Chapter 12

Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance

by Stuart Hall

The aim of this paper is to mark out a set of emergent questions and problems in the study of racially-structured social formations, and to indicate where some new and important initiatives are developing. In order to do this, it is necessary to situate the breaks which these studies represent from the established field of study; this, in turn, requires a crude characterization of the field. I begin with such a crude sketch, at a very general level of abstraction—offering only passing apologies for the necessary simplification involved. The attempts to deal with the question of 'race' directly or to analyse those social formations where race is a salient feature constitute, by now, a formidable, immense and varied literature, which is is impossible to summarize at all adequately. No justice can be done to this complexity and achievement here.

Something important about this field of inquiry can nevertheless be grasped by dividing many of the varied tendencies represented within it into two broad dominant tendencies. Each has generated a great variety of different studies and approaches. But the selection of these two tendencies is not wholly arbitrary. In many ways, they have come to be understood as opposed to one another. As is often the case with such theoretical oppositions, they can also be understood, in many respects, as inverted mirror images of one another. Each tries to supplement the weakness of the opposing paradigm by stressing the so-called 'neglected element'. In doing so, each points to real weaknesses of conceptualization and indicates, symptomatically, important points of departure for more adequate theorizations. Each, however, I suggest, is inadequate within the operative terms of its present theorization. The break thus constitutes a theoretical rupture, in part or in whole, with each of these dominant tendencies, and a possible restructuring of the theoretical field such as might enable important work of a new kind to begin.

For simplification sake, the two tendencies may be called the 'economic'

and the 'sociological'. Let us begin with the first—the economic. A great range and variety of studies must, for convenience, be bundled together under this crude heading. These include both differences of emphasis and differences of conceptualization. Thus, some studies within this tendency concentrate on internal economic structures, within specific social formations (analyses of the economic and racial structures of South Africa would be a good example). Others are more concerned with relations between internal and external economic features, however these are characterized (developed/underdeveloped; imperialist/colonized; metropolitan/satellite, etc.). Or very different ways of conceptualizing the 'economic' are involved, based on radically different economic premises or frameworks. For the purposes of this paper, I shall group together within this tendency—the pertinent differences will be dealt with later—those which are framed by neo-classical 'development' economics (e.g. a dual sector analysis—capitalist and subsistence sectors); those which adopt a modernization or industrialization model (e.g. based on something like Rostow's theory of 'stages of growth'); those, like the 'dependency' theorists of the ECLA school, utilizing a radical theory of the economics of world underdevelopment; or those like Baran or Gunder Frank, who have employed a Marxist orientation (how classical it remains, as shall be seen, is a matter of continuing controversy). What allows of a characterization of these very different approaches as belonging to a single tendency is simply this: they take economic relations and structures to have an overwhelmingly determining effect on the social structures of such formations. Specifically, those social divisions which assume a distinctively racial or ethnic character can be attributed or explained principally with reference to economic structures and processes.

The second approach I have called sociological. Here again—rather tendentiously—a great variety of approaches are placed under a single rubric. Some concentrate on social relations between different racial or ethnic strata. Some deal more exclusively with cultural differences (ethnicity), of which race is only one, extreme case. Some pursue a more rigorously plural theory, derived from Furnivall and M. G. Smith and others of that school. Some are exclusively concerned with forms of political domination or disadvantage, based on the exploitation of racial distinctions. In the vast majority of these studies, race is treated as a social category. Biological conceptions of race have greatly receded in importance, though they have by no means wholly disappeared (for example: the revival of bio-sociology, and the reintroduction of biologically-based theories, through the genetic principle, in the recent work of Jensen and Eysenck. The principal stress in this second tendency is on race or ethnicity as specifically social or cultural features of the social formations under discussion.

Again, what distinguishes the contributors to this school as belonging—for the purposes here alone—to a single tendency, is this: however they differ internally, the contributors to the sociological tendency agree on the autonomy, the non-reductiveness, of race and ethnicity as social features. These exhibit, they argue, their own forms of structuration, have their own specific effects, which cannot be explained away as mere surface forms of appearance of economic

relations, nor adequately theorized by reducing them to the economic level of determination.

Here it can be seen how the two paradigms have been counterposed to one another, each correcting the weakness of its opposite. The first tendency, whether Marxist or not, gives an over-all determinacy to the economic level. This, it is said, imparts a hard centre—a materialist basis—to the otherwise soft-centredness or culturalism of ethnic studies. The stress on the sociological aspects, in the second tendency, is then a sort of direct reply to this first emphasis. It aims to introduce a necessary complexity into the simplifying schemas of an economic explanation, and to correct against the tendency of the first towards economic reductionism. Social formations, the second tendency argues, are complex ensembles, composed of several different structures, none of which is reducible to the other. Thus, whereas the former tends to be mono-causal in form, the latter tends to be pluralist in emphasis, even if it is not explicitly plural in the theoretical sense.

It will be seen that this debate reproduces, *in micro*, the larger, strategic debates which have marked out the field of social science in general in recent years. Consequently, developments in the latter, larger, field—whether they take racially-structured social formations as their specific objects of inquiry or not—are bound to have theoretical effects for that region of study. Hence, the consequences of such breaks in the paradigms for the 'sociological theories of race'. The debate is not, however, exclusively a theoretical one. Differences of theoretical analysis and approach have real effects for the strategies of political transformation in such societies. If the first tendency is broadly correct, then what is often experienced and analysed as ethnic or racial conflicts are really manifestations of deeper, economic contradictions. It is, therefore, to the latter that the politics of transformations must essentially be addressed. The second tendency draws attention to the actual forms and dynamic of political conflict and social tension in such societies—which frequently assume a racial or ethnic character. It points to the empirical difficulty of subsuming these directly into more classical economic conflicts. But if ethnic relations are not reducible to economic relations, then the former will not necessarily change if and when the latter do. Hence, in a political struggle, the former must be given their due specificity and weight as autonomous factors. Theory here, as always, has direct or indirect practical consequences.

Political circumstances—while not sufficient to account for the scientific value of these theories—also provide one of the conditions of existence for theory, and have effects for its implementation and appropriation. This has clearly been the case, even if restricted (as is done for a good section of this paper) primarily to the Latin America and the Caribbean. The dual sector model—based on an export-led, import-substitution, foreign investment supported type of economic development—sponsored a long and disastrous period of national economic development, which further undermined the economic position of one country after another in the region. The theory of modernization was for long the economic cutting-edge of alliance-for-progress strategies in the continent.

Versions of the 'dependency' school have been harnessed, under different conditions, to the promotion of anti-imperialist, national-capitalist development of a radical type. The metropolitan/satellite theories of Gunder Frank and others were specifically developed in the context of the Cuban revolution and the strategies of Latin-American revolution elaborated in OLAS—represented, for example, in the resolutions to the 1962 Second Declaration of Havana. The whole field, indeed, provides an excellent case study of the necessary interconnexions between theory, politics and ideology in social science.

Each tendency exhibits something of its own rational core. Thus, it may not be possible to explain away race by reference to the economic relations exclusively. But the first tendency is surely correct when it insists that racial structures cannot be understood adequately outside the framework of quite specific sets of economic relations. Unless one attributes to race a single, unitary, transhistorical character—such that wherever and whenever it appears it always assumes the same autonomous features, which can be theoretically explained, perhaps, by some general theory of prejudice in human nature (an essentialist argument of a classic type)—then one must deal with the historical specificity of race in the modern world. Here one is then obliged to agree that race relations are directly linked with economic processes: historically, with the epochs of conquest, colonization and mercantilist domination, and currently, with the 'unequal exchanges' which characterize the economic relations between developed metropolitical and 'underdeveloped' satellite economic regions of the world economy. The problem here is not whether economic structures are relevant to racial divisions but how the two are theoretically connected. Can the economic level provide an adequate and sufficient level of explanation of the racial features of these social formations? Here, the second tendency enters its caveat. Similarly, the second tendency is surely correct to draw attention to the specificity of those social formations which exhibit distinctive racial or ethnic charactistics. The critique of economic reductionism is also, certainly to the point. The problem here is to account for the appearance of this 'something else'—these extra-economic factors and their place in the dynamic reproduction of such social formations. But these 'real problems' also help us to identify what weaknesses are obscured by the inversions which each paradigm practices on the other. If the dominant tendency of the first paradigm is to attempt to command all differences and specificities within the framework of a simplifying economic logic then that of the second is to stop short with a set of plural explanations which lack an adequate theorization, and which in the end are descriptive rather than analytic. This, of course, is to state the differences in their sharpest and most oversimplified form. It is worthwhile, now, exploring some of the complex terrain and arguments which are contained by this simple binarism.

The first aspect can be pinpointed by looking at some features of the recent controversies which have arisen in the analysis of the South African social formation. South Africa is clearly a 'limit case' in the theoretical sense, as well as a 'test case' in the political sense. It is perhaps *the* social formation in which the salience of racial features cannot for a moment be denied. Clearly, also the racial

structures of South African society cannot be attributed to cultural or ethnic differences alone: they are deeply implicated with the forms of political and economic domination which structure the whole social formation. Moreover, there can be little argument that this is a social formation in which the capitalist mode of production is the dominant economic mode. Indeed, South Africa is the 'exceptional' (?) case of an industrial capitalist social formation, where race is an articulating principle of the social, political and ideological structures, and where the capitalist mode is sustained by drawing, simultaneously, on what have been defined as both 'free' and 'forced' labour.

Now substantial parts of the literature on the South African social formation deal with the racial aspects of the society as accounted for, essentially, by the governing economic relations. These relations are characterized as, for all practical purposes, class relations in the classical sense. The structuring of the South African labour force into black and white strata is therefore analysed as similar to the 'fracturing' of the working class, which one finds in all capitalist social formations—with the single exception that, here, race is the mechanism by which this stratification of the class is accomplished. As Wolpe has observed, these analyses assume that white and black working classes stand in essentially the same relation to capital. Hence, the dynamic of social relations will fall within the basic logic of class struggle which capitalist relations or production classically assume. The racial divisions amount to 'nothing more than the specific form which the fractionalization of the working class, common to all capitalist modes of production, has taken in the South African social formations' (Wolpe: 1976). Such analyses—Wolpe refers to several sources—thus tend to fall into what we have defined as our 'first' paradigm: the subsumption of racial structures under the 'logic' of capitalist economic relations. This approach can then be easily matched by its immediate, and inverted, opposite. These alternative analyses treat economic class formations as largely irrelevant to the analysis of the social and political structures, where race, rather than class, is treated as the pertinent factor, through which the society is socially structured and around which social conflicts are generated. Such a 'sociological' approach can be found in, for example, Kuper (1974) and Van den Berghe (1965).

Much more important—and more difficult to slot easily into either of the two approaches—is the work of John Rex, himself a South African and a distinguished sociologist. Rex has not worked extensively on South African materials. But his writing, though often necessarily programmatic, represents the 'sociological' approach at one of its richest and most complex points. Rex's first essay on the subject, 'South African society in comparative perspective' (Rex: 1973), opens with a critique of the failure of both structural-functionalist and Marxist perspectives to deal effectively with race and ethnicity in South African society. He is equally critical of, though he gives more attention to, the 'Plural' theory of Furnivall and Smith. Smith argued that the different ethnic segments of Caribbean society were 'plurally' distinct, held together only through the monopoly, by one of the segments, of political power: 'the monopoly of power by one cultural section is the essential precondition for the maintenance

of the total society in its current form.' Against this, Rex correctly argues that 'the dynamics of the society turn upon the involvement of men of differing ethnic backgrounds in the same social institutions, viz., the slave plantation' (Rex: 1973, p. 261). The same could be said of the attempts to extend the 'plural society' paradigm, with its primacy of attention to cultural segmentation, and its ascription of the factor of cohesion to the instance of political monopoly, to South Africa. However, he is equally critical of any attempt to explain the racial forms in which social conflict appears in such societies as a species of 'false consciousness'.

