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"Race Relations" ; a Theoretical Displacement

by

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of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Warwick in the
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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Acknowledgments	1
Abstract	2
<u>Chapter I</u>	
The Sociology of Race Relations	3-79
<u>Chapter II</u>	
Racism, Racial Discrimination and Ideology	80-130
<u>Chapter III</u>	
The Racial Explanation of Slave Labour	131-155
<u>Chapter IV</u>	
The Historical Explanation of Race Relations	156-196
<u>Chapter V</u>	
The Problem of Status and Racial Stratification	197-221
<u>Chapter VI</u>	
Black Poverty and the Labour Market	222-289
<u>Bibliography</u>	290-314

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Acknowledgments	1
Abstract	2
<u>Chapter I</u>	
The Sociology of Race Relations	3-79
<u>Chapter II</u>	
Racism, Racial Discrimination and Ideology	80-130
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The Racial Explanation of Slave Labour	131-155
<u>Chapter IV</u>	
The Historical Explanation of Race Relations	156-196
<u>Chapter V</u>	
The Problem of Status and Racial Stratification	197-221
<u>Chapter VI</u>	
Black Poverty and the Labour Market	222-289
<u>Bibliography</u>	290-314

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the major perspectives on the social and economic situation of "blacks" in Britain and the U. S. A. As part of this alternative concepts are suggested which we feel are of greater theoretical depth and relevance than race relations theory. By race relations theory we mean any text which implicitly or explicitly does not treat "race relations" as a concept. That is to say, one which attempts to explain race relations rather than investigate it epistemologically. The race relations perspective justifies itself with reference to the actors' definition of the situation, namely, race consciousness, racism and racial discrimination. We hope to demonstrate that its epistemological and methodological basis generates a formidable theoretical incoherence and unavoidable inconsistencies. Our method is to take the theory at its word and confront its conclusions and propositions with its methodological principles. We then extract the inadequacies and trace them to epistemological assumptions.

This procedure is accompanied by a suggested resolution of the problems identified by race relations theory, namely, that to explain the social and economic situation of "blacks" it is necessary to analyse the class structure of capitalist society. In other words, the most theoretically consistent approach would be that whose point of departure is capitalist relations of production. Such an explanation, however, must be prefaced by the analysis of race relations as a concept, i.e. as a term within a specific epistemological and theoretical tradition.

This development displaces "race relations" as a theory and paves the way for the posing of different questions about modes of labour exploitation, and capitalist production. Thus the last two chapters are concerned with the explanation of the conditions of existence of social segregation and changes in the processes of labour exploitation via an investigation of the relations of production within the capitalist mode of production.

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIOLOGY OF "RACE RELATIONS"

Writing between the years 1913-1940, Robert E. Park did more than any other sociologist to pioneer and popularise the "race relations" approach, and place it within a body of definitions and sociological concepts⁽¹⁾. For Park, "race relations" were those relations between people of different racial characteristics which had entered into their consciousness and become socially significant: "Race relations, as that term, is defined in use and wont in the United States, are the relations existing between peoples distinguished by marks of racial descent, particularly when these racial differences enter into the consciousness of the individuals and groups so distinguished, and by so doing determine in each case the individual's conception of himself as well as his status in the community"⁽²⁾. Races respond to one another as such for they are set apart by peculiar morphological characteristics. These differences penetrate social awareness and create feelings of group identity, solidarity and status; without race consciousness there are no "race relations", yet it must be a status-determining consciousness. Park offered, however, four other definitions of "race relations" as if as testimony to the theoretical weight of the conceptual problems he was grappling with: "Race relations in this sense are not so much the relations that exist between individuals of different races as between individuals conscious of these differences"⁽³⁾. Here Park offers a more inclusive definition for instead of: "particularly when these racial differences enter into the consciousness of individuals ... " as a determinant of status we have a consciousness of racial differences as the basis of "race relations". In his third definition, Park introduces ethnicity and conflict: "Race relations" are " ... all the relations that ordinarily exist between members of different

- 1) Robert E. Park, *Race and Culture* (The Free Press, New York 1950).
- 2) *ibid.* p. 81.
- 3) *ibid.*

ethnic and genetic groups which are capable of provoking race conflicts and race consciousness or of determining the relative status of the social groups of which a community is composed⁽¹⁾. Park's fourth definition of race relations partly banishes race consciousness: "... the term race relations, as here conceived, includes relations which are not now conscious or personal, though they have been; relations which are fixed in and enforced by the custom, convention and the routine of an expected social order of which there may be at the moment no very lively consciousness"⁽²⁾. Here Park is suggesting that "race relations" are not static and that they become routinised and stable without disappearing. Park's final definition is a development of the fourth and by the same token strikingly distinct from the third in that phenotypical differences are considered to be irrelevant, and race conflict need not be evident. "Race relations" are: "All these relations of cultural or racial minorities with a dominant people may be described, for our purposes, as types of race relationship, even though no evidence exists either of active race conflict, on the one hand, or of obvious racial diversity on the other"⁽³⁾. This definition also introduces a new element of minority group relations of sub- and super-ordination, and displaces both racial diversity and race conflict at the observational level.

Park's definitions condense the two substantive bases of "race relations", the biological and the phenomenological. The first implies that since there are races, as defined by biologists, then relations between them can simply be designated "race relations". It involves global descriptions of multifarious race contacts taking place as a result of human migration⁽⁴⁾. Thus, in Park, "Europe's expansion" in the 15th and 16th centuries appears as: "A progressive extension of European culture and domination in the world, accompanied by an increasing integration of, and intimacy with the races and

- 1) *ibid.* p. 82.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 83.
- 3) *ibid.* p. 84.
- 4) *ibid.* ch. 26.

peoples within this imperium"⁽¹⁾. Race problems are seen as an efflux of racial confrontation, competition and conflict within which would fall frontier clashes, slavery, and ultimately, racial segregation in the post-emancipation period⁽²⁾. The second would justify "race relations" in terms of actors consciousness of racial differences, i.e. the existence of racial definitions and identities.

Park's implicit assertion that "races" meet suggests that he favoured the biological over the phenomenological justification of "race relations". He only marginally discusses the economic and social conditions or the structures which make men racially conscious. Indeed, this race consciousness is circularly explained, as both expression and cause of conflicts: "Race conflicts have their biological and economic aspects but it is the attitudes that they express and provoke which are of first importance"⁽³⁾. The race problem; "arises from the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of peoples of a markedly different racial type, as well as standard of living, entering freely and without conflict, into the competitive co-operation of an individualistic and democratic society ... "⁽⁴⁾. Park, however, does not attempt to work out the determinants of the difficulty of racial harmony among sharply differentiated phenotypes with markedly different standards of living. Instead, he shifts into a world historical cyclical paradigm.

Park's race relations cycle was published almost 50 years ago apparently as a liberal protest against the American Government's Exclusion Law of 1924, which, in his view, effectively created, 'our racial frontier in the Pacific'⁽⁵⁾. After surveying the relationships between Pacific "race relations" and "geography", "the world economy", "world politics" and "the melting pot", he suggested and predicted that the struggle for existence among races is climaxed by an inexorable global integration. "In the relations of races,

- 1) *ibid.* pp. 107-108.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 104.
- 3) *ibid.* p. 159.
- 4) *ibid.*
- 5) This is the title of the article in which Park espoused the race relations cycle. R. Park, *op. cit.* Ch. 9.

there is a cycle of events which tends everywhere to repeat itself⁽¹⁾. This cycle, "which takes the form, to state it abstractly, of contacts competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation, is apparently progressive and irreversible. Customs regulations, immigration restrictions and racial barriers may slacken the tempo of the movement; may perhaps halt it altogether a time; but cannot change its direction at any rate reverse it"⁽²⁾. However, apart from these official obstacles, Park regarded the existence of divergent physical traits as a major barrier to acculturation, assimilation and amalgamation. For him, peoples of strongly dissimilar anatomical characteristics cannot but be conscious of these differences and seek to establish "social distance" among themselves. Thus, the intensity of "the race problem" varies in direct proportion to the tempo of assimilation and this, in turn, is related to the degree of racial contrasts among the population: "... the chief obstacle to the cultural assimilation of races is not their different mental traits but rather their divergent physical traits"⁽³⁾. Thus, in Park's sociological analysis, social relationships build directly out of racial morphologies.

Park's work appears to be as seminal on "race" as Tannenbaum's on slavery and "race relations"⁽⁴⁾. Indeed, they both share a deep concern with "races" and racial movements⁽⁵⁾. Scattered throughout the former's

- 1) *ibid.* p. 150.
- 2) *ibid.*
- 3) *ibid.* pp. 252-253.
- 4) We say "appear to be" in order not to confuse "seminality" with "commonality". Modern race relations theories simply share with Park certain epistemological assumptions which go beyond Park's writings.
- 5) Compare Park's essay "Race Relations and Certain Frontiers", *op. cit.* Ch. 8., with this strain in Tannenbaum's thought: "The Negro now has physical occupancy - possession would be a more accurate word - of a very large part of the Western Hemisphere and this non-political Negro Empire is increasing because Negro fertility is relatively high in comparison to whites. The biological hold which the Negro has on this part of the Western world is more important than the slave trade and its cruelties, than slavery, than race discrimination, than capitalism, socialism, communism, democracy, fascism, centralism, federalism, art, music, culture and whatever". In Vera Rubin (ed.) *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium* (University of Washington Press, London 1971) p. 62.

writings are core statements which foreshadow the postulates of such major theorists of "race relations" as E. Franklin Frazier, E. T. Thompson, Harmannus Hötink, Pierre L. van den Berghe, Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan, Gunnar Myrdal, George Simpson and T. Milton Yinger, Michael Banton, and John Rex⁽¹⁾. Moreover, some of these sociologists have explicitly expressed an indebtedness to, or affiliation with, Robert Park's development of "race relations"⁽²⁾. This reflects an uncritical reading of Park, when we consider his definitional ambiguities, inconsistencies and other theoretical lapses. For example, Park's construction and treatment of his race relations cycle show him to be remarkably ambivalent and he rigorously avoided economic structures in his global study of race and culture contacts. Thus apart from peripheral descriptions of the market, commerce and division of labour, the theoretical focus of his political economy does not rise above Adam Smith's man as innately a trader⁽³⁾. His analyses are shot through with a xenophobic and static philosophical anthropology and a (related) methodology based on the abstracting of consciousness from its social milieu and then treating it as an autonomous thing. Thus Park begins with "race consciousness" and seeks to explain its origin not in the social structure but human nature⁽⁴⁾.

- 1) For key insights on the perspectives which stress "stranger", "status consciousness", and "white prejudice", see Robert Park, *op. cit.* pp. 252, 260 and 236 respectively.
- 2) See E. Franklin Frazier, *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World* (Beacon Press, Boston 1957). Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification: A Comparative Approach* (MacMillan, London 1969). George Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, *Racial and Cultural Minorities* (Harper and Row, New York 1958) pp. 13-14. John Rex, *Race Colonialism and the City* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1973) P. XIII.
- 3) Robert E. Park, *op. cit.* p. 90. Cf. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (The Modern Library, New York, 1937) p. 13.
- 4) "Racial antipathies in a somewhat more positive sense than is true of racial prejudices, have their sources in fundamental human nature", *ibid.* p. 237. See also pp. 77 and 373.

Park's cycle posits the inevitability of the processes involved in the transitions to assimilation. But two important observations can be made about this cyclical determinism. Firstly, it is nowhere stated what are the political, economic and social conditions which reduce economic and biological competition among races to the extent that a universal socio-cultural homogeneity emerges. Park's cycle is thus prophetic and teleological⁽¹⁾. It expresses a vision, a hope; but it is not theoretical analysis and demonstration. Secondly, and not surprisingly, Park contradicts himself: "It does not follow that because the tendencies to the assimilation and eventual amalgamation of races exist, they should not be resisted and, if possible, altogether inhibited"⁽²⁾. The processes of assimilation are therefore reversible and the cycle is shown to have a political axis which Park leaves unexamined.

Park's definitions of "race relations" do not constitute an adequate demarcation of a field of study which can be called race relations sociology. The definitions have distinct objects, each individually emphasising race consciousness, racial morphology, status, conflict and mores. In consequence, as Pierre van den Berghe noted "... the field of "race relations" has come to resemble a theoretical no-man's-land between psychology, sociology and anthropology⁽³⁾. But this amorphousness is a product of Park's refusal to think out the problem of theory construction. He assumes there is a ready-made world of facts (race consciousness) and observable phenomena (racial differences). This assumption subjectively absolves him of the responsibility of welding his observations and insights into a coherent unity of concepts. This his various definitions not only borrows from history,

- 1) A pertinent criticism of its teleology was voiced by Robert Staples " ... this particular theory could be used to sanction the existing social order. Whatever state of race relations exists is acceptable because it is part of a natural process that is inevitable whenever two different cultures come into contact". Introduction to *Black Sociology* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York 1976) p. 7.
- 2) Robert Park, op. cit. p. 131.
- 3) Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective* (John Wiley and Sons Inc., London 1967) p. 6.

psychology, economics and anthropology, but Park felt no need to evaluate their comparative adequacy or their internal consistency.

We have suggested that race relations theorists read Park uncritically. We should add, and selectively. For, despite Park's dramatic repudiation of his race relations cycle, a sizeable literature has grown up around it which does not treat assimilation as conceptually and theoretically problematic⁽¹⁾. Secondly, although Park's writings do not lend themselves to periodisation - there are no theoretical-chronological breaks - there is a particular development worthy of consideration. In 1921, Park writes of race problems as natural phenomena evolving from race and culture contacts. He writes ambiguously, failing to specify what is an "instinctive factor" or why colour becomes a symbol of moral divergences. In 1923, the race problem is identified with the problem of economic inequality⁽²⁾. Sixteen years later, class relations behind "race relations" are alluded to and indeed, Park predicts the transformation of "race relations" into relations of culture and class: "The same forces which brought about the diversity of races will inevitably bring about, in the long run, a diversity in the peoples of the modern world corresponding to that which we have seen in the old. It is likely, however, that these diversities will be based in the future less on inheritance and race and rather more on culture and occupation. That means that race conflicts in the modern world which is already or presently will be a single great society, will be more and more in the future confused with, and eventually superseded by the conflict of classes"⁽³⁾. It is not that Park moved from race to class. He does not appear to have had more than a glance at Marx's writings in 1942⁽⁴⁾. Rather, the end-product of his historical cycle suggests both assimilation and class conflict.

- 1) See Brewton Berry, *Race and Ethnic Relations* (Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1965); Emory Bogardus, *Immigration and Race Attitudes* (D. C. Heath, Boston 1928). Indeed, the 'school' of ethnic assimilation derives from Park's cyclical vision.
- 2) Robert Park, *op. cit.* p. 159.
- 3) *Ibid.* p. 116.
- 4) See Robert Park, *Society* (The Free Press, New York, 1955), pp. 336-337.

Park's analysis of "race relations" moved uneasily between biologically and phenomenologically defined races. One of his students, E. Franklin Frazier, has superbly summarised his racial historiography. "As in Park's frame of reference, the biological and ecological aspects of race relations are regarded as the first phase of race relations. The next phase involves the development of economic relations between the white and coloured races. The third aspect of race relations includes the various types of political systems which have been established in order to maintain control and resolve the conflicting interests of white and coloured peoples. In the final stage, the racial problem becomes a problem of social organisation in what are called multi-racial communities and a problem of world organisation involving European and coloured peoples who have achieved political independence, or European states and coloured peoples who are struggling to become independent nations"⁽¹⁾. Yet this is more than a summary of Park's approach; it constitutes the organisational structure of Frazier's account of "the three racial frontiers" of the world, the American South, Latin America and South Africa⁽²⁾. Frazier's major contribution to the clarification of what are "race relations" can be found in his analysis of the development of the sociology of "race relations" within the emergence of sociology in the United States.

According to Frazier, sociological theorising on "race relations" prior to Robert Park was guided by assumptions of Negro inferiority and the undesirability of racial accommodation. In Park, however, the analysis moved to a sophisticated plateau utilising "such social psychological tools as attitudes, social distance and Sumner's concept of the mores"⁽³⁾. At the same time, Frazier censures Park's uncritical appropriation of Sumner's fatalistic biologism, his superficial treatment of ecological, political, and economic factors, and the static nature of his perspective prior to the publication

- 1) E. Franklin Frazier in G. Franklin Edwards (ed.) *E. Franklin Frazier on Race Relations* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1968), p. 106.
- 2) E. Franklin Frazier, *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World* (Beacon Press, Boston 1957).
- 3) G. Franklin Edwards (ed.) *E. Franklin Frazier on Race Relations*, op. cit. p. 41.

of "the Nature of Race Relations" in 1939. For Frazier, Park's major contribution is his later emphasis on the dynamic nature of "race relations". This changing nature of "race relations" Frazier attempted to develop into a global, racial historiography. Not surprisingly, then, Frazier did not identify Park's writings as derived from an empiricist epistemology, or even from the sociology of Georg Simmel. His corrective to Park's lapses is a plea that the sociology of "race relations" be not insensitive to economic and ecological factors. The concept, class is virtually absent from his work so that his brief analysis of the economic organisation emerging during racial contacts is restricted to descriptions of "white capital and coloured labour". Frazier's theoretical contribution, then, constitutes an unoriginal continuation of Park's theories.

Park's inconsistencies are the inevitable consequence of the epistemological tradition within which he theorised - empiricism ⁽¹⁾. It means that the theorist genuflects before what is considered to be the real, everyday events and experiences of actors. But this obeisance to reality is a self-imposed hallucination which has fatal consequences for theoretical investigation. We have seen how the reality of "race relations" receded from each of Park's definitions until race lost all conceptual specificity. What needs to be explained is: why was the sociology of race relations developed as a sub-discipline within sociology despite the formidable incoherence of Park's works? This continuous repetition of Park's definitional ambiguities and general theoretical superficiality can only be explained as a necessary consequence of a dominant empiricist tradition. It demonstrates too the common epistemological principles between Robert Park and contemporary sociologists of "race relations".

Despite the absence of any explicit acknowledgment of Robert Park's influence, British sociologist of the post-war years followed Park in his emphasis on colour as a determinant of status and conflict. ⁽²⁾ The

- 1) See Don Martindale's exposition of the consanguinary relationship between philosophical schools and sociological theories. He writes: "Positivistic organicism is made possible by the fusion of older forms of philosophical idealism and empiricism. Conflict sociology is the scientific extension of historical empiricism. Formalism was suggested by neo-Kantian empiricism and phenomenology". *The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1961) p. X.
- 2) See Kenneth Little, *Negroes in Britain* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1947); Michael Banton, *White and Coloured* (Jonathan Cape, London 1959).

now disabused term "coloured people" is a legacy of the 'colour-class' and 'stranger' hypotheses initially proposed by Kenneth Little and Michael Banton respectively. For Little, Britain's colonial past had bequeathed a legacy of stigmatised conceptions of the Negro so that they were found unacceptable to Englishmen. Banton posited that the impact of the Negro's racio-cultural strangeness contributes to his rejection by the British people⁽¹⁾. But Banton's hypothesis evinces an ambivalence toward race and culture. It is not stated whether it is the Negro's distinct anatomical characteristics or, customs and mannerisms which constitute this strangeness. If the latter, then, how do we explain the social rejection of Anglicised Negroes? If the former, however, then the stranger hypothesis can be subjected to the same criticisms which E. Franklin Frazier made of Robert Park's early fatalism. For example, many European explorers have related their first contact with natives as comprising fascination, curiosity and friendliness. The European was sometimes regarded as a visitation of the Gods, or an evil omen⁽²⁾. These phenomena hardly support the postulate of an instinctive attitude to strangers. Moreover, the theses of both Banton and Little ignore the more general problem of status stratification and patterns of social intercourse.⁽³⁾ Neither author discussed the social rejection of "English people" by "English people".

These theses were subsumed within the immigrant-host model which was adopted by a considerable number of theorists in the early 1960's⁽⁴⁾. In "Dark Strangers," Sheila Patterson argues that coloured people were above all immigrants, and their socio-economic situation is explicable in terms of

- 1) Compare this viewpoint to Robert Park's "We at once fear and are fascinated by the stranger, and an individual of a different race always seems more of a stranger to us than one of our own". Introduction to the Science of Sociology (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1921), p. 578.
- 2) Cf. E. Franklin Frazier, *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World*, op. cit. Ch. II. See also Brewton Berry, op. cit. pp. 98-104.
- 3) See below, Ch. V.
- 4) Ruth Glass, *Newcomers* (Allen and Unwin, London 1960). Sheila Patterson, *Dark Strangers* (Penguin, Middlesex 1963). Peach, *West Indian Migration to London* (Oxford University Press, London 1968).

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an immigrant-absorption cycle. Colour, however, increases visibility and thereby complicates the generational cycles of the absorption of immigrants. In her opinion, students of "race relations" had erred in stressing either race or colour: "... what we have in Britain is not or not yet basically a colour or a race situation, however much it may appear to be so to many colour conscious immigrants - it is an immigrant situation"⁽¹⁾. In Patterson's view, the social status of West Indians is a consequence of their economic situation rather than preconceptions from the colonial past. Thus the situation must be explained, in terms of socio-economic class affiliations, of cultural contacts and conflicts, of rural and urban differences of adaptation and acceptance between immigrants or a minority group and the receiving society"⁽²⁾. The host society was not particularly prejudiced or hostile toward West Indian immigrants, for the antipathy which often confronted them was directed also at Polish immigrants, or residents of another street or village.

Patterson's work, allegedly within the immigrant absorption perspective, made a significant concession to the orthodox emphasis on colour. West Indians were above all immigrants like any other, but noticeably, dark strangers. This concession to the social psychological approach is absent in Ceri Peach's analysis. Peach explained the West Indian presence in Britain in terms of push-pull factors, i.e. the constellation of social economic and political determinants of population shifts between two distinct regions. The push element was the absence of opportunities for economic advancement for large sections of the labour force in Britain's colonies⁽³⁾. Peach focused on the pull element in West Indian migration to Britain seeing it as a direct response to Britain's labour needs. There was, however, a disequilibrium between these labour requirements and social welfare provisions so that: "Migration produced a conflict between the economic and social needs of Britain. The shortage of workers made West Indians economically acceptable: the shortage

1) Sheila Patterson, *op. cit.* p. 17.

2) *Ibid.* p. 19.

3) For an analysis of this factor, see R.B. Davison, *West Indian Migrants* (Oxford University Press, London 1962).

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- 3) For an analysis of this factor, see R.B. Davison, *West Indian Migrants* (Oxford University Press, London 1962).

of housing made them socially undesirable"⁽¹⁾. Immigration, then, is a function of the cyclical gyrations of the British economy, while the ensuing residential problems - the seed-bed of racial conflict - was responsible to the housing shortage in central urban areas as well as the prejudices of landlords.

Peach's conception of acceptability is problematic. Were West Indian workers acceptable or profitable? Thus, to whom were they acceptable? The merit of the analysis, however, lies in the attempt to develop a structural-conflict approach as well as the conceptualisation of the West Indian as immigrant workers rather than Negroes, or strangers.

Are West Indians a racial group, coloured immigrants, or immigrant workers? This question forms the background to race relations dissertations between 1947-1973⁽²⁾. The title of Little's book "Negroes in Britain" had set the tone of discussion and in the intervening years colour and immigration theses co-existed peacefully, especially since theorists did not systematically discuss one another's works.

In 1967, Michael Banton initiated an unnoticed revolution by translating his earlier emphasis on colour into "race relations". Banton's "Race Relations" was the first major exposition of the race relations perspective

1) Ceri Peach, *op. cit.* p. 100.

2) In 1960, Ruth Glass still had not found an answer "Migrant is a defective substitute for the even less suitable work 'immigrant'. The terms 'race', 'racial' or 'race relations' are worst of all: 'race' is not a scientifically valid category; 'race relations' are not discrete phenomena, but the term implies that they could be thus considered. Although I have avoided such words as much as possible, I must apologise for not having been able to do so altogether". *op. cit.* p. XIII. What, however, is the alternative to "race relations"?

to be published in Britain⁽¹⁾. Like Park and Frazier he 'mapped' "race relations" globally and historically and proposed "six orders of race relations": institutionalised contact, acculturation, domination, paternalism, integration, and pluralism. These are, in his view, "typical sequences in the changing patterns of "race relations"⁽²⁾. "Race relations" for Banton, are the observed behaviour of races in their various contact situations or sequences. The nature of these relations, however, is related to people's beliefs about race. In Banton's words: "Patterns of race relations during the last two hundred years have been influenced by what people believed to be the nature of race and it is necessary, therefore, to take account of these ideas"⁽³⁾. Race relations then, pre-exist the beliefs which social scientists are advised to merely take account of. It is not a case of social scientists designating particular social relations as racial in conformity with actors' definitions. Rather, social relations are by definition "race relations" when the actors are of a different race. Banton's approach then, belongs to the biological variant of race relations studies.

The rejection by Sheila Patterson and (marginally) Ruth Glass of the race relations perspective was a novel attempt to break away from a then rapidly developing orthodoxy. However, Patterson's cyclical explanation cum

- 1) An Institute of Race Relations was established in Britain as early as 1957 "to encourage and facilitate the study of the relations between races". For indispensable analyses of its politics, see Robin Jenkins, *The Production of Knowledge at the Institute of Race Relations* (National Labour Press Ltd., London 1971); A. Sivanandan, *Race and Resistance: The IRR Story* (The Institute of Race Relations, London 1974).

Up to 1973, the Institute received financial support from various firms and Foundations which was used to sponsor race relations research and publications. These studies were part of this sponsoring: Michael Banton, *Race Relations* (Tavistock, London 1967). John Rex and Robert Moore, *Race, Community and Conflict* (Oxford University Press 1967). Between 1947-1967 colour had become race relations. But just as the coloured-immigrant perspective is an assimilation of the two divergent emphases so a certain genius for compromise re-asserted itself in 1969 with the publication of E. J. B. Rose and Nicholas Deakin, *Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations* (Oxford University Press, London 1969). Colour, class and race had come full circle.

- 2) Michael Banton, *op. cit.* p. 75.
- 3) *ibid.*, p. 3.

prediction is as speculative as Park's. Like Park, she failed to specify the economic and political conditions of the transition to absorption. Moreover, in a culturally pluralistic society, to which culture must the immigrants conform before they can be said to have been assimilated? These silences on Patterson's part are compounded by the absence of any theoretical substantiation of her rejection of "race relations." Significantly, however, it came at a time when the theory of race was being disputed in scientific circles⁽¹⁾. Indeed, over the last two decades the theory of race has been subjected to severe and sustained criticisms from certain biologists. Debate has settled around the arbitrary nature of classificatory criteria and the impossibility of unambiguously demarcating racial frontiers. Sociologists are necessarily involved. For, if the sociology of "race relations" is concerned with races as they interact, it inevitably becomes embroiled in controversy over the scientific status of racial classifications. Thus the multiplicity of "scientific" definitions of "race" would make "race relations," as the study of relations between races, an enterprise based on biology rather than sociological theory.⁽²⁾ Moreover, how can relations between actors be termed racial, if race is a disputed biological category?

Sociologists of "race relations" attempted to resolve this problem by recourse to a complex sociological perspective, but one already contained in Park's definitional efforts - phenomenology. In the words of one of its proponents: "If men define situations as real then they are real in their consequences"⁽³⁾. Thus, irrespective of the scientific status of race, in so far as actors define their situation racially, then race is a social reality. The sociology of "race relations" then can be an autonomous theoretical activity with its own object - "race relations." This movement from a biological to a phenomenological constitution of "race relations" represents an important

- 1) See Ashley Montagu, *Statement on Race* (Oxford University Press, London 1972).
- 2) See Leonard Lieberman, "The Debate over Race" in James E. Curtis and John Petr as (eds.) *The Sociology of Knowledge*, (Duckworth, London 1970).
- 3) Morris Janowitz (ed.) W.I. Thomas on *Social Organisation and Social Personality*, Selected Papers (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1966), p. 301.

re-conceptualisation of social structure. In the biological approach, social structure is perceived as the observable behaviour of physically divergent racial types. In the phenomenological, social structure is conceived in terms of unobservable categorisations and expectations. It is not race, but the social interpretation of racial differences which matters.

As we have seen, Park was poised uncomfortably between defining his object on the basis of competitive biological races and the phenomenology of race, i.e. the actor's consciousness of race. It is therefore correct to say that he also pioneered the phenomenology of social interaction between "blacks" and "whites". This can be explained with reference to the 'intersubjective' social analysis which was developed at the Chicago School of Sociology in the first three decades of the twentieth century⁽¹⁾. The phenomenological justification then, belongs to a complex sociological tradition whose epistemological and theoretical inter-relationships deserve considerable analysis. Thus Patterson's rejection of phenomenologically defined 'race relations' had been much too summary. Indeed, she rejected the intersubjective approach without nullifying it, and thereby left space for its subsequent development in Britain. This development can be identified in the writings of John Rex.

Among post-war sociologists of 'race relations', John Rex presents the most ambitious attempt to define and justify the sociology of 'race relations'. As regards specifying its object, Rex confessed to a certain discomfiture: "There is, however, a particularly difficult problem in defining the field of the sociology of 'race relations,' which arises from the important role of

- 1) Cf. R. W. Fredricks, "George Herbert Mead's social behaviourism carried the intersubjective standard over into the graduate education of a whole generation of sociologists trained at the University of Chicago, many of whom have played leading roles in the development of the discipline over the last three decades". *A Sociology of Sociology* (The Free Press, New York 1970) p. 209; E. Franklin Frazier also testifies "The sociological theories of Park in regard to race relations were developed originally in close association with Thomas. Park who was observing race relations in the South was on constant communication with Thomas", in G. Franklin Edwards (ed.) *op. cit.* p. 37.

beliefs in the very constituting of the problem in question"⁽¹⁾. What is the problem in question? "... race relations situations and problems have the following characteristics: they refer to situations in which two or more groups with distinct identities and recognisable characteristics are forced by economic and political circumstances to live together in a society. Within this they refer to situations in which there is a high degree of conflict between the groups and in which ascriptive criteria are used to mark out the members of each group in order that one group may pursue one of a number of hostile policies against the other. Finally, within this group of situations true race relations situations may be said to exist when the practices of ascriptive allocation of roles and rights referred to are justified in terms of some kind of deterministic theory, whether that theory be of a scientific, religious, cultural, historical, ideological or sociological kind ... "⁽²⁾. Rex is singular in the consistency of his attempt to justify "race relations" as a distinct field of study within sociology. For, in both Park and Frazier, we see sustained attempts to constitute "race relations" in a multi-disciplinary context. Thus when they encroached on other fields it was justified in terms of the overall complexity of social interaction. Banton continued this tradition by conceiving the sociology of "race relations" as "an applied social science" which necessarily encompasses other disciplines⁽³⁾. He did not concern himself with the implications of competing explanations of "race relations" being offered by the various sciences, since: "The psychologists and sociologists examine the same data, the same 'facts' but from different aspects ... "⁽⁴⁾ The interpretations of the facts are assumed to be complementary. Rex, on the other hand, emphasised his interest in race relations sociology as an autonomous sub-discipline, a *sui generis*.

Rex's concern with the independence and specificity of "race relations" sociology may be seen in the context of his opposition to the immigrant-host

- 1) John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1970) p. 7.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 159-160.
- 3) Michael Banton, *Race Relations*, *op. cit.* p. 2.
- 4) *ibid.* p. 10.

framework. In his first major work on "race" he criticised its conception of the host society as one of order and stability⁽¹⁾. His alternative conception posited a social system with dysfunctional attributes of intergroup conflicts. Seven years later, Rex expressed his opposition to other approaches from the same conflict position. In his view, the Marxist model of race relations, the contributions of minority group and stratification theories all fail to clarify the distinct dimensions of "race relations." For "race relations" are not a case of stratification, cultural diversity or ideology, but inter-group conflict of a special kind⁽²⁾.

When are problems, relations, and situations racial? For Rex, the decisive element is actors racial beliefs or deterministic rationalisations. Rex goes further, however, and delineates what he feels to be the structural underpinnings of race relations situations. He lists the following: frontier situations of conflict over scarce resources, the existence of unfree, indentured, or slave labour, unusually harsh class exploitation, strict legal intergroup distinctions and occupational specialisation, differential access to power and prestige, cultural diversity and limited group interaction and migrant labour as an underclass fulfilling stigmatised roles in a metropolitan context⁽³⁾. These are in Rex's words "... historical situations in which it is frequently the case that the problem of relations between men are defined as problems of race relations"⁽⁴⁾. Three significant postulates emerge from Rex's analysis: Race relations problems are situations of conflict and discrimination which are deterministically justified. The social structural basis of these phenomena is European colonialism, imperialism and migrant labour to metropolises. The sociology of "race relations" is concerned with the study of these processes and is so designated because of actors' racial conceptions and beliefs.

- 1) John Rex and Robert Moore, *Race Community and Conflict*, op. cit. p. 14.
- 2) John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. Ch. 1.
- 3) John Rex, *Race Colonialism and the City* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1973) pp. 203-204.
- 4) *ibid.* p. 203. The grammatical error "the problem ... are" is not insignificant. It is a Freudian slip which shows that it is the sociologist who defines the problem as 'race relations', while what Rex tells us is that relations are defined by actors as 'race relations.'

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Rex's analysis contains serious inadequacies. Those that are particularly dislocative concern his confusion of taxonomy and theorising and his idealist conception of social structure.

He defines his field of study on the basis of actors' beliefs, or more precisely, deterministic justifications. But he does not explain them in that it is not stated whether the relationship between the factors in his definition are necessary ones. Must all ascriptive procedures be accompanied by deterministic expressions? Rex does not even pose this question. He is concerned not with explanation but categorisation. This reduces social analysis to the mere elaborating of a *ad hoc* taxonomy which designates phenomena rather than clarify the necessary conditions of their existence. "Actors" frequently come to define their relations as "race relations". The key term here is frequently. How frequently? Since Rex is unwilling, or unable to posit theoretical relationships he reduces social analysis to a positivistic enumeration of characteristics. The problem here is that since no theoretical relationship is postulated, Rex is free to decide what is ascriptive and what are deterministic justifications. Indeed, note the scope of his determinism: "scientific, religious, cultural, historical, ideological or sociological" as well as the omnibus underpinnings which include slavery, colonialism, capitalism, imperialism and division of labour. Thus, even at the taxonomic level, where Rex's analysis begins and ends his definition of race relations situations encompasses all social relations. How then does he conceive the sociology of "race relations" as a sub-discipline within sociology? What are non-race relations situations? Moreover, since the breadth of Rex's definition makes "race relations" indistinguishable from general relations of exploitation, why a sociology of "race relations" and not of exploitation? Nor is Rex consistent in accusing 'immigrant' theorists of ignoring conflict while himself asserting that the metropolitan working class had become quiescent through its acquisition of citizen's welfare rights⁽¹⁾.

1) John Rex and Robert Moore, *Race Community and Conflict*, op. cit. p. 15.

in an "integrated social order"⁽¹⁾.

Rex's approach posits a highly generalised neo-Parkian model of inter-group relations with a structural-functionalist variable (ascriptive processes) as its core element. His attempt at a synthesis produced such eclectic opacities as: "Our own view is that the element of ascriptive allocation is an intermediate term between such factors as class conflict and exploitation on the one hand, and racist theories on the other"⁽²⁾. We may note the confusion of levels of analysis. For if ascriptive allocation is an intermediate term, it has no place between the "factors" of class conflict and "racist theories". Nothing is explained here merely terminologically categorised. Moreover, the mention of class conflict and exploitation is rhetorical in so far as Rex nowhere clarifies their content and significance. At root, the model of race relations situations constitutes a simple notion of racial discrimination as practised by one group against another and justified in terms of race. This is hardly innovatory or a theoretical improvement on Park.

Rex's works on "race relations" constitute a sophisticated defence of the phenomenological tradition in social analysis. His epistemology is empiricist in that he thinks "actors" refer to real people rather than a relation within his theory. He writes: "The sociologists seek to apply concepts to the understanding of social relations, and social relations in turn depend upon the conceptualisations which actors make of their world and of other actors"⁽³⁾. Thus Rex, like most sociologists of "race relations", take a prefatory bow to "the actors' definition of the situation". The general view is that in so far as actors define themselves in racial terms, there exist social races and a

- 1) For Rex, "The peculiar position of minorities arises from the fact that they are unintegrated minorities in a relatively stable and integrated social order". *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. p. 88. Note the tautology involved in the notion of an "unintegrated minority".
- 2) John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. p. 118.
- 3) *Ibid.* pp. 8-9.

(sociological) race problem⁽¹⁾. Thus the sociology of 'race relations' studies relations between phenotypically different people not because of these differences, but by virtue of the social significance of racial identities in social interaction.

The suggestion that the actors' definition of the situation be the starting point of social analysis is of questionable theoretical virtue. Is a definition an attitude, an expressed belief, or interpretation of an actor's state of mind? Sociologists of "race relations" have not as yet documented the existence of racial definitions of the situation. Indeed, it seems quite likely that the "actors" are the race relations theorists themselves. This is related to the further problem of choice of actors. There is considerable evidence of "whites" justifying their opposition to "blacks" and immigration in terms of the increased competition over jobs as well as housing, educational and welfare amenities. For example, in August 1972, as part of the opposition to the influx of Ugandan Asians to Birmingham, one shop steward remarked "We are concerned for the future of our children. There are not enough jobs or houses for our people"⁽²⁾. A month later, factory workers drew up a petition and demonstrated against Ugandan Asians entering the city. An Asian worker was "happy" to sign the petition. One shop steward who led the demonstration emphasised: "This is not a racial protest at all, black and white must stick together and keep these Asians out to make sure our children have a future"⁽³⁾. During the "Notting Hill race riots", a Manchester Guardian reporter wrote: "Another youth who had also been calling for a lynching, turned to me and said: "Tell them we've got a bad enough housing shortage around here without them moving in. Keep Britain white"⁽⁴⁾. This remark can be interpreted as an 'economic' definition

- 1) This is no doubt the ultimate justification of race relations studies to be found in virtually every such work published from the 1950's. The term "social race" appears to have been first used by Charles Wagley (ed.) *Race and Class in Rural Brazil* (Unesco, Paris 1952) p. 14. But for a review of the consensus, see Andrew Lind (ed.) *Race Relations in World Perspective* (Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1955), Introduction.
- 2) Birmingham Mail, 22.8.1972.
- 3) Birmingham Mail, 2.9.1972.
- 4) Manchester Guardian, September 2, 1958. Cited in Ruth Glass, *op.cit.* p. 138. See also BBC Interview with "Teddy Boys", pp. 261-269.

of the situation for the "keep Britain white" is a function of a perceived housing shortage. The question then is: why do sociologists of "race relations" ignore those actors who do not define "race relations situations" racially?

In our view, racial sentiments, although themselves responses to racial questions can be interpreted in the context of the type of working class organisation. We would argue that the fact of some 'whites' justifying their opposition to 'blacks' in economic terms invites a consideration of the relationship between racial definitions and class organisation. For their opposition is as workers in struggle. The object of this opposition to black workers suggests that the struggle is within the relations of distribution - the wage and price levels. We would postulate that in conditions of struggle against distribution relations, particularistic forms of working class organisation must prevail. For in so far as the totality, capitalist processes of production as contradictory commodity relations dominated by capital, is not "grasped by the masses," class organisation is necessarily fragmented. Thus the unemployed, the non-unionised worker, and all "swellers" of the labour market are seen as the threat, or malaise. If, on the other hand, the basis of capitalist relations of production is seen through, the bourgeoisie become the object of opposition and proletarian organisation and struggle would ensue. We shall return to these themes in our final chapter. Suffice to observe here that a methodological emphasis on the actors definition of the situation cannot obscure the fact that the necessary choosing of "actors" and "definitions" is guided by the theoretical judgement of the sociologist. Sociologists of race relations, then, merely say they are loyal to the actors definition of the situation. We shall see more evidence of this inconsistency in their treatment of "groups" and "social races".

For the concept of social races is amenable to a threefold interpretation. It can be taken to be a referent of a sense of belonging to a particular race. A sociologist would therefore be able to designate relations between phenotypes as "race relations" as long as expressions of a racial identity are evident. This we would regard as the conservative interpretation

in that race is seen as (structuring) the social reality⁽¹⁾. "Social races", however, contain a radical kernel. For the term social suggests that the problem is not one of race but the racialisation of social interaction - if that indeed be the case - by particular socio-economic conditions. Race is then seen as affecting the social reality. However, actors define but do not design their social relations. They come to express their conceptions racially under specific social circumstances. The theoretical problem then becomes not, as Rex would have it "taking account of the actors own definition of the situation"⁽²⁾, but the constructing of logically interconnected concepts demonstrating relationships between the social structure and racial expressions. This cannot be effected by an analysis whose departure point is the actors' definition. For then this definition ceases to be problematic and is not theoretically analysed. Moreover, understanding the actors' definition does not necessitate defining a field of study in correspondence with it. Many actors define their situation, and this is understood by sociologists, as one of exploitation. Yet it would be extremely difficult to find these sociologists suggesting a sociology of class exploitation in its own right. The subservience to the actors' definition is thus seen to be specific to sociologists of "race relations". We shall see, however, that they are not aware of the complexities of this methodology and indeed, abandon it completely.

A radical understanding of "social races" means that if racial expressions are taken as evidence of race affecting social reality, then social relations are not racial but racialised. The object of social analysis must therefore be not "race relations" but racialised relations. A more radical, or revolutionary conception of "social races" abolishes both "race relations" and racialised relations: Social relations are not reducible to

- 1) Cf. Leo Kuper "Clearly racial differences are of a more enduring nature than class differences and there are very extensive social correlates of class differences in many racially structured societies. In some critical respects relevant to conceptions, class structures and racial structures constitute different systems of stratification, however much they may overlap ..." *Ideology and Revolutionary Change in Plural Societies* (Duckworth, London 1974) p. 67.
- 2) John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. p. 161. This methodological structure is ambiguous to the point of obscurantism. Does "take account" mean consider, examine, or treat as canons of theoretical validity? For Rex's rejection of it, see p. 284 below.

men's opinions and theories. Thus going further we may say that it is not the relations which are racialised but that verbal behaviour takes a particularistic (racial, or sexual, or regional) form under determinate social and political conditions. The investigation of this relationship does not require and cannot be designated the sociology of "race relations." Thus on its own terms such a sociology is an indefensible theoretical practice.

It is now easier to understand why the writings of both the biological and phenomenological theorists of race relations cover the same terrain of "racial contacts". Indeed, the phenomenological variant of "race relations" merely preserves a racial historiography in which the history of the post-Columbus world is a history of racial struggles, conflict and domination. Either way, "race relations" are necessarily historicised and eternalised. Sociologists can thus dissertate on race ad infinitum. This is clearly brought out in two revealing passages from John Rex: "On the other hand, there will be some situations in which the hostile policies are justified and rationalised in terms of racist theory, and these are obviously to be included in core race relations studies. On the other hand there are cases in which racist assumptions are implicit in the policies pursued and in which it is the task of the sociologists of race relations to understand them"⁽¹⁾. Either way, then, the sociologist decides when racist values are operative. The actors' definition is discarded and the object of race relations studies is now seen to be not a reality 'out-there', but a product of particular sociological theories.

The second passage is even more revealing in that the sociologist is asked to continue studying "race relations" even after racist beliefs and definitions have been exposed: "But the fact that the sociologist studying race relations finds himself unmasking racist beliefs by no means implies that there is no field of race relations studies. Social categories depend for their existence on the subjective definition given to them by social actors. Race is no exception. So long as it exists in the minds of men there will be race relations problems to study just as there will be men who can be helped to fight against the buttressing of injustice by the use of pseudo-scientific

1) *ibid.* 1. 134.

beliefs"⁽¹⁾. Rex is not concerned with the relationship between his theoretical practice and the content of men's minds. He ignores the possibility that his definitions may well be the only basis of race relations sociology. For surely so long as Institutes and Research on Race Relations persist, then race will be in mens' minds? Are not these men to be helped, therefore, fighting a shadow created by race relations research? It is arguable that if the intellectual and material resources which have been allotted to race studies to date had been devoted to research on class exploitation, then the proletariat would be seeing itself as belonging to a different race from the bourgeoisie and engaging in massive conflict to realise its interests. In doing so, both "blacks" and "whites" might well have been liberated in the process.

From our criticisms, it should not be assumed that some sociologists of "race relations" are not aware of the inadequacies of their discipline, although it is doubtful if they perceive its fundamental untenability. Pierre van den Berghe, for example, accuses his colleagues of being atheoretical, and took a critical stance towards the construction of a theory of "race relations". He wrote: "Part of the reluctance of race scholars to indulge in theory construction may be the fear of cogitating themselves out of a speciality. Or, phrased differently, the failure to arrive at a theory of race relations may simply reflect the fact that the subject has no theoretical leg to stand on"⁽²⁾. In van den Berghe's view, an independent theory of "race relations" is impossible even if scholars intensify their efforts at theory construction. For "race relations" are to be situated within a general theory of culture and social institutions. This is because, firstly, "... the sheer unequal co-existence of two or more groups that look objectively different does not constitute a system of race relations"⁽³⁾. Secondly,

- 1) John Rex, *Race Colonialism and the City*, op. cit. p. 192.
- 2) Pierre L. van den Berghe, op. cit. p. 6.
- 3) *ibid.* p. 23.

"race" or "ethnic" relations are, in the last analysis, a special type of relations of power and relations of production ... "(1)". Thus, among sociologists of "race relations", van den Berghe comes closest to a repudiation of the sociology of "race relations" as an autonomous theoretical enterprise. But he has not analysed "race relations" as a concept and his objections to race relations theory becomes a call for its greater sophistication.

The importance of van den Berghe's critical suggestions lies in their apparently genuine attempts at theoretical enquiry. The major problem with his analysis, however, is a peculiar inconsistency, a significant antinomy between his conception of theorising and his actual investigations. Studies of "race relations", he asserts, are theoretically sterile. Van den Berghe's identification of the source of this sterility then lapses into an equally sterile personalism, visible in his charge that the fear of abolishing race as a speciality is responsible for the low-level theorising by race theorists. We think the problem to be an epistemological one. Race theorists, including van den Berghe, conceive their task as one of explaining "race relations" as a theory-free social fact. They take their conceptualisation "race relations" to be a real object in society 'out-there' to which their explanations must then correspond. This objectively militates against rigorous abstraction and thereby fosters the fatal ambiguities which we earlier discerned. Van den Berghe's analysis is not an exception. Consider, for example, his emphasis on race as "a special case of differentiation and stratification" and "an extreme case of ascribed status and lack of social mobility"⁽²⁾, together with his equally powerful rejection of its independent study. Surely the assertion of the speciality of race already contains a special theory - race relations theory.

1) Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Ethnicity* (Basic Books Inc., New York, 1970) p. 12.

2) Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism*, op. cit. p. 22.

For van den Berghe, race relations exist when racial differences are socially recognised and given stratificatory and behavioural significance. Racism is thus inseparable from race: "The existence of races in a given society presupposes the presence of racism, for without racism, physical characteristics are devoid of social significance⁽¹⁾. Racist beliefs, then, define "race relations". However, one of van den Berghe's major theses is that elements of the social structure fundamentally condition these relations. Thus "race relations" take a paternalistic or competitive form, depending on the relations of production. Pre-industrial societies are characterised by paternalistic "race relations" while competitive "race relations", "the polar opposite of the paternalistic type", are a feature of urban, industrial societies with a complex division of labour. Van den Berghe's conception of social structure appears to deviate from the subjectivism of his colleagues in that he makes explicit reference to relations of production as determining the type of "race relations". The first problem here is that given the psychological breadth of the concept "race relations", it is impossible to refute the proposition that they are influenced by social structure. Indeed, van den Berghe's typology of "race relations" was originally (1958) designated a typology of race prejudice⁽²⁾. Secondly, is paternalism an attitude or a policy? Van den Berghe conflates the two categories, but this blurs an important point. If paternalism is a policy then it is necessarily a policy of the ruling "whites" who, by definition, cannot be competitively orientated towards "blacks". Paternalism and competitiveness cannot be placed at opposite ends of a spectrum. Finally, van den Berghe has a technicist conception of relations of production. This allows him to escape the defining of capitalist production and posit such economies as: non-manufacturing, agricultural, pastoral handicraft, mercantile capitalism and plantation⁽³⁾. It is obvious that van den Berghe takes the productive forces as the relations of production. He does not discuss, or even suggest, what constitutes mercantile capitalism as an economy and

1) *ibid.* p. 24.

2) See Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Ethnicity*, *op. cit.* p. 24.

3) Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism*, *op. cit.* p. 31

whether capitalist agriculture is impossible, as an economy. His analysis thus becomes not theoretical explanation but description and classification of his race relations facts. This enterprise is not in itself illegitimate, but only in so far as it is not regarded as a contribution to theoretical knowledge where necessities of connection between phenomena and relations of consistency between explanatory categories must be guaranteed⁽¹⁾.

As is evident, race relations theorists return again and again to the definitional problem. This is not unique to social scientific practices. What is peculiar, however, is an omnipresent circularity in the attempts to define "race relations". Economics is popularly defined as the study of that behaviour aimed at the allocation of scarce resources between competing ends. The behaviour is not pre-defined as economic. The matter is different in race relations literature in that theorists, in attempting to define simultaneously both race relations as a sub-discipline of sociology and the phenomena with which it is concerned, presuppose what is to be demonstrated. The rubric of a particular perspective on social relations is thus taken to be a description of real social relations. There is racial behaviour, the object, and the theory which attempts to explain it, race relations sociology. However, where does the theory begin and the racial social relations end? It is principally through the separation of the observed and conceptualising that "race relations" become the social reality and the sociological theory its explanation rather than its creator. Obviously race relations sociology cannot pre-exist racial social relations. What then explains and justifies the race perspective? This is not an innocent question for the answer, actors and their definitions, illustrates the epistemological lineage and basis of race relations sociology - empiricism.

Theorising is conceived as a mapping of the real world: People are black and white and do perceive themselves as such. This epistemology leads to a concentration on the racial constitution and consciousness of actors, and, inevitably, to a loss of theoretical rigour: If social relations build out of different racial morphologies, their explanation is impossible in conditions of racial homogeneity, for example, relations of intra-racial

1) Cf. Paul Q. Hirst, *Social Evolution and Sociological Categories* (Allen and Unwin, London 1976) p. 125.

exploitation. The history of the world then has to be a history of racial confrontations. This explains why this history flourishes in the analysis of the post-Columbus world. This mode of producing knowledge has to be a theoretical nullity. For the means of validation are posed as extrinsic to the theory, as within the object. Yet the theory is construed as a textual reproduction of the object, reality. Which is primary? Moreover, the consciousness of real actors is a chimera, and its attempted reproduction in texts obscures the theoretical pre-suppositions of the theorist, above all, from himself. He cannot rigorously interrogate his concepts in their logical ramifications, while pursuing a correspondence to the (average?) actor's definition.

An anti-empiricist analysis situates itself within the conceptual scheme it constructs. The analysis is not regarded as ontologically separate from "the real world" and thus its theoretical and political implications are within an inter-defined set of concepts. In contrast, an empiricist analysis not only seeks to abstract knowledge from the "real" but considers this knowledge to be independent, and even 'value-free'. Thus race relations theorists do not consider the relationship between the dissemination of their biological and social justifications of 'race relations' and race consciousness. They dissertate on "the real world" without seeing race relations theory as acting upon it. Thus these theorists do not consider the possibility that the explanation of the popularity of racial identities, designations and interpretations lies in their continuous production of race relations concepts.

In the empiricist tradition, theories are abstractions to be applied to concrete reality. Thus, given the assumption of a real world of 'race relations', it becomes logical to apply theories of conflict, power and roles to their study. The racial conflict position is itself situated within the Parkian tradition of viewing group competition and conflict as the basis of historical and social processes. Park, in turn, was instrumental in popularising the conflict paradigm which was developed in the early years

- 1) It is therefore not surprising that race theorists have written-off "the (white) working class" which is the safest explanation of their preference for conceptualising "blacks" as a race, rather than as workers.

of the Chicago School of Sociology⁽¹⁾.

Modern race conflict writings postulate a general conflict system, and direct their analysis towards group interests and struggles⁽²⁾. Society is seen as consisting of continuous processes of conflict amongst fractions and strata. In opposition to the functionalist picture of a consensual social system based on value integration, conflict theory stresses pluralities of dissension and the omnipresence and inevitability of reciprocal opposition. On the other hand, according to a leading functionalist-conflict analyst, conflict is functional to the equilibrating needs of the social order⁽³⁾. Thus one race theorist could argue that race conflict functions to integrate the races by eliminating sporadic strain and tension⁽⁴⁾.

R. A. Schermerhorn provides us with what is perhaps the most representative formulation of the epistemological and theoretical assumptions of the conflict model: "Power conflict theory begins with an initial advantage over system analysis since it appeals to the facts of familiar, everyday observation tracing out their relations by gradual and easy stages,

- 1) See Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, *Introduction to the Sciences of Sociology* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1921) Chs. 8-14. It is in this then dominant sociological text that the Chicago School's debt to Simmel's dialectic of conflict is most obvious. Indeed, it may be categorically stated that the conflict approach to race relations derives from Simmel's and Park's concept of conflicting social forms. See Robert Park, *The Crowd and the Public and Other Essays* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1972).
- 2) See William J. Chambliss (ed.) *Sociological Readings in the conflict Perspective* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Massachusetts 1973). John Rex, *Key Problems of Sociological Theory* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1961). N.J. Demerath III and Richard A. Paterson (eds.) *Systems Change and Conflict* (The Free Press, New York 1962); Ralph Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1972).
- 3) Lewis Coser, *The Function of Social Conflict* (The Free Press, New York 1956).
- 4) See Joseph S. Himes "The Functions of Racial Conflict" in Clagget G. Smith (ed.) *Conflict Resolution: Contributions of the Behavioural Sciences* (University of Notre Dame Press, London 1971) pp. 175-177.

often avoiding the baffling complications encountered in the contrasting view. Beginning with the immediate experience of limited social encounters, the power conflict theory stresses the obvious fact of inequality in most interactions, i.e. that what one has, the other wants, or what one wants the other has. Confrontations like these are unavoidable, and each of the two parties will focus on these items because they are either crucial to survival or the self-esteem of either one. What divides the two contenders is the inherent scarcity of means. The attempt to control these means leads directly to open or concealed conflict in which the exertion of power is needed to attain the goal. Such sorts of concrete groupings like nations, political parties, regional associations, ethnic groups, labour vs. management, rural vs. urban sectors and the like⁽¹⁾. These core assertions of the conflict perspective allegedly demonstrate its superiority over systems analysis as well as its relevance to ethnic relations.

For Schermerhorn, "the obvious fact of inequality" in conditions of scarcity generates organisational and physical struggles towards incompatible goals. He is not certain, however, as to what constitutes conflict and what should be regarded as symptoms of it. This problem emerges from the low level of abstraction in conflict theory. In "beginning" with the facts of immediate observation and experience, a concept of conflict cannot be systematically developed. Thus it is arbitrarily suggested that conflict is the actual physical confrontation between groups⁽²⁾. This implies

- 1) R.A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research* (Random House, New York 1970), p. 40.
- 2) The following remarks on the theme of racial conflict are evidence of the conception of conflict favoured by race theorists. For John Horton, "The hostile action of Negro masses destroying white property is perhaps a more convincing demonstration of conflict theory than the hopes of Negro intellectuals". "Order and Conflict Theories of Social Problems" in James E. Curtis and John W. Petras (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 622. In the opinion of Guy B. Johnson, "a look or a gesture" may signify conflict, "Patterns of Race Conflict" in Edgar T. Thompson (ed.) *Race Relations and the Race Problem* (Greenwood Press Publishers, New York 1968) p.127. In contrast, John Rex notes that race relations conflict may be of several kinds, "In the first place there is a kind of conflict in which a minority group is seeking to enter the stratification system from below. In the second, there is a sort of conflict which exists because two or more groups are in competition for limited resources." *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, *op. cit.* p. 121.

that there is no conflict if the forms of social control of the balance of power aborts the organisation of protest. Thus there is no conflict in a concentration camp.

We recall that Rex's delineation of race relations situations fused the categories of identity, group conflict, roles and ascriptive policies cum racist theory. The fact that his own 'conflict' sociology borrows heavily from functionalist and phenomenological theories of society can be seen as a manifestation of the idealist theory of social action which conjoins them. Where Rex appears to depart from functionalism is in his focus on group conflict: "In those cases which concern us there is always a high potentiality for conflict inherent in the situation. Amongst those situations, however, there are some in which groups rather than individuals are parties to the conflict. That is to say, groups do not form as Marx classes in themselves were assumed to form, in the course of the conflict. Their existence is recognised as preceding the conflict so that conflict positions are assigned in terms of recognisable group characteristics"⁽¹⁾. For Rex, the necessary and sufficient condition for a problem to be defined as one of "race relations" is the rationalising of ascriptive modes of reward in terms of deterministic beliefs. In positing the critical salience of beliefs, this approach stands opposed to that which identifies the objective class structure as having definitional and historical primacy in social analyses. But Rex's search for "a non-Marxist alternative" leads him into a cavalier treatment of class evinced by his indifference to: the labour situation of the white working class, the labour market competition intrinsic to wage-labour exploitation, the inadequate social welfare provisions in capitalist societies and the political economic significance of "black labour" to capital accumulation. Indeed, rather than a (white) working class in conflict with a ruling class, it is proposed that we think in terms of black and white groups in conflict.⁽²⁾

Indeed, conflict theorists on "race relations" appear to be involved in sustained efforts to transform, through widely disseminated

1) *ibid.* p. 132 (emphasis in the original).

2) *ibid.* p. 161.

race relations textbooks and media commentaries, races "in themselves" (biological) into races "for themselves". Scattered throughout their writings are dire predictions of the inevitability of race war and the immorality of white oppression and exploitation, side by side with a rejection of Marx's emphasis on the revolutionary potential of the working class, and while Marx's apocalyptic clash culminates in a classless society, they see no solution and, indeed, cannot see an end to the racial inferno to which their vision condemns us. One needs to be careful not to draw a parallel with Enoch Powell's prophecy of "rivers of blood". But if, or when, the chickens come home to roost, we at least are already informed of the intellectual-political origins.

In our view, conflict theories of 'race relations' are remarkably unsystematic. Indeed, there are five distinct weaknesses which demonstrate this approach to be unequivocally untenable. Nowhere in the literature do we see a theoretical specification of different levels, dimensions and types of conflict or a clarification of whether physical confrontation is a necessary condition of conflict. This absence of any conceptual and theoretical rigour follows logically from an attenuated view of social structure in which all observable relations are given equal structural salience⁽¹⁾. Secondly, by the simple expediency of not differentiating types of social relations, conflict and scarcity are posited as being endemic to society⁽²⁾. Thirdly, there is a simplistic attempt to reduce class conflict to a sub-type of group conflict in order to strengthen the picture of plural tension and dissension. Fourthly, the approach to group formation is idealist and fundamentally

- 1) See John Rex, *Key Problems in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. Chs. VII and VIII; Ralph Dahrendorf, op. cit. p. 162.
- 2) David Lockwood marshalled an impressive set of criticisms of the conflict and coercion models of Rex and Dahrendorf. In his view, they confuse social conflict and system conflict and fail to account for social change as "arising from the functional incompatibility between an institutional order and its material base ... " David Lockwood "Social Integration and System Integration" in George Zoltschan and Walter T. Hirsch (eds.) *Explorations in Social Change* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1964) p. 256.

inconsistent. Finally, the concept of power is systematically vulgarised within the power-conflict perspective on "race relations".

