it is the idea of their *separability* Marx opposes. Indeed, for critique to hold, concepts and social relations must be internally-related (Sayer 1979a, 1979b). Second, by 'material,' Marx does not refer merely to the physical attributes of things, but to the amalgamation of the social and material characteristics of objects (Mills 1989). Although Marx is certainly interested in material forms and ideal conceptions, his paramount concern is with the *social* reality behind them: the internal structure of production and, in particular, the mutual relations among the moments which constituting this structure. The distinction between social relations, their material forms and our ideal conceptions of them will prove important to my interpretation of Marx's analytic.

Marx's inversion of Hegel's dialectic has to be understood in the context of the *Introduction's* distinction between the intransitive or ontological and the transitive or epistemological, which I underlined earlier. Marx's use of the dialectic is 'exactly

³⁷We should note that this rediscovery of Hegel did not mark a change in Marx's analysis in the *Grundrisse*. As McLellan (1973: 304) argues, some of the most Hegelian parts of the *Grundrisse* were written *before* this time.

opposite' (Marx 1873: 102) to Hegel's in the sense that Hegel refers to thought whereas Marx refers to social reality. The inversion is not between the ideal and the material, but between the transitive and the intransitive or the epistemological and the ontological. Marx took Hegel's idealist dialectic, i.e., a dialectic among concepts, and employed it as an insight into the character of social reality: 'In its rational form ... [the dialectic] regards every historically developed form as being in a fluid state, in *motion*' (Marx 1873: 103, my emphasis). This insight is the rational kernel of Hegel's dialectic. It is as an *aid to the imagination* that Marx found Hegel's *Logic* of 'great use'. Marx thus construes social reality dialectically, as constituted by the actions of contradictory forces and it is these which (metaphorically) turn social relations upside down and inside out. The task is to discover the logic of social reality, not to impose a preestablished logic upon it. In other words, I believe that Marx subscribes to an ontological dialectics.³⁸

The adjective 'dialectical' applies primarily to Marx's method of *presentation*. Consider Marx's response to the anticipated objections by 'the Philistines and vulgar economists' to *Capital*, volume 1:

if I wished to refute all such objections in advance, I should spoil the whole dialectical method of *exposition*. On the contrary, the good thing about this method is that it is constantly setting traps for those fellows which will provoke them into an untimely display of their idiocy (Marx to Engels, 27 June, 1867, my emphasis).

Marx's method of presentation or 'exposition' is dialectical because social reality is dialectical—and for no other reason. Marx's distinction between critique as an *a posteriori* method of concept development and dialectic as a method of presentation, and his aversion to the imposition of a formal, preconstituted method, is evident in his comment on Lassalle, made to Engels a few months after completing the *Introduction*:

³⁸In maintaining that Marx subscribes to an ontological dialectics I thus disagree with Bhaskar, who maintains that he subscribes to an epistemological dialectics: 'There can be little doubt that in Marx's own self-understanding the primary emphasis of the concept [dialectic] is epistemological. Often Marx uses "dialectical" as a synonym for "scientific method"' (Bhaskar 1989a: 119). Bhaskar also speaks of 'the *methodological* commitment to scientific realism implicit in *Capital*' (Bhaskar 1991: 163, my emphasis). Bhaskar (1989a: 134) places the advent of Marx's scientific realism in the mid-1860s, whereas I place it in the *Grundrisse* notebooks of 1857-58.

It is plain to me from this one note that, in his second grand opus, the fellow intends to expound political economy in the manner of Hegel. He will discover to his cost that it is one thing *for a critique to take a science to the point at which it admits of a dialectical presentation*, and quite another to apply *an abstract, ready-made system of logic* to vague presentiments of just such a system (Marx to Engels, February 1, 1858, my emphasis).

If Marx opposes ‘method’ *per se*, what is the intent of his remarks on ‘The Method of Political Economy’ in the *Introduction*? Commentaries tend to focus on the half-a-page or so which discusses the two-way movement between the concrete and the abstract. But this forms only a small proportion of this section. Marx’s concern is less with explicating the nature of ‘conceptual thinking’ or the ‘theoretical method,’ as he puts it, and more with emphasising the importance of the distinction between the ontological and the epistemological for understanding the ‘order and sequence of the categories’ that constitute his evolving model. ‘Decisive’ in this regard, and important enough for Marx to repeat twice, is the fact that ‘in the theoretical method,’ society retains its autonomous existence outside the head and must always be kept in mind as the presupposition of analysis (Marx 1857: 102). In this statement Marx reveals the true purpose of the *Introduction*.

Were Marx examining society historically, he tells us, he would begin with ground rent and landed property since these are tied up with the first form of production, agriculture. But his concern is with constructing a model of the ‘inner connection between relations of production, of distribution and of circulation’ (Marx 1858: 122) and, for this reason, the sequence of categories in this model must correspond to the causal relationship between their referents in modern, bourgeois society, rather than the sequence in which they were historically decisive.

It would therefore be unfeasible and wrong to let the economic categories follow one another in the same sequence as that in which they were historically decisive. Their sequence is determined, rather, by their relation to one another in modern bourgeois society, which is precisely the opposite of that which seems to be their natural order or which corresponds to historical development (Marx 1857: 107).

Because modern society is dominated by capital, its concept must be the centre of this model. In the *Grundrisse* Marx reconceptualizes capital via a critique of ‘money’ and subsumes under its concept many things ‘which do not seem to belong within it conceptually’ (Marx 1858: 513)—those elements, in fact, which economists regard as ‘autonomous and independent neighbours,’ which Marx examines in the *Introduction*³⁹

The 1859 Preface

My account of the *Introduction* is novel. The *Preface* survives as the most influential guide to Marx’s analytic. Since it is the major obstacle to developing an alternative to traditional, base/superstructure interpretations of Marx, which I identified as the source of the problems of ‘control,’ it is imperative to discover why Marx used it to displace the *Introduction*.⁴⁰ I shall use my realist interpretation of the *Introduction* to explain why it was displaced by the *Preface*, argue that the first, not the last, is the best guide to his analytic and, on this basis, develop a new concept of the object of Marx’s investigation. This will prove important to my attempted resolution of the cluster of problems formulated in the previous Chapter.

During the course of writing the *Grundrisse*, Marx evolved four draft plans for his ‘Economics,’ before arriving a plan for a six-book work: capital; landed property; wage labour; the state; foreign trade; world market and crises.⁴¹ The first book, ‘Capital,’ was to consist of four sections: capital in general; competition; credit; share capital.⁴² The

³⁹Circulation, for example, is not an external operation from capital, it ‘therefore belongs within the concept of capital’ (Marx 1858: 638).

⁴⁰Given its canonical status, we should note: the *Preface* was written *after* the text of *CCPE*, in February, 1859, and dispatched by Marx to his publisher, Duncker, without comment or ceremony: ‘The “Preface” enclosed herewith’ (Marx to Duncker, February 23, 1859).

⁴¹See Marx to Lassalle, 22 February 1858, and Marx to Engels, 2 April, 1858. It was not Marx’s ‘intention to elaborate to an equal degree all the 6 books into which I am dividing the whole, but rather to give no more than the broad outline in the last three’ (Marx to Lassalle, March 11, 1858).

⁴²See Marx to Engels, 29 March, 1858.

Grundrisse is a draft of 'capital in general,' i.e., it is only 'one fourth of one sixth of the entire opus as originally projected' (Nicolaus 1973: 55).

In March, 1858, Marx agreed with the Berlin publisher, Franz Duncker, to publish his work in a series of instalments.⁴³ The first, 'capital in general,'⁴⁴ was to comprise value, money, and capital, and would examine the processes of production and circulation in their unity (Marx to Lassalle: March 11, 1858).⁴⁵ It was to be ready by the end of May, 1858 (Marx to Engels, March 29, 1858) and so Marx set about preparing the rough draft for publication.

Marx's intentions regarding this first instalment are important, for they will subsequently have a bearing on how we explain the displacement of the *Introduction* by the *Preface*. Let us note that he (a) regarded this first publication as a pamphlet 'in its own right,' (b) believed it lay 'the foundations for all that follows' (Marx to Lassalle, March 11, 1858), and (c) identified the chapter on capital as 'the most important part of the first instalment' (Marx to Engels, 2 April, 1858). The inner consistency of his argument required that 'money' and 'capital' appear simultaneously, indeed, 'the whole effect depends on it' (Marx to Lassalle, November 12, 1858).

Marx worked on revising the *Grundrisse* manuscript for publication between August, 1858, and January, 1859, and *CCPE* was published, by Duncker, in Berlin, in June, 1859. The book begins with a short chapter, 'The Commodity,' and quickly moves on to the much longer, 'Money or Simple Circulation'. These chapters are the product of a reworking of the *Grundrisse's* first, smaller chapter, 'On Money,' which Marx rewrote twice in the

⁴³By "instalments" I mean fascicles' (Marx to Lassalle, February 22, 1858). Fascicle: 'a separately published instalment of a book' (C.O.D.).

⁴⁴'This is the substance of my first instalment' (Marx to Engels, 2 April, 1858).

⁴⁵This is confirmed in a letter to Weydemeyer, February 1, 1859.

interim. It is important to note that, *for some reason*, *CCPE* omits the *Grundrisse*'s massive—and, for Marx, crucial—chapter, 'On Capital'. As he wrote to Engels: 'The manuscript is about 12 printer's sheets long and—take a grip on yourself—in spite of its title ... contains NOTHING on Capital' (Marx to Engels, 13-15 January, 1859).⁴⁶ It is this reason I now want to discover.

CCPE is little read because it contains little of interest; it is primarily an exposition of previous theories of value and money. The book's significance, of course, lies with Marx's 'few brief remarks' regarding the course of his study of political economy in the book's *Preface*, for these sketch his intellectual biography and 'summarize' what is taken to be 'the historical materialist perspective' (Sayer 1987: x) and what Marx refers to as 'general conclusions ... which, once reached, became the guiding principle of my studies' (Marx 1859a: 20). An understanding of the relationship between the *Introduction* and the *Preface* is usually derived from this statement by Marx, in the *Preface* (Marx 1859a: 19):

A general introduction, which I had drafted, is omitted [another translation says 'suppressed'], since on further consideration it seems to me confusing to anticipate results which still have to be substantiated, and the reader who really wishes to follow me will have to decide to advance from the particular to the general.

Two mutually supportive impressions are left by this quotation: first, the *Introduction* was written for *CCPE*—for why else would Marx mention it;⁴⁷ second, Marx *replaced* the *Introduction* with the *Preface* because he had changed his mind—for why else would he 'omit' it. Both impressions are encouraged by Marx, but they combine to conceal the *real* reason why he omitted the *Introduction* in favour of the *Preface*. The first impression is

⁴⁶The very first paragraph of the *Preface* to *CCPE* makes clear that Marx was at that point still working to a six-book plan (Oakley 1983: 81), and that *CCPE* is only a part of Book One: 'The present part consists of the first two chapters' of 'the first part [i.e. 'Part One: Capital in General'] of this first book' (Marx 1859b: 19). He adds that 'the entire material' is before him in the form of monographs—which cannot have been true.

⁴⁷This interpretation is found in Echeverria (1978b) and Vincent-Jones (1978): 'It should be taken into account that when Marx finished the *Introduction* in the middle of September, 1857 he did not begin writing the projected work which this text was intended to introduce. A year intervened during which Marx wrote the *Grundrisse*, a collection of manuscripts in which he resolved important theoretical problems' (Echeverria 1978b: 349-350). Vincent-Jones believes that the *Introduction* was 'originally intended to introduce *CCPE* but later replaced by the 1859 *Preface*' (Vincent-Jones 1987: 76).

demonstrably mistaken. Marx wrote the *Introduction* as a preamble to the rough draft of his analytic contained in the *Grundrisse* notebooks: ‘there can be no question ... that the *Introduction* and the main text form an organic whole from the bibliographic, or textual, viewpoints’ (Nicolaus 1973: 13). The second interpretation is maintained by Echeverria (1978b: 346) and also by Sayer (1987), who argues that Marx ‘himself indicates that he wrote the 1859 *Preface* to replace an earlier draft introduction, that of 1857 to the *Grundrisse*’ (Sayer 1987: 2). I want to argue that this interpretation is mistaken also.

To understand why the *Introduction* was ‘omitted’ or ‘suppressed’ in favour of the *Preface*—Marx never said it was ‘replaced,’ as has been claimed—we have to understand the relationship between what they introduce and preface—the *Grundrisse* notebooks and *CCPE*. I want to argue that the *Introduction* was omitted because Marx omitted from *CCPE* the vital chapter on capital and concluded that it was redundant, and that its redundancy is explicable in terms of my realist interpretation of these texts. Let me explain.

In the 1857 *Introduction* Marx establishes the unity of circulation and production, relates this to his method of abstraction and introduces the reader to Marx’s actual practice in the notebooks, which describes a movement from the surface of society (money) to the depths (capital). By omitting the chapter on capital, Marx shattered the ‘inner consistency’ of his argument—the internal relations between circulation and production—which he regarded as vital to its success and thus rendered the *Introduction* meaningless and, as he says, ‘confusing’ to the reader of *CCPE*.⁴⁸ Here I refer to the earlier quotation from the *Preface*: ‘From the particular to the general’ refers to the movement from the commodity and

⁴⁸That the structure of the *Grundrisse* notebooks corresponds to that between the two chapters of *CCPE* and the missing third chapter on capital, is evident if we compare the following. In the *Grundrisse*, towards the end of the chapter ‘On Money,’ Marx writes: ‘... this first section ... points beyond itself towards the economic relations which are posited as relations of production. The internal structure of production ... forms the second section ... [‘On Capital’]. In a footnote on the last page of *CCPE*, Marx writes: ‘The conversion of money into capital will be examined in chapter three, which deals with capital and concludes the first section [of this work]’.

exchange-value, with which both the *Grundrisse* and *CCPE* begin, to the general laws of capitalist production, which are revealed in the missing chapter on capital—these are the ‘results which still have to be anticipated’. The remarkable thing about *CCPE*—Part One, ‘Capital in General,’ of Book One, ‘On Capital’—is that it contains *nothing* on capital! The absence of the crucial chapter explains why the book was poorly received. To Marx’s surprise and dismay it was virtually ignored.⁴⁹ It fell flat, I suggest, because the ‘internal relations’ between money and capital were severed and so much of the theoretical message was lost: ‘The work had fallen between chairs’ (Nicolaus 1973: 57).

The critical question is, Why did Marx omit from the *CCPE* the vital chapter on capital? Given the canonical status of the *Preface*, it is remarkable that this question is seldom asked. Perhaps commentators accept Marx’s own rationalisation. But this is a tangle of contradictions. He tells Lassalle (March 11, 1858) and Engels (April 2, 1858) that the chapter is the most important part of this first instalment and Duncker, who is convinced of this, tells Marx that if this does not sell he will not publish subsequent instalments. There can be no doubt that all concerned regarded this chapter as an integral part of *CCPE* and vital to its success. However, Marx gradually backs away from this position. He tells Lassalle (November 12, 1858) that because ‘undue brevity would render the thing indigestible to the public’ he is expanding the first two chapters and for this reason ‘capital in general’ is ‘likely to run to two instalments’. Given ‘their intrinsic coherence,’ however, it was imperative that these instalments appear simultaneously; indeed, ‘the whole effect depends on it’. In this same letter, Marx implores Lassalle not to inform Duncker of this development. Why? We can only conclude that, having convinced Duncker of the importance of ‘capital’ to the success of the first instalment, Marx was afraid that he might

⁴⁹Marx said of its reception in Germany: ‘so far as I am aware, nobody inquires after the thing or gives a straw for it’ (Marx to Lassalle, October 20, 1859).

not publish it without this chapter.⁵⁰ Only a few days before the manuscript was to be dispatched to the publisher, Marx prepares Engels for the shocking news that this first instalment of ‘capital in general’ will contain nothing about capital in particular (Marx to Engels: 13-15 January, 1859). Marx presents this omission as a conscious strategy on his part; indeed it is now a positive virtue:⁵¹ if the first instalment succeeds then the chapter on capital can follow ‘very quickly’ and the ‘serious and scientific’ nature of the first instalment will compel the reader to take the second seriously. Thus, Marx had moved from his earlier position that the two instalments (‘money’ and ‘capital’) should appear together; now the first was to pave the way for the second. ‘Capital’ was now conditional upon the success of the first instalment, whereas before it was a condition of this success. Two weeks later Marx’s rationalisation changes again. He claims to Weydemeyer (February 1, 1859) that he has ‘held back’ the chapter for ‘political motives’. Marx repeats this to Lassalle (March 28, 1859), claiming that the ‘principal chapter, i.e., the third, on capital’ is omitted because ‘it seemed to me better not to frighten people at the outset’. And yet Marx later claims to Lassalle that he ‘expected’ *CCPE*—which he had described to Engels as ‘serious and scientific’—to be ‘attacked and criticised’.⁵² Finally, in October, 1859, with no sign of this missing chapter—which, recall, was to follow ‘very quickly,’ indeed, which he ‘held back’—Marx is reduced to hoping that this second instalment will at least appear under the same imprint as the first (Marx to Lassalle, October 2, 1859).

By not publishing the chapter on capital as part of the first instalment, Marx risked that (a) Duncker would not publish it, because Marx had convinced him that its inclusion was vital

⁵⁰In a letter to Engels (25 February, 1859) Marx writes: ‘I am morally convinced that, *in view of what I’ve written to Lassalle* Duncker will accept the pamphlet’. This can only be a reference to Marx’s letter to Lassalle (November 12, 1858) in which he rationalises the omission of the chapter in terms of expanding the first so as to make it more digestible to the public.

⁵¹‘This is good on two counts ...’ (Marx to Engels, 13-15, January, 1859).

⁵²Marx to Lassalle, November 6, 1859.

to the success of this instalment; (b) even if it was published the instalment would fail; and therefore (c) Duncker would not publish subsequent instalments and therefore Marx would be denied the outlet in Prussia he had sought for so long and which he regarded as essential to keeping his name in the public eye, in anticipation of his return to Germany.⁵³ These are compelling reasons to believe that the vital chapter was not published as part of *CCPE* because it was not written and that Marx's *post hoc* rationalisations amount to an attempt to make a virtue out of necessity. This conclusion is supported by what we know of Marx's subsequent difficulties with the capital material. After he had finished the manuscript for *CCPE*, in January, 1859, Marx began redrafting the *Grundrisse's* chapter on capital for publication as the third chapter of Book One of his projected six-book work (Oakley 1983: 76). Reviewing the notebooks not used in *CCPE* provided the 'basis for a draft plan for the third chapter written out in an unmarked notebook during February and March 1859' (Oakley 1983: 77). He promises Lassalle (October 2, 1859) that this third chapter will be finished by the end of December, 1859, 'at the very outside'. According to Oakley, however, 'there is no evidence that Marx wrote anything for the third chapter beyond this plan during 1859,' and Marx 'does not appear to have returned to his critical theory until the middle of 1861' (Oakley 1983: 78).⁵⁴ Nor can we conclude that Marx simply changed his mind about the importance of the 'inner consistency' of his thesis. He repeats to Lassalle that 'the first two instalments form a whole';⁵⁵ he reworked the two chapters of *CCPE* to form the first three chapters of volume 1 of *Capital*; and he originally intended to publish Books 1 and 2 of *Capital* (production and circulation, respectively) in one volume.

⁵³In the event, apparently, Duncker was prepared to bring out the second instalment.

⁵⁴Marx returned to the capital chapter at this point.

⁵⁵Marx to Lassalle, October 2, 1859.

To repeat: the chapter was not ‘withheld’ for strategic, political reasons—it simply was not ready: *this is why the Introduction was displaced by the Preface.*⁵⁶

Marx attributed *CCPE*’s lack of impact to its form of presentation, rather than the missing chapter. It is important to note that his extreme self-consciousness about his difficulty in making his investigative writings presentable to the public began at this time. But what exactly was the problem? Marx had previously written for ‘presentation’ before with no obvious difficulty; he was a skilled and accomplished writer. In November, 1858, while hard at work on the manuscript for *CCPE*, which at this time was to include the missing chapter, Marx writes: ‘my aim is not to produce an elegant exposé, but only to write *as I usually do*’ (Marx to Lassalle, November 12, 1858, my emphasis). During this same period, Marx wrote ‘the equivalent of at least two printed volumes of English leading articles about everything under the sun and more’ (ibid). It was just *this* subject on which he was unable to write. What was it about the nature of the material that prevented him presenting ‘money’ and ‘capital’ as ‘an organic whole’? I believe Marx’s problems with the chapter on capital are of a different nature to the usual problems of writing. They have little to do with the appropriate style and form of presentation and everything to do with the unorthodox concept of causality and explanation that Marx operationalised. I have argued that in the *Grundrisse* notebooks, Marx attempts to synthesize into a model the various internal relations which he had identified in the 1840s. The ‘inner consistency’ he speaks of to Lassalle refers to the ‘categories which make up the inner structure of bourgeois society’ (Marx 1857: 108). The problem he encountered in preparing *CCPE* for publication was

⁵⁶It is important to note, for it adds plausibility to my argument on this point, that when Marx restored the organic link between ‘money’ (circulation) and ‘capital’ (production), severed by *CCPE*, he also planned to restore the omitted *Introduction*. This is evident in his draft plan for *Capital*, written in January, 1863, which is reproduced on pp. 414-416 of *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part 1:

“The first section “Production Process of Capital” to be divided in the following way:

1. *Introduction*. Commodity. Money.
2. Transformation of money into capital’ (Marx 1863)

and so on.

It is speculative to suggest that the ‘Introduction’ was dropped once again when Marx was unable to publish Books 1 and 2 together in one volume.

how to present sequentially a model in which every concept of every element of this 'organic whole' presupposes every other.⁵⁷ This is, I suggest, why beginnings are 'always difficult in all sciences' and why the first chapter of *Capital* will 'present the greatest difficulty' (Marx 1867b: 89).

As Marx was attempting to prepare Books 1 and 2 for publication as volume 1 of *Capital*, he recognised that publishing in instalments is inimical to the presentation of writings that have 'dialectical structure':

Whatever shortcomings they may have, the advantage of my writings is that they are an artistic whole, and this can only be achieved through my practice of never having things printed until I have them in front of me in their entirety (Marx to Engels, July 31, 1865).

We should note, however, that just as Marx failed to publish 'money' and 'capital' together in one volume (*CCPE*), so he failed to publish 'production' and 'circulation' together in volume 1 of *Capital*, as was his original intention.⁵⁸ It is no coincidence that, like *CCPE*, volume 1 failed to have the impact envisaged by Marx. The difficulty of presenting the 'organic whole' drafted in the *Grundrisse*, which began with *CCPE*, plagued Marx for the rest of his life and—let us be clear—eventually it defeated him. Despite being intellectually active up to the end 'his concern for the publication of *Capital* just faded away' (Oakley 1983: 116).

The *Introduction*, the *Preface* and Traditional Marxism

My explanation of why Marx 'omitted' or 'suppressed' (never 'replaced') the 1857 *Introduction* in favour of the 1859 *Preface* does not explain what Marx wrote in the *Preface* nor why it was written. But my argument thus far gives added credence to Prinz's (1969)—sadly neglected—explanation of Marx's ulterior motive in the *Preface*.

⁵⁷Within 'every organic system,' effects become causes and 'every economic relation presupposes every other in its bourgeois economic form, and everything posited is thus also a presupposition ...' (Marx 1858: 278).

⁵⁸Once volume 1 was published, Marx then intended to combine in volume 2 of *Capital* everything that was subsequently included in volumes 2 and 3.

The normal function of a preface is to introduce a book by stating its subject and defining its scope of enquiry. The striking feature of the *Preface*, however, apart from its dissimilarity to the *Introduction*, is that it bears no relationship to that which it prefaces—*CCPE* itself! This is explicable, Prinz suggests, in terms of an added function of a preface in a Prussia marked by restrictions on the freedom of expression: since it was the only part of a book that the censor could be relied upon to read, it provided a vehicle for an author to allay any suspicion that the book might be politically unacceptable. Furthermore, ‘censorship had produced the art of reading between the lines and this induced authors to practice the art of writing between the lines’ (Prinz 1969: 439). Marx was writing in code. Prinz argues that Marx designed the *Preface* to avoid the Scylla of confiscation and the Charybdis of disappointing his supporters in Germany, who had waited years in anticipation of the great work (Prinz 1969: 445). We can see how this might be so. Marx’s frankness about his earlier political activities revived memories among his supporters of past battles and impressed the authorities with his apparent sincerity. His remarks about ‘starting again from the very beginning’ and working ‘carefully through the new material’ (Marx 1859a: 23) can be interpreted as a break with his former convictions or as an intensification of them, depending on one’s point of view, censor or supporter. His explanation of the break in his studies due to the need to earn a living as a correspondent with the *New York Tribune*—that ‘rotten sheet’⁵⁹—excuses the delay of the book to his supporters and impresses the Prussian officials with an apparent respectability. Finally, by quoting Dante in conclusion, Marx cloaks himself in the legitimacy of science.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Marx to Engels, December 17, 1858.

⁶⁰This is the quotation from Dante: ‘Here must all distrust be left; All cowardice must here be dead’ (Marx 1859a: 23).

But what of Marx's supposed 'definitive summary of the core of the materialist concept of history' (Sayer 1987: 2), the 'general conclusion' which became the 'guiding principle' of his studies (Marx 1859a: 20)? Traditionally, Marxists have construed Marx's metaphor of a basis or foundation and a superstructure as a distinction between qualitatively distinct social relations and institutions (economic and political) and have expended much energy in an attempt to discover the precise causal relationship between them. But this is to misconstrue Marx, as I want to explain—briefly now, at length in the next two Chapters.

I have already pointed out that the *Preface* bears no relationship to *CCPE*. What is remarkable about the *Preface's* summary of Marx's 'guiding principle' is that it is in no way a summary of the *Grundrisse* either. As we might expect of a 'guiding thread,' it refers to a position established *previously*, in this case, one established by Marx during the 1840s. He makes occasional use of the metaphor of a 'superstructure' in his work of this period and we should note its usage when reading the *Preface*. The adjective Marx commonly attaches to 'superstructure' is 'idealistic'. As Sayer argues (1987: 91), the base/superstructure metaphor 'applies to the relation between social being and social consciousness, it is not a putative model of societal "levels" at all'.⁶¹ It is this relationship, we might note, that Marx and Engels (1846) regard as the 'essence of the materialist conception of history'.

But how are we to interpret Marx's comments regarding the 'conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production' (Marx 1859a: 21).⁶² Traditionally, on the basis of this passage, Marxists construe forces and relations as mutually exclusive,

⁶¹Sayer's interpretation of the base/superstructure metaphor is discussed at length in Sayer (1987). For a comment, see Marsden (1992).

⁶²'At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure' (Marx 1859a: 21).

determining and determined, phenomena. This interpretation is exemplified by Cohen's, technological determinist, thesis of 'the primacy of the productive forces' (Cohen 1978: 136-142). Against this position, I want to argue two points. First, as Sayer has demonstrated, Marx's—undeniable—remarks in the *Preface* are quite dissimilar to his other analyses of forces and relations (see, for example, Marx 1858: 706), where he treats them as internally-related aspects of the same phenomena: they 'are not mutually exclusive concepts, denoting substantially distinct entities' (Sayer 1987: 37). I develop this argument at length in Chapter 4. Second, Prinz has argued that Marx's determinism in the *Preface* is a deliberate strategy intended to disguise his actual beliefs from the censor. 'Is it not wonderfully comforting to know,' asks Prinz, that the kind of revolution Marx has in mind, 'neither can be prevented nor does it involve any immediate danger' (Prinz 1969: 449). Marx succeeded in pulling the wool over the eyes of the Prussian censor and, as we know, *CCPE* was published. But at what cost! The lack of the crucial chapter on capital made the book incomprehensible, even to his staunchest supporters in Prussia, and the failure of the book resulted in Marx's debilitating self-consciousness over the presentation of his analytic. In an ironic travesty of Marx's actual position—set out, I have argued, in the *Introduction*—the sham *Preface*, on the other hand, has acquired canonical status as the definitive statement of Marx's conception of history.

Some Errors of Traditional Marxism

I have argued that in the *Grundrisse* notebooks Marx bestows the object of his analysis with ontological depth and operationalises a realist conception of science, and that the 1857 *Introduction* serves as a valid—albeit rough and tentative—account of Marx's analytic. On this basis I examined the bibliographic relationship between the *Grundrisse* and *CCPE*. I argued that because Marx was unable to present the internal relations between 'money' (circulation) and 'capital' (production) the *Introduction* was rendered redundant and meaningless to the reader of *CCPE*. For this reason Marx 'suppressed' it in favour of the

1859 *Preface*, which he uses as a vehicle to convince the Prussian authorities that the book was politically respectable. I maintain, therefore, that the *Preface* is a singularly inappropriate basis on which to found an understanding of Marx's analytic.

I realise that my realist reading of Marx conflicts with more traditional interpretations. Before developing this reading, therefore, I want to clear the way by summarising what I take to be the principal misconceptions of the relationship between the *Introduction* and the *Preface*.

There is an amalgam of self-confirming misconceptions.

Typically, the *Introduction* is regarded as an earlier draft of the *Preface* which Marx 'replaced' because he changed his mind. This effectively severs the organic relationship between the *Introduction* and the *Grundrisse* and renders the former meaningless. A variation on this theme is to conclude that, because the *Preface* bears little relationship to *CCPE*, the *Grundrisse* must be 'the material of which the generalizations in the *Preface* are the distillate' (Nicolaus 1972: 308). Nicolaus concludes from Marx's remarks in the *Preface* that he 'viewed most of the early works ... with skepticism bordering on rejection' (Nicolaus 1972: 307). This effectively severs the organic relationship between these works and the *Grundrisse*, which is read as 'a critique of all those earlier ideas' (Nicolaus 1972: 312).

Severing the organic links between the *Introduction* and the *Grundrisse* and Marx's preceding work, in this way, encourages an assessment of the *Introduction* on the basis of its ability to 'decode the logic of *Capital*' (Echeverria 1978b: 334). The complex bibliographic relationship between the *Grundrisse* and the assorted manuscripts that comprise *Capital*, examined in detail by Oakley (1983), entails that it must fail this test.

Inevitably the reader detects a tension between the *Introduction*, which takes ‘civil society’ as its ‘point of departure’ (Marx 1857: 83) and explains Marx’s method of inquiry, and volume 1 of *Capital*, which begins with ‘commodity’ and presents Marx’s method of exposition. On this basis, Marx’s apparent decision to ‘replace’ the *Introduction* with the *Preface* is supposedly explained.

Severing the organic links between the *Introduction* and the *Grundrisse* and between the *Introduction* and Marx’s preceding work also focuses attention on the third section of the *Introduction*, to the exclusion of the first two, which encapsulate this relationship. As a result, the significance of Marx’s metaphor of depth is missed, the object of his analysis is construed as ontologically flat and his method of abstraction is misunderstood. Let us recall, from the *Introduction*, that Marx construes abstraction as a *descent*, i.e., as a digging beneath surface forms, via critique, to uncover the mechanisms and conditions sustaining them. This is the process of retroduction I explained in the previous Chapter. As Sayer (1987) has argued at length, ultimately the second (retrodictive) movement of thought which Marx describes in the *Introduction*, the return journey of ascent from the abstract to the concrete, is the task of historiography—‘a work in its own right’ (Marx 1858: 461). Critique-retroduction provides only an orientation to empirical, historical research: it ‘indicates the points where historical investigation must enter in’ (Marx 1858: 460).

Traditional Marxism turns all this on its head. Without ontological depth, critique as a retroductive, *a posteriori* mode of concept formation (the first movement Marx describes in the *Introduction*) becomes meaningless. Denied their real referents, Marx’s concepts are reduced to heuristic devices, of the sort Engels (1967a) criticises, and Marx’s abstraction has no place to go but upward, from the concrete particular (the commodity) to its simplest, most abstract determinants:

According to Marx, the initial endeavour [the first path] is completely unnecessary and can only be justified as a search for a few abstract and general definitions, which once

attained, permit the return. Therefore, despite appearances, correct scientific method should obviate the first endeavour and be directed from these abstract and general definitions towards the concrete (Echeverria 1978b: 339).

The corollary of this position is to consider Marx's analytic as essentially complete and of broad applicability (he has provided the 'few abstract and general definitions' we need). It is also to construe the Marxist method of analysis as a descent from the 'high' level of abstraction, that Marx is supposed to have established, to the concrete, this time conceived 'as a rich totality of many determinations and relations' (Marx 1857: 100). Of course, given the conceptual-mediation of perception, which I maintain Marx describes in the *Introduction*, the concrete recedes as fast as it is approached, and this impossible abstract⇒concrete methodological trajectory transforms theory into an end in itself.⁶³ Sayer's injunction that 'theory should be abandoned if it gets in the way of knowledge' sums it all up (Sayer 1987: 149).

These misconceptions conspire to sustain the predominant interpretation that Marx replaced the *Introduction* with the *Preface* and, in this way, the latter is confirmed as the definitive statement of historical materialism.

Such is traditional Marxism.

The problems of 'control', identified in *Chapter 1*, are a consequence of these misconceptions. By correcting the last, I believe, we can establish the means of resolving the first.

⁶³This point might usefully be related to Hyman's observation: 'It could be argued that the integrity of Marxist analysis is indeed inversely related to the specificity of the concrete issues which concern the student of "industrial relations"' (Hyman 1980: 44).

Marx's Object: Movement, Structure, Surface

A way forward is to recognise that the *Introduction* is a tentative but useful guide to the *Grundrisse* notebooks, where, I maintain, Marx inaugurates a relational concept of society based on a realist ontology. The *Grundrisse* is the foundation of Marx's subsequent work, it establishes the 'principles' of his economics, as he puts it. An examination of the complex bibliographic relationship between the *Grundrisse*, *Theories of Surplus Value*, and the assorted manuscripts that comprise *Capital* reveals the immense difficulty that Marx encountered in establishing the internal coherence of his model of an internally-related, dialectically driven 'organic whole' and in presenting it to people 'no longer at all accustomed to this kind of thinking' (Engels to Marx, June 16, 1867). It suggests two further points. First, the scope of Marx's intended opus is much broader than a reading of *Capital* suggests. We know, for example, that he intended to pursue his 1845 commitment to write a book on law and the state (Sayer 1985). As Oakley (1983: 81) puts it: 'it is not possible to be certain about what it was that Marx did not finish!' Second, even within the restricted scope of Marx's 'Economics,' his work is unfinished. Given his dissatisfaction with the various editions of volume 1 and the incomplete and fragmented nature of the manuscripts that Engels edited into volumes 2 and 3, '*Capital* must be read as an incomplete work of uncertain bibliographic and substantive status' (Oakley 1983: 126), rather than the definitive work it is often taken to be. In short, Marx did not finish what he set out to investigate and he did not present all that he did investigate. I agree, then, with Bhaskar's assessment that Marxism is

a research programme initiated by Marx but no more completed by him than Copernicus completed the revolution in thought which Galileo, Kepler and Newton developed, and Einstein and quantum theory have radically transformed this century (Bhaskar 1989a: 5).

I think my realist explanation of Marx's failure to publish the chapter on 'capital,' which was intended for *CCPE*, goes some way towards explaining his subsequent difficulty in presenting his material and, because of this, his failure to progress through his research agenda. The problem is: How to present a model of an object comprised of interdependent

elements? In hindsight, having developed the interdependence of his categories, in the *Grundrisse*, Marx should have presented them at the outset of *Capital*, alerted the reader to the novelty of the concept of causation and explanation that his model entails and structured the presentation of his analysis accordingly. But Marx's concept of science is embedded in his concept of society and he was not fully aware of the significance and consequences of what he had achieved, as is evident in his surprise and bewilderment over the poor reception of *CCPE* and volume 1 *Capital*. This awareness developed only gradually, in the form of the problematic relationship between the methods of inquiry and exposition. Internal-relations cannot be understood, and therefore should not be presented, sequentially—certainly not as discrete in time as *CCPE* and volume 1, and volume 1 (production) and volume 2 (circulation). This understanding came too late for Marx. He writes: 'the real science of modern economy only begins when the theoretical analysis passes from the process of circulation to the process of production' (Marx 1864: 337). In which case, this science was never presented during Marx's lifetime and, knowing the condition of the manuscripts that Engels edited into volumes 2 and 3, it is doubtful if Marx's science has ever been adequately presented.

It is often the case that philosophical understanding lags behind scientific advances. It is only relatively recently that realists, such as Bhaskar, have recognised and explicated the concept of science that Marx operationalised over a hundred years ago. Yet realists have been preoccupied with demonstrating that Marx is indeed a realist—as if the imprimatur of science that realism bestows automatically makes Marx's analysis true!—at the expense of putting realism to work in explicating the nature of Marx's analytic. An emphasis on Marx's dialectical ontology, such as has been argued here, shifts attention away from his critical epistemology and highlights the need to reconstruct, develop and apply the model it created. This is my aim in the remainder of this thesis.

To reconstruct Marx's model it is first necessary to understand how he *imagined* the object of his investigation: the ensemble of internal relations between production and distribution, exchange and consumption or, simply, social relations of production. The importance of empathetically imagining this object to a reconstruction of the logic of Marx's retroductive process of discovery cannot be overstated. The canonical status of the *Preface* has left two related problems which combine to obscure this object. First, the base/superstructure metaphor is misconstrued. It is used as a framework within which to interpret his post-1859 work—but it is actually a metaphor used by Marx in the 1840s to express the 'guiding principle' of his materialist conception of history: the relationship between social being and social consciousness. In the next Chapter, I shall explain how a realist interpretation of this metaphor can be used to make sense of the relationship between civil society and the state. Second, it has overshadowed the significance of the *actual* metaphors Marx uses in developing his model. Given the epistemological significance of metaphor, in modelling social relations which 'can be established only by being thought' (Marx 1858: 143), this is important. As Tsoukas argues: 'in scientific discourse, metaphor can provide significant insights about mechanisms that produce observable phenomena'. But he adds an important qualifier: 'the identification of these mechanisms is possible only if the literal core of the metaphor is revealed' (Tsoukas 1991: 567). To misunderstand Marx's metaphors, or to apply the wrong metaphor, is to misconstrue the meaning of his concepts. This is precisely what has happened. This dual-sided problem lies behind the vexed question of the relationship between the young Marx's concern with the relationship between civil society and the state and the older Marx's concern with capital—which I examine in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

A realist understanding of Marx's *actual* metaphors can help us reconstruct how Marx imagined his object, make his model more intelligible, and revise how we normally regard the relationship between the young and the older Marx.

Marx used numerous metaphors in developing his analytic. For example:

- social relations are *inverted*.
- society has an *interior* or substratum (production) and a *surface* or superstructure (circulation).
- money ‘reads all prices *backwards* and thus as it were *mirrors* itself in the bodies of all other commodities’. ‘Everything appears *reversed* in competition’ (Marx 1864: 209).
- circulation is ‘the phenomena of a process taking place *behind* it’.
- wage labour and capital are ‘expressions of the same relations from opposite *poles*’ (Marx 1858: 832).
- value is the centre of *gravity* (of price and profit).
- exchange is ‘the *metabolism* of the social *organism*’.
- labour is the *yeast* thrown into capital which starts the process *fermenting*.
- a ‘mutual interaction takes place between the different *moments*. This is the case with every *organic* whole’.
- commodities constantly have to be thrown into it [circulation] anew from the *outside*, like *fuel* into a *fire* .
- ‘the labour time socially necessary to produce them asserts itself as a regulative law of nature. In the same way, the law of *gravity* asserts itself when a person’s house collapses on top of him’.

But the dominant metaphor, which gives coherence and meaning to the others, is the metaphor of *movement*, which he takes from Hegel. Marx’s ultimate concern, which warrants emphasis, is to ‘reveal the economic law of *motion* of modern society’ (Marx 1867b: 92, my emphasis), i.e., to conceptualize the logic of contemporary social history. Marx developed his understanding of this law via analogy with the natural sciences, of which he (and Engels) was an avid student. At the very time he redrafted the *Grundrisse* notebooks, during the 1860s, he read widely in natural history, biology, astronomy, paleontology, physics, chemistry, and mechanics. Marx and Engels saw very clearly the parallels between the analysis of movement in the natural world and their own dialectical conception of the social world. The relevance of the natural sciences to understanding the law of motion of society is made explicit by Engels in a letter to Marx, May 30, 1873:

The subject-matter of natural science—matter in motion, bodies. Bodies cannot be separated from motion, their forms and kinds can only be known through motion; of bodies out of motion, out of relation to other bodies, nothing can be asserted. *Only in motion does a body reveal what it is* The knowledge of the different forms of motion

is the knowledge of bodies. The investigation of these different forms of motion is therefore the chief subject of natural science (my emphasis).⁶⁴

In what comes close to describing the nature of Marx's analytic, Engels goes on to say that physics, 'the science of these forms of motion,' establishes that under certain conditions forms 'pass into one another' and produce effects which cause changes in the internal structure of bodies.

How, then, does Marx use metaphor to imagine this social object? He conceives of it in three-dimensions. It has an *interior* (production) and a *surface* (circulation), an *inner life* (capital vs. labour) and an *outer life* (buyer vs. buyer, capital vs. capital). It is organized around social relations between capital and labour, 'expressions of the same relations from opposite poles,' points about which the *moments* of production appear to *revolve*. *Movement* within this object is energised by the consumption of labour by capital; capital is a process and labour is the *yeast* thrown into it which starts it *fermenting*. The dialectic of this movement turns these relations *upside down* and *inside out*. As relations are *inverted*, their forms of appearance are *mirrored*. This *outer appearance* disguises the real, *inner nature* of the object by making everything seem *upside down* and in *reverse*. For Marx, the 'visible, merely external movement' of the moments of circulation conceals the 'true intrinsic movement' of the process of production. To resolve the first into the last, 'is a work of science' Marx (1864: 313). Developing the astronomical analogy, the 'moments' of production and circulation are analogous to stars whose apparent orbits often conceal their real orbits. Like the astronomer, Marx attempts to break through the sphere of appearance and, by the power of his imagination, catch a glimpse of mechanisms in the reality beyond.

⁶⁴The early chapters of volume 2, which employ this metaphor, were written *after* this letter, in July, 1878.