Rex bases his own approach on a significant historical fact of *difference*. Whereas, 'classically', capitalism has been installed through the expansion of market relations, production for which is based on 'free labour', capitalism in South Africa arose on the basis of conquest (of the Bantu peoples) and their incorporation into the economic relations on the basis of 'unfree labour', 'as part of an efficient capitalist system of production'. This inaugurates the capitalist mode on very different historic 'presuppositions' from those derived from the general account said to be offered by Marx—presuppositions, however, more typical of 'colonial' formations, where conquest and colonization have been central features, and thus pertinent to the appearance, in such societies, of 'not simply the class struggle engendered by capitalist development, but the "race war" engendered by colonial conquest' (Rex: 1973, p. 262). Rex makes a great deal of these differentiating features: the 'capacity of the employers to command the use of coercive violence during and after colonial conquest', and the fact that the 'central labour institution' is not classical free labour but 'migrant labour in its unfree form'.

Taking as the central feature of his analysis this quite atypical 'central labour institution', Rex is able to delineate more precisely the specific economic mechanisms which have served to 'incorporate' the African working class into the capitalist system in ways which *preserve* rather than liquidate its segmentary racial character. The racial structure of the South African social formation is thereby given concrete economic conditions of existence—the link being traceable, precisely, through its 'peculiarity', its deviation from the 'classical' capitalist path. Rex traces historically the various economic forms of this 'unfreedom': the rural reserves, the labour compound, the emergence of the third element of the migrant labour system, the 'urban native location'. 'Nearly all African labour partakes in some measure of the characteristics of the compound worker and the domestic worker's status. All are liable to masters and servants legislation, and none are completely free, even though the development of secondary manufacturing industry may lead to greater flexibility of wages, greater permanence of the labour force and hence greater recognition of the needs of the worker for kinship and community.' (Rex: 1973, p. 278). These 'differences', both in the mode of entry and in the status of African labour, are seen by Rex as operating principally through the means by which African labour supply is recruited to capitalist industry. The economic relations are thus the necessary, but not the sufficient condition of the racial structure of the South African social formation. For this

is also preserved by a 'non-normative' element—for example, political and legal factors—which stems from the political domination of the State by the white settler capitalist class, and the 'workable compromise' between this class and the white working class, which leads both to reap the advantages of confining native labour to its subordinate status in the labour market. In the context of the 'classical' line of capitalist development, a capitalism which preserves rather than abolishes such 'irrational' features must be, to say the least, a 'deviant' case.

There is certainly no simple counterposing of 'social' as against 'economic' factors here. Rex cannot be accused of neglecting the level of economic relations, as many 'culturalists' can. Indeed, it is his concern with the specificity of the *forms* of economic relations peculiar to the South African case which enables him to grasp some of the fundamental features of a social formation which is both identifiably 'capitalist', and yet different in structure from 'the capitalist type' of social development—as the latter has been derived from one reading of the Marxist literature. The attention to the 'central labour institutions' of this formation enables him to bring forward what Marx in another context called the 'differentia specifica'—the basis, as he put it, of an adequate historically-specific abstraction: 'just those things which determine their development, i.e., the elements which are not general and common, must be separated out . . . so that in their unity . . . their essential difference is not forgotten.' (Marx: 1973, p. 85.)

Nor is there a neglect of class relations and the class struggle. The segmentary approach of 'Pluralism' is specifically refused. 'If there is division, the divisions can be seen as functionally integrated within an over-all pattern of political conflict generated by the capitalist development of the country since the mineral discoveries of 1867 and 1886.' The 'revision' involved is rather the refusal of any attempt to subsume these into a universal and univocal form—'capitalist class relations' in general. 'Clearly what we have here is not something which can be adequately interpreted in terms of some universal Marxist law of class struggle but a specific kind of class struggle there undoubtedly is, namely one in which the classes are groups of varying rights and degrees of rightlessness, according to the kind of conquest or unfreedom which was imposed on them in an earlier period. The history, the structure and the forms of social differentiation which South Africa presents [i.e. its 'racial' aspect] are, as in the case of any former colonial society, the product of such conquest and unfreedom.' These two criteria—conquest and 'unfree' labour—are the critical conceptual mechanisms through which Rex's analysis is organized. The 'origin' of the capitalist mode in conditions of conquest, coupled with the 'peculiar institutions' of unfree labour thus preserve, at the economic level, and secure its continuing racially ascriptive features. This is a capitalism of a very specific and distinctive kind: 'there are a number of different relationships to the means of production more subtle than can be comprehended in terms of distinction between owners and non-owners', each of which 'gives rise to specific class situations . . . a whole range of class situations'. The analysis therefore begins with the economic level but differentiates it from the classical type.

In addition, however, there are other relations which are not ascribable within the 'social relations of production'. These include distinctions at the level of culture and values—maintained, for example, by such institutional structures as the system of Bantu education and forms of political power—established through the separation of political and economic power, such as the control of political power by the whites. These generate conflicts between groups distinct from 'control of the means of production'. Here the analysis encompasses the position of social groups—the African 'middle class', the Cape Coloureds, the Indian traders—which cannot be easily assimilated to the earlier analysis of economic relations. From them many ascriptive features of South Africa's 'closed' structure of social relations also arise.

This analysis, while predicated on the 'peculiarity' of the South African system, is not limited to it. Rex has recently proposed a similar sketch as the basis for analysing ethnic relations in Latin America and the Caribbean (Rex: 1978). Here, too, the analysis begins with delineating 'the basic forms of economic exploitation which can arise in colonial conditions', including 'other possible types of capitalist and non-capitalist exploitation and accumulation'. In this instance, the range includes forms of 'unfree' or 'partly-free' labour—the *encomie* slavery and the plantation system, the formation of a 'dependent peasant'. It includes a similar range of social strata—the 'settlers', pariah trader groups, middlemen, the caciques, missionaries, administrators. The general form of the argument is very similar to that employed in the South African case. 'Some of these groups are opposed to one another as classes in a Marxian sense. All of them, however, form relatively close groups with their own distinctive cultural traits and social organization. The over-all effect is of too much overlap and inter-penetration to justify us in calling it a caste system, but too much closure of avenues of mobility for us to call it a system of social stratification. It is much too complex, involving overlapping modes of production, for it to be described as a situation of class struggle in the Marxian sense. All of these aspects need to be kept in mind when we speak of a colonial system of social stratification.' (Rex: 1978, p. 30).

On the broad theoretical plane, we must see this as a model founded on a very specific theoretical revision. Without undue simplification, it combines elements of a Marxist and a Weberian approach. The synthesis is, however, secured on essentially Weberian terrain. I say this, not because Rex constantly counterposes his own approach to what he sees as an inadequate and simplifying application of the 'Marxist law of class struggle'—though he does. Rather, this characterization refers to the conceptual structure of Rex's revisions. The synthesis is accomplished, theoretically, in two different, complementary ways. The first is the distancing of the analysis from what is conceptualized as a 'classical' Marxist approach. Much depends on how this definition is established. 'Classical' Marxism is characterized as a mode of explanation which assumes that all the various instances of conflict are subsumable within and dominated by the class struggle. Classes are defined by economic position—loosely, in terms of the distinction between 'owners and non-owners' of the means of production. They

are economic groups 'in themselves' which can be organized, through the pursuit of their distinct class interests in competing market situations, by means of the class struggle, to become 'classes-for-themselves'. The Marxist approach is also identified, here, with a set of propositions as to the form, the path and the logic of capitalist development. The classical form is that in which free labour confronts the capitalist in the labour market. (Capitalism 'can spring to life only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence meets in the market with the free labourer selling his labour power. And this one historical condition comprises a world's history'. (Marx: 1961, p. 170).) The classical path is that which makes this struggle between owners and non-owners the typical, dominant and determining set of relations in all social formations in which the capitalist mode is dominant. The classical logic is that the 'economic rationality' of capitalist market relations sooner or later prevail over and transform those relations stemming from previous, now displaced, modes of production, so that capitalist relations 'net' the latter within their sway. Rex distances himself from this 'classical' account, in terms of the pertinent differences between it and the actual social formations it is required to explain. True, he concedes that where there is capitalism, there will be economic struggles of a capitalist type—class struggles. However, social formations of a colonial type exhibit different forms which take a different path and obey a different logic. In addition, there are in such social formations other structural relations which are not attributable to class relations of a classical capitalist type.

The second feature is a recuperation of these problems within the framework of a 'classical' Weberianism. By this we mean that, contrary to those who have adopted Weber against Marx, as a way of moving decisively from economic-structural to more 'superstructural' features, Rex always works from that often-forgotten side of Weber's work which treats extensively of economic relations including, of course, economic class conflict of a capitalist type, as one among a range of possible types of such relations. This is a distinctive stress, which allows Rex to encompass Marxian analysis of class relations as one, limited case within a more inclusive range of economic relations, defined as a set of 'ideal-types'. This 'one among a range' approach thus also permits the elaboration of other economic relations to explain peculiar features of social formations which do not exhibit Marx's hypostasized classical capitalist structure. For Weber, economic class conflicts were conceptualized as one among a range of possible market situations, in relation to which groups, differently composed, struggled in competition. For Weber, these different market relations do not overlap into anything which can be called the general form of the class struggle. Groups competing in the struggle over prestige or status may not be the same as groups competing over the power over scarce resources. Thus, in his work on immigration and housing, Rex distinguishes, between and within economic groups in terms of the stratification of the housing market—in relation to which, he identifies a set of distinct 'housing classes'. It follows that the groups dominant in each market situation do not cohere into anything so singular as a single ruling class in the Marxian sense. Instead, one must generate, according to each

empirical case, a range of ideal-typical market situations, the sum of these plural structures constituting the social formation. This does not mean that the analysis excludes questions of exploitation. This is not, however, a general feature but one which remains to be specified in each individual case. It is, thus, Weber in this 'harder' form—Weber, so to speak, 'corrected for' by Marx—which is the theoretical basis of the synthesis Rex proposes. The solution to a limited, one-sided form of Marxian explanation is the adoption of a powerful and distinctive 'left Weberianism'. It should be pointed out here that this 'solution' is not restricted exclusively to those who are opposed to the 'totalism' of Marxian forms of explanation. It has been noted recently (cf., McLennan: 1976 and Schwarz: 1978) that some Marxist theorists, when required to integrate political and ideological structures into an economic analysis of a Marxist kind, sometimes also attempt to deal with these levels by a somewhat untheorized appropriation of Weberianism. (This, it has been suggested, is sometimes the case with the work of so distinguished a Marxist economic historian as Maurice Dobb.) So what has been pinpointed here is something like a 'theoretical convergence', operated at one time or another from arguments which begin from either the Marxist or the Weberian pole of the debate.

Significantly, there is one point where Rex challenges both Marx and Weber—a point where, incidentally, they both appear to agree. This is the contention that 'free labour was the only form of labour compatible in the long run with the logic of rational capitalism' (Rex: 1973, p. 273). This argument—founded, in Weber, by his particular ideal-type definition of 'capitalist rationality', and in Marx, by his historical analysis of the 'typical' path of capitalist development, based on the English case—is contested by Rex on both fronts. Instead, Rex argues that historical deviations from this 'modal' type can often be found in social formations of a 'specifically colonial type'. Here, in contrast, conquest, and a variety of forms of 'unfree labour' (based on apparently irrational forms of ascriptive relations, such as those founded on racial differences) can be possible conditions of existence for the emergence and development of an 'effective' capitalist mode of production. Lying behind this analytic distinction is, undoubtedly, a theoretical-political point: namely a refusal of the 'Eurocentredness' of Marxism, based as it is on extrapolating to other social formations forms of development, paths and logics peculiar to, and illegitimately generalized from, European cases (especially, of course, the English case, which forms the basis for the analysis in Marx's *Capital*).

With this important qualification, we can now identify the dominant tendency of this synthesis (the following passage may stand for many other instances in Rex's work): 'Of course, one problem in adopting terms like "caste" and "estate" . . . is that all of them seem to omit what is essential to the Marxist definition of class, i.e. relationships to the means of production. What we wish to suggest here, however, departs from simple Marxism in a twofold sense. First it recognizes that at the level of relationships to the means of production there are more possible positions and potentialities for class formation than simple European Marxism seems to allow; and second, that over and above the

actual means of production, there are a number of social functions and positions and that these functions are appropriated by closed groups which, thereafter, have their own interests and their own power position vis-a-vis society as a whole.' When this 'Marx plus Weber' theoretical position is then translated to the domain of politics, it yields a 'Marx plus Fanon' sort of argument. (Rex: 1978, p. 23–24, p. 45.)