What is the meaning of the concept, conflict, and what is its relationship to social structure? Race theorists as we have seen have not been helpful. Lewis Coser's functionalist analysis of conflict suffers a similar absence of conceptual specification as opposed to a taxonomy of empirical conflicts. These empirical descriptions merely widen the applicability of the concept to the point of limitless freedom for the theorist. Thus Raymond Mack's and Richard Snyder's criticism is very pertinent: "Conflict is for the most part a rubber concept, being stretched and molded for the purposes at hand ... Relatively little effort has been made to specify analytically different properties of conflict as a generic phenomenon and to differentiate explicitly between conflict and closely related concepts"⁽¹⁾ Conflict, they argued, must be distinguished from anti-locution, aggressiveness, rivalry, misunderstandings and physical confrontations. These phenomena may accompany conflict, but they are not synonymous with it. Following Coser, however, Mack and Snyder proposed the typification of realistic and non-realistic conflict. The former refers to a logical irreconcilability of goals or interests while the latter "arises from the need for tension release, historical tradition, and ignorance or error"⁽²⁾. Race conflict, in the sense of "whites" and "blacks" identifying each other as the source of their socio-economic problems, would be an expression of non-realistic conflict. For it reflects a political misjudgement rather than an irreconcilability of the goals of "blacks" and "whites".

However, to consider a "conflict" unrealistic because the parties are unaware of their true interests is an arbitrary intervention. It contains hidden conceptions of real interests, conflict and social structure. These

- 1) Raymond Mack and Richard Snyder, "The Analysis of Social Conflict - Toward an Overview and Synthesis" in Clagget G. Smith (ed.) op. cit. p. 3.
- 2) Ibid. p. 9.

concepts are related in that the identification of conflict must be part of a theory of social structure. For example, in Marx's writings the social structure is conceptualised as the relationship between classes, a relationship of exploitation from which class conflict derives. To posit racial conflict is to imply that there is a determinate relationship between races. This position is impossible to sustain. Races are located according to a relationship to biological criteria. There can be no political, economic relations between races, which can become exploitative or conflictual. For once contact and relations are established, the races are no longer "races" but agents or units within autonomous relations of production.

Coser's own elucidation of the realistic-non-realistic conflict distinction did not resolve the problem of defining conflict. The nature of conflict is interpreted within a means end scheme: conflict as an end in itself is non-realistic, serving a cathartic function, while realistic conflict is a means to an end of realising a specific goal: "Thus anti-semitism, except where it is caused by conflicts of interests or values between the Jewish or other groups or individuals, will be called non-realistic in so far as it is primarily a response to frustrations in which the object appears suitable for a release of aggressiveness. Whether this object be Jews, Negroes or some other group is of secondary importance to the aggressor"⁽¹⁾. Coser has here used conflict in two distinct senses as a physical confrontation and as a situation of mutual incompatibility - a "conflict of interests". Moreover, the cathartic function of conflict itself can be a means to an end: Negroes could be lynched for the pleasure of tension release so that the distinction between realistic and non-realistic conflict becomes a mere speculation. The problem is that conflict theorists dissertate on conflict without constructing a rigorous abstract concept. This results in an omnipresent transgression of their original definitions and imperceptible lapses into consanguinary notions. These ambiguities must raise serious doubts as to the degree of research which goes into theses on "race relations" which utilise the conflict perspective.

1) Lewis Coser (ed.) Georg Simmel, (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965), p. 172.

On examination, we have seen that conflict theorists have not specified what is conflict. They are ambivalent as to cause and effect, applying 'conflict' to both actual clashes and situations of mutually exclusive goals because of a scarcity constraint. The first meaning describes, and that vaguely, without explaining. The second suggests that in the absence of scarcity there is no conflict situation. Crucially, then, the concept of scarcity must be specified. Here, however, conflict theorists present us with a silence. This is surprising. For indeed, scarcity is the bedrock of conflict and, we may note, en passant, functionalist theory of society⁽¹⁾. Goods are scarce, or are they? This is an important theoretical issue.

Our first observation concerns the absence of any deliberations in the writings of both conflict and functionalist theorists as to the relationship between scarcity and demand. This results in certain conceptual confusions. Scarcity refers to a spatio-temporal insufficiency of resources relative to demand. Thus, demand for power or prestige can be a means to an end. That is to say, men may 'demand' authority or prestige in order to acquire material goods. Thus we need to differentiate desires according to their purposive interrelationships. In this sense, van den Berghe's criticism of Dahrendorf is itself severely defective: "I would therefore suggest a more general theory of group conflict, where authority would not occupy a privileged position but would rather be one of the many desirable "goods" along with material rewards, control of the means of production, power, prestige, spheres of cultural, linguistic, ideological, intellectual, or religious influence, etc."⁽²⁾. There is no theory here, merely incoherent rhetoric and an extremely simplistic suggestion that when masses of people desire the same things which are not instantly available, they are in conflict. Moreover, what, for example, is the relationship between "power"

1) See John Rex, *Key Problems in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. p. 100; R.R. Schmerhorn, op. cit. p. 255; Ralph Dahrendorf, op. cit. p. 209.

2) P. L. van den Berghe, "Dialectics and Functionalism" in Demerath III and Peterson (eds.) op. cit. p. 53. For a similar postulate, see Ira Katznelson, *Black Men, White Cities* (Oxford University Press, London 1973) p. 17.

and "control over the means of production" which justifies their both being treated as "desirable goods"? Isn't the latter itself the power to dispose of society's surplus labour?

To illustrate further, power, or authority may be 'in demand' and scarce because the material goods which its possession appears to ensure are themselves unavailable without it. If it is for this reason that actors engage in conflictual behaviour, the theorist is obliged to explain the origin and nature of scarcity. We may discover that the scarcity of goods, i.e. the means of life, is responsible to the mode of labour exploitation or the private appropriation of the socially produced surplus. We need, then, a sociology of labour exploitation, not of conflict or "race relations". Indeed, a sociology of "race relations" would then be an unjustifiable describing of class exploitation and intra-class competition as group exploitation and group conflict. Thus the 'high' level of black unemployment is frequently cited as a racist statistic prior to and in lieu of any sustained analysis of the labour market. Similarly, inadequate housing and education of "blacks" are seen as racial phenomena on the "evidence" of "racist" remarks, or employers, estate agents and housing authorities being "white".

For conflict theorists, the basis of racial conflict is a scarcity of goods. This scarcity, however, is simply taken for granted. The means of consumption are assumed to be in short supply: it is an empirical fact. This empiricism fixates their analyses within relations of distribution. It is not that they cling to the obviousness of real shortages in modern society, but that they sever goods-distribution from capitalist relations of production by use of the concept of scarcity. Given the immanence of scarce resources, social relations are necessarily problematic in a world of infinite human wants⁽¹⁾. Hence the inevitability of group conflict as seen

- 1) Again we see how much the sociology of "race relations" mirrors the object of sociology - the problem of order within "scarce" world resources, and human nature. Yet, in this sense, sociologists have been left standing by 'liberal' economists. As Harry G. Johnson observed: "Real scarcity has been succeeded by contrived scarcity, and the successful functioning of the economy depends on reiterating this contrivance." Harry G. Johnson paraphrasing J. K. Galbraith's attack on the "conventional wisdom" of classical economics. *On Economics and Society*, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1975) p. 33.

in John Rex's "classic conflict situation": "The parties are engaged in a zero sum game. The more one gets the less is available to the other. In this case, the expectation is that each group will do all it can to restrict the right to compete of the other. The structure of the problem here is similar, whether we are dealing with a metropolitan or a colonial country, and whatever the area of competition".⁽¹⁾ Rex posits here that scarcity is a consequence of actors' perceptions. But there is no necessity for actors to struggle against each other because they perceive resources to be scarce. They may decide to cooperate in the producing of more goods, or lessen their consumption as a collectivity.

Rex is not explaining group conflict but legitimising its existence with reference to scarcity. Within his analysis, it is assumed that one group's gain is the other's loss. He does not consider the possibility of both groups losing because of their conflict. For example, restrictions on the employment of black labour contribute to the under-utilisation of labour resources and thereby decrease the total output of goods available to both "blacks" and "whites"⁽²⁾. In this case, the more one group gets, (greater white employment), the less goods are available to both groups.

- 1) John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. p. 126.
- 2) Leonard Bloom reminds us that "During the three years 1965-7 in the U.S.A., rioting and racialism cost the deaths of 130 citizens ... and the estimated damage to property and the economic loss was about \$714 millions". *The Social Psychology of Race Relations* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London 1971) p. 141. In Andrew Brimmer's view, "... one could aggregate the loss in GNP accruing from racial discrimination over the years. During the period 1954-1963, the failure to use fully present skills of non-whites cost the nation approximately \$129.4 billion; the persistence of educational differences (which itself reflects the legacy of discrimination) added a further loss of \$85.8 billion. These two sources combined were responsible for aggregate losses in GNP of \$215.2 billion." "The Negro in the National Economy" in John P. Davis (ed.) *The American Negro Reference Book* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1966) pp. 272-274.

"Racial discrimination" by employers and white workers' restriction on black labour competition are therefore not a classic situation of conflict. Indeed, the latter may be regarded as a particular form of protest against the cheap labour policies of employers. The analysis should therefore move away from racial conflict toward the general problem of the utilisation of labour resources in the capitalist mode of production. Such a change of object is, however, beyond the resources of sociology and especially conflict sociologists for whom Marx is a "conflict theorist". Is it possible, however, to read Marx in this way?

Sociologists of knowledge are divided among themselves as to what constitutes the most significant theoretical polarisation in the history of social thought.⁽¹⁾ The dominant view is that social theories exhibit a tradition of order-conflict opposition. This position situates Marx alongside Simmel within the conflict perspective. Van den Berghe has attempted a synthesis of these two traditions, a synthesis which has implications for the analysis of the relationship between "race conflict" and "class conflict". Since he isolates class from the relations of production,

- 1) Discussions of the competing epistemological and methodological structures of classic social scientific texts are generally and incorrectly subsumed under the problem of 'the origin of sociology'. See Robert Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition* (Heinemann, London 1967). Nisbet merely traces certain unit ideas to the "two revolutions". Although Parsons lapses into an 'history of ideas' approach, he tangentially focusses on an opposition between positivism and voluntarism. *The Structure of Social Action*, Vol. 1 (The Free Press, New York 1968) p. VIII. Relatedly, Parsons sees Sociology as being genetically split into order and conflict theories. For a summary presentation see John Horton, "Order and Conflict Theories as Competing Ideologies" in J.E. Curtis, ed. op. cit. pp. 605-23. For a criticism of Parsons' and Nisbet's readings of the origin of sociology, see Anthony Giddens, "Four Myths in the History of Social Thought", *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1, 1972. Giddens himself champions an individualism-holism dichotomy. Frederick Engels and V.I. Lenin favoured an idealist-materialist struggle. See Frederick Engels *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962). V.I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirico-Criticism* (International Publishers, New York 1927). The 'structuralist' reading championed by Louis Althusser deviates somewhat from this with a focus on Marx's scientific ruptures with empiricism. *Reading Capital* (New Left Books, London 1970). He does not, however, explain the origin of empiricism, or the relationship between epistemology and methodology.

his project leads to a subsumption of class under groups. This paves the way for an explanation of class, status, sexual and generational conflict as empirically discrete phenomena⁽¹⁾.

Van den Berghe conceived "Marx's dialectic" to be limited because of its stress on a binary opposition. Following Simmel, he argued that polarisations can be multi-dimensional. This means that conflict and contradictions may exist between two or more elements at the level of values, ideologies, role, institutions, or groups. A reformulation of the dialectic was therefore necessary in order that it may be useful for analysing society since: "In any society different groups (defined by sex, age, "race, culture, education, relation to the means of production, wealth power prestige, descent, etc.) have by virtue of their differing roles and statuses interests which are often conflicting"⁽²⁾. Van den Berghe's summary juxtaposition of sex, and age groups, and relationship to the means of production is enigmatic, for these terms are patently not theoretically inter-related. Moreover, the whole argument becomes

- 1) The theoretical convergence between Simmel and Weber as well as the theoretical origin of the (conflict) sociology of "race relations" become palpably evident. Arguing for the application of Weber's stratification theory, Ira Katznelson writes: "Weber ... urged that society be seen conceptually as composed of discrete, separate, yet interacting spheres, each marked by the uneven distribution of available and scarce resources ... Within his schematic framework a multitude of types of displacement, interaction, and conflict is conceivable". *Black Men, White Cities* (Oxford University Press, London 1973) pp. 18-19. It is important to stress that the notion of racial conflict is alien to Marx's object, class conflict and thus there can be no Marxist, structural explanation of race conflict. Simmel and Weber, and Marx are not theoretically supplementary.
- 2) Pierre L. van den Berghe, "Dialectic and Functionalism, Toward a Synthesis" in N.J. Demerath III and R.A. Peterson (eds.) *op. cit.* pp. 300-301. Compare this remark to Simmel's "... age groups may function as a sociological criterion and may become a basis of division for the entire group. Like the division between the sexes age groups stand midway between the organic and the rational". *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations* (The Free Press, New York 1955) p. 134.

speculative, given the lack of theoretical content in van den Berghe's facile use of "roles, "statuses" and "interests which are often conflicting". For, if these groups are not intrinsically conflict groups, then any society can have different groups, without conflict. To illustrate the extent of van den Berghe's distorted conception of "Marx's dialectic", we re-read Marx briefly.

Marx theoretically constructs the concept of class conflict on the basis of the conditions of existence of capitalist relations of production and the productive forces. Capital is an element of these social relations, an embodiment of the estrangement of the labourers from the means of production and the product of their labour. It exists only through processes of self-augmentation. Each movement of expansion, however, reduces the value of the product accruing to the labourers, not in a zero-sum sense, but through the rising productivity of labour engendered by the development of the productive forces. Conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat therefore does not take place because of scarcity, but in conditions of potential abundance.

There is another reason why we must consider a Simmelian reading of Marx to be theoretically impossible. Marx's concept the relations of production specifies limited possibilities of economic structures. Simmel's central concept, the "Web of Social Affiliations"⁽¹⁾ expresses an infinitude of forms of interaction. What conflict theorists fail to

1) Reinhard Bendix's translation of Simmel's "Die Krauzung sozialer Kreise" into "The Web of Group Affiliations" is highly idiosyncratic. Why does "sozialer" become "group" and not social? "Social Affiliations" is conceptually distinct from "group affiliations" and the former translation makes it possible to analyse the relationship between social affiliations and group formation. Clear evidence of Bendix's "free" translation is provided in the following confession: "In using the word circle as a synonym for "group", Simmel often plays with geometric analogues; it has seemed advisable to me to minimise this play with words ... I have used the term "group formation" when Simmel refers to the origin of a social circle and the term "group affiliation" he has in mind that an individual belongs to a social circle". Reinhard Bendix In Georg Simmel; Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations, op. cit. p. 125.

observe is that Simmel can only posit the omnipresence of groups and group conflict because he lacks criteria of differentiation and significance⁽¹⁾. He subsumes all social relations under social forms and cannot therefore investigate the relationships between them. Classes and generations belong to the same form of conflict groups, even though their content may be different⁽²⁾. Simmel's lack of rigour is also visible in his view of conflict as "caused by hate, envy, need, desire ... It is a violent symptom of a disease which represents the effort of the organism to free itself of disturbances and damages caused by them"⁽³⁾. Conflict thus functions to generate unity "through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties"⁽⁴⁾. These are speculations, not theorising in pursuit of logical

- 1) Simmel's model is a simple conflict-unity dichotomy which he plays upon under the guise of a dialectic: "Contradiction and conflict not only precede unity but are operative in it at every moment of its existence" Georg Simmel, *ibid.*, p. 15. Unity is thus a Hegelian Spirit which cannot be dismembered even by the most violent convulsions. As in Hegel, the problem is that of speculation driving out elementary logic. For if there is unity (A) then there must be disunity (non-A), unless this unity is considered the only existing substance. There is no place then for conflict.
- 2) It is beyond the ambitions of this chapter to discuss to what extent Simmel's work is a positive critique or a continuation of the Social Darwinism of Ludwig Gumplowicz for whom racial conflict is the core of the emergence of States and civilisational progress. Cf. Robert C. Angell, "The Sociology of Human Conflict" in Elton B. McNeil (ed.) *The Nature of Human Conflict* (Prentice-Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1965) p. 96. It may be of interest to note here that just as modern race theorists are divided on the issue of whether race conflict is functionally specific or an eternal prime mover, so pioneer sociologists in America were divided in their allegiance to Gumplowicz and Simmel. Cf. Robert C. Angell "The Sociology of Human Conflict" in Elton B. McNeil (ed.) *op. cit.* p. 97. See the Gumplowiczian perspective in Ronald Segal, *The Race War* (Jonathan Cape, London 1966). The functionalist approach to race conflict is best exemplified in Joseph S. Himes "The Functions of Racial Conflict" in Clagget G. Smith (ed.) *op. cit.*
- 3) Georg Simmel, *op. cit.* p. 13.
- 4) *ibid.*

connections. Is conflict a necessary and sufficient condition for unity? What is the relationship between conflict and cooperation, since the latter also produces unity? Moreover, following Simmel, the annihilation of Jews, or the expulsion of immigrants should be construed as attempts to preserve the identity of the race or nation⁽¹⁾.

For conflict theorists of "race relations", group identities are an inexplicable, immanent fact of social life. The inexplicability is expressed in Rex's: "We should find that many members of the society had what MacIver calls like and common interests and that these tend to join up into groups. Between the groups there would be a conflict situation"⁽²⁾. The immanence is clearly brought out by Robin Williams: "From the earliest records to those of our day, human history reveals that men have always regarded themselves as members of particular groups or societies and have always distinguished themselves from persons belonging to other groups and societies"⁽³⁾. This usage of "groups" in the sociology of "race relations" betrays a curious lack of conceptual differentiation. Prof. Eli Chinoy has correctly distinguished between statistical aggregates, social categories and social groups. The line of demarcation being the existence

- 1) Simmel does not distinguish between different types of conflict merely the forms since for him conflict is omnipresent and everlasting. This, however, because he failed to distinguish between conflict and tension and indeed uses the term in senses different from his definition. It is not surprising that Pitrim Sowokin lost patience with Simmel's method and wrote: "What has been said of the fundamental conceptions of Simmelian sociology may be said of its many other propositions. Although valuable in some respects, they are stamped by the same vagueness, indefiniteness, changeable meanings and often by a purely speculative character". *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (Harper and Row, New York 1928) p. 502.
- 2) John Rex, *Key Problems of Sociological Theory*, op. cit. p. 112. Elsewhere Rex mentions scarcity: "Competition for the scarce resource of housing leads to the formation of groups very often on an ethnic basis..." *Race Community and Conflict*, op. cit. p. 16. But how often and whence this "ethnic basis"?
- 3) Robin Williams, *Strangers Next Door: Ethnic Relations in American Communities* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1964), p. 1.

and profundity of a common identity and identification⁽¹⁾. Prior to confrontation and conflict, individuals may constitute statistical aggregates or social categories, i.e. sharing common attributes and interests but not goals and identity. A confrontation between social categories and statistical aggregates may generate group-formation in direct proportion to its intensity and protraction. For example, passengers in a bus constitute a statistical aggregate or a social category in so far as they communicate and share an awareness of commonly held characteristics. They may stand as a group in opposition to the bus-driver or an incoming-passenger, but only as a result of some disagreement, or procrastinating behaviour on the part of the new entrant. Groups are the ultimate in social identification, affinity and cohesiveness among individuals emerging not prior to, but during social interaction. Thus, Williams' emphasis on ethnocentrism as the source of the formation of socially significant groups is an irresponsible speculation which assumes an inflexibility of the human psyche.

What, however, is the ultimate source of Williams' confusion and the inadequacies of the conflict model of "race relations"? It is difficult to decipher whether it is the racial (group) reading of history which propels some social scientists into constructing conflict and power models of "race relations", or the commitment to power and conflict theories of society. Nor is it very important for us to investigate whether it is their epistemology, or philosophical anthropological assumptions about men and power, which sustains the efforts of sociologists of "race relations". We would, however, point out the interesting congruence between normative functionalist theory and the conflict model of "race relations". The idealism of normative functionalism is manifest in its studied accentuation

- 1) Eli Chinoy, *Sociological Perspective* 2nd Edition (Random House New York 1966) pp. 70-71. See also Michael Banton who asserts: "Social scientists now analyse the interaction between "blacks" and "whites" as the interaction of categories of people who are identified by race. They are not groups, for a group is a collection of individuals who are held together by the contact which members have with one another. They are categories because their unity derives from the tendency of others to classify them as similar with respect to social relations". *Racial Minorities* (Fontana/Collins, London 1972) p. 9.

of values, their institutionalisation, internalisation and integrative function. We shall see its influence especially in the postulate of a white racist value consensus on "blacks". A similar methodology is discernible in the race conflict model which explains group formation in terms of the ideas men have about one another. The concern is with real historical men and these ideas are given in their psyche as a philosophical anthropological attribute - ethnocentrism. Thus empiricism and idealism come full circle in the fatalism of instinctually based social relations.

Race conflict also presupposes racial power. Thus a major thesis of conflict theorists and sociologists of "race relations" generally, is that 'blacks' and 'whites' can be regarded as groups differentially placed in an empirical power setting. This thesis is a logical development out of both the rejection of the Marxian concept of class and the empiricist enterprise of describing the real world of power relations. Prof. R. A. Schermerhorn's remark captures the general assumption: "... from the standpoint of power-conflict theory one can view each ethnic group as being in an embattled position, fighting for its life, its identity or its prestige subject to perpetual constraints that threaten its survival, its freedom or its life chances in a precarious world"⁽¹⁾. This is a position he shares with almost all race relations theorists⁽²⁾. For the notion of a racial or ethnic power system is an inevitable consequence of the Weberian conception of social stratification, which dominates sociological texts. What is most interesting about these analyses is their direct

- 1) R. A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research*, op. cit. p. 20.
- 2) Hubert Blalock put the matter forcefully: "Clearly what is needed is a general theory of power relationships between dominant and subordinate parties. Relationships between racial and ethnic groups can then be taken as a special case". *Toward a Theory of Minority Group Relations* (John Wiley and Sons Inc., London 1967) p. 112; see also Stokeley Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power* (Jonathan Cape, London 1968); John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit.; Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism*, op. cit.; Ira Katznelson, op. cit. William J. Wilson, *Power, Racism and Privilege* (The MacMillan Company, New York 1973). We may say that the notion of racial power blocks is a consequence of the textual popularity of the Weberian analysis of power.

lineage with the zero-sum conception which both elitists and pluralists adhered to in the early debate over power in American society. As a result, the thesis of a racial power structure suggest no more than that "whites" are super-ordinate by virtue of having a larger share of national power resources. Two issues which remain un-resolved, however, are: is power measurable and can the power of "whites" be designated white power without suggesting racially-motivated "whites"?

In reviewing the major contributions to the analysis of power, we may distinguish Weberian, structural functionalist, and structuralist approaches. In the Weberian tradition, power is a zero-sum phenomenon. That is to say, it is conceived as a finite substance distributed among actors in mutually exclusive magnitudes⁽¹⁾. Power is any kind of capacity, political, institutional or personal. Within a society, it is shared by a multiplicity of contending groups with their own wills, or interests. This conception cuts across the renowned pluralist-elitist controversy over the distribution or degree of concentration of power in American society. Thus the analyses of C. Wright Mill, Peter Bachrach and Morton Eoratz (elitists) on the one hand, and Robert Dahl and Nelson Polsby on the other, are not methodologically distinct⁽²⁾. In both 'schools' the emphasis is on the behaviour of social actors in empirical settings of decision making involving a conflict of subjectively perceived interests. Polsby writes: "One can conceive of power-influence and control as serviceable synonyms - as the capacity of one actor to do something affecting another actor which changes the probable pattern of specified future events. This can be

- 1) Cf Max Weber, "Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance regardless of the basis on which this probability rests". Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, op. cit. p. 152.
- 2) C. Wright Mills writes ... The elite are simply those who have most of what there is to have ... By the powerful we mean, of course, those who are able to realise their will even if others resist it". *The Power Elite* (Oxford University Press, New York 1959) p. 9.

envisaged most easily in a decision-making situation⁽¹⁾. Robert Dahl's recognition of the State's political salience takes a characteristically personalised form: "The State is, then, a power of key importance in struggles over power for the relatively great resources of the State and its exclusive claim to regulate severe physical coercion means that those who control the State inevitably enjoy great power"⁽²⁾. Note here the focus on persons as well as the ambivalence over power evident in regarding the State as "a power ... in struggles over power".

In criticising this approach to power, the 'elitists' draw attention to its omission of the processes of non-decision making as well as its undifferentiated conception of decision making situations. Thus there are two serious defects in the pluralist model: "One is that the model takes no account of the fact that power may be and often is exercised by confining the scope of decision making to relatively safe issues. The other is that the model provides no objective criteria for distinguishing between "important" and "unimportant" issues arising in the political arena"⁽³⁾. For the 'elitists', the real measure of A's power over B is observable in not only how A's decisions affect B's wishes, but also in A's capacity to actually define B's preferences. Thus, the political theorist should focus on both decision and non-decision making, for the latter often determines the nature of B's preferences as well as the definition of key issues⁽⁴⁾.

Power, then, must be discussed in the context of the shaping of subjective interests. For, in social relations, interests are both

- 1) Nelson Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory* (Yale University Press, London 1963) pp. 3-4.
- 2) Robert Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis* (Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963) p. 51.
- 3) Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "The Two Faces of Power" *American Political Science Review*, 56, 1962, p. 948.
- 4) See Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "Decisions and Non Decisions: An Analytical Framework", *American Political Science Review*, 57, 1963.

interdependent and, to introduce Steven Lukes' three dimensional critique, "real"⁽¹⁾. In Lukes' view, every conception of power is based on a conception of interests. A subjective conception is common to the texts of both pluralists and interests. Lukes, on the other hand, analyses the concept of power in relation to real interests, namely, B's preferences had alternative choices been placed before him: "... A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests"⁽²⁾. Lukes argues for the superiority of his "three dimensional approach on the grounds of its crucial shift away from observable behaviour and overt conflict: "What one may have here is a latent conflict, which consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude"⁽³⁾. Lukes' criticisms of the elitist and pluralist analyses are impressive. He lists: a debilitating commitment to studying "... a series of individually chosen acts rather than culturally patterned behaviour of groups, and practices of institutions"⁽⁴⁾ as well as an unrealistic concentration on overt conflict and consequent ignoring of "The possibility of false or manipulated consensus by definitional fiat"⁽⁵⁾. Yet Lukes does not transcend the limitations of the pluralist and elitist analyses.

Firstly, he does not resolve the ambiguity of the problem the way it is posed. Is it that A has more power than B or power over B? In the former case, the implication is that power exists independently of both A and B, embodied, for example in State apparatuses. In the latter case, A must be shown to be a sovereign agent in order to forestall a counter-argument that A is really subordinate to C. Lukes is not aware of these implications because he has not questioned the way the problem is posed. Hence, a second weakness manifests itself in his analysis. He discusses power in isolation from capital and the reproduction of the political conditions of its

- 1) Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (MacMillan, London 1974).
- 2) *ibid.* p. 34.
- 3) *ibid.* pp. 24-25.
- 4) *ibid.* p. 22.
- 5) *ibid.* p. 24.

production by the State, but covertly introduces both notions. For what is the source of A's capacity to obscure the alternatives open to B except in the former's control of the dissemination of knowledge?⁽¹⁾ Moreover, an awareness of other choices does not necessarily lead to their implementation. Thus in defining real interests in terms of preferences based on knowledge of alternatives, Lukes circumvents the crucial problems of realising these preferences and, derivatively, State power. Thirdly, Lukes trivialises his analysis by not specifying whether A is a referent of an empirical actor or, the concept of class. The fact that A has the capacity to and does not place subversive alternatives before B suggests that these are intrinsically divergent interests. The point of departure, in the analysis of power, should therefore be the objective situation in which they find themselves.

A truly radical breakthrough would involve pursuing such questions as why real interests are in conflict and whether, at a determinate level of development of the productive forces, all conflicts could be resolved without power, if private ownership of the means of production were to be abolished. Lukes radicalism merely develops the elitist position to a point where an exercise of power means that A does take decisions which do not allow B an awareness of other choices. Thus, one implication of this 'third dimension' is that a democratic society would eliminate differential opportunity structures by making all available information, material resources and choices open to its members⁽²⁾. Lukes notion of real interests contains therefore, a hidden postulate of "objective interests".

For Talcott Parsons, these objective interests are collective goals which reflect the integrative needs of the social system. Parsons' conception of power as a functional medium of the social system introduces us to the

- 1) Nor is Lukes consistent in insisting on "the empirical basis for identifying real interests" while postulating that the empirical reality is defined by the powers that be, in that: "thought control takes many less total and more mundane forms, through the control of information, through the mass media and through the process of socialisation," *ibid.*, p. 23.
- 2) But again, Lukes nowhere mentions the 'material' conditions of existence of "democratic participation".

'structural' analysis. For him: "Power then is generalised capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by units in a system of collective organisation when the obligations are legitimised with reference to their bearing on collective goals and where in the case of recalcitrance there is a presumption of enforcement by negative situational sanctions ..."⁽¹⁾ This conception posits legitimation and the 'collectiveness' of goals as necessary conditions for the existence of power. There are two problems here. Firstly, given the legitimacy of the goals, there is no need for power and, indeed, no possibility of recalcitrance so that Parsons' definition is tautologous - power is already contained in the legitimating of goals. Secondly, if a system of organisation has "binding obligations", "recalcitrance", and negative sanctions of enforcement, it cannot be designated as "collective". These phenomena suggest that we are dealing with class-structured, rather than "collective goals".

Both Parsons and Lukes reject the analysing of power in relation to "class". Lukes, however, in stressing latent conflict and real interests, is closer to the structuralism of Nicos Poulantzas for whom power is "the capacity of a social class to realize its specific, objective interests"⁽²⁾. Poulantzas argues that power cannot be defined in abstraction from class conflict and class struggle. The concept intervenes, therefore, at the political, ideological and economic levels of the structure - the form of combination between agents of production and means of production. Power indicates the effect of the structure on classes struggling to realise their interests⁽³⁾. This implies that any changes in the nature or form of these struggles are a consequence of structural transformations.

- 1) Talcott Parsons, "On the Concept of Political Power", in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour M. Lipset (eds.) *Class Status and Power* (The Free Press, New York 1953) p. 244.
- 2) Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (New Left Books, London 1973) p. 104.
- 3) For a more lucid analysis of objective interests than Poulantzas presents, see Isaac D. Balbus, "The Concept of Interest in Plural and Marxist Analysis", *Politics and Society*, 1, 1971.

Poulantzas has been accused of dissolving power into a form of structural determinism⁽¹⁾. This criticism, however, does not pinpoint the source of Poulantzas' inadequate analysis. At root, it is his separation, à la Max Weber, of the economic, political, and ideological levels. For, then, he cannot perceive that what unites these levels, as for Marx, is capital. He is thus forced into two distinct definitions of power: "the capacity of a social class" and introduce a specific relations of domination and subordination of class practices as a relations of power"⁽²⁾. Poulantzas rejects the methodological individualist conception of power by emphasising class struggle, but he still adheres to the conception of power as a thing, a capacity of agents. We observe here how his second definition attempts a merger between structuralism and methodological individualism: "If we consider power as an effect of the structures in the field of the class struggle, we shall see that the capacity of a class to realise its interests, a capacity which depends on the struggles of another class, depends thereby on the structures of a social formation"⁽³⁾. His discomfiture as to the source of power comes because he "ignores Marx's suggestion that power is not a property of individuals. This juridico-ideological reproduction of the social relations of production serves the interests of capitalist in so far as it maintains labourers as wage labourers. However, this does not mean that capitalists have power over workers such that power can be an explanatory category of social behaviour and processes within the capitalist mode of production. For, in Marx's words: "... looking at things as a whole all this does not, indeed, depend on the good or ill will of the individual capitalist. Free competition brings out the inherent laws of capitalist production, in the shape of external coercive laws having power over every individual capitalist"⁽⁴⁾. What Marx's formulation avoids is the analysis of power as power over others. For, whether agents conceived as A and B, or classes, power as the attribute of a subject necessarily leads to the moralistic category of domination and the infinite regress involved in demonstrating its "legitimation".

The term "power" suffers at the hands of the empiricist attempts to utilise it to explain observable behaviour and social phenomena. These are taken to be

- 1) Steven Lukes, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
- 2) Nicos Poulantzas, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.
- 3) *ibid.*, p. 118.
- 4) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

characterised by relationships of domination and subordination. The dominance of this approach in political science and sociology could not but reflect itself in race relations theory. Power is seen as a relation among people, a facility of empirical men. Race theorists merely correlated the skin colour of these men with particular socio-economic indices and deduced racial power or powerlessness⁽¹⁾. It is then argued that it is the domination of "blacks" by "whites" which is responsible for the former's material deprivation. This domination is placed in the context of whites control over the value system⁽²⁾.

We shall offer three sets of criticisms of the notion that "blacks" and "whites" can be regarded as being in a relationship of dominated and dominant⁽³⁾.

Our first criticism concerns the methodological limitations of the zero-sum conception of power on which the notion of a monolithic, white power-structure is based. In this conception, as Poulantzas observed, power is not differentiated at its ideological, political and economic levels or according to its distribution among "whites". This differentiation is crucial to a further distinction, that between power and the exercise of power. "Blacks" are not politically powerless in terms of their capacity for disrupting the particular unity of the various levels or fractions within

- 1) It is testimony to the superficiality^f of the power approach to "race relations" that it contains no systematic analysis of the various conceptions of power found in political science and sociology. This level of theorising should be ignored, were it not for the popularity of this approach. For example, see Ira Katznelson, *Black Men, White Cities*, who quickly reviews the debate over power and agrees with C. Wright Mills that "the problem of who is involved in making [decisions] (or not making them) is the basic problem of power", *op. cit.* p. 23; See also Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, *Power and Poverty Theory and Practice* (Oxford University Press, New York 1970), Part III; see Steven Lukes' critical comments, *op. cit.* pp. 37-38.
- 2) Schermerhorn regards dominance as "authority to dispose of the controlling value system". *Comparative Ethnic Relations*, *op. cit.* pp. 12-13.; S. Carmichael and C. Hamilton approvingly cite a definition of political power as "the psychological control over the minds of men," *op. cit.* p. 51.
- 3) Note that power theorists of "race relations" too do not specify whether it is that "whites" have more power than "blacks" or power over "blacks". To suggest the latter implies an incompatibility of their interests. We are therefore back with the untenable proposition of blacks and whites being in "conflict".

state apparatuses. Riots and demonstrations can cause policy changes or the downfall of a particular Government. They are not capable, however, of transforming capitalist relations of production. One implication of this is that a diminution of white power does not necessitate an increase in black power, since a particular fraction among "blacks" can be the beneficiary. Thus "black capitalism" could exacerbate the economic condition of ghettoised black workers by confining their job opportunities to black-owned and unviable low-paying businesses⁽¹⁾.

Secondly, to be more than a mere assertion of a skin colour-power correspondence, the argument that "whites" have a greater share of power resources must mean that these resources are racially used. Yet there is no logical entailment between racial power distribution and racial power operation. A subsidiary thesis of racist motivation must be adduced. This renders the major argument enigmatic in that "racism" is not applied to intra-racial power differentiation. If "whites" use their power to subordinate "blacks" what explains the subordination of "whites" by "whites" and why, if the explanation is different, different explanations of the single phenomenon of subordination? What we have discovered, then, is that hidden behind the notion of white domination is an idealist methodology which imputes an effectivity to racist values.

Even at this level of analysis, however, race theorists are inconsistent. The State is appealed to as a major instrument of value control. Yet the source of racial values is located exclusively in history, culture and personality. There is no consideration of the possibility that the State's dissemination of racial definitions is a part of a political socialisation organised around the relations of distribution. Consider the nature of the interventions of the State which resolve "racial conflict" over economic, educational and social welfare resources. These interventions constitutionalize the sociologists' racial definition of the situation by legalising racial solutions. Thus we have a gamut of Race Relations Acts and State and Federal legislation to ensure "racial equality", or universal citizenship rights. These interventions do not resolve

1) See Timothy Bates, *Black Capitalism: A Quantitative Analysis* (Praeger Publishers, New York 1973). Bates' arguments are interesting in the debate over Black Capitalism. But see also Earl Ofari, *The Myth of Black Capitalism* (Monthly Review Press, New York 1970).

the conflicts in favour of either "whites" or "blacks"; for surely such a resolution necessarily demands the alternative society implied in Lukes' conception of power. The State is neither black nor white. What its "racial" resolutions do, is consolidate the race relations perspective and "race relations" as a social reality.

A more important criticism, however, parallels that which Marx made of the State's attempt to resolve the Jewish Question. The attempt to establish an equality of citizens fails because of the peculiar nature of a merely egalitarian emancipation. In attempting to put "blacks" on an equal footing with "whites", the State merely accentuates the existence of social and economic distinctions. In decreeing equal rights for "blacks", the State assumes that the whole society exists in order to guarantee the preservation of racial rights, property, and security. It thereby solidifies the racial ethos and racial comparisons; it presupposes the eternity of the estrangement whose symptoms it opposes⁽¹⁾.

The errors of omission and commission which we have discovered in the power approach to "race relations" cannot be explained on the grounds of scientific immaturity. For the source of this theoretical adolescence lies in the very "theory of race relations," arguably the most developed sub-discipline within sociology. "Race", however, is not a sociological-theoretical construct. It is no doubt a disputed concept within biology and, as a term, it may be of interest to certain theorists. Sociological concepts are abstract categories in a specific logical relationship to one another to constitute a theoretical field. The sociology of "race relations" then, is built on an edifice of a pseudo-theoretical construct.

A partial recognition of this can be seen in a certain withdrawal from "race relations" into role theory and minority-majority and ethnic relations. Michael Banton expressed his disenchantment with race, without being certain as to the alternative: "The misleading biological associations of the word 'race', when used to identify a social category, are reduced by using the terminology of minority-majority relations"⁽²⁾. Prof. Banton, however,

- 1) See Karl Marx, 'The Jewish Question in Robert Tucker (ed.) The Marx-Engels Reader (W.W. Norton and Co. Ltd., New York 1972), pp. 31-41.
- 2) Michael Banton, Racial Minorities, op. cit. p. 11.

is not satisfied with this terminological reconstitution of "race relations. Elsewhere he writes: "Strictly speaking 'race relations' might be better renamed 'ethnic relations', but while crude concepts of 'race' still have so much influence upon popular thinking such a change might be premature in Britain. Australians and Pakistanis are both ethnic groups but Pakistanis are also a racial minority"⁽¹⁾. Finally, Banton focused his emphasis on role relationships: "In a society in which blacks are subordinated, black people are in certain situations ascribed a role which gives them fewer privileges than the role ascribed to white people. Their social categorisation is used as a clue. Telling people in the dominant category how to treat them, so that in this society race becomes a role sign. Physical characteristics do not of themselves decide a person's place in society; it is the significance that is placed on these characteristics which is important"⁽²⁾. Banton is not investigating the theoretical origin or status of "race relations". "Race relations" simply are. But the word race creates difficulties, which cast doubt on their study. For this reason he suggests that it must be abandoned. British society, however, is not yet ready for this rejection for Pakistanis, but not Australians, are a racial group. Thus the study of their treatment is best effected within the framework of race as a "role sign".

At this point, Banton introduces the Parsonian ascription-achievement distinction, arguing that black people can be seen as having specific social roles involving subordinated rights, obligations and expectations. Their race is an ascribed as opposed to an achieved role sign ensuring their inferior treatment, protestations about which incur sanctions from the dominant

- 1) *ibid*, pp. 11-12.
- 2) *ibid*, p. 9.
- 3) The application of role theory to "race relations" is a development of one of Park's suggestions. Park on the other hand appropriated the role concept from Georg Simmel, although it was Ralph Linton who firmly introduced it into American Sociology. Cf. Lewis Coser, Georg Simmel, *op. cit.* p. 26.

whites⁽¹⁾. With this stress on roles, Banton sought to minimise the significance of "race" in accounting for relations between "black and white people". Race is merely a signthrough which a social category is identified. On the other hand, Harold Baron merged the two notions - race and roles: "It cannot be denied that individual attitudes and prejudices are significant for perpetuating racial discrimination, but in order to understand racism as an institutional phenomenon, it is necessary to view individual behaviour in terms of norms and roles"⁽²⁾. It was Baron's contention that the dynamics of urban racism are best understood within a framework of norms and roles. He suggested that social interaction in institutional settings creates and is structured by enduring standards of achievements and expectations. Furthermore: "The control systems have been bolstered in the abstract by ideological justifications, institutionally by normative prescriptions, and individually by adjustments to roles either of superordination for white or subordination for blacks"⁽³⁾. These arguments are aimed principally at demonstrating the structural determination of social interaction. Role-incumbents are assumed to be acting out mutual sets of normatively controlled expectations and obligations which are, in the case of "blacks" and "whites", hierarchically arranged. How pertinent, however, are "roles" to the explaining of "black-white interaction"; without an analysis of role theory?

Role theory has a well established position in sociology and social psychology. It is crucial to the "functionalism" of both Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton, as well as the cultural anthropology of Ralph Linton, whose definitions of "role" are of seminal status among

- 1) The distinction between ascribed and achieved roles is also often cited as defining 'race relations situations'. See John Rex *op. cit.* Pierre L. van den Berghe, *op. cit.*
- 2) Harold M. Baron "The Web of Urban Racism" in Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt (eds.) *Institutional Racism in America* (Prentice Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1969) p. 161.
- 3) *Ibid.* p. 138. See also T. F. Pettigrew. *Racially Separate or Together* (van Nostrand, New York 1964).

theorists⁽¹⁾. Yet the theoretical status of "role" is still a matter of dispute and its analytic value was seriously undermined by two leading role-analysts: "The concept role is at present still rather vague, nebulous, and non-definable. Frequently in the literature, the concept is used without any attempt on the part of the writer to define or delimit the concept, the assumption being that both writer and reader will achieve an immediate compatible consensus"⁽²⁾. Thus it is extremely surprising that "role" has not been given any systematic analysis in the literature on "race relations". This can be said of the writings of Harold Baron, T. F. Pettigrew, John Rex, Pierre van den Berghe, and other sociologists of "race relations" and it requires us to consider the utility of "roles" in analysing "race relations". We shall argue that its widespread use in race relations studies reflects not only the dominance of functionalist sociology⁽³⁾ but also the attenuated view of social structure peculiar to race (relations) theorists.

Most simply put, a "role" is a part played by a person, a sort of feigning or play-acting⁽⁴⁾. But the recognition that men are consciously and unconsciously acting out roles in society opens up other and related areas of investigation. For example, how are roles created and why do men act out roles? What are the relationships between roles, personality and culture? It is in attempting to answer these questions that two categories of role-theories were discovered by "role-analysts".

- 1) Cf. Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason and Alexander W. McEachern, *Explorations in Role Analysis* (John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York 1966) p. 3. See almost any work of Talcott Parsons, but especially Talcott Parsons et al., *Toward a General Theory of Action* (Harper and Row, Publishers, New York 1961), Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (The Free Press, New York 1951), Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (The Free Press, New York 1968), Ralph Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1968).
- 2) Lionel J. Neiman and James W. Hughes "The Problem of the Concept of Role - A Re-survey of the Literature" quoted in Neal Gross et al. (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 4.
- 3) See Robert Merton, *op. cit.* p. 319.
- 4) This is the sense in which it is used by T. F. Pettigrew, *op. cit.* Ch. 3.

Ralph Linton sees role as being inseparable from status. Society for him, is a set pattern of statuses occupied by individuals. Each status has its particular role which: "Represents the dynamic aspect of status ... When (the individual) puts the rights and duties which constitute the status into effect, he is performing a role"⁽¹⁾. Linton not only sees status and role as inseparable, but also argues that any distinction between them is purely academic. On the other hand, role is not actual behaviour but the normative standards of behaviour of persons in given positions⁽²⁾.

The second meaning of role differs from this in two respects. Firstly, within the second definition and equally popular use of "role", the emphasis is on the nature of the standards of behaviour which are considered by some sociologists to be internally determined, or at least created by the individual's definition of the situation. Berger, for example, defines a role as "a typified response to a typified expectation"⁽³⁾. While Linton stressed the cultural (external) element in roles, the 'interactionists' assert that roles have two other equally important ones, the personal and the situational: "A person's role is a pattern or type of social behaviour which seems situationally appropriate to him in terms of the demands and expectations of these in his group"⁽⁴⁾. In the interactionist perspective, a role is not behavioural standards expected of a given position but a mode of behaviour derived from the individuals subjective assessment of himself and others. Talcott Parsons, at different times used both these conceptions of role, a fact which testifies to its importance in his theoretical system as well as its definitional diffuseness. He saw "roles" as both individual orientations to expectations influenced by the value standards which govern interaction, and as behaviour. Roles

- 1) Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man*, quoted in Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason and A. W. McEachern (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 12.
- 2) Ralph Linton, *op. cit.* p. 50.
- 3) Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (Pelican Books Ltd., Middlesex 1971) p. 112.
- 4) Stansfield Sargent, *Concepts of Role and Ego in Contemporary Psychology*, quoted in Neal Gross et al., *op. cit.* p. 13.

have integrative functions; they facilitate the meshing of individual behaviour and the needs of the social system⁽¹⁾.

In Linton's conception, a role is not subjectively induced but obligatory performances within a social position⁽²⁾. Every position has what are called role-prescriptions, although because role is a relational term, i.e. one plays a role vis-a-vis another person's role, it is impossible to faithfully reflect them. In other words, since the actor has multiple relations with various people, no theory can do more than describe some of his roles. Thus, in Davis' use of role, the actual behaviour which it describes may deviate from both the expectations of others and the obligations which the status of position imposed. This use of role as actual performance makes role inseparable from a description of behaviour.

We are faced with two sets of issues in these different and divergent usages of "role". Firstly, it seems that it is necessary to make a distinction between the substantive role (parts, rights, duties, obligations) its internalisation in learning social expectations, from role-incumbent or positions, and the actual performing of roles. Secondly, role is used as a way of labelling a group of individuals by virtue of the possessing of certain common attributes, or as an indication of how a given individual should behave, or to refer to a conscious or unconscious piece of deception. To summarise then, among role analysts and theorists, the concept "role" refers to actual, idealised, prescribed, or interpretive behaviour, and can be placed within a context of culture, perception, or function within a social system.

This tangled complexity of role theory should restrain sociologists of "race relations" from using role as an explanatory category. There are two major criticisms to be made the application of role to "race relations".

- 1) Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, op. cit. p. 38-39; Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (The Free Press, New York 1954) p. 239.
- 2) As Kingsley Davis put it, "An individual carries his social position around in his head, so to speak, and puts it into action when the appropriate occasion arises". *Human Society* (MacMillan, New York 1963) p. 87.

Firstly, role theory by itself offers no explanation of different perceptions of norms; states of transition and changed behaviour. It homogenises disparate responses to social situations under role behaviour so that the argument becomes circular. Thus, the deferential, or the arrogant black is still performing a role. A change in behaviour is merely re-named role-change in order to preserve the notion of racial roles. However, if this changed behaviour means changed roles, what is the evidence for the existence of a racial role in the first place? Role theory thus contributes nothing to the understanding of allegedly racial behaviour. Moreover, do these separate roles for "whites" and "blacks" refer to expectations, obligations or standards of behaviour? This is important. For we would then be able to analyse whether particular "blacks" or "whites" can step outside of their roles. Role avoidance, for example, is impossible if roles are obligatory. Thus, the suggestion that roles are obligatory must make reference to the structural situation of role-incumbents. This introduces our second criticism. Racial role theorists express a studied indifference to the concept of class, yet it is argued that society is (racially) stratified. What is not perceived is that with the rejection of the concept of class "whites" must become the dominant group and "blacks" the subordinated. These theorists are therefore brought back to a power model of "race relations".

In replacing racism with "roles", and racial discrimination with "ascriptive role allocation", race relations theorists present verbal solutions to the irrepressible theoretical threats to their field of study. The explanation is that these threats are not recognised as theoretical problems but minor inconveniences to the constructing of race relations theory. Tamotsu Shibutani and Klan M. Kwan, for example, abandoned "races" in favour of "peoples". Their purpose: "... a better understanding of race relations through a comparative study of the contact of peoples"⁽¹⁾. Although admitting to being heavily influenced by Park and his many students"⁽²⁾, Shibutani and Kwan reject his biologism in preference for

1) Tamotsu Shibutani and Klan M. Kwan, op. cit. p. V.

2) *ibid*, p. 8.

a focus on the historical culture or ethnic allegiance of a people. Is "ethnicity", however, different from or theoretically superior to phenomenologically construed "race relations"? We think not and shall substantiate our viewpoint by analysing some definitions and postulates contained in the works of Shibutani and Kwan as well as R. A. Schermerhorn.

These writers all define an ethnic group in terms of the existence of a "consciousness of kind", a term derived from Franklin Giddings⁽¹⁾. An ethnic group is defined as people who share similar cultured characteristics and conceive of themselves as being of a kind, R. A. Schermerhorn's definition is exemplary: "... a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their people-hood ... a necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group"⁽²⁾. This definition of an ethnic group lacks even the pretence of theoretical delimitation. What, in other words, determines the selection of particular cultural attributes as evidence of 'kind? In a strict biological sense, all members of homo sapiens have a common ancestry, the amoeba, and a shared historical past, the Ice Age. All peoples have a cultural focus on language, per se, as well as a consciousness of kind, as against other members of the animal kingdom, and Martians. Schermerhorn's conception of an ethnic group has not clarified ethnicity. There is no mention of behavioural attributes but an emphasis on the subjectivity of the collectivity so that the sociologists is given infinite scope in the identifying of an empirical ethnic group. This is related to the general confusion over the concept of a group in the sociology of 'race relations'⁽³⁾. Does the

- 1) Franklin Giddings, we remind, was one of the founding fathers of the Chicago School of Sociology. According to E. Franklin Frazier, "Giddings did not offer any broad and systematic theory of race relations although he thought his concept of the consciousness of kind explained racial exclusiveness" in E. Franklin Edwards (ed.) op. cit. p. 32.
- 2) R. A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations*, op. cit. p. 12.
- 3) As Richard E. Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt observe: "Much of the literature analysing the effect of group life on political life has thrown what we are calling "social groupings" and "secondary groups" together under the label "group". *Political Socialisation* (Little, Brown and Co., Boston 1969) p. 182".

collectivity constitute a group even if it is rent with internal divisions and does not always respond to external phenomena as a collectivity?

This problem of the relationship between ethnic identification and behaviour is given considerable attention by ethnic and identity theorists. Common to them all is the assumption of a straightforward translation of self-identity into behaviour. As Shibutani and Kwan put it: "Those who develop consciousness of kind also become convinced that outsiders are basically different from themselves. This is a matter of decisive importance, for if outsiders are different kinds of creatures, then they should be treated differently⁽¹⁾. This proposition is simplistic and moreover, the authors elsewhere make contrary assertions where the relationship between consciousness of kind and treatment is made coincidental, and then reversed: "Lines of demarcation between ethnic categories develop to coincide with the evolving patterns of differential treatment, and the people so classified then begin to conceive of themselves as a kind ... Consciousness of kind ... develops from being subjected to differential treatment"⁽²⁾. The circularity here is an example of a fundamental weakness of the text. The authors focus on ethnic identity and behaviour as the key to the understanding of world historical social processes. Yet it is an elementary tenet of sociological textbooks that social behaviour and processes are constituents of interaction. Thus, self-conceptions cannot be the determinant of behaviour, but reciprocal conceptions existing within a framework of norms, customs, economic interests, in a word, social structure. The problem here is that the authors purport to be studying

- 1) Tomotsu Shibutani and Klan M. Kwan op. cit. p. 43. This assertion can be contrasted with Orlando Patterson's "... people never make economic decisions of the basis of ethnic allegiance, but, on the contrary, that the strength, scope, viability, and bases of ethnic identity are determined by, and are used to serve, the economic and general class interests of individuals". Orlando Patterson, "Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance" in Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1975), pp. 347-348.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 223, (our emphasis).

empirical behaviour patterns but place a singular emphasis on cognitive instances⁽¹⁾. This is no accident. It is precisely where an empiricist epistemology and an idealist methodology are shown to be in a relationship of logical entailment. Wedded to the "subjective perceptions" of men, the ethnic and minority theorists fail to observe that people cannot interact in a causal sequence to their ethnic perception. Hence, once they enter into relationships their behaviour can only be investigated as embodiments of objective economic relations. They therefore cease to be "ethnics" or "minorities"⁽²⁾. To ignore this leads to extremely broad definitions of ethnic and minority groups⁽³⁾ and the impossibility of explaining intra-ethnic interaction.

- 1) It does appear that ethnic theorists have attached themselves to those anthropologists who emphasise the "cultural nature of ethnicity". Abner Cohen criticises this approach citing Evan-Pritchard that "a continued preoccupation with problems of culture inevitably leads to psychology or history". *The Lesson of Ethnicity* in Abner Cohen (ed.) *Urban Ethnicity* (Tavistock Publications, London 1974), p. XIII. Cohen himself defines an ethnic group in terms of shared normative behaviour arguing that "The definition of ethnicity as cognition of identity obscures even nullifies the conception of differences in degree of ethnicity", p. XV.
- 2) The minority-majority relations approach of G. E. Simpson and J. Milton Yinger constitutes another case of verbal innovation. The authors present a familiar set of race relations concepts - group conflict, discrimination, dominant group and self-conceptions. Indeed, as the authors confess: "It is the thesis of this book that relations among races have a great deal in common with groups that think of themselves as different on other groups - culture, nationality, religion. Race differences are primarily important for what people believe them to be". *Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination* (Harper and Row, New York 1958) p. 35.
- 3) As in Louis Wirth's oft-quoted definition: "We may define a minority group as a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination". Cited in G. E. Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, *ibid*, p. 22.

The ethnic theorists are enjoined with race relations theorists in an idealist methodology which approaches "empirical" behaviour through the prism of the actors' definition of the situation. What is peculiar to the ethnic 'school' is a stronger focus on identity. The strength of the focus, however, is grounded in a fatalistic physiologism and presents a certain paradox. According to E.H. Erikson, an ethnic identity is a result of "man's deep-seated conviction that some providence has made his tribe and race or class, caste, or religion" naturally superior to others. This fact is, of course, rooted in tribal psychology and based on all the evolutionary changes which brought about man"⁽¹⁾. Identity, then, is pre-social, even primordial. Schermerhorn, too, defined an ethnic group as a culturally monolithic and impermeable collectivity⁽²⁾ and yet he regarded "the central question" as: "What are the conditions that foster or prevent the integration of ethnic groups into their environing societies?"⁽³⁾ The concept of ethnic integration may be more politically acceptable than "racial integration". The question, however, is can culturally hermetic entities integrate?

- 1) E.H. Erikson, "The Concept of Identity" in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark (eds.) *The Negro American* (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston 1966) p. 235.
Harmannus Hoetink locates perception in society's "genetic past" and thus outside the reach of contemporary politics. *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas: Comparative Notes on the Nature and Nexus* (Harper and Row Publishers, New York 1973).
- 2) It may well be pertinent to cite a refreshing contrast to the analytical superficiality of Schermerhorn et al. J.C. Mitchell begins his analysis with: "Differences supposed or real, in the customs, beliefs and practices that are identified as characteristic of particular sets of persons have long been accepted as an almost universal aspect of human behaviour. The awareness of these differences has been referred to as nationalism, as tribalism and more generally as ethnicity. However, these words, when used as anthropological and sociological constructs, have often led to confusion. Much of this confusion, I contend, arises out of the somewhat different epistemological bases of various notions of ethnicity. I wish to distinguish first between 'ethnicity' as a construct of perceptual or cognitive phenomena on the one hand, and the 'ethnic group' as a construct of behavioural phenomena on the other; and second, between commonsense notions and analytical notions of ethnicity. "Perception of Ethnicity and Ethnic Behaviour: An Empirical Exploration" in Abner Cohen (ed.) op. cit. p. 1.
- 3) R.A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations*, op. cit. p. 14.

Given the obvious idealism of even the efforts to transcend "race relations" it is not surprising that Marxist sociologists have not initiated any systematic study of "race". Thus we can appreciate the dramatic title of Percy Cohen's summary of "the neo-Marxist approach to race relations"⁽¹⁾. He interprets it as asserting that: "All racial antagonisms result from the exploitation of one race by another, which, in turn, produces beliefs concerning the alleged, inferior characteristics may even be, to some extent, produced by the system of exploitation. A structure of racialism also produces full-fledged, doctrines of racism which purport to explain the differential success of races in terms of their inherent characteristics and which serve to justify the structure of oppression and exploitation. The rise of extreme forms of racial inequality and racist ideas is due largely to slavery, which is capitalist exploitation at its most extreme: in this system, whole men, not only their labour power, are bought and sold as commodities, and they are thereby wholly dehumanised by their oppressors and inevitably perceived as inferior beings, which in turn makes it easy to justify their total exploitation, economic, political and sexual"⁽²⁾. Prof. Cohen goes on to stress an interaction between ideology and exploitative economic processes so that racist beliefs become part of a historical process in which "the descendants of slaves are seen to be fit for exploitation"⁽³⁾.

The central deficiency of Cohen's exposition is its bland use of "race", "racial antagonisms" and "racial inequality". It betrays the now familiar empiricism-idealism which begins with the experiences of real subjects. Antagonisms and exploitation are never "racial" in Marxian terms. The relationship of exploitation inheres in the exchange relation between classes and it is this which allows us to speak of capitalist exploitation. If the capitalist class has a different skin colour, or is absolutely phenotypically different from the working class, we still identify their

1) Percy S. Cohen, "Need there be a Sociology of Race Relations", *Sociology*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Jan. 1972.

2) *Ibid.* p. 101.

3) *Ibid.*

relationship as one of economic, not racial exploitation. A race cannot exploit another; a class does, for it is a class because it is in a relationship of exploitation. Even if we concede that there are Caucasian, Mongoloid and Negro races, it has always been the case of a given class exploiting dispossessed classes. Exploitation, therefore, remains non-racial, however much racial hierarchies may exist in mental structures.

Paradoxically, Prof. Cohen went on to repudiate his concept of racial exploitation: "After all the upper and middle classes of any nationality homogenous society exploits their own internal proletariat just as mercilessly as is necessary, while justifying this in terms of various doctrines (including that of eugenics a parallel to scientific racism) engage in sexual practices not dissimilar to those of Alabama or the Orange Free State, and stereotype their social inferiors as lazy, immoral and unsuited to participate in political community"⁽¹⁾. But this attempt at a class analysis comes as an afterthought and was followed by Cohen's own race relations approach which stressed man's xenophobic waywardness.