This realist understanding of Marx's use of metaphor/analogy and his retroductive mode of inference produces a novel—more intelligible—conception of his stated object, announced in *Capital*: 'the capitalist mode of production, and the relations of production and forms of intercourse corresponding to it' (1867b: 90). As a prelude to the next two Chapters, let me say what these terms mean.

'Forms of intercourse' refers to the explicandum with which Marx began in 1843 and worked on throughout the 1840s: the interactions among atomised monads who imagine themselves *to be independent and free. These monads are constituted by the relationship between civil society and the state. They constitute the surface of society, the sphere of circulation created by the process of exchange: 'a very Eden of innate rights of man'* (1867a: 280). 'Forms of intercourse (1867b: 90) or, as Marx puts it elsewhere, 'forms of social/human life' (1867a: 168), should be understood in the same way as Wittgenstein's 'forms of life,' i.e., as integral to and constitutive of social relations, rather than as a mere reflection of an external, objective reality: the surface or form of an object is as real as its inner structure or content.

The 'mode' and 'relations of production' are the explicans of these 'forms of life,' the twin axes of Marx's model. The mode of production is not a thing, as it is often regarded: it is an organizing process—the day-to-day business of earning a living. Relations of production are not a 'base': they are a substratum—the internal structure of society, the product of this process. The mode and relations of production are the process and the structure, respectively, of the 'inner connections' between civil society and political state that Marx set out to explain in 1843.

A realist understanding of Marx's use of metaphor, thus, leads to a conception of his object in three-dimensional terms, as the surface (civil society/state), structure (relations of

production), and movement (mode of production) of society. Marx's analytic aims to explain the law of motion of the mechanisms which mediate between structure and surface and which generate these apparently independent spheres, 'civil society' and 'political state'. This concept shapes the following Chapters. In the next, I reconstruct Marx's formulation of his explicandum, which I construe as the essential relationship between civil society and the state, the surface of society. In Chapter 4, I reconstruct Marx's explicans—'capital'—the structure (relations of production) and process (mode of production) of society. In the process, I hope to craft an alternative to traditional interpretations of Marx.

Chapter 3

Marx's Explicandum: Civil Society ↔ Political State

Introduction

The prevailing tendency to interpret Marx's work through the *Preface* has two effects which combine to impede development of his analytic and resolution of the problems of 'control'. First, his brief biographical remarks are used as a teleological lens through which to view his preceding work. On this basis, it is construed as juvenilia and relegated in importance. Second, the base/superstructure metaphor is used as a framework within which to interpret his subsequent work. On this basis, the metaphor is misunderstood, as I shall now show, and the significance of the actual metaphors active in the construction of his model is lost. This double error severs continuity in Marx's work and leaves us with the problem of making sense of the relationship between the 'early' Marx and 'traditional' Marxism. These are sides of the same problem. Traditional Marxism was formulated in ignorance of the early Marx, and the early Marx was subsequently interpreted in accordance with traditional Marxism.⁶⁵

I shall argue that an understanding of Marx's object as the surface, structure and movement of society, and of his retroductive method of reasoning, from an explicandum

⁶⁵'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law' (Marx 1843a) was first published in 1927, the Paris manuscripts (Marx 1844b) in 1932, the full text of *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels 1846) in 1932. *The Holy Family* (1844) was little read during Marx's lifetime. Only 800 copies of *The Poverty of Philosophy* were published in 1847 and it too was little read. The *Grundrisse* notebooks (1857-58) were effectively published only in 1953. Marxism was defined by people ignorant of these works, but influenced by Engels who provided the philosophical theory through which Marx was understood. As Colletti explains, it was he who coined the term 'dialectical materialism,' subsequently enshrined as the official philosophy of the U.S.S.R. and European communist parties (Colletti 1975: 7-18). When the 'unknown Marx' was eventually published and found to be at odds with this orthodoxy it received a cool reception; these works 'became, almost at once, "the early writing" ... the adjective "early" served to emphasise their heterogeneity and discontinuity vis-a-vis the doctrine of the subsequent period' (Colletti 1975: 15).

to a putative explicans, establishes continuity between the early and the later Marx. The early Marx formulated the explicandum from which the later Marx retroduced an explanatory model or explicans. Given the form of the retroductive mode of inference, we cannot properly understand and evaluate the last until we understand the first. My aim in this Chapter, therefore, is to reconstruct the 'cluster of conclusions in search of a premiss' which Marx formulated into a problem during the 1840s. This is commonly assumed to be capitalist production. But I believe this assumption to be mistaken. I shall argue that Marx's explicandum is the alienated monad of modernity and that he construes this monad as constituted by the 'essential relationship' between civil society and the state. In the next Chapter, I will show how Marx's model of capital is a putative explicans of this essential relationship.

Traditional Marxism understands the relationship between civil society and the state as a relationship between a base and a superstructure. It is this metaphor, we might recall from Chapter 1, that Burawoy (1984) identifies as responsible for the depoliticisation of production and the overpoliticisation of the state. Juxtaposing 'base and superstructure' and 'civil society and the state,' it is notable that the imagery of the first is vertical and the imagery of the second is horizontal. The first suggests that the state is above civil society, the second suggests that the state is alongside it. Which is the problem: the state for mystifying the reality of civil society or the dichotomy between civil society and the state for mystifying the reality of whatever lies beyond? I shall argue against the first and for the last. This issue is critical. The formulation of Marx's explicandum, in this Chapter, determines our formulation and assessment of his supposed explicans, in the next. My aim is to reconstruct the thread of his argument concerning civil society and the state. My argument is novel. It challenges conventional interpretations of Marx's explicandum and of the relationship between civil society and the state. To establish my argument securely,

this Chapter examines Marx's 1840s essays chronologically, cites from them extensively and details their bibliographic status.⁶⁶

Civil Society↔Political State

In Chapter 1, I identified the following conceptual framework as an obstacle to understanding the politics of production: the dichotomy between civil society and the state and its corollaries, the separation of the economic from the political, the private from the public; the conflation of power with state power, law with state law; and the separation of law from politics. I conjectured that these are real dichotomies, falsely conceptualized, and that the task is to discover the mechanism of the object that generates them. I want to establish, at the outset, that this is the cluster of problems with which Marx *began* 150 years ago in 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law' (Marx 1843a).⁶⁷ If this assertion can be substantiated, then Marx's attempted explanation of the civil society/the state relationship, which is discussed at length in the remainder of this thesis, has a direct bearing on any resolution of the problems of 'control,' formulated in Chapter 1.

It is important, therefore, to be clear about what Marx has in mind by 'civil society'⁶⁸ and 'the state'. Engels's description of the multitudes of London captures 'civil society' precisely:

⁶⁶Unless otherwise stated: all references are to the *Marx-Engels Collected Works* and all emphases are in the original. I have drawn bibliographic information from Oakley (1983), McLellan (1973), Rubel and Manale (1975), *Collected Works*, and the Marx-Engels letters.

⁶⁷This essay is a critique of Hegel's 'Natural Law and Political Science in Outline: Elements of the Philosophy of Right,' 1821, which is reproduced in Knox (1952). It was written during spring/summer 1843, first published in 1927, part published in English in 1962, and published in full in English in 1970.

⁶⁸The expression 'civil society' was popular in Hegel's Germany and was derived from a translation of Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767) (Knox 1952: x). For Hegel, it is 'the battlefield of the individual private interest of all against all' (Hegel, cited in Marx 1843a: 41). Marx's comment on Darwin's law of natural selection and 'civil society' illuminates the concept: 'It is remarkable how Darwin rediscovers, among the beasts and plants, the society of England with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets, "inventions" and Malthusian "struggle for existence". It is Hobbes *bellum omnia contra omnes* [war of all against all] and is reminiscent of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, in which civil society figures as an 'intellectual animal kingdom, whereas, in Darwin, the animal kingdom figures as civil society' (Marx to Engels, June 18, 1862).

they crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, and their only agreement is the tacit one, that each keeps to his own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd, while it occurs to no man to honour another with so much as a glance. The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellant and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space. And, however much one may be aware that this isolation of the individual, *this narrow self-seeking is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere*, it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city. This dissolution of mankind into monads of which each one has a separate principle and a separate purpose, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its utmost extreme (Engels 1969: 58, my emphasis).

These words were written in 1843 as Marx was scrutinizing Hegel's concept of civil society and the state. I want to make three points: (a) I believe this quotation to be a description of Marx's initial explicandum: it is the 'narrow self-seeking' of the alienated monad of modernity; life on the streets in 'civil society'—not life in the factory; (b) this atom or monad, which we are about to examine in some detail, is no fiction or philosophical nicety, but a palpable reality on the streets—then *and now*.⁶⁹ I contend that everything that follows is of contemporary relevance; (c) 'civil society' is not a synonym for 'society'—the first is a collection of atomised monads, the second refers to the 'internal relations' among them which cause their atomisation. Attempting to understand these internal-relations, I shall argue, occupied Marx for the remainder of his life.

In this light, let me turn to the relationship between civil society and the state. The predominant opinion is that Marx simply 'materialised' Hegel's idealist concept of the state: thus, the state⇒civil society. Consequently, this relationship is imbued with a Manicheism 'that afflicts the notion of "state" with a pejorative connotation while idealizing "society" as a good, living warm whole' (Foucault 1988: 167-168). There can be no doubt, from this essay, that Marx regards 'civil society' and 'political state' as *equally* problematic categories. They are inextricably linked, twin illusions, abstractions or 'ideas'

⁶⁹Callinicos's 'sinister, centreless, chaos,' a 'violent, illiterate mass lobotomized by television, all coherent understanding lost as, their attention span dwindling, they hop from channel to channel' might pass for a contemporary definition of 'civil society' (Callinicos 1989: 144, in comment on the novels of Saul Bellow and Martin Amis).

(Marx 1843a: 40): ‘the abstraction of the state as such belongs only to modern times, because the abstraction of private life belongs only to modern times. The abstraction of the political state is a modern product’ (Marx 1843a: 32). The ‘abstract private person’ is the ‘essence of the state’ (Marx 1843a: 40). The problem is not a malevolent state over a benign civil society: it is the very idea of their separability. Hegel takes this as a given (Marx 1843a: 45); Marx regards it as the problem to be explained. The real distinction is not between civil society and the state but between their ‘inner nature’ or ‘essential relations’ and their ‘empirical collisions’ (Marx 1843a: 6): ‘the relations between these spheres has [to] be more precisely defined’. Nor did Marx regard civil society as more real than the political state. Both are allegorical spheres, which he contrasts with the *real* ‘civil society,’ i.e., the citizen’s of the state’s ‘own, actual, empirical reality’ (Marx 1843a: 77-78); and the *real* state: ‘as if the actual state were not the people. The state is an abstraction. The people alone is what is concrete’ (Marx 1843a: 28).

Marx develops his understanding of the relationship between civil society and the state by analysing the problem of the political emancipation of the Jews, in ‘On the Jewish Question’ (Marx 1843b), a critique of Bruno Bauer’s *The Jewish Question* (1843).⁷⁰ This essay develops the idea, noted in Marx’s critique of Hegel (Marx 1843a: 77-78), that this external dualism is internalised as a ‘division of the human being into a public man and a private man’ (Marx 1843b: 155):

man—not only in thought, in consciousness, but in reality, in life—leads a twofold life, a heavenly and an earthly life: 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, degrades himself into a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers. 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 in the same way as religion prevails over the narrowness of the secular world, i.e., by likewise having always to acknowledge it, to restore it, and allow itself to be dominated by it. In his most immediate

⁷⁰‘On the Jewish Question’ was written, in Autumn 1843 and first published in 1844.

reality, in civil society, man is a secular being. Here, where he regards himself as a real individual, and is so regarded by others, he is a fictional phenomenon. In the state, on the other hand, where man is regarded as a species-being, he is the imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty, is deprived of his real individual life and endowed with an unreal universality (Marx 1843b: 154).

The link between the two essays is that the 'decomposition of man into Jew and citizen' is only one form of the basic division between private, egotistical man and the public citizen:

The difference between the religious man and the citizen is the difference between the merchant and the citizen, between the day-labourer and the citizen, between the landowner and the citizen, between the living individual and the citizen. The contradiction between the Jew in relation to his citizenship is only one aspect of the universal secular contradiction between the political state and civil society (Marx 1843b: 159-160).

The religious analogy between civil society and the state, and earth and heaven, which recurs throughout these 1840s' essays, warrants caution. One might think that life on earth, in civil society, is more real than life in heaven, in the state. This seems to be Colletti's position, for example: civil society is man's 'real life' (Colletti 1975: 211). But this misunderstands Marx's point and encourages the Manicheism of which Foucault complains. Life on earth and in heaven are equally illusory.⁷¹ Man of civil society is a 'fictional phenomenon,' an isolated monad withdrawn into himself, an egotistic man separated from others and the community. Man of the state is an 'imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty,' 'an allegorical, juridical person' (Marx 1843b: 167):

The members of the political state are religious owing to the dualism between individual life and species-life, between the life of civil society and political life. *They are religious because men treat the political life of the state, an arena beyond their real individuality, as if it were their true life* (Marx 1843b: 159, my emphasis).

Marx develops this analysis contemporaneously, in terms of the 'rights of man,' and historically, in terms of the depoliticisation of civil society. It is important to understand their connection.

⁷¹In 'Introduction' to 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law' Marx talks of the 'fantastic reality of heaven' (Marx 1843c: 175, my emphasis).

a. The Rights of Man

The 'rights of man'—to liberty, equality and property—'are nothing but the rights of a member of civil society, i.e., the rights of egotistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community' (Marx 1843b: 162). 'Liberty' is that of an isolated monad, the right of the separation of man from man, 'the right of the restricted individual, withdrawn into himself' (Marx 1843b: 162-163). 'Equality' means 'each man is to the same extent regarded as such a self-sufficient monad' (Marx 1843b: 163). The right of man to property is the right of self-interest, 'the right to enjoy one's property and to dispose of it at one's discretion, without regard to other men, independently of society.' These three 'rights of man ... form the basis of civil society,' a society of individuals withdrawn into themselves, into the confines of their private interests and private caprice and separated from their community (Marx 1843b: 164). These rights make 'every man see in other men not the realisation of his own freedom, but the barrier to it' (Marx 1843b: 163).

b. The Depoliticisation of Civil Society

Marx contrasts this modern dualism with feudalism, when life was directly, visibly, political; when 'the general power of the state ... [appeared] ... as the particular affair of a ruler isolated from the people, and of his servants' (Marx 1843b: 165-166), rather than as a sphere of general interests constituted by the rights of citizens isolated from their own community. But then:

the political revolution ... abolished the political character of civil society. It broke up civil society into its simplest component parts; on the one hand, the individuals; on the other hand, the material and spiritual elements constituting the content of the life and social position of these individuals. It set free the political spirit, which had been, as it were, split up, partitioned and dispersed in the various blind alleys of feudal society. It gathered the dispersed parts of the political spirit, freed it from its inter-mixture with civil life, and established it as the sphere of the community, the general concern of the nation, ideally independent of these particular elements of civil life. A person's distinct activity and distinct situation in life were reduced to merely individual significance. They no longer constituted the general relation of the individual to the state as a whole. Public affairs as such, on the other hand, became the general affair of each individual, and the political function became the individual's general function (Marx 1843b: 167).⁷²

⁷²Marx is limited to the categories at his disposal. There is no equivalent term for 'state' in feudalism. The feudal state was not a 'real state' (Marx 1843b: 166), just as the Paris Commune was not a state 'in the proper sense of the

Two points of Marx's historical analysis of this 'political revolution' are notable. First, this revolution is the process of the 'essential relations' between civil society and the state, identified as problematic in Marx's critique of Hegel: 'The establishment of the political state and the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals ... is accompanied by one and the same act' (Marx 1843b: 167). Second, this revolution separated the 'spiritual' or ideal and the 'material' elements of social life. These points are connected. Civil society is the material component; the state (the 'political spirit') is the ideal component, it is 'ideally independent' of civil society: hence, 'the completion of the idealism of the state was at the same time the completion of the materialism of civil society (Marx 1843a: 166). Marx thus confirms civil society and political state as coeval: 'this man, the member of civil society, is [thus] the basis, the precondition of the political state' (Marx 1843b: 166).

Marx distinguishes between merely 'political' emancipation, which is what the Jews seek, and 'human' or 'real, practical emancipation,' which is what Marx seeks. Political emancipation, says Marx, sarcastically, is 'the emancipation of civil society from politics,' the decomposition of man into private and public man, the right to be an isolated monad. Man will achieve 'real, practical emancipation' (Marx 1843b: 155), only when the real, individual man reabsorbs the abstract citizen and once more becomes a species-being, i.e., when he recognises the distinction between his own, social, power and political power: 'only then will human emancipation have been accomplished' (Marx 1843b: 168).

In his essay, 'Critical Marginal Notes on the Article "The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian,"' (Marx 1844a) Marx uses the plight of the Silesian weavers to discuss the relationship between social problems and political solutions, 'the general

word' (Marx 1875: 31). In the same way it is incorrect to refer to feudalism's 'civil society'. As Marx says elsewhere, this term was coined during the eighteenth century.

relation of politics to social ills' (Marx 1844a: 190).⁷³ The Silesian weavers are cotton weavers in the Silesian Riesengebirge in Germany. Their economic circumstances deteriorated, due to mechanization and foreign competition. They revolt, damaging local cotton mills and destroying equipment, but are crushed by the Prussian military (Rubel and Manale 1975: 32). On June 26, 1844, George Jung of Cologne writes to Marx telling him that the Silesian weavers' revolt is 'a brilliant confirmation of the truth of your analysis of the present and future situation in Germany, outlined in the *Introduction to the Philosophy of Right*' (cited in Rubel and Manale 1975: 47).⁷⁴ In an article published in *Vorwärts!*, July 27, 1844, Ruge argues that 'Germany lacked the "political soul" needed to cure the social evils such as those responsible for the uprising of the Silesian weavers' (Rubel and Manale 1975: 47). Marx responds in two articles published on August 7th and 10th, 1844. He develops his understanding of the civil society/the state relationship in this critique of Ruge, re the Silesian weavers, just as he had in his critique of Bruno Bauer, re the Jewish question. It is, he says, a 'detailed argument ... necessary to tear to pieces the tissue of errors concealed on a single newspaper column' (Marx 1844a: 208).

I note the following.

Marx distinguishes between the form and the content or 'essential nature' of the state. Political parties see the root of social evils in the fact that a party other than themselves stands at 'the helm of the state'. 'Even radical and revolutionary politicians seek the root of the evil not in the essential nature of the state, but in a definite state form, which they wish to

⁷³Critical Marginal Notes was written in Paris on July 31, 1844, published in *Vorwärts!*, August 7th and 10th, 1844, and first published in English in 1926.

⁷⁴Between the end of 1843 and January, 1844, Marx wrote an *Introduction* to 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Law,"' which he had written six months previously and intended to publish, but did not. In the *Introduction* Marx explains his understanding of religion and describes the movement of his thought from criticism of religion ('the premise of all criticism') to criticism of law and state. I omit a discussion of the *Introduction* because of pressure of space.

replace by a different state form' (Marx 1844a: 197). The root of the problem is not who controls the state but 'the essential nature of the state': the contradiction between private and public life, private interests and general interests—expressed in man's isolation from his community, like a bee from its hive (Marx 1844a: 204). The Silesian weavers' uprising was a partial reaction against this isolation, but contained within it a 'universal soul' in that it represents the situation of all workers.

The state cannot understand the cause of social ills—such as the Jewish question or the Silesian workers question—in the contradiction between private and public life, because it is based on this very contradiction. It 'exists only through the separation [of man] from real life,' it is 'inconceivable without the organized contradiction between the universal idea of man and the individual existence of man' (Marx 1844a: 205).

If the modern state wanted to abolish the impotence of its administration, it would have to abolish the private life of today. But if it wanted to abolish private life, it would have to abolish itself, for it exists only in the contradiction to private life (Marx 1844a: 198).

Blind to these contradictions, the state sees the cause of social ills in: (a) laws of nature, e.g., an excess of population in relation to the means of subsistence; (b) private life, e.g., the bad will of the poor; (c) the inexpedient activity of the administration, i.e., 'the organizing activity of the state' (Marx 1844a: 198).

The impotence of the state is the limitation of the 'political point of view':

Political understanding is incapable of 'discovering the source of social distress ... The more developed and universal the political understanding of a people, the more does the proletariat—at any rate at the beginning of the movement—squander its forces in senseless, useless revolts, which are drowned in blood. *Because it thinks in the framework of politics*, the proletariat sees the cause of all evils in the will, and all means of remedy in violence and in the overthrow of a particular form of state' (Marx 1844a: 204). (my italics)

Political emancipation abolishes people's isolation from statehood by admitting them as members of 'the political community, the state' (Marx 1844a: 204) (an 'imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty'), but does nothing for their isolation from their *real* community. It achieves the 'rights of man,' the right to remain an isolated monad. Social, or real,

practical emancipation, ‘starts out from the point of view of a *separate real individual*’ (Marx 1844a: 205, my italics). I return to this theme in Chapter 6.

Finally, let us note that Marx continues to regard civil society and the state as coeval. The ‘slavery’ of civil society, the ‘unsocial nature of civil life,’ is the foundation of the state; they are ‘inseparable,’ ‘intimately riveted to each other’ (Marx 1844a: 198), ‘hypocritical Christian opposites’. The state is ‘the active, conscious and official expression’ of the ‘present structure of society’ (Marx 1844a: 199). ‘From the political point of view, the state and the system of society are not two different things. The state is the system of society’ (Marx 1844a: 197).

‘Critical Marginal Notes’ was written as Marx was clarifying his ideas in four manuscripts.⁷⁵ Much depends on how these manuscripts are read. Their usual title—‘Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts’—was bestowed by their first editors and reflects the way in which traditional Marxism construes this work of the ‘early’ Marx. They are seen as transitional between Marx’s interest in Hegel’s philosophy and his interest in economics; the point at which he turned Hegel’s dialectical method right way up and applied it in the critique of political economy. I read them differently. They are the point of transition between his critique of the ‘German philosophy of state and law’ (Marx 1843c: 176), a critique ‘which attained its most consistent, richest and final formulation through Hegel’ (Marx 1843c: 181), which he ‘announced’ (Marx 1844b: 232) in the ‘Introduction’ to ‘A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law,’ and his emerging

⁷⁵These manuscripts were written by Marx, in Paris, between April and August, 1844, for self-clarification, not publication. ‘A considerable part of the text has not been preserved’ (CW 3 notes: 598). They were published for the first time, in German, in 1932 but ‘did not attract public attention until after the Second World War’ (McLellan 1973: 128). They were published in English only in 1959.

critique of political economy. I shall refer to them, by their place of origin, as the Paris Manuscripts.

Through his critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Law,' Marx discovered 'civil society' and 'political state' to be equally problematic 'abstractions'. The problem is not one or the other but the 'essential relations' between them. He develops his understanding of these relations in analysis of the Jewish problem and the Silesian weavers problem, in 'On the Jewish Question' and 'Critical Marginal Notes,' respectively. Now he intended to publish

the critique of law, ethics, politics, etc., in a series of distinct, independent pamphlets, and afterwards try in a special work to present them again as a connected whole showing the interrelationship of the separate parts, and lastly attempt a critique of the speculative elaboration of that material (Marx 1844b: 231).

It is probable that this envisaged 'connected whole' is the book, *Critique of Politics and Political Economy*, which Marx contracted to write on February 1, 1845—some six months following this statement—but did not. This book was to be based on these Paris Manuscripts 'and perhaps also on his earlier manuscript *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*' (CW 3: 598):

The economic side [of the book] would no doubt have been a reworking of the 'Paris Manuscripts'. Marx got as far as sketching out a table of contents for the political half which shows that he intended to continue the themes of his 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' and essays [sic] 'On the Jewish Question' by writing a detailed critique of the institutions of the liberal state viewed as a stage leading towards the abolition of both the state and of civil society (McLellan 1973: 139).

These bibliographic details are important because they indicate that what Marx had in mind was not a synthesis between 'economics' and 'philosophy,' as 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' suggests, but a synthesis between the critique of 'politics, law and state' and 'civil society,' whose 'anatomy' Marx 'sought in political economy' (Marx 1859a: 20)—an examination, perhaps, of their 'essential relations'.⁷⁶

⁷⁶They indicate also that, in 1844, Marx's economics was only part of a much broader planned work, just as, in 1857-8, his book on capital was only one of a six-book plan which included a book on the state. A 'Draft Plan for a Work on the Modern State' was written 'presumably in November, 1844' (CW 4). It remained Marx's intention as late as the 1860s to write a book on the state. He never did.

The Paris Manuscripts mark Marx's transition from his critique of politics, law and state and his emerging critique of political economy ('civil society'). This change of direction was stimulated by Engels's 'Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy,' which Marx read as editor of *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (Claeys 1984).⁷⁷ One point, in particular, stands out from Engels's essay: 'it did not occur to economics to question the validity of private property'. Private property is of critical importance: it is 'the entire content of the law and the state' (Marx 1843a: 31) and the 'basis of civil society' (Marx 1843b: 164). Property mediates between 'the state' and 'civil society' and marks the point of convergence between the critique of law and the critique of political economy. It is the pivot about which Marx's change of direction turns, from the first, to the last. He turns to the critique of political economy to explain the 'alien powers' (Marx 1843b: 154) controlling the isolated monad of civil society. It marks a switch from one side of the dichotomy, the state, to the other, civil society.

These manuscripts touch on 'the interconnections between political economy and the state, law, ethics, civil life, etc. ... only to the extent to which political economy itself expressly touches upon these subjects' (Marx 1844b: 231). But, as he explains, political economy does not touch on these subjects at all:

Political economy ... does not recognise the unemployed worker, the workingman, insofar as he happens to be outside this labour relationship. the rascal, swindler, beggar, the unemployed, the starving, wretched and criminal workingman—these are figures who do not exist for political economy but only for other eyes, those of the doctor, the judge, the grave-digger, and bum-bailiff, etc.; such figures are spectres outside its domain (Marx 1844b: 284).

The worker exists for the capitalist only when he exists as capital. We adhere to this theoretically, says Marx, as the capitalist adheres to it practically. Just as Marx intended to develop his critique of law and state (Sayer 1985; Fine 1984), there is every reason to

⁷⁷It was above all Engels who directed Marx's attention to economics and Engels' article in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* was the first work on economics from which Marx took notes' (McLellan 1973: 163).

believe that he intended to include within his analysis these spectres beyond the domain of political economy.

I now want to indicate how Marx's 'economics' was retroduced from the problem of 'civil society'.

In the first place, the main elements of 'civil society'—'man' and 'private property'—are also the two central presuppositions of political economy. Thus:

The political economist reduces everything (just as does politics in its Rights of Man) to man, i.e., to the individual whom he strips of all determinateness so as to class him as capitalist or worker (Marx 1844b: 317).

Political economy starts with the fact of private property; it does not explain it to us (Marx 1844b: 270); it takes for granted what it is supposed to explain (Marx 1844b: 317).

'Man' is 'alienated'. Marx's 'alienated man' is the monad of 'civil society,' observed by Engels on the streets of London in 1843. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* lists two definitions of 'alienate': 1. cause a person to feel isolated or estranged from (friends, society, etc); 2. transfer ownership of property to another person. These two meanings are found in the two German words Marx uses to express his idea of alienation: 'Entfremdung'—estrangement, and 'Entäusserung'—dispossession (CW 3: 588, n. 1). 'Marx seemed to use the two terms indiscriminately, sometimes using both together for rhetorical emphasis' (McLellan 1973: 110, n.2). This double meaning links the concept of the monad of civil society to 'property'. Man is isolated from his community (i.e., alienated in the first sense) because the product of his labour is transferred from his ownership to someone else (i.e., alienated in the second sense).

The movement from 'man' to 'alienation' is affected by 'labour': 'sensuousness,' activity, process. Labour is materialised, embodied or objectified in its product (Marx 1844b: 272). Man is alienated from his activity, the act of producing itself; and from the product of that activity, for it is experienced as a power independent of its producer, confronting him. Marx

calls this estrangement of the self and estrangement of the thing. He derives ‘private property’ from ‘estranged, alienated labour’ (Marx 1844b: 279). Private property is both the *product* of alienated labour, its ‘material summary expression’ (Marx 1844b: 281), and ‘the means by which labour alienates itself, the realisation of this alienation’ (Marx 1844b: 280). Marx contends that *every* category of political economy can be developed with the help of ‘private property’ and ‘alienated labour’—all categories are ‘only a particular and developed expression of these first elements’ (Marx 1844b: 281). Thus, from the ‘relations of private property,’ Marx retroduces ‘labour’ and ‘capital,’ which are ‘latent within them’ and ‘the mutual relations of these two to one another’ (Marx 1844b: 285). Capital is ‘private property in the product of other men’s labour’ (Marx 1844b: 246). Labour is the subjective essence of private property: ‘only when labour is grasped as the essence of private property, can the economic process as such be analysed in its real concreteness’ (Marx 1844b: 317). The antithesis between the propertied and the propertyless is a manifestation of their ‘active connection’ or internal relations—the antithesis between labour and capital.

Whereas in ‘Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law’ Marx (1843a) poses the problem of the ‘essential relations’ between civil society and the state, in the Paris Manuscripts he poses the problem of the ‘essential relationship of labour’ or the relationship of the worker to production (Marx 1844b: 274). Whereas in ‘Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law’ the isolated man of civil society is the essence of the state, in the Paris Manuscripts alienated labour is the essence of private property—and private property, let us recall, mediates between civil society and the state.

After finishing the Paris Manuscripts, in August, 1844, between September and November, of that year, Marx wrote ‘The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno

Bauer and Company'.⁷⁸ The 'Holy Family' is a sarcastic nickname for the Bauer brothers (Bruno and Edgar) and their followers. 'Critical criticism' is the method of the Young Hegelians who 'espoused the significance of the weapon of criticism *per se*' (Oakley 1983: 29). It is an idealist philosophy, political theory, history and conception of human rights and the role of intellectuals. In his Preface to the Paris manuscripts Marx indicates his displeasure with 'critical criticism'. The 'uninformed reviewer' mentioned there (Marx 1844b: 231) is Bruno Bauer, who had reviewed 'books, articles and pamphlets on the Jewish question, including Marx's article on the subject in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, which were published in the monthly *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*' (CW 3: 599, n. 55). 'The Holy Family' is a critique of random articles in this journal. In particular, it is a rebuttal of Edgar Bauer's review of Proudhon's *What is Property?* and Bruno Bauer's review of Marx's own 'On the Jewish Question'. According to McLellan: 'much of Marx's attack consisted of hair-splitting and deliberate misrepresentation which distorted their opponents' articles to the point of absurdity' (McLellan 1973: 133). Nevertheless, during the course of this counter-critique, Marx further develops his own understanding of property, civil society and political state, and political and human emancipation.⁷⁹ I examine them in turn.

a. Property

Proudhon's *What is Property?* was written in France in 1840. Edgar Bauer, referred to by Marx as Herr Edgar, had translated into German the second, 1841, edition, and written a

⁷⁸The 'Holy Family' was written between September and November, 1844. It was first published in Frankfurt, February, 1845, but little read. It was first published in English in 1956, in Moscow. It was originally intended as a pamphlet. I refer to the author as 'Marx' because although Engels's name appears as coauthor he wrote only ten pages, while visiting Paris, and Marx later developed it into a book of some 300 pages or so. When he learnt of its length, Engels wrote to Marx, '...the thing is too long. The supreme contempt we two evince towards the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* is in glaring contrast to the twenty-two sheets we devote to it' (Engels to Marx: CW 38: 28).

⁷⁹Bauer responded to *The Holy Family*. Marx's reply to this response, written in Brussels, November 20, 1845, and published anonymously, is contained in CW 5: 15-18. 'It is roughly identical with a passage in Chapter II, Volume 1 of *The German Ideology* ...' (CW 5: 586, n.5).

critical commentary. Marx champions Proudhon in the face of Bauer's criticisms. 'All treatises on political economy take private property for granted This basic premise is for them an incontestable fact to which they devote no further investigation' (Marx 1844c: 31-32). The merit of Proudhon's *What is Property?*, its 'great scientific advance' (Marx 1844c: 32), is that it 'has made the essence of private property the vital question of political economy and jurisprudence' (Marx 1844c: 33). Proudhon's limitation is that he criticises 'political economy from the standpoint of political economy' and 'criticises law from the standpoint of law' (Marx 1844c: 31). His treatise will be 'superseded by a criticism of political economy, including Proudhon's conception of political economy' (Marx 1844c: 31).⁸⁰

A brief review of the development of Marx's thought to this point adds significance to these remarks. In 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law' the problem is the 'essential relations' between civil society and political state (Marx 1843a). Since property mediates both spheres, the 'essence of private property' and the 'essential relations' between civil society and political state are one and the same. This is why the nature of this essence, these relations, is the 'vital question' of political economy and jurisprudence. Note then: even after Marx's supposedly 'economic' Paris manuscripts, the relationship between these spheres remains the issue; he was concerned with the critique of *both* political economy and jurisprudence.

b. Civil Society and Political State

Marx's 'On the Jewish Question,' published in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, critiques Bruno Bauer's *Die Judenfrage*. Bauer reviews Marx's article in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (no. 1, December 1843, and no. 4, March, 1844). It is notable that a

⁸⁰Interestingly, Marx says 'We need not go more deeply into the juridical part of the book ...' (Marx 1844c: 31).

lengthy section of 'The Holy Family' rebuts the review by repeating the arguments of 'On the Jewish Question'. In the process, Marx reveals more of his understanding of the relationship between civil society and political state.

Bauer says that 'the general state system must hold together the individual self-seeking atoms' (Bauer, cited in Marx 1844c: 120). Marx's response should be understood in the light of Engels's description of life on the streets, which I noted earlier:

Speaking exactly and in the prosaic sense, the members of civil society are not atoms. The specific property of the atom is that it has no properties and is therefore not connected with beings outside it by any relationship determined by its own natural necessity. The atom has no needs, it is self-sufficient; the world outside it is an absolute vacuum, i.e., is contentless, senseless, meaningless, just because the atom has all fullness in itself. The egoistic individual in civil society may in his non-sensuousness imagination and lifeless abstraction inflate himself into an atom, i.e., into an unrelated, self-sufficient, wantless, absolutely full, blessed being ... [but] even his profane stomach reminds him every day that the world outside him is not empty, but is what really fills.

... it is natural necessity, the essential human properties however estranged they may seem to be, and interest that hold the members of civil society together; civil, not political life is their real tie. It is therefore not the state that holds the atoms of civil society together, but the fact that they are atoms only in imagination, in the heaven of their fancy, but in reality beings tremendously different from atoms, in other words, not divine egoists, but egotistic human beings. Only political superstition still imagines today that civil life must be held together by the state, whereas in reality, on the contrary, *the state is held together by civil life* (Marx 1844c: 120-121, my italics).⁸¹

The 'natural basis' of the state, the 'womb' from which it 'sprang' (Marx 1844c: 113), is the 'man of civil society, i.e., the independent man linked with other men only by the ties of private interest and unconscious natural necessity, the slave of labour for gain and of his own as well as other men's selfish need'. 'It must be shown,' says Marx (Marx 1844c: 193), 'how the state, private property, etc., turn human beings into abstractions, or are products of abstract man, instead of being the reality of individual, concrete human beings' (Marx 1844c: 193). This problem remains. I attempt to explain it in Chapter 6.

⁸¹The adjective 'superstitious' reappears much later, in Engels's 1891 Introduction to Marx's 'The Civil War in France': '... in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the state has been carried over from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers'. There is, he says, '... a superstitious reverence for the state ...' (Engels 1962: 484).

c. Political and Human Emancipation

It is because Bauer imagines a ‘peculiar idea of a state, a philosophical ideal of a state’ that he confuses humanity with the state, the real, empirical man with the ‘rights of man,’ ‘human’ with ‘political’ emancipation, social issues with religious questions (Marx 1844c: 88).

The political emancipation of the Jews divides ‘man into the non-religious citizen and the religious private individual ... the individual emancipates himself politically from religion by regarding it no longer as a public matter but as a private matter’ (Marx 1844c: 111).

Herr Bauer grasps only the religious essence of Jewry, but not the secular, real basis of that religious essence Herr Bauer therefore explains the real Jews by the Jewish religion, instead of explaining the mystery of the Jewish religion by the real Jews Consequently Herr Bauer has no inkling that real secular Jewry, and hence religious Jewry too, is being continually produced by the present-day civil life and finds its final development in the money system (Marx 1844c: 109).

In this sense, the ‘political emancipation of the Jews and the granting to them of the “rights of man” is an act the two sides of which are mutually dependent’ (Marx 1844c: 113).

Marx claims to have stripped Jewry of its ‘religious shell,’ to have revealed its empirical, practical kernel—the *real* position of the Jews in ‘civil society’—and to have indicated ‘the practical, really social way in which this kernel is to be abolished’: by ‘abolishing the inhumanity of the present-day practice of life, the most extreme expression of which is the money-system’ (Marx 1844c: 108-110).⁸²

⁸²It is worth recalling, from Chapter 2, that Marx’s first draft of his analytic, the *Grundrisse* notebooks, begins with ‘On Money’.

I turn now to *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology* (Marx 1845; Marx and Engels 1846).

The eleven 'theses' on Feuerbach are thought to have been written in April, 1845, when Marx was in Brussels. They were found in a notebook after Marx's death, edited by Engels and published as an Appendix to his *Ludwig Feuerbach*, 1888 (Engels 1941). They were translated into English in 1903. Marx's original version was published in German and Russian in 1924, in Moscow.

These brief, private notes have acquired a disproportionate importance.

Before commenting, it is timely to recall that an understanding of Marx's early writings, such as the *Theses*, is derived mainly from Engels, who, as Colletti (1975) argues, influenced the entire first generation of 'traditional' Marxists, whose views were set long before many of these early works were published. Engels describes the *Theses* as 'the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of the new world outlook' (Engels 1941: 8). The editors of the *Collected Works*—who were presumably influenced by Engels and 'traditional' Marxism—tell us that the theses are the 'basic principles of the new scientific world outlook,' an initial draft of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*. No doubt the interpretation of the *Theses* as forward-looking and as establishing the 'basic principles of the new scientific world outlook' encouraged Althusser to believe that an epistemological break, between the early and the late Marx, occurred during 1845—the *Theses* and *The German Ideology* are the principal 'Works of the Break'. Althusser describes the theses as 'those few lightning flashes which break the night of philosophical anthropology with the fleeting snap of a new world glimpsed through the retinal image of the old' (Althusser and Balibar 1977: 30).

Caution is advisable in using Engels as a guide to the early Marx, however, for ‘it was precisely during these years that Engels and Marx had followed quite different intellectual paths’ (Colletti 1975: 11). During this formative period, November, 1842—August, 1844, Engels lived in Manchester, Marx lived in Bonn, Kreuznach, then Paris.⁸³ I do not believe the *Theses* is ‘the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of the new world outlook,’ nor that it inaugurates an epistemological break between the ‘early’ and the ‘late’ Marx. To the contrary, the theses condense Marx’s arguments to date and establish continuity between his preceding and subsequent work. Let me explain.

When Marx says, ‘the highest point reached by contemplative materialism, that is, materialism which does not comprehend sensuousness as practical activity, is the contemplation of single individuals in “civil society”’ (Thesis 9, Marx 1845: 5), he alludes to the problem with which he began in Marx (1843a).⁸⁴

When he says, reality must be understood as ‘sensuous human activity, practice’ (Thesis 1), he condenses his move from ‘man’—this pregiven datum that political economy just ‘finds in existence’ (Marx 1843b)—to ‘labour’ (Marx 1844b).

When he says, ‘the standpoint of the old materialism is civil society; the standpoint of the new is human society or social humanity’ (Thesis 10, Marx 1845: 5)⁸⁵ he condenses:

- a. his distinction between merely ‘political’ emancipation—i.e., the right to remain an ‘isolated monad’ of ‘civil society’—and truly ‘human’ emancipation, and

⁸³Marx returned to Bonn in April, 1842, moved to Kreuznach in March, 1843, and to Paris in October, 1843.

⁸⁴Here I refer to Engels’s edited version of Thesis 9.

⁸⁵Here I refer to Marx’s original.

b. his criticism of 'civil society': 'Above all we must avoid postulating "society" again as an abstraction vis-a-vis the individual. The individual is the social being' (Marx 1844b: 299).

Marx objects to 'civil society' because it refers to only external or contingent relations between monads. He objects to the empiricism of 'hitherto materialism' because it accepts 'man' as a given and does not conceive of the practice which creates this pre-given fact. Marx gradually replaces this 'civil society' of external relations between contingently connected individuals with a 'society' constituted by internal and necessary relations and practices.

When he says, 'the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations' (Thesis 6, Marx 1845: 4), he condenses his movement from 'man' to 'labour,' from the 'essential relations' between civil society and political state to the 'essence of private property, i.e., the essential relationship of the worker ('alienated man') to production—to the 'social relations of property'. Marx devoted the remainder of his life to capturing the 'law of motion' of capitalist society, to understanding the 'alien forces' of which 'man' is a 'plaything'.

What Feuerbach does for religion, Marx does for the state. Just as 'Feuerbach resolves the essence of religion into the essence of man' (Thesis 6, Marx 1845: 4), Marx resolves the essence of the state into the abstract man of civil society. The link between religion and the state is the heaven/earth metaphor pervading these essays: 'criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of the earth' (Marx 1843c: 176). Religion and the state are both 'ideal superstructures' (Marx and Engels 1846; Sayer 1987). This comment could be made of both: 'that the secular basis lifts off from itself and establishes itself as an independent

realm in the clouds can only be explained by the inner strife and intrinsic contradictoriness of this secular basis' (Thesis 4, Marx 1845:4).

We might reason thus: if 'man' is the essence of the state (Marx 1843a) and the ensemble of social relations is the essence of man (Thesis 6), then the ensemble of social relations is the essence of the state.