The position, the synthesis of which has been outlined here, has of course been criticized in the context of its application to South Africa. For example, Wolpe in a recent article (Wolpe: 1976) points out that the distinction between 'free' and 'forced' labour is not an adequate way of conceptualizing the relations of production of a capitalist social formation, since, for Marx, even in its classical form, 'free labour' is 'free' only in a very specific and formal sense: it is, after all, subject to economic compulsions to sell its labour power as a commodity. Thus, in the South African case, the free/unfree couple, while effective in distinguishing the different constraints which structure the availability of black and white labour in the market, is not theoretically powerful enough to establish, for black labour, a relation to capitalist production of a conceptually distinct kind: 'all labour-power is in some way and in some degree unfree, the type, gradation or continuum of degrees of unfreedom "merely" affect the intensity of exploitation but not its mode' (Wolpe: 1975, p. 203). Secondly, this distinction does not encompass what for Marx was central to 'relations of production'; namely, the mode of appropriation of surplus labour. Thirdly, such an approach abstracts the labour market and its constraints from the system of production relations proper, which are in fact the central preoccupation of a Marxian analysis. Fourth, the absence of an adequate theorization at the mode of production level leaves us with a political and ideological definition of 'classes' which are then too easily homogenized with the main racial groupings. However, a detailed analysis of the position of the black and white working class in South Africa, in terms both of their complex relations to capitalist production and their internal stratifications, does not allow us to 'treat racial groups' as 'homogeneous in their class composition'. Wolpe, indeed, uses Carchedi's recent work on the identification of social classes to say that the 'functions' of even the white working class with respect to capital are not homogeneous. Fifth, Wolpe, argues that political and ideological positions cannot be ascribed as a bloc to classes defined at the economic level: 'A social class, or fraction or stratum of a class, may take up a class position that does not correspond to its interests, which are defined by the class determination that fixes the horizon of the class struggle.' (Carchedi: 1977.) The example taken is that of the 'labour aristocracy'. This leads on to a more general argument, that the analysis of classes and class struggle must begin from the level of the relations of production, rather than from political and ideological criteria; but that the latter have their specific forms of 'relative autonomy' which cannot be ascribed to the place of a class or class fraction in the relations of production.

I am not concerned to assess in detail the merits of these arguments as they relate to the South African case. Instead, I want to use the example of this

exchange to establish the basis of a more general argument. Rex's arguments may not be entirely satisfactory in themselves, but undoubtedly they win effective ground from what he calls 'simple Marxism'—as Wolpe is obliged to concede. These represent real theoretical gains, against some of the weaknesses and lacunae in what has become the dominant form in which the classical Marxist paradigm has been applied. These gains are not wholly offset by pointing, correctly, to the ways in which Rex sometimes misrepresents Marx, and distorts Marx's real theoretical effectivity. Secondly, Wolpe's response shows that these weaknesses can only be 'corrected for', while retaining the broad outline of a Marxist approach, by significantly modifying the dominant form in which the Marxist paradigm has been applied: either by means of a more scrupulous or rigorous application of Marx's protocols (which have often, over time, been subject to severe theoretical simplification and impoverishment) and/or by bringing to the fore aspects and arguments which, though they can be shown not to contradict Marx, have not tended to play a very significant part when applied the the peculiar features of post-conquest or post-colonial social formations. This paper's interest in certain new approaches to these problems, from within a substantially new application of Marxist protocols of analysis, arises precisely from a concern to indicate where and how these new emphases are beginning to develop.

Wolpe himself concedes some of the points, at least. He acknowledges that Rex 'was right to insist upon the need for a more comprehensive and more refined conceptualization of class than was encompassed by the bare reference to property relations'. This however, he suggests, means moving away from the attention which Rex gives to market relations and constraints on the labour supply, into a fuller analysis of the relations of production and 'modes of production' analysis. He acknowledges that Rex was correct to draw attention to pertinent differences in the conditions affecting the entry into the labour market of 'black' and 'white' labour: though he would add that the distinction between free/unfree labour is then too sharply and simply applied. Wolpe also recognizes the Rex brings forward a point of great theoretical interest by his reference to the form of the 'political compromise' between the white capitalist and the white working classes, and the consequent 'supervising and policing' functions which white labour exerts over black. It follows from this that some of the more simplistic political recipes based on the call for 'black' and 'white' labour to sink their differences in a common and general class struggle against capital—the famous call to 'unite and fight'—are abstract political demands, based on theoretically unsound foundations, since they do not adequately grasp the structurally different relations in which 'white' and 'black' labour stand in relation to capital.

Indeed, on this point, Wolpe may not have gone far enough. For a larger argument is involved here, even if only implicitly. Rex is arguing that the South African social system shows no strong or 'inevitable' tendencies to be gradually assimilated to the more 'rational' forms of 'free' labour, which Marx suggested was a necessary precondition for the establishment and reproduction of the

capitalist mode of production. Hence, he would argue, the racial fractioning of the South African working classes has a real and substantial basis, with pertinent effects at the economic, as well as at the political and ideological, level. Rex thus points to the need for a definition of 'the capitalist mode' which is able to deal with 'other types of capitalist and non-capitalist exploitation and accumulation'—that is, to a 'capitalist' system founded quite securely on forms of labour other than traditionally free and mobile labour. This formulation may be criticized as being, finally, too plurally descriptive. It avoids the necessity to specify the articulating mechanisms, and the modes of dominance, between these different 'types'. But Rex has clearly succeeded, once again, in putting into question an analysis predicated unquestioningly on a general and necessary classical path of capitalist development, with a classical and irreversible sequence of evolutionary stages. To put this more broadly: he opens up the crucial theoretical question of the teleological and evolutionary form in which Marx's work on the necessary preconditions and optimal line of development of the capitalist mode has been interpreted—from the famous assertion, in *The Communist Manifesto*, that 'The bourgeoisie . . . compels all nations on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production . . . it creates a world after its own image', through to the legendary discussion on the 'sequence of stages' which is often derived from the section on 'Pre-capitalist forms'—the so-called *Formen*—in the *Grundrisse* (Marx: 1964). Against this teleological extrapolation, it must be said that the fact of conquest, and thus the very different conditions in which pre-conquest social strata have been inserted into the capitalist mode, have not, on the whole played a central role in the versions of Marxist theory usually applied to such post-conquest societies. (The difficulty of deciding precisely what was the nature of the American slave systems—clearly inaugurated within yet separate from the expanding mercantile capitalist phase—is an aspect of the same theoretical problem (Genovese: 1965; Hindess and Hirst: 1975).

These, then, represent some of the gains which Rex's critique makes against a too-simple Marxism. What I am concerned to show, now, is how current Marxist theorizings on these questions have begun, through their own internal critique of what earlier passed as 'classical' or orthodox Marxism, to rectify some of the weaknesses correctly pinpointed by the critics of reductionism. These departures are, at once, rich and complex, often only at a rudimentary stage of formulation, and—as is often the case at a critical moment of paradigm-shift—locked in an intricate internal debate. Only certain indications of some of the main directions in this work can be provided in this review.

We might begin, here, by looking at one, very distinctive formulation with respect to the development of the social formations of Latin America, which not only defines itself within 'classical' Marxism, but which develops, in what is held to be a Marxist direction, one of the lines of argument which the critique by Rex and others has put in question: namely, the work of Gunder Frank, and recent critiques of Frank's work from within a transformed Marxist perspective.

One distinctive but seminal application of what is taken to be the Marxist

paradigm is to be found in the work of A. Gunder Frank. Frank's work was itself counterposed to the dominant and formative school of 'dependency' theorists, grouped around the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) which was established in 1948. This school adopted a more rigorously structural analysis to explain the 'underdevelopment' of the underdeveloped countries of the region. As against earlier developmentalist models, the ECLA 'school' insisted that development and underdevelopment had to be treated within the single framework of a world economic system. The 'underdeveloped' countries were the dependent sectors of such a world economy: as Furtado put it, 'the theory of underdevelopment turns out to be essentially a theory of dependence' (Furtado: 1971). This starting point within a global economic framework had much in common, in a 'broadly' Marxist way, with those writers who had attempted to deal with modern aspects of capitalist development on a world scale in terms of a 'theory of imperialism' (e.g. Lenin, Luxembourg, Hilferding and Bukharin). The ECLA theorists accepted some such general framework of imperialism, giving of course greater attention than the classical theorists did to the effects of this world system at its peripheries. They were not necessarily Marxist in any other sense. These general relations of dependency, they argued, had created internal structures promoting a form of what they called 'dependent capitalist development' in those sectors, and among those classes, closely linked with the imperialist chain, whilst marginalizing other sectors, including the great mass of the population, especially the peasantry. 'The differences between the internationalized sector and the non-industrialized or marginal sector are the direct result of capitalist expansion, and become a form of structural dualism.' (O'Brien: 1975). However, the 'school' promulgated a variety of different strategies for overcoming this externally-induced sectoral imbalance—often of a technical-economic, rather than of a political kind.

Frank certainly shares with the dependency theorists the necessity to begin from a world capitalist system in which development and underdevelopment were structurally related. However, he explicitly argued against the possibility of a genuine, indigenous programme of economic development, of, say, a national-bourgeois type, as a possible path for Latin America out of its phase of dependent development. And this argument was supported by a startling thesis, which takes us back to the problems posed earlier. Frank argued that Latin America had been thoroughly incorporated into capitalist world relations since the period of the conquest by the European powers in the sixteenth century. Its underdevelopment stemmed from this dependent nature of its early insertion into the world capitalist market. Implicit in this thesis was the view that no structural differences remained between the more and the less developed sectors of these dependent social formations. 'Dependency' he argued, was no recent phenomenon in the region. It was only the latest form of the long-standing 'satellitization' of the Latin-American economies within the framework of imperialist economic relations. The 'expansion of the capitalist system over the past centuries effectively and entirely penetrated even the most isolated sectors of the under-developed world' (Frank: 1969). The fundamental term for

understanding this penetration and subversion by capitalist relations which had brought about the structural coupling of development and underdevelopment was that of a single continuum—the 'metropolis-satellite polarization' . . . 'one and the same historical process of the expansion and development of capitalism' which continues to generate 'both economic development and structural underdevelopment'. This was the imperialist chain, which 'extends the capitalist link between the capitalist world and the national metropolises to the regional centres . . . and from these local centres and so on to the large landowners or merchants who expropriate surplus from small peasants or tenants, and sometimes even from these latter to the landless labourers exploited by them in turn' (Frank: 1969).

The most telling critique of Frank's work is offered in Ernesto Laclau's review essay, 'Feudalism and capitalism in Latin America', republished in a recent volume of essays (Laclau: 1977). Laclau's specific criticisms are easily resumed. The object of his critique is Frank's assertion that Latin America has 'been capitalist from the beginning'—a single process, which must, for Frank, be 'identical in all its aspects from the sixteenth to the twentieth century'. Laclau, first, criticizes Frank's conception of 'capitalism'. Frank defines this as a system of production for the market, of which profit forms the driving motive. This, Laclau argues, differs fundamentally from Marx's conception of mode of production in so far as it dispenses with Marx's principal criteria for defining a 'mode'—the relations of production. This 'error' leads Frank to assume that, wherever their is capital accumulation, then Marx's 'law'—the rapid and inevitable transformation of the social formation by capitalist relations—must follow. However, as Laclau shows, for Marx, the accumulation of commercial capital is perfectly compatible with the most varied modes of production and does not by any means presuppose the existence of a capitalist mode of production: e.g. 'However, not commerce alone, but also merchant's capital is older than the capitalist mode of production, is in fact historically the oldest free state of existence of capital' (Marx: 1974, p. 319–21). This leads Laclau to mount a further critique of Frank's lack of historical specificity—exploitative situations as different as the Chilean *inquilinos*, the Ecuadorian *huasipungeros*, West Indian plantation slaves and Manchester textile workers being, for all practical purposes, subsumed into a single relation, declared 'capitalist'. The same can be said in more detail of the troublesome case of plantation slavery in the New World. This is, of course, the site of a protracted, and still unresolved debate. Phillips (1969)—who, despite his offensive anti-slave viewpoint, Genovese correctly praises for a seminal analysis of the political economy of slavery—argued, long ago, that plantation slavery was a form of capitalism. That was, indeed, the basis of his objection to it (cf. Genovese: 1971). Genovese himself argues that slavery had a distinct set of exploitative relations—a 'seigneurial society . . . [which] created a unique society, neither feudal . . . nor capitalist' (Genovese: 1977). Hindess and Hirst constitute plantation slavery as its own distinctive 'mode', using primarily formal criteria. Williams, early on, subsequently Genovese, and Banaji among others, have concentrated on the

relationship between plantation slavery—whatever its characteristic 'mode'—and the global capitalist economy. Fogel and Engerman have recently described slavery as a profitable form of 'capitalist agriculture'. (Hindess and Hirst: 1977; Williams: 1966; Genovese: 1971; Banaji: 1977; Fogel and Engerman: 1974.)