The source of Prof. Cohen's emasculated Marxist presentation is not difficult to discover. He appears incognisant of Marx's analytical method and critique of bourgeois political economy. Thus, he allows as "Marxist", analyses which regard "tribal" and "racial" phenomena as real social problems rather than conceptual elements of particular theoretical structures. We are not here counterposing the "race question" to "class." Such an analysis begs the question by accepting that there is a race problem⁽²⁾. Rather we would insist that the field of investigation should begin with the structure of the social theory which generates "race problems" as objects of study.

The Marxist approach to "race relations" is generally represented by the works of O. C. Cox, Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy. Cox accepted the

- 1) *ibid.*
- 2) As in John Carl Leggett, *Class, Race and Labor: Working-class Consciousness in Detroit* (Oxford University Press, London 1968). Leggett's view will be discussed in our final chapter, since it is more of an analysis of the relationships between race and class consciousness.

sociological perspective which defines "race relations" as "that behaviour which develops among peoples who are aware of each other's actual or imputed physical differences"⁽¹⁾. "Race relations", then, are that type of social interaction determined or accompanied by race consciousness. He rejected, however, the categories "ethnocentrism", "intolerance" and "racism" as starting points for the explanation of "race relations". Racism is a cultural legacy of the enslavement of Africans by an emergent European bourgeoisie. Its role is restricted to providing functionally significant categorisations of groups in competitive, exploitative relationships. For Cox, the sociology of "race relations" should be concerned with historic confrontations of peoples which lead to hierarchical political and economic relationships. Specifically, his focus is on bourgeois economic and political practices vis-a-vis the Negro and their "ideological" and attitudinal consequences. Cox identified seven types of contact situations:

- 1) "Situations in which the coloured person is a stranger in a white society, such as a Hindu in the United States or a Negro in many parts of Canada and Argentine - we shall call this the stranger situation.
 - 2) Situations of original white contacts where the culture of the coloured group is very simple, such as the conquistadors and Indians in the West Indies, and the Dutch and Hottentots in South Africa - the original contact situation.
 - 3) Situations of coloured enslavement in which a small aristocracy of whites exploits large quantities of natural resources, mainly agriculture, with forced coloured labour, raised or purchased like capital in a slave market, such as that in the pre-Civil War South and in Jamaica before 1834 - the slavery situation.
 - 4) Situations in which a small minority of whites in a coloured society is bent upon maintaining a ruling class status, such as the British
- 1) O. C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race : A Study in Social Dynamics* (Monthly Review Press, New York 1959), p. 373; Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order* (Penguin, Middlesex 1970) Ch. 9.

in the West Indies or the Dutch in the East Indies - the ruling class situation.

- 5) Situations in which there are large proportions of both coloured and white persons seeking to live in the same area, with whites insisting that the society is a "white man's country" as in the United States and South Africa - the bipartite situation.
- 6) Situations in which coloured and white amalgamation is far advanced in which a white ruling class is not established, as in Brazil - the amalgamative situation.
- 7) Situations in which a minority of whites has been subdued by a dominantly coloured population, as that which occurred in Haiti during the turn of the eighteenth century, or the expulsion of whites from Japan in 1638 - the nationalistic situation.(1).

Like Prof. Cohen, Cox conceptualised the exploitation of black labour as racial exploitation and the same criticisms apply to his works. But an even more serious inadequacy in a "Marxist" work on caste, class and race is the absence of a systematic treatment of intra-class struggles, namely labour competition between "blacks" and "whites". Moreover, these seven race relations situations expose a methodological flaw in Cox's study. The selection of criteria defining the contact situation reflect a curious concern with racial characteristics. It shows Cox to be heavily influenced by "the race and culture contact school" and the Weberian technique of typology-construction. The result is a highly compressed, somatic social intercourse between phenotypically different groups in colonial settlements, slavery, capitalist exploitation in colonial territories and contemporary United States and Brazil. Finally, the designation and elaboration of the stranger, original-contact, slavery, ruling class, bipartite, amalgamative, and nationalistic situations constitute an eclectic and arbitrary juxtaposition of profoundly, competitive paradigms and situations. Nor are their interrelationships explored. What, for example, is the relationship between the ruling class and slavery situations? Cox's theoretical affinity with Robert Park, whom he trenchantly criticised, is illustrated in the

1) *ibid.*, pp. 352-354.

following: "Indeed, we now have a conceptual basis for a world study of race relations. By following Europeans in their contacts with peoples of colour, a world map ... "(1). This inconsistency in Cox is a reflection of an uneasy tension between the race relations and class analyses which permeates the works of "Marxists" and radical economists.

Eighteen years after the publication of Cox's work, another notable "Marxist" analysis of "the race problem" was made by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy. They, too, saw white-supremacist ideas as an ideological justification of the exploitation of coloured peoples and their propagation nowhere more intense and systematic than in the United States. Yet, they emphasised, prejudice and hostility had been directed too against East and Southern European immigrants to America up to the middle 1920's. Impoverished newcomers are invariably greeted with discrimination from the indigenous population until they and their descendants are upwardly assimilated in the economic and social system. But this is not inevitable and thus, the real issue is why Negro immigrants to Northern cities became "permanent immigrants".

This problem was to be explained economico-historically, in terms of a burgeoning Northern capitalist economy 'pulling' surplus rural labour (Negroes) into an urban complex after World War I, and especially in consequence of the restricting of East and Southern European immigration to the United States after 1924. In Baran's and Sweezy's view, three sets of developments further explain the roots of the chronic poverty of Negro migrants and their descendants. Firstly, external immigration which after 1924 tended to be relatively highly-skilled, and which restricted occupational mobility for Negroes who were at any rate generally illiterate and unskilled. Secondly, the prejudice and discrimination with which the already established workers greet all impoverished newcomers also operated to encircle the Negro in a poverty trap. This prejudice and discrimination often escalated into violent protests by indigenous American workers against competition from both European immigrants in the 19th century and Negro labour in the early twenties.

1) *ibid.* p. 376.

In the latter case, Baran and Sweezy stressed that the protestations were not racially inspired but largely a result of the employers' use of Negroes as cheap labour and strike-breakers. The net result of these cumulated restrictions on occupational mobility in the urban environment was the ghettoisation of the Negro in the already decaying central areas which in turn was not unrelated to urban pollution, spiralling land prices induced by a phenomenal surge of office construction, the profit-oriented housing market and the rise of the motor industry. The second wave of Negro migration after World War II exacerbated the above-mentioned developments and culminated in half the present Negro population being classified as just on or below the poverty line and over one-third vegetating in the tangled pathology of the ghetto. The third set of developments coincides with the monopoly capitalist phase of the American economy: "First, a formidable array of private interests benefit, in the most direct and immediate sense, from the continued existence of a segregated sub-proletariat. Second, the socio-psychological pressures generated by monopoly capitalist society intensify rather than alleviate existing racial prejudices, hence also discrimination and segregation. And, third, as monopoly capitalism develops, the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour declines, both relatively and absolutely, a trend which affects the Negro more than any other group and accentuates their economic and social inferiority"⁽¹⁾. More specifically, the chronic sub-proletarian status of the American Negro can be explained in terms of the gains accruing to employers, real estate owners, the petit-bourgeoisie, the 'white' proletariat who are understandably interested in diminishing labour competition, the status anxieties of socially mobile 'whites' and, finally, the technological revolution in American industry since 1950⁽²⁾.

In their brief chapter on "race relations", Baran and Sweezy discuss two other related developments, namely, socio-economic stratification among Negroes and the ruling class response to the increasing scope and militancy of the black liberation movement. In their view, capitalism

1) *ibid.* p. 257.

2) *ibid.* pp. 260-261.

cannot solve the economic problems of the Negro masses, however much "black bourgeoisie" may emerge due to the following circumstances:

- a) The specific service demands of the black community for doctors, teachers, lawyers.
- b) Ruling class concessions in the name of economic and political rationality in the desegregation of the Armed Forces and expanded employment of Negroes in the public service.
- c) Tokenism as part of a strategy for national and international pacification and prestige.

Thus, paradoxically, side by side with the overall stagnation and relative deterioration of the Negro's situation we may observe: "The growth of the black bourgeoisie has been particularly marked since the Second World War. Between 1950 and 1960 the proportion of non-white families with incomes over \$10,000 (1959 dollars) increased from 1 per cent to 4.7 per cent, a rate of growth close to three times that among whites. During the same years, the total distribution of income among Negro families became more unequal, while the change among white families was in the opposite direction"⁽¹⁾. This tiny majority has managed to reach high income levels either because of exceptional abilities and prowess, tokenism, or the opening up of particular "black" markets. From this, and other developments, Baran and Sweezy deduce that the economic and political overlords in the U.S. are not governed "by personal prejudices but by their conception of class interests"⁽²⁾. Even though the ruling class may exhibit bouts of short-sightedness, in the long run, concessions to the Negro will be made if the whole capitalist system is being threatened. The crucial question then becomes; if some Negroes can make economic advancement, what is the epistemological or methodological justification for designating the problem and problems of those who do not, a 'race problem'? This question Baran and Sweezy and Cox left unraised because of their concentration on economic history rather than conceptual analysis. This is also the root of their

1) *ibid.* p. 266.

2) *ibid.* p. 264.

confusing inconsistency as regards the solution of "the race problem". Capitalism they assert cannot solve the economic problems of the Negro masses⁽¹⁾. On the other hand, we are told that, in the long run, concessions will be made to black militancy without any clarification of the solution, the nature of this militancy, or the concessions which will be made.

A related and even more crucial inadequacy in the radical and Marxist expositions is the absence of a theoretical analysis of the labour market⁽²⁾. The Negro's problems in the labour market can be fully explained only if the category itself is conceptually transcended. This means that the labour market must be seen as an institutional manifestation of the commoditisation of labour. It is not an autonomous historical fact. Moreover, an emphasis on the disappearing labour market as the cause of problems of black unemployment is suggestive of capital being the power, not prejudiced capitalists. If the central problem is that "blacks have moved from slave labour, to cheap labour, to no labour at all", then we need to explain the last two movements as processes determined by the rigors of capital accumulation in order to both transcend the limitations of the race relations framework and indicate political strategies consistent with our analysis. Thus, the ostensibly radical but fundamentally uncritical approach to the labour situation of "blacks" would be that which stresses the desirability of a perfect labour market or full employment. Here, just as, in Marx's words: "Classical political economy borrowed from everyday life the category price of labour without further criticism,⁽³⁾ so Marxists uncritically

1) *ibid.*, pp. 272-273.

2) This in turn involves the model of capitalism being used. Geoffrey Pilling has justly criticised the neo-Keynesian framework of Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy's "Monopoly Capital". He dismissed it as an exercise in conventional economic analysis where the central contradiction of capitalism becomes not "the contradiction between the accumulation process and the social relations of production" but the realisation of an economic surplus. See *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, 1972, pp. 301, 302 and 306. For other criticisms, see Maurice Dobb, *Marxism and Monopoly Capital: A Symposium*, *Science and Society*, No. 30 (Spring 1966).

3) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, *op. cit.* p. 537.

appropriate the notions of the labour market and "race relations".

Baran's and Sweezy's analysis incorporates many of the insights of immigration theorists. Their epistemological position, however, is a cause for concern. "Race relations" are not perceived as an object or problem peculiar to a theoretical structure. They are assumed to be part of social reality, of which Marxists can give a materialist, rather than an idealist explanation. The difficulty with this assumption is that it lacks criteria for demarcating those problems which are unique to a given theoretical structure. Theories, and their objects of study appear supplementary and explanations of (race) problems inferior or superior, according to the level of emphasis on the economic factor. In consequence, the Marxist explanation (unwittingly) follows "the enemy" into his definitions and materialises his theoretical regress. In our view, to avoid this, the Marxist explanation of "race relations" must begin with an investigation of their epistemological lineage. "Race relations" and race problems are then seen to be a theoretical problem specific to phenomenological and structural functionalist social analyses, in a word, empiricism. The compulsion which radicals and Marxists feel to follow up with explanations of problems derived from these analyses is inexcusable. It makes their Marxism a soft, pluralist one and above all, legitimises and consolidates those theoretical and political practices to which Marx was resolutely opposed.⁽¹⁾

Why it may be asked a race relations investigation of the social and economic conditions of "blacks"? Two answers must be instantly rejected. The first is: because "blacks" are exploited because they are black and the second: because "blacks" are super-exploited. These replies are untenable. They cannot be the reasons for the investigation only assumptions to be verified via an investigation. What then is the real reason? Why not investigate the conditions of "blacks" within the framework of immigrants and the class structure?⁽²⁾ Here Baran and Sweezy and Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack are agreed that "blacks" are to be

- 1) Marx took 'workers of the world unite' seriously enough to dissertate on exploitation per se and not on the exploitation of German workers, or Jews.
- 2) Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*. (Oxford University Press, London 1973).

seen as members of the proletariat⁽¹⁾. On the other hand, unlike Baran and Sweezy, Castles and Kosack firmly disassociate themselves from the race relations perspective.

This perspective they see as an unfortunately dominant approach to immigration in Britain. A less parochial perspective, an internationally comparative investigation of immigration would demonstrate structurally induced similarities in the position of all immigrants in Western Europe. It would invalidate "race relations" and those studies which concentrate on socio-psychological variables. Defending this position they claim: "Virtually every advanced capitalist country has a lower stratum, distinguished by race, nationality or other special characteristics, which carries out the worst jobs and has the least desirable social conditions. In the United States, this situation consists mostly of black people, a fact which is often used to justify the race relations approach. But few British social scientists have paid any attention to the immigrants in the far closer countries of continental Western Europe. In these countries there are about eight million immigrants. At the most two million of them can be considered as being racially distinct from the indigenous population. Yet - as we hope to show in the present work - the problems experienced by all immigrants to Europe and their impact upon society are very similar to those of coloured immigrants to Britain. If that is the case, race and racialism cannot be regarded as the determinants of immigrants' social position"⁽²⁾.

British race relations sociologists had opted for the narrow American conceptualisation rather than make intra-European comparisons of the patterns of immigration and the social position of immigrants. The

- 1) Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack argue against immigrant workers as a 'new proletariat' or a 'sub-proletariat'. "The first term implies that the indigenous workers have ceased to be proletarians and have been replaced by immigrants in this social position. The second postulates that immigrant workers have a different relationship to the means of production from that characteristic of the proletariat. All workers whether immigrant or indigenous, manual or non-manual, possess the basic characteristics of a proletariat ... " *op. cit.* p. 476.
- 2) *ibid.*, p. 2.

tendency has been to let the social or ethnic origin and characteristics of immigrants dictate the mode of investigation of the problems of immigration. In doing so, they missed the crucially determining function of immigrant labour in the capitalist economy.

Castles and Kosack contend that labour migration is a function of both the demographic-economic disparity endemic to economically underdeveloped regions and the post-war full employment and welfare policies of advanced capitalist societies. Full employment meant steadily rising wages and a drift from stigmatised and inconvenient occupations. Thus, labour shortages appeared in low paying industries, the service sector and other infrastructural areas of the advanced capitalist economies at a time when vast labour reserves were cumulating in the backward countries of Southern Europe, Africa, Asia and the West Indies. Labour, including colonial migration, must be understood in "the historical context of the international capitalist system"⁽¹⁾.

One of the justifications for an immigration rather than a race relations approach is the palpable similarities in social positions among immigrants regardless of their ethnic and cultural characteristics. As the authors note: "... subordinate position on the labour market, concentration in run-down areas and poor housing, lack of educational opportunities, widespread prejudice, and discrimination from the indigenous populations and authorities. These similarities, we contend, make it necessary to regard immigrant workers and their families in all the four countries as having the same function and position in society, irrespective of their original backgrounds"⁽²⁾. The common element is the sub-proletarian status of immigrants on the labour market exemplified by their higher frequency of unemployment, concentration in low paid and declining industries, and the generally unskilled nature of their occupations.

Castles and Kosack identify four 'causes' of the immigrants' inferior position on the labour market⁽³⁾. These are: their initially low level of

- 1) *ibid.* p. 7.
- 2) *ibid.* pp. 4-5.
- 3) *ibid.* pp. 97-107.

skills and qualifications, their peculiar socio-economic goals, official restrictions on migrant labour, and discrimination.

Given the disparity in the levels of industrialisation between sending and receiving countries, it is not surprising that the vast majority of migrants possessed relatively inferior industrial skills and training. Castles and Kosack quote several studies which support the observation that colonial migration in particular was of poor industrial quality. The background of poverty has another implication for the goals and behaviour of immigrants on the labour market. Immigrants are generally imbued with a desire or obligation to remit financial resources to their kith and kin. If this is a pressing responsibility then their job preferences deviate from normal market principles. Similar distortions are created by Governments' and employers' policy of utilising immigrant labour to offset cyclical fluctuations in economic growth and expansion. Official policy toward immigrant labour would therefore contain restrictions on internal mobility, professional upgrading and permanent settling. Castles sees the growing system of political repression, repatriation threats and juridical persecution of immigrants as an elongation of labour policy in the advanced capitalist societies of Western Europe. He writes: "In Switzerland, the Schwarzenbach Referendum of 1970 which would have led to the expulsion of a large proportion of immigrants was supported by no less than 46% of the voters. In Germany, the employers campaigned against trade union demands for shorter working hours with the slogan that this would mean bringing in even more foreigners. The French Government used the spectre of 'foreign agitators' against the movement of May 1968. Enoch Powell's campaign against immigrants fits into the same pattern. Prejudice and discrimination against immigrants takes much the same form whatever their colour or country of origin. The Italian who goes to the neighbouring country of Switzerland finds himself as unpopular as the Pakistani who goes half way round the world to Britain"⁽¹⁾. For Castles, these 'official' forms of discrimination cannot be explained in terms of racio-national prejudices. All immigrants are transformed into second class citizens by Government-

1) Stephen Castles "Some General Features of Migration to Western Europe", *New Community*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 1972. pp. 185 - 186.

employer coalitions in order to augment labour exploitation. The final causal factor was the pervasive discrimination against immigrant workers perpetrated by both employers and indigenous workers through their Unions. Employer discrimination is part of the mechanism of exploitation⁽¹⁾. They discriminate not because of their prejudice but in order to facilitate the extraction of surplus value from all workers. On the other hand, working class discrimination is to be explained in terms of critical socio-economic conditions and the material insecurity of the indigenous workers. Workers must become prejudiced, and discriminate against immigrants regardless of their skin colour in conditions of labour competition and "a split in working class consciousness"⁽²⁾. "Race problems" are therefore not problems of race, but of class exploitation of immigrant labour.

Castles and Kosack posit that all workers by definition have the same relationship to the means of production. This position does not appear congruent with their object of study, immigrant workers. The definition of one's object of study is ipso facto the theoretical justification of the study. If an immigrant worker is "a worker born outside of Western Europe"⁽³⁾, then, the justification of the study is place of birth. But by this same token, why not anyone born outside of a given region within Western Europe? The problem here is that since the term working class is conceptualised within the theory of the capitalist mode of production, the notion of immigrant workers is a conceptualisation outside of this theory. It imposes an extraneous geographic element on capitalist relations of production. This imposition has specific consequences of arbitrariness and inconsistency. Are intra-urban labour movements immigrant labour? By the implicit terms of the concept they must be. Yet Castles and Kosack do not include them in their study. This omission is not innocent. It is related to the fact that the boundaries of the concept of immigrant labour are

- 1) For a useful elaboration of this, see M. Nikolnakos, "Germany: The Economics of Discrimination" *Race Today*, Vol. 3, No. 11, November, 1971.
- 2) Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *op. cit.* p. 459.
- 3) Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, "The Function of Labour Immigration in Western Europe Capitalism", *New Left Review*, No. 73, May-June 1972, p. 7fn.

nowhere theoretically specified. Indeed, Castles and Kosack admit to a reliance on the statistical categories of various European Government Labour Offices⁽¹⁾. Their study shows immigrant workers to be part of the working class and not a distinct or separated stratum of proletarians. What, then, justifies the designation immigrant workers? If, as the study demonstrates, the exploitation of labour is indigenous to capital, labourers cannot be either indigenous or immigrant to countries.

To conclude this chapter, race relations theories are conceived as representations of the real world of race relations behind which there is some sort of social structure. For immigration theorists, it is immigrant labour exploitation; for Marxists, class exploitation; for Blalock, Schermerhorn, and Carmichael and Hamilton, power or power and conflict; for Rex, van den Berghe and Philip Mason, domination and scarce resources; for Banton, xenophobia; for immigrant theorists, culture and policy conflicts; for Kenneth Little, the colonial past; for E. Franklin Frazier, ecology and forms of economic exploitation; for Robert Park, almost all of the above-mentioned factors. As far as we are concerned, the structure behind 'race relations' in all its guises is a particular epistemological tradition. There are no "race relations" out there. They are the problem of an empiricist-idealist mode of generating knowledge. Needless to say, they are imaginary within the protocols of this very mode.

1) Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*, op. cit. pp. 483-486.

CHAPTER IIRACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND RACIAL IDEOLOGY

We have observed that sociologists of "race relations" are agreed in principle on the need to place race in a structural context. However, their empiricism and idealism cause an inflation of race into a structural ethos so that the search for a structure comes a full racial circle in "racism" as an explanatory category. "Race relations", as a sub-discipline within sociology, is a variant of the tradition of investigating pre-given minds - beliefs, values, and meaning - as part of the explanation of observable behaviour, or social action. The empiricism is contained in the assumption that consciousness and behaviour are not concepts but terms which describe real, theory-neutral phenomena. The idealism inheres in the postulate that since social actions are belief-bearing, beliefs can be abstracted and their causal efficacy discovered by measuring their strength and pervasiveness. Thus the project is not the production of coherent and systematic knowledge, but the explanation of on-going behaviour. Terms are seen as representations of actual social relationships and their validation dependent on the accuracy of this representation. "Racism" is not analysed as a concept gleaned from a textual study, but a thing active in the consciousness of "whites".

This epistemological position pervades the literature on "race relations" - although it is rarely presented in any systematic way - in official and semi-official reports on "race relations", and the publications of most "anti-racist" movements and organisations. For the last-mentioned especially, Euro-American society is redolent of a virulent racism consistent with the enslavement of Africans and plagued with "racial discrimination", "exploitation" and "oppression". We are regularly treated with propositions such as:

The racist restrictions that strike at people of color in America result in a system of special privileges for the white majority⁽¹⁾.

1) Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America*. (Harper & Row, New York 1972) p. 22.

What white Americans have never fully understood - but what the Negro can never forget - is that white racism is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions maintain it, and white society condones it ... white racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II⁽¹⁾.

America is a racist nation. Indeed, racism is so universal in this country, so widespread and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal. Yes, the central issue of mid-20th century America has been, and still is, racism. Racism has accounted for more than physical segregation and discrimination in obtaining the basic necessities of life, jobs, housing and education. It is the most evil, pervasive and systematic destruction of personality, the negation of one's humanity⁽²⁾.

What we are discovering, in short, is that the United States - all of it, North as well as South, West as East - is a racist society in a sense and to a degree that we have refused so far to admit, much less face ...⁽³⁾

The saliency of racism in American society is indicated by its pervasiveness in all areas of life from the most formal operations of government to the most casual types of interpersonal contact⁽⁴⁾.

It would, therefore, be no exaggeration to assert that the most frequently used explanatory variable in dissertations on "race relations" is "racism".

P. van den Berghe has pertinently observed on the diversity of its meanings: "To the physical anthropologists "race" in the genetic sense is a case of subspeciation in homo sapiens; to a social psychologist racism is a special instance of prejudice; for the philosopher racism is a particular body of ideas; the political scientist may regard racism as a special kind of political ideology; to an economist race is one of the "non-rational"

- 1) Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (P. Dutton & Co. Inc., New York 1968) pp. VII.
- 2) Shirley Chisholm in D. G. Bromley & Charles F. Longino Jr. (eds.) *White Racism and Black Americans* (Schenkman Pub. Co., Cambridge Mass. 1972) p. XVIII.
- 3) Charles Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (Random House, N. Y. 1964) pp. 9-10.
- 4) Harold Baron "The Web of Urban Racism" in L. Knowles & K. Prewitt (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 38.

factors, influencing, to be sure, economic behaviour but falling outside the scope of his discipline; a historian may look at race and racism as by-products of, and rationalisations for, Western slavery and colonial expansion; a cultural anthropologists may regard race and racism as traits in the cultural inventory of a people⁽¹⁾. It is debatable whether this heterogeneous understanding of "race" and "racism" conforms to, or reflects, the sub-divisions within social science. The problem may be one of conceptual analysis. Van den Berghe appears too, to have over-generalised. For, to be sure, not every economist regards or is obliged to regard race as the non-rational element in economic behaviour. But van den Berghe has unwittingly raised an important issue to which we shall return. For a considerable number of social scientists display an unawareness of the need for specification of "racism".

Racism appears particularly popular among "white-liberal" social scientists, usually employed in Government Commissions and semi-official studies, and "black" militants⁽²⁾. It possibly functions to morally unite "blacks" for political action as well as demoralise "whites"; via the inculcation of guilt feelings. Not unrelatedly, admitting to "racism" may be a sporadic self-flagellation, characteristic of the sado-masochistic, or a posture of honesty intended to pacify black insurgents. Observe, however, that the use of "racism" is twofold. It not only identifies a particular body of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and feeling, but also refers to and accounts for the practice of "discrimination" against "blacks" at the social, political and economic levels. Racist ideas are assumed to have penetrated minds and become transmuted into racist attitudes which ultimately realise themselves in institutional practices.

Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton expressed this transmutation when defining racism as: "the prediction of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial

- 1) P. van den Berghe, *Race and Racism*, op. cit. p. 132.
- 2) See Gunnar Myrdal, "An American Dilemma" Vol. I (Harper & Bros. New York 1944) for an emphasis on "beliefs" and "white prejudice". Twenty-four years later this tradition re-appeared in the Kerner Commission's stress on "white racism".

group and maintaining control over that group"⁽¹⁾. Racism is, therefore, not just a convenient idea with which "whites" explain away black subordination and exploitation, it is an elemental part of their cultural heritage which structures their behaviour. As such it is of some independent causal significance. This movement from theory or cognition to action takes place through racism's materialisation into a racist social structure. However, while racist beliefs function to create institutionalised forms of racism, race prejudice - a socio-psychological phenomenon - was of secondary importance in the allocating of responsibility for the socio-economic condition of "blacks".

A distinction is therefore made between "individual racism" and "institutional racism": "Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two closely related forms: individual whites acting against individual blacks, and acts by the total white community against the black community. We call these individual racism and institutional racism. The first consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury or the violent destruction of property. This type can be reached by television cameras; it can frequently be observed in the process of commission. The second type is less overt, far more subtly less identifiable in terms of specific individuals committing the acts. But it is no less destructive of human life. The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first"⁽²⁾. "Individual racism" is considered to be related to the inner dynamics of personality systems. It is a form of prejudice often caused by stunted ego-development, sexual diffidence, aggressiveness and authoritarianism. Those individuals with limited political horizons and the socially insecure too find the simplifying nature of a racial world view irresistably attractive. Thus to focus on the prejudice (as in Gunnar Myrdal's, 'American Dilemma') is to misunderstand the level of analysis necessary to

- 1) Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, op. cit. p. 3.
- 2) Stokely Carmichael & Charles V. Hamilton, op. cit. p. 4.
L. Knowles and K. Prewitt et al. stated the dominant view: "It is our thesis that institutional racism is deeply embedded in American society". Louis L. Knowles & Kenneth Prewitt (eds.) op. cit. p. 6.

expose covert, inadvertent racist practices.

Professor Robert Blauner elaborated on what later became, and still is, an influential perspective⁽¹⁾: "The processes that maintain domination - control of whites over non-whites - are built into the major social institutions. These institutions either exclude or restrict the participation of racial groups by procedures that have become conventional, part of the bureaucratic system of rules and regulations. Thus there is little need for prejudice as a motivating force. For this reason, the distinction between racism as an objective phenomenon, located in the actual existence of domination and hierarchy, and racism's subjective concomitants of prejudice and other motivations and feelings is a basic one"⁽²⁾. In Blauner's view, American society is shot through with racism and racial oppression. This pervasive racism is held responsible for the ghettoisation of Afro-Americans as well as the emergence of a unique black culture. Racial oppression is endemic to the American social structure manifested therein by "iron laws of white privilege", exploitation and control, restricted mobility and dehumanisation of non-whites. Racism is an objective, structured system, not a psycho-pathological phenomenon. It is "a principle of social domination by which a group as inferior or different in terms of alleged biological characteristics is exploited, controlled and oppressed socially and psychically by a superordinate group"⁽³⁾. It interacts dynamically with American capitalism to create internal black colonies. Thus Blauner sees the ghetto as "a major device of black colonisation" differing from other ethnic enclosures in terms of its involuntariness, permanence and external domination. Rejecting the immigrant and Marxist positions, he argued for a new theoretical perspective on American society and the black experience, which would accentuate "the combined existence, historical interaction and mutual interpenetration of the colonial, racial and the capitalist class realities"⁽⁴⁾. To do this, he proposed developing the notion of internal

- 1) See especially Sidney Wilhelm, *Who Needs The Negro* (Schenkman Pub. Co. Inc., Cambridge, Mass. 1974) and D. G. Bromley and C. F. Longino (eds.) *op. cit.*
- 2) Robert Blauner, *op. cit.* pp. 9-10.
- 3) *ibid.* p. 84.
- 4) *ibid.* p. 13.

colonialism⁽¹⁾.

The major components of America's internal colonies, or ghettos, are the following: the involuntary nature of black entry into it, the peculiar cultural configurations, its control and domination by external institutions and urban racism. The usefulness of the colonial analogy inheres in its focus on the historical similarities in the experiences of racial minorities subjugated by western imperialism. For the same forces which generated the enslavement and subjugation of overseas races, generate the ghettoisation of "blacks" in America's cities. Their permanent-immigrant status is inexplicable except with reference to white privileges and political-cultural manipulation by a white elite. One of Blauner's special concerns was to repudiate immigrant-assimilation models as applied to racial minorities. In his view, hopes of assimilation and integration of "blacks" are illusory for: "People of colour have never been an integral part of the Anglo-American political community and culture because they did not enter the dominant society in the same way as did the European ethnics"⁽²⁾. Moreover, European ethnics are set crucially apart from other groups by a fundamental component of the colonial complex, institutional racism.

While Blauner emphasised political-cultural elements in the racist practices and ghettoisation of "blacks", Harold Baron sought to develop a political economy of racism which saw its genesis in slavery and its salience in the duality of the labour market in the American capitalist economy. Baron's urban racism model posits racially hierarchical institutional sectors within the economy with black sub-sectors maintained by vicious circles of reinforcement at the economic, political and educational levels. These institutional discriminations and differentiations are interlocking, impersonal and mutually supportive so much so that explicit racial controls are unnecessary. The racism of the labour and housing markets, the educational

- 1) Other proponents of the internal colonialism paradigm are: Stokely Carmichael & Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power ...* op. cit. Ch. 1. Eldridge Cleaver, *Post Prison Writings and Speeches*, (Vintage Books, New York 1969). For a comprehensive list, however, see R. Blauner op. cit. p. 75. and John Bracy in N. Huggins et al. (eds.) *Key Issue in the Afro-American Experience Vol. II* (Harcourt, Brace Johanovich, New York 1971), p. 260.
- 2) Robert Blauner, op.cit. p. 52.

system and the polity, ensure: "the overall oppressive functioning of the system of urban racism", which was not at all dissimilar from colonial domination⁽¹⁾.

For Baron, racism referred to the patterns of domination and exploitation of "blacks" which are manifest throughout the history of black labour as well as the ideology of black inferiority. It is thus both action and belief. "Race" was urbanised following the massive twentieth-century influx of black labour to the metropolitan epi-centre and it combines with capitalism to produce a racially-differentiated opportunity structure in education, employment and housing in consequence of which, black expectations and achievements are subordinated and pathologised. The heavy concentration of "blacks" in the central urban areas, together with their paradoxical exclusion from the political power system, were, in reality, patterns of enforced residential segregation and political subjugation respectively. American society was in effect virtually a system of Apartheid. The key problem is that institutions in American society are based on racist assumptions and are seen to be functioning efficiently and effectively only when they produce disparities in black and white accomplishments: "A tenacious heritage of racist ideology provides intellectual and symbolic unity for all these separate institutional elements. This ideology not only justifies the way things are, but also serves as a framework for the setting of new goals and solving of problems. In this manner, it operates as a regulator of behaviour"⁽²⁾. The result is racial patterns of role-arrangement based on principles of subordination and superordination, which when fully internalised, become components of personality. In this way, the racist ideology interacts with America's economic and social institutions to produce racist personalities and social structure.

What can be said of both Blauner's and Baron's dissertations is that they are at best racial by described politico-economic and social processes in American cities. Unlike Baron, however, Professor Blauner is indifferent to political economy, especially the economics of American capitalism. As he himself admitted: "Thus my perspective lacks a conception

1) H. Baron, *op. cit.* p. 144.

2) *ibid.* p. 167.

of American society beyond the central significance that I attribute to racism ... there is no systematic exposition of capitalist structure and dynamics; racial oppression and racial conflict are not satisfactorily linked to the dominant economic relations nor to the overall distribution of political power in America"⁽¹⁾. It is not difficult to discern how this deficiency mars Blauner's colonial analogy for it offers no analysis of the extraction and export of an economic surplus. Nor could there be except in the trivial sense of noting that the capitalist and merchant classes in the ghettos are not residentially of the ghettos. This lament would situate the internal colonialism thesis within the aspirations of nascent or frustrated black entrepreneurs. The exportation of an economic surplus is so crucial to colonialism that the concept only makes sense when defining relationships between nation-states. Otherwise, any economically backward region in a given country can be regarded as a colony of the more developed ones and the concept of colonialism is emasculated to the point of absurdity. Then, as we shall see, an internal colony is impossible.

Are America's ghettos products of institutional racism, or is it possible to see a wider set of causal factors in ghetto formation? Some sociologists and economists favour the latter approach and would identify such elements as: the private housing market, Federal Housing policy's neglect of lower income groups, the general decay of the inner city and un-coordinated urban renewal programmes⁽²⁾. The existence of these variables alone demonstrates the overly simplistic treatment which "the ghetto" receives from the proponents of institutional racism. But what is a ghetto? Blauner et al. make no distinction between a slum - which can have both black and white residents, a sub-standard area with overwhelmingly black inhabitants, a black community comprising both poor and well-to-do homes, and a deprived region whose inhabitants are apparently immobilized not only by poverty, but by political and social barriers. These barriers

1) R. Blauner, *op. cit.* p. 13.

2) See O. D. Duncan & B. Duncan, *The Negro Population of Chicago - A Study of Residential Succession* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1957). Alan Spear, *Black Chicago: the Making of a Negro Ghetto* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1967).

are not necessarily externally imposed and this is brought out by Alan Spear's distinction: "The physical ghetto was the product of white racism but the institutional ghetto was the creation of black civic leaders and entrepreneurs determined to make the black community a decent place to live in"⁽¹⁾. Spear nevertheless saw the operation of "racial proscriptions" throughout the pattern of black housing in Northern cities.

However, the explanation of the origins of ghettoisation would appear to need a wider theoretical framework than "racism" even if only because houses must be a scarce commodity in a capitalist mode of production. To focus exclusively on racism is to accept this scarcity as sacrosanct and hence trivialise the analysis. Moreover, the spatial segregation of Negroes may be part of the larger network of the social segregation of low status groupings⁽²⁾. We will restrict ourselves here to two sets of observations on post-war ghetto-formation. According to Eunice and George Greer, the urban drift of the Negro after World War II coincided with an unprecedented population explosion in America. The population grew by 28 million in the years 1950-1960, 85% of which took place in 212 metropolitan areas⁽³⁾. This phenomenon should be considered in conjunction with the Kerner Commission's estimate: "During the decade of the 1950's when vast numbers of Negroes were migrating to the cities, only four million of the 16.8 million new housing units constructed throughout the nation were built in the central cities. These additions were counter-balanced by the loss of 1.5 million central-city units through demolition and other means"⁽⁴⁾. This, together with the Negro's chronically low income, could not but result in a hard core of slum dwellings which were transformed into ghettos by other

- 1) Alan Spear, "The Origin of the Urban Ghetto 1870-1915" in Huggins et al. (eds.) Vol. II op. cit. p. 154.
- 2) See below, Ch. V, for a development of this suggestion.
- 3) Eunice and George Greer, "Housing Segregation in the Great Society", in David Bromley and Charles Longino (eds.) op. cit. p. 71.
- 4) Kerner Commission Report, cited in D. Bromley and C. Longino (eds.) op. cit. p. 44.

socio-political forces⁽¹⁾. Ghettos, then, cannot be explained in terms of "white racism", but as part of a theory of economy and social stratification in conditions of exploitation.

Rather than attempt to situate the ghetto in a theoretically coherent system, within which, however, the concept might turn out to be inadequate, the 'institutional racists' merely cite colonialism cum racism as the cause of black poverty⁽²⁾. Yet the concept of colonialism is given extremely superficial treatment and neither the theoretical boundaries of a ghetto nor the relationships between a colony and capitalist exploitation is examined. Indeed, the whole concept of exploitation is left unclear. Similarly, the elucidation of the concept, internal colony contains no specification of what constitutes a colony. Such a specification would demonstrate the untenability of the concept at two levels. Firstly, a colony means a nation-state governed by a more powerful entity. A colony is a juridico-politically constituted territory and by definition external to the colonising power. This externality, however, is itself problematic, for it is based on the orthodox concept of national economies. This difficulty is compounded by the concept internal colony which posit spatially separate regions whose transactions take the form of "unequal exchange". But regional transactions cannot be either external or internal to themselves so that both the juridical term, "colony" and the spatial designation, "internal colony" are theoretically senseless. Secondly, they both contain hidden conceptions of the capitalist mode of production, which contradict the notion of colonisation. For the "unequal exchanges" are a consequence of regional disparities in the distribution of the productive forces which in turn can only be an effect of capital accumulation. We may observe,

- 1) Note the moral theme which underlies the ghetto concept. It derives from the political economy of poverty. People are observed crowded into "degrading" social and economic conditions - the poor - and are assumed to be eternally confined therein because of a "poverty trap" or a "poverty cycle", or, if they are black-skinned, white racism. Not surprisingly, then, the ghetto remains as conceptually undefinable as the "poor". For a poignant description of the circulation of misery and the chronic pathologies of the ghetto, see Kenneth Clark, *Dark Ghetto* (Victor Gollancz Ltd., London 1965). For a graphic presentation see Raymond S. Franklin and Solomon Resnik, *The Political Economy of Racism* (Holt Reinhart and Wilson Inc., New York 1973) p. 85. For excellent critiques of the various poverty theses see Charles A. Valentine *Culture and Poverty* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1968).
- 2) We return to the problem of black poverty in our final chapter.

however, these disparities becoming the basis of "ethnic", "racial" and "nationalist" politics⁽¹⁾ - of which Blauner's work is a part.

Because Blauner et al. have merely renamed "ghettoes" as "internal colonies", they cannot repudiate the argumentation of Oscar Handlin and Nathan Glazer who pointed out that white immigrants to America had experienced similar patterns of dislocation prior to their assimilation. Addressing himself specifically to the internal colonialism thesis, Glazer contended that comparisons between the socio-economic statuses of "blacks" and "whites" must allow for a time-span⁽²⁾. Then "the black experience" turns out to be comparable in kind to that of other ethnic groups throughout America's history. Moreover, "internal colonialism" ignores the differential successes among Italian, Jewish, Irish and German ethnics. For example, the progress of Italians has not been as rapid as that of German immigrants.

Oscar Handlin presented a similar argumentation. Negroes, he argued, are America's oldest inhabitants but "newcomers" to the city and indeed their rate of socio-economic advancement is much quicker than that of earlier "white immigrants"⁽³⁾. Handlin rejects the view that Negroes should have achieved more than white immigrants in the 20th century because of their longer stay in America⁽⁴⁾. For, although Negroes are America's

- 1) This is exactly what Michael Hechter misses in his otherwise interesting study. *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1975).
- 2) See Nathan Glazer "Blacks and Ethnic Groups: The Difference ..." in Nathan Huggins, Martin Kilson and Daniel Fox (eds.) *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience*, Vol. II op. cit.
- 3) See Oscar Handlin, *The Newcomers* (Anchor Books, New York 1962).
- 4) The internal colonialism thesis also disregards the condition of white immigrant workers in Western Europe where racism cannot be said to be operative. See Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack op. cit. Nor is there any consideration of Paul Baran's and Paul Sweezy's argument that one reason why "blacks" are permanent immigrants is the absence of a burgeoning capitalist economy and a rapidly growing demand for skilled labour which had up-graded white immigrants in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

oldest inhabitants they are its youngest urban residents and their isolation in the rural South had made them incomplete Americans prior to migration. This justified both the "newcomers" and the comparison with European ethnics. Moreover, provided that the specific circumstances of Negro immigration is taken into account the immigrant-assimilation model is eminently applicable to "blacks". These circumstances are: their level of industrial skills and education, their mode of entry into the labour market, e.g. as strikebreakers or unionised labour, the state of the economy, the level of white trade union organisation, the housing situation in the given city and the general level of unemployment. In opposition to the internal colonial thesis, then, the immigrant-assimilation model assumes the inevitability of black social mobility in American cities. What unites them, however, is the postulate of an assimilated or integrated white society to which the Negro is being barred entry.

It is our view that the proposition which Blauner et al. were concerned to repudiate - the applicability of the immigrant-assimilation model to racial minorities - does not need a theory of internal colonisation or "ghetto reservations". Rather, the whole concept of assimilation in a capitalist society should be seen as questionable, for the class and social disparities among "whites" and "ethnics" invalidate the notion that American society has "assimilated" its immigrants. But here we confront Blauner's self-confessed theoretical lacuna, and again as we examine the notion of institutional racism. For the distinction between individual and institutional racism is purely quantitative. It is not a distinction but a focusing on the same phenomenon operating at a different social level. As a 'distinction', however, it obscures the simple notion of racial discrimination upon which the explanatory power of "institutional racism" rests.

If racism is posed as an explanatory concept of white behaviour, it cannot but lead to a model of racial discrimination designed to capture

the motivations of "whites"⁽¹⁾. At root, we are faced here with the fundamental but questionable goal of sociology, the explanation of observable behaviour. Explanation itself is a source of methodological dispute and "behaviour" also needs conceptual classification⁽²⁾. Thus when we speak of discriminatory behaviour - with its implied negative connotations - do we mean sporadic acts of discrimination or unvarying patterns and regularities? If this behaviour is reversed, i.e. if we have examples of positive discrimination, what does it mean for the thesis of racist motivation? Or, how do we account for non-discriminating actors and institutions or decreasing discrimination . . . in a society allegedly structured on racial discrimination? These issues must be clarified

- 1) D.J. Smith, *Racial Disadvantage in Employment*, Neil McIntosh and David J. Smith, *The Extent of Racial Discrimination*, (PEP, London 1974).
 P. L. Wright, *The Coloured Worker in British Industry* (Oxford University Press, London 1968).
 Studies which rely on "racial discrimination" would include:
 W. W. Daniel, *Racial Discrimination in England* (Penguin 1968).
 Simon Abbott (ed.), *The Prevention of Racial Discrimination in Britain* (Oxford University Press, London 1971).
 B. W. Heineman, *The Politics of the Powerless: a Study of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination* (Oxford University Press London 1972), E.J.B. Rose et al., op. cit. Ch. 19.
 Louis Ferman, Joyce L. Kornbluh and J. A. Miller (eds.) op. cit.
 Lester C. Thurrow, *Poverty and Discrimination* (The Brookings Institute, Washington D.C. 1970). Anthony Pascal ed., *Racial Discrimination in Economic Life* (Lexington Books, D.C. Heath & Co., Massachusetts 1972). The supreme frequency of the 'racial discrimination' framework makes further citations unnecessary. On both sides of the Atlantic almost every study of "blacks" leans heavily on this notion.
- 2) See Robert Brown, *Explanation in Social Science* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1963). For comprehensive discussions, see May Brodbeck (ed.), *Readings in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (MacMillan, London 1968); Max Weber in Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (eds.) *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (The Free Press, New York 1949). These dissertations merely continue an empiricist tradition, in that behaviour, past and present, is assumed to be a reality which the theorists analyse. The problem of validation then becomes insoluble for it involves interrogating the values of the theorist or building models of actors to which the explanation by definition corresponds. For example, a racially discriminating actor's behaviour is explained in terms of racism.

before the notion of "racial discrimination" becomes applicable to concrete acts and situations.

It may be argued, however, that the notion as it stands has some utility in research contexts, namely when:

- (a) particular policies are apparently abnormal, e.g. the refusal to employ "blacks" as such, or, are expressive of a preference for "whites",
- (b) particular situations being a deviation from some norm or standard, e.g. the higher level of rejection or unemployment among "blacks", ⁽¹⁾
- (c) racist statements accompany certain acts of exclusion, and
- (d) the victims of particular acts perceive them to be racially-inspired.

On the other hand, these empirical referents are incomplete. The researcher could include the cyclical state of the labour market and employers' profit expectations, or specify his reasons for their exclusion. Obviously it is the theoretical framework employed which selects and orders the variables. If one starts with the assumption of "whites" being racially prejudiced and a political economy which ignores or underplays the conditions of the extraction of surplus labour, then "discrimination based on race" becomes an inescapable conclusion, or frame of reference.

One treatise of which this could be said is Gary S. Becker's "The Economics of Discrimination"⁽²⁾. Given the fundamental ambiguity of "racial discrimination" it is surprising that economists have sought to quantify the concept ⁽³⁾. Becker sought to supplement "the psychologists'

- 1) In Britain, two major investigations on "blacks in industry" took the sentiments of "management" as the critical index of racial discrimination. See Peter L. Wright, *op. cit.* Chs. 4 and 5. D.J. Smith, *Racial Disadvantage in Employment, op. cit.*
- 2) Gary S. Becker, *The Economics of Discrimination* (The University of Chicago Press, London 1957).
- 3) See Anthony D. Pascal (ed.) *op. cit.*

and sociologists' analysis of causes with an analysis of economic consequences"⁽¹⁾. This, of course, merely evades the difficulty of conceptually clarifying "racial discrimination" for the "causes" are precisely the criteria for the designation "discrimination". An analysis of the economic consequences of discrimination which purports to be applicable to all forms of discrimination cannot, therefore, simply admit that "even the causes are not well understood". The haste towards quantification is thus premature. Moreover, Becker's general attempt at "quantification of non-pecuniary motivation" contains a fundamental weakness in that he omitted a crucial pre-requisite to the quantitative approach - that of unambiguously identifying the relevant variables⁽²⁾.

Implicit in Becker's analytical framework is a severing of any functional interconnection between discrimination and pecuniary gain. In other words, discrimination or, to use Becker's own words, a "taste for discrimination" is seen as a socio-psychological thing in itself⁽³⁾. This is well illustrated in the following passage: "Money, commonly used as a measuring rod, will also serve as a measure of discrimination. If an individual has a "taste for discrimination", he must act as if he were willing to pay something, either directly or in the form of a reduced income, to be associated with some persons instead of others. When actual discrimination occurs, he must, in fact, either pay or forfeit income for this privilege"⁽⁴⁾. Becker contradicts himself here in selecting money as the measure of "non-pecuniary motivation". Moreover, this "taste for discrimination" is merely asserted not demonstrated either empirically or theoretically. We are being offered assumptions and hypothetical statements not statements of connections between phenomena. An individual is seen as discriminating if he sacrifices income in order to fraternise with W and not with N. It follows then that if he expects to be recompensed by W he is non-discriminating. From this, we may then conclude as to the

- 1) G. S. Becker, *op. cit.* p. 3.
- 2) See D. J. Bartholomew and E. E. Basset, *Lets Look at the Figures* (Penguin, London 1971), Ch. 2.
- 3) G. S. Becker, *op. cit.* p. 6.
- 4) *Ibid.*

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- 1) G.S. Becker, *op. cit.* p. 3.
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- 3) G.S. Becker, *op. cit.* p. 6.
- 4) *ibid.*

existence of discrimination, or, as may be the case, non-discrimination. Becker simply takes discrimination as given and then proceeds to describe its psychology. He compounds this methodological lacuna by constructing a 'discriminating coefficient' which as Kenneth Arrow observed remains, at best, a model of assumed discrimination⁽¹⁾.

A more critical observation can be made about "racial discrimination". Discrimination is a relational term: it embodies the notion of observable divergencies from a particular social standard. Where, if extant, is the standard or norm? In the labour market, the decisive criteria informing employers' policy preferences are profit-orientated and all social behaviour is intrinsically discriminatory since it involves choice⁽²⁾. Employers' discrimination between workers is thus part of the scheme of things in a capitalist economy. Moreover, "ascriptive allocation", class inequalities and different opportunity structures prevail in every sphere of contemporary societies. This pervasiveness of discrimination does not facilitate the clarification of racial discrimination. On the contrary, it compounds an ambiguity. For racial discrimination can mean either that a set of persons called a race is being, or not being, selected, or racially-motivated discrimination. The first makes no reference to cause; the second is an attempted explanatory proposition aptly criticised by Prof. E. Schermerhorn: "For 'discrimination', as employed by writers in intergroup relations, is an invidious, moralistic term, it fastens a value judgement on the persons engaging in the designated acts. It implies that the people performing such acts are violating a widespread social norm and that really they shouldn't ... One can only applaud such humanitarian sentiments while remaining puzzled over their explanatory value"⁽³⁾.

- 1) Kenneth Arrow, "The Theory of Discrimination" in Orley Ashenfelter and Albert Rees (eds.) *Discrimination in Labour Markets* (Princeton University Press, Princeton N. Y. 1973) pp. 6 and 8.
- 2) In an oblique recognition of this, one writer argued for a distinction between "discrimination which is necessary and right and discrimination which is unfair". See R. M. Gulon, in L. A. Ferman et al. (eds.) *Negroes and Jobs; a book of Readings* (University of Michigan Press, Michigan 1968), p. 326. Also G. Becker, *op. cit.* p. 5. for similar morals.
- 3) R. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations*, *op. cit.* p. 7.

Schermerhorn's comments were not followed through with an amoral explanatory category, for the "dominant whites - subordinate blacks" approach which he proposed is hardly less moral than "discrimination". The difficulties surrounding "racial discrimination" are, however, understandable, for discrimination itself appears to defy definition. For F.H. Hankins "discrimination should not be confused with differentiation or distinction". It is "the unequal treatment of equals"⁽¹⁾. But, as Blalock correctly points out, however much this definition avoids moral evaluations, it founders on the question of equality, for "equals" are a matter of individual perception in given social situations. Michael Banton's definition is unhelpful: "Discrimination is the differential treatment of persons ascribed to particular social categories ..."⁽²⁾. This is tantamount to saying that differential treatment is discrimination and vice versa. Moreover, if these persons are already ascribed to particular social categories their treatment is no longer discriminatory but normative. Banton elsewhere criticises the concept but his alternative model of "roles" implicitly utilises discrimination⁽³⁾.

Blalock argued that we reject the notion of discrimination altogether in view of the difficulties involved in its definition and operationalisation, "for when we try to measure discrimination we usually obtain a measure of inequality"⁽⁴⁾. Secondly, the evidence of inequality does not confirm "discrimination" since other variables may be operative. Finally, in his view, the concept of "minority discrimination" implies that all other individual attributes are equal and contains "a hidden theory of social causation"⁽⁵⁾. Later, however we find Blalock himself uncritically utilising the notion: "Economic and status factors are most likely to be the major determinants of minority discrimination if both the following hold ..."⁽⁶⁾.

- 1) F.H. Hankins, "Social Discrimination", Edwin R. Seligman (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (MacMillan, London 1953) p. 131.
- 2) Michael Banton, *Race Relations*, op. cit. p. 8.
- 3) Michael Banton, *Racial Minorities*, op. cit. p. 95.
- 4) Hubert Blalock, op. cit. p. 17.
- 5) *Ibid*, p. 16.
- 6) *Ibid*, p. 204 and Appendix B.

This inconsistency derives from his unwillingness to specify the "independent variables". Blalock wrote: "I specifically wish to avoid a Marxian type of interpretation, namely, that discrimination results from a conscious, rational attempt on the part of elites to subordinate the minority to their interests. The processes involved are certainly more complex and usually much more subtle"⁽¹⁾. This is an extraordinarily loose formulation. Its major weakness derives from a total mis-reading of Marx as well as Marxist texts on 'race relations.' A Marxian interpretation would not be suggestive of a conscious rational majority conspiracy as Blalock suggests. Rather, it begins with the observation that employers discriminate generally, and for a specific economic purpose, i.e. in response to the independent variable of profit-maximisation. Their discrimination then cannot be termed racial. Even if certain "Marxists" have lapsed into this vague expression, they are less obfuscating than Blalock's "... one must allow for the possibility that innate biological differences account for some of the differentials ..."⁽²⁾ in power. His text remains eminently idealist, trapped within the presupposition of an omnipresent, racist Idea.

Similar critical remarks can be made of those studies which are concerned with demonstrating black-white income comparisons as evidence of discrimination. Here "race" is used as a central research category. For "white" and "black" respondents are obviously selected according to "race" to which the statistical analyses are then subordinated. This preempts the issue and easily generates evidence of "widening black-white income disparities". Some social scientists have expressed understandable reservations about the statistical techniques used in black-white income comparisons. Thus Wohlstetter and Coleman mustered some impressive technical criticisms of the professional literature as well as familiar statements on black-white income disparities⁽³⁾. They criticised these studies for using simple averages, focusing on income

1) *ibid.* p. 109.

2) *ibid.* p. 111.

3) Albert Wohlstetter and Sinclair Coleman "Racial Differences in Income" in A. Pascal, *op. cit.* pp. 4-7.

sub-sets rather than total income to persons, ignoring regional and occupational migration, choosing arbitrary time-spans and comparison points in cyclical variations, and confusing the relationship between income changes and occupational distribution.

Wohlstetter and Coleman present what is arguably the most systematic statistical analysis of white and non-white income in the period 1940-1969. The theoretical significance of their work is that it not only exposes the weaknesses of the major studies of discrimination, but also how their methodological structure parallels those which postulate Negro genetic inferiority⁽¹⁾. It is their view that the models of discrimination generally applied to black-white income patterns are simplistic even when divested of the dubious implication of racial causation.

From the multiplicity of variables involved in measuring income disparities Wohlstetter and Coleman singled out as most important: comparative age structure, education (including its quality) and occupational distribution. Among their conclusions was that for the period 1962-1969 non-white incomes were lower and more cyclically unstable than whites. However, they grew relatively faster than white incomes since World War II, and, crucially, inequality among non-whites, measured in standard ways, is not much different from inequality among whites⁽²⁾. "Racial discrimination derives from a confusing of choice between, and against, "races". It is thus intrinsically imprecise and, moreover, is not supported by the evidence of racial inequality on which it is grounded. For, as Wohlstetter and Coleman pointed out, similar income disparities exist among "whites" and "non-whites" as between them. Why should some inequalities be designated "racial" and surely intraracial income differences should be seen as in need of explanation?⁽³⁾ This, as a necessary pre-condition to the clarification of inter-racial inequality. For the crucial need is for evidence of a norm or standard of non-discrimination, i.e., "universalism".

1) *ibid*, p. 44, 62.

2) *ibid*, p. 68.

3) According to Bayard Rustin: "There are 2.5 million black workers in the Trade Union and they earn an average of 50% more than those blacks who are not unionised". See Daniel S. Davis (ed.), *Mr Black Labour, The Story of A Phillip Randolph Father of the Civil Rights Movements* (E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972) p. XI.

Structural functionalism assumes the existence of this "universalism". Thus, Blauner's assertion that mainstream sociology has neglected race and ethnicity displays an ignorance of the genealogy of race relations theory. For the whole corpus of race relations theorising is derived from the sociological tradition. Blauner's own writings are a variant of structural functionalism. He imputes a normative animism to institutions which is said to unite them in a vicious circle of racial oppression and colonial capitalist exploitation. America is racist society. Its institutions are controlled by "whites" who uniformly subordinate and dehumanise "blacks". This proposition of a white and institutional value consensus on "blacks" is a central element in Blauner's analysis. Racism is a function of slavery and an integrating element in America's functionally interlocked institutions. This analysis is deficient. A more sophisticated functionalism, that, for example, adumbrated by Robert Merton would have avoided the static and fatalistic implications of consensual whites and integrated institutions⁽¹⁾.

For how are "dysfunctions" set in? Blauner's "inadvertent" discrimination approximates Merton's "latent functions"; but even so, he fails to clarify its relationship to capitalist exploitation. If racist discrimination is necessary to capitalist exploitation, how is the exploitation of white workers to be explained? It is to the credit of Blauner and Baron that they take cognisance of American capitalism. But "capitalism" in their usage is a mere term, which allows, for example, the curious expression "racial capitalism"⁽²⁾. Their analyses remain moralistic and superficial. Indeed, a certain regression is made manifest in Robert Blauner's favouring "independent black police forces in the ghetto"⁽³⁾.

For both Blauner and Baron, racism as a cultural legacy, is a formative influence on white attitudes and institutions. Blauner posited that: "The slavery experience has affected the white, as much as the black, collective unconscious, and therefore there exist subliminal tendencies

- 1) Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (The Free Press of Glencoe, London 1964) Part 1.
- 2) Robert Blauner, *op. cit.* p. 45.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 103.

among whites to relate to blacks as the possession and property they once represented"⁽¹⁾. Theorising on "race relations" begins therefore with America's white racist culture which informs conscious and unconscious institutional practices; "to maintain an overall pattern of oppression". The invoking of the unconscious here is a covert admission that a conscious white racism is methodologically implausible. Yet Blauner, and even more so Baron, treats it as a Hegelian Spirit. In Hegel's world, the Spirit objectifies itself in empirical world-historical processes. In Blauner's analysis, racism materialises itself in institutional practices. It is the demiurge of oppressive racial practices, black culture, ghettoisation and discrimination. Such a force can hardly be a mere product of the slavery experience. It must be anthropological, latent in the subliminal recess of the mind. Blauner's idealist zeal thus carries him over into Jung's "collective unconscious". This thesis of an unconscious racism allows a simple juxtaposing of interacting educational, political and economic institutions. But Blauner has not perceived that he has contradicted himself. He has transferred racism from the super-ego to the unconscious without understanding the latter. For if racism is now unconscious then it is neither "whites" nor institutions which are responsible for 'racial oppression'.

Blauner treats behaviour as a given, external to his theory. Because of this, he cannot demonstrate necessary relationships between racist values and behaviour. Indeed, the assertion that racism operates as a regulator of behaviour evinces a certain theoretical debility. A given social act is not a pure observation which theory is then called upon to explain. Rather, it is a phenomenal description constituted within a wider theoretical structure. Blauner's conception of theorising treats behaviour as theory-free observation. Thus, as part of demonstrating the efficacy of racist values, he treats racially discriminating behaviour as a fact which his theory explains. As a result, the level of determination in his analysis is extraordinarily low. Thus his thesis of "racial oppression" can be easily

1) *ibid.*, p. 292.

refuted by positing capitalist exploitation as the necessary condition for the objectification of racist values. Because the institutional racist school is epistemologically empiricist and methodologically idealist, it reduces theorising to apparently empirical descriptions of the workings of American society. "Whites" express themselves disparagingly about "blacks" and "discriminate" against them, therefore, the latter is caused by the former. The Cartesian conception of causation in use here is part of the generally superficial analysis offered by the institutional racist school.