The German Ideology was written by Marx and Engels between the autumn of 1845 and August, 1846.⁸⁶ 'German ideology' refers to the philosophy and socialism of the Young Hegelians. *The German Ideology* was intended as the definitive critique of their position, a critique made necessary because of criticism of Marx's *The Holy Family*. In Bauer's reply, he labelled Marx and Engels 'Feuerbachian dogmatists'. In November, 1844, Max Sterner, another Young Hegelian, had published *The Ego and its Own*, which strongly criticised Marx and Engels as 'communist disciples of Feuerbach' (McLellan 1973: 143). *The German Ideology* was intended to establish the independence of their own position. In a letter to Leske, August 1, 1846, which excuses the non-appearance of his contracted book, Marx explains that *The German Ideology* was necessary 'to prepare the public for the point of view of my Economics [*Critique of Politics and Political Economy*] which is diametrically opposed to the previous German intellectual approach' (cited in McLellan 1973: 143).

⁸⁶The subtitle of *The German Ideology* is: 'critique of modern German philosophy according to its representatives Feuerbach, B. Bauer and Stirner [vol 1], and of German socialism according to its various prophets [vol.2]'. It was written, by Marx and Engels, between the end of September or from the beginning of November, 1845, (it is disputed) and August, 1846. The bulk of it was finished by April, 1846. Only Chapter IV of volume II was published in their lifetime, in the journal *Das Westphälische Dampfboot*, in August and September, 1847. In addition, while in Brussels on November 20, 1845, Marx and Engels wrote a reply to Bauer's response to *The Holy Family* which 'is roughly identical with a passage in Chapter II, Volume 1 of *The German Ideology ...*' (586, *ibid*: n.5). It was published anonymously in *Gesellschaftsspiegel*, January, 1846. *The German Ideology* was first published as a whole only in 1932. It was first published as a whole in English in 1964. Most of the manuscript is in Engels's hand. Marx had corrected and commented upon the entire manuscript. There seems some doubt that Engels was actually capable of writing it. Chapter V of volume II and some passages of Chapter III of volume I are in Joseph Weydemeyer's, hand. Other possible contributors are mentioned in CW 5 notes.

'The section on Stirner [referred to as 'Saint Max'] ... is much longer than all the other parts of *The German Ideology* put together,' equalling in 'length and easily surpasses in tedium Stirner's own book' (McLellan 1973: 148). The section on Feuerbach appears first but was last written, is unfinished and actually says little about Feuerbach (Rubel and Manale 1975: 59; McLellan 1973: 143). McLellan describes *The German Ideology* as a masterpiece of cogency and clarity in its account of the materialist conception of history (McLellan 1973: 151). Oakley (1983: 33) regards much of it as 'simply turgid polemic of little lasting significance'.

Such conflicting assessments suggest that this text allows the reader much discretion. Due to its nonpublication until 1932, it played no active part in the formulation of Marxist thought, but was itself formulated according to traditional Marxism. This has it that, in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels establish the materialist conception of history by reversing the direction of causality between the ideal and the material. This inversion metaphor is redolent of the religious metaphor Marx uses to characterise the relationship between civil society and the state. Indeed, they are parallel pairs of concepts—hence the 'idealism of the state' and the 'materialism of civil society' (Marx 1843a). Both metaphors are misunderstood. Marx opposes the very idea of the separation between the ideal and the material; the inversion metaphor misleads because reversing the direction of causality leaves their separation intact (Sayer 1987).⁸⁷ This is true also of that other Hegelian inheritance: civil society/the state.

In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels continue to critique the very idea of the separation of civil society from the state. There is a clear line of continuity linking this

⁸⁷'Thinking and being are thus certainly *distinct*, but at the same time they are in *unity* with each other' (Marx 1844b: 299).

‘Work of the Break,’ as Althusser (Althusser and Balibar 1977) would have it, with Marx’s previous work. This is evident in the very terminology used to describe the premises of the materialist conception of history. For example:

- a. unlike German philosophy, Marx and Engels ‘ascend from earth to heaven’—a metaphor Marx uses to refer to the relationship between civil society and political state;
- b. they do not set out ‘from what men say, imagine or conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 36)—this is a reference to citizens of the state who imagine themselves free and equal;
- c. materialism’s ‘premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation and fixity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 37)—here we are reminded of the ‘fantastic isolation’ of the ‘atom’ of ‘civil society’.

It is important to understand that the idealism of the state and materialism are civil society are not simply misconceptions but are products of a real, historical process, the logic of which Marx and Engels—and I—aim to explain.

Let me first consider the idealism of the state.

Idealism arises when ideas become separated from their empirical basis in social relations, when ‘morality, religion, metaphysics, and all the rest of ideology as well as the forms of consciousness corresponding to these’ acquire a ‘semblance of independence’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 36-37). Just as one can separate concepts from social relations so ‘one can separate right from its real basis’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 330). This is a general feature of social consciousness but it is ‘the *specific* illusion of lawyers and politicians’ (Marx and

Engels 1846: 330, my emphasis), who elaborate and give special significance to ‘the cult of these concepts, and who see in them, and not in relations of production, the true basis of all real property relations’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 363).

In consciousness—in jurisprudence, politics, etc.—relations become concepts; since they do not go beyond these relations, the concept of the relations also becomes fixed concepts in their mind. The judge, for example, applies the code, he therefore regards legislation as the real, active driving force ... Idea of law. Idea of the state. The matter is turned upside down in ordinary consciousness (Marx and Engels 1846: 92).

Idealism is not simply a philosophical error, it is a real characteristic of ‘the state and the rest of the idealistic superstructure’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 89, my italics): ‘consciousness which emancipates itself [from material conditions] and comes into contradiction with the existing mode of production *devises not only religions and philosophies but also states*’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 45, my emphasis).⁸⁸ Thus, Marx and Engels criticise not only Hegel’s philosophical idealism *but also the juridic understanding people have of themselves*, an understanding propagated by ‘statesmen in general,’ ‘ideologists’ or idealists of the state. Hegel’s philosophy is not the source of the problem, rather ‘Hegel idealises the conception of the state held by the political ideologists’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 348). ‘Let us revolt against this rule of concepts,’ Marx and Engels declare on the very first page (Marx and Engels 1846: 23) of the Preface to *The German Ideology*—against the ‘idea of the state’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 92). I return to the ‘idea of the state’ in Chapter 6.

Let me now consider the materialism of civil society.

The dissolution of civil society into isolated individuals is explained by the relationship between forces of production, the division of labour and private property. A productive force is not a thing, as is often supposed, but a social power of cooperation among individuals caused by the division of labour; it is a power of individuals who ‘exist split up and in

⁸⁸This sentence is crossed out in the manuscript, but it is still worth noting.

opposition to one another' (Marx and Engels 1846: 86).⁸⁹ Private property and the division of labour are identical expressions of the same thing: 'in the one [division of labour] the same thing is affirmed with reference to activity as is affirmed in the other [private property] with reference to the product of the activity' (Marx and Engels 1846: 46). Although a *social* power, 'forces' assume material form as private property and are 'wrested away' from individuals; they are a force of individuals 'only insofar as they [individuals] are owners of private property' (Marx and Engels 1846: 86). Thus:

standing against these productive forces, we have the majority of individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away, and who, robbed thus of all real life-content, have become *abstract individuals*, who are, however, by this very fact put into a position to enter into relations with one another as individuals (Marx and Engels 1846: 87, my italics).

The abstract individuals who constitute civil society are no more a misconception than the 'idealists of the state': they are *real* abstractions. The development of productive forces and the dissolution of civil society into isolated individuals are sides of the same—unexplained—process (Marx and Engels 1846: 89). Whatever explains how individuals are organized into a productive force will explain what robs them of 'all real life-content' and makes them *abstract* individuals.⁹⁰ The connection between productive forces and civil society will prove important to my subsequent explanation of the organization of labour.

I want now to consider the relationship between civil society and the state.

There can be no doubt that—in this supposed 'Work of the Break'—Marx does not waver from his previous position that (a) civil society and state are coeval phenomena and (b) the problem is the 'essential relations' between them. Indeed he is quite explicit that 'the illusions about the state and the rights of man had already been adequately exposed in the

⁸⁹This point is developed in the next Chapter. See also, Sayer (1987).

⁹⁰In 'On the Jewish Question' man is the plaything of 'alien forces,' here he is 'governed by material forces' (Marx and Engels 1846: 79).

Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 197)—a reference to ‘On the Jewish Question’ and the ‘Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law: Introduction’ (Marx 1843a; Marx 1843b). Marx and Engels do not resolve the problem of these essential relations in *The German Ideology*. At one point they write, ‘Origins of the state and the relation of the state to civil society’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 50) but, as the editors note, ‘the end of this page of the manuscript is left blank’. Nevertheless, it is clear that civil society and the state are creations of *one*—albeit ill-defined—historical process, and that this process comprises the division of labour, the privatization of property and the development of productive forces.⁹¹

This process—which I attempt to explain in Chapter 6—creates the abstract individuals who constitute civil society and separates concepts/rights from their basis in social relations. These ‘separate individuals’ are the basis of people’s juridic self-understanding, an understanding propagated by states-men and idealised by Hegel (Marx and Engels 1846: 348). *This is how ‘man’ is the essence of the state*. It is in this context, Marx appends the words ‘idealistic’ and ‘superstructure’ to the state. It is a form of consciousness, an idea, once ‘directly interwoven with material activity’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 36), which has now acquired the ‘semblance of independence’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 36). There is no doubt that Marx and Engels refer to the state as a superstructure, but, of equal importance, they always refers to the superstructure as ‘ideal’.⁹²

The ‘idealism of the state’ is experienced as a ‘cleavage in the life of each individual’ between the ‘private and the class individual’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 78) and as a

⁹¹Marx and Engels refer to this process variously as ‘the life-process of definite individuals’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 36), ‘the material life of individuals,’ ‘the material mode of life of individuals’ and the social organization of production (Marx and Engels 1846: 330) .

⁹²We might note a neglected meaning of ‘superstructure’: ‘a concept or idea based on others’ (C.O.D.). I return to this point in Chapter 6.

contradiction between the particular interests of the separate individuals and their common interest.⁹³ Out of this contradiction, ‘the common interest assumes an independent form as the state, which is divorced from the real individual and collective interests’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 46). This creates the need for ‘a separate entity, alongside and outside civil society’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 90), which will restrain the practical struggle of particular interests ‘which actually constantly run counter to the common and illusory common interests’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 47) and thereby guarantee the bourgeoisie’s property and interests (Marx and Engels 1846: 90). But here is a problem: ‘The state’ is both an ideal superstructure (an illusory community of common interests) and the name given to a form of organization, ‘alongside and outside civil society’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 90) that deals with concepts and rights (fused in law) which have acquired the ‘semblance of independence’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 36-7). This is the dual—vertical and horizontal—conception identified in the Introduction to this Chapter. I return to the problem of reconciling these vertical and horizontal conceptions below .

If ‘man’ is the essence of the state, what is the ‘essence’ or ‘substance’ of man? Marx and Engels deduce that it is the ‘sum of productive forces’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 54). We can reason thus: if ‘forces’ are the essence or substance of man and man is the essence or substance of the state then productive forces are the essence of the state. As Marx and Engels put it (but do not explain): the social organization of production, or the ‘material mode of life of individuals’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 330), ‘in all ages forms the basis of the state and of the rest of the idealistic superstructure’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 89). *Whatever explains how labour is organized into a productive force will explain the essence of the state.*

⁹³In ‘On the Jewish Question’ man is internally partitioned into a private individual and a public citizen.

In December, 1846, Marx acquired Proudhon's *System of Economic Contradictions or the Philosophy of Poverty* (1846), 'skimmed through it in two days,' then wrote of his impressions in a long letter to Pavel Annenkov, 28 December (Rubin and Manale 1975: 64; see CW 38: 95-106). In the New Year, he began work on a critique, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, which was published in Brussels and Paris, in early July, 1847.⁹⁴ Marx must have regarded it highly, for he recommended it as an introduction to *Capital* (Marx 1847a: 165). Proudhon regarded it as 'a tissue of abuse, falsification and plagiarism' (Marx 1847a: 166).

The book consists of two chapters, 'A Scientific Discovery' and 'The Metaphysics of Political Economy'. The first deals with the opposition between exchange-value and use-value; the second is a critique of Proudhon's use of dialectics and sets out Marx's own understanding of production relations. It has been suggested that Proudhon attempted to apply Hegel's method to political economy under Marx's encouragement, if not his tutelage (Oakley 1983: 34; see Marx's letter to J.B. Schweitzer, 24 January, 1865). Now Marx mocks this attempt (Marx 1847a: 119). We have to deal with two men, says Marx, Proudhon and Hegel. 'What part does Hegel play in M. Proudhon's political economy?' (Marx 1847a: 162).

For Marx, ideas, principles and categories are 'but the theoretical expression' of 'the movement of production relations' (Marx 1847a: 166) and, for this reason, they are 'historical and transitory products ... as little eternal as the relations they express' (Marx 1847a: 166): 'the only immutable thing is the abstraction of movement—mors immortalis' (Marx 1847a: 166). While political economy recognises that production occurs within

⁹⁴Subtitle: 'Answer to the 'Philosophy of Poverty' by M. Proudhon,' two volumes, published in 1846.

social relations, it does not explain ‘how these relations themselves are produced, that is, the historical movement which gave them birth’ (Marx 1847a: 162). A failure to grasp the historical movement of production relations leads to the attribution of the origins of thought to the movement of ‘pure reason’. Just so with Proudhon. ‘What Hegel has done for religion, law, etc., M. Proudhon seeks to do for political economy’ (Marx 1847a: 164). Just as Hegel sees civil society as the incarnation of the idea of the state, Proudhon holds things ‘upside down,’ ‘like a true philosopher,’ and sees in actual relations nothing but the incarnation of economic categories. Proudhon’s ‘dialectics’ is among categories and not—as it is for Marx—among production relations. The fusion of two ‘contradictory thoughts constitutes a new thought, which is the synthesis of them. This thought splits up once again into two contradictory thoughts, which in turn fuse into a new synthesis. Of this travail is born a group of thoughts’ (Marx 1847a: 164). Marx concludes that ‘M. Proudhon has nothing of Hegel’s dialectics but the language’ (Marx 1847a: 168).

I note the following.

a. Hegel’s ‘civil society,’ which pervades the earlier essays, appears only twice in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, both occurrences appear on the very last page (Marx 1847a: 212). I suggest that this is because Marx has reconceptualized the ‘civil society’ of atomistic individuals into a ‘society’ of ‘social relations based on class antagonism’:

These relations are not relations between individual and individual [as in ‘civil society’], but between worker and capitalist, between farmer and landlord, etc. Wipe out these relations and you annihilate all society ... (Marx 1847a: 159).

This is a conception of a society of ‘internal relations’ between the elements that comprise social relations of production.

b. Because these relations are between antagonistic parties, they are dual-sided: they simultaneously produce wealth and poverty, empower and repress: ‘production relations ... have not a simple, uniform character, but a dual character; that in the selfsame relations in

which wealth is produced, poverty is produced also; that in the selfsame relations in which there is a development of the productive forces, there is also a force producing repression' (Marx 1847a: 176). Marx's conception of production relations as dual-sided will prove critical to my use of Foucault to explain the relationship between the organization of production, the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state.

c. Marx has progressed from 'man' to 'social relations' ('man' is the ensemble of social relations) to the historical *movement* of those relations. Marx subsequently claims to have discovered the law of motion of modern society (Marx 1867b).

d. Marx has moved from the critique of jurisprudence to the critique of economics. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels urge us to revolt against the rule of (juridic) concepts, here Marx protests against the rule of economic concepts.⁹⁵

'Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality: A Contribution to German Cultural History Contra Karl Heinzen' comprises a series of articles published in *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung*, written at the end of October 1857, and appearing on October 28, 31, November 11, 18 and 25.⁹⁶ Heinzen was a 'socialist journalist' (McLellan 1973: 138) who worked in the insurance business (Marx 1847b: 153) and a friend of the Marxes during 1845. He emigrated to Switzerland and subsequently attacked both communism and 'true' socialism. Heinzen attacked Engels in an article published in the *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung*, September 26, 1847. Engels responds in 'The Communists and Karl Heinzen,' a two-part article appearing in the same journal on October 3 and 7, 1847. Here Marx attacks Heinzen.

⁹⁵'Economic' and 'juridic' forms are coterminous, as I argue below.

⁹⁶An abridged English translation appeared in 1926. A full translation appeared in 1967.

This essay examines the relationship between politics and social conditions, the power of the state and class relations or the power of property (Marx 1847b: 329). It continues the theme of Marx's earlier articles in which he distinguishes between real social or 'human' and 'merely' political emancipation. Heinzen says: 'I cannot help it if Herr Engels and other communists are too blind to realise that power also controls property and that injustice in property relations is only maintained by power' (cited in Marx 1847b: 318). In response, Marx argues that there are two kinds of power, not one: the power of property owners and political power or the power of the state (Marx 1847b: 318). If 'power also controls property,' as Heinzen had said, this can only be because 'property' does not yet control 'political power'. 'In other words: the bourgeoisie has not yet taken political shape as a class. The power of the state is not yet its own power' (Marx 1847b: 318). The central theme of the essay is the relationship between these two types of power, between workers, the bourgeoisie and the state.

The key to understanding this relationship is to recognise that property 'consists in the totality of the bourgeois relations of production' (Marx 1847b: 337) and that 'the political rule of the bourgeois class arises from these modern relations of production' (Marx 1847b: 319). Marx and Engels argue similarly in *The German Ideology*:

If power is taken as the basis of right, as Hobbes, etc., do, then right, law, etc., are merely the symptoms, the expression of other relations upon which state power rests. The material life of individuals ... is the real basis of the state and remains so at all the stages at which the division of labour and private property are still necessary ... *These actual relations are in no way created by the state power; on the contrary they are the power creating it* (Marx and Engels 1846: 329, my italics).

State power might 'maintain' property relations, but it does not *create* them (Marx 1847b: 319). 'State power' is something 'which the bourgeoisie has organized for the protection of its property relations' (Marx 1847b: 319). The state is society's 'official political form' (Marx 1847b: 328), its 'political shell,' an 'unnatural fetter' that revolutionaries will 'blow sky-high' (Marx 1847b: 327).

What should be the relationship between the proletariat and the state? Workers should support the bourgeois revolution as a precondition of their own but 'not for an instant can they consider it to be their final goal'. If they attempt to overthrow the political rule of the bourgeoisie

its victory will only be temporary, only an element in the service of the bourgeois revolution itself ... as long as in the course of history, in its 'movement,' the material conditions have not yet been created which make necessary the abolition of the bourgeois mode of production and therefore also the definitive overthrow of the political rule of the bourgeoisie (Marx 1847b: 319).

Workers 'first have to produce the material conditions of a new society itself, and no exertion of mind or will can free them from this task' (Marx 1847b: 319-320).

Heinzen's understanding of the relationship between property and the state is that of 'sound common sense,' which Marx ridicules:

It is a characteristic of ... 'sound common sense' ... that where it succeeds in seeing difference, it does not see unity, and that where it sees unity, it does not see difference. if it propounds differentiated determinants, they at once become fossilized in its heads, and it can see only the most reprehensible sophistry when these wooden concepts are knocked together so that they take fire' (Marx 1847b: 320).

Where it sees rigid difference, for example, between 'property' and 'political rule' there are, in fact, 'effective relations between the two forces up to the point where they merge' (Marx 1847b: 320).

Finally, at the congress of the Communist League, held in London at the end of November, 1847, Marx and Engels were asked to draft a manifesto for the League, to publicise its doctrines. Marx finished the manifesto in the early days of February, 1848, and it was published in London that same month, by the Working Men's Educational Association, as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

The *Manifesto* is memorable for the following: ‘the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie’ (Marx 1848: 486). This quotation has fuelled an instrumental conception of the state, as something to be seized or smashed. Since the *Manifesto* is Marx’s most widely read text (Sayer 1989: xxi), this conception has prevailed over the complex of interconnections between civil society and political state that Marx had painstakingly analysed up to this point and which I have attempted here to reconstruct. But we should note two points before deriving an understanding of the state from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. First, Engels’s acknowledgment that it is ‘essentially Marx’s work’ (cited in McLellan 1973: 180) has deflected recognition that the *Manifesto* is based on a version written by Moses Hess, three drafts written by London communists, and Engels’s ‘Principles of Communism,’ drafted at the end of October, 1847, which consists of twenty-five questions and answers about communism. The *Manifesto* is an amalgam of these ingredients; a polemical document intended to advertise the objectives of the League. Second, often unnoticed by ‘instrumentalists,’ Marx and Engels, corrected the *Manifesto’s* conception of the state and distanced themselves from its political program in the ‘Preface to the German Edition of 1872,’ which was written in the light of the Paris Commune of 1871. Regarding the state, ‘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 1872: 22). They add that the practical application of its principles depends on historical conditions ‘and, for that reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today’. It is notable also that in his (1891) Introduction to Marx’s ‘The Civil War in France’ (1871), Engels makes a comment that is redolent of Marx’s earliest writings on the state: ‘in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the

state has been carried over from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers.⁹⁷

There can be little doubt, from the preceding reconstruction of Marx's line of argument, that he regards 'civil society' and 'political state' as internally-related, coeval phenomena which cannot be understood apart: 'the completion of the idealism of the state was at the same time the completion of the materialism of civil society' (Marx 1843b: 166); 'the establishment of the political state and the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals ... is accomplished by one and the same act' (Marx 1843b: 167). The problem is not 'the state' *per se*, conceived as a mystification above the reality of civil society: the mystification is the apparent separability of civil society and the state above the reality of relations of production. But here is the problem: the 'state' is *both* an 'ideal superstructure' and a 'separate entity, alongside and outside civil society' (Marx and Engels 1846: 90).⁹⁸ How can this be?

Civil Society and the State/Distribution and Exchange: An Analogy

Let me try to reconcile the vertical relationship between base and superstructure with the horizontal relationship between civil society and the state. What needs explaining is how—by what historical process—'ideal' forms of social relations become the institutional nexus recognised as 'the state,' 'alongside and outside civil society'.

An analogy with distribution and exchange helps explain the nature of this transformation, for Marx's concept of their relationship to production is remarkably similar to his concept

⁹⁷Marx, of course, argued that the causation is in the other direction.

⁹⁸This dual conception develops in *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engels 1846).

of the relationship between civil society and political state. The juxtaposition of vertical and horizontal imagery pervades the three pairs of concepts: production/exchange, production/distribution, and civil society/political state. Exchange and distribution exist side by side with production, yet exchange is its surface and distribution its reverse side (Marx 1865: 33). Similarly, ‘the state has become a separate entity, alongside and outside civil society’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 90), and yet civil society is the ‘foundation’ or ‘basis’ of a ‘legal and political superstructure’ (Marx 1859a: 20). The similarity between Marx’s descriptions of civil society/political state and production/distribution, written thirteen years apart, is striking. The state stands to civil society, ‘alongside and outside’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 90), as distribution stands to production, ‘at the side of and outside’ (Marx 1857: 94). The state and distribution are analogous spheres.

Things appear to exist externally, alongside each other, I suggest, when they are separate in time and space and regarded as things at rest, for this leads us to miss the movement of the internal, essential relations between them—the historical process that sunders them into discrete spheres. This is true of ‘the two determinants of exchange value’ (Marx 1859b: 169), the purchase and sale of commodities (Marx 1859b: 197), production and exchange, production and distribution (Marx 1859a: 99), and the circuits of capital (Marx 1864). It is true also, I suggest, of civil society and political state.

Marx’s use of vertical imagery, whether it be interior/surface or foundation/superstructure, is a metaphor to give objects ontological depth. This rids the imagination of the constraint of empiricism’s flat ontology and linear causality—which sees only ‘empirical collisions’ (Marx 1843a: 6) between externally related static spheres—and creates the space within which to model the inner, necessary connections between apparently discrete, unconnected entities. For example, Marx uses the content/surface metaphor to grasp the causal mechanism that dispossessed the mass of people in feudal England from the land, and

organized the production and exchange of commodities as spatially and temporally discrete activities, occurring in a multiplicity of separate locations, workplaces and marketplaces—the main components of the ‘economy’ of civil society. By explicating the mechanism ‘capital accumulation,’ Marx shows how people—who may never actually meet—are connected by a process and nexus of relations existing independently of them, indeed, behind their backs. The issue for Marx is the ‘essential relations’ between two ‘moments’, production and exchange, of one and the same process (Marx 1857: 99). By demonstrating the relationship between them, Marx is able to argue that although production and exchange exist side-by-side, spatially and temporally apart, they are social forms of the same production relations and thus internally—causally—related.

What is true of the production/exchange distinction *within* ‘the economy’ is true of the distinction *between* civil society and political state. ‘What is at issue,’ wrote Marx in 1843, ‘is the *essential relationship* of these spheres themselves’ (Marx 1843a: 6), rather than their ‘external necessity’. ‘The relationship between these spheres has ... to be more precisely defined’ (Marx 1843a: 5). Marx never did precisely define their relationship: the ‘essential relationship,’ and the alienated monad it constitutes, is an issue still.

Chapter 4

Marx's Explicans: Capital

Introduction

I argued in Chapter 2 that Marx's object, 'the capitalist mode of production, and the relations of production and forms of intercourse' (Marx 1867a: 90), is the movement, structure and surface of society. The previous Chapter explained how the interrelationship between civil society and the state comprises the surface of society and concluded that Marx sought to explain the 'essential relationship' between them. This relationship is constituted by what Marx refers to enigmatically as the 'materialism of civil society' and 'the idealism of the state' (Marx 1843a: 166). The symmetry of Marx's language suggests these are dimensions of the *same* process; indeed, they 'occur at the same time' (Marx 1843a: 102), in 'one and the same act' (Marx 1843a: 167). The critical question: What is the nature of this process, this act?

In formulating an answer, it is important to recognise that the need to explain this 'essential relationship' was the impetus to his life's work. It is his initial explicandum. As I pointed out in Chapter 2, the 'socially determined production of individuals,' these atoms of civil society and 'essence of the state,' is his 'point of departure for observation and conception,' announced in the first lines of the *Introduction to the Grundrisse* notebooks (Marx 1857: 83). While Marx never did explain the problematic 'essential relationship,' a reconstruction of his retroductive line of argument indicates how it might be done.

He reasons thus: the problem to be explained is the 'narrow self-seeking' of the alienated monad of modernity, 'the fundamental principle of our society everywhere' (Engels 1969:

58). This monad is constituted by the ‘essential relationship’ between civil society and the state. Contrary to ‘political superstition,’ civil society is not held together by the state: the state is held together by civil society (Marx and Engels 1844c: 120-121). Since the essence of the state is the ‘abstract private person’ of civil society, to understand the state we must explain the ‘alien powers’ controlling this apparently free and independent monad, i.e., show how it is ‘already *determined* by society’ (Marx 1858: 248, Marx’s emphasis). Marx seeks an explanation of these ‘alien powers’ in the ‘anatomy’ of civil society (Marx 1859a: 20), by which he means ‘the material foundation, the skeletal *structure* as it were, of its *organization*’ (Marx 1857: 110, my emphasis). Over the course of thirty years, Marx retroduced from ‘the idea of the state,’ to the ‘man’ of civil society, to alienated labour, to ‘relations of private property,’ to ‘relations of production’ between capital and labour and, finally, to the immutable abstraction of movement, *mors immortalis*, of these relations. His ultimate aim was to ‘reveal the economic law of motion of modern society’ (Marx 1867b: 92).

Marx construes ‘civil society’ and, its mirror image, ‘the state,’ as phenomena on the surface of society, products of a process taking place beneath it, which he explains in terms of the ‘moving unity’ and ‘inner necessity’ of the elements comprising ‘the inner organization of the capitalist mode of production’ (Marx 1864: 831). This movement is governed by an ‘inner law’ (Marx 1864: 880). Marx’s understanding of this law was developed in pursuance of the inner connection of the historical process that sunders society into two apparently discrete spheres, civil society and the state. The name of this ‘inner structure’ and ‘complicated social process’ (Marx 1864: 830)—which ‘actually conceals the inner connection behind the utter indifference, isolation, and alienation’ of the problematic ‘abstract private person’—is *capital*.⁹⁹ Marx’s model of capital aims to

⁹⁹It was for this retroductive line of argument, I believe, that caused Marx to give this title to the result of his life’s work, in December 1862.

explain the law of motion of the mechanisms which mediate between structure and surface (production and circulation) and which generate these mirror images, civil society/the state. It does *not*, I contend, aim to explain capitalist production *per se*. This is to confuse his explicans with his explicandum. The trajectory of Marx's line of argument thus points to the 'inner organization of the capitalist mode of production' (Marx 1864: 831) as the process, the 'essential relationship' between civil society and the state. But since Marx never completed his 'economics,' much less write his book on the state and synthesize the critiques of political economy and jurisprudence, he never explained how, in what way? We can retroduce that this *must* be so, but *how* it is so we must work out for ourselves. This is one of my concerns in the remainder of the thesis.

A realist understanding of this multi-faceted, dynamic, three-dimensional object—society—is helpful to working out this problem in two ways.

First, because this social object is an internally-related and moving organic whole, Marx's concepts of its elements are interdependent and fluid in meaning, rather than mutually exclusive and fixed; they do not 'refer unambiguously or consistently to different, and mutually exclusive, bits of empirical reality' (Sayer 1987: 22). These elements cannot 'properly be understood as externally "interacting" on one another; each is what it is only by virtue of its relation to the other and must be conceptualized accordingly' (Sayer 1987: 19). Since Marx's concepts are interrelated they must be understood relationally.¹⁰⁰

Second, the meaning of these concepts depends on how we look at this object. We can examine:

¹⁰⁰For example, capital and value are defined in terms of each other. Value and capital are both social processes: value is 'a self-moving substance,' 'the subject ['the independently acting agent'] of a process' (Marx 1867a: 255); and value 'in process' is capital—capital is 'permanent self-multiplying value' (Sismondi, cited with approval by Marx at 1867a: 256; 1865: 108) or 'value in motion' (1865: 136). Hence: 'the movement of [industrial] capital is this abstraction [value] in action' (Marx 1865: 108).

- its interior or its exterior (as in *Capital*, volumes 1 and 3)
- it at rest (its structure) or in motion (its process),
- it in cross-section or in plan

Marx's model is a theoretical cross-section of this object, which attempts to explain the logic of contemporary social history; the real, historical process that mediates between its internal structure and outer surface. Marx's use of 'capital' to refer to an 'inner structure' and a 'complicated social process' (cited above) should be understood in this context. Considered at rest, capital is the 'basic structure' of relations of production (Marx 1864: 267); considered in motion, it is a 'complicated social process' which converts 'social relations into things' (Marx 1864: 828 and 830; 1858: 301).¹⁰¹ Capital, then, is both a social structure (relations of production) and the historical process of its reproduction (mode of production). These two meanings of capital parallel Marx's two meanings of 'organization': both a process and the medium of that process, the mode and relations of production.

My aim in this Chapter is to develop this novel concept of capital by depicting: (a) the relationship between concepts of apparently discrete *things* and establish them as interrelated elements comprising the internal structure of society—relations of production; and (b) the relationship between concepts of apparently discrete *processes* and establish them as dimensions of the *same* process: that which mediates between the internal structure and outer surface of this object and generates the seemingly discrete 'civil society' and

¹⁰¹More complex still, this social process objectifies production relations in a series of material forms that move in a circuit of metamorphosis and Marx uses different concepts to refer to its appearance at different stages in this circuit. Within production, where he labels the social relation 'capital,' it appears as labour-power, means of production and raw material. Within circulation, where he labels the social relation 'value,' it appears as commodities and money. Since the commodity is both the elementary premise of capital and the immediate result of the capitalist process of production, circulation and production overlap and money and commodities are forms of both value and capital—hence the hybrid term, 'capital-value' (Marx 1865: 49,107). Thus, paraphrasing Engels's letter to Marx (May 30, 1873), cited in Chapter 2: capital is a social relation that undergoes metamorphosis through various material forms, a process which produces effects that cause changes in the internal structure of these relations. Grasping this movement, that is, considering the process 'taken as a whole', requires an analysis of the 'basic structure' of capital (Marx 1864: 267). The purpose of Marx's metaphor of depth is to create the space within which the causal mechanisms of this structure can be imagined, then modelled.

‘political state’—mode of production. The Chapter argues that Marx’s concepts of this structure and process have a common problem—a lack of an explanation of how labour is organized and subsumed to capital—and concludes that this is identical to the residuum resisting explanation by ‘control,’ which was identified as a problem in Chapter 1.

Relations of Production

I start by examining one of the most elusive concepts in Marx’s lexicon, ‘abstract labour,’ for it will prove critical to understanding the organization of labour and its relationship to civil society and the state. One interpretation is that this concept is ‘just a pair of words’ with ‘no genuine explanatory value’ (Steedman 1985: 568, 573). Marx himself regards the distinction between abstract and concrete labour as one of his most important discoveries and, for this reason alone, we must take it seriously and try to fathom its elusive meaning.¹⁰²

Writing in the Soviet Union during the 1920s, that ‘Hegelian’ opponent of traditional Marxism, Isaak Illich Rubin, noted that those few who give attention to ‘abstract labour’ prefer ‘to confine themselves to a literal repetition of a few sentences which Marx devotes to this concept in the second section of Chapter 1 of *Capital*’ (Rubin 1972: 134).¹⁰³ This continues to be so. Commentaries tend to define abstract labour negatively, by stating what it is not, and by paraphrasing Marx’s deduction of the existence of abstract labour in the context of his account of the bodily form of value: ‘there is nothing left but what is common to them all ... human labour in the abstract’ (Marx 1867a: Chapter 1). In this fashion, an

¹⁰²‘The best points about my book are 1. (this is fundamental to all understanding of the FACTS) the two-fold character of labour according to whether it is expressed in use-value or exchange-value which is brought out in the very First Chapter’ (Marx to Engels, August 24, 1867). See also volume 1: the distinction between abstract and concrete labour is ‘crucial to an understanding of political economy’ (Marx 1867a: 132).

¹⁰³Rubin stressed the importance of Hegel for understanding Marx, the internality between content and form (Rubin 1972: 117) and for this was accused of idealism, executed on Stalin’s orders and his supporters were imprisoned. See Rosdolsky (1968: 78 and 570).

understanding of abstract labour, like so many of Marx's concepts, is handed down through the generations and acquires the authority of tradition. 'We all think we *know* what Marx means when he uses these concepts' (Sayer 1987: 16-17).

Since an understanding of abstract labour is usually based on the first few pages of *Capital*, volume 1, which examine the commodity, the common impression is that it is a phenomenon of exchange. Pilling's account is representative:

in exchanging products men *equalize* them—that is, the market, as an objective process, abstracts from the physical-natural aspects in which one use-value differs from another; and in so doing the market abstracts from that which serves to differentiate this labour (Pilling 1980: 46).

On the basis of the much-quoted Chapter 1, Pilling concludes:

it should be clear that in the *formation* of abstract labour we are not dealing with a mental process, *but something that takes place in the actual process of exchange itself* (Pilling 1980: 46-47, my emphasis).

There are many variations on this theme but, in essence, Pilling's is a typical account of abstract labour. But is Part 1 of volume 1 of *Capital* the best guide to 'abstract labour'? This volume was written last (Oakley 1983), so Marx must have worked out the concept well before this time. Rubin suggests that if we trace the development of Marx's thought we will find in his work 'enough elements for a sociological theory of abstract labour' (Rubin 1972: 135). Indeed, if we read Marx chronologically-bibliographically, as realism suggests we should, an entirely different understanding of abstract labour emerges. It is this understanding *I now want to develop*.

'Abstract labour,' first appears in the *Grundrisse* notebooks and is developed in *CCPE*, where it makes its public debut.¹⁰⁴ In these texts, two things are clear. First, abstract, average and general labour are synonymous: 'This abstraction, human labour in general, exists in the form of average labour ... It is simple labour which any average individual can

¹⁰⁴Note: the concept, but not the *term*, appears in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Marx 1847a: 127).

be *trained* to do and which in one way or another he *has* to perform' (Marx 1859b: 31, my emphasis). Second, while the existence of abstract labour can be deduced from exchange, it is a *creation* of production. The reduction of different kinds of labour to uniform, simple, homogeneous labour, of a uniform quality, whose only difference is quantity, Marx explains, 'appears to be an abstraction, but it is an abstraction which is made every day *in the social process of production*' (Marx 1859b: 30, my emphasis). Most commentaries grant that abstract labour is a real not a mental abstraction, but wrongly construe it as the abstraction of exchange. This ignores the fact that commodities have prices before they go to market and that the magnitude of these prices is proportionate to socially necessary labour which is caused by the abstraction of production. 'Abstract labour' refers to one of those phenomena which is created in production but expressed via exchange on the surface of society, circulation. The act of exchange projects this inner characteristic of production to the outside.¹⁰⁵

Marx confirms this interpretation in *Capital's* Chapter 11, 'Cooperation,' and in the *Resultate* (Marx 1866), where he manages to discuss the concept 'abstract labour' without using the term: in fact, Chapter 1 is the *only* place in *Capital* the term appears. I want to suggest that we can derive an understanding of the problematic 'abstract labour' by explicating its synonym, 'average social labour,' which is discussed at length in one of 'the most immediately readable' chapters of *Capital*—'Cooperation' (Marx to Kugelman, November 30, 1867).¹⁰⁶ Here Marx explains that:

Any average magnitude ... is merely the average of a number of separate magnitudes all of one kind, but differing in quantity. In every industry, each individual worker differs from the average worker. These individual differences, or 'errors' as they are called in mathematics, compensate each other and vanish whenever a certain minimum number of workers are employed together. Edmund Burke, that famous sophist and sycophant, goes

¹⁰⁵For example: 'The value of commodities as determined by labour time is only their average value. This average appears as an external abstraction' (Marx 1858: 137).

¹⁰⁶Please be so kind as to tell your good wife that the chapters on the "Working Day," "*Co-operation*," "Division of Labour and Machinery" and finally on "Primitive Accumulation" are the most immediately readable' (Marx to Kugelman, November 30, 1867, my emphasis).

so far as to make the following assertion, based on his practical observation as a farmer: that 'in so small a platoon' as that of five farm workers, *all individual differences in the labour vanish, and that consequently any given five adult farm labourers taken together will do as much work in the same time as any other five* (Marx 1867a: 440, my emphasis).

As I will now explain, this example conveys the meaning of the abstract/concrete labour distinction better than Marx's attempt to do so in Chapter 1. The first point I want to make is that abstract/concrete labour is a *conceptual* distinction. In the first German edition of *Capital*, Marx says:

a commodity does not possess two different forms of labour *but one and the same labour is defined in different and even opposed ways* depending on whether it is related to the use-value of commodities as to its product, or to commodity value as to its material expression (Marx 1867: 13, cited in Rubin 1972: 146-147, n. 20, my emphasis).

There are not two types of labour, but *one*—the everyday activity of earning a living—which may be defined or viewed in two different ways. This point will prove important.

Abstract labour is no less real for being conceptual. It is measured, expressed in quantitative production norms and translated into ~~the~~ rules of work behaviour and performance (as I will explain in Chapter 6). These rules define labour of an average or normal intensity or quality (Marx 1867a: 440 and 701-702), which workers can be 'trained to do'—labour which, 'one way or another,' they *have* to do (Marx 1859b: 31). I believe that this is what Marx has in mind when he says:

Labour, thus measured by time, does not seem, indeed, to be the labour of different persons, but on the contrary *the different working individuals seem to be mere organs of this labour*' (Marx 1859: 30, my emphasis).

The 'abstraction which is made every day in the social process of production,' which reduces different kinds of labour to uniform, simple, homogeneous labour, is the immutable abstraction of movement: the activity of organizing or 'training' labour to meet this quantitative rule. Construed thus, Marx's concrete/abstract labour distinction, of *Capital*, volume 1, parallels in meaning his private/social labour distinction, of the *Grundrisse* and of *Capital*, volume 3, where he discusses the 'organization of labour into social labour' (Marx 1864: 266). The rules of work behaviour and performance, centred on the abstraction, 'average labour,' are devices by which private, concrete labour is organized and rendered

X

social. Organizing is the ‘abstraction of activity’ Marx speaks of in the *Grundrisse* notebooks (Marx 1858: 693) and the ‘abstraction of relations of production’ he speaks of in the *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Marx 1847a: 165). It is only when the capitalist ‘sets in motion’ this ‘labour of an average social quality’ that the law of valorization ‘come[s] into its own’ (Marx 1867a: 441). Recognition of the role of ‘abstract labour’ in organizing production influences how we understand productive ‘forces,’ which I consider next.

Traditionally, a ‘productive force’ is construed as a property of an object, or set of objects, rather than as a social relation, or relations between objects (Cohen 1978: 28). This ‘technological’ interpretation of Marx is yet another symptom of the influence of the 1859 *Preface*, where he speaks of ‘*material* forces of production’ and ‘*material* productive forces of society’ (Marx 1859b: 20, 21, my emphasis). But, once again, if we look at the range of Marx’s writing we find that he uses a variety of expressions as synonyms for what are normally referred to as ‘productive forces’. For example: ‘the productive power of social labour,’ ‘the productive forces of social labour,’ ‘the forces of social production,’ ‘the social productive power of labour,’ and ‘the social productive force of labour’.¹⁰⁷ They share an emphasis on the ‘social’ rather than the ‘material’.

‘Productive force’ is the usual translation of *Produktivkräfte*, but a more exact translation, as both Cohen (1978) and Sayer (1987) point out, is ‘productive powers’. This distinction is important. ‘Whereas a “force” can be conceived as a thing, a power is always *of* something’ (Sayer 1987: 27).¹⁰⁸ A productive force is the collective power of social production, brought about by organizing labour ‘into one single productive body,’ for the purpose of improving its productivity (Marx 1867a: 449). Put another way, it is the power

¹⁰⁷These terms come from Marx 1866, Part 3: 377; Marx 1865: 232 and 259; and Marx 1858 37, 98 and 540, respectively.

¹⁰⁸‘To speak of “productive forces” ... immediately suggests the possibility of a *list*’ (Balibar, in Althusser and Balibar 1977: 233). ‘The “productive forces” are not really things’ (ibid: 235).

of social labour, 'not a set of things as such at all' (Sayer 1987: 27). For example, simple cooperation, 'creates a new productive power, which is intrinsically a collective one' (Marx 1867a: 443), and the 'mode of cooperation is itself a "productive force"' (Sayer 1987: 43). Indeed, for Marx, the main force of production is the human being (Marx 1858: 422).