Frank quotes Marx's observation in the *History of economic doctrines*—which describes the plantations as 'commercial speculations, centres of production for the world market'—as proof that Marx regarded them, too, as 'capitalist'. Laclau reminds us that Marx, pertinently, added, 'if only in a formal way'. Actually, Marx seemed to be arguing the opposite to Frank; for he insists the plantation slavery could only be 'formally capitalist', 'since slavery among the negroes excludes free-wage labour, which is the base on which capital production rests. However, those who deal in slave-trading are capitalists'. As Beechey (1978) has recently argued slavery certainly presupposed private property, a class of owners and a property-less class. However, whereas under capitalism the worker owns his own labour power which he sells as a commodity to the capitalist, slaveholders owned both the labour power and the slave. 'The slaveholder considers a Negro, whom he has purchased, as his property, not because the institution of slavery as such entitles him to that Negro, but because he has acquired him like any other commodity through sale and purchase.' (Marx: 1974, p. 776.) However, both the slave trade itself, and the extraction of the commodities so produced, were funded by mercantile capital and circulated within the global circuits of capital. As Beechey puts it, with great clarity: 'Slaveholders were both merchants, dealing with the purchase and sale of commodities on the world market, and slaveholders exploiting their slaves within the plantation system, which emerged as a specialized agricultural region, a kind of internal colony within the expanded world market.' (Beechey; 1978.)

What Marx was describing, then, was something radically different from Frank's interpretation: namely, an articulation between two modes of production, the one 'capitalist' in the true sense, the other only 'formally' so: the two combined through an articulating principle, mechanism or set of relations, because, as Marx observed, 'its beneficiaries participate in a world market in which the dominant productive sectors are already capitalist'. That is, the object of inquiry must be treated as a complex articulated structure which is, itself, 'structured in dominance'. Slave plantation owners thus participated in a general movement of the world capitalist system: but on the basis of an internal mode of production—slavery in its modern, plantation form—not itself 'capitalist' in character. This is a revolutionary proposition in the theoretical sense, since it departs from that very teleological reading of Marx which produced, in Frank, the indefensible thesis that Latin America has been 'capitalist' since the Conquest. What we have now, in opposition to the thesis of 'inevitable transformation' of pre-capitalist modes and their dissolution by capitalist relations, is the emergent theoretical problem of an articulation between different modes of production, structured in some relation of dominance. This leads on to the definition of a social formation which, at its economic level, may be composed of

several modes of production, 'structured in dominance' (cf., Althusser and Balibar: 1970; Hindess and Hirst: 1975, 1977; Poulantzas: 1973). This has provided the basis for an immense amount of formative work, especially on 'pre-capitalist modes of production', offering a more rigorous approach to that reading of Marx, rightly criticized—on this very point –by Rex, whilst retaining the systematic terms of a Marxist analysis. This work is, of course, pitched principally at the level of economic relations. Though it has clear consequences for other levels of the structure of social formations (class formations, alliances, political and ideological structures, etc.), these have not been spelled out (for example in Laclau's essay quoted here: though for related developments pertaining to these levels, see Laclau, and others referred to more extensively below). It has, for example, quite pertinent effects for any analysis of the way this articulated combination of modes inserts economic agents drawn from different ethnic groups into sets of economic relations which, while articulated into a complex unity, need not be conceptualized as either necessarily the same or inevitably destined to become so.

This emergent problematic constitutes perhaps the most generative new theoretical development in the field, affecting the analysis of racially-structured social formations. The emergent theoretical position is grounded by its proponents in a certain 're-reading' of the classical Marxist literature. It is part of that immense theoretical revolution constituted by the sophisticated return to the 'reading' of Marx's *Capital* which has had such a formative intellectual impact over the past decade. It is also being currently developed in a range of different theoretical fields. Laclau puts the essential argument in a strong form: 'the pre-capitalist character of the dominant relations of production in Latin America was not only not incompatible with production for the world market, but was actually intensified by the expansion of the latter.' Marx, in a passage less well known than *The Communist Manifesto* 'scenario' quoted earlier, spoke of the fact that: 'the circuit of industrial capital . . . crosses the commodity circulation of the most diverse modes of social production. . . . No matter whether commodities are the output of production based on slavery, of peasants . . . of State enterprise . . . or of half-savage hunting tribes . . . they come face to face with the monies and commodities in which industrial capital presents itself. . . . The character of the process of production from which they originate is immaterial. . . . They must be reproduced and to this extent the capitalist mode of production is conditional on modes of production lying outside of its own stage of development.' (Marx: 1956, p. 109.) Bettelheim who may appear to take a more 'classical' view, argues that the *dominant* tendency is towards the dissolution of other modes by the capitalist one. But this is often combined with a secondary tendency—that of 'conservation-dissolution': where non-capitalist modes, 'before they disappear are "restructured" (partly dissolved) and thus subordinated to the predominant capitalist relations (and so conserved)' (Bettelheim: 1972).

Using this schema, Wolpe shows that certain problems of the South African social formation, referred to earlier, which could not be satisfactorily explained within the older reading, and which Rex among others correctly

criticized, begin to be resolvable through the use of these new theoretical instruments and in a manner which throws significant light on the racial fracturing of class relations in South Africa. While the detailed outlines of this attempted 'solution' cannot be entered into here (Wolpe: 1975), its broader consequences are worth quoting. Wolpe suggests, for example, that the reliance of the capitalist sector in South Africa on the non-capitalist sectors in the African areas for both cheap labour supply and subsistence reproduction enables capital to pay for labour-power below the cost of its reproduction, whilst having always available a plentiful labour supply whose costs of subsistence it does not fully bear (Wolpe: 1972). He employs both the 'articulation' and the 'dissolution-conservation' variants of the thesis. In South Africa, the tendency of capital accumulation to dissolve other modes is cross-cut and blocked by the counter-acting tendencies to conserve the non-capitalist economies—on the basis that the latter are articulated in a subordinate position to the former. Where capitalism develops by means, in part, of its articulation with non-capitalist modes, 'the mode of political domination and the content of legitimating ideologies assume racial, ethnic and cultural forms and for the same reasons as in the case of imperialism . . . political domination takes on a colonial form' (Wolpe: 1975). He adds: 'The conservation of non-capitalist modes of production necessarily requires the development of ideologies and political policies which revolve around the segregation and preservation and control of African "tribal" societies'—that is, the relation assumes the forms of ideologies constructed around ethnic, racial, national and cultural ideological elements.

In short, the emergent theory of the 'articulation of different modes of production' begins to deliver certain pertinent theoretical effects for an analysis of racism at the social, political and ideological levels. It begins to deliver such effects—and this is the crucial point—not by deserting the level of analysis of economic relations (i.e. mode of production) but by posing it in its correct, necessarily complex, form. Of course, this may be a necessary, but not a sufficient starting point. In this respect, Wolpe's term 'requires' may go too far, suggesting a necessary correspondence, of a too-functionalist kind, between the structure of modes of production and the specific forms of political domination and ideological legitimation. The level of economic analysis, so redefined, may not supply sufficient conditions in itself for an explanation of the emergence and operation of racism. But, at least, it provides a better, sounder point of departure than those approaches which are obliged to desert the economic level, in order to produce 'additional factors' which explain the origin and appearance of racial structuring at other levels of the social formation. In this respect, at least, the theoretical advances briefly outlined here have the merit of respecting what we would call two cardinal premises of Marx's 'method'. The materialist premise—that the analysis of political and ideological structures must be grounded in their material conditions of existence; and the historical premise—that the specific forms of these relations cannot be deduced, *a priori*, from this level but must be made historically specific 'by supplying those further delineations which explain their *differentiae sp.*' Both premises are well expressed in one

of the most justly famous passages from *Capital*: 'The specific economic form, in which unpaid labour-surplus is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows up out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form . . .' (the materialist premise). But 'This does not prevent the same economic basis—the same from the standpoint of its main conditions—due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environments, racial relations, external historical influences, etc., from showing infinite variations and gradations in appearance, which can be ascertained only by analysis of the empirically given circumstances' (the historical premise), (Marx: 1974, p. 791–2). Both premises are indeed required, if the conditions of theoretical adequacy are to be met: each, on its own, is not sufficient. The first, without the second, may lead us straight back into the *impasse* of economic reductionism; the second, without the first, snares us in the toils of historical relativism. Marx's method, properly understood and applied, provides us with the conditions—though not, of course, the guarantee—of a theoretical adequacy which avoids both. (For a further elaboration of the 'basic premises' of Marx's method, see, Johnson, et al.: 1978; for a condensed version of the argument outlined by Wolpe, as applied to Latin-American and Carribbean social formations, see, Hall: 1978.)

The application of the 'articulation' thesis, briefly outlined here, has had revolutionary theoretical consequences in other fields of inquiry, which can only be shortly noted here since they fall outside of our principal concern. They can be found, in the English context, in the work on 'pre-capitalist modes' and social formations, by Hindess and Hirst (1975, 1977); in Banaji (1977); in the recent work on 'colonial modes of production' (e.g., Alavi: 1975); in recent issues of *The review of African political economy*, *Critique of anthropology* and *Economy and society*; also, in a related form, in the renewed debate about 'transition', sparked off by the reissue of the formative set of essays on *The transition from feudalism to capitalism* (Hilton: 1976); and in the forthcoming work on Jamaica by Post. In France, it is most noteworthy in the context of the revived interest in the new 'economic anthropology' to which such writers as Godelier, Meillassoux, Terray, Rey and Dupré have made outstanding contributions (cf., the selection by Seddon, 1978). (For interpretive overviews and critiques in English, see, *inter alia:* Clammer, 1975; Bradby, 1975; Foster-Carter, 1978; Seddon, 1978; Wolpe, 1978.) Meillassoux principally deals with 'self-sustaining' agricultural social formations, and their dissolution-transformation, when they have grafted on to them production for external 'capitalist' markets. This has certain theoretical consequences for those articulated social formations where the non-capitalist sector is 'able to fulfil functions that capitalism prefers not to assume in the under-developed countries' (cf., Wolpe's development of this argument, above)—and thus for such societies as the South African one, where (as Clammer extrapolates) 'people who are obliged to become wage-labourers

in a neo- and quasi-colonial situation are forced back on the "traditional" sector to obtain precisely those services which the capitalist does not provide'. Clammer correctly points out that this revives the 'dual sector' analysis—though in a radically new form; since (Meillassoux argues) it is precisely the ideological function of 'dual sector' theories to 'conceal the exploitation of the rural community, integrated as an organic component of capitalist production' (Meillassoux: 1972, 1974; for a more extended critique, see Clammer: 1975).