We would argue that since mental processes accompany all behaviour particular beliefs are always intertwined with social action⁽¹⁾. These beliefs are not accessible to textual reproduction and correspondence. For any investigation and discovery of beliefs involve theoretical presuppositions so that there is no way of disengaging actors' beliefs from the conceptions of the theorist. Thus a belief, in an alleged logical relationship with behaviour, must be specified and analysed within a system of concepts. If the whole society is assumed to be racist, such a conceptual scheme is impossible and the concept of the capitalist mode of production must be replaced with "racial capitalism". Here again the analysis of the institutional racist school disintegrates. For, given the thesis of a racist culture and a racial capitalism, it becomes impossible to explain the emergence of non-racist, or liberal "whites". All whites have to be racists and, if some are not, it is because they have fortunately escaped the racist socialisation, just as in Parson's explanation of "deviants". This subsidiary argument exposes the arbitrariness of the functionalist conception of socialisation.

The sociological theory which the institutional racist 'school' embraces is that which regards explanation as the isolating of the cultural phenomena underlying the behaviour of actors. Theorising is, therefore, the mapping of the external world of behaviour and beliefs within which the

1) As Engels admitted, "We simply cannot get away from the fact that everything that sets men acting must find its way through their brains - even eating and drinking which begins as a consequence of the sensation of hunger or thirst transmitted through the brain and ends as a result of the sensation of satisfaction". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (Progress Publishers, Moscow 1968) p. 610.

former is explained when the significance of the beliefs for individuals is ascertained. The epistemological unity between Max Weber and Talcott Parsons is made clear in the concept of social action which is distinguishable from behaviour because it is subjectively meaningful. Analysis, therefore, begins with the *Zeitgeist* or the cultural meanings embodied in individual acts.

The institutional racist 'school' may thus be regarded as part of a tendency in American sociology toward the analysis of cultural values and their institutionalisation. The most eminent representative of this tendency, Talcott Parsons, formulated his preference for cultural analysis in this way: "I do not think it is useful to postulate a deep dichotomy between theories which give importance to beliefs and values on the one hand, to allegedly 'realistic' interests, e.g. economic, on the other. Beliefs and values are actualised, partially and imperfectly, in realistic situations of social interaction and the outcomes are always codetermined by the values and realistic exigencies; conversely what on concrete levels are called 'interests' are by no means independent of the values which have been institutionalised in the relevant groups"⁽¹⁾. The first sentence in this passage attempts to obscure the opposition between the idealist and materialist approaches to social theorising. This is a methodological problem to which we shall return. The second sentence stresses the omnipresence of beliefs and values in social interaction. But there is no logical connection between the two propositions. It is possible to accept that values and beliefs are ubiquitous, and yet recognise "a deep dichotomy", at epistemological and methodological levels, between Weber's "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" and Marx's "Capital".

Parsons has glossed over the phenomenon of different objects of study being generated by different epistemologies. But there are two further points which must be made about his formulation⁽²⁾. Firstly, his

- 1) Talcott Parsons, *Structure and Processes in Modern Society* (The Free Press, Illinois 1960) p. 173.
- 2) Apart from the analytical superficiality within the conflating of beliefs and values. For a more sophisticated treatment of the relationship between beliefs and values see Milton Rokeach, *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values* (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, California 1968).

subsumption of economic interests under values and beliefs only appears to be dissimilar from the counterposing of ideas and behaviour. Here a general statement is made about a reciprocal relationship or dialectical interaction between base and superstructure such that ideas come to have "life of their own"⁽¹⁾. This metaphorical expression is virtually unexaminable. But like Parsons' autonomy of values, its purpose is to justify analysing empirical minds (value systems). Secondly, the idealist methodology and circularity of Parsons' reasoning is clear: Beliefs realise themselves in action, the outcome of which is partly determined by values. Economic interests are evaluated and mediated through institutionalised values. Values, then, determine values. Since a principle of primacy is absent, the nature of this determination cannot ever be demonstrated, which is tantamount to saying that structural-functionalism cannot explain the source of values.

We have asserted that there is no logical movement from a recognition of the existence of beliefs and values in "interests" to denying an opposition between idealist-materialist methodologies. There is, however, a psychological movement. In other words, a large part of the credibility of the idealist approach flows from our knowledge of ourselves as thinking beings⁽²⁾. Since the individual explains his own behaviour in

- 1) For assertions to this effect see Eugene Genovese "Materialism and Idealism in the History of Negro Slavery in the Americas" in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese (eds.) op. cit. p. 244; Stanley Elkins, op. cit. p. 61; J.V. Femia in "Moore and the Pre-conditions for Democracy", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 11, 1972, p. 42; John Rex, "The Concept of Race in Sociological Theory" in Sami Zubaida (ed.) op. cit. p. 52. Both Genovese and Rex claim this to be a Marxist position. Yet it is a viewpoint voiced repeatedly by "non-Marxists". Moreover, it contains an ontological separation of being and consciousness in contrast to Marx's: "We set out from real, active men and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also necessarily sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development . . ." *The German Ideology* (Lawrence and Wishart, London 1965) pp. 37-38.
- 2) Cf. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Penguin Books, Middlesex 1973).

terms of "because I thought", it seems logical to explain all behaviour by beginning with men's thoughts. Materialism appears to omit thought, while idealism seems to do homo-sapiens justice by beginning with the psychological facts. The investigation of "race relations" is legitimate because "race" is a facet of men's consciousness.

The psychological attractiveness of idealism, however, is inimical to social analysis, which poses questions about the origin of beliefs and values, rather than treats them as explanations. Is the actor by definition knowledgeable and objective about his values and beliefs? For this and other reasons, the expression of beliefs does not necessitate or justify the social scientist treating them as what Poulantzas called "finalist explanations". Admittedly, all action is belief-bearing since man is by definition a psycho-physical entity. A cognitive and value element is, therefore, always coeval with action. We observe this in the possibility of lifting the bracketed phrases from the following sentence without altering its meaning: If individuals (believe that it is natural and necessary to) act as to satisfy their bio-economic interests, their actions may be interpreted as orientated towards the realisation of (this idea) their gratification. The problem for the social scientist, then, is not one of "beliefs" versus "economic interests", but the specifying and justifying of the epistemological basis of his method of investigation. To illustrate further, racism is an allegedly pervasive value in white society, but so too is the value that material needs must be satisfied. Which is the autonomous value? It is clear that to explain the behaviour of whites in terms of racist values is no more plausible than an explanation based on material values. Indeed, all value explanations are inconclusive. This is close to Brian Barry's argument that they are intrinsically tautologous since "the evidence for a value is simply a description of the behaviour it is used to explain"⁽¹⁾.

1) Brian Barry, *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy* (Collier, MacMillan, London 1970) p. 89. See also Jonathan Turner, *The Structure of Sociological Theory* (Dorsey Press, Illinois 1974) p. 245. What both sets of criticisms fail to mention, however, is the theoretical source of this tautology and hence the alternative which is to construct a system of concepts and demonstrate their logical relationships.

In the case of Blauner et al., the justification for "racist behaviour" is an alleged widespread white racism, as a set of values of which the same behaviour is an index.

It is a paradox that as the race relations literature thickens, research analysts and ethnomethodologists have invalidated the methodological basis of the discipline. For a powerful set of criticisms has been levelled at the discovery, survey, and measurement of "race consciousness" which demonstrates the thesis of an omnipresent white racism to be, at best, a speculative assertion.

We may identify two general criticisms of the research methods used in the survey of racial beliefs and attitudes. The first derives from the intersubjective position. For the ethnomethodologist, social statistics are not a product of scientific interviewing techniques, observation, coding and decoding. Rather, they are based on complex processes of negotiation among actors each with his own "background expectancies"⁽¹⁾. This would explain the "race-of-interviewer effect" on respondents⁽²⁾ - although virtually unstudied is the converse "race-of-respondent effect on interviewers". It has been argued that white interviewers and black respondents "negotiate" differently from black interviewers and black respondents. According to Shirley Hatchet and Howard Schuman: "The process for both races seems to be one of avoiding responses that might offend the interviewer of the "opposing" race and of being frank (or at least franker) with interviewers of one's own race"⁽³⁾. The racist, or prejudiced response then, may well be a result of the intersubjectivity of

- 1) See A. V. Cicourel, *Method and Measurement in Sociology* (The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois 1964) Chs. III, IV. For more general observations, see Herbert Hyman et al., *Interviewing in Social Research* (Chicago University Press, Chicago 1954) especially pp. 150-170.
- 2) See Howard Schuman and Jean M. Converse, "The Effects of Black and White Interviewers on White Respondents in 1966", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. XXXV 1971, pp. 44-68.
- 3) Shirley Hatchet and Howard Schuman "White Respondents and Race of Interviewer Effects", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4 Winter 1975-1976, p. 527.

the interview situation. Herbert Hyman et al. claimed to have clear evidence that "the presumed impersonality of the interview situation does not overcome the reluctance of Negroes to express their opinions freely to whites"⁽¹⁾. Attempts to decrease the race-of-interviewer-respondent bias have gone in the direction of the racial allocation of interviewers. This expedient can only be regarded as an admission that the extent of "prejudice" is a function of the racial constitution of interviewers and respondents. We have reason to challenge even this conclusion and will now do so as part of the second criticism of race research methods.

The second criticism emphasises the intrinsically theoretical nature of both questionnaire content and the interpreting of responses. The positing of the subjective expectancies of "actors" as responsible for distortions in findings is an implicit recognition of the impossibility of theory-neutral fact gathering. Theory operates here at two levels. Firstly, there is the assumption that interviewing produces accurate reflections or indices of mental states. Secondly, the questions posed to respondents invariably embody their answers. For example, if the term Negro defines a person of low status, the question, are Negroes inferior or undesirable as neighbours cannot but elicit affirmative responses.

Obviously, race survey questionnaires cannot but contain economic and status elements. Thus virtually every such survey produces "evidence" of some white prejudice. But given the omnipresent economic and status connotations in "whites" and "blacks" the designating of responses as racial, or racist, is profoundly enigmatic. In one survey: "Twenty questionnaire items concerning attitudes towards coloured immigrants were used to construct four attitude scales reflecting various dimensions of racial prejudice. The scale used here was labelled "competitive economic prejudice", since its component items reflect the view that whites should be given preferential treatment in job promotions, lay-offs, and appointment

1) Herbert Hyman et al. *Interviewing in Social Research*, op. cit. p. 159.

to supervisory status"⁽¹⁾. The economic elements here are overwhelming. Despite this, the authors classified their results under the rubric "race prejudice". Moreover, the fact of a white respondent favouring preferential treatment for "whites" need not be interpreted racially, but in terms of utilitarian individualism. The respondent may reason that "whites" as opposed to "blacks" would favour his economic survival in the competitive labour market, or hope that they would, on being informed that he is so disposed. Examples of "white solidarity" could therefore be interpreted as evidence of an individualist calculation in competitive situations. To test its existence, the question posed could be: if you knew that other whites would not vote for your preferential treatment but blacks would, would you favour a "white first" policy?

The racial interpretation of responses to theoretically ambiguous questions is also evident in the notion of race-of-interviewer effect. Why "race-of-interviewer" if the responses of ghetto "blacks" to "middle-class" black interviewers exhibit familiar patterns of distortion? "Race-effect" is specifically derived from the premise of racial stratification. This results in the illegitimate use of the undifferentiated concept "Negroes" in questionnaires. For there are no Negroes, but Negro businessmen, executives, lawyers, labourers, doctors, celebrities, etc., etc.⁽²⁾ The question do you think you are superior to Negroes is therefore oversimplistic. Leaving aside the unfortunate unspecificity of superior, a more sophisticated code would be: do you think a Negro millionaire is superior to a Negro doctor? We would then be better placed to discuss the relationship between economic stratification and cultural images of inferiority-superiority. America's, "poor whites", like Brazil's, may well turn out to be "Negroes" in all but name only.

- 1) Stephen L. Elkin and William H. Panning, "Racial Prejudice in English Cities", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 2, Summer 1975, pp. 166-167.
- 2) As Rashi Fein puts it: "there is no the Negro American - as there is no the white American. There are many Negro Americans who live in conditions far better than the median Negro American. There are some who live far better than the median American" in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 124.

Some measure of the elusiveness of white racism and prejudice is demonstrated by the conflicting results of surveys. In 1969, E. Rose and Nicholas Deakin took a sample of five hundred "whites" from five areas with a high concentration of "blacks", as well as a national, control group sample. The results show those "whites" who felt an "unconditional antipathy" to coloured immigrants to be 10% of the British population⁽¹⁾. Clifford S. Hill opened his first Chapter with: "Colour prejudice in Britain is increasing"⁽²⁾. He found, in 1965, that 20% of the population were "severely prejudiced" and another 30% having a considerable amount of prejudice. In 1961, Anthony Richmond found 33% of the population "severely prejudiced"⁽³⁾, while one decade before Rose's and Deakin's survey, Michael Banton arrived at the same figure of 10%⁽⁴⁾. Voices of dissent have also been raised in the United States. Richard F. Hamilton examining data on white attitudes towards black rights by class, region, age, religion and party allegiance, discovered erratic and inconsistent patterns of tolerance and a general commitment to equal rights⁽⁵⁾.

- 1) E.J.B. Rose and Nicholas Deakin, *op. cit.* p. 321. For criticisms of their research methods, see John Powan, *New Society*, 14 August, 1969, p. 408. One co-author, N. Deakin, revised this figure upwards in a subsequent edition of *Colour and Citizenship*.
- 2) Clifford S. Hill, *How Colour Prejudiced is Britain?* (Victor Gollancz Ltd., London 1965) p. 21.
- 3) Anthony Richmond, *The Colour Problem: a Study of Racial Relations* (Penguin, London 1961).
- 4) Michael Banton, *White and Coloured*, *op. cit.*
- 5) Richard F. Hamilton "Class and Race in The United States" in George Fischer (ed.) *The Revival of American Socialism* (Oxford University Press, New York 1971). See also P.B. Sheatsley "White Attitudes toward the Negro" in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark (eds.) *op. cit.*; W. Brink and L. Harris, *Black and White: A Study of U.S. Racial Attitudes Today* (Simon and Schuster, New York 1967); H.G. Erskine, "The Polls: Recent Opinion on Racial Problems", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Winter 1968-1969, Vol. 32. For further bibliographic references, see T. F. Pettigrew, *Racially Separate or Together?* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York 1971) p. 209.

In our view, these criticisms amount to a refutation of not only the simplistic research models which inform investigation into the extent of racism or race prejudice among "whites", but the perspective which generated them. It would not be incorrect to say that the "white racism" which permeates Euro-American society is manufactured by the theoretical and methodological immaturity of social scientists. What is pervasive is the assertion of white racism being pervasive. In this context, the ethnomethodological criticisms do not penetrate to the core problem of theory, in this case, the race relations perspective.

What is racism?

A major analytic difficulty with the perspective which emphasises white racism is the unsystematic nature of its exposition. Racism is rarely defined as a concept and distinctions are not made between its individual and institutional expression and its determinate function. The result is a certain confusion between levels of abstraction, description and explanation. The term is used to describe a particular body of texts, beliefs, attitudes and feelings as well as to account for practices of discrimination against "blacks" at the social, political and economic levels. (1). In the literature "racism" designates: an aesthetic aversion to "blacks", an expression of belonging to another race, or that "blacks" are of a different (inferior) species, stereotyped expectations of a racial group, or the imputation of behavioural characteristics to an individual on the basis of his racial origin, or a belief which determines the behaviour of "whites;" and discriminating white behaviour.

- 1) Blauner, for example, defined racism as "a propensity to categorise people who are culturally different in terms of non-cultural traits" and elsewhere "an historical and social project aimed at reducing or diminishing the humanity ... of the racially oppressed", op. cit. pp. 112 and 41 respectively. Michael Banton preferred racism as the doctrine and racialism as its practice. Michael Banton, *Race Relations*, op. cit. p. 8. Note that this is a mere terminological shift which leaves the theoretical relationship no different from Blauner's.

The explanation of this definitional arbitrariness can be located in the use of racism to designate beliefs as well as explain behaviour construed as derived from these beliefs. The arbitrariness is inevitable, since the project is the analysis of observable black-white relations. Yet it precludes the ascertaining of the alleged behavioural effectivity of racism. The condition for the introduction of theoretical rigour is the abandoning of the idealist-empiricist pursuit of the mental states of everyday actors. For there is, we contend, an inverse relationship between the level of conceptual precision and the degree of empiricism in a social investigation. It is because theorists think their problem as corresponding to an external reality that racism has the status of a mere term. An anti-empiricist position precludes this low level abstraction, for the definition of a racism would attain theoretical significance only when articulated within a consanguinary set of constructs. It thus becomes a concept and the theorist is then not free to redefine or manipulate its meaning according to different 'empirical' expressions.

It is possible to distinguish a common core of race determinism and race supremacy in the various definitions of racism. On this basis we propose to specify the meaning of racism and examine: the conditions of its emergence, its relationship to the rate of exploitation as well as its alleged status as an ideology.

Racism means a "race" is congenitally inferior to another. It is obviously predicated on the concept of race. But certain political and economic conditions must be met before sustained racist theories become manifest. These are: labour exploitation, class inequalities and expressed opposition to either, or both. Exploitation is a relationship of economic non-equivalence between two groups standing in determinate relationships to the means of production. It necessarily generates economic, and political - in terms of access to the State machinery - inequalities. These groups will be defined biologically, as superior-inferior races, in proportion to the degree of class inequality and the opposition to exploitation. For this opposition necessarily explains inequality in terms of social determination. Such an explanation cannot find favour with the exploiting class. The competing theories of biological determinism (Social Darwinism) and

social determinism may be seen as an intellectual efflux of class struggles. Thus, the necessary conditions for the emergence of racist ideas are class exploitation and class struggles. Both Marx: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"⁽¹⁾ and historians of the 'idea of race' and racism lend support to this viewpoint. Not surprisingly, then, a notion of race and racial inferiority has been discovered in the ancient civilisations⁽²⁾, feudal Europe⁽³⁾, nineteenth century Britain and America⁽⁴⁾ and twentieth century Rwanda⁽⁵⁾ and this list is obviously not exhaustive. An idealist social study would focus on these intellectual phenomena rather than the class structure. Indeed, it would posit a racial history of the world by equating and linking pro-slavery texts with Aristotle's denigration of the slave's nature in a chain of continuity⁽⁶⁾.

The problem of the emergence of race determinism and race supremacy is different the thesis of racism causing the intensity or intensification of labour exploitation. The generation of race and racism by exploitative relationships does not imply the determination of the latter by the former. Indeed, on the contrary, if these theories are produced as a result of the growth of opposition to class exploitation, then they cannot be conceived as a necessary and sufficient condition of "ultra-exploitation". Thus the thesis of race and racism being a causal element in the compounded exploitation of black workers is untenable. The notion

- 1) Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, op. cit. p. 39.
- 2) See Louis Ruchames, *Racial Thought in America: From the Puritans to Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. I, op. cit. Introduction; Thomas Gosset, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Schocken Books, New York 1965).
Ramila A. Thaper, *Meeting of Experts on the Concepts of Race, Identity and Dignity*, UNESCO, Paris 3-7 July, 1972, p. 6.
- 3) Paul Bohannan, *African Outline*, Penguin, London 1964) p. 69.
- 4) Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1971);
I. A. Newby, *The Development of Segregational Thought* (The Dorsey Press, Illinois 1968); George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (Harper and Row, New York 1972) p. 320.
- 5) See Philip Mason, *Race Relations* (Oxford University Press, London 1970) pp. 14-15.
- 6) See Thomas Gosset, op. cit., Ch. 1.

of compounded exploitation is itself questionable. Is there a normal exploitation? The exploitation of "white workers" does not provide a comparable norm of exploitation since, for example, the situation of white female and low-paid workers disproves the existence of any remunerative homogeneity among "whites". The explanation is that capitalists are by definition continuously in pursuit of greater surplus value. This is a condition of the capitalist mode of production, which is independent of the social beliefs of the capitalist class. Thus, an intensification of exploitation is by no means a deviation inexplicable except with reference to some psychological or attitudinal quirk. The rate of exploitation is not constant or spatio-temporally uniform. For it is responsible to the structural exigencies dominating agents, both capitalists and workers, in mutual opposition within the capitalist mode of production. Class struggles, then, are a crucial moment in the determination of the rate of exploitation which must, therefore, manifest historical fluctuations. Only an idealist analysis can attribute its intensification to an assumed *idée fixe*. Such an analysis would be not only inconsistent and fatalist but would necessarily direct struggles against "whites", rather than capitalism.

To admit the existence of voluminous racist texts is not to impute a behavioural effectivity to racist beliefs. We cannot ascertain whether or not actors "believe" their theories. Thus, it is illegitimate to posit a monolithic black image in the white mind, or a static, Negrophobic mental preparedness. George Frederickson's analysis concludes that there were "... shifting and divergent white conceptions of Afro-American character between 1817-1914. White racialism considered as an intellectual and ideological phenomenon, was not a monolithic and unchanging creed during this period but a fluid pattern of belief"⁽¹⁾. The problem with this conclusion, however, is that divergent and shifting viewpoints hardly constitute a belief. But Frederickson here raises the more fundamental question of racial ideology.

Eugene Genovese has traced a "fully developed racist ideology" to the nineteenth century from where it emerged to "conquer the Western

1) George M. Frederickson, *op. cit.* p. 320.

World"⁽¹⁾. In their dissertation on institutional racism, Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt proceeded thus: "Our analysis begins with attention to ideological problems in American society which historically and presently sustain practices appropriately labelled "institutional racist". We then turn attention to the procedures of dominant American institutions: educational, economic, political, legal and medical"⁽²⁾. Their work mirrors the general reluctance on the part of race relations theorists to clarify whether racism is an ideology of slavery, "Negro slavery", or contemporary "racist practices". Indeed, why is it an ideology? What is the meaning of ideology as a concept and can a social formation contain a plurality of ideologies? The silences on these questions would suggest that ideology in race relations writings is simply a synonym for an idea as, for example, in Manning Nash's definition: "The ideology of race is a system of ideas which interprets and defines the meanings of racial differences, real or imagined in terms of some system of cultural values. The ideology of race is always normative: it ranks differences as better or worse, superior or inferior ... "⁽³⁾. Here ideology, obviously interchangeable with idea, is a term of no theoretical significance. What, however, is ideology as a theoretically significant expression?

The concept of ideology became an object of systematic sociological study after the publication of Karl Mannheim's "Ideology and Utopia"⁽⁴⁾. Mannheim was concerned with the various ways in which an object presents itself to various subjects according to the differences in their social settings. This was part of a larger investigation into how mental structures, thoughts, ideas, etc. are, inevitably, differently formed in various historical contexts. According to Mannheim, ideology can be

- 1) Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, op. cit. p. 130.
- 2) Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt (eds.) op. cit. p. 6.
- 3) Manning Nash, "Race and the Ideology of Race" in Paul Baxter and Basil Samson (eds.) *Race and Social Difference* (Penguin Books, Middlesex 1972) p. 111.
- 4) Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1972).

particular and general. The former refers to incorrect interpretations of situations, lies or rationalisations. The latter denotes the historical moulding of the mental structures of particular epochs and social groups. Significantly, the general conception of ideology does not impeach the validity of what is being said; it merely notes its existential basis. Ideology was for Mannheim a neutral sociological category to be used to identify fundamentally opposed politico-philosophical perspectives. For him, all thought is ideological for intellectual phenomena necessarily exist in a constant state of confrontation and conflict. Even the Utopian perspective, namely, that which challenges the dominant Weltanschauung is an ideology in embryo. Ideology, then, is a neutral sociological term; it simply depicts and expresses in terms of its own historical emergence and the intellectual conflicts intrinsic to social differentiation: "The distrust and suspicion which men everywhere evidence towards their adversaries, at all stages of historical development, may be regarded as the immediate precursor of the notion of ideology... We begin to treat our adversaries' views as ideologies only when we no longer consider them as calculated lies and when we sense in his total behaviour an unreliability which we regard as a function of the social situation in which he finds himself"⁽¹⁾. But this approach, he cautioned, must not degenerate into argument ad hominem which finds expression in the imputing of a logical relationship between the social-class origin of a theorist and the truth content of his enquiry⁽²⁾. Mannheim faces an intractable problem here. Can a subjective being in a world of objective divisions resolve the question of objectivity?

1) *ibid.* p. 54.

2) *ibid.* p. 24. Note that Louis Althusser's conception of ideology is akin to Mannheim's. Ideology is counterposed to science, but admitted to be a source of scientific theory. See Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (Penguin Books, Middlesex 1969), pp. 199, and 232.

How is truth to be grasped if historical differentiations within social systems are intrinsically disfigurative of intellectual phenomena? Mannheim's solution is "the free floating intellectual".

The two central criticisms of Mannheim's conception of ideology concern his relativism and reductionism both of whose source can be found in his empiricism, i. e. his conception of reality as an atheoretical thing.

In nominating "free-floating intellectuals" as bearers of objective truth, Mannheim falls prey to the very assumption he had repudiated. For, given the existential conditioning of all social thought, no group can be free-floating. Mannheim, therefore, did not resolve the problem of relativism. Indeed, in failing to ask whether the objectivity of knowledge is not itself existentially conditioned, Mannheim has to become a relativist. He seeks truth but denies the possibility of its discovery except by a group with a specific relation to social reality. Maurice Mandelbaum put the matter succinctly: "Mannheim's ideological doctrine is wholly relativistic; his attempts to substitute relationism for relativism by means of a sociology of knowledge leads him to assume what had previously been denied: the possibility of objective knowledge"⁽¹⁾. Mannheim's inconsistencies are a consequence of his assumption of a reality, independent of the knowing human subject, objective knowledge of which can be obtained by controlling the values of the knower. Yet since it is impossible to demarcate the value of the knower from the external reality, the latter's objective essence is unknowable. Thus, by definition, ideology too cannot be discovered.

In focusing on the knowing subject Mannheim may be said to have misconceived the problem of ideology. For what is more relevant to the analysis is the material basis of the existence of "adversaries" and "antagonists". This would involve formulating criteria of significant conflicts, as well as an analysis of the concepts of class consciousness and mode of production. Mannheim nowhere discusses how men come to be in conflict. Different group interests are merely asserted as endemic

1) Maurice Mandelbaum, *The Problem of Historical Knowledge: An Answer to Relativism* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York 1938) p. 32.

to society. Thus Mannheim reduces class to groups and ideology is seen through a prism of group psychology⁽¹⁾. Such an approach allows the use of "ideology" to mean: the idiosyncratic views of individuals, statements conceived as not in accord with "reality", non-scientific views, or ideas expressed by an arbitrarily defined group. Mannheim's conception, then, presupposes the existence of objective truth which the use of pure sociological reason can grasp. His project is merely to demonstrate how groups and interests deform reasoning processes and objective inquiry: "Just as Kant once laid the foundations for modern epistemology by asking about the already existent natural sciences, "How are they possible?" so today we must ask the same question concerning the type of knowledge which seeks qualitative understanding and which tends, at least, to affect the whole subject. We must ask further from and in what sense can we arrive at truth by means of this type of thought"⁽²⁾. The sociology of knowledge, then, is merely called upon to lay bare the vitiating of social thought by group loyalties, interests and conflicts.

Mannheim's conception of ideology, as opposed to that of George Lukacs and Karl Marx⁽³⁾, severs it from class, class conflict and the subjective conditions of revolution. It percolates through the writings of such influential theorists as Talcott Parsons, Alvin Gouldner, C. Wright Mills,⁽⁴⁾ Robert Merton and John Plamenatz. It is also the source of such

- 1) Karl Mannheim, op. cit. p. 19.
- 2) Karl Mannheim, op. cit. p. 261.
- 3) See George Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (Merlin Press, London 1971) pp. 83-222.
Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, op. cit. pp. 40-47; *Capital*, Vol. 1, op. cit. pp. 573, 608-611.
- 4) See Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, op. cit. pp. 267, 349-351; Alvin Gouldner, op. cit. pp. 47-51.
C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, op. cit. p. 280.
John Plamenatz, *Ideology* (MacMillan, London 1970).
Robert Merton, op. cit. pp. 516-521.
From among these texts Robert Merton's discussion and interpretation of Mannheim must be considered the most lucid.

formulations as: racial ideology, abolitionist ideology, management ideology, male ideology, middle-class ideology, national ideology ... a social formation can exhibit an unlimited number of ideologies. The concept thereby loses all theoretical significance and relevance to a theory of social change.⁽¹⁾ Not surprisingly, then, it has become an academic expletive, used in interchanges of mutual recrimination, the very phenomenon which Mannheim sought to avoid. These are assertions which we shall now attempt to substantiate.

We may observe, in Mannheim's differentiation between 'particular ideology' and 'total ideology', an attempt to avoid treating lies, rationalisations and self-deceptions as "ideology". This differentiation is crucial. For his whole analysis rests on the possibility of separating the psychological from the theoretical level. If no valid distinction can be made between the particular and the total his treatise is nullified, since ideology becomes unidentifiable.

For Mannheim, the concepts particular ideology and total ideology are similar in that they both deal with individual subjects but treat their ideas transcendently, i.e. as a function of the subjects' life-situation. They differ, however, for the total conception relates to the minds of historical epochs and to the theoretical rather than logical or factual divergences which preclude a discourse between individuals.

There are serious problems with this analysis to the extent that we may charge Mannheim with not having established a distinction between particular and total ideology, formal differences between them, or even a concept of ideology. He continuously conflates methodological and substantive levels of differentiation. Thus he confusingly uses "we" to denote both himself as analyst and empirical actors. In consequence, it is impossible to ascertain whether the concepts of particular and total ideology are his abstraction or everyday actors' usages and meanings. This is important. For the latter case is not itself proof of a distinction.

- 1) We regard social change as the transformation of specific relations of production. In this sense, every conception of ideology is an effect of conception of capitalist relations of production as well as the possibility of their abrogation. If they are seen as class relations of exploitation via commodity exchanges, then ideology cannot be of "groups".

Some individuals regard racist ideas as a lie, a scientific error as well as a total ideology dominating the slavery and post-emancipation periods. If the former case, Mannheim is obliged to define existential conditions, and historical epochs, and clarify the relationship between psychological and theoretical explanations. Are they necessarily mutually exclusive? Mannheim is silent on precisely these issues.

A particular lacuna in Mannheim is even more dislocative for his empiricist history of ideas. It may be observed that he does not offer an abstract definition of ideology but empirical descriptions of the mental states which he construes as ideological. It is logically impossible to distinguish between variants of an unspecified phenomenon. This Mannheim does demonstrate. To illustrate, 'particular ideology' may be a property of individuals or groups and its source is discoverable through analysis of their existential conditions. The method of discovering 'total ideology' is exactly the same, except that we examine the existential conditions of the epoch. But if the existential conditions of an individual are identical to those of the historical epoch, and Mannheim gives us no reason to exclude this possibility, then, there is no necessary difference between particular and total ideologies. Within the Mannheimian conception, then, it is legitimate to designate virtually any viewpoint as ideological. This, however, is not just the consequence of logical flaws in his work. He himself regarded all social theories as belonging to either particular, total, or utopian ideology. Thus, every theorist is ideological including Mannheim.

'Ideology and Utopia' may be seen as part of a discourse about the status of ideas in society. "This book", Mannheim begins, "is concerned with the problem of how men actually think"⁽¹⁾. His contribution focuses on the social genesis of ideas, theorising as well as the problem of objectivity. George Lukacs, a contemporary of Mannheim, concerned himself with the relationship between ideas and the transformation of class consciousness. His object is the clarification of the theoretical (subjective) conditions which must be satisfied if the proletariat is to become a revolutionary class. Sociologists who reject this as an object of study would necessarily

1) Karl Mannheim, op. cit. p. 1.

appropriate and popularise Mannheim's approach to ideology. Race relations theorists too would adopt the Mannheimian notion of ideology, given their commitment to the analysis of groups and their world-view, rather than "class". Thus, no sociologist of "race relations" can be concerned with the relationship between "racial ideology" and bourgeois ideology. For this would mean abandoning the assumption of a racial social structure. What race theorists must do in order to sustain 'racial ideology' is develop notions of internal colonialism and institutional racism.

In order to demonstrate the imaginary nature of "racial ideology" we shall return the focus on bourgeois ideology through a summary analysis of Georg Lukacs' much neglected conception of ideology.

Lukacs' approach derives from Marx's conception of social change in which philosophic-political theories are ideological correlates of capitalist relations of production. For Lukacs, ideology is inseparable from the commodity-structure of bourgeois society; it is the subjective aspect of objective processes of reification and de-reification. The subjects are classes and their political behaviour (class struggles) is a reflex of these processes. The social relations of production in capitalist society are of commodity exchange. These generate forms of reification; theories of the immanence of the immediate reality. At the same time, however, the contradictions in the mode of production, e.g., labour competition as ~~against~~ working class industrial concentration, economic struggles and solidarity⁽¹⁾. These foster a revolutionary, de-reifying consciousness as evinced by Marxism. Thought then, is "a factor in the total process, a form of reality,"⁽²⁾ and ideology, part of a revolutionary, dialectical process. Marxist ideology in Lukacs' view functions to revolutionise working class consciousness through a unification of subject and object, theory and practice. Only a dialectical conception of social reality as a totality can make intelligible that which the capitalist mode of production endlessly reifies: "... when the dialectical method destroys the fiction of the immortality of the categories it also destroys their reified character and clears the way to a knowledge of reality"⁽³⁾. In de-reifying social reality

1) Georg Lukacs, op. cit. p 171-173.

2) *ibid.* p. 203.

3) *ibid.* p. 14.

Marxist ideology treats all consciousness, including the economic categories of bourgeois economists, as fetishised, but necessary forms, fundamentally illusory because specific to the capitalist mode of production.

Marxist ideology distinguishes itself from bourgeois thought by admitting to its self-transcendence through the development and ultimate disappearance of the proletariat. For Marxism is an ideology specific to the contradictions within the capitalist mode of production. It reflects the actual emergence, social existence, needs and consciousness of the working class not only because Marx wrote explicitly for the proletariat, but also because without this class, Marxism is ontologically impossible. Marxist ideology is dialectical. It recognises that its mass assimilation and practice leads to the disappearance of all ideology. It is true because its propositions and imperatives correspond to the level of development of the productive forces. The proletarian revolution it argues for is not based on a dream, or a morality, but a part of the logic of capitalist development. Bourgeois ideology on the other hand reifies the social structure by fragmenting the totality of social reality. Thus the conditions of bourgeois ideology are limited and limiting relative to the problems of social change and scientific knowledge.

True, scientific apprehension of social processes is alien to the bourgeoisie because of its place in the scheme of production. The proletariat, on the other hand, being the object of capitalist rationalisation can "see clearly for the first time how society is constructed from the relations with each other". For example, it is a fundamental perception of Marxism that the productive forces under capitalist commodity production had developed to the point where private property was redundant. Even if this is grudgingly acknowledged by the bourgeoisie, neither individually nor collectively can it act on this historical fact, enmeshed as it is in capital accumulation. The matter is different with the proletariat. It is a social class whose theoretical knowledge leads to action without transition by virtue of its commodity status.⁽¹⁾ The task of Marxists, then, is the imputation

1) Lukacs, however, fails to demonstrate this intrinsic revolutionary potential of the proletariat, as a commodity. Indeed, he asserts that it is because the worker's "humanity and his soul are not changed into commodities" that he is revolutionary, *ibid*, p. 172.

of class consciousness to the proletariat, to give it an understanding of itself as a commodity. The social theory, the analysis of a social problem which does not perform this function is an uncritical creature of capitalist reification.

Lukacs' emphasis of praxis derives from his opposition to the "contemplative, purely cognitive stance" which arbitrarily severs the connection between thought and existence. This tendency has its roots in Kant's epistemology and survives in sociological analysis: "As long as a man adopts a stance of intuition and contemplation he can only relate to his own thought and to the object of the empirical world in an immediate way. He accepts both as a ready-made - produced by historical reality. As he wishes only to know the world and not to change it he is forced to accept both the empirical material rigidity of existence and the logical rigidity of concepts as unchangeable. His mythological analyses are not concerned with the concrete origins of the rigidity nor with the real factors inherent in them. That would lead to its elimination. They are concerned solely to demonstrate how the unchanged nature of these data could be conjoined whilst leaving them unchanged and how to explain them as such."⁽¹⁾

Lukacs has been criticised as an historicist, and humanist working within a Hegelian framework ⁽²⁾. This criticism is justifiable. For his position on the inevitability of the dissolution of capitalism is predicated on a linear condition of historical evolution. However, "History and

1) *ibid.* p. 202.

2) See Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (Penguin Books, Middlesex 1969) pp. 31, 114ⁿ, 221ⁿ. We feel that Althusser's criticisms, however, miss an important question for Marxist theory: can concepts represent processes without becoming historicist? If Lukacs' "dialectics" becomes teleological in his attempt to capture processes of social change so too do Althusser's "structural causality" and "timeless history". For Lukacs, the internal contradictions in the development of capitalist commodity production generate a social force, the proletariat, which necessarily seeks the abolition of bourgeois relations of production. This abolition, hinges on the theoretical development of this class so that, for Lukacs, it is not history which determines class consciousness, but class struggles, initially in the intellectual-theoretical sphere.

Class Consciousness" does contain an incisive theoretical analysis of the capitalist social formation. The concepts: productive forces, relations of production, commodity production, reification and ideology are all inter-defined⁽¹⁾. Lukacs' project is the specification of the relationship between base and superstructure. He argues that theoretical production is determined by the exchanges men enter into with nature and their fellow men. The commodity exchanges within capitalism qualitatively reify the content of this theoretical production in so far as the relations of the producers to one another appear as a relationship between things. Marx broke with reification by turning his analysis on the concept of the commodity. For Marx, a commodity is "a mysterious thing" as opposed to the clarity of a relationship of exploitation based on custom, power, or personal dependence: "In preceding forms of society, this economic mystification arose principally with respect to money and interest-bearing capital. In the nature of things it is excluded in the first place where production for the use value, for immediate personal requirements, predominates; and, secondly, where slavery or serfdom form the broad foundation of social production, as in antiquity and during the Middle Ages. Here, the domination of the producer by the conditions of production is concealed by the relations of dominion and servitude, which appear and are evident as the direct motive power of the process of production"⁽²⁾. The mystification of the social basis of exploitation then reaches an apogee in capitalism to constitute ideology, not as a subjective fantasy, but a conscious expression of the objective processes of capitalist production.

The anti-empiricist strain in "History and Class Consciousness" constitutes an embryonic but powerful criticism of contemporary sociology. For in recommending fealty to the actors' definition of the situation, they take the commodity structure of bourgeois society and the specific nature of its agents as expressive of an immanent condition. They, as Lukacs wrote

- 1) One inconsistency in this inter-definition, Lukacs, as other Marxists like Althusser, Gramsci and Lenin, refer to Marxism as an ideology. But even here he adds that it is specific to contradictions within capitalism and a part of the class struggle.
- 2) Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. III, op. cit. p. 831.

of the Anabaptists, "start from the assumption of man as he exists and an empirical world whose structure is unalterable"⁽¹⁾. This slavish copying of the empirical world is exemplified in Talcott Parsons' definition of money as "a generalised medium of exchange", and significantly in the writings of Weber and Durkheim there is a deep pessimism about not men in capitalist society as adjuncts of exploitation and alienation, but human nature⁽²⁾. The ideological content of sociological texts is significant. For as we have seen this is precisely the kind of political economy and philosophical anthropology which informs race (relations) studies. It derives from empiricism. Sociologists claim to be dissertating on reality as distinct from analysing concepts. The result is a "perennial play" on the term reality and general statements about the real world intrinsically susceptible to empirical falsification. For example, is money a generalised medium of exchange? Within Ford's economic empire a part of the reality which Parsons claims to be explaining goods are allocated without monetary exchanges. Arguably, then, and this is what Parsons' formulation obscures, a global economy organised as a communal entity would dispense with money.

It is interesting that the disciplines of politics and sociology are organised around the "Hobessian" problems of power and order. For the fact that Thomas More's "Utopia", for example, is not chosen as the seminal text is part of the curtailment of discussions of an alternative social order. Similarly, Marx's "socialism" is dubbed impractical and dismissed by race relations theorists as incapable of eradicating race from society⁽³⁾. Marxist social scientists remain within the empiricist tradition in preparing to engage in "empirical" research on "race" and working class consciousness rather than develop the philosophical-anthropological and strategic implications of Marx's

1) Georg Lukacs, op. cit. p. 192.

2) See Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A study in Sociology* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1968), pp. 247-249, 362. Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber, An Intellectual Portrait* (Anchor Books, New York 1962), pp. 470-471.

3) See Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, op. cit. Ch. III, Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, op. cit. Moreover, consider the virtual absence of works dealing with the relationship between the eradication of capitalist commodity production and "racism".

scientific socialism ⁽¹⁾. Thus, the many radical studies which have concluded that the working class is apathetic, imbued with middle class ideology, and racist ⁽²⁾.

Our original questions were: are racist ideas an ideology, the ideology of slavery, "Negro slavery", or contemporary "racist policies"? These questions we consider to be false; but affirmative answers are provided by race relations theorists. These answers suggest that racist ideas are conceived in structural terms, however much these theorists may not be aware of this. For, and this is Mannheim's singular contribution to the analysis of ideology, to designate an idea as ideology is to imply necessary relationships, i.e. a structure. This means that the necessity must be demonstrated through the specifying of this structure. The great weakness in Mannheim derives from this empiricist conception of social structure. This enabled him to play on such vague expressions as psychological interests, historical epoch, and existential conditions. But this very vagueness prevented him from proving necessary relationships and validates his project of a "formal functional analysis" of "how men actually think". Race theorists, following Mannheim have functionally labelled racism an ideology, generally without specifying the relationship between the two terms.

Let us, however, pursue the questions further.

The question, are racist ideas an ideology is premature and incomplete. It must first be established that many ideologies can exist in a social formation. This, as we have seen, cannot be demonstrated without nullifying the concept altogether. The question is incomplete because

- 1) Thus, we may isolate empiricism as responsible for the fact that "... there has been relatively little progress towards the elaboration of a theory concerning the development of the subjective conditions of revolutionary situations". Harold Wolpe, "Some Problems Concerning Revolutionary Consciousness" in Ralph Miliband and John Saville (eds.), *The Socialist Register* (Merlin Press, London 1970) p. 251. We would even propose that empiricist and non-empiricist practices are set within class struggles where the exploited class interrogates "reality" by abandoning the given definitions of the situation.
- 2) See, especially, Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1964).

ideology must be posed as of a structure. Thus our second question, are racist ideas the ideology of slavery? We would answer negatively on two counts. Firstly, racist ideas preceded the existence of slave labour in the Americas. Secondly, this necessarily non-generalised mode of labour cannot generate notions of men's nature, only the nature of the slave, as in Aristotle's "some men are slave by nature." Slavery does not necessarily breed a pervasive racism. Greek and Roman slavery are a case in point⁽¹⁾. Slavery is not a necessary and sufficient condition for the development of race theory and ideas of racial supremacy. The theoretical elaboration and dissemination of these ideas are a function of the extent of the opposition to men being held as property. Race supremacist notions are not exclusive to slave society. Even free labourers may be defined as racially inferior, arguably, as part of obscuring the political determinants of the rate of exploitation. Thus, racism is not an ideology of the exploitation of black wage labourers. The labour being designated "black labour" is itself a device aimed at mystification and division. However, this usage of racist ideas in a justificatory context does not constitute them as ideology except in the Mannheimian conception where ideology can be lies, rationalisations, or State propaganda. Indeed, a certain moralistic reductionism is implicit in the equating of ideology with the contextual usage of ideas. It becomes, then an argument ad hominem, a manifestation of a personal objection to particular forms of social control. Ideology thereby ceases to be

- 1) For discussions of how Greeks and Romans justified slavery non-racially, see M. I. Finley (ed.) *Slavery in Classical Antiquity* (Heffer, Cambridge 1960); on the defence of North American slavery Eric McKittrick points out: "The Southern thinkers drew much from the notions of Aristotle on order and function in society. They examined Scripture, their Bible argument is really something more than an exercise in equivocation ... there was the "King Cotton" theory which showed how the iron necessities of world trade upheld slavery. The Southerners also appealed to Burke ... They even had recourse to science, a science that was not merely Southern ... " *Slavery Defended: the Views of the Old South* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1963) p. 2.

theoretically relevant to class organisation and the analysis of political forces within the capitalist social formation.

We would argue that ideology cannot be conspiratorily construed, i.e. as the ideas imposed by a ruling class or in terms of an "elective affinity" between values and group interests. The notion that racist ideas were the ideology of the South's plantation slavery is of this genre. Here ideology is interchangeable with naturalisation; but since pro-slavery writers utilised "Negro inferiority", "the world market", "culture", and "history", it is unjustifiable to select one of their rationalisations as the South's ideology. We hope to avoid the arbitrariness and confusion surrounding ideology by defining it as the theoretical reproduction of relations of commodity production. Only generalised commodity production gives birth to ideology, to fetishised political economic concepts and the notion of a functional immanence between commodity production and human nature. Racist theory necessarily concerns the nature of races not the nature of man. While racist ideas are an efflux of a particular mode of labour exploitation, ideology constitutes an epiphenomenon of capitalist commodity production. For processes of production which involve capital accumulation and the rigid calculation of individual inputs necessitate the imputation of immutable, individualist-utilitarian attributes to economic agents⁽¹⁾. Hence, as Marx observed: "The categories of bourgeois economy consist of such like forms. They are

- 1) The following remark may be taken as a domain confession of an economist: "The economist operates with an implicit assumption that goods are scarce and wants are insatiable, so that man in his economic capacity wants to earn as high an income as possible and in capitalistic economics - accumulate as much wealth". Charles P. Kindleberger, *Power and Money* (Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London 1970) p. 7. C.B. MacPherson provides the historical dimension: "It was only with the emergence of modern market society, which we may put as early as the seventeenth century in England, that this concept of man was narrowed and turned into almost its opposite. Man was still held to be essentially a purposive rational creature, but the essence of rational behaviour was increasingly held to lie in unlimited individual appropriation, as a means of satisfying unlimited desire for utilities. Man became an infinite appropriator and an infinite consumer; an infinite appropriator because an infinite desirer." *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973), p. 5.

forms of thought expressing with social validity the conditions and relations of a definite, historically determined mode of production, viz., the production of commodities. The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labour as long as they take the form of commodities, vanishes therefore, so soon as we come to other forms of production"⁽¹⁾. Ideology is the theoretical reproduction of relationships of commodity exchange dominated by capital. By this same token it cannot be racist. Racist ideas are not the reproduction in thought of capitalist relations of production; nor can they reify the commodity structure of bourgeois society. Indeed, ideas of racial inferiority are irrelevant to capitalist commodity production and even incompatible with relations of production which necessitate the labourer disposing of his labour power according to market exigencies. Thus, Governments would express no disinclination to engage in campaigns against "racial ideology" as much as others would seek to disseminate racist ideas. For the relationship between racist ideas and the capitalist mode of production is not one of logical necessity.

It is not that whether racism is an ideology or not depends on how the latter is defined, for it cannot be arbitrarily defined. If race relations theorists define and use "ideology" in an ad hoc, unsystematic manner, it is because they seek to add a materialist veneer to the idealist perspective which constitutes racism as a Negrophobic Logos determining history, a history of "race relations". Sidney Hook's contrasting of Marx's materialism and idealism is here of some relevance. In Marxism, he argues: "... we have a critical social behaviourism which does not deny that human beings are influenced by beliefs but which seeks to make intelligible the historical impact of dominant social beliefs - their rise, acceptance and decline - by interpreting them as forms of class behaviour ... The errors of the idealists arise from their attempts to deduce the character and existence of the given from the activity of the mind and from the fatal step by which the relatively autonomous activity of the mind becomes transformed

1) Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 76 (emphasis ours Y.W.)

into independence of complex material conditions"⁽¹⁾. Hook, however, does not comment on the relationship between the "given" and idealism, and this is unfortunate. For it is the notion of a given which logically leads to either the pursuit and classification of correlations and regularities (positivism) or ideational causation. The innate fatalism of an idealist methodology is obvious. It is incapable of realising even C. Wright Mills' liberal plea that social science enlarges the scope of human choice⁽²⁾. For if the racist mind, an independent free-floating body of ideas, or deep-rooted psychological pre-dispositions and values, has causal responsibility, then we can do nothing but explore and interpret "race relations" ad infinitum, while, sporadically, despairing at "race riots" and exhorting all men to deeper humanistic contemplation.

We have seen that from its inception the analysis of the economic and social conditions of "blacks" in advanced capitalist societies was conceived within, and because of, certain philosophical-sociological traditions and perspectives. It derives initially from Simmel's sociology which George Mead, R. Park, W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki institutionalised in the Chicago School of Sociology in the early 20th century⁽³⁾. We have repeatedly criticised its project of reproducing a conceptual map of the real world of social relations. So too did C. Wright Mills, although himself unaware of its epistemological foundation: "Tendency II: Toward a systematic theory of 'the nature of man and society'". For example, in the works of

- 1) Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx* (Humanities Press, New York 1958), pp. 59-60.
- 2) C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Penguin Books, Middlesex 1971) Ch. 1.
- 3) Cf. Howard Becker "The parallel between Simmel and Thomas and Znaniecki seems close, and given the nature of Znaniecki's early training, it is quite conceivable that the precedent afforded by Simmel influenced him considerably ... indications are given of the basic pattern of social interactions as developed by George Herbert Mead and others. But ... Mead in all probability drew on Hegel rather than Simmel" in Kurt H. Wolf (ed.), *Georg Simmel* (Harper Torchbooks, New York 1959) p. 227. For similar references to the influence of Simmel on the Chicago School, see Robert E. Faris, *Chicago Sociology, 1920-32* (The University of Chicago Press, London 1920).

the formalists, notably Simmel and von Wiese, sociology comes to deal in conceptions intending to be of use in classifying all social relationships providing insights into their supposedly invariant features. It is, in short, concerned with a rather static and abstract view of the components of social structure on a quite high level of generability ... in so far as sociology is defined as a study of some special area of society, it readily becomes a sort of odd-job man among the social sciences, consisting of miscellaneous studies of academic leftover. There are studies of cities and families, racial and ethnic relations and of course, small groups. As we shall see, the resulting miscellany was transformed into a style of thought which I shall examine under the term liberal proclivity⁽¹⁾. This tendency cannot be but socio-psychological for in the real world of belief bearing behaviour, explanation must focus on values, or beliefs. Thus, as E. Franklin Frazier observed: "In Park's development of sociological theory in regard to race relations, there are several important features which are significant for the future of sociological theory in this field. The original emphasis of this theory was upon the social psychological aspects of race contacts. It was concerned primarily with an explanation of behaviour in terms of attitudes. This was not only peculiar to Park's theory, but it was characteristic of the theories of other scholars"⁽²⁾. It is interesting to note that studies of "blacks" have not developed away from the framework pioneered by theorists in the first quarter of the twentieth century. This should come as no surprise for sociology, if anything, an empiricist mode of social analysis, is still a dominant theoretical practice. Thus, even the most sophisticated works of the conflict school, radical sociologists and black analysts concerned with the eradication of racism remain wedded to phenomenology, or normative functionalism⁽³⁾. A "social problem" specific to contemporary social science - the 'race problem' is taken as the reality of the 20th century.

- 1) C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, op. cit. pp. 30-31.
- 2) E. Franklin Frazier in G. Franklin Edwards (ed.), op. cit. p. 39.
- 3) For an example of a desperate, but unsuccessful, attempt to escape from sociology, see Robert Staples, *Introduction to Black Sociology*, op. cit.

In this and the preceding chapter, we hope to have demonstrated that the tradition of race (relations) studies is an off-shoot of the rise of phenomenological and functionalist modes of social analysis which are in turn variants of empiricism. It is not that these analyses set out only to explain and not to change. If there is a conservative conspiracy, it lies not in the rejection of Marx's political perspective but in a loyalty to an empiricist epistemology within which social analysis begins with real actors their behaviour, beliefs and definitions. We are, therefore, not surprised that after over a half-century of theorising there is still "a race problem". In 1904, W. I. Thomas could write, "Race prejudice is an affair that can neither be reasoned with nor legislated about very effectively"⁽¹⁾. Frank Tannenbaum echoed him fifty-three years later, "... and a prejudice is of the hardest substance, harder to grind down than a diamond"⁽²⁾. Myrdal's study, the Kerner Commission Report, the P. E. P. Reports in Britain, the liberal, radical and militant literature on "race relations", all testify to the profound influence of Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Weber, Simmel and the Chicago and Harvard Schools of Sociology. We will not assert that the race (relations) perspective has not helped⁽³⁾, and cannot help "blacks", or for that matter "whites", and, therefore, should be abandoned. We will say, however, that in so far as social analysis remains steeped in the empiricist tradition, "race problems" will continue. On the other hand, if it is argued that the durability of the race (relations) perspective is to be taken as evidence of the intractability of "racism", then a legitimate demand can be made for a moratorium on "race relations" in order to relocate resources to the investigation of the basis of this intractability. We suggest the basis will be discovered in the practices of the sociology of "race relations".

- 1) W. I. Thomas "The Psychology of Race Prejudice" quoted in George M. Frederickson, *op. cit.* p. 315.
- 2) Frank Tannenbaum "Race Relations in Caribbean Society", in Vera Rubin (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 66.
- 3) See Melvin Tumin "Some Social Consequences of Research on Racial Relations", in Bernard E. Segal (ed.) *Racial and Ethnic Relations* (Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York 1972)

CHAPTER III

THE RACIAL EXPLANATION OF SLAVE LABOUR

From the 15th century onward, European Trading Companies began the "colonial history" of the New World by establishing therein settlements and, ultimately, plantation slavery based on imported African labour. These processes also formed the matrix of what are called 'race relations' in Euro-American society.

Spanish traders and settlers with royal encouragement⁽¹⁾ were the first Europeans to implant forced labour⁽²⁾ and the production of primary products for export in the New World. Thus the island of Hispaniola had vast sugar estates producing sugar for export to Europe already in the first quarter of the 16th century. Sugar production spread to Brazil by the mid 16th century then to British and other European colonial settlements. This development went hand in hand with the importation of African slaves. By the end of the 17th century "Negro slavery" was firmly established in the New World and involved in the production of similar primary commodities.

But why slavery and why the enslavement of Africans? Indeed, is the latter question a valid one?

The investigation of the origin of slavery in the Americas is polarised into competing paradigms. The first stresses the motivational patterns and

- 1) G. K. Fieldhouse notes the influence of both the monarchy and mercantilism. He writes: "the metropolitan institutions created to govern Spanish America embodied this principle in that they alone dealt with colonial matters and were responsible only to the King. Chronologically the first was the Casa de Contractacion set up in 1503 on the model of the Portuguese Casa da India. Its functions were to license all trade with the colonies; to organise shipping and navigation" *The Colonial Empires* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1966) pp. 16-17.
- 2) Reference here is to the much debated *encomienda*, *repartimiento* and *mita*. See Silvio Zavala, *New Viewpoints on the Spanish Colonisation of America* (Russell and Russell, New York, 1968) Chs. VI, VIII and VIII; M. Ratekin, "The Early Sugar Industry in Espanola", *Hispanic-American Historical Review*, Vol. 34, 1954.

racial assumptions of Europeans, while the second focuses on the economic structure of European society and the world economy. Prof. Winthrop D. Jordan is an eminent representative of the former approach⁽¹⁾.

Jordan's main concern is the social-psychology of sixteenthcentury Englishmen, specifically their religion, social ethics and evaluation of blackness where there was evidence of a troubled asceticism as well as a quasi-religious antipathy to darkness. In effect, the pre-slavery attitudes of Elizabethan Englishmen towards Africans were defined by the physical, philosophical and cultural negation which the "darkies" represented. Englishmen, already hypersensitive to blackness and sensuality, felt a compelling aversion to the African's colour, heathenism and blatant sexuality: "From the first, Englishmen tended to set Negroes over against themselves, to stress what they conceived to be radically contrasting qualities of colour, religion and style of life, as well as animality and a peculiarly potent sexuality"⁽²⁾. These interrelated characteristics evoked in Englishmen feelings of profound puzzlement and anathema. Above all, the impact of the African's colour was striking for: "... one of the fairest-skinned nations suddenly came face to face with one of the darkest peoples on earth,"⁽³⁾ and blackness was to Englishmen the personification of things vile.

Jordan's next step was to emphasise these "first impressions" on the

1) Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro 1550-1812* (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1968). Jordan's work is of crucial significance not only because it is eminently representative of an idealist historiography and empiricism but also because it enjoys some currency as "the last word" on the subject. Reviewing "White Over Black" J.H. Plumb concluded: "It is good to see so many of the best American historians tackling one of the greatest historical problems of their society, the slave South and its complex repercussions. Among these Winthrop Jordan has won a deservedly high place with this magnificent book scholarly, perceptive, and intellectually sophisticated ..." in Allen Weinstein and Frank Otis Gatell (eds.) *American Negro Slavery. A Modern Reader* (Oxford University Press, New York 1973) p. 409. See also George M. Frederickson "The Development of American Racism" in Nathan I. Huggins et al. (eds.) *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc. New York 1971), Vol. 1, p. 244.

2) *ibid.* p. 43.

3) *ibid.* p. 6.

grounds that they indicate the content of attitudes, which he defined as: "Thoughts and feelings (as opposed to actions) directed towards some specific object (as opposed to generalised faiths and beliefs)⁽¹⁾". This emphasis allows the proposition of a movement from a mental state, a colour antipathy existing prior to, and intensified by, contact with "savage" Africans, to a "racial slavery". This is most clearly stated in: "Whatever the limitations of terminology as an index to thought and feeling it seems likely that the colonist's initial sense of difference from the Negro was founded not on a single characteristic but on a congeries of qualities which taken as a whole, seemed to set the Negro apart. Virtually every quality in the Negro invited pre-judicial feelings. What may have been his two most striking characteristics, his heathenism and his appearance, were probably prerequisite to his complete debasement. His heathenism alone could never have led to permanent enslavement since conversion easily wiped out that failing. If his appearance, his racial characteristics, meant nothing to the English settlers, it is difficult to see how slavery based on race ever emerged, how the complexion as the mask of slavery ever entered the colonists' mind ... other qualities ... added up to savagery; they were the major components in that sense of difference which provided the mental margin absolutely requisite for placing the European on the deck of the slave ship and the Negro in the hold"⁽²⁾. For Jordan, then, the perception of the African as a savage was a causal agent, not a rationalisation, but a necessary prerequisite to his enslavement. It was the feeling of a difference which tipped the balance and propelled Englishmen into "an unthinking decision" to enslave the "blackies".

We will offer a series of criticisms of Jordan's contribution to the clarification of the origin of African enslavement. Firstly, there is the absence of analytical differentiations. Despite the large volume of empirical material amassed, he failed to discuss the different types of confrontations which took place between Englishmen and Africans. Prof. Davis conceded that Jordan may have hit part of the truth in asserting a European tendency to

1) *ibid.* p. VIII.