I want to draw attention to a connection between 'abstract labour' and 'productive forces'. The connection is the activity of organizing. Concrete or private labour is rendered 'abstract' or social as it is organized into a productive power or 'force'. Marx suggests as much: creating a 'definite organization of social labour' ('abstract labour'), he says, '*at the same time* develops new, and social, productive powers of labour' (Marx 1867a: 486, my emphasis) (productive 'force'). The *same* process that organizes labour into a productive power or 'force' makes labour 'abstract' and 'sets in motion labour of a socially average character' (Marx 1867a 441). Abstract labour and productive 'forces' are internally-related, sides of the same process and nexus of production relations. This will prove important to my subsequent explanation of the organization of labour.

The concept 'productive forces' grows complex because, as I shall later explain, this mode of organizing is objectified in artefacts, via their design, architecture and construction (Marglin 1974; Foucault 1977): 'an entirely objective organization of production ... confronts the worker as a pre-existing material condition of production' (Marx 1867a: 508). As social relations of production become 'bound to the various material elements of the production process' (Marx 1864: 830), in this way, the productive power of social labour acquires the semblance of the productive power of 'capital' (Marx 1863, Part 1: 378; Marx 1867a: 451). As Marx puts it, the social relation is transformed into a thing and the thing embodies, absorbs or 'subsumes' the social relation (Marx 1863, Part 3: 483). Social things acquire material characteristics and material things acquire social characteristics. It is this fusion of the social and material characteristics of productive powers in the form of

capital that often confuses. Capital ‘appears to be a mere thing, and to coincide entirely with the matter in which it is present’ (Marx 1858: 513). In consequence, we attribute causal powers to inanimate objects. This is the problem of ‘fetishism’: an incapacity to detach the physical existence of something from the social characteristics amalgamated with it (Marx 1867a: 1008). To understand the nature of ‘forces,’ and their relationship to capital, the physical and social characteristics of things must be prised apart. Sayer explains:

material things ... only become productive forces in so far as they take on social characteristics’; and social phenomena are productive forces only in so far as they are materialised in actual production processes (Sayer 1987: 26).

This is a distinction between material and social attributes (or ‘sides’) of productive things, not between different kinds of phenomena—*social* relations of production and *material* forces or capital (Sayer 1987: 57-58). Productive powers or ‘forces’ and capital are internally-related, sides of the same phenomena, not different kinds of phenomena.

This interpretation of ‘forces,’ particularly, the distinction between the social and material attributes of productive things, is helpful in two ways.

First, it establishes that social relations of production, not things, have causal primacy: developing the productivity of labour, by stimulating technological and organizational innovation, is ‘the historical task and justification of capital’ (Marx 1864: 259). This is important. It denies us recourse to technological determinism and compels us to enquire of the social character of the material things which we call ‘forces’ and capital. Their social character is that they are *privately owned* (Marx 1863, Part 3: 492 and 495).¹⁰⁹ This is the ‘specific social determination of capital and of capitalist production’ (Marx 1863, Part 3: 492). A productive power is capital only because it is private property, i.e., in the context of

¹⁰⁹The ‘social determination of capital and of capitalist production ... is expressed juridically in capital as property’ (Marx 1863, Part 3: 492).

relations of exclusion, between people, over things.¹¹⁰ Capital and property are internally-related forms (economic and juridic) of the same phenomena, not separable things. It is because the ‘social productive power of labour’ is objectified in material things, which are fetishised and privately owned, that capital is experienced by workers as an alien and coercive force. Capital is the power of social labour, objectified in things, which are fetishised, privately owned and experienced by workers as an alien force. These things are no longer the ‘force’ or power of the people who constitute them, but of the people who *own* them (Marx and Engels 1846: 86).

Second, it changes the traditional understanding of the contradiction at the heart of capitalist production. The conflict between ‘forces’ and relations of production alluded to by Marx in the 1859 *Preface* (Marx 1859a: 21), and made famous by its canonical status, is not between things and people: it is between an emerging set of social relations, capable of sustaining ‘a higher state of social production’ (Marx 1858: 750) and the constraint of ‘the existing relations of production or—*this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms*—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto’ (Marx 1859a: 21, my emphasis). Put simply, it is a conflict between the owners and non-owners of things. The ‘bitter contradiction, crises, spasms’ of history are caused by an incompatibility between the existing relations of ownership and the further development of the productive powers of social labour (Marx 1858: 749).¹¹¹

¹¹⁰A negro is a negro. In certain relations he becomes a slave. A mule is a machine for spinning cotton. Only in certain relations does it become capital. Outside these circumstances, it is no more capital than gold is intrinsically money, or sugar is the price of sugar ... Capital is a social relation of production. It is a historical relation of production’ (Marx 1867a: 932, n. 4).

¹¹¹As Engels puts it: ‘the limits of production are determined not by the number of hungry bellies, but rather by the number of purchasers with full purses’ (Engels to Lange, 29 March, 1865). Put another way, it is a conflict between unlimited means, ‘unconditional development of the productive forces of society,’ and limited purpose, ‘the self-expansion of the existing capital’ (Marx 1864: 250).

A Labour Theory of Property

I want to extend this depiction of the interrelationship between Marx's concepts to the nucleus of his analytic. This is usually understood to be the 'labour theory of value'. This theory is notoriously difficult to understand and is widely regarded as discredited—even among Marxists. For example, Cohen's defence of Marx's theory of history does not extend to a defence of his labour theory of value, as is evident in its concluding words: 'The theses of the labour theory of value are not presupposed or entailed by ~~an~~ contentions advanced in this book' (Cohen 1978: 353). It is notable, too, that Cohen's critic, the realist Derek Sayer, does not find it necessary to explicate or defend this theory in either his account of Marx's method (Sayer 1979a) or his reconstruction of the main categories of traditional Marxism (Sayer 1987). This central problem of Marxist theory surfaces amidst the labour process debate, whose participants balk at accepting the labour theory of value, but otherwise make use of the categories attached to it. Littler sums up the predicament:

many labour process writers try to have their cake and eat it: that is to say, they recognise the problem [of the labour theory of value] but do not deal with the theoretical implications [the abandonment of labour process theory]. Instead, they tend to side-step the problem (Littler 1990: 79).

Side-stepping the problem, however, is the source of the impasse in radical IR and labour process theory. It must be confronted and resolved.

A start is to recall, from Chapter 2, the remarkable fact that Marx does not use the expression—'labour theory of value'—traditionally attributed to him: he speaks of the *law* of value. This simple observation can be developed into an alternative formulation of value theory. A realist interpretation of Marx's model, in terms of structure, surface and movement, resolves the ambiguity of 'value' by explaining the relationship between its substance and its form and construes Marx's analytic as a labour theory of *property*. Let me explain.

As I have said, Marx's concepts are handed down through the generations and accepted with the authority of tradition. Realism, however, places a premium on conceptual precision. For this reason, it is important to scrutinize the components of the 'labour' 'theory' 'of' 'value'.

Labour

As I argued earlier, there are not 'two different forms of labour but one and the same labour'—earning a living—which can be 'defined in different and even opposed ways' (Marx, cited in Rubin 1972: 146-147, n. 20). Abstract labour is a conceptual phenomenon, which is used to define labour of average quality or intensity, which workers are trained to do, which, one way or another, they have to do (Marx 1859b: 31). This interpretation sets aside the obscurity of much commentary on abstract labour and reveals the simple truth: labour is purposeful, responsible, creative human action upon instruments, means of production and raw materials—the significance of which I will shortly explain.

Theory

Marx's theory should be understood in the realist sense, as a model of a nonempirical object developed via retroduction, rather than as a deductive-nomological argument. The law of value attempts to explain patterns of events on society's surface (civil society ↔ the state) by modelling the generative mechanisms of its inner structure (capital). It is a noncausal analysis, in the sense that it aims to define the capacity to act of these mechanisms; in itself, it does not explain how they operate in particular instances.

Of

The two meanings of 'theory,' 1. realist or noncausal and 2. nonrealist or causal, correspond to two meanings of 'of': 1. 'the material or substance constituting or identifying a thing' and 2. 'origin, cause or authorship' (C.O.D.). The relationship between

‘labour’ and ‘value’ should be understood in the first sense: labour is the material or substance *constituting* or identifying value: it is not the cause of value.

Value

Interpretations of the ‘labour theory of value’ usually founder on the elusiveness of ‘value’ and the problematic relationship between its substance and its form. Interpreting it in a realist sense renders it comprehensible. The substance of value is a relationship between people, expressed as abstract labour; the form of value is a relationship between commodities, expressed in exchange-value or price.¹¹² Construed thus, abstract labour doesn’t *cause* value—as the ‘labour theory of value’ suggests—no more than social being causes social consciousness. Rather, abstract labour and (exchange-) value are internally-related sides of the same social relations, substance and form, inside and outside, in exactly the same way in which abstract labour/forces, forces/relations and civil society/the state are related.¹¹³ This interpretation explains the ‘central claim of the labour theory of value’ (Cohen 1988: 210): ‘the exchange value of a commodity varies *directly and uniformly* with the quantity of labour time required to produce it under standard conditions of productivity’ (Cohen 1988: 210, my emphasis). Indeed it does, for they are sides of the same thing.

A ‘labour theory of value,’ considered as a causal relationship between the magnitude of value’s substance (abstract or socially necessary labour) and the magnitude of its form (exchange-value or price), would be an understanding of exploitation based on a theory of price. There are two main points I want to make against this interpretation.

¹¹²Unlike many, I do not believe that exchange-value and price are different things. Marx writes that the price of commodities is ‘this exchange value of theirs, expressed in money’ and ‘money is the physical medium into which exchange values are dipped, and in which they obtain the form corresponding to their general character’ (Marx 1958: 137 and 167). And in the *Resultate* he argues: ‘price is the expression of exchange-value as exchange-value, i.e. as *money*’ (Marx 1866: 955). Price is the quantitative measure of exchange value.

¹¹³Cohen (1988) makes a similar point: ‘value is *defined* as socially necessary labour time. But a stipulative definition of a technical term is not a theory, and when value is defined as socially necessary labour time, it cannot also be a central theoretical claim of the labour theory that socially necessary labour time determines value’ (Cohen 1988: 210).

First, what labour actually (re-)produces is not ‘value’ or price, but social relations of production and their twin, coeval, economic and juridic forms. As Ellerman puts it:

Capitalism is not a particular type of price system. Capitalism is a particular type of property system; the system which allows Capital ... to appropriate the whole product of a production process (Ellerman 1984: 224).

These forms are fused in the corporation which is remarkable as ‘the only major human organization in our present society which has owners who may buy and sell it as a piece of property’ (Ellerman 1983: 270). *The corporation is the modern site at which political economy and jurisprudence converge*. It is also, I shall argue, the site of those elusive ‘essential relations’ between civil society and the state—for property, let us recall from the previous Chapter, mediates between them.

Second, the ambiguity of ‘abstract’ labour has obscured a startling fact about *actual*, ‘concrete’ labour. The law normally grants people rights and obligations for the positive and negative consequences of their intentional actions, i.e., it holds them responsible. This is the essence of the ‘juridical principle of imputation’ which is applied daily by the courts in every area of human conduct—except industrial relations (Ellerman 1984). Although labour is purposeful, creative and responsible human action, workers have no legal responsibility for the positive and negative results of their labour (Ellerman 1984). This responsibility is transferred, by the contract of employment, from workers to the legal fiction, the joint-stock company or corporation, which thereby acquires the right to direct or manage the production process and to appropriate its product. It is an everyday fact of life that when workers sell their capacity to work, by the same act, they sell the rights and obligations attached to it. In transferring these rights from the worker to the corporation, the contract of employment effectively reduces workers of the capitalist firm to the legal status of things. If overnight the workers in capitalist firms became robots, ‘the legal institutions of capitalism would hardly

notice the difference' (Ellerman 1984: 229). Yet this fact has been neglected by radicals and conservatives alike:

One would scan the entire legal and philosophical literature in vain to find the simple observation that the actions of the employee in a normal capitalist firm are fully deliberate, intentional, voluntary, and responsible—but that the employees are assigned zero legal responsibility for the positive and negative results of these actions (Ellerman 1984: 230-31).

Construed in these terms, Marx's analytic comprises a labour theory of *property*, the essence of which can be distilled thus:

- a. people are responsible for the positive and negative results of their intentional actions,
- b. labour is intentional human activity, therefore,
- c. workers should legally appropriate the positive and negative fruits of their labour. This is an *inalienable* right, a right held by virtue of being a person: a *human* right. However,
- d. these rights are transferred by the contract of employment to the corporation and it is these rights—to organize and manage production and to appropriate its product—that are bought and sold as property.

It is in this sense, I suggest, that alienated labour is 'the essence of private property' (Marx 1844b: 317) and private property is 'the material, summary expression of alienated labour' (Marx 1844b: 281), realised only 'by production itself' (Marx 1858: 493).

The contradiction between labour's *de facto* responsibility and lack of *de jure* responsibility and the privately owned nature of the work organization—which together comprise the legal foundations of capitalist production—escapes our attention because they are as 'familiar and mundane as, say, slavery was in the ante-bellum South of the United States' (Ellerman 1983: 288). And also, I suggest, because traditional, 'economic' readings of Marx obscure these issues by focussing on the production of a surplus (*surplus* value). The existence of a surplus is unremarkable. What matters, for Marx, is how the capitalist organizational form

obscures the existence of this surplus and denies workers a *right* to it (viz. surplus *value*):¹¹⁴

Instead of desperately shifting about for some or other way of defending the labour theory [of value], Marxists and non-Marxists should address themselves to the crucial question, which is whether or not private ownership of capital is morally legitimate (Cohen 1988: 238).

To recap. The ‘incessant reproduction’ of the relationship of production is the ‘sine qua non of capitalist production’ and ‘appears to be an even more important result of the process than its material results’. These relations have juridic and economic forms. These forms are fused in the form of the corporation—the only major social organization to take the form of private property. Private property mediates between civil society and the state. It is the point of convergence between jurisprudence and political economy. Marx’s analytic is a labour theory of property. It aims to explain how production or property relations themselves are produced.

Power, Control and Organization

I have explicated the internal relations among some key elements of the dual-sided social relations of production—abstract labour/forces, forces/capital, capital/property, property/alienation, alienation/fetishism and abstract labour/exchange-value—each of which owes its character to its relation to the other. Marx imagines, then models the connections between these seemingly discrete phenomena and reveals them as internally-related elements (‘moments’) of the same nexus of production relations, caused by the ‘inner organization of the capitalist mode of production’. In so doing, he operationalises a realist concept of power or causation. Marx’s model of capital is less interested in the behaviour of individuals than in the internal-relations among them that structure their *capacity* to act.

¹¹⁴Gerstein argues that ‘Marx attributed centrality to the *form* and not simply to the *fact* of exploitation’ (Gerstein 1976: 259).

Labour-power is a capacity to act *par excellence*. In other words, Marx's primary interest is material, rather than efficient or final, causes:

To prevent possible misunderstandings, let me say this. I do not by any means depict the capitalist and the landowner in rosy colours. But individuals are dealt with here only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, the bearers of particular class-relations and interests. My standpoint, from which the development of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations *whose creature he remains*, socially speaking, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them (Marx 1867b: 92, my emphasis).

I want to suggest that the problems of 'control,' evident in criticisms of radical IR and labour process analysis, stem from a reading of Marx based on the radical concept of power. As I explained in Chapter 1, radical analysis retains pluralism's empiricist $A \Rightarrow B$ formulation of power but, because of an understanding of their conflicting real interests, differs by imputing to *A* the motive to control the behaviour of *B*, and by imputing to *B* the motive to resist. It is an argument of this thesis that Marx provides no imprimatur for the radical concept of power. *Capital* is not a theory of 'interests'—real or otherwise—it is a model of the social relations of production which structure the capacity to act, and an explanation of the law of motion of modern society. Recognition of the mismatch between Marx's realist or relational concept of power and the radical concept of power, implicit in traditional Marxism, is important for two reasons.

First, it helps explain the difficulty of labour process theory. Just as 'power' has been abstracted from the internal-relations of production that took Marx thirty years to depict, so 'labour process' has been abstracted from the social relations of production that give it life. The labour process, says Marx, is simply 'the process of production, separated from capital' (Marx 1864: 382); and, as every Marxist knows, capital is a social relation of production. Plucking the labour process from social relations of production prises it apart from the valorization process, shatters the unity of the production process and divorces

production from the circuits of capital—Marx’s carefully crafted ‘organic whole’.¹¹⁵ Put simply, it reduces to a static entity that which Marx was adamant can be understood only as movement (Marx 1865: 108). No wonder labour process theorists are in such a quandary (Knights and Willmott 1990). This is what happens when one chapter is abstracted from one volume of an unfinished work, and when *Capital* itself is abstracted from the complex evolution and scope of Marx’s prodigious output. To paraphrase ~~Weber~~^{Sayer}, the labour process is not a taxicab one can take where one will: it comes as part of an internally-related, organic whole.¹¹⁶

Second, my depiction of the internal relations between abstract labour and productive ‘forces’ establishes that labour is not simply ‘controlled’ into a productive power: it is *organized* into one. The *primum mobile* of capitalist production is not ‘control’ *per se*: it is the creation of a surplus by developing ‘the productive forces of social labour.’ This is ‘the absolute motive and content’ of the capitalist’s activity (Marx 1866: 990). I will argue, in Chapter 6, that this puts the techniques of work organization grouped under the rubric of ‘control’ in a different light. As Sheila Cohen explains: ‘the organization of the labour process has very little to do with “control” in the sense of a power struggle, and everything to do with “efficiency”’ (Cohen 1987: 42-43, my emphasis). ‘Efficiency’—‘productive with minimum waste or effort’—is precisely the aim of organizing labour into a productive force and rendering it ‘abstract’. This shifts the explanatory focus away from ‘control’ to how the dual-sided relations of production both empower and repress in the search for efficiency.

¹¹⁵Marx makes clear in the *Resultate* that the distinction between the labour process and the valorisation process is purely *conceptual*. They cannot be empirically distinguished. They form a ‘single and indivisible’ production process. (Marx 1866: 991). ‘The immediate process of production is always an indissoluble union of *labour process* and *valorization process* just as the product is a whole composed of use-value and exchange-value, i.e. the *commodity*’ (Marx 1866: 952).

¹¹⁶I borrow this from Sayer 1987 (ix), who uses it to refer to the hijacking of Marx’s views by traditional Marxists.

Mode of Production

I now turn from the internal structure of society, or its relations of production, to the logic of its historical development, its movement or mode of (re-)production. Just as my realist reading of Marx establishes the interrelationship between the elements comprising the internal structure of capital, so it can establish the interrelationship between the apparently discrete historical processes which constitute movement in these relations. My explanation of the logic of this historical process is based on (a) my earlier interpretation of the nucleus of Marx's concepts: the broad, dual-sided nature of relations of production, the internal-relations between abstract labour/forces and forces/capital, and the real abstraction of capitalist production—the activity of organizing; and (b) a novel interpretation of the subsumption of labour by capital. I shall argue that the organization of labour into a productive power, the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour to capital, and the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals—the essence and precondition of the state (Marx 1843b: 166)—are coterminous dimensions of the same process and nexus of production relations, with a common, unifying logic. I aim to explain this process and its logic.

I start with the relationship between the formal and the real subsumption of labour under capital (henceforth F/R SLC). This relationship is said to contain the 'inner logic of capitalism' (Mandel 1976: 944) and 'lies at the heart of much contemporary Marxist theory of the workplace (Cressey and MacInnes 1980: 9). Given its supposed importance, Marx's explanation of this relationship is distinctly ambiguous. Although the F/R SLC distinction is implicit in much of *Capital*, volume 1, it is explicitly discussed only in its missing 'sixth' chapter, the *Resultate*, where it occupies nineteen pages (Marx 1866). Marx's account of the concept is undeveloped and rough and its significance is not spelt out. He establishes that formal and real subsumption correspond to the production of absolute and relative surplus

value, respectively, but their relationship to the historical periods characterised by cooperation, manufacture and large-scale industry is unclear. Even allowing for the ambiguities and inconsistencies due to the disorganization of *Capital*, Marx's explanation of the movement between the formal to the real subsumption of capital, from manufacture to factory production, absolute to relative surplus value production, is unsatisfactory. For these reasons the F/R SLC concept is widely rejected, even among Marxists, as inadequate for understanding both the workplace and the development of the capitalist mode of production. The discrediting of the F/R SLC concept is an important component of the problem of 'control'. I believe, however, that in important respects conventional interpretations of Marx on this matter are mistaken and cloud the significance of what he is trying to say. To argue the point, I want to utilise my earlier account of the internal-relations between abstract labour/forces and forces/capital to reconstruct and piece together Marx's fragmented remarks on the F/R SLC in volume 1 and in the *Resultate*.

I believe that formal and real subsumption are ideal-types of modes of production—'mode' understood as an organizing process, rather than a thing or 'social formation'. The movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour is analogous to the movement of the mechanism of a watch or clock. The movement of this mechanism connects the two sides of production relations: it organizes labour into a productive power and objectifies this mode of organization in artefacts, whereby it becomes the repressive force of owners of capital. In other words, this—yet to be explained—mechanism transforms the productive power of social labour into the power of owners of capital. This mechanism obeys a continuous logic which has governed the past, governs the present and is likely to govern the future. Marx's concept of the formal/real subsumption of labour to capital attempts to capture, or model, the logic of this historical process—the genesis and development of the capitalist mode of production. While I concentrate here on history, the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour to capital has

contemporary significance: every new capital, I believe, must pass from one mode to the other (formal to real) if it is to survive.

Most commentaries focus on the ‘real’ subsumption of labour, but a full understanding of this concept requires that we look first to how labour is ‘formally’ subsumed. A start is to recognise that capital preexisted capitalism. It existed in the Middle Ages in the form of usurer’s and merchant’s capital, which were convertible into money-capital. Money-capital was prevented from becoming industrial-capital ‘by the feudal organization of the countryside and the guild organization of the towns’ (Marx 1867a: 915). These modes of organizing prevented money-capital from turning into industrial-capital by preventing the merchant from purchasing labour and thus becoming a manufacturer.¹¹⁷ These ‘fetters’ (Marx 1867a: 915) to the development of industrial-capital were broken by (a) expropriating the mass of people from the soil, from the means of subsistence and from the instruments of labour, and (b) agglomerating them in the first factories or manufactories (Marx 1867a: 915), which were established beyond the jurisdiction of guilds, in the valleys of Lancashire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and at sea ports (Marx 1867a: 923). This dual-sided process, which lasted from the last third of the fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth (Marx 1867a: 889), created the conditions for the formal subsumption of labour under capital.¹¹⁸

The formal subsumption of labour under capital, according to Marx, began in the period of ‘simple cooperation,’ the ‘simultaneous employment of a large number of wage-labourers in the same labour process’ (Marx 1867a: 448-449), a form of production which ‘developed in opposition to peasant agriculture and independent handicrafts’ (Marx 1867a:

¹¹⁷‘A merchant could buy any kind of commodity, but he could not buy labour as a commodity’ (Marx 1867a: 479).

¹¹⁸‘By the nineteenth century, the very memory of the connections between the agricultural labourer and communal property had ... vanished’ (Marx 1867a: 889).

452).¹¹⁹ This marks the start of capitalist production, historically and conceptually (Marx 1867a: 439). Labour is only ‘formally’ subsumed under capital in simple cooperation because ‘all that changes’ is the *form* of compulsion to perform surplus labour ‘from what had obtained under the earlier mode of production’ (Marx 1866: 1025-1026):

what brings the seller [of labour power] into a relationship of dependency is solely the fact that the buyer is the owner of the conditions of labour. There is no fixed political and social relationship of supremacy and subordination (Marx 1866: 1025-1026).

Capital takes over the labour process developed by ‘different and more archaic modes of production’; the only difference is that now this process is between ‘things that the capitalist has purchased, things which belong to him’ (Marx 1867a: 292). Labour is practically and conceptually subsumed within these property relations, or capital, as labour-power and the right to use it are sold to the capitalist: ‘on entering the labour process they are incorporated into capital. As cooperators, as members of a working organism, they merely form a particular mode of existence of capital’ (Marx 1867a: 451). It is because labour is (formally) subsumed under capital—to the imperative to produce a surplus by developing the productive power of social labour—that the capitalist must intervene to organize workers’ ‘individual functions’ ‘into one single productive body’ and to overcome their resistance to the domination of capital’s imperative (Marx 1867a: 449).

The labour process becomes the instrument of the valorization process, the process of the self-valorization of capital—the manufacture of surplus-value. The labour process is subsumed under capital (it is its own process) and the capitalist intervenes in the process as its director, manager ... *It is this that I refer to as the formal subsumption of labour to capital* (Marx 1866: 1019).

Once labour is formally subsumed to capital, in simple cooperation, ‘two developments emerge,’ in the period of manufacture, which ‘revolutionise’ the labour process and mode of production.¹²⁰ I shall argue that these two developments—which Marx does not explain—correspond to the dual-sided nature of the emerging capitalist social relations of

¹¹⁹Cooperation is ‘the first change experienced by the actual labour process when subjected to capital’ (Marx 1867a: 453).

¹²⁰The period of manufacture, for Marx, is between the middle of the sixteenth century and the last third of the eighteenth century.

production, which I identified earlier: they simultaneously empower and repress, organize and dissolve, produce wealth and produce poverty (Marx 1847a). On the one hand, the productive power of social labour is increased:

labour becomes far more continuous and intensive, and the conditions of labour are employed far more economically, since every effort is made to ensure that no more (or rather even less) socially necessary time is consumed in making the product (Marx 1866: 1026).

On the other hand, an economic relationship of supremacy and subordination is created, since to achieve this increase in productive power workers must be trained or disciplined to renounce their desultory habits of work and forged ‘into a single productive body’ (Marx 1867a: 449) under the supervision and direction of the capitalist. ‘The complaint that the worker lacks discipline runs through the whole of the period of manufacture’ (Marx 1867a: 490). As Marx puts it: ‘in the *self-same* relation in which there is a development of the productive forces, there is also a force producing repression’ (Marx 1847a: 176, my emphasis). It is in this sense that ‘forces of production and social relations’ correspond to ‘two different sides of the development of the social individual’ (Marx 1858: 706).¹²¹

On the ‘foundation’ of the formal subsumption of labour under capital, Marx explains:

there now arises a technologically and otherwise specific mode of production—capitalist production—which transforms the nature of the labour process and its actual conditions. Only when that happens do we witness the *real* subsumption of labour under capital (Marx 1866: 1034-1035, my emphasis).

Much depends on what ‘there now arises’ means. If we construe productive forces as things then only a technological determinist interpretation of this historical process is possible—machinery was ‘introduced’ and stimulated an adaptive response in social organization, necessitating the development of factories and deskilling workers. This is the implicit stance of labour process analysis, which tends to interpret the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour as a process of deskilling. But if we interpret

¹²¹As Marx says, the worker is subjected to the very organization that increases its productive power (Marx 1867a: 477). ‘In manufacture, the social productive power of the collective worker, hence of capital, is enriched through the impoverishment of the worker in individual productive power’ (Marx 1867a: 483).

productive forces as a mode of organizing, as I have argued we should, then an entirely different reading of Marx follows.

I shall argue that Marx's concept of the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour refers to the organization of labour into a productive force and the objectification of this mode of organization in artefacts. My argument is based on Marglin's observation that the creation of the factory was an organizational, not a technological or industrial revolution. The first factories, he argues, predated by many years the introduction of power to the labour process and technological changes in machine design (Marglin 1974).¹²² As Marx acknowledges, they were modelled on the 'ideal workhouse' or 'House of Terror' (1867a: 388-389) and could best be described as 'mitigated jails'. I want to suggest that this new—yet to be explained—organizational form or mode of production simultaneously disciplined and empowered social labour.¹²³ Once established, this mode of organization was objectified in the design and architecture of machines and buildings and shaped technological innovation (Marglin 1974: 48).¹²⁴ This, I suggest, is how 'an entirely objective organization of production confronts the worker as a preexisting material condition of production' (Marx 1867a: 508). Whereas under cooperation and manufacture capital existed in the form of social organization, now it took the form of things. What capital now subsumes or 'appropriates' is not an archaic labour process, but a new mode of organization or 'network of social relations'. It is in this way that 'all the productive power of social labour appears as the productive power of capital'

¹²²Marglin's article is relevant because it asks 'is work organization determined by technology or by society?' (Marglin 1974: 33). It also asks 'why, in the course of capitalist development, the actual producer lost control of production?' (Marglin 1974: 34). I shall argue, however, that the crucial question is not why, but *how*.

¹²³It is this 'collective working organism'—the unified productive body—which 'subjects the previously independent worker to the discipline and command of capital' (Marx 1867a: 481).

¹²⁴'The particular forms that technological change took were shaped and determined by factory organization' (Marglin 1974: 48).

(Marx 1863, Part 1: 377), as ‘alien property’ (Marx 1866: 1003), ‘fetishes with a will and soul of their own’ (Marx 1866: 1003).¹²⁵

This line of argument runs counter to traditional, technological determinist, readings of Marx, but it was advanced by commentators in explanation of the first factories and was endorsed by Marx himself. For example, in 1835, Andrew Ure, a nineteenth century apologist for the factory system and a big influence on Marx and Engels, made a comment on the introduction of the ‘water frame’ to the cotton industry which confirms this interpretation. The water frame was invented by John Wyatt, but Arkwright gets the credit.

Ure explains why:

The main difficulty (faced by Arkwright) did not, to my apprehension, lie so much in the invention of a proper self-acting mechanism for drawing out and twisting cotton into a continuous thread, as in ... training human beings to renounce their desultory habits of work, and to identify themselves with the unvarying regularity of the complex automation. *To devise and administer a successful code of factory discipline, suited to the necessities of factory diligence, was the Herculean enterprise, the noble achievement of Arkwright.*¹²⁶ Even at the present day, when the system is perfectly organized, and its labor lightened to the utmost, it is found nearly impossible to convert persons past the age of puberty, whether drawn from rural or from handicraft occupation, into useful factory hands. After struggling for a while to conquer their listless or restive habits, they either renounce the employment spontaneously, or are dismissed by the overlookers on account of inattention.

If the factory Briareous could have been created by mechanical genius alone, it should have come into being thirty years sooner; for upwards of ninety years have now elapsed since John Wyatt, of Birmingham, not only invented the series of fluted rollers, (the spinning fingers usually ascribed to Arkwright), but obtained a patent for the invention, and erected ‘a spinning engine without hands’ in his native town ... Wyatt was a man of good education, in a respectable walk of life, much esteemed by his superiors, and therefore favourably placed, in a mechanical point of view, for maturing his admirable scheme. But he was of a gentle and passive spirit, little qualified to cope with the hardships of a new manufacturing enterprise. *It required, in fact, a man of Napoleon nerve and ambition, to subdue the refractory tempers of workpeople accustomed to irregular paroxysms of diligence ...* Such was Arkwright (Ure, cited in Marglin 1974: 46. Marglin’s italics, my underline).

Marx uses only the first three sentences of this quotation, at p. 549 of volume 1 of *Capital*, where he talks of the factory code as ‘the caricature of the social regulation of the labour

¹²⁵‘The rule of the capitalist over the worker is nothing but the rule of the independent *conditions of labour* over the worker, conditions that have made themselves independent of him’ (Marx 1867a: 989).

¹²⁶‘Anyone who knows Arkwright’s biography will be unlikely to apply the epithet “noble” to this baker-genius. Of all the great inventors of the eighteenth century, he was unquestionably the greatest thief of other people’s inventions and the meanest character’ (Marx 1867a: 549-550).

process' (Marx 1867a: 550). The ambiguity of Marx's explanation of the direction of causality between discipline and the introduction of machines renders it susceptible to the conventional interpretation that the second facilitated the first.¹²⁷ *But message of the full quotation is the precise opposite.* Arkwright succeeded in introducing the water frame into the factory because he had the personal resolve and organizational ability necessary to impose his will on workers. His technical contribution was nil. This suggests that it was not the introduction of machines that subordinated labour, but rather the ill-defined 'revolution' in the organization of production that occurred during the period of manufacture. Only when and where labour was subordinated, I suggest, were machines introduced.

Productive Forces, Civil Society and the State

I now want to establish my main differences with conventional interpretations of the relationship between the formal and the real subsumption of labour under capital. This will enable me to draw out the critical features of my interpretation and to establish its relevance to what I have construed as Marx's explicandum—the 'essential relationship' between civil society and the state and the modern 'man' it constitutes.

The root of the problem, I believe, is a tendency for commentaries to conflate 'subsumption' (*subsumtion* Marx 1867a: 645) and 'subordination'.¹²⁸ They are closely related, but distinct terms. 'Subsume': to 'include' or 'place under'. 'Subordinate': 'a person working under another's control or orders; to make subservient'.¹²⁹ I want to take

¹²⁷The passage I have in mind is this: 'The technical subordination of the worker ... gives rise to a barrack-like discipline, which is elaborated into a complete system in the factory ...' (Marx 1867a: 549).

¹²⁸Cressey and MacInnes (1980: 24, n. 12), for example, note: 'Different writers have used "subjection," "subsumption," and "subordination". While subsumption probably describes the "real" relationship more adequately, and "subordination" the "formal" one, *for the sake of clarity* we use "subordination" throughout' (my emphasis).

¹²⁹The following suggests that Marx distinguished between these concepts: 'the labour process is subsumed under capital ... *and* the capitalist intervenes in the process as its director, manager ...' (Marx 1867a: 1019, my emphasis); also, see Marx 1867a: 1034, where 'subsumption' and 'subordination' appear in the same sentence.

care to spell out their interrelationship, for this is crucial to the argument to be developed in the remainder of the thesis.

Labour is subsumed within capital, practically and conceptually, in the sense that, when it is sold, it becomes a mode of existence of capital. Capital absorbs or subsumes labour through the exchange of labour-power for money. This ‘brings capital into ferment and makes it into a process [of] production’ (Marx 1858: 301). As Braverman (1974: 116) puts it: ‘not only is capital the property of the capitalist, but labour itself has become part of capital’. It is because labour is *initially* or ‘formally’ subsumed within capital or property relations, and therefore subject to capital’s imperative to make a surplus by enhancing the productive power of labour, that labour must be disciplined or subordinated. Only when and where labour is subordinate is capital profitable. These—yet to be explained—organizational techniques are then objectified in the design of machinery and buildings, which confront workers as alien, fetishised forces—as capital. This objectification of a mode of organization in artefacts is what is meant by real subsumption. Only when production relations and things are fused in this way is the subsumption of labour under capital ‘real’.

The direction of causality of traditional, technological determinist readings of Marx is wrong. It was not the introduction of machines that disciplined labour; it was the disciplining of labour that facilitated the introduction of machines. Society is not disciplinary because it is capitalist; rather capital derives its profits from that which makes society disciplinary. Labour is not first partially or ‘formally’ and then, through the introduction of machines, fully or ‘really’ subordinated or controlled. Rather, it is only because labour is formally subsumed that it must be subordinated and only when and where ‘factory discipline’ is ‘perfectly organized,’ as Ure puts it, and the organization of production ‘breaks down all resistance’ (Marx 1867a: 899), that machines are introduced and labour is (‘really’) subsumed within the material conditions of production.

The causal sequence is: (a) formal subsumption, i.e., as labour's capacity to act (labour-power) is exchanged for money, it is incorporated into capital. It becomes imperative for capital to produce a surplus by developing the productive power of social labour; (b) the simultaneous empowerment and repression (or subordination) of labour via its reorganization; and (c) real subsumption, i.e., the objectification of this mode of organization in things.

The influence of the radical concept of power causes most, if not all, commentators to read 'subsumption' as 'subordination,' which they construe as a relationship of control between management and labour.¹³⁰ This produces two misconceptions.

First, what Marx intends as a relationship between production relations and artefacts, the objectification or subsumption of a mode of organizing as the productive force of capital—a relationship, an 'entirely objective organization of production' which causes the capacity to act of *both* parties to the employment relationship—is construed as a relationship between management and labour, based on deskilling, which enhances the control of the first over the last (Cressey and MacInnes 1980). This is a mistake. For Marx, the movement between the formal and the real SLC does not rely on the transference of skills from people to machines, but on the objectification or materialisation of a mode of organization. This is a relationship between the productive power of labour and private property, not between individuals and machines. While deskilling certainly occurs, it is a consequence, not a cause, of the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour to capital.

¹³⁰This is explicit in Stedman Jones, for example, who talks of 'the transition from "formal" to "real" capitalist control over production' (cited in Edwards 1986: 110).

Second, by equating subsumption with subordination, commentators reason that since significant areas of worker resistance or *in*-subordination persisted until the turn of the twentieth century, the transition from the formal to the real 'subordination' of labour to capital must have occurred between 'early capitalism' and 'monopoly capitalism' (Edwards 1986: 42; Littler and Salaman 1982: 255).¹³¹ This is mistaken on two counts. First, it treats the relationship between the formal and the real subsumption as a once-and-for-all transition rather than a continuous movement. Second, it overlooks the correspondence between the formal and the real subsumption of labour to capital and the production of absolute to relative surplus value. Both developments are caused by the reorganization of production during the period of manufacture, whereby the different stages of production, which were 'previously successive in time,' become 'simultaneous and contiguous in space' (Marx 1867a: 464). This reorganization marks a shift from the increased duration and intensity to the increased productivity of labour. Put simply: more is produced in the same time.

These misconceptions have so discredited the concept of the F/R SLC that it has been rejected and confidence in 'control' has been severely shaken. I want to consider two paths to this conclusion.

1. Paul Edwards reasons that because it is impossible to achieve total control over labour '*real* subordination is, in the strict sense of the term, impossible' (Edwards 1986: 110, *my* emphasis). He therefore rejects as 'inappropriate' 'the model of a shift from a formal to a real subordination of labour' (Edwards 1986: 142).

¹³¹Marx dates the formal subsumption of labour in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The movement to the real subsumption began in the period of manufacture, which lasted until the end of the eighteenth century.

2. Cressey and MacInnes (1980: 12)¹³² reason that ‘subordination’ must be rejected because it is incapable of explaining capital’s dual role in the workplace; it must organize *and* discipline, create *and* alienate. ‘We would argue strongly that notions of formal and real subordination, and the theorisation of the labour process they inform are an obstacle rather than an aid to analysis’ (Cressey and MacInnes: 1980: 31). The discrediting of ‘subordination’ has undermined confidence in ‘control’.

The problem has been wrongly posed. Cressey and MacInnes (1980: 30, n. 83) argue that ‘the concept of a “frontier” of control is ... obviously firmly rooted in R.S.L.-F.S.L. analysis’; but, actually, traditional F/R SLC analysis is firmly rooted in ‘control’ and its implicit radical concept of power. ‘Subordination’ is indeed incapable of understanding the dual-sided nature of production relations. But what needs rejecting is not Marx’s concept of the formal/real movement, but interpretations of it in terms of control. If we construe the movement as Marx intended, but did not fully explain, as the objectification of a mode of organizing labour as the productive force of capital, these criticisms lose their force and the problems stimulating them become explicable.

To return to the criticisms of Paul Edwards (1986), and Cressey and MacInnes (1980).

1. Total subordination of labour by management *is* impossible, but the real *subsumption* of labour to capital, in Marx’s sense of the term, is perfectly possible—indeed relative surplus-value could not be produced otherwise. Marx is less concerned with who exercises power and why (efficient and final causes) than with how the internal-relations between labour and capital—an ‘entirely objective organization of production’—cause the capacity to act of

¹³²Cressey and MacInnes (1980: 12): ‘the concept of the development from a formal to a real subordination is inadequate to analyse the development of the capitalist mode of production ... that instead the contradictoriness of capital’s strategy in the workplace lies in the character of its material relation with labour. In pursuit of valorisation it faces the need to organise the forces and relations of production in a way which develops the social productivity of labour as much as it alienates it’.

both (material causes). An understanding of the last is a prerequisite for understanding the first. It is important, then, to understand how labour is organized and subsumed to capital.

2. The coexistence of organization and discipline, creation and alienation is not a logical contradiction inherent in the concept of subsumption ('subordination')—as its critics suggest. Given my conception of 'forces,' labour is simultaneously disciplined *as* it is organized, alienated *as* it creates. This is a *real* contradiction inherent in the dual-sided nature of relations of production and present within every worker—with the capacity to 'blow this foundation of society sky-high' (Marx 1858: 706). This is the real nature of the conflict between relations of production and productive 'forces' alluded to in the 1859 *Preface* (Marx 1859a: 21).

It is important to correct these misconceptions of the F/R SLC concept because they obscure its potential for explaining the organization of labour and the problematic 'essential relationship' between civil society and the state. To develop the point, I must examine one more internal relation, touched on in the previous Chapter—that between productive forces and civil society. I want to suggest that the dual-sided nature of relations of production—the coexistence of empowerment and repression, creation and alienation—contains a mechanism which causes both the organization of production and the dissolution of society into alienated monads (Marx's initial explicandum). It is this mechanism, I believe, that Marx's F/R SLC concept tries to grasp.

Marx makes clear that the organization of labour into a productive power and the dissolution of feudalism's fixed, personal relations of dependency into the abstract, atomised monads of 'civil society' are sides of the same process. 'Civil society,' for Marx, is 'the mutual inter-dependence of the individuals among whom the labour is divided' (Marx and Engels 1846: 46), it is 'the form of intercourse determined by the existing

productive forces at all previous historical stages, and in its turn determin[es] these' (Marx and Engels 1846: 50).¹³³

Standing against the productive forces, we have the majority of individuals from whom these forces have been wrested away, and who, robbed thus of all real life-content, have become abstract individuals, who are, however, by this very fact put into a position to enter into relations with one another as individuals (Marx and Engels 1846: 87).

Since they are internally-related facets of the same nexus of production relations, whatever explains how labour is organized into a productive power, objectifies or 'subsumes' it as the 'force' of capital, robs people of 'all real life content,' will also explain how people are rendered the 'abstract' monads of civil society—the essence and precondition of the state.

And here is the problem with Marx's explicans: his model of capital—the mode and relations of production.