Rey's work deals principally with 'lineage' societies and, like Meillassoux derives from African fieldwork: but wider extrapolations of a theoretical nature have been made from this terrain (Rey: 1971, 1973, 1975; Rey and Dupré: 1973). It differs from other work in the French 'economic anthropology' tradition by being concerned, in part, with problems of extending the 'articulation' argument —as the title of his second book indicates—to the question of class alliances, and thus to the political level. Rey also departs somewhat from the problematic of 'articulation'. He is concerned with the 'homoficence' of capitalism—what Foster-Carter calls the problem of the 'parallelism of action' of capitalism (cf., Foster-Carter: 1978; also for a more substantive review/critique both of Rey and of the 'articulation' literature). A major distinction in Rey's work is, however, the attempt to periodize this 'parallelism of action' as a process, into three principal stages, marked by the character of the articulation in each. These are: (i) the period of the slave trade, where the European market acquires supplies, through relations of exchange, 'essentially by playing on the internal contradictions of the lineage social formations'; (ii) a transitional phase—colonialism in the full sense—where capitalism takes root, grounding itself in the pre-capitalist mode and gradually subordinating it; (iii) a new type of social formation, with the capitalist mode of production internally dominant; frequently, then, dependent on a metropolitan capitalism (neo-colonialism). To each phase a different set of class alliances corresponds. Rey is also much concerned with the way the lineage societies are interrupted and disarticulated by the exterior force of capital—often through violence and what Marx called the 'fact of conquest' (Foster-Carter: 1978). Rey sees the 'rooting' of capitalism in these pre-capitalist modes as possible only with the implantation of 'transitional modes'—precisely the function of the colonial period. While giving to this phase a seminal role not normally accorded to it, or even distinctly remarked, Rey's approach leaves the history of capital and the mechanism of transition as one largely 'written outside such social formations' and he tends to treat the relations of exchange as the central articulating feature (for a wider critique, see, Clammer: 1975; Foster-Carter: 1978; Terray: 1972; Bradby: 1975).

The term articulation is a complex one, variously employed and defined in the literature here referred to. No clear consensus of conceptual definition can be said to have emerged so far. Yet it remains the site of a significant theoretical rupture (*coupure*) and intervention. This is the intervention principally associated with the work of Althusser and the 'school' of structuralist Marxism. The term is widely employed, in a range of contexts, especially in the *For Marx* essays, and the succeeding volume, with Balibar, in *Reading Capital*

(1965; 1970). At least two different applications are particularly relevant to our concerns here (though, interestingly, the term is not defined in the 'Glossary', prepared by Ben Brewster and sanctioned by Althusser himself, which appeared in the English editions of both books). Aside from these particular usages, the term has a wider reference of both a theoretical and a methodological nature.

Foster-Carter correctly suggests that is is a metaphor used 'to indicate relations of linkage and effectivity between different levels of all sorts of things'—though he might have added that these things require to be linked because, though connected, they are not the same. The unity which they form is thus not that of an identity, where one structure perfectly recapitulates or reproduces or even 'expresses' another; or where each is reducible to the other; or where each is defined by the same determinations or have exactly the same conditions of existence; or even where each develops according to the effectivity of the same conditions of existence; or even where each develops according to the effectivity of the same contradiction (e.g. the 'principal contradiction' so beloved, as the warrant and guarantee of all arguments, by so-called 'orthodox' Marxists). The unity formed by this combination or articulation, is always, necessarily, a 'complex structure': a structure in which things are related, as much through their differences as through their similarities. This requires that the mechanisms which connect dissimilar features must be shown—since no 'necessary correspondence' or expressive homology can be assumed as given. It also means—since the combination is a structure (an articulated combination) and not a random association—that there will be structured relations between its parts, i.e., relations of dominance and subordination. Hence, in Althusser's cryptic phrase, a 'complex unity, structured in dominance'.

Many of the classic themes of the Althusserian intervention are resumed in and through his various uses of this term: for example, his argument that Marx's 'unity' is not the essentialist 'expressive unity' to be found in Hegel, and that, therefore, Marx's dialectic is not merely an inversion, but a theoretical advance over Hegel. This is the critique against conceiving Marx's 'totality' as an 'expressive totality', which grounds Althusser's early critique of the attempts to rescue Marx's work from 'vulgar materialism' by way of a detour through Hegelianism (see Althusser's *For Marx*, expecially the chapter 'On the Marxian dialectic'). It also founds Althusser's critique of the attempt to read Marx as if he meant that all the structures of a social formation could be reduced to an 'expression' of the economic base; or as if all the instances of any historical conjucture moved in a relation of direct correspondence with the terms of the 'principal contradiction' (that of the 'base', between forces and relations of production)—this is Althusser's critique (the opposite of that against Hegelian idealism) against 'economic reductionism'. Marx's 'complex unity', Althusser argues, is neither that in which everything perfectly expresses or corresponds to everything else; nor that in which everything is reducible to an expression of 'the Economic'. It operates, instead, on the terrain of articulation. What we find, in any particular historical conjuncture (his example, in 'Contradiction and overdetermination' in *For Marx*, is Russia, 1917) is not the unrolling of the

'principal contradiction', evenly, throughout all the other levels of the social formation, but, in Lenin's terms, the 'merger', 'rupture', condensation of contradictions, each with its own specificity and periodization—'absolutely dissimilar currents, absolutely heterogeneous class interests, absolutely contrary political and social strivings'—which have 'merged . . . in a strikingly "harmonious" manner' (Lenin, *Letters from afar*, no. 1). Such conjunctures are not so much 'determined' as overdetermined, i.e., they are the product of an articulation of contradictions, not directly reduced to one another.

Althusser and Balibar, then, employ this general theoretical concept in a variety of different contexts. They conceive of a social formation as composed of a number of instances—each with a degree of 'relative autonomy' from one another—articulated into a (contradictory) unity. The economic instance or level, itself, is the result of such a 'combination': the articulation between forces and relations of production. In particular social formations, especially in periods of 'transition', social formations themselves may be an 'articulated combination' of different modes with specified, shifting terms of hierarchical ordering between them. The term also figures in the Althusserian epistemology, which insists that knowledge and the production of knowledge are not directly produced, as an empiricist reflection of the real 'in thought', but have a specificity and autonomy of their own—thought, 'established on and articulated to the real world of a given historical society' (Althusser and Balibar: 1970, p. 42). The scientific analysis of any specific social formation depends on the correct grasping of its principle of articulation: the 'fits' between different instances, different periods and epochs, indeed different periodicities, e.g., times, histories. The same principle is applied, not only synchronically, between instances and periodizations within any 'moment' of a structure, but also, diachronically, between different 'moments'. This connects with Althusser's objections to the notion of a given and necessary sequence of stages, with a necessary progression built into them. He insists on the non-teleological reading of Marx, on the notion of 'a discontinuous succession of modes of production' (Althusser and Balibar: 1970, p. 204), whose combined succession—i.e., articulation through time—requires to be demonstrated. Indeed, 'scientificity' itself is associated with 'the problem of the forms of variation of the articulation' of the instances in every social structure (Althusser and Balibar: 1970, p. 207). The same is said of the relations between the economic and the political and ideological forms of their appearance. This, too, is thought on the analogy of an articulation between structures which do not directly express or mirror each other. Hence, the classical problem for Marxism—the problem of determinancy of the structure, the 'determination in the last instance by the economic' (which distinguishes Marxism from other types of social scientific explanation)—is itself redefined as a problem of 'articulation'. What is 'determined' is not the inner form and appearance of each level, but the mode of combination and the placing of each instance in an articulated relation to the other elements. It is this 'articulation of the structure' as the global effect of the structure itself—or what has been called, by Balibar, the matrix role of the mode of production'—which defines the Althusserian concept

of determination: as a structural causality (Althusser and Balibar: 1970, p. 220). It is this conception, on the other hand, which has provided the basis for the critique by Hirst and Hindess (1975) of Althusser's 'determinacy of articulation by the structure' as, itself, an 'expressive totality'—a Spinozian eternity. Dealing with the example of the relation between feudal ground rent and the feudal relation of lordship and servitude, Balibar treats it as a reduced instance of the articulation of *two* different instances, an 'economic' instance and a 'political' instance. Likewise, Balibar defines the concept of mode of production as, itself, the result of a variant combination of elements (object of labour, means of labour, labour-power). What changes, in each epoch, is not the elements, which are invariant (in the definitional sense), but the way they are combined: their articulation. While it is not possible to 'tell' the whole of the Althusserian intervention through the terms of a single concept, like articulation, it must be by now apparent that the concept has a wide and extensive reference in the works of the structuralist Marxists.

Though we cannot go into the theoretical and methodological background to the emergence of the concept, we can at least note in passing, two pertinent provenances. The first is that of structuralist linguistics, which provided the master-model of a substantial part of the whole 'structuralist' venture. Saussure, the 'founder' of this school, who argued that language is not a reflection of the world but produces meaning through the articulation of linguistic systems upon real relations, insists that meaning is no mere 'correlation between signifier and signified, but perhaps more essentially an act of simultaneously cutting out two amorphous masses, two "floating kingdoms" . . . language is the domain of *articulations*' (Barthes: 1967). More pertinent, perhaps is the warrant which Althusser and others have found, in Marx's most extensive 'methodological' text—the 1857 *Introduction to the Grundrisse*—for a theory of the social formation as what Marx himself calls an 'articulated hierarchy' (Gliederung)—or, as Althusser translates him, 'an organic hierarchized whole'. 'In all forms of society' Marx wrote 'it is a determinate production and its relations which assign every other production and its relations their rank and influence' (Marx: 1973). If this represents a slender warrant for the construction of the whole structuralist edifice, it is certainly clear that, in that text, Marx was decisively opposing himself to any notion of a simple identity between the different relations of capital (production, circulation, exchange, consumption). He spoke, at length, of the complexity of determinations between these relations, the sum of whose articulations, nevertheless, provided him (in this text) with the object of his inquiry (adequately constructed in a theoretical sense); and, in *Capital*, with the key to the unravelling of the necessarily complex nature of the relations between the different circuits operating within the capitalist mode (cf., Hall: 1973). This is the real burden of Marx's extensive criticisms in the 1857 *Introduction* against treating the different relations which compose the capitalist mode as a 'regular syllogism'—an 'immediate identity'. 'To regard society as one single subject is . . . to look at it wrongly; speculatively.' 'The conclusion we reach is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they all form

the members of a totality of distinctions within a unity.' (Marx: 1973.) In the same way, there seems to be a clear warning issued against any simple notion of an evolutionary sequence or succession of stages in that development: '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. The point is not the historic position of the economic relations in the succession of different forms of society.' This last point indicates what we would want to call (in addition to those already signalled) the third premise of Marx's method: the structural premise. It is, above all, the employment of the structural premise in the later, mature work of Marx, and the manner in which this has been appropriated and developed by Althusser and the structuralists, which produces, as one of its theoretical results, the extensive-intensive concept of articulation.