2) *ibid.* p. 97. This crucial passage is inconsistent with statements on pp. 61, 63, 64, 85 and 91, where Prof. Jordan, *en passant*, mentions the political and economic under-pinnings of Negro slavery.

associate Africans: "... with Moorish infidelity and with Noah's curse of Canaan which may have disposed some Europeans to regard them as fit for bondage ..." But he advised that we consider: "... that European slave traders dealt initially as equals with African princes and merchants, and negroes of royal blood who travelled to Europe were received with respect and honour"⁽¹⁾. This remark illustrates the necessity of a close reading of Prof. Jordan's peculiar use of "Englishmen". He failed to specify which "Englishmen" saw Africans as "savages"; the captains of the slave ships, the seamen who reportedly fared slightly less badly than the cargo, the slave merchants, slave masters, English scribes, missionaries, ship builders, explorers, settlers ...? The force of Jordan's argumentation rests, in large part, on this homogenising of a wide range of disparate phenomena and activities under "Englishmen thought" and "the settlers felt". This is illegitimate in a serious historical study, but unavoidable in a historiography in which perceived racio-cultural differences constitute historical catalysts.

A second criticism pertains to Prof. Jordan's use of "attitudes". Given their complexity, a major study of "attitudes towards the Negro" should at least contain some preliminary theoretical specification. Prof. Jordan did not take this precaution and compounded this deficiency by positing a causal connection between attitudes and behaviour⁽²⁾. Not surprisingly, then, he confuses attitudes with opinions, poetic musings, rationalisations and ideology, and operates with the simplistic notion that an extended review of selected sixteenth and seventeenth century writers captures a general attitude towards the Negro. But Prof. Jordan's monumental documentation is not sufficient for describing a whole *Zeitgeist*. His full-blown annotations from "primary

- 1) D. Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Cornell University Press, New York 1966) pp. 281-282.
For similar observations see Keith Irvine, *The Rise of the Coloured Races* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London 1972) p. 58. P. D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa*. (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 1964) ch. 2. Christopher Fyfe "The Impact of the Slave Trade on West Africa" in Centre of African Studies, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade from West Africa* (University of Edinburgh, 1966) p. 85.
- 2) For some understanding of the extent of Jordan's oversimplification see Martin Fishbein (ed.) *Readings on Attitude Theory and Measurement* (John Wiley, New York 1962).

sources" may well be an insignificant proportion of the sixteenth and seventeenth century literature on Africans. Moreover, attitudes are elusive entities, and in order to discover them it is necessary to ask questions of respondents. This obviously poses problems for the historian seeking to investigate past attitudes. Manifold complications emerge when empirical attitudes are investigated in order to explain behaviour and they are surmounted only through the construction of concepts of economy and social structure from which behaviour is to be theoretically deduced.

Thirdly, Prof. Jordan ignores the crucial question of whether Elizabethan perceptions of Africans were influenced by the knowledge of Africa's "degradation" by the Iberians. In other words, were not Africans already lowly-placed in an international status stratification system? Nor does Prof. Jordan consider that Englishmen, envious of the Iberians' success, may have been powerfully affected by the commercial potential of Africans, and this independently of their blackness, animality and irreligiosity. These omissions undermine Jordan's claim to be dealing with "the raw materials of history". Rather, as E. H. Carr convincingly argues, the historian works-up the raw materials generated by his particular theory of history⁽¹⁾.

Finally, Prof. Jordan is manifestly inconsistent in that his muted concessions to economics all but destroy his notion of a racially based slavery. Notably: "The case with the African was different: the English errand into Africa was not a new or perfect community but a business turn ... The most compelling necessity was that of pressing forward the business of buying Negroes from other Negroes. It was not until the slave trade came to require justification, in the eighteenth century, that some (our emphasis) Englishmen found special reason to lay emphasis on the Negro's savagery"⁽²⁾. And again, "Negroes became slaves, partly because there were social and economic necessities in America which called for some sort of bound, controlled labour"⁽³⁾.

1) E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (Penguin Books, Middlesex 1961).

2) Winthrop Jordan. *op. cit.* p. 27.

3) Winthrop Jordan. *op. cit.* p. 61.

Elsewhere, he admits that Africans had been brought to the Caribbean Islands: "... to meet an insatiable demand for labour which was cheap to maintain, easy to dragoon, and simple to replace when worked to death"⁽¹⁾. Here Prof. Jordan concedes that enslavement does not demand a sense of difference as a prerequisite. Jordan's excursions into economics, however, fail to make significant the fact that England's entry into slave trading and the setting up of slave plantations took place a century after its initial contact with Africa. It was after the establishment of colonies and the sugar industry in the New World that English merchant's capital developed slavery into a concerted and systematic enterprise. Because Jordan has not thought out the theoretical relationship between economic structure and consciousness, he fails to demonstrate the relationship between "prejudice" and slavery. Thus, while Elizabethan pre-conceptions assured the African's enslavement, in the case of Negro slavery in Virginia: "Slavery and prejudice may have been equally cause and effect, continuously reacting upon each other, dynamically joining hands to hustle the Negro down the road to complete degradation"⁽²⁾. Surely we must be dealing with different levels of prejudice in this continuous interaction. For if the prejudice is at the same level both before and after slavery, then slavery has no effect on it. If, however, we have different levels of prejudice, then it cannot be a case of equal cause and effect. The prejudice has to be more or less, before slavery than after. This means that they cannot at all be enjoined in a causal sequence to explain each other. For we would be left with an insoluble problem of separately demarcating their respective force. The whole argument becomes untenable unless a third category is introduced as the end-product of this interaction. Hence, Prof. Jordan's "complete degradation". We are, therefore, still without an explanation of the relationship between prejudice and slavery.

At root, it is his idealist theory of social action and his belief in "the power of irrationality in men" which cause his merging of two separate issues, slavery and "Negro slavery", into "a racial slavery". For, given "the

- 1) E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (Penguin Books, Middlesex 1961).
- 2) Winthrop Jordan. *op. cit.* p. 27.

primacy of thoughts and feelings" and "the fundamental constants of ... human avarice and exploitation"⁽¹⁾, the investigation of attitudes takes a natural preference over an analysis of the economic structure of Elizabethan society.

Prof. Jordan's study is a bold attempt to construct a pre-slavery, psycho-history of North American "race relations" - an approach shared by two other historians, Carl N. Degler and Stanley Elkins. The notion of a racially based slavery is essential to the whole edifice of his dissertation. He wrote: "Understanding the way racial slavery began is both extremely difficult and absolutely essential to comprehension of the white man's attitudes toward Negroes. For once the cycle of debasement in slavery and prejudice in the mind was underway it was automatically self-reinforcing. It is so easy to see the dynamics of this cycle that most students of race relations in the United States have looked no further; they have assumed that the degraded position of the slave degraded the Negro in the white man's eyes - without pausing to wonder why Negroes became slaves in the first place ..."⁽²⁾. Unfortunately, Jordan nowhere faced up to the theoretical problems generated by a cyclical historiography. Is the cycle self-propelling and hence, perpetual? This slide into fatalism is avoidable only by introducing other elements - which generates a second question. How are the factors which operate on the cycle's axis to be individually weighted? The absence of any discussion of slavery as a concept is illustrative of these deficiencies in Jordan's work and the easy marriage of slavery and "race" one of its consequences.

On the whole, there is a tendency to assume racial motivations in the white mind in discussing the structure of Afro-European relations. This lapse, however, is related to an idealist procedure whose starting point is not relations of production but a separable consciousness. It has resulted in the practice of interposing a notion of racial causation via an emphasis on the racial characteristics or thoughts of "actors". Racial slavery becomes, by innuendo, racially-motivated slavery and the understanding of slavery itself either as a legal status or economic institution is necessarily hindered. For

1) *ibid.* p. XIV.

2) *ibid.* p. X.

primacy of thoughts and feelings" and "the fundamental constants of ... human avarice and exploitation"⁽¹⁾, the investigation of attitudes takes a natural preference over an analysis of the economic structure of Elizabethan society.

Prof. Jordan's study is a bold attempt to construct a pre-slavery, psycho-history of North American "race relations" - an approach shared by two other historians, Carl N. Degler and Stanley Elkins. The notion of a racially based slavery is essential to the whole edifice of his dissertation. He wrote: "Understanding the way racial slavery began is both extremely difficult and absolutely essential to comprehension of the white man's attitudes toward Negroes. For once the cycle of debasement in slavery and prejudice in the mind was underway it was automatically self-reinforcing. It is so easy to see the dynamics of this cycle that most students of race relations in the United States have looked no further; they have assumed that the degraded position of the slave degraded the Negro in the white man's eyes - without pausing to wonder why Negroes became slaves in the first place ..."⁽²⁾ Unfortunately, Jordan nowhere faced up to the theoretical problems generated by a cyclical historiography. Is the cycle self-propelling and hence, perpetual? This slide into fatalism is avoidable only by introducing other elements - which generates a second question. How are the factors which operate on the cycle's axis to be individually weighted? The absence of any discussion of slavery as a concept is illustrative of these deficiencies in Jordan's work and the easy marriage of slavery and "race" one of its consequences.

On the whole, there is a tendency to assume racial motivations in the white mind in discussing the structure of Afro-European relations. This lapse, however, is related to an idealist procedure whose starting point is not relations of production but a separable consciousness. It has resulted in the practice of interposing a notion of racial causation via an emphasis on the racial characteristics or thoughts of "actors". Racial slavery becomes, by innuendo, racially-motivated slavery and the understanding of slavery itself either as a legal status or economic institution is necessarily hindered. For

1) *ibid.* p. XIV.

2) *ibid.* p. X.

example, consider this quotation from Stanley Elkins: "All negroes or other slaves within the province (according to a Maryland Law of 1663), and all negro and other slaves to be hereafter imported into the province shall serve *durante vita*; and all children born of any negro or other slave, shall be slaves as their fathers were for the term of their lives."⁽¹⁾ Elkins' immediate comment was: "Such was the just legal step whereby a black skin would itself ultimately be equatable with "slave"."⁽²⁾ But the law contains no such implication. It does not suggest the enslaving of coloured freedmen or their children, but the children of "negro or other slaves". It is, therefore, the twentieth-century historian who has read "race" into a seventeenth century edict.

In support of our charge that "racial slavery" is not serious historical analysis we may follow Prof. Elkins himself into a non-racial explanation. In Virginia, Elkins argued: "The decade of the 1660's, inaugurated by the restoration of the Stuart monarchy, marked something of a turning point in the fortunes of the colony not unrelated to the movement there and in Maryland to fix irrevocably upon the Negro a lifetime of slavery. It was during this decade that certain factors bearing upon the colony's economic future were precipitated. One such factor was a serious drop in tobacco prices, brought on not only by over-production but also by the Navigation Acts of 1660 and 1661, and the market was not to be fully restored for another twenty years. This moment, with rising costs and a disappearing margin of profit, that commercial production on a small-scale basis was placed under serious disabilities. Another factor was the rise in the slave population. Whereas there had been only about 300 in 1650, by 1671 there were, according to Governor Berkeley, 2,000 slaves in a servant population of 8,000. This was already 25 per cent of the servants, and the figure was even more significant for the future, since the total white servant population in any given period could never be counted on to exceed their average annual immigration multiplied by five or six (the usual term in years, of their indenture), while the increase of slaves over

1) Stanley Elkins, *Slavery. A Problem in American Institutional and Cultural Life*. (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1964) p. 40.

2) *ibid.*

the same period would be cumulative. Such a development would by now be quite enough to stimulate the leaders of the colony - virtually all planters - to clarify in law once and for all the status of life-time Negro servitude."⁽¹⁾

The thesis here is that a declining profit margin and the increase in the slave population precipitated the planters' decision to legalise the life-time servitude of the Negro. This argument contains a tautology deriving from Elkins' vague conception of slavery. How can there be a rise in the slave population before the legal clarification of slavery? On the other hand, if Negroes were treated as slaves before they were legally designated as such, then the legalisation is a secondary, if not irrelevant phenomenon⁽²⁾. But whence this rise? If the planters had been importing Negroes as slaves, then surely their status is clear. If it is a matter of natural reproduction, it means that Negro children inherit a necessarily pre-existing slave status. We see, then, that even at the juristic level, Elkins' argumentation is illogical. Finally there is the demographic explanation of the Negroes' life-time servitude: the planters were pushed into a legal clarification because of the rapid increase in the Negro population between 1660 and 1670. Yet the dates are inconsistent. Virginia, according to Elkins himself, effected "some kind of statutory recognition of slavery" in 1661, that is, before the increase in the Negro population.

Elkins' venture into an economic explanation raises more questions than it answers. However, his observations would question the tendency to advance the existence of race consciousness as a necessary or sufficient condition to the African's enslavement. They draw attention to the economic

- 1) *ibid.* pp. 44-45 (our emphasis).
- 2) This question of pre-enslavement treatment of Negroes is still a matter of controversy. Oscar Handlin argues "The status of Negroes down to the 1660's was that of servants and so they were identified and treated down to the 1660's". *Race and Nationality in American Life* (Atheneum, New York 1957) p. 7. Carl Degler claims an early "discrimination against Negroes" but he does not make clear the relationship between socially-motivated discrimination and economic and political discrimination. "Prejudice and Slavery" in Robin Winks (ed.) *Slavery: A Comparative Perspective* (New York University Press, New York 1972).

rationale underlying the introduction of slavery in the Americas. Only through the persistent ignoring of evidence of this sort can the change of the Negro's status in America from indentured to slave be explained in terms of "racial prejudice".⁽¹⁾ Yet Carl Degler too posits the saliency of xenophobia in the relatively rapid transformation of the African indentured servant into a slave.⁽²⁾ His viewpoint shows an affinity with M. I. Finley's "slavery outsider formula"⁽³⁾, where the outlander is seen as most suitable for enslavement, an outcome decided according to the balance of power between peoples.

Max Weber's definition of the plantation is suggestive of this power model. The plantation is "a capitalist development of the manor" arising from the coincidence of conquest and the possibility of intensive cultivation. It "operates with disciplined servile labour. We do not find as in the case of the manorial economy, a large estate and individual small holdings of the peasants side by side but the servile population are herded together in barracks."⁽⁴⁾ Weber's position appears to be that slavery should be seen as the outcome of a structural confluence of economic calculation and the balance of military power. For him, the employment of slave labour is possible and even mandatory under the following conditions:

- 1) where cheap maintenance of this labour is possible,
- 2) when opportunities exist for regular supplies through a slave market,
- 3) where agriculture or simple industrial processes constitute the predominant form of economic activity.⁽⁵⁾

- 1) Cf. Carl Degler "Prejudice and Slavery" in Robin Winks (ed.) *op. cit.*
- 2) Carl Degler, *Out of Our Past: The Forces that Shaped Modern America* (Harper and Row, Publishers, New York, 1962).
- 3) M. I. Finley, "The Idea of Slavery . . ." in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese (eds.) *Slavery in the New World* (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs., New York 1969) pp. 260-261.
- 4) Max Weber, *General Economic History* (Collier Books New York 1961) p. 73. Weber uses "capitalist" in a peculiar sense for "servile labour" is not a capitalist form of labour exploitation.
- 5) Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* (The Free Press, New York 1966) pp. 276-277.

This emphasis on calculation conforms to Weber's general proposition of an unending rationalisation of economic activity in human society and more so in Occidental civilisation. To the question why slavery, Weber, and as we shall see, Eric Williams, would reply because it may be the most rational form of economic organisation. Weber, however, did not seek to clarify the role of conquest, or what conditions determine who is enslaved. Is it the propertyless or the most physically and politically defenceless among them? Nieboer's oft-cited thesis suggests that an abundant supply of land and relatively defenceless communities invite enslavement or the imposition of some form of compulsory labour⁽¹⁾. But why other communities? "Prejudice" as we have seen is not the answer, and why are some races or communities more powerful? Indeed, is it a question of "other" communities or the political forces therein.

From an analysis of the race relations question 'why were Africans enslaved,' and its internally inconsistent answers, we move to a presentation of "materialist" attempts to transcend this perspective.

In his analysis of the origin of slavery in the Caribbean, Eric Williams effectively challenged the idealist historiography by displacing "race" into the economics of the sugar plantation. In uncompromising language, he wrote: "Slavery in the Caribbean has been too narrowly identified with the Negro. A racial twist has been given to what is basically an economic phenomenon. Slavery was not born of racism: rather racism was the consequence of slavery. Unfree labour in the New World was brown, white, black and yellow; Catholic, Protestant and pagan."⁽²⁾ This progression through a variety of races and religions signified, for Williams, the overwhelming economic concerns of the planters and their mercantile governments. The slave trade and slave labour in the New World began with the Indians who were decimated by European diseases and overwork. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the plantations were being staffed with "white" labour comprising: indentured

- 1) Herman J. Nieboer, *Slavery as an Industrial System* (Lennox Hill, New York 1971).
- 2) Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Andre Deutsch, London 1964) p. 7.

servants, convicts, "redemptioners", former manorial tenants, war-weary Germans, freedom-seeking Irishmen, and unrepentant trade unionists.

Williams' documentation of the traffic in unfree white labour to the New World is impressive and he made bold to compare the lot of the slave with that of the ordinary seaman during the Middle Passage⁽¹⁾.

The much-vaunted plentitude of land in the New World was, in Williams' view, a product of naked imperialist aggression resulting in the massive dislocation and destruction of the indigenous Caribbean communities. Similarly, the yeoman farmers were almost completely displaced through the introduction of large-scale plantations in the Caribbean, not the unsuitability of "white" labour in the tropics.

If race was irrelevant, why was the white servant not made a slave? Williams offered as reasons; the gap between the needs of the plantation and European sources of supply, the facility with which white servants escaped and, most important, the relative cheapness of black labour: "The money which procured a white man's services for ten years could buy a Negro for life ... as compared with Indian and white labour Negro slavery was eminently superior"⁽²⁾. Having disposed of the "historically unsound" notion of black labour being intrinsically suited to plantation slavery, Williams posited slavery's relative superiority over peasant farming: "Under certain circumstances slavery has some obvious advantages. In the cultivation of crops like sugar, cotton and tobacco, where the cost of production is appreciably reduced on larger units, the slaveowner, with his large-scale production and his organised slave gang, can make more profitable use of the land than the small farmer or peasant proprietor. For such staple crops, the vast profits can well stand the greater expense of inefficient slave labour. Where all the knowledge required is simple and a matter of routine, constancy and cooperation in labour - slavery - is essential, until, ... the land available for

- 1) See also Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade. A Census.* (University of Wisconsin Press, London 1969) pp. 282-286. K.C. Davies, "The Living and the Dead" in S. Engerman & Eugene D. Genovese (eds.) *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere* (Princeton University Press, Princeton 1975).
- 2) Eric Williams, *op. cit.* p. 19.

appropriation has been already apportioned."⁽¹⁾ Slave labour becomes dearer than free labour only when free labour is in abundance, and in conditions of a plénitude of virgin land this is highly unlikely. The plantations, then, could not have been staffed by wage labourers or by peasant producers. Relations of production emerge from the given political, economic and ecological habitat⁽²⁾. Negro slavery, then, was an expression of the "economic rationality" of profit-seeking merchant capital, the relative cheapness and abundance of African labour, the fact of Africans being accustomed to settled agricultural activities, the risks of civil or international war involved in enslaving other Europeans on a mass scale, i.e. the politico-demographic impossibility of exporting European peasants as "slaves" to overseas plantations.

Williams' opposition to a racial interpretation of "Negro slavery" was rooted in an emphasis on profit and ownership. For him, once Africans entered the capitalist world-economy through the plantation, they come to represent a mode of labour exploitation. Negro slavery is thus a misnomer if it implies more than a description of the racial characteristics of the slaves: "The distinction between races in the Caribbean area, has for the most part, been a distinction between those who owned property, principally land, and those who did not; ... The distinction in race or colour was only the superficial visible symbol of a distinction which in reality was based on the ownership of property."⁽³⁾ Williams' argumentation contains an important insight: the horror with which contemporaneity now regards slavery should not blind us as to its circumstantial rationality or deflect attention away from the structural determinants of American slavery as an already existing system into which the African was introduced.

Williams' work has been designated "Marxist" and trenchantly

- 1) *ibid.* p. 6.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 5.
- 3) Eric Williams, *Race Relations in Caribbean Society*, in Vera Rubin (ed.) *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium* (University of Washington Press, London 1971) p. 54.

criticised by Eugene Genovese who charged him with a mechanical materialism⁽¹⁾. Indeed, Williams' analysis is more of a sustained polemic against racial interpretations of the origin of African enslavement than a systematic, theoretical study of slavery in the Americas. Genovese, writing from a "Marxist" perspective, takes the development and formation of social classes as of decisive significance in the linking of New World slavery with the history of Western Europe and Africa⁽²⁾. "Class", however, was not to be conceived in strict economic terms, but in its ideological, psychological and cultural aspects⁽³⁾. However, in his depiction of the European antecedents to slavery, Genovese sided with those historians and economists who argue that the mercantile phase of capitalist development in Europe was a crucial moment in the colonisation of the New World⁽⁴⁾. Mercantilism constituted both an economic philosophy and policies geared towards the accumulation of wealth - initially precious metals - and its concentration within the borders of the nation-state. It was a theory of foreign trade coeval with the evolution and consolidation of national markets in 15th century Europe. However, it virtually dominated economic thought and policy up to the 18th century expressed an obsessional concern with the balance of merchandise trade⁽⁵⁾. Thus the European state powers dealt with the planters on mercantilist terms seeking

- 1) Eugene Genovese, "Materialism and Idealism in the History of Negro Slavery in the Americas" in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 241.
- 2) Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made* (Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London 1970) p. VIII.
- 3) *ibid.* p. 19.
- 4) *ibid.* pp. 25-26. See also B.J. Stein and B.A. Stein, *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America* (OUP London 1970) Ch. 1. D. Brion Davis *op. cit.* pp. 127-128. Eric Williams, *British Historians and the West Indies* (Andre Deutsch, London 1968) Ch. 1.
- 5) For an incisive analysis of mercantilism see Harry G. Johnson, *On Economics and Society* (The University of Chicago Press 1975) Ch. 18.

to monopolise both the products and the buying power of the colonies⁽¹⁾.

Genovese did not develop the theme of the role of merchant's capital in the slave trade and its interaction with slave production in the Americas. He focussed instead on the "paradoxical" situation of a developed Europe with an economy based on free labour producing a backward and irrational form of labour exploitation in other regions of the world. American slavery was an enigmatic reimposition of an outmoded form of economic organisation. It was a case of advanced Western European economies generating social retrogression and the recall of older modes of production. Genovese saw, however, an historical parallel in the so-called second serfdom in 16th and 17th century Eastern Europe when a massive demand for agricultural staples in the West generated more intense forms of labour exploitation: "The expansion of the Western European Economy encouraged social retrogression and the reinstitution of older modes of production in both Eastern Europe and parts of the New World"⁽²⁾. This designation of slavery as an archaic mode of production suggests a pandering to a unilineal notion of historical change which no doubt reflects the unsettled status of the concept mode of production. Why is slavery in the Americas a mode of production? Why is it an anachronism if, its persistence throughout the middle-ages and the beginning of the modern period is a well-documented observation⁽³⁾.

A major weakness in Genovese's approach is a failure to specify whether Negro slavery was a function, effect, or necessary consequence of class formation in Europe. The first would see modern slavery, once arisen, as providing certain economic stimuli to the development of capitalism in Western European development. The second is self-explanatory, and the

- 1) Sir Matthew Decker put the matter bluntly: "There must be a large importation of Negroes to cause these growths in our plantations and of our cloathing accordingly ... may not this be said to be a transplanting of men for our benefit by taking them from one climate where by its heat they want no cloathing, and carrying them to another where they cannot live without it nor be supplied by any other but ourselves." Sir Matthew Decker, *Essays on the Causes of the Decline of Foreign Trade* (London 1757) p. 178.
- 2) Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, op. cit. pp. 22-23.
- 3) See Brion Davis, op. cit. Part 1.

third would offer theoretical statements about European capitalism necessarily producing "older" modes of production in other regions. It is this lack of conceptual rigour in Genovese which gives his "Marxist" analysis the moral tone which he evidently sought to avoid. Thus he asserts that slavery in the Americas had "a racial basis". This popular assertion is, of course, profoundly ambiguous. It can mean that Africans were enslaved, which is inaccurate. For, more precisely, some tribally organised agricultural labourers were enslaved. The designation "Africans" obscures the different political, economic and social background of the slaves. It also suggests that if these Africans had been of another "race", then they might not have been enslaved, which ignores the role of African chiefs and merchants in the slave trade. Finally, it implies the now untenable racially-motivated enslavement.

The limitations in Genovese's approach were unsparingly exploited by Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst who charged him with having no concept of a mode of production or of slave production⁽¹⁾. Genovese's silences on the type of economic organisation within which the formation of classes unfold reflect the idealism-humanism within which the social relations of slavery are reduced to the consciousness of experiencing subjects. Thus Genovese does not clarify the relationship between the origin of slavery and capitalism. Their's is a valid criticism. For the promise to link the use of slavery with the capitalist world market is not fulfilled in Genovese's chronological narrative of certain economic and political events in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. Their alternative to Genovese's historicism is then, the investigation of the origin of African enslavement in terms of the following conjunctural forces:

- 1) the possibility of a steady supply of relatively cheap slave labour from an already existing African

1) Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *Pre-capitalist Modes of Production* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1975) pp. 148-156.

slave trade⁽¹⁾,

- 2) the penetration of European merchant's capital into that trade, and
- 3) the limited demographic possibility of a mass conversion of Europeans, or American Indians into slaves.

Slave plantations are to be seen then as part of the development of the international division of labour which sustained capital accumulation in Europe and a capitalist world market dominated by merchant's and later industrial capital.

Immanuel Wallerstein has indicated that this division of labour can be ethnically depicted as comprising: "a slave class of African origins located in the Western Hemisphere, a "serf" class divided into two segments: a major one in eastern Europe and a smaller one of American Indians in the Western Hemisphere. The peasants of western and southern Europe were for the most part "tenants". The wage workers were almost all west Europeans. The yeoman farmers were drawn largely even more narrowly principally from northwest Europe"⁽²⁾. This ethnic depiction has to be justified or at least admitted to be a concession to a peculiar contemporary concern with race and ethnicity. For, it may be said that the salient feature of the 17th century world economy was the mode and rate of labour exploitation in particular regions as determined by the balance of class forces therein, not the racial composition of the classes involved.

The convergence within the viewpoints of Eric Williams, Hindess and Hirst, and Wallerstein derives largely from their appropriation of Marx's analysis of the creation of a capitalist world economy from the 16th century

- 1) On this point see Basil Davidson, "Slaves or Captives? Some notes on Fantasy and Fact" in Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson and Daniel M. Fox (eds.) *Key issues in the Afro-American Experience* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York 1971) Vol. 1. Davidson's question why did Africans sell Africans is, however, misleading in so far as it is an expression of surprise. Did the inhabitants of the slave trading regions see themselves as "Africans"?
- 2) Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the origin of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Academic Press, New York 1974) p. 82.

and the role of merchant's capital within this process. Marx situated merchant's capital not merely within the emergence of national markets or Empires but the primitive accumulative phase of the development of capitalist commodity production with a "world embracing commerce and a world embracing market"⁽¹⁾. Commerce, the transformation of products into commodities by buying cheap and selling dear⁽²⁾ are indispensable moments in capital formation: "In order that capital may arise and take control of production, a definite stage in the development of trade is assumed"⁽³⁾. In promoting world trade, merchant's capital promoted both the slave trade⁽⁴⁾ and slave production in the Americas⁽⁵⁾. Thus it was not the mere entrance of merchant's capital into the overland African slave trade which developed slavery in the Americas. Merchant's capital contributed to and co-existed with productive capital exploiting slave labour in the Americas. Hence the Dutch merchants who energetically expanded the slave trade and slavery⁽⁶⁾ in the 17th century guaranteed their

- 1) Karl Marx, *Capital* (Laurence and Wishart, London 1972) Vol. III Ch. XX. Merchant's capital is that monetary flow which is "penned within the sphere of circulation" as a mediation between spheres of production. It is an "agent of productive capital". p. 327.
- 2) The movement of merchant's capital is M-C-M. His profit is a profit upon alienation without equivalent values being exchanged. "To buy cheap in order to sell dear is the rule of trade" Karl Marx, *ibid.* p. 329.
- 3) Karl Marx, *Capital* (Laurence and Wishart, London 1972) Vol. II, p. 33.
- 4) Merchant's capital is amoral. Its commercialising zeal knows no bonds. Marx describes its lack of morality: "Merchant's capital, when it holds a position of dominance stands everywhere for a system of robbery, so that its development among the trading nations of old and modern times is always connected with plundering, piracy, kidnapping slaves and colonial conquest ..." Vol. III p. 331.
- 5) "The purchase and sale of slaves is formally also a purchase and sale of commodities. But money cannot perform this function without the existence of slavery. If slavery exists, then money can be invested in the purchase of slaves. On the other hand, the mere possession of money cannot make slavery possible." Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. II, p. 32.
- 6) Cf. P.D. Curtin "The Slave Trade and the Atlantic Basin in Nathan I. Huggins et al. (eds.) op. cit. p. 82. For a general history of Dutch merchant's capital predominance, see C.R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire: 1600-1800* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1965).

own displacement by hastening the rise of industrial capital⁽¹⁾ from the cauldron of the Triangular Trade⁽²⁾.

Within these commercial exchanges it could be observed that the economic dramatis personae possessed different skin colours. But this is a fact of no significance because of its non-correspondence with class situations. The merchants were both European and African. If the Europeans held the initiative in the blossoming of slavery, it is because they were representatives of the economic form M-C-M¹. Their operations began and ended with money actively mediating between the system of slave production in the Americas and the generation of labour reserves in Africa's "subsistence economies". African traders and merchants of the Coastal Regions expressed a different economic form, C-M-C. They began with an animate commodity, the sale of which enabled them to expand their consumption of other commodities. Inland African traders by-passed the monetary mediation altogether with bare commodity - commodity exchanges⁽³⁾, since these societies were small-scale systems based upon redistributive Iron Age agriculture⁽⁴⁾.

- 1) Observing England's industrial and commercial dominance in the 18th century, Marx wrote: "Commercial supremacy itself is now linked with the prevalence to a greater or lesser degree of conditions for a large industry. Compare, for instance, England and Holland. The history of the decline of Holland as the ruling trading nation is the history of the subordination of merchant's capital to industrial capital. Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. III, op. cit. p. 333. See also D. Brion Davis op. cit. pp. 9-10.
- 2) Cf. Eric Williams, op. cit. where what Marx says above about the decline of Holland as the ruling trading nation. Williams suggests as the cause of the abolition of slavery. See also R. Sheridan "The Plantation Revolution and the Industrial Revolution" *Caribbean Studies* 9 (3) 1969.
- 3) Walter Rodney has observed: "On the whole West African coast, slaves and other items of export were purchased by an assortment of trade goods, ranging from firearms to glass beads. Cited in Marlon Kilson "West African Society and the Atlantic Slave Trade 1441-1865" in Nathan I. Huggins et al. (eds.) op. cit. p. 45. But no distinction is made here between (monetary) purchase and (goods) exchange and thus a significant theoretical relation is obscured.
- 4) Cf. Marlon Kilson, "West African Society and the Atlantic Slave Trade 1441-1865" in Nathan I. Huggins et al. (eds.) op. cit. p. 41.

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The origin of the enslavement of African labourers cannot, therefore, be explained in terms of the racial presuppositions and attitudes of Europeans. Its interpretation as such is traceable to: a general failure to analyse the economic structure of European and African societies at the time of their confrontation, the theoretical lacunae surrounding slavery and the idealist tendency to invoke "race" when analysing modern slavery. Indeed, the term "negro slavery" mirrors a certain theoretical deficiency, an illegitimate conflation of slavery as a mode of labour exploitation with the racial composition and perhaps consciousness of the classes involved. For the conditions within a mode of production, or labour exploitation, are not given in the consciousness of subjects, in group perception and evaluation. Rather, these must be seen as secondary sociological processes.

The enslavement of African labourers was part of an emergent global system of production whose dynamism emanated from Western Europe's accumulative compulsions⁽¹⁾. Winthrop Jordan's idealist orientation led him astray into the Elizabethan mind and the explanatory value of his dissertation is thus marginal. From Marx and Eric Williams, we derive some understanding of the role of merchant's capital and the Caribbean political economic setting. It would remain but to examine the African economy and society in order to discover why Africa's contribution to the development of world capitalism was for three centuries mainly restricted to human commodities⁽²⁾.

One obvious reason is the then comparatively low level of development of the productive forces, or division of labour. This resulted in not only a low degree of labour productivity and restricted buying power but the political and territorial fragmentation consistent with the absence of large-scale concentration of economic production. A second set of consequences which

- 1) Cf. Karl Marx. "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation". *Capital*, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 751.
- 2) See Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. (Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, London 1972). Nathan I. Huggins et al. (eds.) op. cit.

fostered African supplies is the presence of a high level of disguised rural unemployment and the comparative underdevelopment of an African manufacturing industry. These conditions, however, were not included in P. D. Curtin's two models of the African suppliers' role in the slave trade⁽¹⁾. Curtin's "supply models" are political, and economic, referring respectively to inter-tribal war and the profit motive of African chiefs and middle-men, as incentives to the capture and sale of human cargo. In Curtin's view: "... the total supply from Africa was not only regular but followed a pattern of apparent response to rising prices and a high elasticity. But ... the individual coastal regions appear to supply slaves in response to their own patterns of political affairs, anarchy, civil and international war"⁽²⁾. This formulation reflects an unfortunate preference for political conditions (modes of recruitment) over the economic structure - a lapse not unrelated to Curtin's neglect of the literature on "subsistence economies"⁽³⁾.

Rather than highlight the well-researched theme of the European 'demand' for slaves, some "Africanists" correctly concern themselves with the pre-penetration economic organisation of African societies⁽⁴⁾. Some of

- 1) P. D. Curtin, 'The Atlantic Slave Trade 1600-1800 in J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds.) *History of West Africa*, Vol. 1 (Longman, London 1971).
- 2) P. D. Curtin, *Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade*, in S. L. Engerman and Eugene Genovese op. cit. p. 114. See also *ibid* pp. 55-56 and 497-498.
- 3) See Paul Bohannon and George Dalton (eds.) *Markets in Africa* (North-western University Press, 1968).
- 4) See K. Annouka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1956). Basil Davidson, *Black Mother: Africa, the Years of Trial*. (Gollancz London 1961). C. W. Newbury, *The Western Slave Coast and its Rulers*. (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1961) Ch. 1 and 2. J. D. Page, *A History of West Africa* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1969) Ch. 6. Walter Rodney, op. cit. Ch. 4. Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810* (McMillan, London 1975) pp. 16-24 and Ch. 4.

these investigations marginally acknowledge that the class structure is a crucial 'supply' condition of slave trading⁽¹⁾.

These deductions are obscured within the perspective which ignores the maritime slave trade and thus conflates the different statuses of the arriving Africans into "Negro slavery". Thus Louis Ruchames' corrective is timely: "The relationship between the English slave trade and the captured African slave had all the essential elements of a later American slavery"⁽²⁾. This observation, however, has to be considered in conjunction with U.B. Philips' "The first comers were slaves in the hands of their maritime sellers but they were not fully slaves in the hands of the Virginian buyers"⁽³⁾. African labourers rather than British became servants for life, then, because they were already part of the international maritime slave trade. Their labour power was never their property to be disposed of under contractual or market conditions.

This status as unfree labourers militated against their eventual ownership of land as against that of the indentured servant. This crucial observation introduces a further argument. For the question why weren't "whites" enslaved can now be displaced. The question to be posed is: why at a certain moment arriving Africans were not made indentured servants. This was ruled out not only because they were "slaves in the hands of their maritime buyers", indeed, up to that moment they can be conceived as war

- 1) See Christopher Fyfe "The Impact of the Slave Trade on West Africa" in Centre of African Studies, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade from West Africa*. op. cit. p. 85. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, op. cit.
- 2) Louis Ruchames (ed.) *Racial Thought in America: From the Puritans to Abraham Lincoln* (The University of Massachusetts Press, Massachusetts 1969), p. 221.
- 3) U.B. Philips, *American Negro Slavery* (Louisiana State University Press, Louisiana 1969) p. 75.

prisoners⁽¹⁾, but also because indentured labour was inimical to profits. U. B. Philips brings out this relationship: "... no sooner was its service over than it set up for itself, often in tobacco production, to compete with its former employers and depress the price of produce. If the plantation system were to be perpetuated an entirely different labour supply must be had⁽²⁾. The fact that the (white) indentured service ceased *pari passu* with the development of slavery⁽³⁾ should therefore be taken as evidence of the absence of feelings of racial brotherhood on the part of the planters. What they needed was a class of labourers whose political condition made it possible to preclude their having access to the means of production, *durante vita*. To interpret their decision racially would therefore constitute a massive oversimplification of "the formation of a mode of labour exploitation"⁽⁴⁾.

This oversimplification, however, derives from the assumption within the question: why were the African labourers enslaved? There is an assumption of a peculiarity about slave labour. Scholars appear puzzled. How come this recrudescence of slavery in the post-enlightenment period of Western culture and emergent industrial civilisation? From the standpoint of this question, slavery is a Western Dilemma. This humanist approach has to focus on subjects the white mind or the 'negroidness' of the Negro. But is

- 1) Cf. Henry Brailsford "After the Battle of Worcester, 1,500 Scottish prisoners were sold to Guinea merchants and set to work in the mines of Africa". *The Levellers and the English Revolution* (Cresset Press, London 1961) pp. 333-334.
- 2) U. B. Philips *op. cit.* p. 74. See also Stanley Elkins for mention of a serious drop in tobacco prices in the 1660's *op. cit.* pp. 44-45. Kenneth Stamp writes confidently "The use of slaves in southern agriculture was a deliberate choice among several alternatives made by men who sought greater returns than they could obtain from their own labour alone, and who found other types of labour more expensive". *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante Bellum South*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1956) p. 5. See also T. J. Wertenbaker, *The First Americans 1607-1690*, (MacMillan, New York 1927), p. 47.
- 3) Cf. T. J. Wertenbecker, *The First Americans 1607-1690* (Macmillan, New York 1927) p. 25. Wertenbecker correctly discusses slave labour in terms of the dissolution of the indentured labour system.
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slave labour any less moral than serfdom or wage labour? Consider the following statement: "An office was set up in Manchester, to which lists were sent of those workpeople in the agricultural districts wanting employment, and their names were registered in books. The manufacturers attended at these offices and selected such persons as they chose; when they had selected such persons as their 'wants required', they gave instructions to have them forwarded to Manchester, and they were sent, ticketed like bales of goods, by canals or with carriers, others tramping on the wad, and many of them were found on the way lost and half-starved. This system has grown up into a regular trade. This House will hardly believe it, but tell them that this traffic in human flesh was as well kept up, they were in effect as regularly sold to these (Manchester) manufacturers as slaves are sold to the cotton-grower in the United States ... "(1)

The importation of slave labour from Africa should be of no greater theoretical significance than labour movements in 19th century England⁽²⁾. It may have greater political significance in that the conditions of slave labour preclude the slaves transforming the relations of production⁽³⁾. Our conception of slave labour possibly demonstrates why the theoretical significance cannot be greater.

Slave labour is an effect of a relationship between agents where the extracting of surplus value from the producers is not subject to negotiation, i. e., it is set by neither custom, nor contract. The legal status of slavery merely re-affirms the social relation in which the producer as a possession does not negotiate with his owner as to the rate of exploitation. Slave labour is at the polar end of a continuum of labour exploitation comprising, debt bondage, clientage, corvee, serfdom ... wage labour. This continuum is based on the capacity of an exploited class to negotiate over the boundaries of its exploitation. In other words, the power of the non-owners of the means of production to determine the mode of labour exploitation to which they will be subjected is a

- 1) Ferrand's Speech in the House of Commons, 27th April, 1843; cited in Karl Marx Capital Vol. I, op. cit. p. 267.
- 2) As Marx put it: "For slave trade read labour-market, for Kentucky and Virginia, Ireland and the agricultural districts of England, Scotland and Wales, for Africa, Germany". *ibid.*
- 3) See Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst for a summary of failed slave insurrections, op. cit. pp. 120-123.

consequence of their solidarity and organisation⁽¹⁾. Thus, when particular labourers are subjected to this mode of labour exploitation its investigation cannot begin at the level of their regional or biological characteristics, but with the balance of political forces within social formations.

- 1) The solidarity and organisation must not be interpreted as independent of the development of the productive forces. See Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971), pp. 40-41.

CHAPTER IV

THE HISTORICAL EXPLANATION OF "RACE RELATIONS"

Up to the early 1970's a considerable body of literature was produced on the different patterns of "race relations" which emerge in North and South America after the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century⁽¹⁾. The consensus was that the Negro fared differently in the cultural, stratification and economic systems of these continents and that contemporary "race relations" in North America can be interpreted in terms of its unyielding chattelisation of the Negro. The underlying argument is that the different pattern of "race relations" in the American hemispheres reflect structurally different slave systems which are themselves explicable in terms of divergent legal and moral traditions.

Frank Tannenbaum most succinctly elucidated the proposition of a genetic continuity between the incomplete citizenship of "blacks" today

- 1) The literature on this subject is immense. The best bibliographic reference known to this writer is Magnus Morner, "The History of Race Relations in Latin America: Some Comments on the State of Research" in Laura Foner and Eugene D. Genovese (eds.), *op. cit.* Morner states the problem in this way: "Granting that the plantation provided the principle framework for slavery in the New World, another major problem arises. Why have Negro-White relations taken such a different course in Anglo and Latin America (e.g. Brazil), if the point of departure were the same? Were the differences already present during the time of slavery despite the common plantation framework? Or are they mainly a result of post-abolition conditions?" The major works of representatives of the two schools of thought on these issues are:
- Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (Random House, New York 1946).
 Stanley Elkins, *op. cit.*
 Marvin Harris, *Patterns of Race in the Americas* (Walker & Co., N. Y. 1964).
 Sidney Mintz, "Slavery and Emergent Capitalism" in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese, *op. cit.* pp. 22-37.
 David Brion Davis, *op. cit.*
 Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, *op. cit.*
 Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black nor White*. (MacMillan, N. Y. 1971).
 Harmannus Hoetink, *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas: Comparative Notes on the Nature and Nexus*. (Harper & Row Publishers, N. Y. 1973).

and the harshness of North American slavery: "The point of course is that in Latin America the slave had legal and moral standing. He was known as a human being by State and Church. In the British West Indies and in the Southern States of the United States, he was a chattel until the day of emancipation. And it was difficult if not impossible to redefine overnight what was chattel yesterday into a full-blown citizen today"⁽¹⁾. This emphasis on moral and legal traditions and assertions of structurally different slave systems conjoin the writings of Gilberto Freyre, Frank Tannenbaum and Stanley Elkins, and it is on this basis that we shall treat them separately from their foremost critics.

Freyre did not offer a sustained comparison of North American and Iberian slavery but his works contain sweeping commentaries on, and analysis of, both Portugal's colonisation of Brazil and the place of the slaves' descendants in Brazilian society⁽²⁾. As regards the former, his historiography stressed the unfolding of values in the "integration of autochthonous races and cultures different from the European culture"⁽³⁾. For Freyre, the key to the understanding of Brazil's unique racial history lies in the delineation of the interaction of cultures in an emerging Luso-Tropical civilisation. However, he did not use sociological concepts to examine these historical processes but rather, historic facts to fit into an interpretative scheme which emphasised cultural motivations. Freyre's works, then, are studies in social history guided by a profound concern with cultural fusion and racial hybridism. These, he felt were fostered by the absence of ethnocentrism among the Portuguese as well as their ultra-liberal sexuality. His narrative of the Portuguese in Brazil, their ambitions, cosmology and appetites, combines philosophy of history, serious anthropological insights, journalistic analysis, anecdotes and mundane biographical sketches.

In Freyre's view, Portuguese and Africans who came to Brazil,

- 1) Frank Tannenbaum, "Race Relations in Caribbean Society" in Vera Rubin (ed.), *op. cit.* p. 66.
- 2) See Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves* (Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y. 1964).
- 3) Gilberto Freyre, *The Portuguese and the Tropics*, (Lisbon 1961) p. 275.

albeit in different historical roles, became the Brazilians from Portugal and Africa over a period of time harmoniously integrated into a Luso-tropical society. Freyre was particularly concerned to trace Brazil's "race relations" to easy-going patriarchal relationship between the masters and the slaves, particularly those between master and female slaves⁽¹⁾. We are told that Portuguese slavery was of a benign, patronising quality. Slaves were made to feel participants in the microcosm of the Luso-tropical civilisation - the Big House⁽²⁾. A manorial rather than an industrial slavery prevailed adopted largely from the Moors and resulting in a *Gerneinschaft* rather than a *Gesellschaft* on the plantations. This was because the Portuguese were unique among Europeans in not being tainted with colour prejudice. This facilitated easy contact between Portuguese and Africans and this pervasive miscegenation which was the historic root of Brazil's "racial paradise". For the result was a sociological inter-marriage of cultures and the assimilation and integration of the African. This is where Freyre's works set the tone and background for the investigating of slavery and its underlying patterns in the study of contemporary "race relations". He himself, however, refrained from any systematic comparative enquiry into slave systems and "race relations" in the Iberian and Anglo-Saxon worlds. For this, we must turn to Frank Tannenbaum's "Slave and Citizen".

Tannenbaum felt that the differences in "race relations" in Brazil as depicted by Freyre, and North America, were best explained by way of an analysis of slavery. But these differences were ultimately traceable not just to slavery but to the ethos of the slave systems. Thus he also set out to treat slavery as a moral phenomenon, to examine its ethical underpinnings which made it more than just an economic, or even a legal institution: "For if one thing stands out clearly from the study of slavery, it is that the definition of man as a moral being proved the most important influence both in the treatment of the slave and in the final abolition of slavery"⁽³⁾. The

- 1) See Gilberto Freyre, *The Mansions and the Shanties: The Making of Modern Brazil* (Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y. 1963) Ch. XII.
- 2) Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, op. cit. pp. 3-11.
- 3) Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, op. cit. p. VII.

morality of the slave system was embodied above all in religious tenets. Thus whether abolition was peaceable or turbulent depended on the strength of the Christian doctrine of human equality which Tannenbaum saw reflected in legal norms and political culture and impinging on the treatment of the slave. The universalistic spiritual tenets of Catholicism endowed the slave in Latin America with a moral personality, while, in Protestant North America and the British West Indies he was denied the privileges of Christianity. As evidence of the moral force of Catholicism, he cited: "The slave trade had been condemned by Pius II on October 7th, 1462, by Paul III on May 29th, 1537, by Urban VIII on April 2nd, 1639, by Benedict XIV on December 20th, 1741, and finally by Gregory XVI on December 3rd, 1839"⁽¹⁾. These, and other facts, prove, in Tannenbaum's opinion, that the Catholic Church, however ineffectively, was hostile to slavery from the start.

One other development out of Tannenbaum's stress on the role of ideas in social action is the positing of a causal connection between the nature of slave systems, the mode of their dissolution and belief in the spiritual equality of men. For him, the cultural content of a social system has a crucial influence on actors' behaviour and a determining function as regards the historical transformation of that system. This approach raises a number of problems which we confronted in an earlier chapter. Let us here observe how Tannenbaum uses it to facilitate a hemispheric comparison of the slave systems, "race relations" and the socio-political dynamics of the transition from slavery to freedom.

The author constructed a three-fold classification of New World slavery based on the existence of an effective slave tradition, slave laws and religious institutions concerned with the Negro. All three elements were allegedly present in the Iberian prototype and conspicuously, crucially absent in the British, American, Dutch and Danish slave systems. The last system, French slavery, lacked both an effective slave tradition and Slave Laws. Within this three-fold classification, a sub-classification was made based on a criterion of severity which, in descending intensity, defined the

1) Ibid. p. 62.

Dutch, the French and Portuguese slave systems. But Tannenbaum did not limit himself to comparisons of the degree of leniency or severity of New World slavery. Equally important for him were the theological and legal impediments to manumission, the physical treatment of slaves, the practices relating to marriages and family rights, the position of slaves relative to criminal law and punishment and redress against masters.

In Tannenbaum's view, the Northern European Protestants who settled in North America lacked a tradition or concept of slavery and for this reason imposed the most extreme form of slave labour - chattelisation. The Iberian settlers on the other hand saw their slaves as moral beings and used their slave law, specifically, the *Las Siete Partidas* to facilitate the antithesis of slavery - manumission. Thus for all its cruelty, abuse, hardship and inhumanity, the atmosphere in Brazil and in Spanish America made for mobility and ultimately, freedom: "In Brazil and Spanish America the law, the Church and custom put few impediments in the way of vertical mobility of race and class and in some measure favoured it. In the British, French and United States slave systems the law attempted to fix the pattern and stratify social classes and racial groups"⁽¹⁾. In the Iberian system, there was an institutional facilitating of freedom; in the United States, the evidence was overwhelming that the manumission of slaves was balked by a multiplicity of sanctions. The whole weight of the judiciary was utilised to ensure the permanent enslavement of Negroes and totally absent were the intermediary gradations of freedom based on miscegenation which graced the Iberian system⁽²⁾. The crucial distinction was that North American law enshrined in social and political practices, canonised the notion that the Negro is intrinsically a slave in contradistinction to the tacit Iberian assertion that, the Negro was made a slave. One made slavery immanently, permanently connotative of "Negro"; the other stressed the incidental nature of Negro slavery.

Freedom, Tannenbaum asserted, is the negation of slavery and

1) *ibid.* 1. 127.

2) *ibid.*

attitudes towards the former as well as the possibilities of its realisation should be the crucial category in a comparison of slave systems. These possibilities are defined by the historical setting as a whole but the *Las Siete Partidas* performed a unique function in New World slavery, constituting the final differentia specifica between the British, American and Iberian slave systems. This set of slave laws deriving both from Napoleon's Code Noire and Roman Slave Law made for the following ameliorations in Iberian as compared to Anglo-Saxon slavery:

- 1) partial wage labouring in cities by slaves,
- 2) the adoption of Catholicism by escaped slaves,
- 3) ownership of property by slaves,
- 4) a clear delineation of the slave's obligations,
- 5) the maintenance of ties of kinship among slaves, and
- 6) recognition of the legal rights of the slave against his master.

These developments endowed the Iberian slave with a moral personality and foreshadowed the nature of "race relations" in the post-emancipation period in that large numbers of coloured freedmen were created and integrated into Brazilian society over a period of time. North American slavery, on the other hand, dammed up the possibilities of freedom and maintained a rigid structure of complete enslavement. In consequence, "race relations" in the post-emancipation period remain pregnant with bitterness and violence⁽¹⁾. Moreover, the emancipated Negro in North America lacks the moral personality and the experience to deal with his new-found freedom⁽²⁾. The "race problem", then, was essentially one of the corrosive demoralisation of the Negro by North American slavery to the extent that what was a "thing" could not be suddenly legalised into a citizen⁽³⁾.

The publication of Stanley Elkins' doctoral dissertation in 1959 constituted a challenging continuation of the Freyre-Tannenbaum approach

1) *ibid.* p. 110.

2) *ibid.* p. 111.

3) *ibid.* p. 115.

to New World slavery. Elkins' singular contribution was a development of Tannenbaum's scattered references to the impact of slavery on the Negro's personality. But going further than Tannenbaum on slavery itself, he contended that the divergencies between American and Iberian slavery were so profound that one was dealing with two different species⁽¹⁾. In the American system, the line between slave and free was rigidly drawn both in law and custom, resulting in a total rightlessness of the slave. However, Elkins focused on marginally different legal elements from Tannenbaum. He examined the slave's status in North America within the framework of four major legal categories; term of servitude, marriage and the family, policy and disciplinary powers over the slave, and property and other civil rights. These he contended showed a complete subordination. Only in North America was the slave condemned to eternal servitude, denied the right of religiously sanctioned conjugal relationships, subjected to a system of total power, and incapable of entering into contractual relationships. Slavery in North America was a "closed system" and its impact on the slaves' personalities was profoundly dehumanising.

Before we turn to Elkins' samboification thesis, let us summarise the reasons he presented for the 'closed nature' of North American slavery. It was not an imported or transferred slavery, rather it was "fashioned on the spot" and necessarily reflected the exigencies of the individualistic, laissez-faire capitalism of early American colonisation. The rigidity of American slavery as opposed to the fluid, Iberian structure was explicable in terms of the difference between the "liberal Protestant, secularised, capitalist culture", and "... the conservative paternalistic, Catholic, quasi-mediaeval culture of Spain and Portugal and the then New World colonies"⁽²⁾, where there was a fine tension and balance, an interplay of interests among the institutions of colonial societies. This militated against the exercise of total power by the planter class. North American slavery, on the other hand, had no such "checks and balances" and therein lies the origin of "Sambo".

1) Stanley Elkins, *op. cit.* p. 58.

2) *Ibid.* p. 32.

According to Prof. Elkins: "Sambo, the typical plantation slave, was docile but irresponsible, loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing; his behaviour was full of infantile silliness and his tasks inflated with childish exaggeration. His relationship with his master was one of utter dependence and childlike attachment: it was indeed this childlike quality that was the very key to his being"⁽¹⁾. "Sambo", and Elkins was emphatic, was not a biologically-based characterisation of the slave's personality. Africans, in his view, were not racially only culturally inferior to Europeans. It was the apologetic scribes of the plantocracy and biased historians who had wrongfully traced "Sambo" to the inferior African culture. For "... no true picture ... of African culture," wrote Elkins, "seems to throw any light at all on the origins of what would emerge, in American plantation society, as the stereo-typed 'Sambo' personality"⁽²⁾. "Sambo" was rather the product of the African's attempt to adapt to a system of total power, bereft of his traditional cultural apparatus which might have amortised "the final shock".

This passage contains Elkins' thesis in a nutshell: "An examination of American slavery, checked at certain critical points against a very different slave system, that of Latin America, reveals that a major key to many of the contrasts between them was an institutional key. The presence or absence of other powerful institutions in society made an immense difference in the character of slavery itself. In Latin America, the very tension and balance among three kinds of organisational concerns - church, crown and plantation agriculture - prevented slavery from being carried by the planting class to its ultimate logic. For the slave, in terms of the space, allowed for the development of men and women as moral beings, the result was an "open system" a system of contact with free society through which ultimate absorption into society could and did occur with great frequency. The rights of personality implicit in the Church's most venerable assumptions on the nature of the human soul were thus in a vital sense conserved, whereas to a staggering extent the very opposite was true in North American Slavery

1) *ibid.* p. 82.

2) *ibid.* p. 97.

which operated as a "closed system"⁽¹⁾. Negro slaves in North American society, had been infantilised far beyond that which could be interpreted as accommodation or feigned adaptation and, moreover, this phenomenon was on a scale only parallel with the personality deformation among Jews in Nazi concentration camps where too "instances of widespread infantilisation were observed". To forestall criticisms that his choice of concentration camps as a comparable institution to slavery was overdrawn, Elkins explicitly rejected an inference that the plantation was even like a concentration camp. It was more a case of the latter being "a highly perverted slave system and a perverted patriarchy"⁽²⁾.

Sambo, in Elkins' view, was not a feigned accommodation. Even so, he argued, sustained feigning becomes a genuine role-performance unless the role-player has experiences which enable him to imagine an alternative existence. The African had suffered five shocks - capture, transport, sale, the Middle Passage and plantation slavery - which had ruthlessly sapped his psychological durability and caused a recourse to a childlike posture⁽³⁾. Sambofication was thus a definite theoretical possibility.

However much the sambofication thesis may not have been conceived as an analytical category in "race relations", some writers have utilised it as such⁽⁴⁾. D. P. Moynihan's family-instability thesis contains implicit and explicit reference to sambofication and he approvingly cites Nathan Glazer and T. H. Pettigrew's utilisation of Elkins' thesis⁽⁵⁾. Suffice to say

1) *ibid.* p. 81.

2) *ibid.* p. 104.

3) *ibid.* pp. 98-101.

4) See the following: William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs, *Black Rage* (Basic Books, N. Y. 1968). Charles Siberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (Random House, N. Y. 1964). Laura Foner & Eugene Genovese felt "Elkins focused on the impact of slavery on the blacks, boldly introduced psychological models into historical analysis, and by implication related the slave background to a variety of current problems". *op. cit.* p. 1.

5) See Lee Rainwater and William Yancey (eds.), *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (M. I. T. Press, Cambridge Mass. 1967) pp. 61-62.

here that, by innuendo, the "sambofication thesis" assumes responsibility for the inability of blacks to adjust to, and succeed in, the competitive complex of modern American capitalism. Obversely, as Tannenbaum suggested, the reluctance of "whites" to accord "blacks" full citizenship may be in recognition of their unpreparedness⁽¹⁾. Moreover, by implication, if it is the "master" who organises the initiation into adulthood, "black" politics should be orientated towards influencing and appealing to "whites".

Prof. Elkins' historiography has been challenged at almost every major point, and especially the notion of "Sambo"⁽²⁾. Critics attack his assumption of a closed, homogenous, North American slave system as an over-generalisation, since North American slavery was spatio-temporally differentiated. Against Elkins, Prof. Genovese argued that all the slave regimes in the Americas were paternalistic and that the Old South was a "historically unique kind of paternalistic society"⁽³⁾. The labour system was of a "non-bourgeois" character so that the slaves escaped the psychic impairment consistent with a brutally profit-orientated economy. Genovese's accounts of the slaves lives demonstrate that they were not as culturally denuded or cowed as Elkins portrayed. All forms of exploitation will generate psychological resistance but the slave's personality was much more complex and differentiated than Elkins allowed⁽⁴⁾. Earl Thorpe saw Elkins' concentration camp analogy as misleading in that the identification with oppressive authority was not complete, but partial and sporadic⁽⁵⁾. Finally, Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte advised that we treat Elkins' "Sambo" as a hypothetical construct only, since Elkins did not document the empirical existence of this stereotype⁽⁶⁾.

- 1) Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, op. cit. p. 111.
- 2) See A. J. Lane, (ed.), *The Debate over Slavery: Stanley Elkins and his Critics*. (University of Illinois Press, London 1971).
- 3) Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: *The World the Slaves Made* (Panther Books, New York 1974) p. 5.
- 4) Eugene Genovese, *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History* (Random House, New York, 1971) pp. 73-102.
- 5) E. F. Thorpe in Ann J. Lane (ed.) op. cit. pp. 23-42.
- 6) R. S. Bryce-Laporte in Ann J. Lane (ed.) op. cit. pp. 269-292.

It is also necessary to mention the differences in emphasis between Tannenbaum and Freyre and Elkins. For Tannenbaum offered so many qualifications of his major conclusions that he stands apart from Elkins and Freyre. While he stressed the interplay of religious and legal traditions, and plantation economics, Elkins and Freyre emphasised the role of the pre-bourgeois, Iberian culture. The following quote from Freyre, strikingly similar to Elkins' argumentation, proves their intellectual affinity: "The Portuguese who as a people still predominantly pre-bourgeois and pre-industrial in their attitudes, and who, after the 16th century especially, became settlers in non-European areas, adopted in such areas, when they found them in great plantations of sugar cane, a type of slavery also predominantly pre-bourgeois, and pre-industrial in its characteristics and in striking contrast with the predominantly industrial and bourgeois type of slavery which would be always adopted by other Europeans in those same areas"⁽¹⁾. Secondly, however much Tannenbaum gave prominence to slave laws, he did not share Elkins' juristic obsession. "The slave system", Tannenbaum admitted, "was broader in its impact than might be discerned from a reading of the slave laws"⁽²⁾, and while both Elkins and Freyre assumed an absence of miscegenation in North America, Tannenbaum felt that miscegenation was widespread in both systems, "but a source of pride" among Brazilians⁽³⁾. Furthermore, for Tannenbaum, "Important as the differences between Brazil and the U. S. were, the similarities were undoubtedly greater"⁽⁴⁾. Elkins, on the other hand, argued, "But the differences between the two systems are so much more striking than the similarities that we may with profit use them not as parallels but as contrasts"⁽⁵⁾.