Marx gives a compelling historical account of how labour is prised off the land and whipped and branded, as he puts it, on to the road that leads to the labour market, and of how labour is reduced to the status of a thing, or 'hand,' by the relentless movement of machinery. But when it comes to explaining what happens to labour when it enters the 'hidden abode,' how it is simultaneously empowered and repressed as it is organized into a productive power and how the conditions which make possible the introduction of machines are created—beyond allusions to 'barrack-like discipline' and 'factory codes' (Marx 1867a: 549, 550), Marx has remarkably little to say. He nowhere gives an adequate account of how this organization is achieved. This is, I suggest, why the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour to capital is so hard to understand. Marx explains the necessity for capitalist control, to unify workers into a productive body or force, but he does not explain the means whereby it is accomplished. Put simply: he explains the

¹³³It is this dual process of dissolution/organization 'which enables money to transform itself into *capital*' (Marx 1858: 507), and which transforms landed property into wage labour (Marx 1858: 276).

‘why’ (the motive), but not the ‘how’ (the means). I argued, in Chapter 1, that ‘how’ is precisely what realism demands of an explanation.¹³⁴

No one who follows Marx’s progress in painstakingly presenting his model of the dialectic which drives production relations can fail to be struck by the ambiguous language of causation in those sections of *Capital* which address the emergence of the capitalist mode of production. For example:¹³⁵

After the various operations have been separated, made independent and isolated, the workers are divided, classified and grouped according to their predominant qualities (Marx 1867a: 469).

The technical subordination of the worker ... gives rise to a barrack-like discipline which is elaborated into a complete system in the factory (Marx 1867a: 549).

The organization of the capitalist process of production, once it is fully developed, breaks down all resistance (Marx 1867a: 899).

there now arises a transformation of the labour process and its actual conditions (Marx 1866: 1034-35).

the relations of production themselves create a new relation of supremacy and subordination (Marx 1866: 1227).

The question is, to take the third quotation, what develops the organization of the capitalist process of production in such a way as to break down ‘all resistance’? Traditionally, this is interpreted in technological determinist terms: technology is introduced and breaks down resistance. Marx’s ambiguity certainly renders it susceptible to this interpretation. But this overlooks the fact that it is changes in production relations that bring about developments in technology, and begs the question of what brings about new forms of social organization in the first place and how it is objectified in things?

Let me summarize the argument of the past two Chapters. I began in, Chapter 3, by arguing that Marx’s initial explicandum is the ‘essential relationship’ between civil society and

¹³⁴The realist view of explanation can be conveniently summarized in the claim that answers to why-questions (that is, to requests for causal explanations) require answers to how- and what-questions’ (Keat and Urry 1975: 31).

¹³⁵In each case, the emphasis is mine.

political state, a relationship which constitutes the alienated monad of modernity, and which is manifest in the private/public and economic/political dichotomies. I traced Marx's retroductive line of argument to capital and argued, in this Chapter, that it is both a social structure (relations of production) and an organizing process (mode of production). I have identified Marx's lack of explanation of how labour is organized and subsumed to capital as a serious weakness in his explicans, which—I suggest—prevents our seeing its relevance to understanding the 'essential relationship' between civil society and the state and the alienated monad it constitutes.

I want to conclude by relating this realist interpretation of Marx to the cluster of problems formulated in Chapter 1. There is a striking correspondence between Marx's problematic explicans and initial explicandum and the two central problems of the organon of control: the difficulty of explaining (a) the dual-nature of the organization of production, evident in the discrediting of 'F/R SLC,' and (b) the relationship between this organization and a private, economy and a political, state, evident in the depoliticisation of production and the overpoliticisation of the state (Burawoy 1985). Marx's line of argument suggests that these two sets of problems are causally connected. Indeed (a) causes (b). It remains to explain how: (i) labour is simultaneously empowered and repressed as it is organized, (ii) this mode of organization is subsumed to capital, (iii) this mode of organization creates the 'abstract private person' of civil society, and (iv) this 'abstract private person' is the 'essence' of the state. Marx nowhere gives an adequate answer to these questions. I contend, in the remainder of this thesis, that Foucault does.

Chapter 5

Marx and Foucault: The Incompatibles?

Introduction

Before detailing how Foucault can assist Marx, which I do in the next Chapter, it is necessary to confront the widespread and deep-seated belief that Marxian and Foucauldian social theory are fundamentally incompatible (Callinicos 1989: 85). This belief contains a contradiction, which, if explored, allows us to rethink the relationship between Marx and Foucault and make sense of the problematic relationship between the dual-natured organization of production, civil society and the state.

Foucault gives mixed messages regarding his stance toward Marxism. He quotes from Marx ‘without feeling obliged to add that authenticating label of a footnote with a laudatory phrase,’ he asks, ‘when a physicist writes a work of physics, does he feel it necessary to quote Newton and Einstein?’, and he wonders, ‘what difference there could ultimately be between being a historian and being a Marxist’ (cited in Cohen 1985: 10). Elsewhere, there are clear signs of Foucault’s hostility towards Marx:

Don’t talk to me about Marx any more! I never want to hear anything about that man again. Ask someone whose job it is. Someone paid to do it. Ask the Marxist functionaries. Me, I’ve had enough of Marx (Foucault, cited in Eribon 1991: 266).

As far as I’m concerned, Marx doesn’t exist. I mean, the sort of entity constructed around a proper name, signifying at once a certain individual, the totality of his writings, and an immense historical process deriving from him (Foucault 1980a: 76).

The first sign of Marxists’ hostility towards Foucault emerged in response to the publication of *The Order of Things* (Foucault 1973, originally published in 1966). This hostility was provoked by two sentences in which Foucault says: ‘Marxism exists in nineteenth century thought in the same way a fish exists in water; that is, it stops breathing anywhere else’ (Foucault 1973: 262); and the controversies between Marxism and bourgeois economics ‘may have stirred up a few waves and caused a few surface ripples;

but they are no more than storms in a children's paddling pool' (Foucault 1973: 262). According to Foucault's biographer, Eribon (1991: 162), 'the Marxists went on the counteroffensive and excommunicated Foucault's book'. *The Order of Things* was interpreted as a rejection of praxis and history and, along with these, Marxism itself. As Sartre—whom Foucault labelled 'the last Marxist' (Foucault, cited in Eribon 1991: 161)—puts it: 'Marxism is the target. It is a matter of establishing a new ideology, the final dam that the bourgeoisie can erect against Marx' (Sartre, cited in Eribon 1991: 164). For these reasons, *The Order of Things* 'was initially seen by many as a "right-wing" book' and Foucault was construed as anti-Marxist (Eribon 1991: 164). This label has proven difficult to remove.

These observations are important, for they tell us something of the context within which Foucault's work was initially read, which was one of hostility between Marxists and Foucault. This hostility, however, was not caused solely by a misunderstanding over a few careless words. While Foucault seldom directly criticises Marx in his books, his interviews make clear that his work is an implicit critique of the traditional understanding of the main categories of Marxism—ideology, class, the state, and its economistic, 'descending' analysis of power (Foucault 1980a, 1981, 1988). Foucault also opposes the political strategy of 'smashing' the state and advocates, in its stead, the cultivation and enhancement of localised resistance to organized repression:

Nothing in society will be changed if the mechanisms of power that function outside, below and alongside the State apparatus, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed (Foucault 1980a: 60).

There is little doubt that Foucault's work opposes Marxism—as traditionally understood—and that Foucault himself was 'violently anti-communist' (Eribon 1991: 136).

So much for Foucault's opposition to Marxism. What is there in Foucault's work that is so objectionable to Marxists? I want to answer this question by examining Palmer's polemical

essay, 'The Eclipse of Materialism: Marxism and the Writing of Social History in the 1980s' (Palmer 1990), for it represents the stance of traditional Marxists towards Foucault.

Palmer is a Marxist historian. He notes with concern that 'many historians who once considered themselves historical materialist have been distancing themselves from Marxism for a number of years' (Palmer 1990: 111). He identifies two main reasons for this. First, 'the collapse of the degenerate and deformed worker states in which socialism/communism had supposedly been constructed' (Palmer 1990: 111). Second, French 'poststructuralism,' which, 'more than any other body of theory,' has 'influenced the writing of social history in the 1980s' and 'challenged historical materialism directly' (Palmer 1990: 120). While Palmer's polemic is targeted at post-modernism/structuralism (he uses the terms interchangeably), Foucault is identified as an important representative of this genre and singled out for special odium. The key word in the designation of Foucault is the pre-fix 'post-'. Foucault is firmly identified with an approach in the social sciences which is unified by the belief that society has moved to a post-capitalist stage, characterised by post-Fordist techniques (such as flexible specialisation), which calls for a different—post-Marxist—type of analysis and politics.

Palmer opposes Foucault's 'poststructuralism' for these reasons:

a. It questions 'the very concept of class' (Palmer 1990: 115). His emotive language is revealing: 'running scared from class'; Gareth Stedman-Jones and Michael Ignatieff are accused of 'breaking with class' (Palmer 1990: 116). This characterisation echoes Meiksins-Wood's 'retreat from class,' and the title of the volume in which Palmer's essay appears, *The Retreat of the Intellectuals* (Meiksins-Wood 1986; Miliband and Panitch 1990). The message is clear: to question 'class' is evidence of an academic's lack of courage and solidarity with the working-class.

b. It is idealistic. It elevates language as ‘a determining materiality’ and constructs a politics ‘detached from the anchor of history ... whose rhetoric and discourse are the agencies of social change’ (Palmer 1990: 116, 138). Foucault’s ‘poststructuralism’ is construed as a descendent of Althusser’s ‘idealism’ and ‘theoretical academicism’ (Meiksins-Wood 1986: 19). Within the ‘Foucauldian framework,’ ‘power can never be located, and resides always in the determination of discourse, which spins itself in a never-ending and analytically and politically impenetrable Lacanian circularity’ (Palmer 1990: 131).

Against the ‘self-indulgent unintelligibility’ of postmodernism, Palmer presents ‘an orthodox Marxist appreciation’ of ‘some elementary categories of historical materialism: class, consciousness, struggle,’ and defends ‘historical materialism and its insistence on material determination and the importance of class’ (Palmer 1990: 119, 128). More specifically, Palmer defends the work of E. P. Thompson and ‘a wide array of writing associated with the British Marxist historian’ (Palmer 1990: 115): in a word, ‘Thompsonianism’. Herein lies the contradiction I mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter. Let me explain by making these comments:

1. Palmer’s dismissal of ‘poststructuralism’ as a form of idealism and his defence and advocacy of ‘material determination and the importance of class’ (Palmer 1990: 128) reveals a particular understanding of the relationship between the ideal and the material—that Marx simply reversed the direction of causality between them. There are two arguments against this traditional interpretation of Marx. First, as Sayer has argued, what Marx opposes is not simply ‘idealism:’ it is the validity of the very distinction between the material and the ideal—just as he opposes the idea of the distinction between a parallel pair of concepts, civil society/political state. The inversion metaphor misleads, in both cases, because it leaves the distinction intact (Sayer 1987: 85-88). Second, I argued in Chapter 2 that the important distinction in Marx is not between the material and the ideal, but between

social relations of production and their ideal and material forms. In Chapter 6, I aim to show how the material and the ideal can be separated from the social world only at the cost of their fetishism and reification (Sayer 1987: 88).

2. Palmer's depiction of Foucault as a descendent of Althusser's 'idealism' raises the question of the relationship between them. It is well-known that Foucault was a student of Althusser, that they remained on good terms throughout their lives and that Althusser favourably refers to Foucault in *For Marx* (Althusser 1970). Rather than construe Althusser and Foucault as part of an idealist lineage, I want to note two interrelated points of similarity between them, for later development. First, Foucault inherited from Althusser and Balibar (1977) a nonfetishistic concept of productive 'forces,' which I explained in Chapter 4 and which Foucault deploys in Part 3 ('Discipline') of *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977). This is important to note, because—as I explain in the next Chapter—only a reader with a nonfetishistic conception of 'forces' can see the significance for Marxism of what Foucault achieves in that book. Second, as Bhaskar points out, Althusser was the 'foremost Marxist influence' on realism:

whatever its internal weaknesses and susceptibility to critical realist critique, in recasting Marxism's thinking about itself, science and society, Louis Althusser made a contribution of decisive importance. The Althusser legacy demands nothing less than the most thorough-going critical reappropriation today (Bhaskar 1991: 183).

I want to suggest that it is not idealism that Foucault learnt from Althusser, but an understanding of productive forces and realism. These points are related: a realist reading of Marx produces a nonfetishistic concept of productive forces.

3. 'Orthodox Marxism' is indefensible. Indeed this is one of the problems with which we began in Chapter 1. Meiksins Wood, who condemns the 'retreat from class' and is Palmer's ally in his defence of orthodox Marxism and his rebuttal of 'postmodernism,' elsewhere complains of:

orthodox base/superstructure theories which, in one form or another and in varying degrees, adapt 'modes of analysis' which, explicitly or implicitly, treat the economic

'base' and the legal, political, and ideological 'superstructure' which 'reflect' or 'correspond' to it as qualitatively different, more or less enclosed and 'regionally' separated spheres (Meiksins-Wood 1981: 68).

As Jessop (1990b: 49) explains, according to the base/superstructure model, the state is 'an essentially repressive instrument whose control enables the economically dominant class to exercise its dictatorship over subordinate classes'. The categories 'state,' 'class,' 'struggle' and 'consciousness,' then, which Palmer wishes to defend, are integral components of the base/superstructure model that he—along with other critics of Foucault and 'postmodernism'—otherwise rejects.¹³⁶ As Meiksins Wood acknowledges: there is 'no explicit and systematic' theoretical alternative to the 'vulgar economics' of the base/superstructure approach—although, she adds, intriguingly, 'something like it is implicit in the work of certain Marxist historians'.

4. To simultaneously defend 'orthodox Marxism' and 'Thompsonianism' is a logical contradiction, for, as Palmer admits:

Theoretically, his [EPT's] exit from the Communist Party of Great Britain was posed in terms of his political and conceptual reading of the deficiencies of the orthodox metaphor of a determining economic base and a derivative superstructural realm (Palmer 1990: 113, also 114).

I want to note three points concerning Thompson. First, his historical narratives contain an implicit critique of and alternative to orthodox Marxism. Thompson's alternative is a broad conception of 'relations of production' and a distinction between social being/consciousness and agency/structure. These distinctions are fused in 'experience,' his central explanatory device, which he regards as the missing 'genetics' of Marx's account of social change (Thompson 1978: 170). Second, Thompson's theoretical alternative, embedded in his narratives, remains unexplicated—in large part because his (1978) polemic against Althusser stigmatised explicit theorizing and discouraged scrutiny of the theory of his historical practice (Sewell 1990: 54). Third, the antipathy of 'Thompsonians' towards

¹³⁶As Meiksins Wood (1981: 66) acknowledges, 'Marxists have, in various forms, perpetrated the rigid conceptual separation of the "economic" and the "political" which has served bourgeois ideology so well'.

Foucault, and Thompson's own disdain for 'theory' has hindered recognition that Foucault and Thompson share an opposition to traditional Marxism. There is a striking similarity, for example, between their criticisms of 'class'. Thompson (1978: 295) complains:

these classes which are marshalled, sent on manoeuvres, and marched up and down whole centuries bear so little relation to the actual people disclosed in the archives—or, for that matter, in the streets around us.

For Thompson, 'class itself is not a thing,' to be measured, but 'a happening,' 'the way the machine works ... the friction of interests—the movement itself' (Thompson 1978: 295). Foucault complains that Marxists focus mainly on defining class, its boundaries, its membership, but never concretely on the nature of the struggle' (Foucault 1988: 123).

When Marxists

talk of the 'class struggle' as the mainspring of history, they're above all concerned to find out what the class is, where it is situated, whom it includes, and never what the 'struggle' is in concrete terms (Foucault 1980a, 13-14.¹³⁷

Foucault's concern with 'the nature of the struggle' thus resembles Thompson's concern with 'the movement itself'.

I have documented grounds for the common assumption that Marx and Foucault are fundamentally incompatible, pointed to the contradiction of simultaneously defending orthodox Marxism and Thompsonianism, and drawn attention to Foucault's and Thompson's shared opposition to traditional Marxism. I want to lodge the idea that Foucault can be of great assistance in resolving the difficulties identified by my realist reading of Marx: I shall argue that he can be used to explain the dual-natured organization of production and, on this basis, we can explain the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state. Before developing this argument, however, it is necessary to confront an apparent obstacle. For Foucault to be of use to this realist reading of Marx, Foucault must be compatible with realism. To the best of my knowledge, the relationship between

¹³⁷Foucault notes an important exception—Marx's historical texts.

realism and Foucault has never been systematically examined. The typical postmodern reading of Foucault, as a relativist idealist hostile to metanarrative, and the close association between realism and the ‘materialism’ of its exemplar—Marx—has left a widespread impression that realism and Foucault are incompatible and has discouraged their cross-fertilisation.

Is a realist reading of Foucault possible then? I believe it is.

In the remainder of this thesis, I shall argue that a realist reading of Foucault—this student of Althusser and *bête noir* of traditional Marxism—can be combined with my earlier realist reading of Marx to help resolve the problems I have identified in Marx’s model of capital and, on this basis, to explain his initial explicandum.

Foucault: A Realist Reading¹³⁸

Foucault is an empirical, historical researcher into the nature of power. He denies being a theorist of power (Foucault 1988: 39); indeed, he seems averse to theorizing and declares himself an empiricist (Foucault 1988: 106). Yet, deeply embedded within his detailed analyses of concrete historical situations and events there is a rich and complex model of the mechanisms of power which is of direct relevance to the problems examined in this thesis.¹³⁹ Because Foucault prioritizes empirical detail over conceptual precision, however, there is little conceptual coherence and development within and between his texts. As a result, this implicit model of power is ‘exploratory rather than coherent and well-finished’ (Cousins and Hussain 1984: 226). His empirical work can be similarly described. In Foucault’s own, somewhat harsh, words, it is indecipherable, disorganized, inconclusive,

¹³⁸An earlier version of this section was published as pp. 107-116 of R. Marsden, ‘The Politics of Organizational Analysis’. *Organization Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, 93-124.

¹³⁹Foucault’s model of disciplinary power is explicated in the next Chapter.

repetitive and disconnected, a muddle that does little more than mark time: 'it advances nowhere' (Foucault 1980a: 78). They are 'just fragments,' it is up 'to you or me to see what we can make of them' (Foucault 1980a: 79).

The conceptual and empirical incoherence of Foucault's work renders it susceptible to a variety of interpretations, each of which discern, or impose, some unity (Burrell 1988: 222). There are two broad sets of responses to Foucault. Both are impediments, in my view, to understanding the significance of Foucault's concept of power. Historiographers criticise Foucault for failing to meet the requisite standards of empirical evidence. They allege his evidence is insufficient and conflicting, he is careless over dates and places and his topics are not even 'discussed in a temporal order' (Giddens 1987: 213). Postmodernists welcome his work as a celebration of heterogeneity and difference, fragmentation and indeterminacy, and as an alternative to the totalizing discourse or metanarrative of science (Cooper and Burrell 1988; Burrell 1988). Broadly speaking, the first group rejects his work for failing to meet modernist criteria, the second welcomes it for this very reason.

To correct these interpretations, I want to present an alternative reading of Foucault based on critical realism and to argue that Foucault seeks 'to establish the ontological foundations of modern institutions' (Clegg 1989a: 153). This reading is based on several points of resemblance between Foucault and realism which suggest a *prima facie* case for their compatibility. These can be stated simply, thus:

1. they share the metaphor and terminology of depth.
2. each is concerned, in different ways, with what Bhaskar calls 'object constitution'.
3. both are critical of and provide compatible alternatives to positivism and empiricism.
4. they share a nonempiricist concept of causation and a similar approach to time and space.

5. they provide compatible alternatives to the positivist dichotomy between practice and theory, power and knowledge.
6. they provide compatible critiques of and alternatives to conventional approaches to 'power'.
7. both are critical of traditional Marxism.¹⁴⁰

Foucault contends that his work is best understood not as a solution but as various ways of formulating a problem: explaining the relationship between experience, power and knowledge (Foucault 1988: 71). 'For my part,' Foucault explains:

it has struck me that I might have seemed a bit like a whale that leaps to the surface of the water disturbing it momentarily with a tiny jet of spray and lets it be believed, or pretends to believe, or wants to believe, or himself does in fact indeed believe, that down in the depths where no one sees him any more, where he is no longer witnessed nor controlled by anyone, he follows a more profound, coherent and reasoned trajectory (Foucault 1980a: 79).

This metaphor of the whale is redolent of realism's metaphor of ontological depth. Foucault is undoubtedly a skilled analyst of surface events, but his work does not preclude other analyses, such as realism. The idea I want to develop is that the set of problems Foucault attempts to formulate can be better understood if we explore the ontological underside to his empirical studies of these events. 'Down in the depths,' Foucault does indeed follow a 'coherent and reasoned trajectory'—a glimpse of which is revealed in his interviews— which realism can help explicate and develop.

Problematization

Like realists, Foucault's purpose is to demystify the category of the 'real' by showing how objects of knowledge are constituted. Foucault refers to this as 'problematization,' the notion common to all his work since *Madness and Civilization* (Foucault 1988: 257). Paraphrasing Foucault, problematization is not the representation of a preexisting object, nor

¹⁴⁰I am thinking here of Sayer's (1987) implicitly realist critique of traditional interpretations of Marx.

the creation by discourse of an object that does not exist, but a concern with how objects are practically and conceptually constituted (Foucault 1988: 257). In considering the compatibility of Foucault and realism, however, much depends on the nature of 'objects'. I want, therefore, to deduce something of their nature from Foucault's comments on sexuality, madness and criminality.

An object, for Foucault (1981: 127), 'is the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviours, and social relations' by the deployment of a series of conceptual and practical operations—in a word, 'disciplines'. For example, 'the convergence of internment and medicine' (Cousins and Hussain 1984: 139) organized in the form of the asylum. An object is a network of social relations organized or synthesised into empirical form by this complex disciplinary technology. 'Objects' are simply regulated forms of social relationships and, as such, also forms of experience—such as madness, illness, sexuality, and criminality. They are real, historical constructs—like the objects of realism, they are concept- and activity-dependent—what Foucault calls the 'historical *a priori*' (Foucault 1980a: 236). I note their resemblance to my concept of social object in Chapter 1.

These objects have an outside or a surface (observable behaviour, events) and an inside or structure, which is referred to by Foucault as the mobile system of relationships and syntheses between an object's constitutive elements (Foucault 1980a: 236). The surface corresponds to practice, the interior corresponds to the product of practice—its structure of interconnections. The latter is largely a hidden domain, for, while social practices are conceptualized, their interconnections seldom are. As Foucault puts it, 'people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does' (Foucault, cited in Krips 1990: 173).

Foucault depicts the existence of these objects by detailed empirical descriptions of the practices constituting them (Foucault 1971b, 1976, 1977); by examining concretely and in detail the way in which power is exercised—its ‘great surface network’ (Foucault 1981: 105). For the most part, he is concerned with the ‘how’ of practice, only latterly (in Foucault 1977 and 1981) with the ‘what’ of the product of that process, its structure or ‘anatomy’. Foucault describes the exterior of the necessary relations comprising these objects, i.e., he empirically isolates necessary from contingent relations. Realism can assist in developing an understanding of the interior of these objects, i.e., the nature of the causal connections between their heterogeneous, constitutive elements (Foucault 1980a: 194).

Causality, Time and Space

A misunderstanding of the nature of these objects is the source of the chief difficulties of understanding Foucault, particularly his methods of examining them. Convention distinguishes between Foucault’s early archaeological and later genealogical work (Burrell 1988). This characterisation poses the problem of the relationship between discourse and power; is Foucault an archaeologist of discourse or a genealogist of power? (Smart 1983a). It is important to counter this interpretation, for it encourages an idealist interpretation of Foucault and mystifies his significance as an empirical researcher.

I want to examine Foucault’s methodology by considering his work as the gradual formulation of a problem which is intelligible only if we use his later work as a retrospective vantage point. As Foucault says, ‘one always finds what is essential after the event; the most general things are those that appear last’ (Foucault 1988: 257). I propose that we consider Foucault’s texts, as he examines those of others, not laterally or horizontally, in terms of chronological periods, but as the laying down of epistemic sediments. On this basis, I shall argue, archaeology and genealogy are complementary methods working in different dimensions, not discrete methods representing different periods of his work.

To make sense of archaeology and genealogy, I want to introduce the idea that Foucault employs a realist concept of causality, and that this informs his approach to time and space. For Foucault, causally connected things need not occur in the same time and space; the 'here-and-now' is not necessarily epistemologically significant (Urry 1985: 23). This is evident in his conception of power and history. Power, for Foucault, is a quality of social relations which 'are perhaps among the best hidden things in the social body' (Foucault 1988: 118). These relations are hidden, I suggest, because they are among people spatio-temporally discrete. They are nonempirical, but real, entities, transcending time, space and organizational forms. Similarly, the conventional view of history, as a chain of past events, and of historiography, as the narrative description of the sequence of these events, is based on a particular, constant conjunction, view of causation to which Foucault does not subscribe. Foucault employs a two-dimensional view of time. It exists in a horizontal dimension as a sequence of events, and in a vertical dimension as 'layers of epistemic organization' of ideas of those events (Giddens 1987: 213). Epistemic structure is the 'deep memory' of an historical process, it constitutes a history of the development of an object (Bollas 1987). These horizontal and vertical dimensions of time correspond to genealogy and archaeology respectively; both methods synthesise spatio-temporally discrete material.

Archaeology is a method of unearthing from beneath the surface of ideas and categories ('local discursivities') the object which is the historical, materialist condition of their existence (Foucault 1980a: 233). We might recall Bhaskar's words as an apt justification of this method: knowledge 'does not lie exposed on the face of the world prone to the gaze of the casual observer. Rather it is, for the most part, hidden encrusted in things, needing to be excavated in the theoretical and practical labours of the most arduous kind' (Bhaskar 1986: 68). Foucault chose the term archaeology to

suggest that the kind of analysis I was using was out-of-phase, not in terms of time but by virtue of the *level* at which it was situated. Studying the history of ideas, as they

evolve, is not my problem so much as trying to discern *beneath them* how one or another object could take shape as a possible object of knowledge. Why, for instance did madness become, at a given moment, an object of knowledge corresponding to a certain type of knowledge? By using the word 'archaeology' rather than 'history,' I tried to designate this desynchronisation between ideas about madness and *the constitution of madness as an object* (Foucault 1988: 31, my emphasis).

If we heed Foucault's remarks concerning 'level' and 'time,' archaeology should not be regarded as a digging back through chronological time, or the past, and the assemblage of its remnants in the 'museum of modern knowledge,' as Harvey (1989: 56) puts it. Rather, it is a digging beneath present categories to uncover the object they represent. Archaeology is a method of abstraction consistent with realism. Whereas positivism generalises from the particular and deduces an understanding of the local from general, covering laws, Foucault's archaeology extracts knowledge of general causal mechanisms, diffuse throughout society, from their particular manifestations. As Burawoy (1985: 18) puts it, 'every particularity contains a generality; each particular factory regime is the product of general forces operating at a societal or global level'. Archaeology is method of extracting 'the general from the particular' (Burawoy 1985: 18). Its aim is to produce a model or analytics to grasp the situational logic of localities and contexts by explicating the rationale or microphysics of the infinitesimal mechanisms of power operating there (Atkinson 1972: 174-179, van Velsen 1967: 141-149; Foucault 1988: 105).

True, Foucault abandoned the term archaeology (1988: 31), but the *concept* remains. 'Archaeology' was not replaced by 'genealogy,' but by 'analytics' (Foucault 1981: 82): a model or 'grid of analysis' describing the nature and constitution of an object and grasping its logic and rationale. The shift from 'archaeology' to 'analytic' coincides with a shift in Foucault's interest from the 'how' to the 'what' of power, from an uncritical acceptance of sovereign power to an attempt to define disciplinary power (Foucault 1980a: 92 and 183-184). Foucault makes clear that this analytics of power can be constituted only if it frees itself from the juridico-discursive representation of power (Foucault 1981: 82); 'we must,' he says, 'construct an analytic of power that no longer takes law as a model and a code'

(Foucault 1981: 90). Necessarily then, the excavation of power's 'microphysics' entails a critique of those systematising theories and descending analyses which represent power in terms of law and the state. An analytic, therefore, is a model depicting the constitution or structure of objects and is developed through a critique of their constitutive categories.

Genealogy, on the other hand, is a method of determining the constitution of objects (Foucault 1980a: 117) by means of a detailed empirical description of their practical, historical formation. Concrete events are conjunctures of a multiplicity of diverse practices, constituted by a 'mobile system of relationships and syntheses,' which genealogy reveals through selecting material from the flux of empirical events. Like that other realist, Marx, Foucault's empirical work is concrete 'because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse' (Marx 1857: 101). The 'syntheses,' noted above, is important, for the combination of these elements and processes 'qualitatively modifies each constitutive entity' (Urry 1985: 26), and is one reason why, for Foucault, as for Marx, there can be no 'general' theory.

This realist interpretation recasts conventional understanding of Foucault's method. Rather than representing discrete periods of his life's work, archaeology and genealogy are methods of analysis operating in different dimensions: ontological depth and chronological time, theory and history, abstract and concrete. In Foucault's words:

'archaeology' would be the appropriate methodology of this analysis of local discursivities, and 'genealogy' would be the tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play (Foucault 1980a: 85).

Moreover, these methods are complementary:

it is a question of forming a different grid of historical decipherment by starting from a different theory of power; and, at the same time, of advancing little by little toward a different conception of power through a closer examination of an entire historical material (Foucault 1981: 90-91).

This interpretation of his methodology helps account for Foucault's retrospective description of all his work as genealogy (Foucault 1980a: 85-86).

Realism and Foucault: A Convergence

Foucault's synthesis of material discrete in time and space, his explanation of the practical and conceptual constitution of seemingly self-evident things, and his unearthing of the microphysics of objects beneath their surface flux of empirical events—all this is consistent with realism's critique of and alternative to positivism's conception of causality, explanation and theory. Certainly, genealogies are 'precisely anti-sciences' (Foucault 1980a: 83)—but they are anti-*positivist* sciences.

Recognition of realism's and Foucault's common purpose is hindered by the different terms used to describe it and the different methods they favour. Their common purpose is to capture the causal mechanisms of social forms of experience. Bhaskar calls this 'object constitution'; Foucault calls it 'anatomy'. Their respective methods are critique and genealogy. Critique retroduces from categories to their constitutive social conditions, thereby creating concepts that map real, nonempirical social structures and their mechanisms. Genealogy uncovers the layers of epistemic organization of objects of knowledge through a reconstruction of the history of their formation. Critique and genealogy are complementary moments of historical analysis, for they approach a common task from different directions. Theorists grant logical priority to critique over empirical research. They direct attention to relevant historiographic terrain. We theorize a thing and then describe its formation by writing its history. Foucault—being no social theorist—reverses the order of priority. He presents a genealogy of the practical constitution of objects—madness, criminality, sexuality—and leaves us the problem of theorizing about what he has done. This is, perhaps, a partial explanation of the volume of secondary literature on Foucault.

Realism and Foucault provide complementary critiques of positivism's theory/practice dichotomy and of empiricist concepts of power.

Realism's notion of the internality of social relations and categories, which it derives from Marx (Sayer 1979a, 1979b), is compatible with Foucault's notion of power-knowledge. Foucault shows how the control of an object requires knowledge of its nature. The mechanisms of disciplinary power are simultaneously instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge. Disciplines simultaneously individualise and categorize. Power and knowledge, conceived by positivism as independent, are internally related and combine to form 'power-knowledge,' a concept analogous to 'space-time' (Hawking 1988: 15-34). Foucault thus dissolves the traditional, positivist, distinctions between power and knowledge, practice and theory. We should, says Foucault, 'abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and interests' (Foucault 1977: 27).

In Chapter 1, I used realism to distinguish between material, efficient and final causes; the capacity to act and its exercise; and power and domination. Drawing on Isaac (1987a), I suggested that the radical concept of power and the *organon of control* conflate these realist distinctions. I now want to establish that Foucault's concept of power is consistent with this realist concept of power. The first thing to note, in this regard, is that Foucault's work developed in reaction to traditional Marxism's implicit, radical concept of power and its corollaries—real interests and ideology, base and superstructure. Foucault does not deny the reality of control and subordination: he claims only that power is more complex than prohibition and that an understanding of power cannot be deduced from an imputed motive (Foucault 1988: 102). To understand who exercises power and why (efficient and final causes) we must first understand the structures and mechanisms which cause the capacities

to act (material causes) (Foucault 1988: 103). Efficient and final causes must be discovered empirically. While Foucault is often accused of a structural determinism which ignores human agency, I think this accusation is mistaken. It is based on an impression left by Foucault's emphasis on material causes, the dearth of empirical applications of his model, and his preoccupation with empirical studies of forms of domination. The mechanisms of power obey a logic which Foucault's empirical studies attempt to understand. These studies of the 'how' of power contain an implicit model of the 'what' of power which is compatible with realism. Realists and Foucault can agree that power is a ubiquitous quality of social relations, exercised by individuals, that the mechanisms of social relations are nonempirical, that while social practices are conceptualized their interconnections seldom are and, therefore, must be revealed through abstraction and reconstructed through empirical history.

This realist reading of Foucault corrects postmodern and historiographic interpretations, which, I maintain, obscure what he has to say and inhibit the deployment of his ideas.

Postmodernist interpretations of Foucault, distrustful of 'any narrative that aspires to coherence' (Harvey 1989: 350), are fuelled by his criticisms of 'theory' and science and by his preoccupation with the microphysics of power. Because power is local and fragmentary it cannot be connected or represented by a metatheory: 'Incredulity towards metanarratives' is Lyotard's definition of the postmodern (Lyotard, cited in Harvey 1989: 45). Foucault, however, claims to be unfamiliar with this interpretation: 'What are we calling post-modernity?', he asks of an interviewer, 'I'm not up to date'. 'I've never clearly understood what was meant in France by the word "modernity,"' he says, 'neither do I grasp the kind of problems intended by this term—or how they would be common to people thought of as being "post-modern"' (Foucault 1988: 33-4). Characterizing Foucault as a postmodernist is a mistake: he is no postmodernist. It is specifically *positivist* science, and its implicit empiricist ontology and conception of theory, Foucault opposes. He rejects 'the

generalization of relatively specific and localised empirical developments into large-scale general laws of development' (Urry 1985: 37) and, its corollary, the explanation of local events by appeal to some overarching, general theory. Foucault opposes this positivist method for two reasons. It is unable to explain the microphysics of power and it disqualifies or discredits ('subjugates') local knowledges with the potential to do so. Foucault does not deny the existence of a general law of power—indeed he argues that the logic of power relations developed over time and across space—Foucault denies only that a knowledge of this logic can be deduced from covering laws based on empirical generalisations. Certainly, there are general laws, but they cannot be deduced from generalisations. The laws of power relations—their microphysics—are analogous to the laws of fluid dynamics: invariant in every river, but every river is different (Harvey 1989: 343-344). How the logic of power unfolds in practice depends on its context; the exercise of the capacity to act is always negotiated and therefore contingent on political skill and the circumstances of its deployment.

This, then, is the basis of Foucault's opposition to 'general theory' which is used to sustain a postmodernist interpretation of his work.

Equally, historiographers' criticisms of Foucault are rendered redundant by a realist interpretation. Reading Foucault is uncomfortable for those accustomed to orthodox modes of writing history for he does not provide a narrative of a sequence of events, topics are not discussed in temporal order and there are breaks in the description when the reader expects continuity (Giddens 1987: 213). Although true, these criticisms are based on a misunderstanding of Foucault's project. Foucault's aim is to delineate an object through a description of the practices, diverse in time and space, which constitute it; it is not to develop a narrative of the sequence of past events, ideas or institutions. An analogy with psychoanalysis is helpful. From the narrative of psychoanalysis the analyst retroduces a

model of the structure of the analysand's ego, an unconscious organizing process evolved from a dialectic between this inner core and the external environment (Bollas 1987: 8). Ego-structure is the internalisation of a process; a form of 'deep memory' (Bollas 1987: 50); it constitutes a 'history of the development of the person' (Bollas 1987: 50). The aim of psychoanalysis is not to research the analysand's biography, but to discern the structure of the ego from the 'private logic of sequential association implied in the patient's discourse' (Bollas 1987: 1). This logic of association is unlikely to be confined to cojoin events within the same space and time. The relationship between events is more important than the details of their chronological sequence and location. The object of psychoanalysis does not exist within conventional understandings of time and space: nor does Foucault's. He is an historian of the constitution of objects, not a narrator of the sequence of events. Sexuality, for example, is an object in the sense that the ego is an object. 'What I want to make apparent is precisely that the object "sexuality" is in reality an instrument formed a long while ago, and one which has constituted a centuries-long apparatus of subjection' (Foucault 1980a: 219). Just as the psychoanalyst uses knowledge of the analysand's ego to inform understanding of his or her present and past, so Foucault's work informs understanding of taken-for-granted objects by accounting for their historical formation. In this sense, Foucault is an historian of the present and a philosopher of the past.

Marx, Realism and Foucault

The *assumption* that Foucauldian and Marxian social theory are fundamentally incompatible has discouraged an exploration of Foucault's potential for resolving problems of traditional Marxism. And so Marx and Foucault continue to be read as if in separate compartments and there is little or no cross-fertilisation between them. But Marx and Foucault are not static, unchangeable bodies of knowledge. Much depends on how they are read—it is the dynamic interchange between them that is important. In the remainder of this Chapter and the entirety of the next I shall argue that a realist reading of their work turns

them around to face each other, renders their work complementary, indeed, mutually supportive, facilitates a *rapprochement* and synthesis between them and that this synthetic model can help explain the problems formulated in Chapter 1.

I begin by identifying the common realist characteristics of Marx and Foucault. In so doing, I shall recapitulate the key points of my realist reading of their work.

1. Both deconstruct reality by demonstrating its factitious character.

Marx deconstructs ‘the natural, self-understood forms of life,’ the surface of society, the behavioural interactions among monads who imagine themselves to be independent and free, by depicting the internal structure and movement of society (relations and mode of production). Foucault refers to ‘forms of life’ as ‘objects’—ingrained taken-for-granted social forms the very obviousness of which blinds us to the fact that they are historical, social constructs. Foucault deconstructs taken-for-granted objects (madness, criminality, sexuality) by reconstructing the practices, diverse in space and time, which constitute them. The point of his genealogies is to undermine confidence in contemporary notions of the self-evident by showing objects to be historical, materialist constructs

2. Both are concerned with ‘object constitution’ or modelling.

In the *Grundrisse* notebooks, Marx attempts to synthesize the internal relations which he identified in the 1840s into a model of the ‘inner connection between relations of production, of distribution and of circulation’ (Marx 1858: 122), of the ‘inner structure of bourgeois society’ (Marx 1857: 108). This model was reworked and developed. It exists between the *Grundrisse* notebooks, the 1861-63 ‘Critique of Political Economy’ manuscript, the three parts of *Theories of Surplus Value* and the three published volumes of *Capital*. Foucault refers to ‘object constitution’ as ‘problematization’: to grasp the rationale or logic of objects by developing a grid of analysis (a ‘model’) of the discursive and non-

discursive practices that constitute them.¹⁴¹ The aim 'is to move less toward a "theory" of power than toward an "analytics" of power, i.e., towards a definition of the specific domain formed by relations of power, and towards a determination of the instruments that will make possible its analysis' (Foucault 1981: 82). 'All my books ... are little toolboxes,' he claims (Foucault, cited in Eribon 1991: 237). Foucault constitutes objects in thought by developing a genealogy of their effects. In so doing, he provides us with a nucleus of concepts comprising a model or analytics of power.

3. They share a relational concept of the social.

Marx objects to 'civil society' because it refers to only external or contingent relations between individuals. During the fifteen years that went into the making of the *Grundrisse* notebooks, Marx gradually replaces this 'civil society' of external relations between contingently connected individuals with a 'society' of internal and necessary relations and practices. Foucault's relational conception of the social is evident in his understanding of 'objects'. The power of these objects is an 'open, more-or-less coordinated ... cluster of relations' (Foucault 1980a: 199). 'Power-knowledge relations' are relations of production in a broad sense; they produce madness, criminality, sexuality. His comment on sexuality is generalizable: it is a system of relations between its heterogeneous elements (Foucault 1980a: 194).

4. They share a realist concept of power.

Both Marx and Foucault conceive power as a capacity to act, bestowed by real, nonempirical social structures and mechanisms, exercised by agents, contingent on their motives, political skills and the circumstances of its deployment. Both are primarily concerned with material rather than with efficient and final causes, i.e., not with overt conflict between *A* getting *B* to

¹⁴¹Foucault says 'problematization' (how objects are practically and conceptually constituted) was never isolated sufficiently (Foucault 1988: 257).

do something *B* would not otherwise do, but with the social relations of power which cause both *A* and *B* doing what they *ordinarily* do (Isaac 1987a: 96). This realist concept of power underpins Foucault's concern to deconstruct the taken-for-granted and Marx's concern to deconstruct apparently 'self-evident natural laws' of a mode of production (Marx 1867a: 899). It points to the importance of explaining the *normal*—not conflict, but its absence.

5. Their realist understanding of ontology and causation is evident in their conception of space and time.

Both Marx and Foucault reject the belief that 'there is something epistemologically significant about the "here and now," that we are peculiarly constituted by and within the social relations which *currently* surround us' (Urry 1985: 23). Just as regularly cojoined phenomena may not be causally connected, so phenomena spatio-temporally separate may be. Their work draws together material discrete in time and space. It is a characteristic of Marx's analysis to conceive of apparently unconnected phenomena as elements or 'moments' of a process. For example, despite being 'separate in time and space,' the three processes of capital have an 'inner unity,' and exist 'independently alongside one another, each as the presupposition of the other' (Marx 1858: 403). Foucault explains how phenomena discrete in space and time are synthesized into 'objects' and how different objects are interrelated—'let's try and see if it isn't the same' (Foucault 1980a: 209).¹⁴² Marx and Foucault's conception of space and time is explicable in the light of a realist conception of causation, for it is real but nonempirical causal mechanisms that connect apparently discrete things.

6. Realism renders critique and genealogy complementary methods.

¹⁴²Foucault is responding to the statement: 'Your previous book dealt with criminality. Sexuality, apparently, is a different kind of object' (Foucault 1980a: 209).