The term itself is by no means unproblematic, indicating here a certain approach, rather than providing in itself a theoretical resolution to the problems it indexes. It has been subjected to a searching critique. In itself, the term has an ambiguous meaning, for, in English, it can mean both 'joining up' (as in the limbs of the body, or an anatomical structure) and 'giving expression to' (cf: Foster-Carter: 1978). In Althusserian usage, it is primarily the first sense which is intended. There are, in any case, theoretical objections to the notion that one structure 'gives expression to' another: since this would be tantamount to seeing the second structure as an epiphenomenon of the first (i.e., a reductionist conception), and would involve treating a social formation as an 'expressive totality' —precisely the object of Althusser's initial critique of Hegelianism. Some notion of an 'expressive' link—say, between the economic and political structures of a society remains, even in Althusserian usage, but this is elaborated by other terms which break up or break into any residual sense of a perfect and necessary 'correspondence'. Thus, in addition to insisting on the specificity, the non-reductiveness, the 'relative autonomy', of each level of the society, Althusser always uses such terms as 'displacement', 'dislocation', 'condensation', in order to demonstrate that the 'unity' which these different relations form are not univocal, but mislead through 'over-determination'. Another criticism, then, is that the concept of 'articulation' may simply leave two dissimilar things yoked together by a mere external or arbitrary connexion: what Marx once called 'independent, autonomous neighbours . . . not grasped in their unity' (Marx: 1973, p. 90). Althusser attempts to overcome this 'mere juxtaposition' by using the concept of 'over-determination', and by always speaking of 'articulation' as involving hierarchical as well as lateral relations i.e., relations of dominance and subordination (cf: Marx's discussion of money in different historical epochs, which does not 'wade its way through all economic relations' but is defined by where it plays a 'dominant' or a 'subordinate' role). This, however, leads on to other criticisms. The schema, constructed around articulation has, often with justice, been described as too 'formalist'. Thus, in the full-blown 'structural causality' of Althusser and Balibar's *Reading Capital*, the 'economic' determines 'in the last instance' not substantively but principally by 'giving the index of

effectivity' in the structure to one or another level: i.e., in a *formal* way. (But Althusser retreats from some of these more formalist excesses (Althusser: 1976).) While the whole attempt to develop such an analysis is predicated on the need for an approach which is not reductive, it has been criticized as giving rise to a conception of 'structure' which—since it contains within itself all the conditions of its own functioning—is itself that 'expressive totality' which Althusser seeks to avoid (cf: Hindess and Hirst: 1975; Hirst: 1977). The framework is also open to the criticism that it leaves the internal elements of any 'structural combination' unchanged with change or transition being limited to the variations (different articulations) through which the 'invariant elements' are combined. This weakens the historicity of the approach—contravening what we have called the historical premise of Marx's work (but again see Althusser: 1976). This notion of the variation between invariant elements has resulted in a very formalist way of defining a 'mode of production' (following, especially, Balibar): so that some of the real advances made in attempting to ground analysis in a more developed and sophisticated understanding of modes of production and their combination can easily be vitiated by a sort of formalist hunt for one, separate, 'mode of production' after another. Nevertheless, we would continue to insist on the potentially generative value of the term and its cognate concepts, which give us a start in thinking the complex unity and *differentiae specificae* of social formations, without falling back on a naive or 'vulgar materialist' reductionism, on the one hand, or a form of sociological pluralism on the other.

So far, I have been speaking, exclusively, of the application of the term 'articulation' to the economic structure of complex social formations. But I have also said that the social formation itself can be analysed as an 'articulated hierarchy'. At the economic level, this may involve the articulation of a social formation around more than one mode of production. Some of the political and ideological features of such societies can then be explained with reference to this particular combination. But it is also possible to conceptualize the different levels of a social formation as an articulated hierarchy. Since we must assume no 'necessary correspondence'—no perfect replication, homology of structures, expressive connexion—between these different levels, but are nevertheless required to 'think' the relations between them as an 'ensemble of relations' (marked by what Marx in his 1857 *Introduction*, when dealing with these issues, defined as the 'law of uneven development')—then it is, once more, to the nature of the articulations between them to which we must turn. The attention—of a more detailed and analytic kind—to the nature of modes of production helps to ground these other aspects of the social formation more adequately at the level of the economic structures (the materialist premise). However, we cannot thereby deduce *a priori* the relations and mechanisms of the political and ideological structures (where such features as racism make a decisive reappearance) exclusively from the level of the economic. The economic level is the necessary but not sufficient condition for explaining the operations at other levels of the society (the premise of non-reductionism). We cannot assume an express relation of 'necessary correspondence' between them (the premise of historical specificity).

These are, as Marx put it, 'a product of historical relations and possess their full validity only for and within these relations'. This is an important, indeed a critical qualification. It requires us to demonstrate—rather than to assume, *a priori*—what the nature and degree of 'correspondence' is, in any specific historical case. Thus, through this opening, some of the criticisms which, as was noted earlier, are made from the perspective of 'sociological' explanations—for example the requirement to be historically specific—begin to be met, within the framework of this seminal revision.

Here, however, different positions within the general problematic of 'articulation' can be identified. Some theorists argue that all we can do is to deal with each level, in terms of its own specificity, and the 'conditions of existence' which must be fulfilled for it to function (e.g. the economic relations of the capitalist mode require, as a condition of existence, some extra-economic, juridical framework, which secures the 'contract' between buyer and seller of labour power). But, it is argued, the internal forms and specificities of the extra-economic levels can neither be prescribed nor identified from the economic level which 'requires it', as a formal necessity of its functioning. This is tantamount to a theory of the 'autonomy' (not 'relative autonomy') of the different levels (Hirst: 1977; Cutler, et al.: 1977). This, however, fails to deal with social formations as a 'complex unity' (Marx's 'unity of many determinations').

Other approaches recognize that there may well be 'tendential combinations': combinations which, while not prescribed in the fully determinist sense, are the 'preferred' combinations, sedimented and solidified by real historical development over time. Thus, as is clear from, say, the Latin-American case, there is no 'necessary correspondence' between the development of a form of capitalism and the political forms of parliamentary democracy. Capitalism can arise on very different political foundations. Engels, himself, showed how capitalism can also harness and adapt very different legal systems to its functions. This does not prevent us from arguing that the advent of capitalism has frequently (tendentially) been accompanied by the formation of bourgeois parliamenatary democratic regimes: or even from accepting Lenin's percipient observation that parliamentary democracy provides 'the "best possible" political shell for capitalism'. We must, however, see these 'combinations' as historically specific, rather than specified *a priori*: as 'laws of tendency'—which can be countermanded by 'counteracting tendencies'. To take a pertinent example: in Europe, the rise of capitalism is consequent upon the destruction of feudal ties and the formation of 'free labour'—of 'labour power' as a commodity. It is hard to think of a capitalist formation in which there would be no form of labour-power available to capital in its 'free' form. This, in turn, means that, whatever is the specific legal form with which capitalist development 'corresponds', it must be one in which the concept of the juridical 'contract' between 'free persons' appears, which can legally regulate the forms of contract which 'free labour' require. This 'requirement' is something more than a mere, empty, or formal 'condition of existence'. However, this does not mean that the tendency to combine capitalism with 'free labour' cannot, under specific historical conditions

be cross-cut or countermanded by a counteracting tendency: namely, the possibility of certain of the conditions of existence of capitalism being effectively secured by combining 'free labour' with certain forms of 'unfree' or 'forced' labour. Once we move away from European to post-Conquest or post-colonial societies, this combination—free and 'unfree' labour, on the basis of a combination of different modes of production—becomes more and more the paradigm case. This leaves almost everything of importance, still, to be done in developing a better understanding of the 'laws of motion' of capitalist formations which are structured in this alternative manner. Naturally, it has consequences, then, for political and legal structures. In such 'deviant' social formations (deviant only in the sense of departing from the European paradigm-case), there will be political structures which combine (or may combine) forms of parliamentary democracy with other forms of political representation—or legal structures which elaborate more than one form of citizen status. The 'articulation' of 'free' and 'forced' labour, the combination of 'equal' and 'restricted' franchises, the position of the Chiefs and the Bantustan 'internal colonies', and the different legal statuses of 'white' and 'black' citizens, in the South African social formation, perfectly represent the elements of such a 'variant' case—one which is in no sense 'non-capitalist'; provided, that is, we read Marx's 'laws of development and motion' as laws of tendency (and countertendency) rather than as *a priori* laws of necessity.

Where, then, the relations between the different levels of a social formation are concerned, one needs additional concepts, i.e., to supply further determinations, to those which have been mobilized for the analysis of the economic 'mode of production' levels. And one needs to acknowledge that the economic level, alone, cannot prescribe what those levels will be like and how they will operate—even if their mechanisms are not fully specifiable without attending to the level of the economic. Here, the work of Althusser, and of the 'Althusserians'—for example, Poulantzas's work on 'the State'—requires to be supplemented by the work of another Marxist theorist whose elaboration, at this level, constitutes a contribution to the development of a rigorously non-reduction Marxism of the very first importance. This is the work of Gramsci. Gramsci's work is more fragmentary (much of it written in prison, under the eyes of the censor, in one of Mussolini's jails), far less 'theorized' than that of Althusser. Gramsci has been formative for the development of Althusser's problematic: though, since in certain respects Gramsci remained a 'historicist', the relationship between Althusser and Gramsci is a complex one. In a recent review of this relationship, we have expressed it in terms of Gramsci providing the 'limit case' of historicity for Marxist structuralism (Hall, et al.: 1977).

We cannot elaborate in any depth, here, on Gramsci's concepts (for a review, see: Hall, et al.: 1977; Anderson: 1977; Mouffe: 1978). The central concept in his work is that of hegemony. Hegemony is that state of 'total social authority' which, at certain specific conjunctures, a specific class alliance wins, by a combination of 'coercion' and 'consent', over the whole social formation, and its dominated classes: not only at the economic level, but also at the level

of political and ideological leadership, in civil, intellectual and moral life as well as at the material level: and over the terrain of civil society as well as in and through the condensed relations of the State. This 'authority and leadership' is, for Gramsci, not a given *a priori* but a specific historical 'moment'—one of unusual social authority. It represents the product of a certain mastery of the class struggle, certainly, but it is still subject to the class struggle and the 'relations of social forces' in society, of which its 'unstable equilibrium' is only one, provisional, outcome or result. Hegemony is a state of play in the class struggle which has, therefore, to be continually worked on and reconstructed in order to be maintained, and which remains a contradictory conjuncture. The important point, for Gramsci, is that, under hegemonic conditions, the organization of consent (by the dominated classes to the 'leadership' of the dominant class alliance) takes precedence (though it does not obliterate) the exercise of domination through coercion. In such conditions, the class struggle tends to assume the form, not of a 'frontal assault' on the bastions of the State ('war of manoeuvre') but of a more protracted, strategic and tactical struggle, exploiting and working on a number of different contradictions (Gramsci's 'war of position'). A state of hegemony enables the ruling class alliance to undertake the enormous task of modifying, harnessing, securing and elaborating the 'superstructure' of society in line with the long-term requirements of the development of the mode of production—e.g. capital accumulation on an expanded scale. It enables such a class alliance to undertake the educative and formative tasks of raising the whole social formation to what he calls a 'new level of civilization', favouring the expanded regime of capital. This is no immediate and direct imposition of the narrow, short-term, 'corporate' class interests of a single class on society. it forges that unity between economic, political and ideological objectives such that it can place 'all the questions around which the struggle rages on a "universal" not a corporative level, thereby creating a hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups'. This is what Gramsci calls the 'educative and formative role of the State. . . . Its aim is always that of creating new and higher types of civilization; of adapting the "civilization" and the morality of the broadest popular masses to the necessities of the continuous development of the economic apparatus of production'—the formation of a 'national-popular will', based on a particular relationship between the dominant and dominated classes. This, then, depends, not on a presumed, necessary or *a priori* correspondence between (economic) structure and (political and ideological) superstructures but precisely on those historically specific mechanisms—and the concrete analysis of those historical 'moments'—through which such a formative relationship *between* structure and superstructures comes to be forged. For Gramsci, the object of analysis is always the specificity of this 'structure-superstructure' complex—though as a historically concrete articulation. 'It is the problem of the relations between structure and superstructure which must be accurately posed and resolved if the forces which are active in history . . . are to be correctly analysed.' This is a rigorously non-reductionist conception: 'How then could the whole system of superstructures be understood as distinctions

within politics, and the introduction of the concept of distinction into a philosophy of praxis hence be justified? But can one really speak of a dialectic of distincts, and how is the concept of a circle joining the levels of the superstructure to be understood? Concept of "historical bloc", i.e. . . . unity of opposites and distincts. Can one introduce the criterion of distinction into the structure too?' Gramsci, clearly, answers these questions in the affirmative. He is especially sharp against any form of vulgar economism: 'It is therefore necessary to combat economism not only in the theory of historiography, but also and especially in the theory and practice of politics. In this field, the struggle can and must be carried on by developing the concept of hegemony.' (All the quotes are from two essays in Gramsci: 1971.)