Finally, the causal relationship which Tannenbaum posited between the moral

- 1) Gilberto Freyre, *The Portuguese and the Tropics*, op. cit. p. 79.
- 2) F. Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, op. cit. pp. 116-117.
- 3) *ibid.* p. 121.
- 4) *ibid.* p. 118.
- 5) Stanley Elkins, op. cit. p. 58. Elkins also misleadingly attributes to Tannenbaum a discovery of "staggering contrasts" in the two slave systems. Stanley Elkins, op. cit. p. 25.

aspects of slavery and the nature of its abolition does not figure in the works of either Freyre or Elkins. Elkins contented himself with a brief analysis of abolitionist spokesmen in North America within "a paradigm of anti-slavery thought", tracing their intellectual progress on an institutional-individualist spectrum⁽¹⁾. His reliance on, or affinity with, Freyre and Tannenbaum is more of a highly selective appropriation from their interpretations of Latin American slavery. His particular contribution places North American slavery in a unique category of severity. The differences in emphasis among Freyre, Tannenbaum and Elkins do not undermine the commonality of their historiographic assumption that contemporary "race relations" are reflective of the moral and legal bases of Negro slavery. If this assumption is invalid, then different sets of social and economic processes surely must be examined, including the entire race relations framework.

A forthright and pungent challenge to the Freyre-Tannenbaum-Elkins interpretation of slavery in the Americas came from Marvin Harris. He counterposed Tannenbaum's assertion of moral differences between Church, Crown and Colonists in colonial societies, to an identity of economic interest. They all sought to control the greatest resource of the New World - manpower - in order to exploit its fertile soil and precious metals, and this overriding concern determined their behaviour patterns. Moreover, in Harris' view, there was no need to contrast North American and Iberian plantation systems, for within Latin America itself there were divergences. For example, there were sharp distinctions between the plantations of Highland and Lowland America, indeed, they were polar extremes⁽²⁾. The major difference was related to the level of capital investment which was higher in the Lowlands' economic units, especially on the sugar estates where the master ruled

- 1) Stanley Elkins, *op. cit.* pp. 175-193.
- 2) The Highland areas refer to Mesoamerica, the Central Andes of South America all through Mexico and the North of Venezuela, and finally through Columbia, Ecuador, Peru and Northern Chile. The Lowlands would be the coastal and tropical and semi-tropical latitudes including Northern Brazil, the Caribbean Islands and Eastern South America. Marvin Harris, *op. cit.* pp. 1-2.

supreme. These "Big Houses" were powerful enough to ignore both the Church and the Crown's representatives. But plantations not only differed regionally, they performed different economic functions from haciendas and were themselves divisible into 'engenhos' and 'usinas'. "The business of the sugar plantation was to grow and refine sugar; that of the haciendas was to grow food to feed the peones and the hacendado's family"⁽¹⁾. The 'engenhos' were not unlike the haciendas in terms of labour organisation; they were both non-competitive and non-commercialised. Thus, patriarchal relations could and did prevail on the 'haciendas' and on the early 'engenhos', not, however, on the 'usinas' plantation or factory in the field. Freyre and Tannenbaum had failed to make this distinction and this is one reason why they posited a general Iberian or Brazilian type and a decisive concern with legality on the part of the slave-owners.

The plantation was the typical lowland economic organisation characterised by heavy capital investment, monoculture, sensitivity to fluctuations on the world market and a different kind of racial prospectus. In the Lowlands: "Neither the State nor the Church had direct access to the slave population. The master stood between the Church and the State and the slaves. This was the reverse of the situation which existed in the Highland regions, where the hacendados frequently found it necessary to check with the Church and the State before they were able to make use of Indian labour"⁽²⁾. But even so the famous New Laws of 1542 which declared that the Indians were to be regarded as free men, insisted that they were vassals of the King of Spain. These laws were not expressions of humanist sentiment but part of the Crown's attempt to pry loose the enslaved Indians from the increasingly powerful encomenderos and slaveholders⁽³⁾.

Harris was hostile to continental comparisons of slave systems: "Better to dispute the number of angels on a pinhead than to argue that one country's slavery is superior to another's"⁽⁴⁾. He did, however, feel a

1) Marvin Harris, op. cit. p. 46.

2) *ibid.* p. 48.

3) *ibid.* pp. 16-19.

4) *ibid.* p. 74.

need to challenge both Tannenbaum and Freyre on specific issues. Writing with a simplicity and forcefulness unusual for an academic, he flatly accused Freyre of intellectual dishonesty and suggested that he was a lackey of Portuguese imperialism. If, asked Harris, the Portuguese were colour blind, why had they managed to produce so few mixed types in their African colonies? Moreover, copulation with females of a different race is no indication of the absence of colour prejudice nor does it logically inhibit the development of a race-supremacist mystique. Indeed, a race-supremacist belief may precipitate copulation of this sort, since it invariably contains notions of the super-sexual prowess of the lower race.

The contrasting of legal codes and matrix of customs about slavery initiated by Tannenbaum and Elkins betrayed a naive, legalistic orientation which has no place in anthropological studies. For, writes Harris, "In Brazil as in everywhere in the colonial world, law and reality bore an equally small resemblance to each other"⁽¹⁾. Thus: "The Crown could publish all the laws it wanted, but in the lowlands sugar was king. If there were any Portuguese or Spanish planters who were aware of the legal obligations towards the slaves, it would require systematic misreading of colonialism, past and present, to suppose that these laws psychologically represented anything more than the flatus of a pack of ill-informed Colonel Blimps who didn't even know what a proper cane field looked like"⁽²⁾. In Harris' opinion, Tannenbaum's cardinal error was not to draw a distinction between abstract legality and actual institutional patterns. Tannenbaum's explicit hostility to "economic determinism" caused an over-emphasis on the secondary features of slave society and an aversion to the reality of political and economic power. For the frequency with which Popes condemned the slave trade which he cited, was evidence of either Christian hypocrisy or economic determinism, for the Iberian nations were the last to suppress the slave trade and emancipate their slaves.

Harris' criticism found an echo in Stanley Mintz's careful review of Elkins' "Slavery". Mintz charged Elkins with an unjustifiable neglect of economics, especially the different levels and rates of capitalist development

1) *ibid.* p. 77.

2) *ibid.* p. 76

of the slave empires and a false assumption of an homogenous Iberian slavery. Tannenbaum and Elkins had also researched insufficiently into the legal institutional background of English slavery. For a substantial legal and institutional tradition existed in English Law and practices towards slaves and villeins in sixteenth century England: "Slaves had numbered 9 per cent of the population in the Doom sday Book, but slave status had been gradually assimilated into villeinage thereafter"⁽¹⁾. The existence or non-existence of a legal tradition was therefore invalid as an explanation of the differences between Iberian and English slavery.

Mintz noted that Elkins, in a constrained manner, had tried to introduce economic elements into his interpretation of slavery, but like Tannenbaum he "circumvents critical evidence on the interplay of economic and ideological forces"⁽²⁾. However, Elkins' main error lies in his treatment of Iberian slavery as a "single phenomenon". This was unacceptable even for purposed of broad comparison, for slavery in Cuba, which Elkins had curiously neglected, had become just as viciously dehumanising as in North America once its plantations became capitalist industrial units. Since all the colonising societies possessed traditions and given the observed facts of a fluctuating dehumanisation of slaves in the slave systems of Spain, Portugal and North America, the issue should become: what were the factors militating against "the effective transfer" of traditions to the slave colonies of the North Europeans? For Mintz, the evidence supported the view that institutions of a legal and moral nature are subservient to economic exigencies. In Puerto Rico, in the period 1807-1873, as the plantation system mushroomed, economic exploitation and repression became more intense and just as systematic as that of sixteenth century Virginia. The institutional apparatus of the Iberians did not always protect slaves, and the grafting of metropolitan institutions on to the colonial corpus met with different successes in North and South American colonies.

Mintz's crucial contribution lies in his exposure of the arbitrary

- 1) Sidney W. Mintz, "Slavery and Emergent Capitalisms" in Laura Foner & Eugene Genovese, (eds.) op. cit. p. 32.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 30.

nature of "the Iberian type" via an illumination of the periodic differences as well as similarities between Spanish and Portuguese slavery. "Slave systems", he emphasised, had unacceptably static connotations and obscured the changing patterns of slavery in Latin America. Mintz cited evidence from Cuban and Puerto Rican slave history, which Tannenbaum and Elkins had overlooked, in order to demonstrate the contrasts between Spanish and Portuguese slavery as well as "the economic onslaught upon institution and tradition"⁽¹⁾.

In Mintz's view, the plantation must be seen dynamically, as an emergent industrial system producing commodities for the colonial powers which changed its organisational forms in response to their economic demands. The early benign paternalism of the Iberian variant simply reflected the embryonic state of Portuguese and Spanish capitalism. Another reason for its manorial characteristics had to do with the nature of the crops grown. It meant that, for some part of the year, slaves were substantially non-profitable in terms of maximising a cash profit, for: "Unlike the wage-earners of early capitalism slaves represented a cost, diminishing capital when they were not producing. This helps to explain the truly desperate efforts of the slave-owners to increase their profit margins by compelling slaves to grow their own foodstuffs, by enabling them to become artisans, by renting out in labour gangs, and so on"⁽²⁾. This facilitated some slaves buying their freedom, especially if slave prices were then low, or the world demand for plantation produce was slack. Hence the high rate of manumission in Latin America was not morally but economically inspired. It is possible, in Mintz's view, to accept the position that the slave systems were different. But these differences, he stressed, were caused by the specific social and economic conditions of the two continents and fluctuations in the demand for staples in the metropolitan markets. The manorial ameliorations to slavery were part of the slaveholders' attempts to reproduce the plantation system and to protect themselves from uncontrollable world market price movements. When these exogenous market forces became utterly irresistible, so too did

1) *ibid.* p. 32.

2) *ibid.* p. 35.

abolitionist agitation and the opposition of the slaves. Mintz's response to Tannenbaum and Elkins is clear: the understanding of New World slavery is not facilitated by the ignoring of economics in preference for culture and tradition. Rather, it is only through focusing on economics that culture and legal norms can be identified as components of behaviour.

Unlike Mintz, D. Brion Davis did not concede any significant differences in the slave systems⁽¹⁾. Thus he announced his critique of Tannenbaum and Elkins by denying their thesis of salient discontinuities between slave systems in the New World. His repudiation of Elkins' and Tannenbaum's interpretation of slavery in the Americas centred on morality, religion, legality and the issue of manumission. Slavery, he contended, has always been shot through with the "contradiction" involved in holding a man as chattel. This results in an "institutional continuity" which nullifies any attempt to prove a "morphological incomparability" of slave systems, although each has unique features. In Davis' view, the differences among the slave societies in the New World at the levels of philosophy, cultures, legal traditions and master-slave relationships had been exaggerated. More specifically, Davis accused Tannenbaum and Elkins of using a questionable strategy of moral comparison and, even on that score, of presenting factually incorrect information. In consequence, an historic injustice was done to British and North American slavery, presented by Tannenbaum and Elkins as: "of a merely uniform severity, the slave being legally deprived of all rights of person, property and family, and subjected to the will of his owner and the police power of the State, which barred his way to education, free movement, or emancipation"⁽²⁾. This viewpoint can only be held at the expense of ignoring well-documented evidence of organisational diversity and economic variations among the plantations in Barbados, Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. In all these areas, the actual status of the slave was fluid and ambivalent, exemplifying, for Davis, the inherent tension involved in enslaving an entity which can itself own things. This ambiguity in defining a slave's legal and moral status, the impossibility of treating a

- 1) David Brion Davis, *op. cit.* Ch. Eight.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 224.

a man wholly as a piece of conveyable property gave rise to numerous, if sporadic, anomalies in the slave's condition, throughout the history of slavery.

The static treatment of Anglo-Saxon slavery was compounded by Tannenbaum's and Elkins' omission of the prodigious barbarities perpetrated by Iberian planters on their slaves at different periods. Various writers testify to this, among whom the most oft-quoted are C. R. Boxer, Stanley Stein, Elsa Goveia and Celso Furtado⁽¹⁾. It is impossible to regard Iberian slavery as more sensitive to the humanity of the slave when, "...on the great plantations of Bahia ... a Capuchin missionary was told in 1682 that a Negro who endured for seven years was considered to have lived very long"⁽²⁾. The evidence points to a high slave mortality on Brazil's plantations and in the mines. The 40,000 slaves per year which Brazil was importing in the first quarter of the nineteenth century did not visibly increase the number of slaves. Given this high mortality rate, it is not surprising that, "Portugal and Brazil were the only civilised nations that openly resisted attempts to suppress the African slave trade"⁽³⁾. And since slave rebellions in Brazil were almost of epidemic proportions, the "mildness" of Iberian slavery was largely a myth. Rather, Davis emphasised, we should agree with Boxer that it was "a hell for Negroes" who lived "short, brutish and nasty" lives.

Contrary to Tannenbaum's assertion of the softening influence of catholicism on the slaves' lot, neither civil nor religious authorities displayed any enthusiasm towards restraining the planters' treatment of slaves as dispensable objects: "In theory, of course, the Portuguese or Spanish slave possessed an immortal soul that entitled him to respect as a human personality. But though perfunctorily baptised in Angola or on the Guinea coast, he was acquired and sold like any merchandise upon his arrival in America. Often slaves were herded in mass, stark naked, into large warehouses where they

- 1) C. R. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 1963). Stanley Stein, *Vassouras, A Brazilian Coffee Country 1850-1900*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1957). Elsa Goveia, "The West Indian Slave Laws of the Eighteenth Century" in Laura Foner & Eugene Genovese, op. cit. Celso Furtado, *The Economic Growth of Brazil* (Univ. of Calif., California, 1963).
- 2) *ibid.* p. 232.
- 3) *ibid.* p. 236.

were examined and marketed like animals ... The Spanish, who ordinarily sold horses and cows individually, purchased Negroes in lots, or piezas de Indias, which were sorted according to age and size"⁽¹⁾. Tannenbaum may have been right in arguing that the Catholic Church did all in its power to protect the Negroes' rights and humanity. But how much power did it have in comparison to profit-obsessed slave traders and planters? The Iberians had souls, so did the slaves, as the Church insisted; but the Iberians were also bent on maximising the scope and the profit of their enterprises and the slave was part of their expendable equipment. This "inherent contradiction" has plagued all slavery in Western culture and it is reflected too in Slave Codes. Thus there are many problems involved in their assessment.

Tannenbaum had argued that the Las Siete Partidas, a codification of ancient and Catillian slave customs, was the legal fundament of Iberian slavery. Davis considered this choice of the Las Siete Partidas to be highly arbitrary, especially in view of the manifold actual deviations from its humane provisions. But even so, the Partidas granted the master the right to do with the slave as he wished and during its compilation by the "learned intellectuals" it was recognised that the condition of Moorish slaves in Spain was "the most miserable that men could have in this world"⁽²⁾. Furthermore, there can be no justification of Tannenbaum's ignoring of the Code Fortosa compiled in 1272, a decade after the Las Siete Partidas. This Code vindicated the master's right to inflict the harshest of punishments on his slave and pronounced a slave's testimony acceptable only if it were given under torture.

As regards Tannenbaum's emphasis on manumission as a test case of the relative severity of slave systems, Davis conceded that the phenomenon of manumission was more common in Latin America, but rejected this as evidence of leniency in the whole system especially since the black-white ratio may have been a contributory factor to the different rates. And just as "the principles and traditions were not so strikingly different as has been supposed"⁽³⁾, so the figures on the manumitted: "In 1800 there were

1) *ibid.* p. 235.

2) *ibid.* p. 105.

3) *ibid.* p. 270.

approximately 58,000 free Negroes in Virginia, or about one-eighth the number of slaves. The number of free Negroes had increased from about 2,000 in 1782 to 30,000 in 1810, which was a faster rate of growth than that of the slave population. From 1790 to 1860 the number of free Negroes in Delaware outnumbered slaves nearly 10 to 1. While this high population in the border states can be partly explained by the migration of manumitted slaves from the lower South, the fact remains that there were over 250,000 free Negroes in the slaveholding states on the eve of the Civil War. In 1888 after seventeen years of government sponsored emancipation, there were still some 600,000 slaves in Brazil⁽¹⁾. Since Tannenbaum and Elkins had ignored the history of slavery in Western civilisation as a whole, they lacked a broad comparative perspective and hence lapsed into facile generalisations about slavery in the Americas. Their criteria for establishing the comparative harshness of America's slave systems were arbitrary because slavery was not seen as part of a continuum and continuing contradiction. Throughout history, to enslave a man has caused ironies and paradoxes, largely because of the impossibility of completely 'chattelising' a human being. For Davis, this is the framework within which the myriad enigmas and imponderables of slavery in the Americas are to be evaluated.

Davis' interpretation of slavery in the Americas as part of a continuing moral contradiction can be contrasted to Eugene Genovese's focus on class contradictions. Since we are concerned here more with "race relations" theories which imputes an axial role to slavery, we shall restrict ourselves to selected themes in Genovese's works on slavery. Genovese presented his contribution to the materialist-idealist controversy with a critique of both F. James's "mysticism" and Harris' "ahistorical economic determinism"⁽²⁾. In his view, the elucidation of the problem of slavery had been impeded by the rigid idealist and materialist approaches. The former harboured deficiencies of both a factual and theoretical nature for it ignored the material foundation of each particular slave society, and especially the class relations in preference, for an almost exclusive concern with tradition and cultural continuity. But

- 1) *ibid.* p. 264.
- 2) Eugene Genovese, "Materialism and Idealism in the History of Slavery", in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese (eds.) *op. cit.* p.

equally untenable was the mechanical materialism of Eric Williams and Marvin Harris.

Their economic-determinist position which saw abolition as a mere political reflex of economic transformation had a parallel in the idealist emphasis on ideological correlatives to the exclusion of economics, especially class interests. Yet: "If the War for Southern Independence grew out of the failure to recognise the moral personality of the slave, then we need to know the reason why no such war or revolution occurred in the Northern States or in the British or Dutch West Indies, which in the Tannenbaum-Elkins Thesis also denied that moral personality. The other country in which abolition occurred amidst fearful violence was Saint Dominigue which then logically should have stood with the United States at one side of the polarization that Tannenbaum and Elkins posit: In fact, by their explicit account, it stood midway between the Anglo-Saxon and Iberian models"⁽¹⁾. Manumission and emancipation had little or nothing to do with morals.

Abolition, for Genovese, was one of the crucial issues in the historical interpretation of slavery. It should be regarded, in his opinion, as a consequence of the internecline struggle between the plantocracy and the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Whether it was peaceful or violent depended on the balance of power between these two forces. Abolition took a relatively non-violent course in Latin America and the Caribbean because the plantocracies there were weak, disunited, absenteeist, often outnumbered by slaves and coloured freedmen and ideologically dependent on the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Conversely, a powerful plantocracy as that of the American South could physically express opposition to abolitionist intervention from the metropolises.

In order to transcend the difficulties involved in deciding which slave system was morally superior, Genovese postulated a pervasive paternalism in the New World slave societies and, elsewhere, proposed a conceptual specification of "treatment". The slave-holding regimes of the New World exhibited distinct patterns of paternalism which was in turn a function of institutional and moral legacies as well as the exigencies of world capitalism.

1) Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, op. cit. p. 13.

This paternalistic ethos was, however, spatio-temporally unstable; it was more characteristic of the Brazilian North East than the South and the nineteenth century than in the eighteenth in Brazil as a whole. The American South too, in Genovese's opinion, possessed a patriarchal slave regime despite its bourgeois distortions. Thus it was not a question of paternalism versus capitalistic exploitation and commercialisation - the core of Elkins' thesis - for both the market for the plantation's agricultural staples and the slave market influenced the slave-holding regime. Thus, the commercial side, with the primary concern for profit maximisation, actually reinforced the paternalistic impulse,⁽¹⁾ in that the masters often ameliorated the slaves' conditions in order that they may increase their work effort.

However, paternalism itself was not adequately clarified so that there is enough leeway for it to be regarded as, and even used by Prof. Genovese to mean; affective ties of community and dependency between master and slave, a chauvinist condescension with strict authoritarian overtones⁽²⁾, good treatment either in terms of physical or moral welfare⁽³⁾ and an absence or mildness of "racism"⁽⁴⁾. Prof. D. B. Davis made a similar comment on "paternalism": "The meaning of paternalism is devastatingly clear when Genovese discusses specific situations of dependency, accommodation and resistance. The concept becomes hazy when extended as a general historical category. Genovese seems to have retreated from the term "seigneurial" much as he earlier retreated from "feudal". Yet he still equates paternalism with a "pre-capitalist" stage and thus with various preceding forms of feudal or semi-feudal society. It is sufficient here to say that he has not moved far in clarifying the relationship between paternalism and capitalism"⁽⁵⁾. The ambiguousness of "paternalism" is compounded by its interchangeable use with "patriarchalism", "mediaevalism", "corporatism", and "seigneurialism"⁽⁶⁾. In contrast, his analysis of "treatment" introduces a much-needed clarity.

1) *ibid.* p. 98.

2) *ibid.* pp. 96, 99-100.

3) *ibid.* pp. 98-99.

4) *ibid.* p. 111.

5) D. B. Davis, *The New York Times Book Review*, 29, September 1974, p. 2.

6) Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, *op. cit.* p. 76.

Indeed, this essay constitutes a fertile development arising out of the discussions which Tannenbaum et al. initiated.⁽¹⁾ We shall now critically analyse it well as the problem of comparative "race relations".

Genovese demonstrated that "treatment" can be understood in three different senses; day to day living conditions, including labour conditions, more general living standards involving the slaves recreation and cultural existence and, finally, opportunities for freedom and citizenship. He correctly perceived that Freyre, Elkins, and Tannenbaum used treatment in the first, second and third senses respectively, and that their critics did not isolate the different categories. In Genovese's view, although the slave's treatment in a given slave regime may be 'good' in one sense and 'bad' in another, specific kinds of treatment can be compared and this could provide a basis for judgement as to the relative severity of the slave systems.

Against Genovese, it can be argued that since the various categories of treatment are not logically related or comparable, any subsequent judgement of the nature of the slave systems must involve an arbitrary favouring of a particular category. For example, if Brazilian slavery was better placed in respect of space for the development of the slave's culture but worse in terms of nourishment and labour conditions, which slavery was milder? Genovese's conceptual analysis of treatment could well have displaced the whole problem of the comparative lot of America's slaves. But Genovese concedes too much in retaining the concept of treatment. He does not recognise that he has provided the basis for a change of terrain. We observe in the following passage how Genovese is led astray by "race relations". He writes: "A comparative analysis of treatment in any of the meanings must take place on at least two different levels simultaneously. First, conditions must be measured or assessed at a given historical moment. Race relations or working conditions must be evaluated for Cuba, Brazil, Jamaica, Saint Domingue and Virginia for a certain year or decade, for each slave system reflected the exigencies of the world market at any given moment in time. Second - more difficult but probably more important - conditions must be measured

1) Eugene Genovese, "The Treatment of Slaves in Different Countries" in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese (eds.) op. cit. pp. 202-210. (Our emphasis, Y.W.)

or assessed according to corresponding points of historical development. The second half of the seventeenth century in Barbados, for example, must be compared and contrasted with the second half of the eighteenth century in Saint Domingue or the middle of the nineteenth century in Cuba. One sugar boom has to be measured in economic and social effects against another. These two sets of investigations ... should lay bare the details of life in time and place with due attention to the state of the world market and the technological level of each section of the slave economy"⁽¹⁾. Surely, if treatment is multi-dimensional and functional to a multiplicity of economic and historical circumstances, then, any conclusive investigation across countries is methodologically impossible. The real problem is that Genovese, in clinging to comparative race relations, must retain "treatment" and inconsistently adhere to the orthodoxy of comparing countries. Moreover, if the world market and technology are to be investigated, then the treatment of slaves should be replaced with the "rate of labour exploitation," for the former suggests a voluntarism on the part of the slave-owners inimical to the structural investigation of a mode of production. The political economic and social practices of the slaveowners were determined by their situation within the conjuncture of global commodity exchange. How they treated their slaves depended on how they were treated by the world economy. Thus if we are to investigate "the treatment of slaves" we need to develop a concept of economic structure. It was the world market which made the slaveholders

Genovese's Marxist historiography is of questionable theoretical viability. Although Marx's writings cannot be said to be a theoretically homogenous system, they are indisputably concerned with the analysis of social classes in social formations with specific modes of production. For Marx, classes derive from particular social relations of production and their practices are not a consequence but a determinant of their consciousness. This determination precludes the possibility of consciousness being the object of Marx's analysis. Even if ideational factors guide all social practice, theorising cannot hope to recapture the empirical processes within this

1) *ibid.* pp. 204-205. (Our emphasis, Y.W.)

guidance⁽¹⁾. The point of departure of Marx's analysis is, therefore, the economic structure and his project is not explaining behaviour, but the investigation of the relations between classes in the given mode of production. Their theoretical practice - the expression of various ideas, beliefs or intentions is to be situated in a theoretical scheme rather than described as an external regulator of their political practices.

Marx's analysis thus differs fundamentally from the subjectivist-idealism of sociology where "men are not considered as the "bearers of objective instances (as they are for Marx), but as the genetic principle of the levels of the social whole. This is a problematic of social actors, of individuals as the origin of social action: sociological research thus leads finally, not to the study of the objective co-ordinates that determine the distribution of agents into social classes and the contradictions between these classes, but to the search for finalist explanations founded on the motivations of conduct of the individual actors"⁽²⁾. Marxian social analysis would therefore generate different "problematics" from History and Sociology. Genovese's writings belong to these orthodoxies. They promote a studied concentration on the ideational and motivational patterns underlying social interaction in "slave societies". He argues that the goal of "getting within" a society should mean a concern with its spirit in its dominant ideology, system of values and psychological patterns"⁽³⁾. Genovese's works, tinted with Marxian terms, but directed at the psychology of slaveholding "and the slave-holding experience" are necessarily rife with theoretical and conceptual ambiguities. For, in his pursuit of the chimera of an historical materialist psychology, Genovese

- 1) Psychological models, historical-psychological models, and even the renowned, dialectically-conceived superstructure are not methodologically qualified to take into account the whole chain of ideas involved in even a single social act. The selecting of ideas from an assumed world view would need to be theoretically justified with reference to another type of model. But see Chapter III for a discussion of this methodological problem.
- 2) Nicos Poulantzas, "The Problem of the Capitalist State", in Robin Blackburn (ed.) *Ideology in Social Science* (Fontana/Collins, London 1972) p. 242.
- 3) Eugene Genovese "Materialism and Idealism in the History of Negro Slavery in the Americas" in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 251.

operates on two levels of reductionism: 'class' becomes 'groups', groups of slaveholders and 'ideology' is equated with psychological patterns, or society's spirit. He thereby becomes the supreme idealist. The question a Marxist analysis would ask of American slavery would be diametrically different from Genovese's. It would be to what extent, if at all, the investigation of slavery in the Americas clarifies the concept of capitalist relations of production, not "history".

A second crucial omission on Genovese's part is his failure to observe that, at root, the divergencies between the two 'schools' are explicable in terms of their different conceptions of modes of production. Admittedly, these conceptions are rarely made explicit; but a theoretical analysis of texts is concerned with making manifest even their unstated conceptual relationships. Genovese reads his fellow-historians in pursuit of their psychological models⁽¹⁾. This concern with motivation leads him away from the political implications of historical writing. To illustrate, Tannenbaum explained the "frictions" in contemporary "race relations" in terms of the American Negro's sudden introduction to Emancipation⁽²⁾. The general implication of this explanation is that the demand by the Civil Rights Movement for "freedom now" is premature and self-defeating. Since the years 1941-1947 saw severe "race riots" as well as strident black militancy in American cities,⁽³⁾ we may therefore justifiably interpret Tannenbaum's remark: "What was chattel yesterday cannot be suddenly legalised into citizenship" as a caution to contemporary America. Genovese did not consider this aspect of Tannenbaum's work to be of any significance. What impressed him was Tannenbaum's sensitivity to the cultural and spiritual dimensions of slave society.

- 1) Both George Fithugh and Ulrich Bonn Philips are called "racists". Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, op. cit. p. 236. In *Red and Black*, op. cit. p. 262. For Genovese, Freyre's works are "an attempt at psychological reconstruction". Eugene Genovese "Materialism and Idealism ..." in L. Foner and E. Genovese (eds.) op. cit. p. 251. Elkins' book "illustrates how quickly the discussion must pass into considerations of psychology and anthropology" Eugene Genovese in Laura Foner and Eugene Genovese (eds.) op. cit. p. 239.
- 2) Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, op. cit. pp. 112-115.
- 3) See Herbert Garfinkel, *When Negroes March* (Atheneum, New York (1969)).

A similar emphasis on the psychological quality of Elkins "Slavery" testifies to Genovese's abiding interest in motivations, values and experiences. Elkins' book is said to have demonstrated "the remarkable uses to which psychology can be put in historical inquiry. It has brought to the surface the relationship between the slave past and a wide range of current problems flowing from that past"⁽¹⁾. We would contend that what is remarkable about Elkins' work is the idealist assumption which orders his concepts. The result is a fragile theoretical structure sporadically fortified with a fervent anti-materialistic ethic. In Elkins, the relationship between North American slavery and capitalism is as follows: "That very strength and bulwark of American society, capitalism, unimpeded by prior arrangements and institutions, had stamped the status of slave with a clarity which elsewhere could never have been so profound and had further defined the institution of slavery with such clarity that the slave was, in fact, degraded"⁽²⁾. Despite the powerful moral undertones in Elkins' interpretation, he conceptualises slavery primarily as a legal status. His conception of capitalism derives from the neo-classical school's emphasis on profit rather than on the relations of production, or commodity exchange. Where Elkins considers slavery as an economic institution, he counterposes a profit-orientated, North American slavery to a pre-bourgeois, pre-industrial, Iberian system. Had he analysed the theories of slavery, or possessed a concept of slave production, he might not have taken Gilberto Freyre's description of domestic servitude in the declining North-East Brazil as representative of an Iberian type. But Elkins' whole contrasting of slave systems is suggestive of an unspecified capitalism-slavery distinction. The contrast turns out to be a humanist one, capitalistic slavery dehumanises the slaves, while a pre-bourgeois, pre-industrial slavery protects their personality. Thus Elkins' moral indictment of American capitalism runs parallel with an idealisation of Latin American slavery. We may therefore understand the violence of Marvin Harris' reaction to Elkins' dissertation.⁽³⁾

Harris' likening of the comparing of slave systems to the proverbial

- 1) Eugene Genovese, *In Red and Black*, op. cit. p. 96.
- 2) Stanley Elkins, op. cit. p. 61.
- 3) Harris hopes that Elkins will never experience being whipped by masters differently disposed toward his "human dignity", op. cit. p. 75.

mediaeval squabble may be an example of unscholarly polemicising. But what he is ridiculing is the scholasticism of the debate over slavery in the absence of any clarification of what is a slave system. He effectively exposes the inadequacies of the idealist school, without, however, displacing their questions. To illustrate, Tannenbaum's thesis rests on legal and normative criteria - laws, religion and tradition. His book could well be sub-titled "the religico-juridical ethic and the spirit of slavery". This is a proposition different from the assertion of different systems of production in the Americas, which Elkins incorrectly attributes to him. It is not that Harris misread Tannenbaum, as Genovese has argued. Rather, Tannenbaum misled his colleagues by confusing slavery as a moral and legal status with slavery as a system of production. Tannenbaum simply has no concept of slavery. A spectrum of severity does not constitute a structural delineation of an economic institution. Descriptions of brutality do not inform us as to the standard of living or the degree of labour exploitation. Brutality, like leniency, can be a form of social control. It has no logical relationship to the standard of living. Harsh forms of punishment can be meted out to well-kept, but recalcitrant slaves by a master incensed at their "ingratitude". Similarly, a high standard of living, as Genovese observes, is not incompatible with a high rate of exploitation⁽¹⁾. Finally, the Iberian "amellorations" to which Tannenbaum drew attention may be explained with reference to the lack of capital resources which caused the given slaveholders to rent out their slaves to those better endowed with capital⁽²⁾, as well as the level of capital intensity on the given plantation⁽³⁾. Here Marvin Harris' underdeveloped focus on capital was given some sophistication by Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst. x

They delineated three phases in the development of the use of slave labour in the Americas. In the first phase, when production is at subsistence level slave labour is employed in a supplementary capacity to the settler-

- 1) Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, op. cit. p. 181.
- 2) Cf. A. J. R. Russell-Wood, "Colonial Brazil" in David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (eds.) *Neither Slave nor Free* (The John Hopkins University Press, London) p. 87.
- 3) Cf. Marvin Harris, op. cit. pp. 44-49.

farmers. The second phase sees the dominance of merchant's capital and concomitant processes of agricultural production for export as well as slave trading. Phase three involves a shift from the production of sugar and tobacco to cotton as an industrial raw material for metropolitan markets. It is in the last two phases that slave labour becomes the dominant mode of labour exploitation. The purchase of slaves is an investment in the means of production. Slaves, then, are part of capital equipment and the intensity of their exploitation is determined by the exigencies of the credit system for the purchase of slaves and the market situation of their produce⁽¹⁾.

Hindess' and Hirst's analysis of slavery in the Americas is marred, however, by their not distinguishing between "exhaustion" and "exploitation". Their "intensity of exploitation" refers to the mode of utilisation of the slaves' labour and this cannot be designated "exploitation" without causing a confusion with Marx's conception of exploitation. In contrast to the tangential analysis of Hindess and Hirst, Fogel's and Engerman's investigation into "the capitalist character of slavery" and "the anatomy of exploitation" is of supreme relevance to the question of the degree of exploitation of African labour in the history of North American slavery⁽²⁾. Their conclusions on the comparative welfare of African slaves and the white proletariat call into question the tendency to see slavery in an opprobrious light with the implication that capitalist wage-slavery is superior. Fogel and Engerman refute this implication by comparing, not contrasting, the two modes of labour exploitation. If their comparison is overdrawn it is because of their refusal to distinguish between exploitation per se and capitalist exploitation. The "capitalist character of slavery" is a misnomer, a badly formulated description of "the exploitative processes of slave labour". Slave labour and wage labour are both relationships of non-equivalence. But there are crucial differences between them which, however, do not relate to the attitudes and experiences of agents but the conditions of their reproduction. Wage labour presupposes the

1) Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *op. cit.* p. 136.

2) Robert W. Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, (Little Brown and Company (Inc.) London 1974), Chs. Three and Four.

development of merchant's capital into an independent entity and its penetration into the sphere of production. In the processes of capitalist commodity production, the surplus labour extracted from the producers thereby takes a value form. With slave labour, the processes of the extraction and realisation of surplus labour are not mediated by a money wage and so there is no accumulation of capital, but primitive capital accumulation.⁽¹⁾ In both cases, the measurement of the degree of exploitation presents serious computational problems,⁽²⁾ which partly explains the generally moralistic treatment of the concept of labour exploitation, the moral comparisons of slavery in the Americas as well as the theoretical inadequacies of "Time on the Cross"⁽³⁾.

- 1) Slave labour produces either capital or revenue; wage labour, capital. Thus when slaveowners merely amass wealth, they are not capitalists. Marx makes the distinction between money and capital and between slave labour and wage labour precisely in order to clarify the difference between primitive accumulation and capitalist accumulation: "In themselves money and commodities are no more capital than are the means of production and of subsistence. They want transforming into capital. But this transformation itself can only take place under certain circumstances that centre in this, viz., that two very different funds of commodity-possessors must come face to face and into contact; on the one hand, the owners of money eager to increase the sum of values they possess by buying other people labour-power; on the other hand free labourers ... Free labourers in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves, bondsmen, etc...." *Capital*, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 714.
- 2) Exploitation is a concept designed to illuminate a certain condition of class societies. Attempts at its measurement, as distinct from a quantitative illustration, involve solving the notorious "transformation problem" of values into prices. See Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, (Modern Reader Paperbacks, New York, 1970) Ch. VII. A more conclusive analysis can be found in Ronald L. Meek, *Economics and Ideology and Other Essays* (Chapman and Hall, London 1967) Parts Two and Three.
- 3) See Thomas L. Haskwell, "Review of Three Critiques of Stanley L. Engerman and Robert W. Fogel, 'Time on the Cross'", *The New York Review of Books*, Vol XXII, No. 15, Sept. 1975, pp. 33-38. Herbert Gutman, *Slavery and The Numbers Game: A Critique of Time of the Cross* (University of Illinois Press, Chicago 1975). Gutman's arguments do not seem to us convincing except when he challenges Fogel's and Engerman's illegitimate extrapolations from the slave past in their "Epilogue: Implications for Our Time" pp. 258-265.

Slave labour may produce either revenue or capital and this possibility is responsible for both the rate of exhaustion of slaves and their exploitation. However, slave labour can be industrial, domestic or agricultural, with plantation slavery being a sub-species of the last genre⁽¹⁾. Slaves in these different sectors would have different working and living conditions. But we should expect the rate of exploitation to vary according to the relationship between the slave's maintenance costs and value of the commodities produced⁽²⁾. The treatment of slaves should then be subsumed under the general questions of the forms of social control on slave plantations and the rate of exhaustion of slaves, and both these problems related to the rate of surplus labour extraction as determined by the capital, slave and goods markets. It is here that historians of slavery should focus their investigations, a strategy which eliminates the problem of the comparative harshness of American slavery and contemporary "race relations". That is to say, slavery should no longer be regarded as a subject for, or a sub-type of, "race relations".

The source of the manifest inadequacies and inconsistencies in the literature on American slavery and 'race relations' must be situated in the empiricist-idealist presuppositions of the race relations perspective. Rather than attempt to locate slave labour within a systematic theory of modes of production, historians and sociologists pursue a historical explanation of race relations by attempting to reconstruct and compare slavery as it really

- 1) "Negroes were not of course engaged solely in agricultural work and domestic service during slavery. The ablest slaves were trained as skilled labourers on the plantation and in town - as blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, bricklayers, painters, shoemakers, harness makers, and so on. Some worked for their owners; some were hired out to private employers or to public agencies, some were permitted to work for themselves in return for a certain percentage of their earnings. As mining and manufacturing began to develop, the use of slaves was expanded to quarrying, coal mining, iron milling, founding, textile milling and tobacco manufacturing. Slaves also worked on steamboats and maritime vessels and on the railroads in every capacity except as conductors". Arthur M. Ross "The Negro in the American Economy" in L. Arthur M. Ross and Herbert Hill (eds.) *Employment Race and Poverty* (Harcourt Brace and World Inc., New York 1967), p. 8.
- 2) Cf. Eugene Genovese "The Treatment of Slaves in Different Countries" in L. Foner and E. Genovese (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 207.

was⁽¹⁾ Thus, not conceptual strategies but terminological cameras are being developed so that the picture - the resultant theories - constitute angled images of a slave past. The situation is one of slavery being investigated through the prism of "race relations" and vice versa. It has not been discerned that the recapturing of past beliefs and behaviour is an eminently inconclusive enterprise and by definition inferior to an abstract theory which demonstrates how agents must embody particular social relations of production. As Marx observed in another context "Not only in their answers but in their very questions there was a mystification"⁽²⁾. The question, then, why was Brazil's slavery different from North America's, can only generate inconclusive debates. It derives from a sub-discipline - comparative "race relations" which randomly selectes "differences" from the "slave systems" to explain equally arbitrary differences in world "race relations".

There are few texts on slavery in the Americas which do not pay some tribute to Tannenbaum's pioneering work and attribute to him the thesis of profound differences between "the slave systems". This imputation must now be questioned for there is enough textual evidence in "Slave and Citizen" to refute it: "... in spite of the sharp contrasts here drawn, the slave systems in Latin and Angle-Saxon America were not institutions differing absolutely one from the other. Differences there were and important ones but they were differences of degree rather than in kind ... In fact so inclusive was the influence of slavery that it might be better to speak not of a system of slavery in Brazil, Cuba or the United States but of the total pattern as a slave society"⁽³⁾. These remarks indicate the same ambivalence and inconsistency which we have discovered in Winthrop Jordan, Carl Degler and Stanley Elkins. It may appear

- 1) In the words of R. Fogel and S. Engerman "... what is set forth represents the honest efforts of scholars whose central aim has been the discovery of what really happened" *op. cit.* p. 8.
- 2) Karl Marx, 'The German Ideology; cited in Louis Althusser, *Reading Capital* (New Left Books, London 1970) p. 53.
- 3) Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, *op. cit.* pp. 116-117. Again, "racial and class mobility was as characteristic in Southern slave states as in other slave societies in this hemisphere" p. 124. Elsewhere, Tannenbaum asserted that the process of change "was similar under slavery in this hemisphere regardless of the aegls under which it originated" p. 127.

enigmatic that scholars have not observed Tannenbaum's self-contradictions. But there are two points to be made about this. First, Tannenbaum's references to systemic similarities in American slavery are sporadic and unsystematic. Second, those scholars who celebrate Tannenbaum's Thesis could not discover 'the other Tannenbaum' in that the thesis of severe slavery generating antagonistic post-emancipatory "race relations" is necessary to race relations historians and sociologists. For in adopting the race relations perspective, they logically pursue white attitudes and prejudice legacies from the first historical confrontation.

However, in order to demonstrate that slavery has had a formative influence on "race relations", it would be necessary to specify what constitutes "race relations" and whether this influence resides in economic, institutional or social-psychological legacies. Tannenbaum and Elkins on the other hand, offered us underdeveloped social-psychological propositions which assume an easy translation of attitudes into behaviour⁽¹⁾. They both failed to generate the concepts necessary for a theoretical marriage of the "slave past" and contemporary social structures. Working within their tradition of historical continuity, Degler was constrained to deny Tannenbaum's central postulate, arguing: "The overall conclusion that emerges from the comparison of slave systems is that the differences are not fundamental to an explanation of differences in contemporary race relations ... We must look behind the practices of slavery"⁽²⁾. Degler's work contains the most detailed comparison of Iberian and North American slavery from a race relations perspective. He maintains that "race relations" in Brazil are crucially different from North America's. These differences originated in the descent institutions of Brazilian and North American slavery, not in slavery.

A seminal passage summarises Degler's main argument: "The key that unlocks the puzzle of the difference in race relations in Brazil and the United States is the mulatto escape hatch. Complex and varied as the race

- 1) For Tannenbaum, easy manumission reflects a "friendly attitude" towards the slave and its systematic obstruction an "attitude of hostility". Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, op. cit. p. 69.
- 2) Carl Degler, *Neither Black nor White*, op. cit. p. 92.

relations in the two countries have been and are today the presence of a separate place for the mulatto in Brazil and its absence in the United States defines remarkably well the heart of the difference"⁽¹⁾. Brazilian society has carved a special niche for the mixed bloods somewhere between black and white. Thus its "race relations" are milder than North America's. Specifically, segregation would be physically impossible in conditions of multiple differences in skin colour. Similarly, a doctrine of racial purity cannot emerge given the palpable racial homogeneity of Brazilian society. At the political level, the mulatto escape hatch demonstrates to lower class "blacks" the real possibility of social ascension through "marrying lighter". It also siphons off potential leaders of the black masses, who would have to emerge initially from the better educated mixed-bloods, on to a middle-rung of prestige. In both cases, black solidarity and insurgency are inhibited, even precluded. Thus there is no scope for the development of black consciousness, Black Panthers or Black Muslims in Brazil⁽²⁾. For Degler, the, the "hostility" of North American "race relations" is to be explained in terms of the historical failure of the mulatto escape hatch to develop therein.

Degler's explanation of the failure of the mulatto escape hatch to develop in the United States is, however, vague and unsystematic. Indeed, there is no explanation at all, but mere hints at possible causes: the absence of white women in colonial Brazil, the greater class consciousness of Anglo-Saxons and the relative autonomy of American wives who often challenged the miscegenating practices of their husbands⁽³⁾. These factors may account for the different number of mulattoes in Brazil and North America; they do not explain why the mulatto escape hatch was merely "incipient" in the United States. Degler's strongest assertion rests on the concept of mores:

- 1) *ibid.* p. 224.
- 2) And indeed, Gilberto Freyre is reported to have asserted: "Negritude is a mysticism which has no place in Brazil". Cited in Anani Dzidzienyo, *The Position of Blacks in Brazilian Society* (Minority Rights Group, London, 1971) p. 14.
- 3) Degler argues also that the mulatto escape hatch was almost legalised in the British West Indian islands. Indeed, he contends that this was done in eighteenth century Jamaica, without stating the reasons. Neither Black nor White, *op. cit.* pp. 229-241.

"... the definition of the Negro worked out was neither foreordained nor implicit. It was, rather, the consequences of the interaction of English mores in the special circumstances of settlement in North America ..."(1)
 But what is needed is a theoretical investigation of these circumstances. Instead, Degler presents judicial and legislative examples of the defining of a Negro.

It is pertinent here to mention the absence of any rigorous analysis of the theory of race by race relations theorists. Almost every historical or sociological treatise on "race relations" discusses the theory only in order to demonstrate its ambiguities at the biological level but "reality" at the social level. Issues generally omitted or unsatisfactorily treated are; the epistemological basis of race theory, its social determination, i.e. the relationship between the emergence of a world economy and race theory, and race in the context of the augmentation of labour supplies on plantations.

To illustrate, Carl Degler's mulatto escape hatch merely reiterates that in the United States, the mulatto is a "Negro". This means that race and racial hybrids are defined according to external, phenotypical criteria rather than genetic traits⁽²⁾. The question then becomes one of explaining the dominance of the viewpoint that race is to be defined according to phenotypical characteristics. This where the epistemological basis and the social determination of race theory become relevant. We would argue that the theory of race is an empiricist positivist classification of socio-economically constituted aggregates of people. The race concept is empiricist in its notion of real rather than theoretically-based biological differences within homo sapiens and methodologically positivist in its focus on their measurement and

1) *ibid.* p. 244.

2) Cf. Leonard Lieberman "The Debate over Race" in James Curtis and John Petrias (eds.) *The Sociology of Knowledge* (Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., London 1970). According to Lieberman, the use of genetic as opposed to phenotypical criteria generates different kinds of races. He records "Class and LI composed blood types of Negroes in the United States with those of African Negroes and concluded that North American Negroes have about 30 per cent genes from white populations". p. 572. The flaw here is that the notion of "white populations" already suggests the use of phenotypical criteria.

correlation. It does not explain biological differences as such but describes and emphasises selected ones⁽¹⁾.

What is the relationship between the biologists' project of racial classification and the economic exigencies of plantations producing for a world market? Degler poses a different question: why is anyone known to be of Negro blood or Negro ancestry defined as a Negro and hence accorded slave status? His answer - the absence of the mulatto escape hatch - is circular, for the mulatto escape hatch is itself explained in terms of racial awareness. In answer to our question, we may observe a certain deviation from the scientific definition of the Negro. This suggests that the Negro of the plantation's logic is different from that of the biologist's. What is the social function of Negro blood and Negro ancestry - the pillars of the planters' Negro? The heterogeneity in the definition of a Negro in various slave states suggests that the Negro race functioned as a plantocratic mode of augmenting and maintaining the supply of labour⁽²⁾. It was the need to deprive agents of the right to own their labour and land which generated the South's racial classification. The classification, then, is not racial but economic. The Negroes who by various means acquired property in land and slaves, were designated mulattoes or coloureds. Genovese has recorded that George Fitzhugh, a deeply committed Southern "racist", saw slavery's salvation in a "disguised slavery" for non-slaveholding "whites"⁽³⁾. But "whites" were slaves if we construe the possession of $\frac{7}{8}$ or $\frac{15}{16}$ white blood a qualification for membership of the white race, and the fact of men of 100%

- 1) This approximates to the criticism made by the "lumpers" of the "splitters" attempt to specify a race. Cf. Leonard Lieberman, *ibid*, pp. 570-571.
- 2) For an example of the problem of legally defining a Negro in slave society see D.B. Davis *op. cit.* pp. 278-279. But for original documentation of the legal heterogeneity, see John Hope Franklin and Isidore Starr (eds.) *The Negro in Twentieth Century America* (Vintage Books, New York 1967) pp. 4-13. In Kentucky, 1/16 Negro blood qualified as Negro; in Alabama, in 1927, any amount; similarly in Arkansas 1910 "any Negro blood whatsoever"; in Florida in 1927, 1/8 or more qualified as Negro.
- 3) Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, *op. cit.* p. 209.

'Negro blood' being slaveholders⁽¹⁾ means that "blacks" did enslave "whites". If these whites are not perceived as "whites" by historians and sociologists today, then, it is a clear case of the planters' definition of the situation being still dominant. In our view, then, men are not racially defined and classified because of human colour consciousness. European travellers and explorers may have been impressed by the striking contrasts of the African's colour and hair texture, but this is crucially different from sustained taxonomic undertakings. A theory of race is the product of an empiricist-positivist interpretation of acute economic cleavages and labour exploitation. This would explain its shifting and controversial nature as well as its easy transformation into racial determinism and race supremacy⁽²⁾. Lieberman argues persuasively that the debate over the existence of races between the "lumpers" and the "splitters" has been strongly influenced by particular commitments to egalitarianism⁽³⁾. Significantly, the "three major races of the world"

- 1) Cf. Eugene Genovese, "The Slave States of North America" in David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (eds.) *Neither Slave nor Free* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, London 1972), pp. 267-271.
- 2) The first "scientific" treatise on race, Carl von Linnæus, *Systema Naturae* (1735), posited an association between race and behavioural characteristics. Von Linnæus divided *homo sapiens* into four variants: American ("reddish, choleric, erect"); European ("White, ruddy, muscular"); Asiatic ("yellow, melancholic, inflexible"); and African ("black, phlegmatic, indulgent"). Cited in Louis Snyder (ed.) *The Idea of Racism; its History and Meaning*, (Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York, 1962) p. 11. Obviously there is a considerable amount of sociological observation in Linnæus' classification and this tradition still continues among "biologists". Thus a recent study devotes considerable resources to demonstrating the existence and genetic inferiority of "Negrids" to "Europids". John R. Baker, *Race* (O. U. P., London 1974) Part 4. Baker's sociology emerges sporadically. We are told: "The contributions of Negrids to the world of learning have, on the whole, been disappointing despite all improvements in facilities for their education" p. 503. Baker resolves to settle "the ethnic problem" by selecting "a technical term that will cover the whole subject of equality or inequality among the ethnic taxa of man". p. 6.
- 3) In his view: "The race concept itself developed in a dialectic that has been controlled largely by the same structural forces that generated the growth of racist and equalitarian ideology" *op. cit.* pp. 582-583. Biologists were attempting to support or refute particular positions on equality in developing the concept of race whose potential was later used to justify European imperialism.

"correspond to a pattern of continental economic differentiation. Similarly, the forty different "racial types" elicited from respondents in a Bahian village testify to the use of colour as an economic index⁽¹⁾. It is not that 'race' and 'class' coincide. Rather, the perception of racial characteristics and racial classifications reflect a rejection of a class conceptualisation of agents' positions in the capitalist mode of production.

By treating the theory of race itself as a problem, we are able to perceive that Degler's escape hatch is an economic institution (more developed on Brazilian plantations) which caused certain agents to be defined as hybrids and others (on North American plantations) either "white" or "black". However, it is incorrect to say that North American slave society was polarised into "blacks" and "whites". Such a racial theory existed and still does, but the South had a class structure; there were poor whites, white planters, Negroes, and free Negroes. There was no "racial polarisation" of American slave society. Legally and economically, the South was divided into slaveholders and slaves. This legal division was racially arbitrary and there was no correspondence between 'class' and 'race' since Negroes too were allowed to hold slaves. Degler takes race for granted and hence his unexplained notions of racial patterns, racial stratification and racial polarisation. This general incoherence leads him into contradicting the very basis of the mulatto escape hatch. "Mulatto", he asserts, has "no social or legal significance ... in the United States racial pattern"⁽²⁾. Why then is the place of the mulatto, in both Brazil and the United States, the key to the understanding of their different "race relations"?

It is interesting to note that while Marvin Harris discerned the political content and context of the theory of race⁽³⁾, Degler did not. On the contrary, he suggests that "awareness of racial differences is

- 1) See Marvin Harris, *op. cit.* p. 58.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 102.
- 3) "All racial identity scientifically speaking is ambiguous. Whenever certainty is expressed on this subject, we can be confident that society has manufactured a social lie in order to help one of its segments take advantage of another". Marvin Harris, *op. cit.* p. 56.

inherent in man⁽¹⁾. Degler cannot pose the question under what economic and social conditions does a physical difference become a racial difference. Yet Harris' hypo-descent thesis is remarkably similar to the mulatto escape hatch. Harris asserts that in Latin America as a whole, during slavery, racial hybrids were not forced back into the Negro slave group because of the absence of a system of "descent rule" which made white and black ancestry synonymous with master and slave positions respectively. In Brazil, mulattoes were slaveowners also⁽²⁾. After Emancipation, "mixed-bloods" were not automatically relegated to a "subordinate caste" and racial identities remained ambiguous. On the other hand, "hypo-descent" defined North American slavery resulting in a bi-racial pattern of stratification in which "whites" and "blacks" are rigidly defined and hierarchically ordained. Today, this polarised pattern prevails in North America as opposed to Latin America, where a multi-racial pattern of stratification exists based on complex and fluid definitions. Harris' explanation of the absence of "descent rule" in Latin America (the converse of Degler's mulatto escape-hatch) diverged considerably from Degler's who emphasised the widespread miscegenation in Brazil and "the consequent softening of racial animosity" which resulted in a benign treatment of mixed offspring. Against this, Harris cited evidence of Portuguese masters selling their mulatto children into slavery and stressed demographic and economic exigencies such as the need for skilled and semi-skilled labour and the absence of a Portuguese yeomanry to provide foodstuffs to the sugar plantations. But their common argument is that the historical patterns of "race relations" in Brazil are different from those of North America. Harris has the merit of preceiving that "it is one's class and not one's race which

- 1) Carl Degler, *Neither Black Nor White*, op. cit. p. 208.
- 2) The same can be said of the U.S. Harris' argument is weakened considerably by the evidence of slave-owning "people of colour" in North America as well as "black" artisans and skilled workers. See John Russell, *The Free Negro in Virginia 1619-1865* (John Hopkins, University Press, Baltimore 1913). John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro - North Carolina* (Univ. of N. Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1943). E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (MacMillan, N.Y. 1949). Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: the South 1820-1860* (Oxford Univ. Press, N. Y. 1964). Eugene Genovese, "The Slave States" in David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (eds.) op. cit. pp. 258-277.

determines the adoption of subordinate and superordinate attitudes between specific individuals in face to face situations"⁽¹⁾. Harris confuses "class" and "status" and obviously, for him, "race relations" refer to social intercourse between races. But since, by Harris' own admission, Brazil's races are symbolic, ambiguous, innumerable and inconsistent, "race relations" cannot be said to exist in Brazil.

What then of the alleged continental differences in the patterns of "race relations"? This is first and foremost a problem of theoretical approach, for a "difference" is an observation pregnant with theoretical presuppositions. Theorists of comparative "race relations" are trapped in a circle of interminable comparison for failing to recognise that the differences are in their theories. No other work on slavery and "race relations" corroborates this as convincingly as Degler's "Neither Black nor White," for it catalogues a plethora of differences and similarities between American and Brazilian "race relations". As Degler confessed "I found the nuances of race relations in Brazil so complex and yet so simple, so different from, and so similar to those in the United States ..."⁽²⁾. What remains an enigma is Degler's contention that there are deep contrasts between Brazilian and North American "race relations" and what makes his work speculative and inconclusive is the absence of criteria of significant differences. For scientific investigations cannot be the extradicting of differences or similarities without clarifying the theoretical framework underlying this extradiction. Degler could not undertake such a project of theoretical specification for his methodology is idealist. "Race consciousness" defines his object of study. The result is a simple race relations continuum comprising the slave and post-emancipation periods within which the history of two continents is examined. Since this

1) Marvin Harris, *op. cit.* p. 61.

2) Carl Degler, *Neither Black Nor White*, *op. cit.* p. X. For observations on similar patterns of "race prejudice" and "racial discrimination" in Brazil as in North America, see Anani Dzidzienyo, *op. cit.* See also Thomas Skidmore, *Black Into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (O. U. P., New York 1974) pp. 173-218, for an excellent analysis of Brazil's 'whitening' policy. The notable works on the situation of "blacks" in Brazil have repudiated the popular and official Brazilian picture of good "race relations". See especially Octavio Ianni "Research on Race Relations in Brazil" in Magnus Morner (ed.) *Race and Class in Latin America* (Columbia University Press, New York 1970).

continuum disintegrates as soon as an attempt is made to specify "race relations", "the slave past" remains a historical mystery and post-emancipation "race relations" a vague referent of such varied phenomena as; 19th century acts of segregation, racial inequalities, attitudes of contempt for the Negro, race riots, and the general economic and social condition of "blacks". Since the investigation of any one of these phenomena would require a distinct conceptual scheme, "comparative race relations" must be a theoretical impossibility.

The locating of the ultimate source of this theoretical sterility is not an easy matter. We could say that this is the consequence of the idealism of Freyre, Tannenbaum and their intellectual heirs. On the other hand, are these scholars themselves mesmerised by race consciousness and physical differences, or are they scions of bourgeois historiography with its in-built fascination for culture and rejection of "modes of production"? The answer is, in all probability, much more simple. The historical explanation of 'race relations' is but an intrapolation of the sociology of "race relations" whose inadequacies, therefore, must reappear.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEMS OF STATUS AND RACIAL
STRATIFICATION

The race relations perspective has discovered the following facts, facts which are regarded as problems of race relations:

- (a) expressions of a "them" and "us" awareness based on apparent colour differences⁽¹⁾.
- (b) an abnormal frequency of demeaning responses to all "blacks" by all "whites", and
- (c) socially segregative behaviour of "whites" towards "blacks", even when economic criteria of status parity are satisfied⁽²⁾.

Sociologists of 'race relations' are concerned to explain these phenomena

- 1) Cf. Lewis C. Copeland, *The Negro as a Contrast Conception in Edgar Thompson (ed.) Race Relations and the Race Problem*, op. cit. Ch. 6. H. Hoetink, *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas*, op. cit., Ch. 6.
- 2) There are numerous case studies of these phenomena and a wealth of documentation. See, e.g. E. Franklin Frazier's analysis of the fears and frustrations of "the black bourgeoisie". E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (The Free Press, N.Y. 1959) pp. 195-238. See also the autobiography of "famous" Negro writers where personal recordings of social rejection and avoidance are often graphically portrayed, e.g. W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (A.C. McClurg, Chicago 1903) p. 2. A striking illustration of avoidance behaviour can be found in Ralph Ellison's ironic emphasis on the invisibility of the "black" man. See Prologue, *Invisible Man* (Penguin 1952). This pervasive ostracism constitutes a powerful influence on black social scientists rejecting a class analysis and identifying with "the black race". For it is in intimate social contact situations that racism seems most operative and class most irrelevant. Social exclusion by whites, the impermeability for the Negro of "white society" may also be the root of black cultural nationalism and separatist political philosophy. What is missing in the literature is the analysing of social segregation among "blacks". But see E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*, op. cit.

within the framework of racial stratification. But ultimate responsibility is sought in the status configurations in Euro-American society within which social integration and segregation are determined by men's status aspirations and life styles⁽¹⁾.