Critique and genealogy are complementary methods (of 'object constitution') which are consistent with the epistemological implications of realist ontology. Critique retroduces from categories to their constitutive social conditions, thereby creating concepts that map real, nonempirical social structures. Genealogy uncovers the layers of epistemic organization of objects of knowledge through a reconstruction of the history of their formation (Hacking 1981: 37). Genealogy and critique are methods of a quite different type of abstraction to that practiced by positivists; not the extrapolation from sample to population, but an extraction of the general from the particular. Critique and genealogy are complementary moments of analysis, for they approach a common task (object constitution) from different directions. Both indicate where empirical investigation 'must enter in' (Marx 1858: 460).¹⁴³

Having indicated how realism mediates between Marx and Foucault, I now want to consider some basic points of contact between their work. These will be developed in the next Chapter.

Marx and Foucault: Elements of a Synthesis

My argument concerning the relationship between Marx and Foucault can be simply stated. Marx explains 'why,' i.e., he describes the imperative of the social structure that facilitates and constrains social action, but he does not explain 'how,' i.e., how labour is organized, how this mode of organization is subsumed to capital, nor how it is responsible for civil society and the state. Foucault explains 'how,' i.e., he describes the mechanisms of power, but he does not explain 'why,' i.e., the motive or purpose of disciplinary power.¹⁴⁴ I

¹⁴³Realism can also be used to reinterpret *The Order of Things*. Realism is an alternative to the subject-object approach to knowledge which Foucault opposes in this book. He confines himself to describing transformations in knowledge/science, 'thinking that this would be an indispensable step if, one day, a theory of scientific change and epistemological causality was to be constructed' (Foucault 1973: xiii). Realism is such a theory.

¹⁴⁴*Let us not ... ask why* certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. *Let us ask, instead, how things work* at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and

showed in Chapter 1 that it is precisely ‘how’ that realism demands of an explanation.¹⁴⁵ Realism’s understanding of the relationship between ‘why’ and ‘how’ mediates between Marx and Foucault in the following way. Answers to ‘why’ questions (i.e., to requests for causal explanation) require answers to ‘how’ questions, which, in turn, require answers to ‘what’ questions, i.e., careful description of the object and the mechanisms by which it acts—i.e., object constitution (Keat and Urry 1975: 31). To marry ‘why’ and ‘how’ it is necessary to explicate ‘what’—to synthesize Marx’s description of relations of production (structure) and Foucault’s description of the mechanisms of disciplinary power (agency).¹⁴⁶

I shall do this incrementally. First, by establishing points of contact between their work (sub-theses), then, in the next Chapter, by presenting a thesis by which they can be understood.¹⁴⁷

uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc.’ (Foucault 1980a: 97, my emphasis).

¹⁴⁵This absence (‘how’) is one reason for the problems of conventional interpretations of Marx. Marxists have deduced ‘how’ from ‘why’ rather than ‘what,’ i.e., they have deduced an understanding of power from a motive.

¹⁴⁶I should add that the lack of ‘why’ in Foucault is as much a problem as the lack of ‘how’ in Marx. The difficulty with Foucault’s work is in understanding the nature of the problem of which it is an explanation. If a retroductive argument is a cluster of conclusions in search of a premise, then Foucault’s work is a cluster of premises in search of a conclusion.

¹⁴⁷Let me anticipate one possible objection: Marx’s concern is with production, Foucault’s concern is ‘with people situated outside the circuit of productive labour’ (Foucault 1980a: 161)—does this not render their work incompatible? I think not. It is important to recall Marx’s comments in the *Paris Manuscripts*, where he switches from the critique of jurisprudence to the critique of political economy. He touches on ‘the interconnections between political economy and the state, law, ethics, civil life, etc. only to the extent to which political economy itself expressly touches upon these subjects’ (Marx 1844b: 231). But, as he explains, political economy does not touch on these subjects at all. It

does not recognise the unemployed worker, the workingman, insofar as he happens to be outside this labour relationship, the rascal, swindler, beggar, the unemployed, the starving, wretched and criminal workingman—these figures who do not exist for political economy but only for other eyes, those of the doctor, the judge, the grave-digger, and the bum-bailiff, etc.: such figures are spectres outside its domain (Marx 1844b: 284).

Marx is saying only that these spectres are beyond the scope of his particular, ‘economic’ enquiry—i.e., his critique of political economy; he is *not* saying that they are beyond the compass of relations of production. The worker exists for the capitalist only when he exists for capital; Marx adheres to this theoretically as the capitalist does practically. He intended to later encompass these other figures within his promised ‘connected whole,’ *Critique of Politics and Political Economy*, which would examine ‘the interconnections between political economy and the state, law, ethics, civil life, etc.’—but never did. These figures beyond the scope of political economy’s restricted vision are precisely the figures Foucault is concerned with: ‘the insane, prisoners, and now children’ (Foucault 1980a: 161).

1. Both base their analyses on what people actually do, rather than on what they imagine they do.

One of the premises of the materialist conception of history is that we should not set out 'from what men say, imagine or conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh' (Marx and Engels 1846: 36). This is a reference to citizens of the state who imagine themselves to be free and equal. Materialism's 'premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation and fixity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions' (Marx and Engels 1846: 37). This is a reference to the 'fantastic isolation' of the 'atom' of 'civil society'. The civilian of civil society is a 'fictitious phenomenon'; the citizen of the state is an 'imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty' (Marx 1843b: 154). Individuals err in treating 'the political life of the state, an arena beyond their real individuality, as if it were their *true* life' (Marx 1843b: 159, my emphasis). 'The social structure ['society'] and the state,' write Marx and Engels (1846: 36), 'are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, however, of these individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they actually are, i.e., as they act, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will'. The legal conception that monads of civil society have of themselves is an important part of Marx's explicandum.

Foucault's criticism of conceptions of power in terms of law and state is precisely a criticism of the juridic self-understanding of the monads of civil society. Marxists, he argues, simply mirror this liberal conception: they substitute economic for juridic subjects, a malign for a benign state. They are more concerned with defining 'class' than with empirically investigating the nature of the struggle (Foucault 1988: 123). They have deduced an understanding of power from a motive ('why'), rather than from empirical investigation ('how'). 'The way power was exercised—concretely and in detail—with its

specificity, its techniques and tactics, was something that no one attempted to ascertain' (Foucault 1980a: 115-116). Marx (and Engels) would surely concur: 'Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production' (Marx and Engels 1846: 36).

2. They share an explicandum.

A realist (chronological-bibliographic) reading of Marx's work allows us to identify the explicandum which he defined in his 1840s essays and from which he retroduced: the dichotomy between civil society and the state, which constitutes modern man. This explicandum is described in Engels's concrete account of life in the streets of London, in 1843; and in Marx's abstract account of the juridic self-understanding of the monad of civil society, also in 1843 (Marx 1843a, 1843b). It is important, in considering the relationship between Marx and Foucault, to recognise that this is very much a contemporary problem: the alienated existence of the rootless, narcissistic individual of modernity (Sayer 1991: 12; Callinicos 1989: 144; Lasch 1980). Foucault is concerned with precisely this problem. The monad of civil society is no misconception, but a palpable product of disciplinary techniques (Foucault 1977: 194). As I shall show, in the next Chapter, he provides the means of explaining how the individual is 'already socially determined' (Marx 1858) and criticises the individual's juridic self-understanding.

3. Both regard (a) civil society and the state as equally problematic, coeval phenomena, and (b) civil society as the basis of the state, not vice versa.

a. For Marx: 'the completion of the idealism of the state was at the same time the completion of the materialism of civil society' (Marx 1843b: 166), and 'the establishment of the political state and the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals ... is accomplished by one and the same act' (Marx 1843b: 167). For Foucault: 'there is

something ... that bothers me about this notion: it's that the reference to this antagonistic couple is never exempt from a sort of Manicheism that afflicts the notion of "state" with a pejorative connotation while idealizing "society" as a good, living, warm whole' (Foucault 1988: 167-168).

b. For Marx: 'If power is taken as the basis of right, as Hobbes, etc., do, then right, law, etc., are merely the symptoms, *the expression of other relations upon which state power rests*. The material life of individuals ... is the real basis of the state ... These actual relations are in no way created by the state power; on the contrary *they are the power creating it*' (Marx and Engels 1846: 329, my emphasis). For Foucault: the state 'can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations' (Foucault 1980a: 122), i.e., 'on the basis of a small-scale, regional, dispersed Panopticism' (Foucault 1980a: 72). Disciplinary power is 'the lasting substratum for the transitory historical ediface of the state'. 'Nothing in society will be changed if the mechanism of power that functions *outside, below and alongside* the State apparatus, on a much more minute and everyday level, are not also changed' (Foucault 1980a: 60, my emphasis). Let us compare with Marx: the emancipation of private property from the community causes the state to 'become a separate entity, *alongside and outside* civil society' (Marx and Engels 1846: 90, my emphasis). The similarity between their propositions is remarkable.

4. Marx's conception of the juridic self-understanding of the individual and Foucault's conception of the representation of power in terms of law and state are complementary.

For Marx, the apparent freedom and independence of the monad of civil society is the basis of the apparent equality of the citizen of the state. In this way, 'separate individuals' are the basis of people's juridic self-understanding, an understanding propagated by 'statesmen in general' and 'ideologists of the state'. This understanding, not Hegel's philosophy, is the problem to be explained. Hegel merely idealizes the conception of the state held the monads

of civil society and popularised by political ideologists (Marx and Engels 1846: 348). Foucault's critique of the formulation of power in terms of law and state is tantamount to Marx's intended critique of politics, law and state. There is a striking resemblance between Foucault's critique of the juridic concept of power, or the 'ideology of right,' and Marx's critique of the legal conception people have of themselves, or Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'. The juridico-political theory of sovereignty continues to exist 'not only as an ideology of right, but also to provide the organizing principle of the legal codes which Europe acquired in the nineteenth century, beginning with the Napoleonic Code'. Marx and Foucault are equally concerned with the juridic subject: for Marx, 'the individual engaged in exchange' (Marx 1858: 245-246); for Foucault the target of the punishment of incarceration ('deprive the individual of all rights, but do not inflict pain').

5. Foucault's 'disciplinary techniques' and Marx's 'division of labour' refer to the same process.

Foucault's disciplinary techniques are the mysterious 'division of labour' Marx uses to explain the organization of labour in the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of capital (Marx 1867a: 486). The division of labour dissects handicraft activity into its separate components, specialises the instruments of labour, forms specialised workers, and combines the latter into a single machine (Marx 1867a: 480-491).

The division of labour is an organization of production which has grown up naturally, a web which has been, and continues to be, woven behind the backs of the producers of commodities (Marx 1867a: 201).

I shall argue that disciplinary practices are the *means* of dividing labour—through time, in space—by which this organization is created: 'The technological mutation of the apparatus of production, the division of labour and the elaboration of the disciplinary techniques sustained an ensemble of very close relations' (Foucault 1977: 221).

6. Foucault's conception of the relationship between power and knowledge and Marx's conception of the relationship between social relations and categories are compatible. Social relations and categories, power and knowledge, are internally-related.¹⁴⁸

Marx's notion of the internality of social relations and categories (or social being and social consciousness) is equivalent to Foucault's notion of power-knowledge relations.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Foucault's conception of power-knowledge improves upon Marx's minimal theorisation of the mechanisms of the correspondence between social relations and categories. For Foucault, categorization and individualization are sides of the same, disciplinary process. His account of the political significance of categorization in his genealogies of power-knowledge relations, gives historical meaning to the proposition that social relations are simultaneously ideal and material.

7. The privatization of property coincided with the privatization of power.

Foucault is clear that the privatization of property and the onset of the capitalist mode of production stimulated the privatization of power and the development of disciplinary society. It is important to understand the relationship between the privatization of property and the privatization of (disciplinary) power. Foucault construes disciplinary power as a means of containing opposition to the privatization of property, the development of industrialism and the exploitation of labour, entailed by this process, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Foucault 1977: 85-87). Foucault (1977: 274) calls this opposition 'popular illegalities,' but, in the light of the labour theory of property, sketched in Chapter 4, I prefer to regard them as the inalienable rights of labour, an indigenous form of law. When

¹⁴⁸'Between techniques of knowledge and strategies of power, there is no exteriority' (Foucault 1981).

¹⁴⁹Marx's conception is the basis for that of realism: 'These pre-interpretations are not externally related and contingently conjoined to what happens in the human sphere, but internally related and constitutive of it' (Bhaskar 1986: 161).

these rights clashed with the development of capitalist production and private property, they 'had to be punished' (Foucault 1977: 85).¹⁵⁰

8. Foucault's account of the 'composition of forces' parallels Marx's account of the organization of a productive force.

The object of disciplinary techniques, which I explain in the next Chapter, is to constitute a power or force greater than the sum of its elements. A disciplinary power is a productive power. These techniques analyse and organize space, break up and rearrange activities in time and, thereby, constitute a productive power whose effect is superior to the sum of its the elementary forces that compose it (Foucault 1977: 163). The force in question could be of the army, the monastery, or, as I shall argue in the next Chapter, it could be the productive power of labour.

9. 'Power-knowledge relations' (Foucault) and 'relations of production' (Marx) attempt to grasp the same real object: 'society' (Bhaskar).

If power means a dense web of hidden social relations, transcending a wide variety of organizations, preceding the establishment of the factory system and forming the substratum of the state, as Foucault contends;¹⁵¹ and if relations of production are nonempirical structures, the substratum of 'civil society' and 'political state,' as Marx contends: How do they differ? I want to suggest that 'power-knowledge relations' and 'relations of production' are approximations of the same real object—'society': a network of nonempirical, but real, social structures (Bhaskar 1989a). They are a substratum: an underlying layer or substance beneath the surface, a foundation or basis (C.O.D.), a dual-

¹⁵⁰With the new form of capital accumulation, new relations of production and the new legal status of property, all the popular practices that belonged either in a silent, everyday tolerated form, or in a violent form, to the illegality of rights were reduced by force to an illegality of property' (Foucault 1977: 86-87).

¹⁵¹Power is 'a productive network which runs through the whole social body' (Foucault 1980a: 119).

sided phenomenon with an outward or superficial appearance and an invisible internal structure (Marx 1867a: 680 and 682).

10. Foucault's explanation of the logic of disciplinary power and Marx's explanation of the law of motion of capitalist society are complementary, indeed mutually supporting. Foucault explains the mechanisms of this motion.

11. The dual-sided nature of relations of production corresponds to the dual-sided nature of disciplinary power.

Let me recall, for Marx, 'the relations of production ... do not have a simple, uniform character but rather a dual one' (Marx 1867a: 799 and Marx 1847a: 176). They simultaneously empower and repress, organize and dissolve, produce wealth and produce poverty.¹⁵² These two sides of relations of production correspond to the 'two different sides of the development of the social individual' (Marx 1858: 706). Disciplinary power is dual-sided also: it simultaneously enables and represses, organizes and atomises, categorizes and individualises.

12. Disciplinary power and relations of production are dimensions (agency and structure) of the same object.

Disciplinary practices are the causal mechanisms of production relations, the way of acting of this structured thing—the mode of organizing production.

13. Marx's account of the genesis of industrial capital and Foucault's account of the genesis of disciplinary technologies are complementary. The period of manufacture (from

¹⁵²'In the self-same relation in which there is a development of the productive forces, there is also a force producing repression' (Marx 1847a: 176).

the mid-sixteenth century to the last third of the eighteenth century) and the period in which disciplinary techniques were diffused throughout society coincide.

In this Chapter, I have presented a realist interpretation of Foucault to challenge the widespread assumption that Marxian and Foucauldian social theory are fundamentally incompatible. Realism turns Marx and Foucault around to face each other and renders their work complementary. In the next Chapter, I develop the points of contact between their work, outlined here, into a synthetic model with the intention of explaining the organization of labour, the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state, and—thereby—the cluster of problems formulated in Chapter 1.

Chapter 6

The Organization of Labour: The Materialism of Civil Society and the Idealism of the State

Introduction

Let me gather together the main strands of the thesis.

In Chapter 1, I decomposed the problem of IR theory into the deficiencies of the organon of control, evident in its inability to explain the dual-nature of the organization of production, the radical concept of power upon which it is based and the influence of traditional interpretations of Marx, evident in a dichotomous conceptual orthodoxy centred on the civil society/political state axis. I argued that the means of resolving this cluster of problems is contained in a realist, chronological-bibliographic reading of Marx. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 presented the results of this reading.

In Chapter 2, I argued against using the *Preface*, the source of traditional interpretations, as a guide to Marx's analytic and explained how a realist interpretation of his 1858 *Introduction* leads to a conception of his object in three-dimensional terms, as the surface (civil society \leftrightarrow political state), structure (relations of production) and movement (mode of production) of society. Marx aims, I suggested, to explain the law of motion of the mechanism which mediates between structure and surface and which generates the—yet to be explained—mirror images, civil society \leftrightarrow political state.

In Chapter 3, I reconstructed Marx's formulation of his explicandum, in his 1840s essays: the alienated monad of modernity, constituted by the 'essential relationship' between civil society and political state. I showed how Marx regards these spheres as internally-related, equally problematic, coeval phenomena that cannot be understood apart. The issue is not

the state *per se*, conceived as a mystification above the reality of civil society: the mystification is the apparent separability of civil society and the state above the reality of capital. Civil society and political state are products of the same process—which he refers to enigmatically as the ‘materialism of civil society’ and the ‘idealism of the state’—and the same ‘essential relations’. But what is the nature of this process, these relations? I suggested that the need to answer this question was the impetus to Marx’s life’s work. The trajectory of his retroductive line of argument strongly suggests that his putative explicans is the ‘inner organization’ of production or ‘capital’: at rest, a social structure—relations of production; in motion, a process—mode of production.

In Chapter 4, I examined capital at rest (relations of production) and in motion (mode of production) by explicating the interrelated concepts that describe the internal structure of society and the logic of its historical development or movement. This realist interpretation of the nucleus of Marx’s concepts is significant in two respects. First, it resolves the ambiguity of ‘value’ by explaining the relationship between its substance and its form and thus construes Marx’s analytic as a labour theory of *property*. Second, it makes clear that labour is not controlled into a productive power or ‘force,’ but *organized* into one and thus shifts the explanatory focus away from ‘control’ *per se* to how the dual-sided relations of production simultaneously empower and repress workers. Marx provides no explanation of this phenomenon. This is a serious problem in his model of capital. I suggested that his inability to explain how labour is organized and subsumed to capital (his explicans) is the cause of the problem of understanding civil society and political state (his explicandum).

Let me now relate ~~this~~ this Odyssey through Marx to the problems formulated in Chapter 1. Marx’s explicandum—civil society↔political state—and his putative, but problematic, explicans—the dual-natured organization of production—correspond to the two central problems of ‘control’ identified in Chapter 1. Marx’s retroductive line of argument

suggests that these two sets of problems are causally connected. In this Chapter, I shall argue that the—yet-to-be-explained—dual-sided nature of the organization of production is the causal, generative mechanism of the dichotomous conceptual orthodoxy of modernity. I intend to show how these are real dichotomies, falsely conceptualized (Conjecture 6).

Here is the essence of my argument: the organization of labour into a productive power, its subsumption to capital, and the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals, are coterminous dimensions of the *same* process and nexus of production relations, with a common, unifying logic. Therefore, whatever explains how labour is organized into a productive power, objectified as the ‘force’ of capital, and thus robbed of ‘all real life content’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 87), will also explain how people are rendered the ‘abstract’ monads of civil society—‘the basis, the precondition of the political state’ (Marx 1843b: 166).¹⁵³ Marx nowhere gives an adequate answer to these questions. I contend, in this Chapter, that Foucault does.

A prerequisite of using Foucault to sustain this realist reading of Marx is the complementarity of Foucault and realism. Chapter 5 presented a realist reading of Foucault as an antidote to historiographic and postmodern interpretations, which, I maintain, obscure the significance of what he has to say and inhibit the deployment of his ideas. A realist reading of Foucault is helpful in two ways. First, it helps explicate and develop his model of power by creating the theoretical space within which to imagine and explore the interior or underside of his empirical studies of power. This is necessary, for, as Foucault acknowledges, his work refers to problems that could not be made explicit because of the way he posed them (Foucault 1988: 243). Foucault’s problems were inadequately

¹⁵³‘This man, this member of civil society, is thus the basis, the precondition, of the political state. He is recognised as such by the state in the rights of man’ (Marx 1843b: 166).

formulated, I suggest, because he lacked an alternative ontology to the empiricism he so thoroughly undermined. Second, by insisting on the necessity of substantive analysis, realism disentangles Foucault's work from his epigones' 'overblown theory dressed up in unnecessary jargon' and reveals it as 'a perceptive guide to empirical research,' not a new language of armchair theorizing (Silverman 1985: 82). It is as a guide to empirical research that I intend to use Foucault.

Foucault's potential for resolving some of the problems of traditional Marxism—as posed in this thesis—eludes the typical reading of his work, for several reasons. First, unless one understands that Foucault is not writing a history of the prison but constructing a model of power, the relevance of *Discipline and Punish* to understanding institutions other than prisons is not clear. Realism is necessary to explicate Foucault's model of power. Second, recognition of Foucault's model is inhibited by the micronature of his analysis. He reasons that to understand the 'architecture' of power one must first know something of stone-cutting; hence, he analyses the 'political economy of detail,' the 'microphysics of power,' the 'calculus of the infinitesimal and the infinite' (Foucault 1977: 140). To release the potential of Foucault's microanalysis of power it must be integrated with Marx's broad explanation of the law of motion of modern society. Foucault's relationship to Marx is analogous to the relationship of quantum mechanics to the general theory of relativity. The first 'deals with phenomena on extremely small scales,' the second 'describes the forces of gravity and the large-scale structure of the universe' (Hawking 1988: 11). Physics requires a theory that will incorporate these two types of analysis: so does social theory. Not only is Foucault necessary to sustain an alternative to traditional Marxism then, but Marx is necessary to release the potential of Foucault's model of power. If Marx's explicandum is a cluster of conclusions in search of a premiss, Foucault's explicans is a cluster of premisses in search of a conclusion.

I have suggested that Marx's inability to explain how labour is organized and how this mode of organization is subsumed to capital is the source of his inability to explain how civil society is 'materialised' and how the state is 'idealised'. In this Chapter I will argue that Foucault provides the means of explaining the first two problems and, thereby, the means of explaining the third.

Here is the order of my presentation: First, I use realism to explicate Foucault's model of power. Second, I synthesize Marx's model of relations of production (structure) and Foucault's model of power (agency). Third, I use this hybrid model to explain (a) how labour is organized into a productive power, (b) how this mode of organization is subsumed to capital, and (c) the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state—and its dichotomous corollaries.

I stress that this is an exercise in the logic of (re-)discovery and object constitution. I aim to develop a model of the object which Marx discovered but did not fully explain, nor, because of this, relate to his initial explicandum. This synthetic, Marxian-Foucauldian model—of the material causes of the capacity of individuals to act at work—is the explicans of the thesis. The final Chapter indicates how this model can be utilised and tested.

Disciplinary Power: A Model

Foucault's thesis of disciplinary power can be briefly stated. It is constituted by three methods of organizing, each of which consists of several techniques, and three means of 'training,' hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and the examination, which combine to determine norms or rules of conduct and shape or 'normalize' people to fit them. Together, they control the operation of the body, in precise detail, by organizing its movement in space and time and thereby constitute a power greater than the sum of its

elementary forces—what Foucault calls the ‘composition of forces’. These techniques are widespread. The force in question could be the army, the hospital, the prison—or it could be the productive force of labour. Indeed, Foucault illustrates his description of disciplinary techniques with quotations from Marx and examples from production. These techniques originated in monasteries and were developed and refined as they constituted a variety of institutions—workhouses, asylums, hospitals, barracks—from whence they converged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to form ‘the blueprint of a general method’ employed throughout society (Foucault 1977). The nucleus of this model of power is implicit in Part 3, ‘Discipline,’ of *Discipline and Punish*, although it must be supplemented by drawing on Foucault’s other work. It is seldom explicated, systematically developed and used in explanation of the organization of production, because it is seldom recognised for what it is. The following influences militate against recognition of the model, its utility and potential. Foucault himself offers little guidance to enable the reader to detect the model’s presence, because he became aware of the significance of models (or ‘analytics’) subsequent to the book’s publication.¹⁵⁴ He tells us only that he is ‘mapping’ on a ‘series of examples some of the essential techniques that most easily spread from one disciplinary institution to another’ (Foucault 1977: 139). To recognise these examples of disciplinary techniques as elements of a model, and to appreciate its significance and potential, one must (a) recognise and understand the significance of models, and (b) recognise this *particular* model as the means of resolving a familiar, identifiable problem—such as those identified in the Introduction. These prerequisites are interrelated: the potential use of the model draws it out of the text.

Before explicating the nucleus of Foucault’s model, some preliminary comments may be helpful.

¹⁵⁴He became aware of ‘models’ (or ‘analytics,’ as he calls them) in *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1 (Foucault 1981).

1. My order of presentation follows the order of the three chapters of Part 3 of *Discipline and Punish*: ‘Docile Bodies,’ ‘The Means of Correct Training,’ and ‘Panopticism.’ The first chapter considers the elements of the model separately: it describes three methods of organizing space, movement and time. The second chapter considers the elements of the model in combination: it describes three instruments of ‘training,’ which together synthesize these methods of organizing to produce a power or force greater than the sum of its constituent parts. These two chapters examine the same object, but in different ways, at rest and in motion. Finally, in the third chapter, Foucault abstracts, from this empirical detail, a model which he calls ‘Panopticism’—‘a diagram of a mechanism of power in its ideal form’—shows how it operates and how it spread throughout society during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Foucault 1977). This model is regularly mistaken for a utopian schema. In fact, it is a model of ‘particular mechanisms which *really exist*’ (Foucault 1980a: 164, my emphasis). It is this model I want to reconstruct in the first part of this Chapter. This model’s presentation in *Discipline and Punish* is ambiguous, repetitive and inconsistent.¹⁵⁵ My presentation aims to be clear, economical and coherent.

2. Imagining this model in the shape of a pyramid helps us understand Foucault’s order of presentation (Foucault 1977: 177, 221). In each of the first two chapters, he examines this architecture of power from its base to its apex. The final technique of each method, described in the first chapter, organizes its predecessors; the ‘means of correct training,’ described in the second chapter, synthesize the methods and techniques described in the first. Thus his analysis is cumulative.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵This is true, at least, of its English translation.

¹⁵⁶For example, ‘the examination,’ in ‘The Means of Correct Training,’ parallels ‘the composition of forces,’ in ‘Docile Bodies’.

3. Explicating Foucault's model poses the same problem as explicating Marx's model: how to present sequentially a model in which every concept of every element of this 'organic whole' presupposes every other. Within 'every organic system' effects become causes and 'every economic relation presupposes every other ... and everything posited is thus also a presupposition' (Marx 1858: 278). So, too, for Foucault: power is a machine, a technology of parts that work in unison.

4. It is important to understand that Foucault often employs the archaic meaning of many key terms, e.g., 'docile,' 'gesture'. Where appropriate, I comment on the etymology of these words, for this tells us something of the history of the techniques they represent.¹⁵⁷

Foucault tells us none of this.

5. Foucault presents the examples without explicating the model; here I present the model without Foucault's examples. In their stead, I provide examples taken from Marx, so as to illustrate areas of commonality between them, for later development.

6. Finally, although Foucault is clear that these techniques were 'organized from the starting point of local conditions and particular needs' and 'took shape in piecemeal fashion,' over centuries, 'prior to any class strategy designed to weld them into vast, coherent ensembles' (Foucault 1980a: 159), I use the imperative voice so as to stress their contemporary salience. I shall later argue that the techniques of Accounting, HRM and IR are the modern form of these organizing devices.

¹⁵⁷The archaic meaning of 'docile,' for example, is 'teachable,' or 'easily managed'. This meaning may now seem strange, but it was employed in Marx's time. This usage is evident in this quotation from Lord Ashley, cited in *Capital*, volume 1, which explains why employers prefer to employ married females: because 'they are attentive, docile' (cited in Marx 1867a: 526, n. 60).

How to Organise Space, Movement and Time

1. *The Art of Distributions* (organizing individuals in space)

a. Enclosure¹⁵⁸

Create an 'enclosure'—a space 'heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself'—and confine or enclose people within it. The enclosure is simply a homogeneous, well-defined space which can be further organized, observed and controlled to concentrate the forces deployed within it. Space is organized differently inside and outside the enclosure. 'Enclosure' is derived from 'encloister,' meaning 'to shut up in a cloister or monastery'. The monastery is the ideal-typical enclosure. It is also the source of many organizational techniques.¹⁵⁹ The monastic model was gradually imposed on vagabonds and paupers (the workhouse), the mad (the asylum), armies (barracks), orphans (the orphanage), pupils (the school), criminals (the prison) and

side by side with the spread of workshops, there also developed great manufacturing spaces, both homogeneous and well defined: first, the combined manufactories, then, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the works or factories proper The factory was explicitly compared with the monastery, the fortress, a walled town (Foucault 1977: 142).

An enclosure is a prerequisite for 'simple co-operation': 'As a general rule, workers cannot co-operate without being brought together: their assembly in one place is a necessary condition for their co-operation' (Marx 1867a: 447). Marx alludes to merchants drawing weavers and spinners 'from their home towns' and 'concentrating them in one place of work' (Marx 1858: 510). Historically and conceptually: 'a large number of workers working together, at the same time, in one place ... constitutes the starting point of capitalist production' (Marx 1867a).

¹⁵⁸Three out of six of Foucault's books are concerned with enclosures: the asylum (*Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*), the clinic, (*The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*) and the prison (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*). They have two similarities: (a) their internal regimes are founded upon similar (disciplinary) techniques; (b) they each house people who have strayed from the norm. Foucault's interest in 'enclosures' was aroused by his work in a psychiatric hospital: 'What struck me was that this practice of confinement was accepted by both sides as absolutely self-evident ... However, I came to realise that it was far from being self-evident and was the culmination of a very long history, a culmination that did not occur until the nineteenth century' (Foucault 1988: 96-97).

¹⁵⁹For example, many personnel management and accounting techniques originated in monasteries. See Kieser 1987.

It is worth noting that it is within the chapter ‘Co-operation,’ of *Capital*, volume 1, from which I derived an understanding of ‘abstract labour’ and productive ‘forces’ (in Chapter 6), that Marx draws an analogy between factory and military organization:

Just as the offensive power of a squadron of cavalry, or the defensive power of an infantry regiment, is essentially different from the sum of the offensive or defensive powers of the individual soldiers taken separately, so the sum total of the mechanical forces exerted by isolated workers differs from the social force that is developed when many hands co-operate in the same undivided operation, such as raising a heavy weight, turning a winch or getting an obstacle out of the way. Not only do we have here an increase in the productive power of the individual, by means of co-operation, but the creation of a new productive power, which is intrinsically a collective one (Marx 1867a: 443, cited in Foucault 1977: 163-4).

Marglin notes that ‘military analogies abound in contemporary observations of the early factory’ (Marglin 1974: 46, n. 47). The army and the workforce are not simply analogous, however, but are organized using similar techniques—an explanation, perhaps, of the presence of military analogies in IR (Dunn 1990 and 1991, Keenoy 1991).¹⁶⁰

b. Partitioning (or the principle of individualising partitioning)

Divide this enclosed, homogeneous space into linear partitions or ‘cells’: ‘the disciplinary space is always, basically, cellular’ (Foucault 1977: 143). Allocate an individual to each: ‘each individual has his own place; and each place its individual’ (Foucault 1977: 143).¹⁶¹ ‘Cell’ originally meant ‘a monastery or nunnery, generally of small size, dependent on some larger house’; it later came to mean ‘one of a number of spaces into which a surface is divided by linear partitions’ (O.E.D.). Initially these are conceptual partitions, marked by

¹⁶⁰It is interesting to note Marx’s comment to Engels, made as he was working on *Capital*, regarding the similarities between the organization of factories and armies: ‘Is there any sphere in which our theory that the organization of labour is determined by the means of production is more dazzlingly vindicated than in the industry for human slaughter? It really would be worth your while to write something on the subject (I have not the necessary knowledge for it) which I would include as an appendix to my book under your name. Give the matter some thought. If you do it, however, it must be done by the first volume, in which I am dealing in particular with this topic’ (Marx to Engels, July 7, 1866). Engels responds: ‘I will try and produce the stuff about the mass-murder industry for you’ (Engels to Marx, July 12, 1866). There is no record of Engels having produced this material.

¹⁶¹‘Place in each of the cells a lunatic, a patient, a convict, a worker or a schoolboy’ (Foucault 1980a: 147).

rules of behaviour; they are subsequently materialised, via the architecture and construction of buildings, to become physical partitions (described below).¹⁶²

These partitioning techniques fragment tasks, distribute them in space and organize this spatial order of production. Let us note that the organization of the labour process, discussed by Marx in Chapter 14, 'Division of Labour and Manufacture,' of *Capital*, volume one, which produced 'new, and social productive powers of labour,' was accomplished by separating, making independent and isolating the operations of the various stages of production and by allotting them to workers who were 'riveted' 'to a single fraction of the work' (Marx 1867a: 418, 464, 469). These techniques also break up group dispositions, prevent unwelcome communication and make possible a knowledge of the location of individuals by revealing their presences and absences. This facilitates the supervision of the conduct of each individual, 'to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits' (Foucault 1977: 143).¹⁶³

c. The rule of functional sites

Further subdivide, analyse and codify space and organize it horizontally in layers so that the same space can have different uses. In factories, for example, the distribution of bodies is articulated with the spatial arrangement of production machinery.

In the factories that appeared at the end of the eighteenth century, the principle of individualising partitioning became more complicated. It was a question of distributing individuals in a space in which one might isolate them and map them; but also of articulating this distribution on a productive machinery that had its own requirements. The distribution of bodies, the spatial arrangement of production machinery and the different forms of activity in the distribution of 'posts' had to be linked together (Foucault 1977: 144-145).

¹⁶²This conceptual organization of space governs 'the disposition of buildings, rooms, furniture, etc'. For example, until the eighteenth century the house was an undifferentiated space. Control over sexuality became inscribed in architecture; space within the house became specific and functional (Foucault 1980a: 150).

¹⁶³The principle of the factory system, then, is to substitute ... the *partition* of a process into its essential constituents, for the division or graduation of labour among artisans' (Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures*, London, 1835, p. 20, cited in Marx 1867a: 502, n. 17, my emphasis).

Codifying space, in this way, constitutes ‘a *real* table of juxtaposed and carefully distinct regularities’ (Foucault 1977: 144, my emphasis)—a *tableau vivant*—which can be more easily supervised. In the factories that appeared at the end of the eighteenth century, for example, ‘by walking up and down the central aisle of the workshop,’ it was possible to observe the worker’s presence and application, the quality of his work, to compare workers with one another, and to classify them according to skill and speed (Foucault 1977).

d. The art of the rank (or the transformation of arrangements)

Rank the occupants of these cells. ‘Rank’ is the conceptual place or location one occupies in this ‘living table’. It is marked by the point of intersection between a column and a row. It defines the relationship between the part and the whole and is the product of ‘examining’ (described below). Because it may be done at the conclusion of every task, ranking makes the elements of the table moveable and interchangeable. Individuals are distributed and circulated in a network of relations; there is ‘a *perpetual movement* in which individuals replace one another in a space marked off by aligned intervals’ (Foucault 1977: 146 and 147, my emphasis). Marx explains: ‘After the various operations have been separated, made independent and isolated, the workers are divided, classified and grouped according to their predominant qualities’ (Marx 1867a: 468-469). ‘The working personnel was sometimes divided into from twelve to fifteen categories, and these categories themselves *constantly underwent changes* in their composition’ (Marx 1867a: 403, my emphasis).

The techniques of the Art of Distributions transform ‘confused, useless or dangerous multitudes’—whatever they may be—‘into ordered multiplicities’ (Foucault 1977: 148), by organizing space, both material (architectural) and ideal (conceptual), to create both a living (*tableau vivant*) and a conceptual table. They organize people into ranks and files

and express this organization conceptually as rows and columns on a table. The table functions as a concise and orderly list of contents, or index, of the enclosure. It exhibits relations between individuals in a distinct and comprehensive way. The Art of Distributions is 'both a technique of power and a procedure of knowledge' (Foucault 1977: 148). It is 'the first condition for the control and use of an ensemble of distinct elements: the base for a micro-physics of what might be called a "cellular" power' (Foucault 1977: 149).

2. The Control of Activity

a. The time-table (or method of temporal regulation)

Within the enclosure, create and partition linear, homogeneous and continuous time. This can be contrasted with 'practical time, which is made up of incommensurable islands of duration each with its own rhythm' (Harvey 1989: 253). Time is organized differently inside and outside the enclosure. Monks were the first to carefully measure and subdivide time. They used sun-dials, the position of the stars or the the waterclock, when, outside the monastery, time was measured by the rising and setting of the sun and the waning and waxing of the moon (Kieser 1987: 113). It was they who devised the time-table: 'a list of times at which events are scheduled to take place' (O.E.D.); a 'general framework for an activity' (Foucault 1977: 151). The time-table establishes rhythm, imposes tasks, and regulates the cycles of their repetition. This method of regulating time's quantity reflects the principle of non-idleness—Do not waste time!—and is a means of ensuring time's quality: 'it is a matter of constituting a totally useful time' (Foucault 1977: 150). This method was refined, by developing smaller units or divisions of time, as it spread from monastic communities to schools, workshops, hospitals and poorhouses—which were often attached to monastic communities—and, according to Foucault, the framework of the 'factory-monastery' was imposed upon workers in seventeenth-century manufactories, which had regulations that laid down the exercises that divided up the working day

(Foucault 1977). As Marx notes: all economy ultimately reduces itself to economy of time (Marx 1858: 173).

b. The temporal elaboration of the act (or the correlation of the activity to the time)

Correlate the activity to the time. Subdivide movements of the body into their simplest elements; prescribe their order of succession; precisely define the position of the limbs; assign each movement a direction; and correlate with the temporal imperatives of the timetable. Time is extracted from the body by subdividing its movements. In this way: 'time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power' (Foucault 1977: 152). As Marx puts it: 'Not only is the specialised work distributed among the different individuals, but the individual himself is divided up, and transformed into the automatic motor of a detail operation' (Marx 1867a: 481).¹⁶⁴ Manufacture 'mutilates the worker, turning him into a fragment of himself' (Marx 1867a: 482); "'to subdivide a man is to execute him ... The subdivision of labour is the assassination of a people'" (Marx 1867a: 484-485).

c. The correlation of the body and the gesture

Correlate the overall position of the body with the movement of the limb or 'gesture'. A 'gesture' is 'a significant movement of a limb or the body' (C.O.D.). Its original meaning referred to the manner of placing the body, especially in acts of prayer or worship. This was important within monasteries, where visible behaviour is an indicator of inner attitude (Kieser 1987). As this technique became deployed in other contexts, such as the army and the factory, the movement of the limb (the 'gesture') was correlated with the overall position of the body to achieve the best efficiency and optimum speed. The efficient use of the body extracts time from it; nothing is to remain idle or useless—'Teach him by

¹⁶⁴Here Marx references Dugald Stewart who 'calls manufacturing workers "living automatons ... employed in the details of the work' (Marx 1867a: 481, n. 40, Marx's emphasis).

experience how to obtain the desired effect with the minimum exertion' (Marx 1867a: 458).

d. The body-object articulation

Define the relationship between the parts of the body to be used and the parts of the object to be manipulated and establish the succession of these correlations: 'Over the whole surface of contact between the body and the object, power is introduced, fastening them to one another'. It is a 'meticulous meshing' (Foucault 1977: 153). 'A worker who performs the same simple operation for the whole of his life converts his body into the automatic, one-sided implement of that operation' (Marx 1867a: 458).

e. The principle of exhaustive use

To summarize the techniques for controlling activity:

- i. linear time is created and subdivided.
- ii. movement of the body is subdivided and correlated with the temporal imperative of the time-table.
- iii. movement of the limb is correlated with the overall position of the body, to achieve the best efficiency and optimum speed.
- iv. the relationship between the part of the body to be used and the part or parts of the object to be manipulated is defined and the succession of the correlations is established.

These techniques of correlating time and movement are synthesized according to the principle of exhaustive use: 'it is a question of extracting, from time, ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces' (Foucault 1977: 154). They extract time from the body by subdividing it and maximising the efficiency of its movement. These techniques ensure labour is employed economically and efficiently:

‘every effort is made to ensure that no more (or rather even less) socially necessary time is consumed in making the product’ (Marx 1866: 1026),¹⁶⁵

3. *The Organization of Geneses* (training aptitudes)

The Art of Distributions organizes individuals in space. The Control of Activity extracts time from bodies by subdividing and increasing the efficiency of their movement. It is concerned with the movement of individuals, located in organized spaces—‘the position of the finger, the bend of the leg, the movement of the arms’ (Foucault 1977: 158). The Organization of Geneses is concerned with groups of individuals and with series of moves—‘teach in turn posture, marching, the handling of weapons, shooting’ (Foucault 1977: 158)—the integration of these moments of linear time and individual chronologies, ‘one upon the other’ (Foucault 1977: 160) to form a ‘composite,’ an ‘evolutive’ time: ‘The time of each must be adjusted to the time of the other in such a way that the maximum quantity of forces may be extracted from each and combined with the optimum result’ (Foucault 1977: 164-165). As Marx puts it: ‘the different stages of the process, previously successive in time, have become simultaneous and contiguous in space. Hence a greater quantity of finished commodities is produced within the same period’ (Marx 1867a: 464). ‘The working day regarded spatially—time itself regarded as space—is many working days alongside one another’ (Marx 1858: 399).

The Organization of Geneses consists of these techniques:

- a. segment: divide the duration of the activity into segments.
- b. seriate: arrange these segments into a sequence, according to prescribed criteria.
- c. finalise: prescribe that each segment must end at a specific time.

¹⁶⁵Marx is referring to two developments that revolutionise the labour process during the period of manufacture. I discuss them below.

- d. hierarchize: arrange these segments into small steps according to difficulty by combining tasks of increasing complexity.
- e. examine: conclude each step with an examination and require the correct response before allowing the individual to pass to another activity.
- f. rank: differentiate, correct, punish, eliminate.
- g. prescribe exercises: repetitive, different and graduated tasks that economise time and accumulate it in a useful form (Foucault 1977: 161, 162). Their purpose is to train: to exercise is to train.
- h. synthesize: organize these elements according to an analytical plan.