Gramsci's theoretical contribution has only begun, recently, to be recognized—though his role as an outstanding militant in Italian politics in the 1920s and 1930s has long been acknowledged. His analysis bears, in a specially rich and productive way, on the analysis of the great bourgeois social formations of a developed capitalist type in Europe—Western Europe, where a reductionist economistic analysis, clearly, will not suffice to account for the depth of the transformations involved. Perhaps for this very reason, he has been thought of as, *par excellence*, the Marxist theorist of 'Western capitalism'. His work has, therefore, hardly been applied or employed in the analysis of non-European formations. There are, however, very strong grounds for thinking that it may have particular relevance for non-European social formations—for three, separate reasons. First, Gramsci may help to counteract the overwhelming weight of economism (Marxist and non-Marxist) which has characterized the analysis of post-Conquest and 'colonial' societies. Perhaps because the weight of imperialist economic relations has been so powerfully visible, these formations have virtually been held to be explainable by an application of 'imperialism' as essentially a purely 'economic' process. Second, these societies present problems as to the relation in the 'structure-superstructure complex' equal in complexity to those about which Gramsci wrote. Naturally, no simple transfer of concepts would be advisable here: Gramsci would be the first to insist on historical specificity, on difference. Third, Gramsci viewed the problem of 'hegemony' from within the specific history of the Italian social formation. This gave him a particular, and highly relevant, perspective on the problem. For long periods Italy was marked precisely by the absence of 'hegemony': by an alliance of ruling classes governing through domination rather than through hegemonic class leadership (direction). So his work is equally relevant for societies in which, according to the rhythm and punctuation of the class struggle, there has been significant movements into and out of a phase of 'hegemonic direction'. Moreover, Italy was/is a society brutally marked by the law of uneven development: with massive industrial capitalist development to the North, massive underdevelopment to the South. This raises the question of how the contradictions of the Italian social formation are articulated through different modes of production (capitalist and feudal), and through class alliances which combine elements from different social orders. The problem of the State, and

the question of strategic alliances between the industrial proletariat and the peasantry, the 'play' of traditional and advanced ideologies, and the difficulties these provide in the formation of a 'national-popular will' all make his analysis of Italy specially relevant to colonial societies.

Gramsci's work has recently been taken up and developed in a structuralist manner—especially in Althusser's essay on 'Ideological State apparatuses' (Althusser: 1971). This seminal essay differs from Gramsci's work, specifically, in posing the problem in terms of 'reproduction'. But the concerns which underlie this approach are not all that distant from those of Gramsci. The economic relations of production must themselves be 'reproduced'. This reproduction is not simply economic, but social, technical and, above all, ideological. This is another way of putting Gramsci's observation that, to achieve its full development, capitalist social relations require to be coupled with an elaborate development and elaboration at the 'non-economic' levels of politics, civil society and culture, through moral, intellectual and ideological leadership. Althusser then shares with Gramsci a classical concern for the manner in which the 'hegemony' of a ruling class alliance is secured, at these other levels, through a formative and educative class leadership or authority over the social formation as a whole. Both of them argue that this enlarged or expanded hegemony is specific to the institutions, apparatuses and relations of the so-called 'superstructures' of the State and civil society. Both Althusser and Gramsci, then, insist that ideology, while itself a contradictory site and stake in the class struggle, has a specific function in securing the conditions for the expanded reproduction of capital. It is, therefore, a pertinent, and distinctive level of struggle, where leadership is secured and contested: with mechanisms and sites of struggle 'relatively autonomous'. Both also maintain that 'ideology' is not a simple form of false consciousness, to be explained as a set of myths or simple false constructions in the head. All societies require specific ideologies, which provide those systems of meaning, concepts, categories and representations which make sense of the world, and through which men come to 'live' (albeit unconsciously, and through a series of 'misrecognitions'), in an imaginary way, their relation to the real, material conditions of their existence (which are only representable to them, as modes of consciousness, in and through ideology). Althusser sometimes tends to represent ideology as rather too functionally secured to the rule of the dominant classes: as if all ideology is, by definition, operative within the horizon of the 'dominance ideas' of the ruling class. For Gramsci, ideologies are thought of in a more contradictory way—really, as sites and stakes in the class struggle. What interests Gramsci is how the existing ideologies—the 'common sense' of the fundamental classes—which are themselves the complex result of previous moments and resolutions in the ideological class struggle, can be so actively *worked upon* so as to transform them into the basis of a more conscious struggle, and form of intervention in the historical process. Both insist, however, that ideologies are not simply 'in the head', but are material relations—what Lenin called 'ideological social relations'—which shape social actions, function through concrete institutions and apparatuses, and are materialized through practices. Gramsci

insists on the process which transforms these great 'practical ideologies' of fundamental social classes. Althusser, for his part, adds that ideologies operate by constituting concrete individuals as the 'social subjects' of ideological discourses —the process of what, following Laclau, he calls 'interpellating subjects'.

These propositions have recently been taken forward in a seminal intervention by Laclau (1977). In the essays on 'Populism' and 'Fascism', Laclau argues that the individual elements of these ideologies (e.g. nationalism, militarism, racism, 'the people', etc.) have, in themselves, no necessary class-belonging 'no necessary class connotation'. We cannot assume, *a priori* that these elements necessarily 'belong' to any specific class, or indeed that a class, as a single homogeneous entity, has a single unitary and uncontradictory 'world view' which, as Poulantzas says, it carries around with it, through history, 'like a number plate on its back' (Poulantzas: 1973). Ideologies, as concrete discursive formations do exhibit a peculiar 'unity' of their own. This unity arises, first, through what Laclau calls 'condensation': where each element 'fulfils a role of condensation with respect to others. When a familial interpellation, for example, evokes a political interpellation, or an aesthetic interpellation, and when each of these isolated interpellations operates as a symbol of the others, we have a relatively unified ideological discourse'. (This has been defined as 'ideological unity' through a process of connotative condensation—cf., O'Shea: 1978.) Secondly, unity is secured through 'the specific interpellation which forms the axis and organizing principle of all ideology. In trying to analyse the ideological level of a determinate social formation, our first task must be to reconstruct the interpellative structures which constitute it'. If separate ideological elements have no necessary class belonging, and classes do not have paradigmatic ideologies assigned or ascribed to them, what then is the relationship between classes and ideologies? As might be assumed, this relation is understood in terms of the way the class struggle articulates the various ideological discourses. 'Articulation requires . . . the existence of non-class contents—interpellations and contradictions—which constitute the raw materials on which class ideological practices operate. The ideology of the dominant class, precisely because it is dominant, interpellates not only the members of that class but also members of the dominated class.' It succeeds to the extent that it articulates 'different ideologies to its hegemonic project by an elimination of their antagonistic character'. Ideologies are therefore transformed 'through the class struggle, which is carried out through the production of subjects and the articulation/disarticulation of discourses'. This follows Gramsci's general line, which argued that ideologies cannot be reduced to the transparent, coherent 'class interests' of their class-subjects, and that ideologies are transformed, not by one class imposing a unitary 'world vision' upon all other classes, but by 'a process of distinction and of change in the relative weight possessed by the elements of the old ideology . . . what was secondary or subordinate or even incidental becomes of primary importance, it becomes the nucleus of a new doctrinal and ideological ensemble' (Mouffe: 1978; see also Mouffe for a seminal elaboration of this argument in relation to Gramsci).

There are problems with Laclau's tentative formulations: for example, what are 'class practices' which can operate to transform ideologies but which are, themselves, presumably, without any specific ideological elements which 'belong' to them? Despite these difficulties, these theorists begin to give us the tentative elements by means of which we can attempt to construct a non-reductionist theory of the super-structural or extra-economic aspects of social formations—once again, powered through the use of the concept of articulation.

What I have tried to do in this paper is to document the emergence of a new theoretical paradigm, which takes its fundamental orientation from the problematic of Marx's, but which seeks, by various theoretical means, to overcome certain of the limitations—economism, reductionism, 'a priorism', a lack of historical specificity—which have beset certain traditional appropriations of Marxism, which still disfigure the contributions to this field by otherwise distinguished writers, and which have left Marxism vulnerable and exposed to effective criticism by many different variants of economistic monism and sociological pluralism. This is a survey of an emergent field, not a comprehensive critical account. It must in no sense be assumed that the solutions attempted have been fully demonstrated, or that they are as yet adequately developed or without serious weaknesses and lacunae. With respect to those racially-structured social formations, which form the principal objects of inquiry in this collection, the problematic has hardly begun to be applied. Thus all that I have been able to do is to indicate certain strategic points of departure in such a potential field of application, certain protocols of theoretical procedure. Specifically, there is as yet no adequate theory of racism which is capable of dealing with both the economic and the superstructural features of such societies, while at the same time giving a historically-concrete and sociologically-specific account of distinctive racial aspects. Such an account, sufficient to substitute those inadequate versions which continue to dominate the field, remains to be provided. Nevertheless, in the hope of sponsoring and promoting such a development, it might be useful to conclude with a brief outline of some of the theoretical protocols which—in my view, of necessity—must govern any such proposed investigation.

This would have to begin from a rigorous application of what I have called the premise of historical specificity. Racism is not dealt with as a general feature of human societies, but with historically-specific racisms. Beginning with an assumption of difference, of specificity rather than of a unitary, trans-historical or universal 'structure'. This is not to deny that there might well be discovered to be certain common features to all those social systems to which one would wish to attribute the designation, 'racially structured'. But—as Marx remarked about the 'chaotic' nature of all abstractions which proceed at the level of the 'in-general' exclusively—such a general theory of racism is not the most favourable source for theoretical development and investigation: 'even though the most developed languages have laws and characteristics in common with the least developed, nevertheless, just those things which determine their development, i.e. the elements which are *not* general and common, must be

separated out . . . so that in their unity . . . their essential difference is not forgotten.' (Marx: 1973.) Racism in general is a 'rational abstraction' in so far as 'it really brings out and fixes the common element and saves us repetition'. Thus it may help to distinguish those social features which fix the different positions of social groups and classes on the basis of racial ascription (biologically or socially defined) from other systems which have a similar social function. However, 'some determinations belong to all epochs, others only to a few. Some will be shared by the most modern epoch and the most ancient'. This is a warning against extrapolating a common and universal structure to racism, which remains essentially the same, outside of its specific historical location. It is only as the different racisms are historically specified—in their difference—that they can be properly understood as 'a product of historical relations and possess . . . full validity only for and within those relations'. It follows that there might be more to be learned from distinguishing what, in common sense, appear to be variants of the same thing: for example, the racism of the slave South from the racism of the insertion of blacks into the 'free forms' of industrial-capitalist development in the post-bellum North; or the racism of Caribbean slave societies from that of the metropolitan societies like Britain, which have had to absorb black workers into industrial production in the twentieth century.

In part, this must be because one cannot explain racism in abstraction from other social relations—even if, alternatively, one cannot explain it by reducing it to those relations. It has been said that there are flourishing racisms in pre-capitalist social formations. This only means that, when dealing with more recent social formations, one is required to show how thoroughly racism is reorganized and rearticulated with the relations of new modes of production. Racism within plantation slave societies in the mercantilist phase of world capitalist development has a place and function, means and mechanisms of its specific effectivity, which are only superficially explained by translating it out from these specific historical contexts into totally different ones. Finley (1969), Davis (1969, 1970) and others have argued that, though slavery in the Ancient World was articulated through derogatory classifications which distinguished between the enslaved and enslaving peoples, it did not necessarily entail the use of specifically racial categories, whilst plantation slavery almost everywhere did. Thus, there can be no assumed, necessary coincidence between racism and slavery as such. Precisely the differences in the roles which slavery played in these very different epochs and social formations may point us to the necessary ground for specifying what this specific coincidence between slavery and racism might secure. Where this coincidence does in fact appear, the mechanisms and effectivity of its functioning—including its articulation with other relations—need to be demonstrated, not assumed.

Again, the common assumption that it was attitudes of racial superiority which precipitated the introduction of plantation slavery needs to be challenged. It might be better to start from the opposite end—by seeing how slavery (the product of specific problems of labour shortage and the organization of plantation

agriculture—supplied, in the first instance, by non-black, indigenous labour, and then by white indentured labour) produced those forms of juridical racism which distinguish the epoch of plantation slavery. The elaboration of the juridical and property forms of slavery, as a set of enclaves within societies predicated on other legal and property forms, required specific and elaborate ideological work —as the history of slavery, and of its abolition, eloquently testifies. The same point may be made, *in extenso*, for all those explanations which ascribe racism-in-general to some universal functioning of individual psychology—the 'racial itch', the 'race instinct'—or explain its appearance in terms of a general psychology of prejudice. The question is not whether men-in-general make perceptual distinctions between groups with different racial or ethnic characteristics, but rather, what are the specific conditions which make this form of distinction socially pertinent, historically active. What gives this abstract human potentiality its effectivity, as a concrete material force? It could be said, for example, that Britain's long imperial hegemony, and the intimacy of the relationship between capitalist development at home and colonial conquest overseas, laid the trace of an active racism in British popular consciousness. Nevertheless, this alone cannot explain either the form and function which racism assumed, in the period of 'popular imperialism' at the height of the imperialist rivalry towards the end of the nineteenth century, or the very different forms of indigenous racism, penetrating deep into the working class itself, which has been an emergent feature of the contact between black and white workers in the conditions of post-war migration. The histories of these different racisms cannot be written as a 'general history' (Hall: 1978; Hall, et al.: 1978). Appeals to 'human nature' are not explanations, they are an alibi.