It is necessary, however, to offer some preliminary specification of stratification in view of the different and often opposed senses in which it is generally used. Stratification, or social stratification, refers to patterns of inequality in the allocation and possession of goods and services, prestige and power⁽²⁾. Weber used the term social honour to describe patterns of prestige allocation which form a system of status stratification. Status stratification is, therefore, a specific form of social stratification which is a more general conceptualisation of inequality. It suggests the existence of status criteria or prestigious attributes differentiating individuals as well as status groups based on these differentiations. We shall examine this and major theories of racial stratification in terms of their explanatory relevance to the social segregation of "blacks".

The "Marxist" analysis has largely ignored the status order in capitalist society in preference to a "class analysis". But if the term "actor" is obscurantist because it ignores the class situation of the individual referent, so too an exclusive concern with the work situation of "blacks" sins on the side of reductionism. Thus "Marxist" works on "race relations" have left unexplained or inadequately explained a crucial area of the experiences of "blacks", i.e. social rejection by "whites", including the multiplicity of humiliations with which they - especially "black" middle and upper income categories - are confronted. Baran's and S. ...'s brief discussion of status may be read as asserting that American

- 1) Weber argued: 'With some oversimplification, one might say that "classes" are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods, whereas "status groups" are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special "styles of life". Max Weber, *Class, Status and Party* in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), From Max Weber (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London 1961) p. 193.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 180.

society is characterised by an increasingly complex, fluid and differentiated status order determined by income disparities and occupational hierarchies⁽¹⁾. It manifests itself in the segregative and integrative peculiarities of social intercourse observable in American society⁽²⁾. Social intimacy, the polar opposite of social segregation, reaches its zenith when individuals' reciprocal evaluations of social prestige are congruent. Conversely, the systematic social isolation of a group may be regarded as attempts by incumbents of "high" status to restrict the entry to their group of persons who do not share their status virtues. The questions are however, why do Negroes incur a status demotion for those "whites" who interact intimately with them and is this demotion merely stratificatory?

In order to deal with these questions, we will follow through from a discussion of Max Weber's "status stratification", since most stratification theories derive from him and, moreover, it was he who originally propounded behavioural connotations existing in "status". For Weber, class, status and political organisation were often contiguous, but essentially parallel and reciprocal, even contrarily reciprocal, facets of power. Class was economically determined, however, whilst status reflected positive or negative social estimation of honour. The status system and status groups constitute not a polarisation of society but rather a gradation of positions determined by a variety of symbols to which prestige is attached. In his own words: "In contrast to classes status groups are normally communities. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely

- 1) For Baran and Sweezy "In such a social structure individuals tend to see themselves in terms of the 'status hierarchy' and to be motivated by ambitions to move up and fears of moving down", *op. cit.* p. 259. See also James Baldwin for an almost identical analysis of the Negro's "status". *Nobody Knows My Name* (Dial: New York 1969) p. 133.
- 2) See also Vance Packard who contends "The majority of Americans rate acquaintances and are themselves being rated in turn ... they believe that some people rate somewhere above them that some others rate somewhere below them and that still others seem to rate close enough to their own level to permit them to explore the possibility of getting to know them socially without fear of being snubbed or appearing to downgrade themselves". *The Status Seekers* (David McKay Company Inc., New York 1959) p. 6.

economically determined 'class situation' we wish to designate as 'status situation' every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by specific positive or negative social estimation of honour"⁽¹⁾. Weber was concerned to demonstrate the autonomy of the status system in relation to the economic and political orders. Mere economic power or wealth, he argued, was no guarantee of social honour and indeed the opposite has often been the case⁽²⁾. The economic nature and independence of 'status' were manifested by the fact that individuals at the same economic level do not necessarily establish social affiliations apart from those functional to business. In Weber's view, this reflected an underlying system of prestige based on symbolic possessions and exhibited by certain 'life-styles' as well as occupational peculiarities. The link he posited between behaviour and status is brought out clearly in this passage: "In content, status honour is normally expressed by the fact that above all a specific style of life can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle. Linked with this expectation are restrictions on 'social' intercourse (that is, intercourse which is not subservient to economic or any other of business's 'functional' purposes). These restrictions may confine normal marriages to within the status circles and may lead to complete endogamous closure"⁽³⁾. The last point suggests that not only would members of privileged status groups ("whites") react sharply to incursions by pariahs and the nouveaux riches (economically mobile "blacks"), but that status groups can take an extreme development into a caste system of superordination and subordination.

For Weber, status was a crucial element in not only social intercourse but in economic and political action, class interests and class struggles. For in all these situations the actor's estimation of honour had a determining role⁽⁴⁾. Weber was sceptical of "class interests" unless

- 1) Max Weber in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.) op. cit. pp. 186-187.
- 2) *ibid.*, pp. 187 and 192.
- 3) *ibid.*, pp. 187-188.
- 4) Status, in Weber's view, even impinged on the operation of the market. *ibid.*, pp. 185, 192-4.

these were understood as an empirically verifiable direction of action with probable links with the class situation of a 'certain average' of people. Moreover, status-group affiliation can take precedence over class consciousness and class formation if certain intellectual and economic conditions prevailed. In brief, men are (or potentially) status maximisers measured in terms of their drive for power and social honour and expressed primarily through their economic activities.

We turn now to a criticism of Weber's and Weberian theories of status stratification as applied to the social rejection and isolation of "blacks" by "whites".

Weber's theory of stratification has often been transformed into a general theory of society by an even stricter demarcation of class, status and power. W.G. Runciman, for example, sees it as such, since it was 'self-evident' that inequalities in all societies are three dimensional, institutionalised and capable of being ranked⁽¹⁾. However, contrary to Runciman's assertion, it is not at all obvious that inequalities of class, status and power need not always coincide. For this view needs considerable elucidation, including a specification of class, status and power. The viability of stratification, or Weber's "tripartite distinction of inequality", as a theory of society remains limited for another reason. "Stratification" describes patterns of inequality consequential to and existing within class polarisation⁽²⁾. For example, within the bourgeoisie, rentiers, financiers, industrialists and landowners may be differentially placed vis-a-vis the

- 1) See W.G. Runciman "Class, Status and Power?" in J.A. Jackson, (ed.) *Social Stratification* (Cambridge Univ. Press, London 1968) pp. 28-29. Runciman, as is the wont of stratification theorists, suggests that Marx was a student of stratification. For a cogent critique of this view, see James Stolzman and Herbert Garnberg "Marxist Class Analysis Versus Stratification Analysis as General Approaches to Social Inequality" in *Berkley Journal of Sociology* Vol. XVIII 1973-4, pp. 106-125.
- 2) Prof. Zygmunt Jordan's observation is here relevant " ... Class-determining properties are classificatory and comparative concepts, that is, they do not signify a property which an object may have to a greater or lesser degree but one it either has or has not got at all". Z. Jordan (ed.) *Karl Marx* (T. Nelson & Sons Ltd., London 1971) p. 23.

State or a prestige system. Similarly, levels of consumption differ among the working class and this results in different status configurations among them, although their relationship to the means of production is necessarily uniform. Stratification theory cannot be a theory of society. For societies are not only stratified; they are divided fundamentally according to individuals' relation to the means of production. Ira Katznelson's attempt to regard race as "a special case of stratification" fails for ignoring this. Even so, he did not adhere to Weber's schema in that he omitted status stratification and "class" is not analysed, but presented as an empirical, institutionalist category⁽¹⁾.

However, in itself Weber's approach to status contains three major inadequacies. Firstly, his use of 'status' is more taxonomic than explanatory serving to delineate situations rather than demonstrate theoretical connections. We are not told why status should transcend class alignments and be incongruent with economic behaviour. This is related to an arbitrary separation of inextricably entwined phenomena which creates an appearance of intellectual rigour and originality but conceals a laborious attempt to de-emphasise economics in society. Derivatively, Weber made an artificial distinction between ownership, the production, acquisition and the consumption of goods. Thus he failed to demonstrate that status criteria and evaluation are manifestations of socio-economic disparities and that their sources are to be sought in the organisation of economic life. Styles of life are not mere occupational residues; nor do they originate from status as opposed to income groups.

Secondly, the monopoly of high culture and conventions by a status group can be explained with reference to a classificatory rather

- 1) See Ira Katznelson, *op. cit.* p. 17.
- 2) But Katznelson's difficulty is understandable given Weber's inadequacies. For Weber's writings on class and status are eminently un-systematic. Different definitions of the same terms are offered so that conceptual rigor disappears and we are never told how life styles (status) and life-chances (class) are related, but status and class consciousness.

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than a distributive notion of class⁽¹⁾. For the power to monopolise status symbols relates not to a drive for power or social honour but to ownership of the means of production. Thus the symbolic elements which Weber stressed, the feudal-aristocratic sub-cultural residues which command social esteem out of proportion to their economic utility do not reflect any autonomy of status stratification. Rather, their existence is indicative of ownership of the means of production, generally land, and that the bearers are beneficiaries of unearned income. Thus the social esteem attached to them is not out of proportion to their economic utility. For there are all sorts of material rewards, e.g., an improvement in employment prospects, accruing from being deferential to, or knowing the plumed and titled. These residues are therefore not ancestral symbols but indices of current ownership of the means of production. Finally, Weber's specification of the relationship between class and status is unsatisfactory. His concept of class is based on the ownership of virtually any marketable goods or services⁽²⁾. This makes it indistinguishable from the concept of status. The resulting confusion reaches mammoth proportions in the literature on stratification where "middle class" remains a theoretical no man's land, but yet extremely popular in social surveys.

It is our view, that, in the light of these deficiencies, theories of status stratification in the Weberian tradition have to be seriously revamped

- 1) See Z. Jordan, "Now, it is clear on the other hand that when we deal with classes in the distributive sense, that is, when a property is predicated of members of a class taken individually, we can easily order them hierarchically, for we are ordering individuals ~~along~~ a continuum according to a characteristic capable of gradation (such as education, size of income or prestige). Classes in the collective sense, however, cannot be ordered that way for the simple reason that the class determining properties are classificatory and not comparative concepts, that is, they do not signify a property which an object may have to a lesser or greater degree but one that it either has or has not got at all", op. cit. p. 23.
- 2) For Weber, "... the various controls over consumer goods, means of production, assets resources and skills each constitutes a particular class situation... In between are the various middle classes (Mittelstandsklassen), which make a living from their property or their acquired skills" *Economy and Society*, Vol. 3. (Bedminster Press, New York 1968) pp. 302-303.

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in order to be useful to the explanation of socially segregative behaviour towards "blacks". Hubert Blalock rightly cautions Weberian status theoreticians, but himself treads a knife-edge of ambivalence: "Sociologists may well tend to over-estimate the degree to which individuals are primarily motivated by considerations of status and power. Having generalised the notion of "economic man" to that of "status seeking man", we may have minimised the importance of other types of goals, with the inherent danger of assuming that status and economic interests constitute a single "master motive" in terms of which all forms of behaviour are to be explained. But while status goals may not be all-important, they possess a characteristic that makes their potential explanatory power considerable; they often can be satisfied by a very limited number of alternative means"⁽¹⁾. Blalock is here unkind to his readers in not specifying these "other types of goals" and inconsistent in finally admitting to "the considerable power of status goals". We shall see that sociologists have not heeded Blalock's caution, in consequence of which, explanations of the social and rejection of "blacks" remain trapped within Weberian ambiguities and inconsistencies.

Weber posited that occupations and their attendant life-styles contain important status implications. An eminent contemporary sociologist went further and made occupational hierarchisation both a functional prerequisite of all complex economies and, together with the kinship system, the basis of stratification in American society⁽²⁾. For Parsons, however, a conspicuous exception to the mandates of kinship and occupation was "ethnicity" which "tends to preserve relatively independent pyramids in the more general system"⁽³⁾. One of the ways in which ethnicity modifies the general system of stratification is through "discrimination" which is Parsons' terms for "the non-acceptance of ethnic members in certain statuses for which they are otherwise qualified ..."⁽⁴⁾. In so far as the ethnic group possesses its peculiar sub-systems of values and culture,

- 1) Hubert Blalock, 'Toward a Theory of Minority Group Relations, op. cit. p. 39.
- 2) Talcott Parsons "Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification" in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Lipset (eds.) op. cit.
- 3) *ibid*, p. 118.
- 4) *ibid*, p. 119.

ethnicity significantly affects the main class system. However, Parsons interchangeably and thus confusedly uses social stratification, status and class structure. Moreover, he does not document his assertion that Negroes by virtue of their separate value system and culture possess a separate stratificatory pyramid. His use of "discrimination" to explain the social segregation of the Negro is obviously clumsy, and "otherwise qualified" betrays his misunderstanding of the whole problem of status qualifications. Parsons' remarks on the "ethnic problem" and "the negro case" are tangential to his general analysis of social stratification. He was not addressing himself directly to the problem of racial stratification, which is a questionable omission in a discussion of the American system of stratification.

For Parsons, American society conformed to an ideal type pattern variable - universalistic-achievement - which "gives first place to unit qualities and performances which have adaptive functions for the system"⁽¹⁾. But the system's predilection for the universalisation of the opportunity structure extended only to the economic and class orders, for, in Parsons' view, the status order is ascriptively based⁽²⁾. By ascription-standards, rewards are allocated to persons on the basis of culturally assigned identities. Thus, if persons are defined as being of a certain sex or race, they will, because of this have more or less opportunities. Where achievement or performance standards are employed, however, persons will have varying opportunities and rewards allocated to them on the basis of the imputed degree of correspondence between what they do and a certain norm or standard. Alvin Gouldner has criticised, if not invalidated, Parsons' ascription-achievement dichotomy. He argued that it obscures the phenomenon of rewards being allocated on the basis of achievements which themselves depended upon prior ascription⁽⁴⁾.

- 1) *ibid*, p. 112.
- 2) Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils et al. (eds.) *Theories of Society* (The Free Press, New York 1965), p. 257.
- 3) Alvin Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (Basic Book Inc. New York 1970) pp. 322-323.

Developing on this insight we would posit that an individual's class position is ascribed. He is born into a system of social relations which determine his condition as a non-owner, or owner of the means of production. This condition significantly affects his subsequent achievements in terms of access to economic and cultural resources as well as how he will be rewarded. Moreover, income in the form of profit may be classified within the mechanisms of both achievement and ascription. In this sense, the two systems merge or rather, ascriptive mechanisms determine both modes of allocating rewards. Parsons' assertion that the economic and class orders tend to be universalistic and achievement-oriented, in contrast to the status order, is questionable for another reason. It severs the links between class and status systems. Status criteria and life-styles are inseparable from economic classes and the material and social conditions of a given socio-economic formation. Parsons' emphasis on occupations is in the right direction. Yet, it too is theoretically threadbare, for he fails to pose the question why occupations are the source of social gradations⁽¹⁾.

Parsons' conception of ascription has been uncritically accepted and, as we have seen, widely used by race theorists. What they have ignored is that since it is the cultural values within the social system which determine what is an ascriptive characteristic, it follows that skin colour is intrinsically neutral; its social significance is imputed by the social system. "Blacks" therefore are not of a lower status than whites because they are black-skinned. Thus there must be some other condition which determines the values and hence their being low-status. Indeed, we shall see that this condition is an economic one entirely removed from ideas of racial supremacy.

- 1) This failure is related to Parsons' general reluctance to discuss the concept of social relations of production as opposed to sporadic sorties into Marshall's political economy. A parallel can be found in Max Weber's remark, "As to the general economic conditions making for the predominance of stratification by "status", only very little can be said". This borders on scientific irresponsibility. Max Weber, in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 193.

The indifference to capitalist relations of production which characterises Parsons' structural functionalism appears responsible for the inadequacy of his explanation of status stratification "in the Negro case". But, on the other hand, other scholars have historicised the problem by positing a connection between the slave past and status stratification which has resulted in a racially stratified society. This is exemplified by the frequently met references to "the slave past" as to an historic "black box". We may take as an illustration C. R. Boxer's oft-quoted remark: "... one race cannot systematically enslave members of another on a large scale for over three centuries without acquiring a conscious or unconscious feeling of superiority"⁽¹⁾. This invites at least three criticisms. Firstly, the notion that "the white race" enslaved "the black race" is a hyperbole of vastly ahistorical connotations. For it was but a tiny minority of "the white race" which enslaved - and generally in collusion with a minority of - members of "the black race". Boxer's formulation obscures the class differentiations and responsibilities involved in the so-called European conquest and betrays a facile conspiratorial suggestiveness. Apart from this, his uncritical use of "race" ignores the vast literature and controversy surrounding its conceptual validity. Secondly, if his remark is meant to explain the source of the low status of the Negro in contemporary society, then it is a non-sequitur. For is it impossible for the white race to acquire feelings of moral inferiority and

1) C. R. Boxer, *op. cit.* p. 56. Harold Baron is more revealing on "status" but he only raises the question: "Historically, blacks have been relegated to the bottom of the status ladder. Slavery soon defined a class to which only persons of African ancestry belonged". Harold Baron in Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt *op. cit.* p. 164. For similar unspecified remarks on the "slave past" and "status" see E. Rose and N. Deakin, *op. cit.* p. 48. Daniel P. Moynihan in *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy*, eds. Lee Rainwater and W. L. Yancey (M. I. T. Cambridge 1967) p. 61. H. Blalock *op. cit.* Ch. 2. Max Weber in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.) *op. cit.* p. 177. A high point of theoretical confusion is reached in: "Certain traits are present everywhere but more developed in the Negro as a consequence of his slavery background and his subordinate caste status also have been conducive to a high Negro crime rate". Arnold Rose "The Negro in America, the Condensed Version of an American Dilemma" (Harper and Row, New York 1964) p. 306.

regret instead of superiority? Finally, it distorts the theoretical relation between slavery and the constituting of race theory.

It is more plausible that the needs, duration and intensity of slave-labour exploitation created a Negro race onto which was grafted deterministic Darwinist associations⁽¹⁾. Robert Blauner put the matter bluntly: "It was European conquest and colonial wardship that created the "Indian", an identity irrelevant to men who lived their lives as Crow, Sioux or Iroquois. And as a result of slavery the "Negro race" emerged from the heterogeneity of African ethnicity"⁽²⁾. More precisely, the designation Negro was applied to labourers according to the demand for slave labour and thus "whites" too became slaves, depending on the particular conception of "ancestry". The point here is that ancestry or the past is always derived from, i.e. defined with reference to, current economic and social conditions. This is as relevant to slave plantations as to conditions of distribution in the capitalist mode of production⁽³⁾. For to trace a group's genealogy presupposes the existence of criteria or exigencies which demarcate the group. Thus the "ancestry" of a group is part of it being constituted. The contemporary 'Negro', then, is an economic and social classification of an agent's location within the conditions of distribution in the capitalist mode of production, and "Negro ancestry" a consequence of this classification.

- 1) Cf. P.D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa, British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 1964), Ch. 2. P. L. van den Berghe, *op. cit.* pp. 11-18.
- 2) Robert Blauner, *op. cit.* p. 13.
- 3) We shall preliminarily define a capitalist mode of production as characterised by relations of commodity exchange. Labourers exchange their commodity labour power with non-labourers, i.e., the owners of the means of production in return for a sum of goods which labour has produced as commodities. These relations contain processes of the extraction of surplus value and the accumulation of capital necessary for their reproduction. See the following chapter for further comments on the concept of the capitalist mode of production.

This crucial point is ignored by sociologists and historians who identify history, or ancestry, as the cause of the low status of "blacks". They treat ancestry as an historical fact rather than the result of a definite theoretical practice. They are thus unable to perceive that the lineage between the slaves and the Negro today is not racial, but theoretical. It is an effect of a particular conception of ancestry as based on certain phenotypical traits, i.e., the criteria which the planters had used to augment their labour supply⁽¹⁾. Unable to think out the problem of the Negro's status as a theoretical problem, social scientists have appealed to history, seeing in the Negro's degraded ancestry the source of his low status today. They thereby create the notion of the slaves being the ancestors of "blacks" and the slaveholders the ancestors of "whites". It has not been observed that this conception is as arbitrary as the definition of a Negro offered by the various slave States. We shall elucidate this point. A conception of lineage is intrinsic to the concept of ancestry and indeed, of any historical perspective. Thus, an historian could legitimately consider African slaves as the ancestors of "whites" by simply modifying the boundaries of lineage. Such a modification would be less contrary to the conclusions of geneticists on "race". "Race" should thus be seen not as a "social lie", or an unscientific belief which strangely persists among actors, but the result of a definite (historical) theoretical perspective which attempts to impart to an economic classification ("whites" or "blacks") an element of political continuity and cohesiveness.

- 1) If "blacks" today are an economic categorisation with obvious status connotations, then, any concern with the refurbishing of the image of the Negro in "History" and "Culture" is naive, and idealist. Thus Harold Cruse combines a denunciation of the relevance of Marxism to the black situation with a powerful emphasis on cultural regeneration. *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (Morrow, New York, 1967).

The failure to appreciate the nature of the "ancestral" aspect of status stratification has resulted in not only vague allusions to slavery but postulates of a separate "ethnic stratification" and an emphasis on colour in discussing the social status of the Negro. The consensus among sociologists appears to be that "blackness" is, for historical reasons, a salient badge of low status, if not responsible for the general condition of "blacks" in advanced capitalist societies⁽¹⁾. John Rex linked the stratificatory significance of colour to the colonial past: "Colour is taken as the indication that a man is only entitled to colonial status and this means that he has to be placed outside the normal stratification system"⁽²⁾. As late as 1969, in their massive study of "British race relations", E. J. Rose and N. Deakin made colour a fundamental factor: "We therefore took the decision to concentrate on the factor of colour in most of the commissioned research. Our discussions with social scientists who agreed to undertake research for us convinced us that we must break away from the focus of an immigrant host relationship and turn instead to a study of a relationship between groups . . . distinguished by the factor of colour"⁽³⁾. Robert Blauner's argumentation is also an example of this tendency: "A continuing racist theme, with powerful social structural consequences, has served to consolidate rather than to erase the distinctive experience of the past. There is not other lower class group in America's pluralistic society that has met in the past or meets in the present the systematic barriers of categorical expulsion, blockage and discrimination based on race and colour"⁽⁴⁾. We may voice some objections to this

- 1) See H. Blalock, *op. cit.* Ch. 2. E. C. Hughes "Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status", in L. Coser and B. Rosenberg (eds.) *Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings* (McMillan, London 1964). For an exhaustive exploration on the colour theme in social interaction see *Daedalus*, Spring Edition 1967. A review of the contributions could constitute a thesis in itself. Suffice to say here that among such eminent sociologists as Edward Shils, Roger Bastide and F. Fernandes, only David Lowenthal managed to demonstrate the purely indexical nature of colour.
- 2) John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, *op. cit.* p. 108.
- 3) E. Rose and N. Deakin et al., *op. cit.* pp. 5-6.
- 4) Robert Blauner "Black Culture Myth or Reality", in David G. Bromley and Charles F. Longino, jr., *op. cit.*, p. 588. Ira Katznelson modifies the notion of racial exploitation somewhat by arguing "colour has been a mark of oppression related to, yet quite independent of, class" *op. cit.* p. 6. Blauner merely asserts racial exploitation and is silent on its relationship to "class".

formulation, for is it that the racist theme has social structural consequences or that the social structure nurtures racism? In either case, what is social structure? What are these distinctive experiences of the past that could have been erased and how systematic are the "barriers" in the light of evidence of faster generational mobility among "blacks" compared to some other ethnics?⁽¹⁾ The reference to America as 'a pluralistic society' is eclectic and rhetorical in so far as the writer nowhere spells out what is a pluralistic society. Blauner's view of colour being the basis of discrimination bears a similarity to Talcott Parsons' analysis of colour as a symbolic phenomenon, whose historic meanings need not necessarily be that of a stigma⁽²⁾. Parsons correctly perceived that colour is an unambiguous index of group membership but in stressing its "symbolic nature," he shifted the emphasis away from the economic underpinnings of the meanings attached to colour. Against both Blauner and Parsons, we would argue that black skin merely informs that the given agent belongs to an economically backward group and is, in all probability, himself economically inferior. But black skin does not have the same "symbolic" significance for all whites. Hence the degree of status relegation and avoidance depend on the social position of the given white. There is no general significance of colour in human society. This Parsons overlooks because of his separating of cognition from social differentiation. Thus, the "functionalist" analysis of colour remains eminently descriptive because of the symbolic treatment of an economic index, black skin.

For both Blauner and Parsons obscure the fact that whites and blacks are particular social metaphors and status designations which are not based on actual skin colour⁽³⁾. These terms identify status

- 1) Cf. Nathan Glazer "Blacks and Ethnic Groups: The Difference and the Political Difference it Makes" in Nathan I. Huggins et al. (eds). *op. cit.* pp. 203-208.
- 2) Talcott Parsons, "Full Citizenship for the Negro American" in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark (eds.) *op. cit.*
- 3) Cf. Pierre Vallieres, *White Niggers of America* (Monthly Review Press, N. Y. 1971) Ch. 2. As is evident too from the existence of visually Caucasian Negroes. But see Jean Genets classic: "But who are the blacks? and what is their colour?" *The Blacks* (Faber, London 1970).

groupings distinguished by the patterns of consumption. Hence, a racial identification may be understood as a status group designation. In the words of Immanuel Wallerstein: "Race, finally, is a particular form of status group in the contemporary world, the one which indicates rank in the world social system"⁽¹⁾. It is unfortunate that Wallerstein does not spell out whether by race he means a biological category, race consciousness or racial expressions. For each meaning has a different point of departure. He appears to be arguing that the last four hundred years have witnessed an interaction of different types of economic organisation within which some were dissolved and from which the capitalist mode of production became predominant and universal. These processes have generated their peculiar superstructures and the theory of race could be interpreted as an intellectual reflection of the global division of labour within which the white race commands a relatively privileged position. Racial expressions, e.g., 'I am white', may therefore be seen as a manifestation of status group affiliations and hierarchisation which transcend national borders. The concept of race, then, could be located in the context of the generalisation of the capitalist mode of production and racial expressions conceived as status assertions.

Two important consequences are that firstly, the individual's group is not just within his immediate residential or national environment but all those who share a similar pattern of consumption. This is not a concession to Weber's separation of the conditions of consumption from production. Rather, it's a recognition that in conditions of commodity production or consumption according to any other criteria other than need, there will be patterns of economic inequality out of which the social and cultural images of agents will develop. Put another way, patterns of consumption deriving from a class society ensure that the acquisition and possession of goods become a measure of the worth, or social rank of agents. This means that classificatory criteria will be attached to material goods over

1) Immanuel Wallerstein, *Social Conflict in Post-Independence Black Africa: The Concept of Race and Status Groups Reconsidered* (McGill University, Reprint Series No. 34), p. 223.

and above, for example, moral qualities. Thus the possession and use of particular commodities will determine the status position of agents. In conditions of capitalist commodity production where all goods are commodities access to which is determined by an agent's relationship to the means of production or location within a stratified system of wage labour we may identify two major groups or classes and a multiplicity of ranked status groupings. Given the 'reserve army of labour' function of "blacks"⁽¹⁾ in the metropolises, they cannot but be a lower status grouping than "whites". Secondly, the global nature of this mode of production and the relative economic underdevelopment of those regions peopled with "coloured races" also determine that "blacks" in the metropolises be of an inferior status ranking to "whites". "Blacks" and "whites" are indices of social rank.

In positing the commodity structure of the capitalist social formation as the basis of status stratification, it becomes possible to perceive that the labour situation of "blacks" force their automatic relegation to the lower reaches of the status hierarchy. It is to be admitted that over the last ten years a certain percentage of "blacks" has achieved what is loosely called middle class status. This should not be expected to elevate the ranking of "blacks"; per se, in the status order. Thus the economic achievements of individual "blacks" cannot ensure fraternisation or social intimacy with their white economic peers. For example, a frequently voiced objection to having a "coloured person" as a neighbour is that, then, "the whole street will become black". This sentiment would be voiced about a member of any lower-income group, given visible indices of his economic situation such as style of dress, or speech and behavioural mannerisms. We would, therefore, argue that the pattern of social intercourse between "blacks" and "whites" is a variant of intercourse between lower and upper status groupings. Its conceptualisation as a race (relations) or ethnic problem is a peculiarity of the race relations perspective which begins with the posing of racial questions to empirical actors. Thus, within this perspective,

- 1) Reference here is to the level of unemployment and underemployment, as well as low levels of skills and, crucially, income among "blacks". See the following chapter.

the social avoidance of "blacks" by "whites" is pregnant with race and racism. If on the other hand, we abandon the empiricist conception of "whites", it becomes possible to discuss the general problem of status hierarchies as a condition intrinsic to socio-economic formations based on class exploitation, hence in which social rejection is a general condition.

The social ranking of agents in terms of their consumption of goods is a general condition of class societies. Thus status stratification is not a bourgeois phenomenon specific to the capitalist mode of production, or more precisely, the capitalist social formation. Status groupings within the working class are an effect of the existence of a stratified labour market. Two radical political economists go further in arguing that the American economy "... needs stratification; therefore, it needs inequitable rules to maintain the economic privileges and social equilibrium of the existing order. Segmentation in the economy leads to the "freezing" of social distinctions. Job career ladders are superficially contrived in order to nurture intra and intervocational status preoccupations among workers who have neither job satisfaction nor control over work"⁽¹⁾. The language here is functionalist and even conspiratorial. However, the possibility cannot be ruled out that status concerns become a preoccupation for workers deprived of control over the labour process. What we would emphasise is that since capitalist commodity production intrinsically generates a hierarchical system of distribution and consumption only its abrogation would make material possessions and consumption irrelevant to social intercourse. Black and white skin would then lose their raison d'être as status indices.

We have suggested the existence of a status order with international connotations. Yet, this is problematic, for it may be asked: who apportions the esteem on which the order is based? Thus Rex argues that we consider the super-imposition of master symbols of legitimation in an essentially conflictual social order. In his view, the existence of status systems poses questions about the class nature of status characteristics and the

1) Raymond S. Franklin and William K. Taab "The Challenge of Radical Political Economics", *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, March 1974, p. 137.

conflict ramifications of assigning esteem. Rex's focus on the conflict underlying "status" was aimed at repudiating the normative functionalist stress on common value elements as the basis of social order⁽¹⁾. This is inconsistent with his general emphasis on racist colonial values as the basis of metropolitan race relations. Moreover, to posit a white value consensus on blacks is precisely within a functionalist analysis. A radical approach would be not to deny the existence of values, or reject the notion of status, but to specify the relationship to that which is presupposed, namely relations of production. Thus to ask who accords status is to manifest an empiricist stance⁽²⁾. For status is not a zero-sum quality possessed by empirical actors. Rather, it is a concept used to identify and explain different patterns of social intercourse. We deduce a positive or negative estimation on the part of actors on the basis of the concepts of intergrative and segregative behaviour. Without the concept of status, the social analyst would have to fall back on explanations such as: W is avoiding B because he does not like him. With the concept of status as a social image derived from the exploitation of labour, we may more specifically and correctly say that B's social standing offers W no incentive to social intercourse with him and thereby place W's behaviour in a theoretical context.

Rex's reservations about "status" were also part of a reaction against the status-seeking man implicit in theories of race and ethnic relations. But his model is hardly more objective and it confuses status stratification with general social stratification. In his discussion of "minorities" and the stratification systems of "relatively stable advanced capitalist society," he enumerated three dimensions, or three main images, of the total society - the images of the occupational community-power, and

- 1) John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. pp. 92-95.
- 2) As when Hubert Blalock rejects concepts which cannot be measured, op. cit. passim.

educational structures⁽¹⁾. Immigrant minorities are said to enter the stratification system at some fixed point in the lower reaches. Yet the host stratification system contains an international scale of status comparisons which exists independently of the economic advances of immigrant groups: "We have from time to time suggested that the stratification system of society arises from the subjective picture or model of social relations which comes to men's minds when they think of their society as a whole ... But equally it is sometimes useful to look at a wider picture which takes in not merely social relations within the metropolitan country but within the whole imperial and colonial system ... We might if we wish speak of a stratification system which covered not merely a single metropolitan country but a world-wide empire"⁽²⁾. This passage, in its allusion to extra-territorial social relations, is commendably seminal. However, some objection can be taken to "the subjective picture" being the basis of stratification. For, apart from the methodological difficulties involved in grasping what comes to men's minds, there is the problem of objective determinants and constraints on perception - a theme left unexplored in the Weberian tradition.

Status stratification cannot be conceptualised in isolation from class structure. But this is overlooked by those sociologists who are inclined to regard "status consciousness" as a determinant of behaviour. For example, Robin Williams admits: "We are increasingly impressed with the importance of a sense of threat in intergroup relations and with the particular potency of feared loss of social prestige"⁽³⁾. We would, however, question the notion that the nature of "intergroup relations" is determined by a positive or negative social estimation of honour. It is not people's perception of their position on the status hierarchy which determines their behaviour. For behaviour is not caused by, merely mediated through,

1) John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. pp. 94-95.

2) *Ibid*, p. 105.

3) Robin Williams, op. cit. p. 376.

"culturally structured and shared" status symbols⁽¹⁾. Thus, to explain "whites" restrictions on social intercourse with "blacks", we need to take into account the former's economic interests and the norms they underpin. These goals, or interests, in turn have to be placed in a structural (class) context since they generate different patterns of behaviour according to whether the actor buys or sells labour power. That is to say, fraternising with lower status incumbents ("blacks") induces not a status loss but an economic liability depending on class position and interests.

With this observation, it becomes easier to understand the comparative virulence of the objections of working class "whites" to residential or social intimacy with "blacks". Capitalists are by definition in mutual competition and their social life is often a function of their market interests. Workers, as sellers of labour power, find their social life subordinated to the labour market. Thus, if information about and access to the labour and sex markets depend on "contacts" we can appreciate why "blacks" are to be avoided⁽²⁾. For the white worker, there is the real possibility of ostracism from the neighbourhood, or community, and the absence of any economic compensation from "blacks". This holds good for members of the white working class, but consider the businessman's situation. As related by Blalock: "A businessman eager to rise in the Chamber of Commerce may stand to lose a great deal if he invites a Negro to his home ..." ⁽³⁾. This should by no means be taken for granted. For it depends on whether the businessman's business caters for a Negro

- 1) Cf. John Rex " ... those countries which use skin colour as a means (emphasis ours) of discriminating between men". *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. p. 107.
- 2) According to Charles E. Silberman "virtually every study of how people find jobs has indicated that the most common method is recommendation by a relative or friend, usually one working for the same employer; relatively few people find jobs through newspaper advertisements, and even fewer through government or private employment agencies". *Crisis in Black and White* (Vintage Books, New York 1964) p. 243.
- 3) H. Blalock, op. cit. p. 66.

market or not. However, the point is that the white worker's position on the labour market could be endangered through fraternisation with a Negro while the "businessman" may stand to gain a great deal⁽¹⁾. We may therefore expect white workers to be more harshly segregative in their behaviour towards "blacks" and to verbalise their opposition to fraternisation and social integration in racist terms depending on the extent of the distribution of the race perspective. These racist sentiments, therefore, must be analysed as revealing of the dominant theoretical practice, and the desire for expressions of disassociation to be in the most absolute terms. They do not demonstrate the existence of "a race problem", which is a conceptualisation peculiar to the type of sociological theory in use.

As we have seen, sociological studies on the social segregation of "blacks" today have misunderstood "ancestry", paid insufficient attention to group material achievements, commodity production and their relevance to status stratification. Our alternative approach spells out criteria and characteristics of status evaluation in terms of the stratified system of wage labour, group accomplishments measured with reference to quantity and quality of consumption, and individual achievements seen in terms of factors such as income-size, job-type, level of education, area of residence and house-ownership. In brief, the individual is ranked as part of an economically constituted group. This ranking is a theoretical construct deduced from our conception of status stratification. It is not posited as the empirical determinant of patterns of social intercourse but as a conceptual link between the above-mentioned economic conditions and socially integrative, or segregative behaviour. Actors do rank each other but their criteria reflect the political economy of the given society and this ranking is not a determinant of behaviour but a concept mediating between two structures - economic organisation and social intercourse⁽²⁾.

- 1) For an analysis of the compromises business makes in order to penetrate the "black" consumer market, see Harold Baron "Urban Racism" in Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt, *op. cit.*
- 2) It must be admitted, however, that the social rejection of blacks as a status problem is an improvement on seeing it as a "race" problem. For it can then be perceived that some "whites" too face problems of social isolation and that instead of analysing the problems of racial hatred, identity and "black" self-hate we should proceed to, for example, the relationship between status and self-esteem generally.

In remaining within the Weberian tradition of strictly separating the patterns of social intercourse from capitalist relations of production, Williams et al. have had to assume a status-maximising propensity in men⁽¹⁾. Their great weakness consists in ignoring that, in social scientific explanations analytical separation of interrelated phenomena must be crowned with a synthesis if the investigation is not to relapse into atheoretical assumptions about human nature. It is quite legitimate to construct theories of status stratification to explain patterns of social intercourse, especially since the verbal behaviour of actors suggests the existence of subjective rankings. The fatal step is when the sociologist treats "status consciousness" not as a mediating category but a determinant of behaviour. For then, the philosophical anthropological implication is that "man must have status" and the investigation stops short at discovering more fundamental mechanisms and political economic relations. Thus, a mere concern with status does not explain why "whites" initiate the social segregation of "blacks". Their behaviour is derived from the economic interests which determine the intensity of restrictions on social intimacy with lower-status incumbents. We may say that the degree of segregation practised by W towards individuals placed lower on the status order is determined by the extent to which integrative behaviour or intimacy would, via ostracism, threaten the realisation of W's economic and social interests.

Our conception of status stratification radically dissolves Weber's, Parsons' and Rex's contributions to the understanding of the Negroes' position in the status order, by demonstrating how status stratification is rooted in modes of production and distribution. It is now possible, for example, to see where the Warner "caste school" went wrong⁽¹⁾. The

- 1) For example, Walter C. Kaufmann "Status Concern" A.J.S. 12 Jan. 1957. H.M. Blalock, Jr., "Status Consciousness", Social Forces, Vol. 37, No. 3, March 1959. Hubert Blalock, op. cit. Ch. 2. G.E. Simpson and J. Yinger "Racial and Cultural Minorities" (Harper and Row, New York 1965) p. 111-114. Vance Packard "The Status Seekers", op. cit.
- 2) Lloyd Warner, American Caste and Class (A.J.S. Vol. XLIII, Sept. 1936).

Warner argument was that "blacks" and "whites" were different castes, not in the classic Hindu sense, but defined by sanctions against inter-marriage and blocked mobility for the lower group. We had, therefore, a caste system of impermeable boundaries based on racial traits. For Warner, caste implied rigidly blocked social mobility in the stratification system. It did not mean that black Americans will not make economic and cultural advancements; the caste line would, however, remain an insurmountable barrier to attendant prestige and acceptance into "the mainstream of American society".

The level of sociological sophistication in Warner's model leaves much to be desired. Instead of the dubious comparison with, and choice of, caste, he might have recognised as Weber did, that status groups are often transfigured into closed endogamous units through the restrictions on social intercourse which they practise: "Where the consequences have been realised to their full extent, the status group evolves into a closed 'caste'. Status distinctions are then guaranteed not merely by conventions and laws, but also by rituals"⁽¹⁾. Moreover, since caste suggests hereditary occupational specialisation, its applicability to the American Deep South in the post-emancipation period was marginal to the extreme. Warner's caste line was, in effect, a status frontier impermeable for the Negro because of his comparably low social and economic achievement⁽²⁾. More precisely, then, it was an economic frontier.

We hope to have demonstrated that the social inferiority of "blacks" vis-a-vis "whites" can be explained with references to the former's inferior consumption patterns. This further explains the limited social integration

- 1) Max Weber in Gerth and Mills, *op. cit.* p. 188.
- 2) This one-sided impermeability is now being challenged, however, by self-imposed black restrictions on fraternisation with "whites" - a phenomenon confusingly called "black racism". Significantly, it comes with a dramatic discrediting of whites' ancestors, seen now not as the "founding fathers" but as exploitative slaveholders, a positive rewriting of black history and a deprecating of "white middle class affluence and white society"; cf. Stokeley Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *op. cit.*
- 3) Visually Caucasian "blacks" do pass, however, into "white" society. But passing is not unique to "blacks". Lower status and stigmatised "whites" also fake or obscure their genealogy and appearances in order to be accepted in "higher circles". Cf. Erving Goffman, *Stigma*, (Pelican, Ltd. 1968) pp.92-113. Goffman's conception of stigma is, however, superficial in that he treats it in isolation from concepts of economic structure.

between "blacks" and "whites", an explanation identical to that applied to limited social intercourse between intra-racial income groups⁽³⁾. The second problem, too, the social rejection of economically mobile "blacks" by their white peers, does not require a racial explanation. For there must be identical patterns of integrative and segregative behaviour within the black and white communities, since actors necessarily prefer to fraternise with others who do not just possess congruent "life-styles", but who can improve their "life-chances". The racial analysis must pose as enigmatic or as evidence of racism the rejection of even those "blacks who-have-made-it" by "whites". This is because this analysis follows Weber in separating the concepts "life-styles" and "life-chances". If we link the categories, however, we may observe that "blacks who-have-arrived" will be rejected only if their achievements cannot improve the life chances of the "whites" in question. Black capitalists and millionaires will necessarily be invited to dinner just as frequently they avoid social intimacy with poor "whites" and "blacks". In this sense, in examining this issue the questions which "whites" and which "blacks" must always be raised. For social segregation is a general problem of men in exploitative societies manipulating their social intercourse to realise their economic class interests. "Blacks" are, therefore, faced not with "a race problem", or ethnic stratification, nor even with a status problem, but with the consequences of capitalist commodity production. Thus, the social rejection, exclusion and segregation of "blacks" are a sub-species of the general ostracism of lower status groupings and the accompanying expressions, Niggers, Chinks, Japs, Wogs, Spaghetts, Micks, Greasers, Frogs, Tinkers, ... are but the verbalisation of an economically generated rejection syndrome. There is, then, no theoretical justification for construing any pattern of social avoidance as a "race problem" for its conditions of existence transcend the boundaries of "race relations". Rather, the problem to be posed is, what are the conditions of existence of capitalist commodity production?

CHAPTER VI

BLACK POVERTY AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Study after study of the socio-economic conditions of black workers in the U. S. A. and Britain not only document the existence of a pervasive poverty and deprivation, but also posit a specific context to it, as opposed to the deprivation experienced by other ethnic minorities⁽¹⁾. These assertions of Lee Rainwater and W. Yancey express a commonly held view - point: "Negro poverty was of a special, more desperate kind. It was the product of ancient brutality, past injustice and present prejudice which had produced a twisted and battered cultural heritage, a community excluded from the rest of society and buried under a blanket of circumstances"⁽²⁾. Although the theory of social causation here is simplistic, the emotive language is partly justified by the persuasive evidence of chronic under-consumption among "blacks" in America. In "The Other America", Michael Harrington estimated that between forty and fifty million Americans were living in poverty in the early

- 1) An interesting compilation of approaches to poverty can be found in: Daniel P. Moynihan (ed.), *On Understanding Poverty* (N. Y. 1969). Dorothea Wedderburn (ed.), *Poverty Inequality and Class Structure* (Cambridge University Press 1974). For an invaluable survey of American poverty and theories of it see: S. M. Miller and Martin Rein, *Poverty Inequality and Policy* in Howard S. Becker, *Social Problems: A Modern Approach* (John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York 1967). See also Margaret S. Gordon (ed.) *Poverty In America* (Chandler Publishing Co., Calif., 1965). Louis A. Ferman, Joyce L. Kornbluh and Alan Haber, *Poverty In America: A Book of Readings* (Univ. of Michigan Press, Mich. 1965).
- 2) Lee Rainwater and William Yancey (eds.) *The Moynihan Report and The Politics of Controversy*, op. cit. p. 2.

1960's⁽¹⁾. The poverty line was calculated \$4,000 annually for a family of four members and \$2,000 for a single individual. Just over 50% of the black population could then be classified as poor⁽²⁾.

The Kerner Commission reported that, compared with "whites", "blacks" had completed fewer years of education, and less of them had attended high school, were likely to be unemployed and three times as likely to be in unskilled or service jobs, earned an average of thirty per cent less and were more than likely to be living in poverty. In addition, Negro housing was three times as likely to be overcrowded and sub-standard and this disparity was even more pronounced when compared with white suburbs⁽³⁾. In 1967, the striking characteristic in socio-economic comparisons between black and white Americans was the high incidence of poverty among the non-whites. Poverty affected 11% of "whites" but fully 35% of "blacks"⁽⁴⁾. This by no means implies that the other 65% of blacks were "middle-class"; or rich, for 47% of these existed just on or slightly above the "poverty line" calculated in 1967 at \$3,533 per annum for a family of four. The more recent findings testify to continuing patterns of deprivation, in which between 33 and 35% of the black population

- 1) Michael Harrington, *The Other America* (MacMillan, N. Y. 1964) p. 1 and Ch. 4. Sydney Wilhelm, *Who Needs the Negro* (Schenkman Pub. Co. Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts 1970); "Time" Magazine, June 17, 1974, p. 24. For systematic and most recent data on the economic condition of "blacks" in the 1970's see U. S. Bureau of the Census, Series No. 54, *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1974*, Washington, D. C. 1975.
- 2) The figure for Britain in 1970 was 7 to 10 million. *The Times*, 9th September, 1970. Studies of black poverty and deprivation in Britain are virtually absent. As to the extent of the correlation between colour and economic deprivation, occupational distribution, high unemployment and low income, analysis points to an American situation in embryo. See Sheila Allen, *Race Today*, April 1971, p. 112; David J. Smith, *Racial Disadvantage in Employment*, op. cit.; E. J. B. Rose et al., *Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations*, op. cit. Chs. 13 and 14; S. Castles and G. Kosack, op. cit. Ch. II.
- 3) The Kerner Commission Report, op. cit.
- 4) John F. Kain (ed.) *Race and Poverty The Economics of Discrimination* (Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. Y. 1969) p. 2.

remain "poor".

During the years 1962-67, many studies of the economic situation of "blacks" focused on their poverty as a race relations problem⁽¹⁾.

Within this we may briefly identify some four explanations of the desperate level of black deprivation. The first posits the crucial salience of white racism, race prejudice, and racial discrimination⁽²⁾. The second and third explain poverty and its pathological socio-psychological ramifications with reference to slavery or factors and proclivities specific to "blacks"⁽³⁾. Finally, there are the recent studies of black poverty which direct a crucial focus on the labour market. This is a theoretical advance, for the labour market is clearly the major source of income and hence the determinant of workers consumption in its broadest sense⁽⁴⁾. What is not generally analysed is the theoretical basis of the concept poverty, and "blacks" and "whites" as comparative statistical categories.

- 1) This was part of the increased interest in poverty inspired by both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations in their War against Poverty. A. H. Halsey adumbrates this view: "President Johnson's declaration in 1964 of 'unconditional war on poverty in America' inaugurated a plethora of legislation, governmental programmes and social science literature. British Government and British social science have followed a parallel course". Poverty, he contends, increasingly serves as a euphemism for the racial conflict ... in D. Wedderburn (ed.) *op. cit.* p. 123.
- 2) See above, Ch. II.
- 3) For a typical statement, see Kenneth Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, *op. cit.* p. 2. See also the classic family-deficit model of Daniel P. Moynihan and criticisms of it in L. Rainwater and W. Yancey (eds.) *The Moynihan Report & The Politics of Controversy*, *op. cit.* and Lee Rainwater's stimulating "Five Paradigms on Poverty" from which it can be deduced that the "moralising", "medicating" and "naturalising" perspectives are most generally applied to black poverty, in V. L. Allen (ed.) *Psychological Factors in Poverty*, (Academic Press, New York 1970) Ch. 1.
- 4) See James G. Scoville (ed.) *Perspectives on Poverty and Income Distribution* (D. C. Heath and Co., N. Y. 1971). Louis Ferman, Joyce Kornbluh and J. A. Miller (eds.) *op. cit.* Editors' introduction. Some writers argue, however, that the root of Negro poverty is not so much unemployment as low pay and underemployment. See Ina Corinne Brown, *Understanding Race Relations* (Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Hersey 1973) Ch. 8, and J. C. Kincaid, *Poverty and Equality in Britain* (Penguin Books, London 1973) Ch. 10.

From the writings of economists, radical political economists and Marxists, several major arguments emerge: a large number of blacks are poor; blacks are proportionally poorer than whites; blacks are victims of urban racism, economic racism and working class (Trade Union) racism; blacks have higher rates of unemployment than whites; and, finally, black workers are more exploited than white workers. Judging from their popularity, these arguments have become something of an unquestionable consensus among race theorists⁽¹⁾. The first thesis employs a concept the "poor" whose 'relativity' is a by-word among writers on poverty⁽²⁾. For all conceptions of poverty contain criteria of normal or desirable levels of consumption. This specification of this norm is the Achilles Heel of poverty theorists and, indeed, controversies over poverty reflect above all different conceptions of human needs as well as a general adherence to the economics of distribution. The identification of the poor becomes, then, an arbitrary matter. This arbitrariness is compounded by racial comparisons of black and white incomes without regard to regional, educational, vocational and intra-racial differences in income⁽³⁾.

"Blacks" and "whites" are simplistic and thus eminently misleading as statistical aggregates. For Gus Tyler, their use creates "the mischievous myth that poor means black and white means affluent"⁽⁴⁾. For "while it is true that a much higher percentage of non-whites than whites is officially poor, it is equally true that in 1968 two-thirds of the poor were white"⁽⁵⁾. In Tyler's view, the concentration on inter-racial differences obscures the general maldistribution of income prevailing in American society and foster a black-white polarisation at the level of political action. It is part of the establishment's policy of "divide and rule".

- 1) It is significant that it is among economists rather than sociologists that we witness a shift from intersubjectivity and values onto the economic structure. This may be a consequence of the sociologists' professional indifference to political economy. Ralf Dahrendorf, no political-economic angel himself, saw fit to criticise the anti-economic bias of sociologists. See Times Higher Education Supplement, 29th March, 1975, p. 24. It does appear that a basic premise of sociology "men live in society" is fictitious. Men produce in (and so create) society and their social behaviour should thus be taken in the context of economic production.
- 2) See especially Ben B. Seligman (ed.) *Poverty as a Public Issue* (The Free Press, New York, 1965).
- 3) It is related to the official practice of racially identifying applicants for insurance cards, welfare benefits, etc., which is perhaps the clearest case of the State's dissemination and consolidation of "race relations".
- 4) Gus Tyler "White workers Blue Mood" in Joseph Ryan ed. *White Ethnics: Life in Working Class America* (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1973) p. 125.
- 5) *Ibid.*

It should be pointed out that those studies of "the race problem" which focus on poverty have at least drawn attention to the income factor in the general economic situation of "blacks". Since income, however, is inextricably linked to employment, the labour market appears the legitimate point of departure for the explanation of low pay, unemployment, under-employment and general socio-economic deprivation. No retreat from racism, and racial discrimination has, however, taken place. Rather, an underlying neo-classical economic analysis has been made more explicit.

Within this tradition, the analysis of employment is made within the framework of the demand and supply of labour as well as the mechanisms of entry into the labour force. The demand for labour is seen as determined by all or either of these factors: the amount of capital resources, the level of demand for goods and the technique of production. The supply of labour is seen as influenced by such factors as the age structure of the population, the functioning of systems of education and individual training and wage rates. The second category, modes of entry into the labour market, is considered subject to the influence of non-economic factors such as kinship, community ties and tradition, and informal processes of selection⁽¹⁾.

In explaining levels and rates of unemployment economic textbooks generally point to industrial or cyclical fluctuations, the level of aggregate demand, the rapidity and frequency of technological change and declining industries, the level of development and state of the infrastructure of social services and the state of industrial relations, including Trade Union organisation⁽²⁾. These variables are, however, analysed as independent entities determining particular types of unemployment - frictional, lack of labour mobility, ignorance of job opportunities or sources of labour supply; seasonal as found in agriculture and holiday

- 1) See J. King, *Labour Economics* (MacMillan, London 1972).
- 2) B.J. McCormick and E. Owen-Smith (eds.) *The Labour Market* (Penguin, London 1968). A most comprehensive treatment is John F. Burton et al. (eds.) *Readings in Labour Market Analysis* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., New York 1971). Finally, there is J.M. Keynes' enormously influential, *The General Theory of Employment Interest and Money* (MacMillan, London 1970).

resorts; and structural which relates to demand deficiency, the price level and technological changes⁽¹⁾. It is our view that these conventional categories of economic analysis lack theoretical depth for unemployment is treated as the result of policy preference, or the psychological states of men within institutions. This illustrates the moral character of the analysis. The frame of mind of consumers, Trade Unionists, investors and Governments remains un-theorised and conflict among these institutions is treated as anomic phenomena, disturbing the normally healthy state of affairs. Keynes' "revolution" is simply a rejection of this conception of normality: the market is normally in disequilibrium.

However, neo-classical economic concepts can only be dispensed with at a level of analysis which does not take the labour market as the ultimate institutional axis of economic production. Their application to the study of the position of "blacks" on the labour market has recently begun to be challenged by radical economists, a challenge marred, however, by an indiscriminate use of racism and capitalism. One such study, falling somewhere between economic and sociological analysis, is Harold Baron's "dual labour market" thesis⁽²⁾.

Baron argued that in the metropolitan centres of America there is a racially dual labour market structure with a black sector (one-tenth to a quarter of the white) characterised by specific institutionalised and subordinated roles. The two labour markets are subject to different demand and supply forces. This, in Baron's view, explains the racial differentiations in earnings and occupational distribution as well as the separate institutions and procedures for recruitment, training and promotion of workers. The racial dualism of the metropolitan labour market is a salient

- 1) A major controversy in employment theory exists between the structural and aggregative theorists. The former sees unemployment as a consequence not of insufficient aggregate demand but of the transformations of the techno-structure. For discussions see A. M. Ross (ed.) *Unemployment and the American Economy* (John Wiley & Sons Inc., London 1964) and G. Peter Pinz, *Structural Unemployment Theory and Measurement* (Department of Manpower and Immigration, Canada 1969).
- 2) Harold Baron, "The Web of Urban Racism" in Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt (eds.) *op. cit.*

component of the web of urban racism, but it also functions to create a reserve army of labour and hence increasing profits for corporate capitalism. The black subsector is confined to providing a secondary labour force or "labour market flexibility" and it has specific consequences for black workers in the spheres of income and levels of employment. Thus black Americans are concentrated in low-paid jobs and declining industries, and suffer chronically and cyclically high levels of unemployment.

In seeing the black sub-sector as a dynamic entity, Baron was able to clarify the socio-economic differences among "blacks" as well as the fluctuations in their standards of living. As he wrote: "As a result of the extended economic boom, the wartime tight labour market and the change in public and private policies brought about by the civil rights movement, it is true that a top group of younger, better trained workers have improved their conditions enough in the last half dozen years to narrow the gap a little between themselves and their white competitors. A middle group of approximately one half of the black workers has managed to share tenaciously in the prosperity by maintaining its same relative position in regard to whites. However, even the extremely favourable current conditions have not been able to neutralise the effects of urban racism on the one third or more of the families in the cities that constitute 'the black under class' ⁽¹⁾. We may, therefore, say that in Baron's view, 'the race problem' concerns the socio-economic conditions of about 7 million blacks in America who are permanently trapped in the black subsector by the inexorable forces of urban racism and American corporate capitalism.

Baron's thesis itself may now be critically analysed. Above all, it is open to the criticism of remaining at the level of description by not logically linking its categories. Baron vividly depicted the experiences of some

1) *ibid*, p. 149. Support for this description comes from other quarters. During the 1960's unemployment among 'blacks' was almost twice that of 'whites', a situation which still holds today. Among black youth, between 30 and 40% are unemployed. See Charles H. Hession and Hyman Sardy, *Ascent to Affluence* (Allyn and Bacon Inc. Boston 1969) pp. 784-785. See also Tom Kahn, *The Economics of Inequality in L.A.* Ferman et al. (eds.) op. cit. U.S. Bureau of the Census Series, No. 54, op. cit., p. 23.

"blacks" on the labour market yet maintains that all "blacks" are victims of institutional racism. This is because of his commitment to Parsons' normative functionalism, for he is forced to conceive the racist value as a generalised ethos. Thus, his thesis rests on the race relations method of correlating skin colour and living standards to the exclusion of other socio-economic variables such as age structure, educational and professional qualifications, and their quality. This procedure also involves an indifference to demand factors in employment, the supply of labour, the ramified imperfections of the labour market as well as local labour markets. In other words, "the dual labour market" is based on a fictitious assumption that a Hicksian perfect market exists⁽¹⁾. He then attempts to demonstrate that the experiences of "blacks" on the labour market are enigmatic, peculiar, and a racist-inspired imperfection. Baron's analysis of residential patterns and the polity followed the same lines. The numerical strength of "blacks" in given residential areas and political offices is compared to their overall demographic concentration, or ratio to "whites". Disproportional representations are then seen as reflecting the operation of racist criteria, racial discrimination, or racial inequality. But how long have "blacks" lived in that city? What is their income level? Which "blacks" desire to have "whites" as neighbours? These issues Baron inconsistently ignores.

The point here is that the terms "black" and "white" are generalities needing considerable qualification if the universality and heterogeneity of the phenomena or situations they describe are not to be obscured⁽²⁾. Baron does not analyse these terms. Hence, his depiction of the situation of "blacks" on the labour market implies the non-existence of white labour exploitation. "Whites" appear as champions and beneficiaries of a complicity to oppress "blacks". Yet this "consensus" view of white society is inconsistent with Baron's admission that

- 1) See J. E. King, *op. cit.* Chs. 1 and 3.
- 2) As S. Zubaida puts it: "The categories of 'race', 'colour' and 'ethnicity' although they refer to group characteristics that may be socially salient are not necessarily adequate sociological designations. *op. cit.* p. 2.

"employers had fostered competition for jobs especially by employing blacks as strikebreakers", and his brief distinction between "whites" and "the dominant whites"⁽¹⁾. Thus Baron's approach obfuscates the phenomena of labour stratification and competition which have historically plagued the white working class⁽²⁾.

Baron, we have argued, has merely exploited one of the labour market's imperfections. More critical is his neglect of the observation that the labour market is an institutional manifestation of commodity production. Thus, he is forced to ignore other crucial markets (the capital and consumer markets) which combine to form the system of capitalist commodity production. In consequence, his analysis remains at best a description of certain "facts" of racial discrimination. Like every analysis within the race perspective it contains a hidden notion of racist motivation which allows a coquetting with a militant anti-racism. But even if we accept the dual labour market analysis as a general description of the channels of labour recruitment and the patterns of remuneration in a stratified and heterogenous labour market, there is still the possibility of regarding these phenomena not as a product of institutional racism, but part of the general problem of idle resources endemic to the atomistic form of extracting surplus value. For given a multiplicity of private owners of the means of production competitively involved with profit-maximisation, no equilibrium can be established between the level of aggregate demand and the utilisation of economic resources. Baron has no explanation of unemployment generally and thus resorts to "urban racism" as a substitute. For example, one type of unemployment for which he offers a racial explanation that among low-skilled workers could be accommodated under "queue-unemployment".