Individual chronologies and series of movements are analogous to cogs. These techniques organize them into a machinery of power—for producing, fighting, learning, healing, punishing—within which each individual, at each level, at each moment, is correctly combined and permanently utilized (Foucault 1977: 165). This machine is simultaneously a productive power, a means of programmed learning or training and a means of assessing skills, knowledge, and behaviour, or ‘aptitudes’: ‘the quality of being fit for a purpose or position’ (O.E.D.).

Means of ‘Training’

Organizing the distribution of bodies in space, extracting time from them and accumulating it to create a power or force greater than the sum of its parts—the organization of geneses—requires techniques of ‘training’: ‘the chief function of the disciplinary power is to “train” ... to bind [forces] together in such a way as to multiply and use them’ (Foucault 1977: 170). Train: ‘bring or come into a state of physical efficiency by exercise’ (C.O.D.). Training is a means of organizing. Foucault presents three means of training: (a) hierarchical observation, (b) normalising judgement, and (c) the examination, which combines (a) and (b). But this confuses. They are best understood as two dimensions of

the *same* process—‘examining’: ‘to look closely or analytically at’ (hierarchical observation) and ‘the act of testing or judging by a standard or rule’ (normalising judgement) (O.E.D.). This interpretation of ‘examining’ will prove important to my subsequent account of the relationship between Accounting, HRM and IR. This two-sided process produces an analytical plan by which to devise the tactics of organizing these elements into a productive power. I consider them in turn.

Hierarchical Observation (‘to look closely or analytically at’)

Hierarchical observation is founded on the Art of Distributions. The geometry of the distribution of individuals in space is materialised via the architecture and construction of the buildings within which they are enclosed. Such buildings are not designed to be seen, but to render visible those inside. They are microscopes of conduct, apparatuses of observation. Architecture itself organizes power relations. It facilitates a new kind of surveillance, the ‘disciplinary gaze’ or ‘individualising observation’. Its ideal model is the military camp, but it is evident in urban design, hospitals, asylums, prisons, schools and also in the design of workshops and factories, which need ‘an intense, continuous supervision’ (Foucault 1977: 174). Hierarchical observation is ‘indissociable from the system of industrial production, private property and profit’ (Foucault 1977: 175).

Hierarchical observation has two components:

a. Observe, measure, compare and classify individuals’ performance.¹⁶⁶ ‘Note the aptitudes of each worker, compare the time he takes to perform a task’ (Bentham, cited in Foucault 1977: 203). This component makes each individual a ‘case,’ i.e., a describable and analysable object; and arranges facts about them in a (conceptual) table.

¹⁶⁶Individuals may be observed in two senses: (i) literally, (ii) figuratively.

b. Calculate averages and inscribe them in norms or rules of conduct or performance. Have these rules function as ‘a minimum threshold, as an average to be repeated or as an optimum towards one must move’ (Foucault 1977: 183).

Normalising Judgement (‘the act of testing or judging by a standard or rule’)

On the basis of ‘hierarchical observation,’ examine individuals in the second sense of the word, i.e., judge them according to a rule.

‘Normalising judgement’ has two components:

a. Rank

Quantify the individual’s performance, distribute it along a scale, around a norm and hierarchize individuals in relation to one another (Foucault 1977: 223). ‘A penal accountancy, constantly brought up to date, makes it possible to obtain the punitive balance sheet of each individual’ (Foucault 1977: 180).

b. Train

Measure non-observance of the rule and correct it by ‘training’ or prescribing ‘exercises’—techniques which impose repetitive and graduated tasks on the body (Foucault 1977: 161).

Ranking and training work together. They compare and hierarchize; they punish and reward.

Rather than *A* getting *B* to do something *B* would not otherwise do, [these] social relations of power typically involve both *A* and *B* doing what they *ordinarily* do (Isaac 1987a: 96).

In a word: they normalize.

Panopticism

I stated earlier that neither Foucault, nor his followers, systematically explicated his model of power—in large part, because Foucault has never been read as a realist and the model's existence and significance has been overlooked. As I have said, its presentation in *Discipline and Punish* is ambiguous, repetitive and inconsistent. My presentation of this model has attempted to resolve some of these problems and therefore differs from conventional interpretations of Foucault. In particular, I argued that:

1. there are not three means of 'training,' but one: the dual natured 'examining':
 - a. to look closely or analytically at
 - b. to judge according to a rule

Having established the basics of the model, I now want to add:

2. there are not three means of organizing, but two
 - a. the art of distributions (space)
 - b. the control of activity (time)
3. examining and the organization of genesis are sides of the same process.

The two sides of examining, which distribute bodies in space, break-up and rearrange their activities in time, to form a power greater than the sum of its parts, constitute an apparatus which Foucault (after Bentham) calls a panopticon—'the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form' (Foucault 1977: 205). Disciplinary power is the capacity of individuals to act, bestowed by this apparatus. It is a relational power (Foucault 1977: 177). This capacity, or power, is determined by the geometry and architecture of the internal-relations of this apparatus; it exists independently of the particular individuals, and their motives, who exercise this capacity and constitute these relations. Because it is a machinery, its elements cannot be understood in isolation.

I note the following characteristics of the panopticon (for later development):

1. Disciplinary techniques are dual-sided: they simultaneously enable and repress, organize and atomise. It is this dual-sided process that simultaneously organizes people into a productive power, within the workplace, and severs them from their social roots, outside the workplace. It achieves this twin objective via the different organization of movement, space and time, within and without the workplace. This is a daily, tangible experience for most workers. I shall argue, that these dual-sided techniques mediate between productive 'forces' and 'civil society'. As they organize labour into a productive power or 'force' they dissolve society into atoms.

2. Social relations and categories, or power and knowledge are internally-related. Disciplinary techniques render each individual a 'case': an object of knowledge and a target of power.

In becoming the target for new mechanisms of power, the body is offered up to new forms of knowledge (Foucault 1977: 155): knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised (Foucault 1977: 204).

Categorization and individualization are sides of the same, disciplinary process. Foucault's concept of panopticism gives political significance to categorization and historical meaning to the proposition that social relations are simultaneously ideal and material. This will prove important to my explanation of the idealism of the state.

3. Power and knowledge are fused in *rules*.

Foucault shows, for example, how the workshop, the school and the army operated according to rules governing:

time: lateness, absences, interruption of tasks

activity: inattention, negligence, lack of zeal

behaviour: impoliteness, disobedience

speech: idle chatter, insolence

the body: incorrect attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness

sexuality: impurity, indecency

These disciplinary rules are redolent of Marx's reference to the 'private legislator's' 'factory code,' which he defines as: 'the capitalist caricature of the *social regulation of the labour process*' (Marx 1867a: 550, my emphasis). Marx's characterisation, in *Capital*, is based on Engels's account of the despotic rules of the typical Manchester factory, in the 1840s, which notes that factory operatives 'are more sharply watched' than slaves (Engels 1969: 207).¹⁶⁷ Foucault construes these rules as an infra- or counter-law to that of the state: the disciplines 'partitioned an area that the law had left empty' (Foucault 1977: 178), and created within them 'a small penal mechanism' (Foucault 1977: 177), with 'its own laws, its specific offences, its particular form of judgement' (Foucault 1977: 178), with their own 'infra-penalties'.

I want to make several points regarding the panopticon—or, rather, the difficulty of understanding the panopticon:

- a. Because it is a machinery of power it can be understood only in motion, not at rest.¹⁶⁸
- b. For the panopticon to be understood in motion, its model must be empirically applied.
- c. This model is seldom—if ever—used in explanation of the organization of labour.
- d. It is seldom applied for three reasons:
 - i. it is seldom explicated,
 - ii. to understand the utility of the model I have explicated we must understand what Foucault excludes: the 'why' of power, its structural imperative, and

¹⁶⁷'If he tried to snatch one instant, there is the overlooker at his back with the book of fines' (Engels 1969: 204). 'The operative must be in the mill at half-past five in the morning; if he comes a couple of minutes too late, he is fined ...' (Engels 1969: 205). 'The despotic bell calls him from his bed, his breakfast, his dinner,' 'it may be asserted that such a severe discipline is as necessary here as in the army' (Engels 1969: 207).

¹⁶⁸'Only in motion does a body reveal what it is' (Engels to Marx, May 30, 1873).

iii. to understand the ‘why’ of the panopticon we must understand what the model purports to explain. We must link the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ of power, Marx and Foucault. I consider this a prerequisite to the practical application of this model of panopticism.

Marx and Foucault: The Thesis

My thesis regarding Marx and Foucault is simple:

The dual-sided nature of disciplinary practices corresponds to the dual-sided nature of relations of production: they simultaneously empower and repress, organize and dissolve, create and alienate, produce wealth and produce poverty. Disciplinary power and relations of production are dimensions (agency and structure) of the same object. Disciplinary practices constitute the causal mechanism of production relations; they are the way of acting of this structured thing, the *mode* of organizing production. Foucault’s explanation of the logic of disciplinary power and Marx’s explanation of the law of motion of modern society are mutually supporting. Foucault explains the mechanics of this motion.

The techniques I have just described are means to determine abstract labour, i.e., labour of an average intensity or normal quality (Marx 1867a: 701-702 and 1866: 987) and to observe, examine and normalize employees’ performance and behaviour at work, in accordance with this quantitative standard. The average becomes the norm, the norm becomes the rule, and labour is normalized in accordance with this rule. These rules ‘function as a minimum threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards one must move’ (Foucault 1977: 183). These techniques are the ‘abstraction which is made every day in the social process of production’ (Marx 1859b: 30), they reduce different kinds of labour to uniform, simple, homogeneous labour, they are the immutable abstraction of movement (Marx 1847a): the activity of organizing or ‘training’ labour ‘to

work at the normal social *average* rate of intensity' (Marx 1866: 987). These same techniques simultaneously organize labour into a productive power, subsume labour to capital by objectifying this mode of organization and form the basis of the state by dissolving civil society into atomistic monads. Recognition of this potential of Foucault's work requires only a nonfetishistic concept of productive 'forces,' an understanding of the internal-relations between 'forces' and 'civil society,' between 'civil society' and 'political state,' and an appreciation that in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault does not write a history of the prison, but constructs a model of power.

This proposed synthesis is not an end in itself. It is intended as a means of explaining the problems highlighted in the Introduction. Let me develop it, therefore, by putting it to work in explaining (a) how labour is organized, (b) how this mode of organization is subsumed to capital, and (c) how the 'inner organization' of the capitalist mode of production is responsible for the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state. I argued, in Chapter 4, that these problems are interrelated. The organization of labour into a productive power, its subsumption to capital and the dissolution of civil society into atomised monads are part of the same nexus of social relations, with a common, unifying logic. The synthesis between Marx and Foucault, I am about to develop, aims to explain these relations, this logic.

(a) The Organization of Labour: The Political Technology of the Body

Foucault is emphatic: it is 'as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power ... the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body' (Foucault 1977: 26). Knowledge and mastery of individuals 'constitute what might be called the political technology of the body' (Foucault 1977: 26). In this section, I shall argue that the techniques of Accounting, HRM and IR constitute a political technology of the body. These techniques work in unison to observe, examine and

normalize employees' work performance and behaviour, in accordance with the quantitative standard 'abstract labour' and, thereby, to organize labour into a productive power. To develop this argument I must knit together the connections between Marx and Foucault, sketched in the previous Chapter: between 'why' and 'how,' the structure of relations of production and the logic of disciplinary power. Thereby, I will model the 'what' of power—the material causes of the capacity to act. As a means to this end, let me recall some key points of my realist reading of Marx, regarding the law of value and the structural imperative of relations of production. In this light, I shall draw out the relevance of Foucault's model of power to explaining the organization of labour.

1. Abstract or average labour is a *conceptual* phenomenon. It is calculated by abstracting from differences among the concrete labour of individuals. It is labour of an average or normal intensity or quality which workers can be '*trained to do,*' labour which 'one way or another,' they *have to do* (Marx 1859b: 31, my emphasis).

2. Abstract labour and productive forces are internally-related. A productive 'force' is the power of labour, organized around 'abstract labour'. The link between abstract labour and productive forces is the activity of organizing; abstract labour is the standard by which labour is organized. Concrete (or private) labour is rendered abstract (or social) as it is organized into a productive power or 'force'. The *same* process that organizes labour into a productive power makes labour 'abstract' and 'sets in motion labour of a socially average character' (Marx 1867a: 441).

3. Relations of production (and disciplinary practices) have a dual nature: they simultaneously organize and dissolve, empower and repress, produce and alienate (Marx 1847a).

For Marx, the price of a commodity is proportionate to the amount of labour deemed socially necessary to produce it, which, in turn, is determined by the productivity or productive power of labour. The relationship between the productive power of labour and exchange-value or price is an internal-relation between value's substance and its form. 'Value' is neither abstract labour nor price: it is the social process connecting them. It is the 'centre of gravity' or 'prevailing tendency' of the process that renders concrete labour 'abstract' and organizes individuals into a productive power. The law of value is the 'law of motion' of the immutable abstraction of this organizing movement; an 'inner law' that maintains 'the social equilibrium of production' (Marx 1867a: 880). This law draws attention to the following structural imperative of production or property relations:

If the labour-time of the worker is to create value in proportion to its duration, it must be socially necessary labour-time. That is to say, the worker must perform the normal social quantity of useful labour in a given time. The capitalist therefore compels him to work at the normal social average rate of intensity. He will strive as hard as possible to raise his output above the minimum and to extract as much work from him as is possible in a given time. For every intensification of work above the average rate creates surplus-value for him The capitalist forces the worker where possible to exceed the normal rate of intensity. (Marx 1867a: 987, Marx's emphasis).

This structural imperative is important to note because it gives Foucault's techniques a purpose and focus, which they otherwise lack, and it allows us to fathom connections between, apparently discrete, commonplace activities.

This summary of Marx poses the following questions: How

- is abstract labour conceptualized, i.e., how is it observed, measured and calculated?
- is this quantitative production norm inscribed in rules of work behaviour and performance?
- do these rules define labour of an average or normal intensity or quality?
- are workers 'trained' to perform labour of an average or normal intensity or quality?

In short: what kinds of techniques and what kinds of knowledge are necessary to organize labour into a productive power? How is the employee made an object of knowledge and a

target of power? These questions drive my enquiry. My earlier interpretation of Foucault's model of disciplinary power provides the means of answering them.

Before continuing, some preparatory remarks are called for.

First, this technology of power, which I am about to describe, really exists; it is unnecessary to discover it. It forms the junction of a social structure (relations of production) and its causal mechanism (disciplinary power). Knowledge of this technology exists too; it is unnecessary to invent it. But it exists in disciplinary compartments—Accounting, HRM, IR—which hinder an understanding of the unity of the techniques of which they are the knowledge. It is necessary to connect them. This compartmentalized knowledge explains 'how' labour is organized. An understanding of 'why'—to organize labour into a productive force on the basis of abstract labour—connects them.

Second, in describing these internal relations and explicating their logic, it is important to concentrate on what happens, why and how, rather than be preoccupied with categorising them according to academic jurisdiction. An analogy given by the physicist Richard Feynman, to demonstrate the priority of explaining process over categories of facts in scientific thinking, helps make my point:

You can know the name of [a] bird in all the languages of the world, but when you're finished, you'll know absolutely nothing about the bird. You'll only know about humans in different places and what they call the bird. So let's look at the bird and see what it's *doing*—that's what counts (Feynman, cited in Gleick 1992: 28-29).

I am interested in how this machinery of power works—its basic logic—not with naming its parts or its technicians.

Third, I do not intend to detail the diversity of practices which constitute this political technology of the body and which organize labour. I am interested in the relative arrangement or geometry of its elements. I aim to outline a model, and, in the next Chapter, a

method, by which such a technology of power can be empirically investigated and its basic logic and operating principles be understood.

Fourth, I want to be clear: this is an exercise in modelling or ‘object constitution’—I aim to describe what *is*, not to write a history of how it came to be. Marx’s distinction between theoretical and historical work, noted in Chapter 2, is worth repeating:

to develop the laws of bourgeois economy ... it is not necessary to write the real history of the relations of production. But the correct observation and deduction of these laws ... always leads to primary equations ... which point towards a past lying behind this system. These indications, together with a correct grasp of the present, then also offer the key to the understanding of the past—*a work in its own right*’ (Marx 1858: 460-461, my emphasis).

I believe a provisional model of this political technology of the body is a prerequisite to writing its history.

Finally, as I suggested in the previous Chapter, a realist reading of Marx and Foucault points to the importance of explaining the *normal*. Explicating the nature of this social object leads to a reexamination of the everyday business of organizing labour and the *traditional* concerns of Accounting, HRM and IR. The novelty of my argument lies in the way I establish connections between these techniques and between our compartmentalized knowledge of them. This concern with the normal is consistent with my account of theorizing in Chapter 1:

The quality of being *imaginative* which interesting theorists are praised for possessing consists less of their ability to imagine inventively something novel than of their ability to imagine empathetically what others consider to be traditional (Davis 1971: 344, n.1).

The following section attempts to synthesize Marx’s explanation of the law of motion of modern society and Foucault’s explanation of the mechanism of organizing space and time and thereby to explain the logic of the organization of labour.

The Social Logic of Space and Time

The political technology of the body (Foucault) is rooted in the social division of labour and relations of production (Marx). Labour's division, which increases its productive power, occurs through the division and reorganization of space and time; indeed, concepts of space and time are created through divisions of labour. Relations of production—the *medium* of the division of labour—exist within spatial and temporal matrices or 'nets,' within which daily life is caught. These matrices constitute the 'texture' of organizations and the substratum of society (Cooper and Fox 1990).¹⁶⁹ The relationship between space, time and movement, therefore, is the key to understanding the organization of production. This relationship is poorly understood, in physics and in social theory. Until the creation of the general theory of relativity (in 1915), 'space and time were thought of as a fixed arena in which events took place, but which was not effected by what happened in it' (Hawking 1988: 33). This was true also of social theory, until much more recently (the 1980s). Social activity occurs in space and through time, yet 'most forms of social theory have failed to take seriously enough not only the temporality of such conduct but also its spatial attributes' (Giddens 1979: 202). Ordinarily, space and time are treated as environments, rather than as mediums, of social conduct (Giddens 1979). Einstein changed our understanding of space and time by demonstrating that they are interrelated dimensions of one object—'space-time'—not two separate objects: 'when a body moves, or a force acts, it effects the curvature of space and time—and in turn the structure of space-time effects the way in which bodies move and forces act' (Hawking 1988: 33). An understanding of the relationship between space and time, in social theory and physics, therefore, must be sought in the law of motion of bodies—social and celestial.

¹⁶⁹In traditional Marxist parlance, these matrices are the 'base.' I prefer 'substratum': an underlying layer or substance beneath the surface, a *foundation or basis* (Concise Oxford Dictionary). I think that this metaphor is more consistent with Marx's understanding of 'social relations of production' as dual-sided phenomena with an outward or superficial appearance and an invisible internal structure (Marx 1867a: 680, 682 and 690).

It is the connection between Marx's explanation of the 'law of motion of modern society' (Marx 1867b: 92) and Foucault's explanation of the mechanics of organizing space and time (Foucault 1977) I now want to establish. To organize my argument, I shall use parallel remarks by Marx and Foucault, regarding the distinction between divisions among elements of the labour process and divisions among the labour force:

After the various operations have been separated, made independent and isolated, the workers are divided, classified and grouped according to their predominant qualities (Marx 1867a: 468-469).

Production [is] divided up and the labour process [is] articulated, on the one hand, according to its stages or elementary operations, and, on the other hand, according to the individuals, the particular bodies, that [carry] it out (Foucault 1977: 145).

The articulation between the labour process and the labour force is fundamental to the organization of movement in space and time. I shall argue that this articulation is affected by the two sides of 'examining' which I described earlier: 'to look closely or analytically at' (hierarchical observation), and 'to judge according to a rule' (normalising observation). These are not two processes (as Foucault suggests), but one, dual-sided process: creating abstract organizational spaces (or cells) and assigning individuals to them. By explicating how they interrelate, we can begin to understand the organization of labour and answer the questions posed earlier by the structural imperative of relations of production.

'Looking Closely or Analytically At'

Hierarchical observation ('to look closely or analytically at') is rooted in the organization of individuals in space and time (the 'art of distributions' and the 'control of activity'). To explore their interrelationship, I want to turn away from *Discipline and Punish* and towards *The Order of Things*, where Foucault explains that:

Order is, at one and the same time, that which is given in things as their inner law, the hidden network that determines the way they confront one another, and also that which has no existence except in the grid created by a glance, an examination, a language (Foucault 1973: xx).

'Order' is 'the constitution or nature of the world, society, etc.' (C.O.D.). To constitute objects in thought we have to understand how they are *practically* constituted or ordered.

What Foucault has to say on the ‘order of things,’ therefore, is relevant to my task of constituting in thought the causal mechanisms of production.

Foucault explains how the elements of society are ordered by being categorized and counted—what he calls the construction of taxonomia and mathesis. These are not two separate things, but one. Ways of categorising and ways of counting constitute and support each other. What numbers are to a mathesis, words are to a taxonomy—both are means of designating (Foucault 1973: 202). Taxonomy is qualitative mathesis; mathesis is quantitative taxonomy (Foucault 1973: 74). They form one thing: a ‘table’ or analytical plan which constitutes and manifests the order of things.¹⁷⁰ Labour is ordered, in space and through time, by being counted and categorized. This is done via the techniques of Accountancy and HRM, working in unison (Townley 1993a). Together they constitute a table or analytical plan by which to devise the tactics of managing labour. We can deduce, *a priori*, how these techniques order labour from a basic principle of the law of motion of capitalism: capital needs to create a surplus by training workers to perform at (or above) a normal level or intensity. How is this done? Put simply: these techniques calculate ‘abstract labour’ and inscribe this quantitative production norm in rules of work behaviour and performance. Workers are then ‘trained’ to perform at or above this normal level of intensity. Let me explain.

How is abstract labour conceptualized, i.e., how is it observed, measured and calculated?

¹⁷⁰ ‘Table’: ‘that enables thought to operate upon the entities of the world, to put them in order, to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designate their similarities and their differences’ (Foucault 1973: xvii).

I begin with the process of counting, or accounting (O.E.D.). There are several types of accounting. The type relevant to this inquiry is cost accounting.¹⁷¹ ‘Cost’: that which must be expended—time, labour—to produce something (O.E.D.). Cost accounting reveals and analyses expenditures by assigning to them a monetary value, so that performance can be measured and activities controlled. In so doing, it renders them *visible*. To analyse performance, actual costs must be compared with standards by which the operation of a plant can be measured. ‘Standard’: ‘a rule for measuring ... a standard for comparing’ (Websters Dictionary, cited in Lang 1944: 270). A standard cost represents a carefully planned and efficient method of making a product. ‘Abstract labour,’ i.e., labour of a normal quality or intensity, is determined by the techniques of standard cost accounting—a (cardinal) number is a perfect abstraction (Crump 1992: 7). These techniques calculate predetermined normal costs against which actual costs can be compared and from which plans can be devised to correct or normalize deviations. It is important, then, to understand how standard costing techniques work, and how they combine with other techniques for managing labour.

Standard (monetary) costs are based on physical standards by which the operation of a plant can be measured. These standards are based on engineering studies of the design, layout and operation of manufacturing facilities. The engineer uses the criterion of efficiency to decide the best method or design of these facilities and their proper level of performance. Efficiency is measured in units of time. It is for this reason that ‘economy of time’ is ‘the first economic law’ of production (Marx 1858: 173). ‘Labour-time ... exists only in the form of activity’ (Marx 1858: 171). Time and motion study examines the articulation between the machine and its operator. It establishes the reasonable time, under

¹⁷¹This Foucauldian interpretation of cost accounting does not come from *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* or from *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, but from a reading of Theodore Lang (ed.), *Cost Accountants Handbook*, Ronald Press Company, New York, 1944, written for foremen and line-managers.

normal conditions, for completing each operation of a job: the standard from which to measure deviations and assess efficiency. The discovery of engineers in the period of manufacture was that the productive power, or productivity, of labour can be increased by breaking down the labour process into its component motions and organizing these fragmented work tasks according to rigorous standards of time and motion study. Scientific management is but the perfected development of this basic principle of the division of labour which can be traced back, 'via Gilbreth's experiments of the 1890s, to the work of mid-nineteenth century writers like Ure and Babbage,' which Marx found so compelling (Harvey 1989: 125). For Marx, the movement of production is 'symbolically reflected in imagination' by book-keeping, which he construes as 'the control and ideal synthesis' of the production process' (Marx 1865: 136-138). Engineering (time-keeping) and cost accountancy (book-keeping) work in unison: greater calibration of time allows greater calibration of cost and more detailed control of activity. This is why developments in cost accounting were closely associated with the efficiency movement centred on the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.¹⁷²

How is this quantitative production norm inscribed in rules of work behaviour and performance?

How do these rules define labour of an average or normal intensity or quality?

¹⁷²Marx was very much influenced by Ure's *The Philosophy of Manufactures*. 'Ure says: "To each [task], a workman of appropriate value and cost was naturally assigned. This appropriation forms the very essence of the division of labour". On the other hand, he describes this division as "adaptation of labour to the different talents of men," and, lastly, characterizes the whole manufacturing system as 'a system for the division or graduation of labour," and as "the division of labour into degrees of skill, etc.' (Marx 1867a: 470, n. 23). 'Dr Ure ... deplores the gross ignorance of mechanical science which exists among his beloved machinery-exploiting manufactures' (Marx 1867a: 509).

On the basis of engineering studies, which determine the required standard of performance, other techniques (job analysis, description and classification) describe the nature of the job and prescribe when, where and how bodies should act:

hold knife against first and third joints of the fingers. Place upper part of thumb, first joint, against lower blunt edge of knife and the lower part of thumb against upper edge of handle. Do not grasp knife tightly. Do not curl tip of finger into palm of hand (Kenney, Donnelly and Reid 1981: 80).

On this basis, rates of pay are graded for the various classes of work (job evaluation) and standard time allowances are established for each operation. Combining these two factors, wage rate and time, determines the standard labour cost of the operation.¹⁷³ Standard labour costs define labour of an average quality or intensity. The quantitative norms of cost accounting are inscribed, by these (human resource) management techniques, in rules governing workers' behaviour and performance.

These techniques of cost accounting and HRM—categorization of performance by numbers (mathesis) and by words (taxonomy)—work together, counting and classifying people, creating a living (*tableau vivant*) and a conceptual table. This conceptual table can exist in loosely-related documents—a contract of employment, a collective agreement, a bill of works, engineering and architectural plans, a cost report, a budget (Clegg 1975). They comprise a body of rules which define capacities to act, an index of an underlying reality to be negotiated, an analytical plan by which to devise the tactics of organizing these elements into a productive power—and by which these tactics may be contested.¹⁷⁴ This is the everyday business of the politics of production.

¹⁷³Among workers, it [panopticism] makes it possible to note the aptitudes of each worker, compare the time he takes to perform a task, and if they are paid by the day, to calculate their wages' (Bentham, cited in Foucault 1977: 203).

¹⁷⁴For an account of what I have in mind by rules, how they are negotiated and how they may be studied empirically, see Clegg (1975).

How are workers 'trained' to perform labour of an average or normal intensity or quality?

'Judging According to a Rule'

I now want to consider the other side of examining: to judge according to a rule. This process embraces two meanings of 'rule': (a) a minor law; (b) to exercise power. Ruling is an activity rooted in cost analysis.

Standard costs are based on ideal conditions of efficiency. Variations of actual from standard costs indicate variations in efficiency relative to this ideal standard. Cost analysis compares actual with standard costs to discover deviations from the norm of efficiency, at the level of the individual, the unit, and the plant (Lang 1944: 290). Cost accounting techniques, having rendered visible the activities of individuals, calculate the extent to which they depart from the norm of performance, accumulate this information in files, so that individuals (who may be spatio-temporally discrete) may be compared, ranked and assigned to the abstract spaces of organizational structure. In short: they make individuals accountable.

The starting point of *labour* cost analysis is a comparison of actual labour costs per unit for one period with that of another period, or with the standard labour cost per unit. Since labour cost is a function of two factors, wage-rates and time, the excess must be quantitatively broken down in terms of these factors (Lang 1944):

a. Wage-rate variances: i.e., 'the difference between the standard rate for the standard time allowance and the actual cost for the same time allowance' (Lang 1944: 26).

- wage rate changes
- changes of payment plan, e.g., piece rate, measured day work

- change in grade of labour used

b. Time or efficiency variances: i.e., ‘the use of an excessive number of labor hours to perform a given quantity of work’ (Lang 1944: 27).

- selection of workers
- training of workers
- labour turnover
- working conditions
- working hours
- selection of machines and tools
- changes in design of product
- changes in machinery, tools, or methods of production
- adequate accounting or production records

The aim of cost analysis is to discover the causes of labour’s subnormal performance and to devise strategies for its correction. At this point, cost accountancy merges into the traditional concerns of IR, for the two sources of labour cost variance, wage rate and time or efficiency, correspond to the wage- and effort-bargains central to IR. ‘Control by rule’ (job regulation) is the essence of these practices—although in a Foucauldian, rather than a pluralist, sense. These rules ‘function as a minimum threshold, as an average to be respected or as an optimum towards one must move’ (Foucault 1977: 183). As Cohen explains, the techniques of work organization

are not part of some managerial strategy to subordinate a recalcitrant workforce in a ‘political’ contest for power, *but techniques which in their very substance are patterned by the quantitative pressures of value production ... the organization of the labour process has very little to do with ‘control in the sense of a power struggle, and everything to do with ‘efficiency’* (Cohen 1987: 42-43, my emphasis).

‘Efficiency’—‘productive with minimum waste or effort’—is precisely the aim of disciplinary techniques.

It is, perhaps, ironic that this Foucauldian-Marxian synthesis should lead to ‘control by rule’ or ‘job regulation’—the traditional definition of IR which was displaced, via Hyman’s Marxist critique, by ‘control’ (Hyman 1975a). The approach developing here, however, illuminates two problems of this critique. First, it helps explain Wood’s observation that, although Hyman subsumes ‘rule’ under ‘control,’ ‘he does not go on to tell us what are the other types of control’ nor does he ‘draw our attention to forms of control other than regulation’ (Wood 1976: 54; Hyman 1975a: 12). The ubiquity of ‘ruling’ suggests to me that there are none. Second, it helps explain the similarities, noted in Chapter 1, between pluralist and radical analyses of IR. They have differed less over *what* happens in IR than over how and, particularly, *why* (Wood 1976; Wood and Elliot 1977; Zeitlin 1987 and 1989). I have synthesized Marx and Foucault to provide a novel explanation of ‘why’. On this basis, we might act on Fox’s (1979) advice and rethink the relationship between traditional and radical IR, and between the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of IR by exploring in more detail its interrelationship with Accounting and HRM. As Wood suggests:

Any consideration of the way in which Hyman’s redefinition may represent a *real* conceptual innovation [which it manifestly is] would require a more detailed analysis of job regulation than he offers (Wood 1976: 54, his emphasis).

This remains to be done.¹⁷⁵

This approach stresses the practical, day-to-day activities of Accounting, HRM and IR—practices which seem innocuous precisely because they make the organization of production seem normal. My Foucauldian-Marxian analysis of this political technology of the body finds power in what seem apolitical techniques and procedures. Through their insidious nature they squeeze the politics of production and, I shall later argue, conceal a deeper form of domination.

¹⁷⁵But not in this thesis.

(b) The Subsumption of Labour to Capital

I now want to argue that this inner logic of space, movement and time, active in the organization of labour, is active also in its subsumption to capital. Let me recall, from Chapter 1, that the F/R SLC concept is discredited because of its seeming inability to explain the dual-nature of production; and, from Chapter 4, that Marx's own lack of explanation of this concept is a central problem of his explicans, i.e., his model of capital, that hinders recognition of its relevance to his explicandum, i.e., the alienated monad of modernity, constituted by the 'essential relationship' between civil society and political state. I argued in Chapter 4 that: (a) conventional interpretations confuse and conflate 'subsumption' and 'subordination;' (b) the causal sequence is: formal subsumption \Rightarrow subordination through reorganization \Rightarrow real subsumption; and (c) the movement between the formal and the real subsumption is analogous to the movement of the mechanisms of a watch or a clock. If this continuous movement does indeed contain the 'inner logic of capitalism' (Mandel 1976: 944), as I think it does, then it is important that it be understood.

Marx never satisfactorily explains the 'real' subsumption of labour, 'or the *specific* mode of capitalist production,' as he puts it (Marx 1866: 1023, my emphasis). In the four pages in which it is briefly discussed in the *Resultate*, he claims it 'has already been argued in detail, so that we may be quite brief here' (Marx 1866: 1037). But this is not the case—there are only two pages of prior comment, which explain nothing (Marx 1866: 1023-1025). We are told only that 'relations of production *themselves* create new relations of supremacy and subordination' (Marx 1866: 1022, my emphasis). A semblance of an explanation is this: 'With the real subsumption of labour under capital, all the changes in the labour process already discussed now become reality. The social forces of production of labour are now developed, and with large-scale production comes the direct application of science and technology' (Marx 1866: 1035). The development of productive forces 'is

caused by the division of labour’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 48, my emphasis)—but ‘division of labour’ itself is not explained: ‘the division of labour is an organization of production *which has grown up naturally*’ (Marx 1867a: 201, my emphasis). In the absence of an explanation of how production is organized, i.e., of what impels the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour, commentators have seized upon those remarks that lend themselves to a technological determinist interpretation. These are not uncommon. For example, Marx claims the machine is ‘the starting point of the industrial revolution’ (Marx 1867a: 497), as does Engels: it was inventions that ‘gave rise ... to an industrial revolution’ (Engels 1969: 37). This material⇒social direction of causality is also suggested by the following: ‘the technical subordination of the worker *gives rise to* a barrack-like discipline which is elaborated into a complete system in the factory’ (Marx 1867a: 549, my emphasis). It is statements such as these that technological determinist readings draw out and emphasize. Yet there are other signs in Marx and Engels that support an alternative—Foucauldian—interpretation of the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour to capital. It is this alternative reading I now want to develop.

A start is to note that military analogies abound in the work of Marx and Engels. Here two examples: First, in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Engels speaks of ‘barrack-like factory buildings’ and he compares the discipline of the factory with that of the army (Engels 1969: 83 and 207). These observations are the source of Marx’s own remark, in *Capital*, concerning ‘barrack-like discipline’ (cited above). Second, in *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels speak of ‘masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, *organized like soldiers*’ (Marx and Engels 1848: 491, my emphasis). Marx recognises that the factory was modelled on the ‘ideal workhouse’ and could best be described as a ‘mitigated jail’ (Marx 1867a: 389-390). The workhouse was established for the provision of work for the unemployed poor of a parish. It later became an institution,

administered by Guardians of the Poor, in which paupers were lodged and the able-bodied put to work (O.E.D.). But, as Marx knew full well, the ‘ideal workhouse’ was not ‘an asylum for the poor “where they are to be plentifully fed, warmly and decently clothed, and where they do but little work”’ (Marx 1867a: 388). It was, rather, a ‘House of Terror’ (Marx 1867a: 388). What made it so was its rigid system of discipline: workhouses ‘were so similar to prisons in every detail that the poor renamed them “poor-law bastilles”’ (Melossi and Pavarini 1981: 38, in comment on Engels). The workhouse was one of a number of institutions—the orphanage, the army, the school, the prison—that combined to adapt or train the newly dispossessed, beggars, robbers and vagabonds, ‘to the discipline of their new condition’ (Marx 1867a: 896 and 897)—specifically, to ‘the discipline necessary for the system of wage-labour’ (Marx 1867a: 899). The workhouse’s

prominence given to order, cleanliness, uniforms, hygiene (except of course when it came to working conditions), the rules against swearing, using slang or obscene language, reading, writing or singing ballads unless allowed by the governors ... the prohibitions on gambling and the use of nicknames, etc.—all of this constituted an attempt both to impose the newly discovered way of life and to smash a radically counterposed underground popular culture which combined forms of the old peasant way of life with new methods of resistance called forth by capitalism’s incessant attacks on the proletariat (Melossi and Pavarini 1981: 22).

The workhouse achieved this effect by exaggerating the dominant production model—manufacture. It was a place for ‘teaching the discipline of production’ (Melossi and Pavarini 1981: 21).¹⁷⁶ It was this internal regime of discipline, then, which so much resembled the prison, that Marx acknowledges as a model for the organization of production within the factory.

Marx’s observation on the influence of the workhouse as a model must be related to his observation on the first recruits to the factory. ‘Like the royal navy, the factories were recruited by means of the press gang’ (Marx 1867a: 922). He notes the custom of ‘procuring apprentices (!) from the different parish workshops of London, Birmingham,

¹⁷⁶It is interesting to note (for it establishes a link between the organization of aesthetic life and the organization of production) that the first workhouse in Holland was established ‘in what had formerly been a convent’ (Melossi and Pavarini 1981: 18).

and elsewhere' (Marx 1867a: 923). Children were stolen from the workhouse and the orphanage (Marx 1867a: 922-924). This was necessary, according to Marx, 'for the transformation of manufacturing production into factory production and the establishment of the *true relation* between capital and labour-power' (Marx 1867a: 922, my emphasis). Similarly, Engels notes that 'from the beginnings of manufacturing industry ... children from the workhouses were employed in multitudes, being rented out for a number of years to the manufacturer as apprentices' (Engels 1969: 177).¹⁷⁷ There is, then, support within Marx and Engels for the contention that capitalist production

modelled its form of discipline on those which were already emergent The dark satanic mills of Yorkshire and Lancashire simply latched on to the disciplinary apparatus already let loose from the monastery into the poor house, the work house, the orphanage, the barracks, and so on (Clegg 1989a: 172-173, in comment on Bauman).

Let me relate these observations to the 'two developments,' which, Marx argues, 'emerged' in the manufacturing period, to stimulate the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour: (a) the enhancement of the productive power of social labour, and (b) the creation of 'an economic relationship of supremacy and subordination'. I contend that these developments were caused by the dual-sided, disciplinary techniques which I elaborated earlier. They simultaneously empowered and repressed labour. They solved the great problem of this period—workers' lack of 'discipline'—by 'thoroughly revolutionising' the labour process and 'seizing labour-power by its very roots.' Of equal importance, they subsumed labour to capital by objectifying this new mode of organization in things which were privately owned. Let me explain. It is important to understand that the logic of this social organization, described in the previous section, is active in the architecture and construction of artefacts: tools, machines, buildings, even complete settlements. It influences their construction by defining their purpose, or range of purposes.

¹⁷⁷Engels's (1969) account of the recruitment of children from workhouses and orphanages is the source of Marx's account in *Capital*, volume 1. It is worth recalling my argument, in Chapter 3, that Marx and Engels both began, in 1843, with the explicandum of the monad of civil society. Arguably, children were among the most rootless of all monads. *This*—not their working conditions—is the phenomenon to be explained.

Let us first consider technology. The word can be used as a collective noun for tools, machinery, and so on, or as ‘the study of use of the mechanical arts and applied sciences’ (C.O.D.). The last explains the first. The architecture and construction of machines embodies knowledge of the social relations they serve. Technology is like genetic material: it carries the code of the social relations which conceived it; it ‘lays bare the process of the production of the social relations of [his] life, and of the material conceptions that flow from these’ (Marx 1867a: 493). Buildings differ from technology in one important respect: they materialise an organization of people in time and space. There is a correspondence between the creation of conceptual or cellular spaces of organizational structure, to which individuals are assigned, and the creation of architectural spaces. The cell—that basic disciplinary space—is also a basic unit of architecture. A cell can grow in one of two ways: (a) by subdivision, to produce a building, or (b) by aggregation, to produce a settlement. Spatial arrangements, within buildings and within settlements, express relations between people and, in turn, regulate their permissible interaction. In this way, the architecture and construction of artefacts is an important influence on the behaviour of people. Architects not only shape and arrange the physical layout of the factory and the office, then, but also support organizational hierarchies through the partitions they install and the open spaces they establish between individuals, departments and buildings (Hillier and Hanson 1984).

Here is my point: the materialisation of a mode of organizing labour (in time and space), via the design and construction of artefacts, is what Marx is getting at in his concept of the movement between the formal and the real subsumption of labour to capital. Foucault has provided the means of explaining this materialisation. ‘Subsumption’—incorporate, absorb—is precisely the word for this process (Marx 1867a: 1056, 527, n. 62). The organized power of social labour is literally incorporated or absorbed into things via their architecture and construction. In this way, relations of production are manifest, not only in commodities, but also in ‘forces’ of production. These include, *inter alia*, machines,

buildings—even towns and cities. A city can be a form of production relations.¹⁷⁸ This, I suggest, is how ‘an entirely objective organization of production ... confronts the worker as a pre-existing *material* condition of production’ (Marx 1867a: 508, my emphasis). As Foucault shows, buildings themselves are instruments of power: ‘stones can make people docile and knowable’ (1977: 172).

This Foucauldian understanding of the subsumption of labour to capital is helpful in two respects. First, it helps explain the internal-relation between productive forces and private property:

on the one hand, we have the totality of productive forces, which have, as it were, taken on a *material* form and are for the individuals themselves no longer the force of individuals but of private property, and hence of the individuals only insofar as they are *owners of private property* (Marx and Engels 1846: 86, my emphasis).

Second, it helps explain the relationship between capitalism and modernity—an organization of space and time, evident in the design, architecture and construction of things (Harvey 1989). ‘Capitalism is modernity and modernity is capitalism’ (Sayer 1991: 12). I argued in the previous Chapter that Foucault is no postmodernist. His concept of disciplinary power, however, helps us understand modernity—surely a precondition for understanding *postmodernity*. The history of this ‘stone-cutting,’ i.e., of the materialisation of a mode of organizing labour in space and through time, has yet to be written.¹⁷⁹

(c) The Materialism of Civil Society: The Idealism of the State

I now want to show how the same process—a mode of producing, governed by the law of value—that organizes labour into a productive power and subsumes it to capital, is responsible for the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state, and how this

¹⁷⁸See Clarke (1992: 18-21). As Marx puts it: the development of capitalism proceeds through the ‘urbanization of the country’ (cited in Clarke 1992: 21).