One must start, then, from the concrete historical 'work' which racism accomplishes under specific historical conditions—as a set of economic, political and ideological practices, of a distinctive kind, concretely articulated with other practices in a social formation. These practices ascribe the positioning of different social groups in relation to one another with respect to the elementary structures of society; they fix and ascribe those positionings in on-going social practices; they legitimate the positions so ascribed. In short, they are practices which secure the hegemony of a dominant group over a series of subordinate ones, in such a way as to dominate the whole social formation in a form favourable to the long-term development of the economic productive base. Though the economic aspects are critical, as a way of beginning, this form of hegemony cannot be understood as operating purely through economic coercion. Racism, so active at the level—'the economic nucleus'—where Gramsci insists hegemony must first be secured, will have or contract elaborate relations at other instances —in the political, cultural and ideological levels. Yet, put in this (obviously correct) way, the assertion is still too *a priori*. How specifically do these mechanisms operate? What further determinations need to be supplied? Racism is not present, in the same form or degree, in all capitalist formations: it is not necessary to the concrete functioning of all capitalisms. It needs to be shown how and why racism has been specifically overdetermined by and articulated

with certain capitalisms at different stages of their development. Nor can it be assumed that this must take one, single form or follow one necessary path or logic, through a series of necessary stages.

This requires us, in turn, to show its articulation with the different structures of the social formation. For example, the position of the slave in pre-emancipation plantation society was not secured exclusively through race. It was predominantly secured by the quite specific and distinctive productive relations of slave-based agriculture, and through the distinctive property status of the slave (as a commodity) and of slave labour-power (as united with its exerciser, who was not however its 'owner'), coupled with legal, political and ideological systems which anchored this relation by racial ascription. This coupling may have provided the ready-made rationale and framework for those structures of 'informal racism' which became operative when 'freed' black labour migrated northwards in the United States or into the 'free village' system in the post-emacipation Caribbean. Yet the 'coupling' operated in new ways, and required their own ideological work—as in the 'Jim Crow' legislation of the 1880s and 1890s (Van Woodward: 1957). The reproduction of the low and ascribed status of black labour, as a specific fraction of the 'free labouring' classes of industrial capitalism, was secured—with the assistance of a transformed racism, to be sure: but also through other mechanisms, which accomplished their structured positioning with respect to new forms of capital in new ways. In the latter case, pertinent struggles have developed which exploited the gaps, or worked directly on the contradictions between racial ascription and the official ideologies of 'equal opportunity' which were simply not available to black slaves under a plantation system (Myrdal, 1962). We treat these differences as 'essentially the same' at our peril. On the other hand, it does not follow that because developed capitalism here functions predominantly on the basis of 'free labour' that the racial aspects of social relations can be assimilated, for all practical purposes, to its typical class relations (as does Cox (1970), despite his many pertinent observations). Race continues to differentiate between the different fractions of the working classes with respect to capital, creating specific forms of fracturing and fractioning which are as important for the ways in which they intersect class relations (and divide the class struggle, internally) as they are mere 'expressions' of some general form of the class struggle. Politically and culturally, these combined and uneven relations between class and race are historically more pertinent than their simple correspondence.

At the economic level, it is clear that race must be given its distinctive and 'relatively autonomous' effectivity, as a distinctive feature. This does not mean that the economic is sufficient to found an explanation of how these relations concretely function. One needs to know how different racial and ethnic groups were inserted historically, and the relations which have tended to erode and transform, or to preserve these distinctions through time—not simply as residues and traces of previous modes, but as active structuring principles of the present organization of society. Racial categories alone will not provide or explain these. What are the different forms and relations in which these racial fractions

were combined under capital? Do they stand in significantly different relations to capital? Do they stand within an articulation of different modes of production? What are the relations of dissolution/conservation between them? How has race functioned to preserve and develop these articulations? What are the functions which the dominated modes of production perform in the reproduction of the dominant mode? Are these linked to it through the domestic reproduction of labour power 'below its value', the supply of cheap labour, the regulation of the 'reserve army of labour', the supply of raw materials, of subsistence agriculture, the hidden costs of social reproduction? The indigenous 'natural economies' of Latin America and the forms of semi-domestic production characteristic of the Caribbean societies differ significantly, among and between them, in this respect. The same is true even where different ethnic fractions stand in the same sets of relations to capital. For example, the position of black labour in the industrial North of the United States and of black migration to post-war Britain show highly distinctive patternings along racial lines: yet these situations are not explicable without the concept of the 'reserve army of labour'. Yet it is clear that blacks are not the only division within the 'reserve army': hence race is not the only mechanism through which its size and composition is regulated. In the United States, both white immigrants (e.g. European and Mexican) and women, and in Britain, both women and the Irish have provided a significant alternative element (see Braverman: 1975; Castle and Kosack: 1973).

The either/or alternatives, surveyed in the opening parts of this paper, are therefore seriously disabling, at a theoretical level, whether it is 'metropolitan' or 'satellite' formations which are under discussion; and whether it is historical or contemporary forms which are under scrutiny. As I have recently argued (Hall, et al.: 1978), the structures through which black labour is reproduced—structures which may be general to capital at a certain stage of development, whatever the racial composition of labour—are not simply 'coloured' by race: they work through race. The relations of capitalism can be thought of as articulating classes in distinct ways at each of the levels or instances of the social formation—economic, political, ideological. These levels are the 'effects' of the structures of modern capitalist production, with the necessary displacement of relative autonomy operating between them. Each level of the social formation requires its own independent 'means of representation'—the means by which the class-structured mode of production appears, and acquires effectivity at the level of the economic, the political, the ideological class struggle. Race is intrinsic to the manner in which the black labouring classes are complexly constituted at each of these levels. It enters into the way black labour, male and female, is distributed as economic agents at the level of economic practices, and the class struggles which result from it; and into the way the fractions of the black labouring classes are reconstituted, through the means of political representation (parties, organizations, community action centres, publications and campaigns) as political forces in the 'theatre of politics'—and the political struggles which result; and the manner in which the class is articulated as the collective and individual 'subjects' of emergent ideologies—and the struggles over ideology,

culture and consciousness which result. This gives the matter or dimension of race, and racism, a practical as well as theoretical centrality to all the relations which affect black labour. The constitution of this fraction as a class, and the class relations which ascribe it, function as race relations. Race is thus, also, the modality in which class is 'lived', the medium through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and 'fought through'. This has consequences for the whole class, not specifically for its 'racially defined' segment. It has consequences in terms of the internal fractioning and division within the working class which, among other ways, are articulated in part through race. This is no mere racist conspiracy from above. For racism is also one of the dominant means of ideological representation through which the white fractions of the class come to 'live' their relations to other fractions, and through them to capital itself. Those who seek, with effect, to disarticulate some of the existing syntaxes of class struggle (albeit of a corporatist or social-reformist kind) and to rearticulate class experience through the condensed interpellations of a racist ideological syntax are, of course, key agents in this work of ideological transformation—this is the ideological class struggle, pursued, precisely, through harnessing the dominated classes to capital by means of the articulation of the internal contradictions of class experience with racism. In Britain, this process has recently attained a rare and general pitch. But they succeed to the measure that they do, because they are practising on real contradictions within and inside the class, working on real effects of the structure (however these may be 'misrecognized' through racism)—not because they are clever at conjuring demons, or because they brandish swastikas and read *Mein Kampf*.

Racism is, thus, not only a problem for blacks who are obliged to suffer it. Nor is it a problem only for those sections of the white working class and those organizations infected by its stain. Nor can it be overcome, as a general virus in the social body, by a heavy dose of liberal innoculation. Capital reproduces the class, including its internal contradictions, as a whole—structured by race. It dominates the divided class, in part, through those internal divisions which have racism as one of its effects. It contains and disables representative class institutions, by neutralizing them—confining them to strategies and struggles which are race-specific, which do not surmount its limits, its barrier. Through racism, it is able to defeat the attempts to construct alternative means of representation which could more adequately represent the class as a whole, or which are capable of effecting the unity of the class as a result: that is, those alternatives which would adequately represent the class as a whole—against capitalism, against racism. The sectional struggles, articulated through race, instead, continue to appear as the necessary defensive strategies of a class divided against itself, face-to-face with capital. They are, therefore, also the site of capital's continuing hegemony over it. This is certainly not to treat racism as, in any simply sense, the product of an ideological trick.

Nevertheless, such an analysis would need to be complemented by an analysis of the specific forms which racism assumes in its ideological functioning. Here, we would have to begin by investigating the different ways in which racist

ideologies have been constructed and made operative under different historical conditions: the racisms of mercantilist theory and of chattel slavery; of conquest and colonialism; of trade and 'high imperialism'; of 'popular imperialism' and of so-called 'post-imperialism'. In each case, in specific social formations, racism as an ideological configuration has been reconstituted by the dominant class relations, and thoroughly reworked. If it has performed the function of that cementing ideology which secures a whole social formation under a dominant class, its pertinent differences from other such hegemonic ideologies require to be registered in detail. Here, racism is particularly powerful and its imprint on popular consciousness especially deep, because in such racial characteristics as colour, ethnic origin, geographical position, etc., racism discovers what other ideologies have to construct: an apparently 'natural' and universal basis in nature itself. Yet, despite this apparent grounding in biological givens, outside history racism, when it appears, has an effect on other ideological formations within the same society, and its development promotes a transformation of the whole ideological field in which it becomes operative. It can in this way, harness other ideological discourses to itself—for example, it articulates securely with the us/them structure of corporate class consciousness—through the mechanism previously discussed of connotative condensation. Its effects are similar to other ideologies from which, on other grounds, it must be distinguished: racisms also dehistoricize—translating historically-specific structures into the timeless language of nature; decomposing classes into individuals and recomposing those disaggregated individuals into the reconstructed unities, the great coherences, of new ideological 'subjects': it translates 'classes' into 'blacks' and 'whites', economic groups into 'peoples', solid forces into 'races'. This is the process of constituting new 'historical subjects' for ideological discourses—the mechanism we encountered earlier, of forming new interpellative structures. It produces, as the natural and given 'authors' of a spontaneous form of racial perception, the naturalized 'racist subject'. This is not an external function, operative only against those whom it disposes or disarticulates (renders silent). It is also pertinent for the dominated subjects—those subordinated ethnic groups or 'races' which live their relation to their real conditions of existence, and to the domination of the dominant classes, in and through the imaginary representations of a racist interpellation, and who come to experience themselves as 'the inferiors', *les autres*. And yet these processes are themselves never exempted from the ideological class struggle. The racist interpellations can become themselves the sites and stake in the ideological struggle, occupied and redefined to become the elementary forms of an oppositional formation—as where 'white racism' is vigorously contested through the symbolic inversions of 'black power'. The ideologies of racism remain contradictory structures, which can function both as the vehicles for the imposition of dominant ideologies, and as the elementary forms for the cultures of resistance. Any attempt to delineate the politics and ideologies of racism which omit these continuing features of struggle and contradiction win an apparent adequacy of explanation only by operating a disabling reductionism.

In this field of inquiry, 'sociological theory' has still to find its way, by a difficult effort of theoretical clarification, through the Scylla of a reductionism which must deny almost everything in order to explain something, and the Charybdis of a pluralism which is so mesmerized by 'everything' that it cannot explain anything. To those willing to labour on, the vocation remains an open one.

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