¹⁷⁹Marx makes a similar observation regarding technology: ‘A critical history of technology would show how little any of the inventions of the eighteenth century are the work of a single individual. As yet such a book does not exist’ (Marx 1867a: 493, n. 4). For a start on this history of ‘stone-cutting,’ see Clarke (1992) and the literature on the geography of space and time.

results in the dichotomies—private/public, economic/political, subject/object, agency/structure—which have been identified as a problem by critics of ‘control’. I believe this to be a complex process with a simple explanation.

Let me begin by returning to the problem, identified towards the end of Chapter 3, of reconciling the vertical relationship between base and superstructure with the horizontal relationship between civil society and the state. The state is both an ‘ideal superstructure’ above civil society and a ‘separate entity, alongside and outside civil society’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 90). What remains to be explained is how—by what process—‘ideal’ forms of social relations become the institutional nexus recognised as ‘the state,’ ‘alongside and outside civil society’. My concern is to explicate the logic of this process.

To understand this problem more fully, I want to highlight the following discoveries of this realist reading of Marx:

First, the ‘base’—or, more accurately, the ‘substratum’—is not ‘civil society’: it is *capital*—at rest, a social structure (relations of production); in motion, a process (mode of production).

Second, Marx intended to critique both jurisprudence and political economy, and to synthesize them in a ‘connected whole’ (Marx 1844b: 231), because he recognised that capital is manifest in twin forms, juridic and economic, which are fused as private property (Fine 1984: 96). These forms are coterminous, but can be analytically distinguished thus. Economic forms are empirical things of a material nature, e.g., commodities. Juridic forms are empirical things of a discursive nature (Denis 1989: 348), e.g., contracts. They are ‘ideal’ embodiments of relations of production, a discursive medium through which conflicting rights to material things are contested. The discursive nature of juridic forms

helps explain why law is at ‘every bloody level’ (Thompson 1978: 96). The important distinction within Marx is not simply between the material and the ideal: it is between *social* relations of production and their *material/economic* and *ideal/juridic* forms.

Third, juridic and economic forms are mirror-images, formed in the act of exchange. For example, the exchange of the property of the buyer, money, for the property of the seller, a useful article of some sort, transforms the article into a commodity and their economic relation into a contract—the juridic form of a relation between abstract citizens ‘which mirrors the economic relation’ (Marx 1867a: 178). Hence, ‘the attributes of the juridic person’ are ‘precisely [those] of the individual engaged in exchange’ (Marx 1858: 246). The economic form and the juridic form are sinewed by money, which realises the prices of commodities, circulates titles of their ownership and ‘becomes the universal material of contracts’ (Marx 1867a: 238).

Fourth, there are not ‘economic’ relations here and ‘legal’ relations there. There is *one* network of relations of production with juridic and economic forms. As Fine puts it, ‘not only are economic and juridic categories both expressions of historical social relations of production but ... they are expressions of the *same* historical relations of production’ (Fine 1984: 97, my emphasis). Recognition of the coeval nature of juridic and economic forms is an important corrective to traditional Marxism, for it is the neglect of the ‘early’ Marx’s intentions towards the juridic that encourages the association of relations of production with ‘economic’ relations and the consequent belief that the state is a subordinate and secondary superstructure. Marx did not simply politicise ‘economic’ relations, however: he redefined them (Sayer 1987: 77)—and this redefinition, which I am about to elaborate, helps us understand how they are *de*-politicised (Burawoy 1985).

These four points recast the problem: how does the vertical relationship between capital (this substratum) and its economic/material and juridic/ideal forms (these mirror-images) become a horizontal relationship between two apparently separate institutional realms, civil society (the economy) and the state?

I will argue that:

- a. the materialism of civil society and the fetishism of things are sides of the same social process,
- b. the idealism of the state and the reification of concepts are sides of the same social process,
- c. (a) and (b) are real social processes generated by the dual-sided relations of production/disciplinary practices.

Let me first explain the materialism of civil society and the fetishism of things. The key to understanding this process is (a) the internal-relation between productive forces and civil society, and (b) my Foucauldian explanation of the real subsumption of labour to capital.

a. The connection between productive forces and civil society is the dual-sided nature of relations of production and disciplinary techniques, the structure and agency of this connection: they simultaneously empower and repress, organize and dissolve. As these techniques organized people into a productive power, within the workplace, they sever them from their social roots, destroy their communities and render them the atoms of civil society. These techniques achieve this twin objective by organizing space, time and movement differently, inside and outside the workplace (Harvey 1989: 226-239). This differential organization of space and time within and without the workplace is an everyday fact of life for most workers. As these dual-sided techniques organize labour into a

productive power or ‘force’ so they dissolve society into atoms: ‘a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called “discipline”’ (Foucault 1977: 194).¹⁸⁰

b. These same techniques materialise this mode of organization in commodities, tools, machines, buildings and settlements, via their design, architecture and construction. This is what is meant by the ‘materialism of civil society’ (Marx 1843a: 166). We recognise it as the ‘economy’. In this way, the power of labour is subsumed to the owners of these artefacts. The structural imperative of these property relations energises these objects, giving them ‘legs,’ as Marx puts it: a process becomes a thing and a thing becomes a person, the materialisation of people and the personification of things. This is a ‘dialectical inversion’ (Marx 1867a: 734) between subject and object, agency and structure. The structural imperative of property relations is the basis of the attribution of causal powers to these inanimate objects. This is what is meant by the fetishism of things.

The *same* process, then, that organizes labour into a productive power and subsumes it to capital, also destroys the social connections among people, gives them the semblance of independence and bestows things with the semblance of agency (Marx 1867a: 255). This dual-sided process is the basis of the abstraction ‘civil society’ and the fetish ‘the economy’. The materialism of civil society and the fetishism of things are not conceptual errors, then, but dimensions of the same—disciplinary—process, falsely conceptualized.

I now want to explain the idealism of the state and the reification of concepts. I shall argue that, first and foremost, the ‘state’ is a concept carried in legal discourse which is reified and misconstrued as a thing. This argument is novel.¹⁸¹ It contradicts common

¹⁸⁰Foucault prefaces ‘atom’ with the adjective ‘fictitious’. But it is no fiction. People *really are* atomised, divorced from their social roots.

¹⁸¹My argument regarding the state is the product of a reading of Marx stimulated by Abrams (1988), Sayer (1987) and Corrigan and Sayer (1985). For a discussion, see Marsden (1992).

assumptions about the nature of the state. But I believe these assumptions are based on the reification, and ignore the idealism behind it, and for this reason are mistaken.

The predominant view, among Marxists, is that the state is a set of institutions controlled by the bourgeoisie and that law is an instrument of the state used to control the working class. This concrete image of the state is reinforced by the belief that it is something capable of being undermined, seized or smashed. There are many variations on this theme, but they share a startling inability to discover and to define this supposedly self-evident thing:

We have come to take the state for granted as an object of political practice and political analysis while remaining spectacularly unclear about what the state is (Abrams 1988: 59).

So too with law. It is acknowledged that the three main attempts to develop an alternative to the 'black letter' concept of law—legal pluralism, critical legal studies and Marxist theory—are at an impasse (Albrow 1981; Arthur 1976; Conaghan 1987; Cotterell 1981; Fine *et al.* 1979; Fitzpatrick 1980, 1983, 1984; Hunt 1980, 1987; Jessop 1980; Merry 1988; Norris 1988; Santos 1980, 1985, 1987; Sumner 1979; Thompson 1987; Unger 1986; Vincent-Jones 1987; von Benda-Beckmann 1988; Woodiwiss 1985; Woodman 1983). I think that my argument concerning the idealism of the state and the reification of concepts can throw some light on the interrelated problems of grasping 'the state' and 'law'.

I believe that the difficulty of Marxists in understanding the nature of the state and law is rooted in the common belief that Marx turned Hegel right way up and simply reversed the direction of causality between the ideal and the material and between civil society and the state. The Manicheism of traditional, base/superstructure, interpretations of the civil society/the state relationship, of which Foucault complains, flows directly from this belief (Foucault 1988: 167-168). Let me stress, therefore, that Marx does not reverse the direction of causality between civil society and the state: he objects to the very idea of their

separation. In fact, he attributes to 'political superstition' the belief that the state holds together civil life: to the contrary, he argues, the state is held together by civil life (Marx 1844c: 120-121). He also tells us that 'the establishment of the political state and the dissolution of civil society into independent individuals ... is accomplished by one and the same act' (Marx 1843b: 167). I have shown how the counterpart to the organization of labour into a productive power, and its subsumption to capital, as the 'economy,' is the dissolution of civil society into monads. What remains to be explained is Marx's 1843 remark that this monad is the essence, the precondition of the state.

The key to solving the problem of the relationship between the monad of civil society and the idealism of the state is the internal-relation between social relations and categories, or power and knowledge. Individualization and categorization occur simultaneously, as sides of the same relations and process. As the workplace is partitioned and workers are 'riveted to a single fraction of the work,' so they are systematically classified and fixed within categories (Marx 1867a: 464). As disciplinary techniques prescribe movements, so they draw up classificatory tables. Since power is relational, categorization is negotiable. Categories are forged in conflict and embodied in disciplinary rules, which document its outcome. Idealism, for Marx, is a real social process which abstracts concepts from their social roots (Marx and Engels 1846).

To answer the question 'What is the state?' and to explain its idealism I shall utilize Santos's answer to the question 'What is law?' (Santos 1987). A law is a map. Santos intends this metaphorically. But I believe recent developments in the sociology of cartography allow us to mean it literally.¹⁸² Law-making summarizes and codifies knowledge of social action in space and time: truly, it maps. Informal laws are mental

¹⁸²For an account of maps, see Monmonier (1991), Hall (1992) and Buisseret (1990). For an account of how law maps social space using the mechanisms of scale, projection and symbolisation, see Santos (1987).

maps; written laws are cartographic maps. A law is a representation in two-dimensions of a three-dimensional object. To represent a large three-dimensional object within a small, two-dimensional space, laws—like all maps—are constructed according to scale and around a point of projection (Santos 1987). I consider scale and projection in turn.

Law is a hierarchy of nested, interpenetrating, mental and cartographic maps of different scales (Santos 1987). Law maps the same social space as the disciplines, but on a smaller scale. The disciplines map closely, they lower the threshold of describable individuality: ‘they extend the same type of law on a *different scale*, thereby making it more meticulous and indulgent’ (Foucault 1977: 222, my emphasis). Where the disciplines see detail, law sees patterns and relationships. The disciplines are a counter- or infra-law to that of the state, its dark, underside. They exist ‘at the point where the law is inverted and passes outside itself.’ They are ‘the effective and institutionalised content of the juridical forms’ (Foucault 1977: 224).

It is a characteristic of all maps that they abstract information and organize it around a centre or point of projection (Santos 1987). The organizing centre of law is contract, the juridic form of the employment relationship formed in the act of exchange. Exchange produces two characteristic features of law which are important to an understanding of the idealism of the state. First, by abstracting from material differences among the monads of civil society, buyers and sellers, it transforms socially differentiated individuals with concrete needs into juridic citizens with abstract rights. The needs of strangers: the rights of citizens (Ignatieff 1984). As Marx puts it, it ‘makes an abstraction of real men’. Second, it abstracts categories from the social—disciplinary—relations ‘which are their lord and master’ (Marx 1858: 164). This is idealism: the abstraction of categories from their empirical basis (Marx and Engels 1846). Exchange abolishes ‘distinctions of birth, social rank, education, occupation ... when it proclaims, without regard to these distinctions, that every member of the nation is

an equal participant in national sovereignty' (Marx 1847a: 153). 'The state' is peopled by such abstractions.¹⁸³ It is an idea created by the abstraction of exchange, carried in law: an imagined¹⁸⁴ community of juridic persons with abstract rights 'divorced from the ... circumstances which concretely make them what they are' (Sayer 1987: 104). Conversely, law is a body of rules of conduct imposed with the authority of 'the state'. It is the presence of the idea of the state that distinguishes disciplinary rules from law. Herein is the connection between law and state that puzzles.

People must live in an imagined community, a 'state,' because the disciplinary practices that atomise civil society and subsume the productive power of labour to capital, an 'economy,' destroy their *real* communities.

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest [state] will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their community (Anderson 1991: 6).

It is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the [state] is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship (Anderson 1991: 7).¹⁸⁵

Over the past two centuries, millions of people have killed and—more significantly—willingly died for their imagined communities or states (Anderson 1991). We should take seriously, then, rather than dismiss as juvenilia, Marx's repeated statements, during the 1840s, that the state is an idea or abstraction and try to fathom their meaning.

I believe the idea of the state is the juridic self-understanding of modern man with which Marx began in 1843. This understanding is based on the apparent freedom and independence from social forces of the monad of civil society.¹⁸⁶ This is why 'this man,

¹⁸³'Consciousness which emancipates itself [from social relations] ... devises not only religions and philosophies but also states' (Marx and Engels 1846: 45).

¹⁸⁴'Imagined,' not 'imaginary'. The distinction is important.

¹⁸⁵I substitute 'state' for Anderson's 'nation' without, I think, any damage to his argument.

¹⁸⁶Marx notes that, 'the consciousness (or better: the idea) of self-determination, of liberty' makes the citizen a much better worker than the slave (Marx 1866: 1031).

this member of civil society, is the basis, the precondition, of the political state' (Marx 1843b: 166). This is why 'civil society' is the basis of the state, not vice versa:

It is ... not the state that holds the atoms of civil society together, but the fact that they are atoms only in imagination ... Only political superstition still imagines today that civil life must be held together by the state, whereas in reality, on the contrary, *the state is held together by civil life* (Marx 1844c: 120-121, my italics).

The material life of individuals ... is the real basis of the state and remains so at all the stages at which the division of labour and private property are still necessary ... These actual relations are in no way created by the state power; on the contrary *they are the power creating it* (Marx and Engels 1846: 329, my italics).

It is important to be clear: Hegel's idealist philosophy is not the root of the problem for Marx. Rather, it is people's juridic self-understanding, an understanding propagated by 'statesmen in general,' or 'idealists of the state'. 'Hegel idealises the conception of the state held by the political ideologists who still [take] *separate individuals* as their point of departure' (Marx and Engels 1846: 348, my emphasis). 'Let us revolt against this rule of concepts,' Marx and Engels declare on the very first page (Marx and Engels 1846: 23) of the Preface to *The German Ideology*—against the '*idea* of the state' (Marx and Engels 1846: 92, my emphasis).

There is a connection between Marx's intended critique of politics, law and state, begun in 'Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right,"' but never completed (Marx 1843a), and Foucault's actual critique of the sovereign or juridic conception of power. In his critique of Hegel, Marx argues that (a) the essence of the state is the abstract private person, (b) 'the monarch is the abstract person who contains the state within his own person ... [because] ... the monarch is the one private person in whom the relation of private property generally to the state is actualized' (Marx 1843a: 40): 'Only in its flower does the state reveal its secret'. The connection with Foucault is this: The King is the Head of the State. He contains this imagined community, 'the state,' 'within his own person'. When Foucault argues, 'the representation of power has remained under the spell of monarchy. In political thought and analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king' (Foucault 1981: 88-89), he means we have yet to rid ourselves of the *idea* of the state, of the representation

of power in terms of law—of the juridic self-conception of individuals that Marx identified as a problem in 1843 and which states-men (such as Hegel) have idealised ever since.

I now want to consider how the idea of the state is reified. I believe that reification is often misunderstood and that this misunderstanding hinders recognition of the significance of the idea of the state. Reification is commonly understood thus:

treating abstract collective entities, which are the creations of human activity, as the active agency in social relations and in consequence devaluing the part played by human agency (Hyman 1975a: 13).¹⁸⁷

I draw attention to Hyman's definition only because it is particularly concise and is representative of an understanding of reification which I believe conflates two processes I am at pains to distinguish: the materialism of civil society/fetishism of things and the idealism of the state/reification of concepts. I have explained materialism as a real social process and fetishism as an understandable misconception of the structural imperative of property relations. The typical account of reification does not recognise the objectification of a mode of organization in material things, other than commodities, conflates reification with fetishism and regards both as a simple misconception.¹⁸⁸ Not only does this hinder an understanding of the organization of labour and its subsumption to capital, it also hinders an understanding of the *real* nature of reification.

Reification is the mental conversion of a concept, i.e., an abstract idea, into a thing (O.E.D.). To reify is to materialise a concept. Once again, this is a common, everyday process. The idea of the state is reified in myriad ways, some of them seemingly trivial. For example, every time Americans recite the 'pledge of allegiance' and affirm that they are all citizens of an abstract United States of America and that there is 'liberty and justice for all' (Gabel

¹⁸⁷Another definition of reification is provided by Petrovic (1991: 463): 'the act (or the result of the act) of transforming human properties, relations and actions into properties, relations and actions of man-produced things which have become independent (and which are imagined as originally independent) of man and govern his life'.

¹⁸⁸This erroneous conception of reification originates in Lukács (1972).

1980: 27) they bestow the ^{? action} state with a factitious concreteness. But, since the idea of the state is carried in legal discourse, it is typically reified through the multifarious practices and ceremonies of law. The idea of the state, at the heart of the categorical framework of legal discourse, is regularly invoked in adjudication of all manner of disputes—drawing the line, for example, between private, economic and public, political spheres (Klare 1982b). Law is a ‘language of power’ (Foucault 1980a: 201), a discursive medium through which political claims are contested and defined: ‘for the landowner, enclosure, for the cottager, common rights,’ ‘for the mineworker, a political struggle, for the Government, an economic dispute’. The idea of the state, created via the abstraction of exchange, is reified by being ‘enshrined in law, embedded in institutions, routinized in administrative procedures and symbolized in rituals of state’ (Corrigan and Sayer 1985: 4). The idea of the state is ingrained in things, including people, just as the idea of femininity is ingrained in the body of a women. The idea is embodied in the thing observed so that the appearance of that thing matches its perception perfectly (Sumner 1979: 287). As we reify the abstraction, in this fashion, ‘the state’ conceptually and institutionally organizes our thoughts and actions. Marx’s concept of ‘the state’ as both an ideal superstructure and a set of social relations is analogous to his concept of capital as both a thing and a social relation. The difference is that whereas capital is an economic form, fetishised, law is a juridic, discursive form, reified.

Abrams’s seminal ‘Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State’ helps explain the salience of the ‘idea of the state’ (Abrams 1988). We have mistakenly reasoned from the reified idea of the state to a belief in the hidden existence of a substantial state structure—which has never been found! (Abrams 1988: 69). We should reject the notion that (a) the state is a hidden structural reality (Abrams 1988: 74), and (b) something called the state exists as a concrete reality. However, we should retain as an object of study (c) the *idea* of the state because it is a potent ideological and political reality.

I am proposing 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).

Neither Abrams nor I deny the existence of ‘armed bodies of men and prisons, etc.’ The point is that their association with the ‘idea of the state’ legitimates forms of domination which would otherwise be regarded as *illegitimate*. Abrams thus echoes Thomas Hodgskin, in 1825, cited with approval by Marx, for whom ‘state’ is a ‘cabalistic word’ like God, church or capital, ‘or any other of those general terms which are invented by those who fleece the rest of mankind to conceal the hand that shears them’ (cited in Marx 1866: 999-1000). ‘The state’ does nothing: *people* act in the name of the state. ‘We should move on,’ argues Abrams (1988: 63), from the analysis of the state to a concern with the actualities of social subordination’—much as Foucault suggests. We need liberating, not from ‘the state,’ but from the ‘idea of the state’ and the mode of organization upon which it rests. The idea of the state, I have argued, rests on the matrix of individualization caused by disciplinary power. Human emancipation will be accomplished, according to Marx, only when people reabsorb within themselves the abstract citizen, when they renounce their membership of this imagined community and remedy their isolation from their *real* community by recognising their own, social, power (Marx 1843b: 168). It is for this reason, I suggest, that social, real, practical emancipation ‘starts out from the point of view of a separate *real* individual’ (Marx 1844a: 205, my emphasis).

The materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state are coeval, internally-related phenomena, sides of the same social relations and process. As Foucault (1977: 222) puts it: liberties were discovered (the idealism of the state), when the disciplines were invented (the materialism of civil society). The ‘idealism of the state’ is a product of the abstraction of exchange—and, ‘behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the

meticulous, concrete training of useful forces' (1977: 217).¹⁸⁹ The public citizen, formed by the abstraction of exchange, is the counterpart of the private 'civilian,' formed by the abstraction of production; the contractual relations between juridic citizens is the counterpart of the private—disciplinary—relations between real individuals. The civilian of society and the citizen of the state are, then, twin abstractions from social circumstances, formed in production and exchange, respectively. The private civilian—this 'isolated monad'—is a 'fictitious phenomenon' (Marx 1847b: 154). People are atoms 'only in imagination, in the heaven of their fancy' (Marx and Engels 1844c: 121). In reality, they are the playthings of 'alien powers' (Marx 1843c). The public citizen is 'only abstract, artificial man' (Marx 1847a: 167), an 'idealist of the state,' an 'imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty' (Marx 1847a: 154). People can be members of a state only as *individuals*, not as communal, social beings (Marx 1843a: 77). Private civilians, who imagine themselves independent, and public citizens, who imagine themselves free, are abstractions integral to the state, for it 'is based on the contradiction between public and private life' and is 'inconceivable without it' (Marx 1844a: 198 and 205).

Through the medium of law, the private/public distinction is internalized. The individual is partitioned into a private person ('a fictitious phenomenon') and a public person ('an imaginary member of an illusory sovereignty'). Just as private civilians think themselves independent of social forces while being reduced by them to a thing—a 'hand'; so public citizens think themselves free while being reduced to the legal status of a thing (Ellerman 1984: 198). Truly, people lead a two-fold life, 'not only in thought, *but in reality*' (Marx 1847a: 154, my emphasis). Private civilians, who imagine themselves independent, and public citizens, who imagine themselves free, are allegorical figures, marionettes of a process taking place behind their backs (Marx 1843a: 40).

¹⁸⁹To relate back to my argument, in Chapter 4, concerning 'abstract labour': exchange does not create abstract labour, it creates the abstraction 'the state'.

To grasp this process, Marx took the isolated monad of civil society, declared its essence the ‘ensemble of social relations’ (Marx 1845: 4) and sought an explanation of the ‘socially determined production of individuals’—the ‘point of departure’ of his ‘economics’ (Marx 1857: 83)—via a critique of economic categories, thereby revealing ‘the economic law of motion of modern society’ (Marx 1867b: 92). In 1843, Marx understood that ‘the relation of the political state to civil society is just as spiritual as the relations of heaven to earth’ (Marx 1847a: 154). By 1858, he had fathomed that wage-labour ‘has replaced the very earth as the ground on which society stands’ (Marx 1858: 276). Marx’s ‘society,’ then, is not peopled by atomistic individuals, but by the internal-relations among real people in ‘their actual, empirically perceptible process of development’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 37), as they act, produce or—in a word—labour. The ‘essential relations’ between civil society and the state, the basis of these ‘abstractions,’ are social relations of production: a nonempirical, but real, social structure, between people spatio-temporally discrete, which simultaneously enables and constrains their actions. ‘The material life of individuals ... is the *real* basis of the state’ (Marx and Engels 1846: 329, my emphasis). ‘As if the *actual* state were not the people. The state is an abstraction. The people alone is what is concrete’ (Marx 1843a: 28, my emphasis).

People might lead a two-fold existence (private and public), but they do not do things twice. They do not build a society, then create a state (or vice versa). The social structure and the state, wrote Marx and Engels (1846: 35), ‘are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals’. The same process that produces the institutional separation between ‘distribution’ and ‘exchange,’ which we recognise by the fetish ‘the economy,’ also produces the institutional nexus which we recognise by the reification ‘the state’. Prisons and army barracks (the ‘political state’) exist side by side with factories and offices (‘civil society’)—‘alongside and outside’—just as market places and work places

exist side by side *within* the economy of civil society. But they are social forms of the *same* production relations, driven by one and the same process, the mode of production—or, more prosaically, ‘earning a living’ (Marx 1847a: 166). ‘Civil society’ and ‘political state’ are not two different things (Marx 1844a: 197). Like distribution and exchange, they are forms—Janus-faces—of the same thing—social relations of production—‘seen from a different point of view’ (Marx 1863, Part 3: 84).¹⁹⁰ Sometimes we see (civil) society, sometimes the state. Both seem to be everywhere, then nowhere. No wonder they are so hard to define (Jessop 1990b; Frisby and Sayer 1986; Denis 1989: 328-330).

The materialism of civil society/fetishism of things and the idealism of the state/reification of concepts, I have argued, are sides of Foucault’s disciplinary practices and Marx’s relations of production—of *capital*. The first inverts the relationship between the social and the material: the last inverts the relationship between the social and the ideal: the violence of things: the violence of abstractions. They are active in myriad social forms of production, dividing and segregating—practically and conceptually, through time and across space—economic from political, private from public, subject from object, agency from structure. This dual-sided process is hidden from view because it disappears in its results: diverse, spatio-temporally discrete phenomena *and our concepts of them*. These are *real* dichotomies, falsely conceptualized. To paraphrase Marx (1857: 90), the rupture between civil society/the state, economy/polity, private/public, subject/object, agency/structure did not make its way from the textbooks into reality, but from reality into the textbooks. Once there, and therefore part of our conceptual framework, all trace of this movement is concealed. Without Marx’s realist ontology it is impossible to grasp the inner connections beneath this multiplicity of outward forms. We see only ‘external collisions’ between

¹⁹⁰Marx’s comment on France at the time of the Paris Commune is apposite here: the political character of the state changed ‘simultaneously with’ and ‘at the same pace as’ the economic changes of society (Marx 1871: 517)—because they are forms of the same thing.

them, and, to paraphrase Marx (1847b: 320), are left knocking wooden concepts together in the hope that they will eventually ignite. This is the problem, formulated in Chapter 1, facing theorists of the politics of production. ‘To resolve the visible, merely external movement into the true intrinsic movement,’ said Marx (1864: 313), ‘is a work of science’. To this we must add: to understand and practice this science, we must understand the realist ontology upon which it is based.

This thesis places Foucault’s concept of power at the heart of Marx’s analytic. The logic of power and the law of value, the widening and ascending spirals of disciplinary technologies and capital accumulation, interweave and adulterate each other.

The two processes—the accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital—cannot be separated the technological mutation of the apparatus of production, the division of labour and the elaboration of the disciplinary techniques sustained an ensemble of very close relations (Foucault 1977: 221).

Foucault’s explanation of the microphysics of power and Marx’s explanation of the law of motion of modern society are complementary and mutually supportive. Foucault explains the ‘how’ of power, Marx explains the ‘why’. Together, I submit, they define the operative logic of production relations.

Chapter 7

Is the Model True: Is the Object Real?

In Chapter 6, I developed a realist-mediated synthesis between Marx and Foucault by explaining the social logic active in the organization of labour, its subsumption to capital, the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state. Not one iota of contemporary empirical material went into the composition of this model. It is a synthesis of the theoretical work of a German living in London, during the middle years of the nineteenth century, and the empirical investigations, up to 1830, of a Frenchman living in the late twentieth century.¹⁹¹ That their models dovetail suggests to me that they model different dimensions of a common—ontologically independent—object. For this reason, I believe my synthesis—between Marx’s law of motion and Foucault’s logic of power—is not merely conceptual. These concepts define a model *of* something real.¹⁹² There are not *two* objects—relations of production here, disciplinary mechanisms there; rather, I claim to have synthesized two models of different dimensions (structure and agency) of *one* object: capital.

But what sort of an object is it?

It is constituted by the causal connections between the organization of labour, the atomisation of civil society and its fetishised material and reified ideal forms, economy and state. This is *one* nexus of causal relations, with a common, unifying logic. As labour is organized, civil society is materialised and fetishised; as commodities are exchanged, the state is idealised and reified.

¹⁹¹*Discipline and Punish* ‘is limited to an investigation covering the period up to about 1830’—it is not a description of modern society (Foucault 1991: 37).

¹⁹²... as if the task were the dialectical balancing of concepts, and not the grasping of real relations!’ This admonition comes from the 1857 *Introduction* (Marx 1857: 90).

It is real, not because we can see it, but because it has causal powers.

It has a *modus operandi*: a practical, situational logic (mode of production), which regulates the mechanism mediating between the object's internal structure (relations of production) and its surface (civil society ↔ political state).

It has a *primum mobile*: the internal contradiction within the dual-sided relations of production/disciplinary practices, which simultaneously create and alienate, organize and dissolve, empower and repress, create wealth and create poverty. These contradictions are 'two different sides of the development of the social individual,' with the capacity to 'blow this foundation sky-high' (Marx 1858: 706).

It is not 'society': it is the social DNA of the cells which constitute society. These organizational cells are not a microcosm of the social body; they constitute the social body—just as actual cells constitute actual bodies. That much sought, but elusive, 'wider society,' 'external environment,' or 'political economy,' does not, in fact, exist.¹⁹³ There is nothing but cells. Thus, this object—capital:

- a. is not the the cell itself ('organization'): it is the structure and mechanism of the cell.
- b. does not exist in space and time: it is the organiser of space and time.
- c. is not behavioural regularities among people at work in physical containers ('industrial relations'): it is the organiser of these regularities, the architect of these containers.

¹⁹³I am alluding to the radical concept of power's injunction to study organizations/IR in the context of the 'wider society'/'political economy'. These concepts are an effect of construing time and space as external environments of the organization of labour, whereas, I have argued, they are internal to this organization.

The model, developed in Chapter 6, attempts to grasp the structure (relations of production) and agency (mode of production/disciplinary power) of this object; its *modus operandi* and *primum mobile*, the way of acting of this structured thing; its practical, situational logic.

But what status are we to afford a model of an object with the intrinsic nature of being invisible? How are we to distinguish between imagined and imaginary objects? We might reasonably concede realism's argument regarding the possibility of such social objects, but demand proof of the existence of this *particular* object.¹⁹⁴

I can best tackle this issue by returning to the distinction, made in Chapter 1, between the logic of discovery and the logic of proof; between one's reasons for entertaining *H* as a plausible hypothesis and one's reasons for accepting *H* as true. This thesis has been an exercise in the logic of discovery or retroduction. I have used an understanding of Marx's realist ontology and retroductive method to (re-)discover the object of his investigation and to (re-)construct his model of this object. I have used a realist reading of Foucault to augment and sustain this (re-)construction. This retroduced, synthetic model exists at a deep level of abstraction. It is limited in two major respects. First, it purports to explain only the material causes of capacities to act. It says nothing (indeed, such a model *can* say nothing) of the efficient and final causes of the exercise of these capacities. Second, while I have constructed this model as a putative explanation of the problems formulated in Chapter 1, this has been an entirely 'imaginary experiment' (Weick 1989: 519). I submit that this model is aesthetically pleasing, plausible and 'interesting' (Davis 1971): I do not claim that it is *true*. For the model to be true, the object it represents must exist and act in the way I have postulated. This is an empirical question that cannot be answered in this thesis. To

¹⁹⁴I note, in passing, that this imagined, hypothetical object—capital—is no less invisible than well-accepted objects—such as organizations and industrial relations.

answer this question, this retroduced model would have to be worked to the empirical surface, through existing knowledges, in explanation of the efficient and final causes of the exercise of these capacities to act in particular situations. The organization of labour, the materialism of civil society and the idealism of the state needs explaining empirically. This is 'a work in its own right' (Marx 1858: 461).

This certainly does not mean, however, that the validity of the model cannot be assessed in the absence of empirical verification. There are retroductive 'canons of reason, criteria of rationality, which distinguish good technique from bad, promising conjectures from dubious ones, likely directions of inquiry from unpromising courses of research' (Hanson 1971: 66). To test its veracity, we can ask the following questions of the thesis:

1. Is the line of argument of the thesis a valid retroductive inference?
2. Is the model coherent and consistent?

In other words, we can examine the model vertically, i.e., the line of retroductive argument from problem/conclusion to solution/premiss; and we can examine it horizontally, i.e. the logical coherence of the model. Put another way, we can examine the process of thought and its product.

3. Is the model empirically useful?

I consider them in turn.

1. Is the line of argument of the thesis a valid retroductive inference?

The reasons for entertaining *H* (the model of Chapter 6) as a plausible explicans (of the explicandum formulated in Chapter 1) can be scrutinized. Is the retroductive line of argument from Chapter 1 to Chapter 6 *reason-able*?

The argument of the thesis is cumulative. Each Chapter examines a critical issue. On each issue there are opposing sides. My resolution of these issues is both the strength and the weakness of the thesis. Each Chapter builds on the preceding. If one critical argument fails, subsequent arguments collapse.

These are the critical issues:

a. *If the connection between realism and retrodution cannot be sustained, then my understanding of Marx's method is wrong and my chronological-bibliographic reading of Marx is unwarranted (Chapter 1).*

b. *If my analysis of the bibliographic relationship between the *Grundrisse* notebooks, and their *Introduction*, and *CCPE*, and its *Preface*, cannot be sustained, then the *Preface* stands as the most authoritative guide to Marx and my interpretation of his object in terms of surface, structure and movement and of the relationship between his explicandum and explicans falls (Chapter 2).*

c. *If my definition of Marx's explicandum as the modern individual, constituted by the 'essential relationship' between civil society and the state, cannot be sustained, then my definition of his explicans, as 'capital,' cannot be sustained (Chapter 3).*

d. *If my interpretation of capital as both a social structure (relations of production) and a complicated social process (mode of production) with a common problem—'organization'—cannot be sustained, then Foucault's relevance to Marx is lost (Chapter 4).*

e. *If my realist reading of Foucault cannot be sustained, then neither can my argument that Marx and Foucault are compatible (Chapter 5).*

f. *If my synthesis between Marx and Foucault cannot be sustained, then the model collapses and it has no relevance to Marx's problematic explicans, his initial explicandum and the cluster of problems formulated in Chapter 1 (Chapter 6).*

I hasten to add: each of these issues was checked during the 'imaginary experiments' through which the thesis was formulated (these chapters summarize the *conclusions* of these experiments), but my arguments would benefit from a sustained critique.

2. Is the model coherent and consistent?

The inner consistency of the model must be scrutinized for logical contradictions. There are several ways this can be done:

a. The model should be systematically elaborated by broadening and deepening the process that created it. For this to happen:

i. The realist, chronological-bibliographical reading of Marx should be continued.

An understanding of realism (specifically its concept of causation and explanation) can be used to:

- reconstruct and more sharply define the explicandum formulated in his, little read, 1840s essays: modern man, constituted by the 'essential relationship' between civil society and the state,
- reconstruct, explicate and develop his explicans: the model of capital which exists between the *Grundrisse* notebooks, his unpublished 1861-63 manuscript, the three parts of *Theories of Surplus Value* and the three volumes of *Capital*.

In this way, we can better understand the interrelationship between Marx's initial explicandum and putative explicans and continue to knit together the young, 'juridic' and the older, 'economic' Marx.

ii. The realist reading of Foucault should be continued.

The ontological underside to his empirical studies should be explored in more detail. In this way, we can:

- instil conceptual rigour and consistency into his work,
- develop the interconnections between the organization of labour and Foucault's 'objects': sexuality, madness, illness and deviance.
- continue to explicate his model of power.

iii. The models of Marx and Foucault should be further integrated and synthesized.

This thesis has established the simplest, most elementary points of contact between their work. I believe these to be secure and defensible. But they are only a beginning, a foundation. It is not a matter of docking two passive bodies of work; it is a matter of facilitating a dynamic interchange between them which changes the nature of each. Their synthesis into one model should continue.¹⁹⁵

b. The model should be critiqued by contra-positions.

This attempt to develop an alternative to traditional Marxism is novel, contentious and—for some—heretical.¹⁹⁶ It might usefully be critiqued by:

i. traditional Marxism.

¹⁹⁵This might be done, for example, by developing the connections between Marx's intended critique of politics, law and state (announced in 1844) and Foucault's actual critique of juridic conceptions of power.

¹⁹⁶An earlier version of Chapter 2 was submitted to the Marxist journal, *Science&Society*. The following is an extract from their response: 'the main point to be made about this argument [re the *Introduction* and the *Preface*] is its duplicity: it is a device to sever Marx from the "traditional" core concepts of historical materialism ... this paper's *post facto* conjectures about motives and confusions seem arbitrary, and transparent'.

- ii. critics of realism.
- iii. postmodernist interpreters of Foucault.

c. The model should be used to critique contrapositions.

- i. It should engage traditional Marxism.¹⁹⁷
- ii. It should engage historiographic and postmodernist interpretations of Foucault.
- iii. It should engage traditional, Marxist interpretations of Foucault.

d. The model can be tested in explanation of traditional and radical concerns.

- i. *If* this realist-Marxian-Foucauldian, three-dimensional model of power is superior to pluralist and radical concepts of power, *then* it should be able to encompass and surpass their explanations.¹⁹⁸ It should, for example, be able to encompass both radical and traditional IR, ‘control,’ and ‘rule,’ conflict and its absence.¹⁹⁹
- ii. *If* this object encompasses ‘IR,’ ‘organization,’ ‘labour process,’ and ‘HRM’ *then* our model of it should be able to encompass and surpass our knowledge of the techniques and practices which constitute these seemingly discrete objects.²⁰⁰

If the model can do neither (i) nor (ii), *then* it is deficient and must be revised.

¹⁹⁷The classic exposition and defence of traditional, base/superstructure interpretations of Marx remains Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (1978).

¹⁹⁸The three-dimensions of this model of power are time, space and movement.

¹⁹⁹For example, we could act on Wood's suggestion, mentioned in Chapter 6, that we further investigate the relationship between traditional and radical IR by giving ‘job regulation’ a more detailed analysis (Wood 1976: 54). For an attempt to use realism to mediate between traditional and radical organizational analysis see Marsden (1993).

²⁰⁰I believe this object—capital—is the common social animal I alluded to in Chapter 1.

3. Is the model empirically useful?

Let me begin to answer this question by returning to ‘ontological depth’. ‘Depth’ is a metaphor to help us imagine the causal mechanisms that disappear in the constitution of phenomena—which may be spatially and temporally separate and display no obvious interconnections. The relationship between production, civil society and the state, I believe, is a necessary relationship between an inner structure and its surface, not between contingently connected, horizontally aligned neighbours. There are two ways of analysing these causal connections: (a) by retroducting a theoretical cross-section of them, to capture, or model, their governing logic (as in this thesis), and (b) by empirically explaining social actions and events in the light of the law assumed to govern them—their practical, situational logic. The first is a preparation for the second, not its substitute; it indicates where empirical investigation ‘must enter in’ (Marx 1858: 460). The first tells us what an object can do, its capacity to act; the second tells us what it has done, is doing and is likely to do—how that capacity is exercised.²⁰¹

To discuss the empirical usefulness of the model, I want to develop my earlier analogy between capital and DNA. This is not as fanciful as it might at first seem. The discovery of the structure of the DNA molecule, by Crick and Watson, which I discussed in Chapter 1, verified Darwin’s theory of natural selection. Darwin’s theory of natural selection and Marx’s theory of capital are parallel: ‘Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history’ (from Engels’s address at Marx’s funeral, cited in Colp 1982: 470). Marx ‘read, and then reread, Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in the early 1860s, looking for some natural-scientific basis for his own political and social conceptions’ (Colp 1982: 461). There can be no doubt that Marx viewed ‘the development of the economic formation of society ... as a process of natural

²⁰¹ ‘Along the first path the full conception [is] elaborated to yield an abstract determination; along the second, the abstract determination leads towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought’ (Marx 1857: 101).

history' (Marx 1867b: 92). His studied the cell form of society, 'very simple and slight in content,' but more difficult to study than the 'complete body' or 'organism' (Marx 1867b: 90). The close relationship between Darwin and DNA suggests that the DNA/capital analogy is worth pursuing.

It might be objected that this analogy with DNA leads to an unduly deterministic concept of capital. But this would be to misunderstand both DNA and capital. DNA is not the inert, predictably stable molecule it is often taken to be. It is a metabolic molecule, an integral part of the cell and responsive to what happens around it (Rennie 1993). Capital is analogous to DNA because it is the primary, self-replicating genetic material from which action is produced and is present in nearly all social organisms. In Chapter 1, I argued that to understand who acts and why (efficient and final causes) we must first understand the mechanisms structuring their capacity to act (material causes). Capital is a material cause. It is the material out of which action is fashioned.²⁰² My Marxian-Foucauldian model of capital aims to explain the mechanism which structures the capacity of individuals to act at work. How this logic of power unfolds in practice can be discovered only empirically, for this unfolding depends on its context: the exercise of the capacity to act is always negotiated and is contingent on political skill, the motives of people and the circumstances of its deployment.²⁰³

The capital/DNA analogy suggests that the appropriate method of this theory is ethnography—contemporary and historical: a 'method of enquiry combining social theoretical ideas with techniques for data collection' (Rosen 1991: 4-5). Ethnographers practice a very different type of abstraction to positivists: not the extrapolation from sample

²⁰²Historical *materialism* might be better understood in this light. It is an explanation of the material causes of the capacity to act.

²⁰³The exercise of this capacity is, I believe, what E.P. Thompson calls 'class'—it is 'the way the machine works' (Thompson 1978: 295). It is also the 'internal logic' of the 'great,' 'bourgeois arch' of state formation (Thompson 1978: 257 and 296; Corrigan and Sayer 1985).

to population, but the abstraction of the general—the microphysics of power—from the particular (Burawoy 1985: 18). Each particular organizational or cell form is shaped by mechanisms diffuse throughout society. These cellular forms of power contain the genetic code of the body politic; the part contains the whole; the particular contains the general. Ethnography builds ‘on other studies, not in the sense that they take up where the others leave off, but in the sense that, better informed and better conceptualized, *they plunge more deeply into the same thing*’ (Geertz, cited in Rosen 1991: 19, my emphasis). We must research at ‘the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives’ (Foucault 1980a: 39). Ethnography demands no less an imaginative grasp of objects than does theoretical research. My model of capital, of this genetic code, is intended as a stimulant and guide to the ethnographic imagination (Burawoy *et al.* 1991; Atkinson 1990; van Velsen 1967). It is a ladder to be kicked away if and when the model is worked to the surface, its propositions are transcended, and the empirical is redescribed (Wittgenstein 1961).

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