- 1) Harold Baron, "The Web of Urban Racism" in Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt (eds.) *op. cit.* pp. 21-22.
- 2) For example, as Karl Marx observed: "Every industrial and commercial center in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life". Letter to S. Meyer and A. Vogt in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Britain* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1953) p. 551.

This explains how unskilled jobs decrease not only relative to aggregate demand, but further, when firms demote their skilled workers into low job categories⁽¹⁾.

In Baron's interpretation one of the characteristics of the dual labour market was an occupational specialisation according to race with distinct advantages to "whites". For this results in a specific job classification (Negro jobs) and a "job-ceiling for Negroes". For Baron, this is an illustration of white racism. A less idealist approach would see it as employers attempting to cut costs, since occupational immobility at a certain level guarantees cheaper labour. This mode of allocating black labour is not racial discrimination for no doubt white labour is similarly utilised. The chronic vulnerability of black workers to this policy suggests that a structure operates to maintain them in reserve, i.e. as the latest entrants to the labour market with a distribution of skills and qualifications conducive to exploitation during cyclical, or unpredictable market vicissitudes.

Baron has appropriated the neoclassical treatment of the labour market as a unitary phenomenon in which the allocation of labour is a function of demand and supply. Any infraction of the laws of demand and supply appears to him as racial discrimination - the explanation of the labour situation of "blacks". But the problem is that, as some economists stress⁽²⁾, the various dimensions of labour market formation have discriminatory consequences for all workers. We have seen that the concept racial discrimination is poised ambiguously between two meanings: 'racially motivated discrimination' and 'choice between social categories which are defined as a race'. Baron's emphasis on racial discrimination is thus a clear admission that he has not analysed the problem of labour market

- 1) For a clear exposition, see Juanita M. Kreps, Gerald G. Somers, and Richard Perlman, *Contemporary Labour Economics: Issues Analysis and Policies* (Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc., California, 1974).
- 2) See Peter B. Doeringer and Michael J. Piore, *Internal Labour Market and Manpower Analysis* (D.C. Heath and Company Lexington, Massachusetts 1971); Milton Freedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1971).

discrimination. For example, P. Doeringer and M. Piore argue that the labour market comprises a multiplicity of internal labour markets which are intrinsically discriminatory: "In analysing the problem of employment discrimination and in developing remedies, internal labour markets play a central role. Such markets, as shown in earlier chapters, are designed intentionally to "discriminate". They do so by selecting workers at the points of entry and by conferring privileges upon the internal labour force not available to those in the external labour market. Discrimination arises because of the job security and advancement opportunities which exist for the internal work force and because of the economics of developing and retaining a trained work force which the internal market provides to employers. Discrimination, in this sense, has a clear economic and social rationale for both employers and workers and need not have racial implications"⁽¹⁾. Doeringer and Piore do, however, posit the occurrence of racial discrimination in the second meaning mentioned above, where "discrimination results in the exclusion of racial minorities from certain jobs"⁽²⁾. On the other hand, we find the authors perfunctorily conceiving "race as an explicit determinant in hiring and promotion patterns" and "a significant consideration in decisions affecting entry, internal allocation and wages"⁽³⁾. This confusion over motivation is a result of a general reluctance by labour market analysts to consider the labour market in relation to the capitalist market economy as a system of commodity production. Moreover, why not the profit motive?

This reluctance in turn can be explained with reference to the penchant for treating "the labour market" as an empirical phenomenon rather than a conceptual relation. It is noteworthy that labour market analysts have not produced a satisfactory definition of the labour

- 1) Peter Doeringer and Michael Piore, op. cit. p. 133.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 134. (Our emphasis, Y.W.)
- 3) *ibid.* p. 133. (Our emphasis, Y.W.)

market⁽¹⁾. In economic textbooks, a market is defined as a place where buyers and sellers meet. We would prefer its definition as an autonomous relation which dictates the responses of buyers and sellers. Either definition, however, precludes the geographic delimitation of a market. Moreover, since every quality of labour is a *sui generis*, the empirical identification and classification of labour markets is necessarily problematic. The labour market is a valid concept only as a conceptualisation of the movements of the value of labour power. Otherwise, it obscures the fact that the worker sells not his labour but his power to labour and merely facilitates attempts to empirically categorise "groups" of sellers of labour.

It may be argued that the relationship between labour and capital is the implicit crux of labour market analyses. Doeringer and Piore come close to the problem of wage labour in arguing that "internal labour markets are a logical development in a competitive market"⁽²⁾. Similarly, a technological paradigm has been developed which unwittingly focuses on competition between capitals as being responsible for the displacement of black labour from the U.S. economy⁽³⁾. This paradigm is organised around the observation of trends towards increasing capital intensity in

- 1) Or refuse to define it at all: See Lloyd C. Reynolds and Joseph Shister, *The Structure of Labor Markets* (Harper Brothers, New York 1951); Robert L. Bunting, *Employer Concentration in Local Labour Markets* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 1962). For working definitions, see Dale Yolden and Donald G. Peterson et al. *Local Labour Market Research* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1948).
- 2) Peter Doeringer and Michael Piore, *op. cit.* p. 39.
- 3) See The Ad Hoc Committee, "The Triple Revolution" in Eric From (ed.) *Socialist Humanism* (Doubleday and Co. Inc., London 1965); Sidney Wilhelm, *op. cit.* Ch. VI. As Karl Marx commented, "For capital the worker does not constitute a condition of production, but only labour. If this can be performed by machinery or even by water or air so much the better. And what capital appropriates is not the labourer but his labour - and not directly but by means of exchange". Eric Hobbshawn, *Pre-capitalist Social Formations* (Lawrence and Wishart, London 1964) p. 99.

economic production resulting in significant decreases in the need for human labour, especially unskilled labour⁽¹⁾. The accelerated development of automated technology has consequences not only for the level of employment but the spatial distribution of unemployment in that industrial location of long single-storey factories drifts away from expensive, core, urban areas into the suburbs. It means also a decreasing demand for semi-skilled and unskilled labour. The consequence of this "rationalisation of production techniques" for black workers, concentrated as they are in the central urban areas, is a growing redundancy of their labour⁽²⁾.

The central argument of the Committee is that a Third Industrial Revolution has ushered in a new economic era based on cybernetics. This cybernetic revolution has critical consequences for the consumer and labour markets. It decreases the amount of labour employed and increased output at the same time. The result is "a historical paradox" in which, "a substantial proportion of the population is subsisting on minimal incomes, often below the poverty line at a time when sufficient potential is available to supply the needs of everyone in the U.S."⁽³⁾. Thus, closely linked to the non-gratification of needs is the shrinking job market for both black and white workers. Black workers, the Committee pointed out, were seeking entry into a labour market which was not only vanishing but constituted a major break "on the almost unlimited capacity of a cybernated productive system"⁽⁴⁾. Sidney Willhelm

- 1) For useful distinctions between technology, technique, mechanisation and automation, see S.D. Anderman, *Trade Unions and Technological Change* (Allen and Unwin, London 1967) Ch. 3. See also Lance E. Davis and Richard A. Easterlin et al. (eds.) *American Economic Growth* (Harper & Row Publishers, N.Y. 1972) Part III, Ralph Gray and John M. Peterson, *Economic Development of the United States* (Richard D. Irwin Inc. 1974) Part IV, 11. F.J. Monkhouse, *The Material Resources of Britain* (Longman Group Ltd., London 1971) pp. 101-103. Eric Roll, *The World After Keynes* (Pall Mall Press, London 1968) p. 15.
- 2) It is significant that despite strident calls for a total ban on immigration Britain's immigration restrictions still admit professional and highly qualified "blacks".
- 3) *ibid.* p. 414.
- 4) The Ad Hoc Committee "The Triple Revolution" in Eric Fromm (ed.) *op. cit.* p. 414.

posits a similar thesis of a growing and inevitable redundancy of black labour. In his view, "the third technological era" means that "joblessness loses the peculiar quality of being a mere transitory moment that will fade upon the resumption of economic prosperity. The new technology informs the Negro of permanent, workless years even as the economy establishes new productive records and profits"⁽¹⁾. Negro workers are being discarded from the labour force by the juggernaut of automation in a context historically distinct from that of white workers.

Two aspects of this argument will be cited. Willhelm notes that the impact of technological realignments within American capitalism on white workers had been spread over the century up to the restrictions on white immigration in the early 20th century. White workers also shifted from agriculture to industry in a period when technological transformations in the latter were expanding job opportunities. On the other hand, the impact of the "new technology" displaces the black worker from agriculture and industry simultaneously. Willhelm's explanation of the different consequences for white and black workers emphasises "economic racism". He lacks a conception of capital and does not analyse the fact that the displacement of labour affects both white and black workers. It is the labour market which is being made redundant⁽²⁾. This introduces the second strand of Willhelm's argument.

Like the Ad Hoc Committee, Willhelm regards as a paradox the fact of occupational deprivation existing side by side with an unprecedented development of the productive forces: "Today, the gross national product - exceeding \$900 billion - is higher in real dollars than ever; personal incomes stand at peak heights; consumption of goods and services skyrockets; the absolute number of persons employed exceeds all previous marks; everything required for survival at a respectable standard is readily available from a productive standpoint; corporate profits and

- 1) Sidney Willhelm, *op. cit.* p. 166.
- 2) This Willhelm himself admits. He also observes that the rate and timing of technological changes are unpredictable and, correctly, that "technology itself does nothing except within the parameters of social meaning". *ibid.*, p. 137.

dividends are at new heights. Yet the literature on automation and the nation's economic activity provides a striking and overriding paradox: On the one hand, there is apparent bountifulness in the potential of automation, capable of providing living standards never before contemplated . . . The new technology permits liquidation of poverty, hunger and disease, eradication of housing, transportation, and clothing shortages; unimagined expansion of knowledge; extension of the human life span within the foreseeable future. Still, with this new technology man can enslave man . . . ⁽¹⁾. We shall see that these phenomena are paradoxical only in the context of a moral analysis of the capitalist mode of production within which the mode of appropriation and the conditions of distribution are conceived as a given, independent of capitalist relations of production. Thus, the Ad Hoc Committee appealed to President Johnson, while Prof. Wilhelm structured his argumentation around genocidal white racist motivations.

There are a number of reasons why analyses of the employment situation of "blacks" fail to explain, in the sense of demonstrating necessary relationships within a structure, their social and economic situation. Leaving aside the question of whether this situation is a legitimate object of study, "blacks" have been designated "poor" even during periods of "full employment" and indeed, given the fundamental relativism within both these concepts, such analyses must be infinitely regressive. For each could propose and describe 'black poverty' or 'middle class affluence' according to its peculiar criteria of normal living standards. Similarly, economists are by no means agreed as to what constitutes full employment or, for that matter, employment ⁽²⁾. Thus, they are not at all confident as to the

1) *ibid*, p. 161.

2) As Prof. A. Sen observed " . . . the question of measurement of employment has received remarkably little attention in economic history theory (it has come mainly in development economics and that only indirectly), and the limelight has been on the question of measurement of capital". *Employment Technology and Development* (Oxford University Press, London 1975) p. 4. John B. Wood, *How Much Unemployment* (IEA, London 1972). For analyses of the problems involved in defining and measuring unemployment, see Richard Perlman, *Labor Theory* (John Wiley and Sons, Inc., London 1969) Part three.

determinants of the level of unemployment. Indeed, the set of factors which is said to determine the level of employment is generally listed without any specific weighting. Given this state of affairs in economic theory, some labour market analysts find it convenient to cite racial or race-economic motivations in explaining the levels of black unemployment. For example, observe here how J. F. Kain conflates Trade Union discrimination, racial discrimination and labour market discrimination: "Labour market discrimination assumes a variety of forms. Negroes are barred altogether from some firms and industries. In other circumstances firms hire Negroes but only for low skilled, low-paying jobs and refuse to promote them. Other firms, while perhaps not consciously following discriminating practices restrict their recruiting to sources and methods that limit the number of Negro applicants. Still others sign labour agreements with discriminating unions. In many of these, Negroes are barred from training and apprenticeship programmes that are prerequisite to certain trades, occupations or skilled jobs"⁽¹⁾. Kain obviously means negative labour market and racial discrimination. But labour market discrimination, including lack of access to education and industrial qualifications, does not by itself, however explain the high levels of black unemployment⁽²⁾. In conditions of expansion, the demand for labour 'tightens' the labour market and it may then positively discriminate. Moreover, the educational and professional deficiencies of black workers illustrate the functional subservience of the distribution of skills to exogenous economic circumstances such as the rate of growth and investment policies, in a word, the demand for labour.

- 1) John F. Kain, (ed.), op. cit. pp. 17-18.
- 2) Peter Rossi succinctly states one of the reasons "No amount of up-grading of skills or increased quality of education is going to make a dent in a society which does not need the newly skilled workers ...". Cited by A. H. Halsey in Dorothy Weederburn (ed.) op. cit. p. 132. See also A. H. Halsey et al. (eds.), *Education, Economy and Society* (The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., New York 1967) Part II. For a depiction of the failure of retraining schemes to integrate unemployed 'blacks' into the labour market, see Juanita M. Kreps et al., op. cit. Chs. 24 and 25.

It may be said that the labour market analyses of the employment situation of black workers revolve around the two leading classifications of unemployment, the aggregative and the structural. Like in the queue theory of the firm's labour policy⁽¹⁾, however, there is no mention of the relationship between unemployment and the accumulation of capital. Their conception of unemployment is official, i. e. narrowed to the difference between the employed and reported unemployed. Moreover, these classifications are of disputed legitimacy. Thus, E. Gilpatrick argues that 'aggregate demand' explanation of unemployment is indistinguishable from the structuralist explanation: "structural and demand unemployment are so inter-related as to defy dichotomous enumeration"⁽²⁾. The use of concept of the reserve army of labour would eliminate many of the deficiencies within the orthodox labour market analyses of black unemployment. It has at least one important advantage. For the existence of a sizeable amount of hidden unemployment among the labour force is necessarily outside the purview of labour market analysis. The reserve army of labour concept, on the other hand, emphasises the general disparity between labour resources and labour force participation as contingent on the fluctuations in the demand for labour induced by the rigours of capital accumulation⁽³⁾. The concept of unemployment is thus widened to illustrate the general underutilisation of resources in capitalist processes of production. From this it follows that the labour market is too narrow a concept for the analysis of unemployment, or black unemployment.

- 1) As if in paraphrase of the reserve army of labour concept, the queue theory asserts that for employers workers are laid out on a spectrum of desirability with different groups faring differently according to the demand for labour and with respect to their position in the queue. Cf. Juanita Kreps et al., op. cit. p. 449. The constituting of these "groups" is not explained. Nor do the authors inform us what are the conditions of existence of the queue.
- 2) E. G. Gilpatrick, *Structural Employment and Aggregated Demand: A Study of Employment and Unemployment in the United States 1948-64* (The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore 1968) p. 215.
- 3) See below for an elaboration.

Indeed, Kain's analysis may even increase black unemployment in that implicitly the measures to be taken to solve the problem would be: a statutory minimum wage which could drive out of business those small firms which employ casual black labour; efforts to increase the competitiveness of black workers, which in turn displaces the unskilled worker; affirmative employment laws which leave the firm free to "discriminate" after employing a certain percentage of "minority group members".

Implicit in Kain's observations is the recognition that the social and economic problems which face "blacks" today are part of a larger set of related phenomena: the compulsion to maximise profit felt by investors, employers, cyclical fluctuations, the intrinsic underutilisation of the productive forces, and the theoretical and organisational immaturity of the labour movement. It is not a problem of the Negro, but one presented to him by the politico-economic and social conditions of capitalist commodity production. If there is a "Negro problem", it is because there are too many social scientists for whom political economy is terra incognita. The consequence is that the political economic theory which necessarily informs their social analysis remains untheorised⁽¹⁾. This professional aversion to political economy in favour of "the economics of the firm" can be seen in the context of the dominant tradition of pursuing a closer connection with a presumed real world.

It is a tendency reflected in the misunderstanding of the general problem of status stratification, and the concentration on discrimination in the labour market. The consequence for studies of the socio-economic situation of "blacks" today is the same in both cases, an emphasis on

1) A glance at major sociological texts on "social problems" confirms this view. See, for example, Harry C. Bredemeir and Jackson Toby *Social Problems in America* (John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York 1961); F. James Davis, *Social Problems* (The Free Press, New York 1970); Butterworth & Weir (eds.) *Social Problems of Modern Britain* (Fontana 1973); Russell R. Dynes et al. *Social Problems* (OUP, New York 1964) More radical interpretations of social problems, however, can be found in William J. Chambliss (ed.) *Problems of Industrial Society* (Addison-Wesley Pub. Co. Inc., London 1973) Howard S. Becker, *op. cit.*

"white racism", or a facile historicist conceptualisation, as typified by Ray Marshall on "Negro-Union Relationship": "Like most other racial problems the Negro Union relationship had its roots in slavery and Reconstruction"⁽¹⁾. Another common approach is that articulated here by Sidney Lens whose formulation straddles both "race prejudice" and "job-consciousness": "The labour movement is dedicated to end racial discrimination. But in many older unions there is still considerable racial prejudice. Such organisations are highly job conscious - both leaders and members want to control the number of skilled men entering the field every year. If the labour market becomes flooded with skilled men they know their rates will go down. For a long time therefore they excluded Negroes in part because of prejudice and in part because of their job consciousness"⁽²⁾. But which is the significant factor? Lens' ambivalence could be resolved by his specifying the relationship between "job-consciousness" and "prejudice" through an analysis of labour competition. Irwin Dubinsky comes close to this in interpreting general Trade Union discrimination with reference to the 'Trade Unions' Guild tradition and the "discrimination by default" which occurs as a result of 'Trade Unions withholding job-information from all potential applicants. Dubinsky too, however, emphasised "the outright racism" of Craft Unions⁽³⁾.

On the face of it the indictment of "racism" in the labour movement is justified. Ray Marshall and other students of "blacks" and the Trade Unions have catalogued a plethora of formal and informal processes of exclusion applied to black workers by "white dominated unions"⁽⁴⁾. This

- 1) Ray Marshall, *The Negro and Organised Labour* (John Wiley & Sons, New York 1965) p. 15.
- 2) Sidney Lens, *Unions and What They Do* (Pittman's Sons, N. Y. 1964) p. 154.
- 3) Irwin Dubinsky, *Reform in Trade Union Discrimination ...* (Praeger, New York 1973) pp. 25-26.
- 4) See Ray Marshall, *The Negro and Organised Labour* (John Wiley and Sons Inc., N. Y. 1965) Part II. Ray Marshall, *The Negro Worker* (Random House, N. Y. 1967). Robert C. Weaver, *Negro Labour: A National Problem* (Kennikat Press, N. Y. 1946) Ch. I, II and VII. Herbert R. Northrup, *Organised Labour and the Negro* (Harper and Bros., N. Y. 1971) Herman Feldman, *Racial Factors in American Industry* (Harper Bros. N. Y. 1931) Sterling D. Spero and Abram L. Harris, *The Black Worker* (Atheneum, N. Y. 1968) Milton Cantor, *Black Labour in America* (Negro Universities Press, Westpoint, Connecticut, 1969) S. Castles and G. Kosack, *op. cit.* Ch. IV.

Trade Union hostility to black workers is seen as tantamount to an historical paradox. As Julius Jacobson contends: "If principle and logic prevailed, there would be no conflict between the Negro working class and the trade union movement since they share basic interests and needs that eliminate all rational reasons for serious friction between them. The most obvious common denominator is the economic position of the working class, an objective that should benefit both Negro and white workers"⁽¹⁾. The Trade Union objection and opposition to black workers, therefore, constitutes an enigmatic irrationality traceable to America's turbulent racial history. Jacobson's view is not unrepresentative of the most common explanation of "white" opposition to "black" workers. However, are white workers being irrational and what are the conditions of their becoming rational? The failure to discuss this is a grave theoretical retreat which must be exposed as engendering a fatalistic political resignation. It is usually the case that when social scientific theories lack theoretical depth the postulate of "human irrationality" is invoked. The humanist definition, the "Negro problem", is an effect of this debility. It follows from the common conviction that prejudice is an unreasonable human sentiment which defies logical explanation.

The syllogism which apparently informs these studies which charge "racism" in the labour movement seems to be: Trade Unions are working-class organisations. Negroes are members of the working class. Hence, their exclusion by Trade Unions must be responsible to some psychological quirk or prejudice - racism. However, there are two assumptions contained in the premises which are of doubtful validity. It is assumed that:

- a) Trade Union organisation of the working class is, by definition, an organisation for the working class⁽²⁾.

In other words, there is in this assumption an economic

- 1) Julius Jacobson, *The Negro in the American Labour Movement* (Anchor Books, New York 1968) pp. 21-22.
- 2) This is a highly disputed assumption trenchantly questioned by, for example, V.I. Lenin. *What is to be done* (Progress Publishers, Moscow 1973).

conception of class interests.

- b) Trade Unions are structurally homogenous and that their responses to Negroes have been spatio-temporally uniform. This ignores the labour-policy differences between Craft and Industrial Unions⁽¹⁾ and the accelerated integration of the American Negro into the labour movement after 1930.

We would contend that these assumptions betray a superficial understanding of the relationships between Trade Unionism and ideology as well as capital and wage labour. In a word, we are faced here with the common neglect of wider theoretical issues in the analysis of the labour situation of "blacks".

For the economic situation of "blacks" is not merely a function of their labour market position. Their relatively high level of unemployment no doubt contributes to their material deprivation. However, a large number of goods and services is provided by various State and local

- 1) For detailed evidence of Craft Union exclusion policy see Sterling Spero and Abram L. Harris, *The Black Worker*, op. cit. Ch. IV, Jack Barbash, *American Unions, Structure, Government and Politics* (Random House, N. Y. 1967). According to Barbash, "the locus of discrimination is the craft unions and particularly the railroad and building trades unions", op. cit. p. 34. This view is confirmed in numerous other studies. See Scott Greer, *Last Man In: Racial Access to Union Power*. (The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois 1959) pp. 36-39. Sidney Lens, op. cit. p. 35. Ray Marshall, op. cit. pp. 128-129. On the other hand, the same author contends that Craft Unions were the only organisational mode of survival, "especially when Negroes were transported North by employers to be used either as strikebreakers, as cheap labour or in an effort to avert the unionisation of the enterprises", p. 21. I. Dubinsky attributes "the race riots" of East St. Louis in July 1917 to the strikebreaking policy of employers and the "racial" fanaticism of the A. F. L., op. cit. p. 26. Virtually every work cited here admits to "the equalitarian racial policy" of the CIO. But, see also Ray Marshall, *The Negro Worker*, op. cit. pp. 23-29 and James S. Olson, 'Race Class and Progress ... In M. Cantor (ed.) op. cit.

agencies so that the whole infrastructure of social services must be a relevant consideration. Secondly, certain patterns of economic inequality are independent of the labour market, for example inequality flowing from the ownership of property. Others are a result of endemic wage differentiation and would exist even if the so-called dual labour market were abolished. Finally, the level and movement of the prices of consumer goods are a crucial determinant of their availability. For all these reasons, the living standards of "blacks" must be analysed as part of an investigation of the prices of commodities. In effect, the explanation of black poverty is to be found in capitalist commodity production.

As we have seen, "Marxist" and radical writers do indict "capitalism" with the ultimate responsibility for "the race problem". Their expositions, however, are not satisfactory in that apart from the uncritical acceptance of the race relations perspective, their treatment of capitalism is unsystematic. O. C. Cox did not clarify the links between capitalism and "race relations" except for sporadic references to "the profit motive". The same can be said of Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, Harold Baron, Tom Christoffel⁽¹⁾, and the radical economists and sociologists who marginally discuss "racism" and "race relations" in their critique of modern capitalism⁽²⁾. This is one of the reasons why the thesis of capitalism being the cause of "the race problem" lacks plausibility and persuasiveness.

The weaknesses in Marxist dissertations are generally exploited

- 1) Tom Christoffel "Black Power and Corporate Capitalism" in E. N. Schwartz and Robert Ditch (eds.) *White Racism* (Dell Publishing Co., New York 1970).
- 2) See Howard Sherman, *Radical Political Economy: Capitalism and Socialism from a Marxist-Humanist Perspective* (N. Y. Basic Books Press 1975). Ernest Mandel "Where is America Going", *New Left Review* No. 59 Jan-Feb 1970. Martin Nicolaus, "Blacks: Students, Workers" *New Left Review* No. 54 March-April 1964. Raymond S. Franklin and William K. Taab, "The Challenge of Radical Political Economics" in *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. III No. 1, March 1974. Richard C. Edwards, Michael Reich & Thomas E. Weiskopf (eds.) *The Capitalist System: A Radical Analysis of American Society* (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1972). Victor Perlo, *The Economics of Racism* (International Publishers, New York 1975).

by race relations theorists to the effect that Marx's texts are seen as inapplicable to "race". Prof. Leo Kuper championed this orthodoxy in these words: "Marxist theory, in emphasising the class struggle as the major determinant of political change, conceives of racial discrimination and exploitation as an aspect of class relations. In terms of this perspective, race conflict will most probably be resolved, and racial equality established as part of the world proletarian revolution. However, the application of this theory in its pure form to specific situations of racial conflict raises serious difficulties. There is not only a failure in solidarity between workers of different race, but it is often workers of the dominant who demand the most extreme forms of racial discrimination. Moreover, members of the subordinate race, are generally economically differentiated and do not constitute a single class ... "(1). The theoretical confusions within this passage are formidable. We refer to Prof. Kuper's uncritical use of racial discrimination, exploitation and inequality as well as his suggestion that Marxist theory takes these categories for granted. This enduring falsification of Marx's mode of social analysis is compounded by the innuendo that Marxism cannot explain "the extreme forms of racial discrimination" demanded by "workers of the dominant race". Finally, there is the irresponsible arbitrariness of focusing on "the dominant race" without a single mention of the dominant class within that race .

The theoretical deficiencies of race relations analysis, however, cannot be an excuse for treating Marx's analysis of capitalism and capitalist society as biblical constructs. On the other hand, this analysis is often held in suspicion, or rejected on arbitrary, implausible and unclarified grounds. Admittedly, terms such as "capital", "capitalism" and "bourgeoisie" have been vulgarised by the emotional type of Marxism

- 1) Leo Kuper in UNESCO, op. cit. p. 9. For other facile dismissals of 'Marxism' with reference to "race (relations) problems", see Ira Katznelson, op. cit. p. 6. Robert Blauner, op. cit. p. 13. We say "facile" because the habitual procedure is to simplify Marx's analysis after which its irrelevance to "race" is easily demonstrated.

which Alvin Gouldner has mentioned⁽¹⁾. But this in itself is no justification for the peremptory dismissals of "Marxist theory" and "Marxism" which permeate the writings of race theorists in the sociological tradition. Indeed, it may be argued that the sociological tradition, including the texts of Durkheim, Weber and Simmel, remain trapped in the ideological forms of capitalist society and fails to explain the economic condition of "blacks".⁽²⁾ By an explanation we mean the demonstration of necessary relationships between phenomena or concepts, or of the absence of necessary relationships, such that the conditions of existence of the given phenomenon is implied, or specified. In this sense, Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production offers the most adequate set of concepts for the explanation of the social and economic conditions of "blacks". For his writings specify the mode of production within which the conditions which confront "blacks" would cease to exist.

- 1) Alvin Gouldner, *op. cit.* p. 6.
- 2) We have seen that the analysis of all the dimensions of "the black experience" must move to the economic level. On the other hand sociology appears concerned with the exclusion of the economic. As Gouldner puts it: "Although aspects of sociological analysis make tacit assumptions about scarcity sociology is an intellectual discipline that takes economics and economic assumptions as given and that wishes or expects to solve the problem of social order under any set of economic assumptions or conditions". Alvin Gouldner, *op. cit.* p. 94. See W.G. Runciman's similar protestations about sociology in *Social Science and Political Theory* (Cambridge Univ. Press, London 1965) p. 1. This problem is not unrelated to the frustrating diffuseness of fundamental sociological concepts such as "social action" and "social structure. Relatedly, the conceptions of capitalism put forward by Simmel and Durkheim are distinctly moral. Durkheim sporadically refers to the class war, saw "the conflict between capital and labour" as a manifestation of the anomic division of labour and regarded socialism as "a cry of pain". See Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in society* (The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois 1947) Book III, Chs. I and II. Weber's fetishisation of monetary forms of economic accounting leads him to argue for the general superiority of capitalist ("formal rationality") commodity production. *The Theory of Economic and Social Organisation* (The Free Press, New York 1966) pp. 205-210.

Marx's analysis, however, is susceptible to a variety of readings a susceptibility deriving from the different epistemological currents within "Capital" and, indeed, throughout his texts⁽¹⁾. Thus, "Capital is amenable to a historicist-evolutionary⁽²⁾, essentialist (the appearance-essence or, reality distinction) and structuralist re-constitutions. Moreover, in "Capital" the logical, historical and moral arguments are not always systematically separated. Finally, some of its concepts are inherently ambiguous, others Marx himself used ambiguously. These theoretical configurations all impinge on the development of a Marxist explanation of "race relations". Indeed, we hope to show that a 'Marxist explanation of race relations' is epistemologically untenable, except as a theoretical displacement of "race relations".

In the historical or evolutionist reading of "Capital", capitalism is regarded dialectically, as a necessary but transient stage in the development of human civilisation within which antithetical forces are inexorably operative⁽³⁾. Capitalism emerged from the womb of feudalism

- 1) It is to Althusser's credit that he drew attention to the problematic epistemological and theoretical structure of Marx's writings. Although his notion of epistemological breaks is unacceptably hermetic. Marx 'coquetted' throughout his life with not only Hegel but also with Spinoza and Feuerbach. Althusser's repudication of his earlier bifurcation instructive: 'When Capital Volume One appeared (1867), traces of the Hegelian influence still remained. Only later did they disappear completely: the Critique of the Gotha Program (1875) as well as the Marginal Notes on Wagner's 'Lehrbuch der politischen Ökonomie' (1882) are totally and definitively exempt from any trace of Hegelian influence". Lenin and Philosophy (New Left Books, London 1971)p. 90.
- 2) This may be said to be the kind of reading dominant in the 1960's. Certain works testify to this. R. Hilton, Capitalism, What's in a Name", Past and Present, No. 1. Feb. 1957; Maurice Dobb Studies in the Development of Capitalism (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1963). Eric Hobsbawm, Pre-capitalist Economic Formations, op. cit.
- 3) "The economic structure of capitalistic society has grown out of the economic structure of feudal society. The dissolution of the latter set free the elements of the latter". K. Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 715. In "Anti-Dühring", Frederick Engels posits history as a process of evolution whose laws of motion historical materialism extracts. Anti-Dühring (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1959) p. 43. Thus the frequent references to the disappearance of the peasantry in 16th and 17th century Europe and the universalisation of the wage relationship. See Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit. Part VIII, Vol. III, Chs. 20 and 27; Maurice Dobb, Studies in the Development of Capitalism, op. cit. Ch. 6. Eric Hobsbawm (ed.), op. cit. Introduction, pp. 67 and passim.

after the completion of processes of primitive accumulation and the creation of the free labourer⁽¹⁾.

The historical basis of capitalism is not mere private property, profit maximisation or accumulation ad infinitum. However much the growth of the system depends on these processes, they themselves are contingent on the epoch-making buying and selling of labour power. Capitalism should, therefore, be taken to mean a mode of production based on wage labour in which the products of labour are themselves commodities. Moreover, the augmentation of capital takes place precisely through the continuous extraction of surplus value or labour exploitation. Contrasting the feudal and capitalist modes of production, Laclau states: "The feudal mode of production is one in which the productive process operates according to the following pattern: 1. the economic surplus is produced by a labour force subject to extra-economic compulsion; 2. the economic surplus is privately appropriated by someone other than the direct producer; 3. property in the means of production remains in the hands of the direct producer. In the capitalist mode of production, the economic surplus is also subject to private appropriation, but as distinct from feudalism, ownership of the means of production is severed from ownership of labour power; it is that permits the transformation of labour-power into a commodity, and with this the birth of the wage relation"⁽²⁾. Thus, it appears, both historically and theoretically correct to regard the essential characteristic of capitalism as wage labour.

In emphasising the historically transitory nature of capitalism, Marx pointed to evolutionary processes of disintegration rooted in the contradictions which plagued the system. Capitalism, however, has an

- 1) As Marx puts it "...with capital. The historical conditions of its existence are by no means given with the mere circulation of money and commodities. It can spring into 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 history". *Capital*, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 170.ⁿ
- 2) Ernesto Laclau, "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America", *New Left Review*, May-June 1971, pp. 33-34.

historical *raison d'être*. It "sows the seeds of its own decay" reaching its developmental zenith through the unending revolutionising of the productive forces. For, inevitably, these processes of production become increasingly social and clash with the private ownership of the means of production. Given Marx's frequent references to historical facts and his explicit approval of an evolutionary review of "Capital"⁽¹⁾, Marxists cannot be reproached for stressing the developmental processes within capitalism⁽²⁾. This emphasis is also visible in the economico-historical analysis of "the race problem" carried out by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy. Capitalism had become "monopoly capital" and the transformation of its technostructure and the problem of realising the economic surplus best explain the fate of the Negro today.

Yet these changes in the technostructure are also the harbinger of the Negro's liberation from poverty. This thesis graces the works of contemporary radical, liberal and "free market" economists in the U.S. Modern "industrial capitalism" is seen as having reached its apogee in the development of the productive forces to the extent that the tradition of work for income, i.e. wage labour, was now in conflict with the productive forces. Proof of this is the American economy's deviation from the goal of economic organisation - a fuller gratification of human needs. While radical and liberal economists stress this moral failure, the neo-Keynsians focus on the problem of secular stagnation. The economy could produce far more than its distribution mechanism allows and this in turn limits the full employment of resources. The observations and propositions of these liberal and radical economists appear as vindications of Marx's historical analysis of capitalism. Robert Theobald, for example, argues for the abolition of money: "Provision of income as a right will bring us to understand that money itself is an anachronism in a cyberated era. Money was needed to ration scarce goods and industrial services in the past, but it is a highly unsatisfactory means of determining priorities in a cybernated

1) See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, op. cit. pp. 17-18.

2) See Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (Monthly Review Press, New York 1942).

era. Society will find it more satisfactory, in terms of scarce resources to distribute more types of goods and services without money payments"⁽¹⁾ Ralph Parkman cites an extensive literature which challenges traditional conceptions of work and leisure⁽²⁾. Milton Friedman is one of a number of economists who favour a "negative income tax" scheme which in some respects approximates the slogan "to each according to his need"⁽³⁾. But these theses do not approach the question of capitalist relations of production. Capitalist commodity production is not analysed theoretically so that the dislocative inflationary consequences of the artificial stimulation of demand are assumed to be a necessary price of growth. Moreover, the qualifications within the proposals acquire the flavour of strategies for economic stabilisation and "the regulating of the poor"⁽⁴⁾. James Tobin, for example, would have an income guarantee which alleviates poverty and at the same time maintains the incentive to work.⁽⁵⁾ However, the radicalism of these "neo-Keynesian solutions" to the general problem of unemployment and poverty is contained in their taking the level of development of the productive forces as their point of departure. Their profound limitation lies in their reluctance to examine capitalist relations of production and pose the question of the production of use values. In our context, what is noteworthy is the neglect of this economic literature by virtually every race relations text. Nor is this surprising, since the "explanation" of "race relations" consists in demonstrating their reality and naturalness.

- 1) Robert Theobald "The Guaranteed Income in Perspective", in Thomas A. Naylor (ed.), *The Impact of the Computer on Society* (Southern Region Educational Board, Atlanta 19) p. 64. For relevant bibliographical references, see Robert Theobald, *The Guaranteed Income: Next Step in Economic Evolution*, Doubleday Books, New York 1966).
- 2) Ralph Parkman, *The Cybernetic Society* (Pergamon Press, New York 1972), Ch. 3.
- 3) See Milton Friedman, *op. cit.*; Christopher Green, *Negative Taxes and the Poverty Problem*, The Brookings Institute, Washington D. C. 1967).
- 4) Cf. Frances Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Regulating the Poor* (Tavistock Publications, London 1972).
- 5) See James Tobin "Improving the economic status of the Negro", *Daedalus*, *op. cit.* pp. 889-895.

"Vulgar economy" Marx writes "... sticks to the appearances in opposition to the law which regulates and explains them"⁽¹⁾. Numerous other remarks on the distinction between appearances and the real movement of things have been interpreted as evidence that Marx operated with a realist epistemology⁽²⁾. Thus, Norman Geras contends that, for Marx, a scientific work should "uncover the reality behind the appearance which conceals it"⁽³⁾. If such a reconstitution of Marx is correct, then, for Marxists, "race relations" are appearances which Marxist theory can penetrate to the essential relations of capitalist society. Race would then be a "symptom" of capitalism. This thesis finds expression in: "...many of the pervasive social problems that we see around us - inequality, alienation, racism, sexism, militarism, destruction of environment, consumerism, imperialism, etc... - are significantly and systematically related to the economic institutions that make up a capitalist society. To understand how to deal with these problems and to achieve a better society, we must understand the internal structure and dynamics of capitalist society"⁽⁴⁾. These "social problems" are taken as empirical entities "that we see around us". Yet the first difficulty with this empiricist proposition is: how do we know when the reality is grasped? The answer to this question, given by Karl Popper, is that we never know. Thus, any empirical falsification of a theory is its invalidation. If the Marxist thesis is that racism is a symptom or a reality of capitalism,

- 1) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 307.
- 2) See Russell Keat and John Urry, *Social Theory as Science* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1975). Roy Bhaskar, *Realist Theory of Science* (Alma Book Company, Leeds 1975).
- 3) Norman Geras "Marx and the Critique of Political Economy" in Robin Blackburn (ed.) *Ideology in Social Science* (Fontana/Collins, London 1972) p. 285.
- 4) R. C. Edwards et al, (eds.) *op. cit.* pp. 3-4.
- 5) Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1963) p. 105. Popper, however, disagrees with "essentialism". For an assessment of Popper's "empiricist" epistemology, see Karel Williams, "Facing Reality: a Critique of Karl Popper's Empiricism", *Economy and Society*, Vol. 4, 1975. We would argue that the impossibility of Popper's position inheres in his assertion that certainty is impossible, while at the same time posing the existence of "reality" as certain.

the anti-Marxist position can merely point to instances of "race" in pre-capitalist or non-capitalist societies and the Marxist explanation becomes untenable. We need hardly add that this is the standard repudiation of the Marxist explanation of "race relations", effective because Marxists have entered "enemy terrain", i.e. "race relations". Secondly, what are the "internal dynamics of modern capitalism" which would explain "race relations" - the capitalists' drive for profit, the law of value, competition, monopoly capital, the reserve army of labour? Why are these concepts more real than others, such as commodity production, wage labour and the class struggle. Finally, the realist reading necessarily lapses into a concept of monocausality. Thus, it is highly significant that each Marxist text on "race relations" emphasises a different essence, or constituent of capitalism. The "racist capitalism" of radical theorists is also an effect of the essentialist reading. For, in order to 'materialise' racism, it is then possible to link it with what is considered the essential feature of capitalism, generally the motive of the capitalist.

It may be observed that the historical and essentialist readings belong to the same epistemological genus⁽¹⁾. Their question is: what is the essential characteristic of modern capitalism. To answer this question it is necessary to investigate history, necessarily, the feudalism from which it emerged⁽²⁾. The debate between Sweezy and Dobb is part of this project. The feudal past is investigated in order to prove the core constituent of capitalism as being wage labour (Dobb) or, on the other

- 1) Paul Sweezy cited Hegel with relish: "In the process of scientific understanding, it is of importance that the essential should be distinguished and brought into relief in contrast with the so-called non-essential. But in order to render this possible we must know what is essential ...", *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, op. cit. p. 12. The following works also belong to this tradition: Werner Sombart, *The Quintessence of Capitalism*, (Howard Fertig, New York 1967); Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, op. cit. For a Weberian counterpart to the Sweezy-Dobb debate, see Robert N. Green, *Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics* (D.C. Heath and Company, Boston 1959).
- 2) See Paul Sweezy et al., *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (New Left Books, London 1976).

hand, market trade (Sweezy)⁽¹⁾.

As testimony to the elusiveness of historical essences, the debate shifted to the essential feature of feudalism where a similar difficulty emerged in that historians could produce no certainty as to what is feudalism⁽²⁾. It is at this point that interest in the debate waned, or rather, diminished to be rekindled, however, by Andre Gunder Frank and Ernesto Laclau⁽³⁾. In our view, the most significant feature of this "historical" controversy is Laclau's generally unnoticed substitution of the capitalist and the feudal modes of production for "capitalism" and "feudalism". Laclau's break is important for an understanding of Eugene Genovese's entombment in the psychological essence of slavery in the Americas. Genovese's renowned ambivalence over the relationship between slavery and capitalist production suggests an interpretation as that of a "Marxist" theorist caught in a paradigm shift. Structuralist concerns were affecting at least "European Marxists", and capitalism was being replaced with the capitalist mode of production. Genovese was, however, and still is, within the historicist-realist problematic and its concomitant idealist methodology: History is the recapturing of historical reality as the actors themselves experienced it. The task of the historian is to observe, ex-

- 1) We may note here a certain conceptual looseness among the protagonists and even visible in Ernesto Laclau's emphasis on "wage labour", *op. cit.* Marx distinguished between the labourer, the free labourer, and the wage labourer, who was not merely employed for money wages, but produced capital. See Eric Hobsbawm (ed.), *Pre-capitalist Economic Formations*, *op. cit.* pp. 99-120. When these distinctions are not adhered to the debate necessarily becomes inconclusive.
- 2) See Owen Lattimore "Feudalism in History" *Past and Present*, 12, 1957. Eric Hobsbawm speaks of a vast category of "feudalism" which spans the continents and the millennia and ranges from, say, the emirates of Northern Nigeria to France in 1788, from the tendencies visible in Aztec society on the eve of the Spanish Conquest to Tsarist Russia in the nineteenth century", *op. cit.* p. 63.
- 3) See Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (Monthly Review Press, New York 1969), Ernesto Laclau, *op. cit.*

tract and record these experiences. Historical explanation is thus reduced to a search for an ethos since these experiences are actuated by ideas and culture. What gives Genovese's work a Marxist flavour is his premature appropriation of the tentative results of the Sweezy-Dobb debate. Payments in kind are evidence of a natural economy, within which a paternalistic ethos could function; money payments, proof of a ruthless capitalist calculation. We may understand why Genovese works border on an apology for the South and why he insists that Northern capitalism introduced a more iniquitous racism.

Cast in chronological and factorial terms of reference, the Sweezy-Dobb debate over the essential characteristics of feudalism and capitalism can now be seen to have artificially separated moments of a single phenomenon - "the long duration of feudal production"⁽¹⁾. Banaji's analysis is a critical refutation of the characterisation of "the feudal mode of production" as a natural economy to which a commodity economy can be counterposed. The purpose of Marxist theoretical abstractions, he insists, is the identification of processes. Simple abstractions, à la Sweezy, Dobb et al., and "metaphysical scholastic formalism which deduced its 'modes of production' from the simple categories present in various epochs of production"⁽²⁾ cannot identify the laws of motion of the social process. This identification leads to evolutionism when simple abstractions are utilised. A particular factor is seized upon at a particular time in history, for example, wage labour, which is then regarded as a watershed in the transition to a different mode of production. Yet, as Banaji shows, as a matter of historical record, there were significant pockets of slavery and wage labour within feudal enterprises.

The difficulties with the historical analysis are formidable, and indeed, the most popular repudiations of Marxism have come from within this reading⁽³⁾. Firstly, since capitalism's downfall is inevitable, no criteria of adequate political strategies need be formulated: the development of

- 1) Jarius Banaji, "The Peasantry in the Feudal Mode of Production: Towards an Economic Model", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, April 1976.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. 304.
- 3) See Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1957). *The Open Society and its Enemies*, 2 Vols. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1962).

analyses of revolutionary class consciousness and the concept of a socialist mode of production is not seen as a necessary condition of struggle. Given this theoretical vacuum, sociologists construct theories of social change around the problem of identifying a sovereign element in history. Either of two was found: technology and man. Marxism is criticised for being a technological determinism and countermanded with the actors meaning as the motive force of civilisational development. It may be said that "capitalist" as a term of abuse constitutes a direct result of the historicist reading and the criticisms of it. And since the focus is on the capitalist, as a man, a certain legitimization of the notion of historical white exploitation becomes unavoidable.

Louis Althusser's intervention appears to be an abnegation of the historicist tendency paving the way for historiography without history, and modes of production without a problematic causation. A more than brief exposition of the promise of Althusser's reading of Marx is not necessary to our analysis. Thus, suffice to say that Althusser rejects the Hegelian totality with its expressive ideational causation in favour of a structuralist totality in which elements were both subordinate and relatively autonomous. Thus, contradictions are multi-levelled and processes within the structure are over-determined. The dimensions of cause and effect are therefore not distinct: "... the effects are not outside the structure are not a pre-existing object, element or space in which the structure arrives to imprint its mark: on the contrary ... the whole existence of the structure consists of its effects In short ... the structure, which is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements is nothing outside its effects"⁽¹⁾. Within this epistemological and theoretical re-situating of Marx's texts, the notion of historical continuity collapses. A structure possesses differential temporality at its levels so that its transmutation cannot be explained within linear periods, and a de-centred dominance in which subjects are triggers. History does not have active subjects.

Etienne Balibar's attempt at de-historicising Marx took the form

1) Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, op. cit. p. 189,

of an extraction of a set of invariant elements of the mode of production. These elements form an atemporal combination which defines the economic structure of every society⁽¹⁾. Balibar interprets Marx's method in the following manner: "Marx's aim was to show that the distinction between different modes is necessarily and sufficiently based on a variation of the connexions between a small number of elements which are always the same. The announcement of these connexions and of their terms constitutes the exposition of the primary theoretical concepts of historical materialism, of the few general concepts which form the rightful beginning of his exposition and which characterize the scientific method of Capital, conferring on its theory its axiomatic form; i.e. the announcement of a determinate form of this variation, one which directly depends on the concepts of labour-power, means of production, property, etc., is a constantly necessary presupposition of the 'economic' proofs in Capital".⁽²⁾ History, i.e. change, is constituted by the displacement of the element-labourers, non-labourers and means of production. The uniquely contradictory nature of the capitalist mode of production rests on the dual force of two rules of combination, property connection and appropriation connection. For the worker is maximally separated from both the instruments of labour and the products of labour, a separation which increases with the development of capitalism and which guarantees the displacement of its property and real appropriation connection.

The denial of even a historiography in "Capital" is manifest in the work of Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst who themselves are sharply critical of Althusser and Balibar⁽³⁾. Their text initiates a total rupture with the orthodox Marxist debate over the essential characteristic of capitalism. The debate can now be seen as the effect of an empiricist question: what is the major feature of modern capitalism? Posed in this way, the conditions of existence of the capitalist mode of production cannot be investigated. Thus, the debate is extraneous to the class struggle. Capitalism is a concept.

1) *ibid*, p. 215.

2) *ibid*, p. 225.

3) Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *op. cit.*

It has neither essence nor history, however much its analysis may involve historical illustrations. Althusser's structuralism is conceived as an essentialism in disguise, and his reconstitution of Marxism as "a science of history" a capitulation to Spinoza's epistemology⁽¹⁾. Similarly, Balibar's general theory of modes of production is rejected as a contradictory combination of eternal and transitional modes of production⁽²⁾. What Hindess and Hirst do not emphasise is that Althusser's epistemological position is a realist variant of empiricism. Althusser rejects the project of theoretical validation via a correspondence between thought and the real object. However, he conceives thought as appropriating the real-concrete⁽³⁾. Men can therefore write real history and transform it into a science⁽⁴⁾. But how is the appropriation of the real object to be identified?

Althusser's criticism of Marx's totality is not a theoretical act but a demonstration of guilt by association, with Hegel. Marx's totality within which elements are organised around a principal contradiction, that between capital and labour, is replaced with a Spinozist totality comprising relatively autonomous and overdetermined elements. This conception provides no basis for ascertaining the transformation of the totality as opposed to the displacing of its instances. Since there is no concept of significant contradiction - as in Parsons' structural functionalism and Simmel's conflict sociology - the instance which could dissolve the totality is unidentifiable. Thus, within Althusser's structural analysis, the capitalist social formation is characterised by a multiplicity of overdetermined conflicts fused by an absent economic instance. As Glucksman observes: "he is not very specific about how in a revolutionary situation, the overdetermined

1) *ibid.*, p. 316.

2) *ibid.*, p. 274.

3) Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *op. cit.* p. 56.

4) The marriage between history and structural analysis is well expressed by M. Godelier "A history is possible, and can be scientific only on the basis of results won by preliminary structural research, and the results of these historical researches will also contribute to the development of structural research". *Rationality and Irrationality in Economics* (New Left Books, London 1972) p. XXXIII.

contradiction actually fuses into mass action, and implies that this occurs only through political activity, so revealing the tendency to overpoliticisation or voluntarism. In his scheme the fusion of the contradiction appears to result in the disappearance of the structure in domination and Althusser provides no indication of how fusion is effected at the political level and of how the masses and subjective experience and consciousness are interfused with objectively existing contradictions⁽¹⁾. This political sterility follows logically from Althusser's historical materialism. What is not recognised is that relevance to class struggles is not guaranteed by the assumption of either history, or a concrete reality. Rather, theoretical investigations are relevant in so far as they are internally coherent, a condition which neither "history" nor "reality" assures.

The structuralism of Althusser, Balibar and Godelier presupposes a reality which, in their view, empiricism confuses with the observable, but which can only be appropriated through abstraction. But this presupposition is itself empiricist for it treats "reality" as an atheoretical object which is the common theoretical object of all analyses. The structural perspective would concede the reality of racial, ethnic and class conflicts and offer interpenetrating, or materialist explanations of them. In Althusser's case, the economy is determinant in the "last instance". The reality of these conflicts is an empirical given. They are seen as social events not theoretical constructs. In this very empiricism lies the source of the atomisation of the working class.

Our questioning of "reality" is not an idealist exercise which must degenerate into solipsism. Rather, it is a strategy similar to that which has shown "facts", "truth" and "history" of their imputed epistemological authority. Berkeley's immaterialism and Hegel's idealism are both based on the assumption of a theoretically-free world. The former's concern is with the relationship between matter and perception; the latter's, world

- 1) Miriam Glucksman, *Structuralist Analysis in Contemporary Social Thought: A Comparison of the Theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Louis Althusser* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1974) p. 130.
- 2) See I. C. Tipton Berkeley, *The Philosophy of Immaterialism* (Methuen, London, 1974) p. 11.

historical development and the Spirit. These are both empiricist projects claiming to study the given. To question the status of "reality" is asking for clarification of whether it means objects that are: independent of an individual's perception, independent of human consciousness, or a supra-theoretical entity. The first meaning does not define reality as an entity opposed to ideas. Thus, social theories can also be regarded as reality.

"Reality" in the last two senses is self-contradictory: an object independent of all human perception presupposes a perception of it, and an object independent of all theories can only be a theory of God.

Althusser is not faithful to his notion of a "symptomatic reading", for his reconstruction of the system of concepts underlying the words in Marx's texts retains "history" and "reality" as Marx's concepts. To be sure, they are Althusser's. What, then, of his structuralism? Glucksman distinguishes between structural and structuralist approaches: "The former is explicitly empiricist, the latter anti-empiricist"⁽¹⁾. In this sense Althusser is not a structuralist, but a structural theorist. Realism, a variant of empiricism, is structural⁽²⁾. It posits an exogenous reality, or appearances, whose structure is to be discovered and extracted via the application of theory. It is empiricist in that an atheoretical reality is assumed. The structuralist approach interrogates the very concept of reality by analysing the epistemology of texts which asserts its presence. The crucial question is: is there a structural as well as a structuralist Marxism? Or, going further, is it possible to speak of "Marxism" in view of the epistemological and methodological heterogeneity of Marx's texts? On the other hand, this heterogeneity ceases to be problematic if placed in the context of Marx's intellectual development, and his struggle against bourgeois

1) *ibid*, p. 46.

2) This is not arbitrary. For if a structure is a relationship visible in its effects, then the effects of reality can only be discovered by investigating the concept itself. To say that a given phenomenon is real is merely to say that it is a fact of a given theory. At this stage the validation of the fact is yet to be carried out.

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economists and necessary residences on their terrain. For example, Marx entered "history" in order to demonstrate the specific conditions of existence of the capitalist mode of production. For: "It would be inexpedient and wrong therefore to present the economic categories successively in the order in which they have played the dominant role in history. On the contrary, their order of succession is determined by their mutual relation in modern bourgeois society and this is quite the reverse of what appears to be natural to them or in accordance with the sequence of historical development. The point at issue is not the role various economic relations have played in the succession of various social formations appearing in the course of history; even less is it their sequence "as concepts" (Proudhon) (a nebulous notion of the historical process), but their position within modern bourgeois society." (1) Does Marx rescue, reject, or reconstitute history, as a science? Either activity divests the term history of its canonical and demiurgic status and leads to the recognition of the need to construct other modes of theoretical proof. In this sense, Marx's historical illustrations and evolutionism are not Hegelian residues but necessary theoretical preliminaries which carve out the terrain for him to construct a concept of the capitalist mode of production.

Marx's texts, then, are not historical investigations. If they constitute a "science of history" it is exclusively in Marx's emphasis on the present as the key to the understanding of the past. Indeed, a relatively unknown passage from the "Grundrisse" may be cited: "In order to develop the laws of bourgeois economy ... it is not necessary to write the real history of the relations of production. But the correct observation and deduction of these laws, having themselves become in history, always lead to primary equations ... which point towards a past lying behind this system. These indications together with a correct grasp of the present then offer the key to the understanding of the past - a work in its own right which, it is to be hoped, we shall undertake as well"⁽²⁾. To begin with "the laws of

- 1) Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, (Lawrence and Wishart London 1971) p 213
- 2) Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, (Allen Lane, London 1973) pp. 460-461. See also Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, op. cit. pp. 210-211. As Eric Hobsbawm observed: "Marx concentrates his energies on the study of capitalism, and he dealt with the rest of history in varying degrees of detail, but mainly in so far as it bore on the origins and development of capitalism", op. cit. p. 20.

bourgeois economy" is not methodologically arbitrary. For the "genesis of capitalism" presupposes the specification of capitalist social relations of production. This is extremely important. For the development of the concept of the (capitalist mode of production thereby becomes the precondition and basis of any "historical" writing within the Marxist tradition⁽¹⁾.

Within a structuralist reading, it is possible to argue that Marx has no concept of reality⁽²⁾, or history. When he writes of an essence, or the real behind the appearances, he means necessary relationships which the empiricism of political economy obscures. Political economy has a concept of reality. This is why it sticks to appearances; namely, it constructs concepts whose adequacy is measured according to their correspondence to reality. But appearances are nothing but the conceptions of political economy in the same sense as "race relations" are the dominant conceptions derived from the theoretical practice of an empiricist social science. Marxists are not to penetrate "race relations" in the sense of admitting to their real existence and exposing their material substratum. Rather, their epistemological and theoretical lineage should be laid bare as a precondition to changing the terrain and the object of study. For if "... the relation between wage labour and capital determines the entire character of the mode of production"⁽³⁾, then, it is wage labour which constitutes the germ of class antagonisms. On the other hand, social science creates and classifies different antagonisms under such rubrics as poverty, deviance, industrial relations, race relations, sex relations, and so on. The question is: why are these problems regarded not as the product of a particular epistemology, but as the realities of life?

We stressed the "development" of the concept of the capitalist mode of production in view of the absence in Marx of a systematic use of

- 1) This viewpoint can be found, for example, in Eric Hobsbawm: "Marx concentrated his energies on the study of capitalism, and he dealt with the rest of history in varying degrees of detail, but mainly in so far as it bore on the origins and development of capitalism", op. cit. p. 20.
- 2) Note that "Capital" is subtitled "A Critique of Political Economy"; as texts, that is.
- 3) Karl Marx, Vol. III, op. cit. p. 880.

the term mode of production. We would draw attention to Marx's random geographic and chronological designations of modes of production - "Asiatic" and "ancient" - which suggest that he had not thought out its specificity as a concept. Louis Althusser says as much: "Marx did give us any theory of the transition from one mode of production to another, i.e. of the constitution of a mode of production"⁽¹⁾. Jarvis Banaji contends that the concept mode of production has two distinct meanings. The first is simply the labour process. The second is "a broader and more specifically historical meaning. Modes of production are variously called: 'forms of production', 'forms of the social process of production', 'epochs' in the economic development of society', 'epochs of production, periods of production'⁽²⁾. Banaji, however, does not attempt to resolve this ambivalence. This is an unsatisfactory state in which to leave the issue. For then, the field is left open for the empirical identifying of a mode of production and the problem of the relationship between the productive forces and relations of production remains enigmatic.

The empirical conception of a mode of production reduces the concept to a national economy. A mode of production is seen as a regional instance of a more general phenomenon, for example, "a system of production"⁽³⁾. Discussions deriving from this conception would revolve around the manner in which the capitalist mode, i.e. European economies or urban industrial enclaves in the 'Third World' impinge on "non-capitalist" or "traditional" modes of production⁽⁴⁾. We may observe here how Dorothy Smith attempts to transcend the regional conception: "... we do not begin with the notion of the mode of production as a distinct institutional zone, roughly equatable with that of economies but with the concept of the mode of production as the basic organisation of the society, and thus with the family as one aspect of the social

1) Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *op. cit.* p. 197.

2) Jarvis Banaji, *op. cit.* p. 301.

3) Ernesto Laclau, *op. cit.*

4) See Ivar Oxaal, Tony Barnett and David Booth (eds.) for stimulating discussions of these issues, *Beyond the Sociology of Development: Economy and Society in Latin America and Africa* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1975).

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relations which are determined by the mode of production"⁽¹⁾. Smith does, however, lapse into a technicist conception in arguing that: "The term industrialisation identifies, though rather loosely, a mode of production"⁽²⁾. Here modes of production are defined in terms of the instruments used within the labour process. The concept of relations of production is omitted and the particular forms which these instruments may assume are thus ignored. For Norman Long, a mode of production is "... that complex made up of the forces of production (i.e. technical rules, resources, instruments of labour, and labour power) and the social relations of production ... These social relations are principally defined in terms of the ownership and control of the means of production and of the social product. Thus, in theoretical terms a mode of production equals the combination of social relations of production and the level of development of the productive forces: comparing for example, the capitalist with the feudal mode we find that both systems exhibit quantitatively different relations and forces of production"⁽³⁾. In this definition, emphasis is on the combination of social relations of production and the productive forces. In his conclusion, however, Long abandons the combination and emphasises production relations contending that 'in non-hacienda zones there exists a multiplicity of modes based on capitalist semi-capitalist, and non-capitalist production relations'⁽⁴⁾.

A mode of production as an economy is a residue of the empiricist search for an economic counterpart to the politically sovereign nation-state. It creates insuperable theoretical difficulties in defining economic "sovereignty", "dependence", and "underdevelopment"⁽⁵⁾. The empiricist conception cannot

- 1) Dorothy Smith "Women, the Family and Corporate Capitalism", Berkeley Journal of Sociology, Vol. XX, 1975), pp.55-56.
- 2) *ibid.* p. 56.
- 3) Norman Long, "Structural Dependency, Modes of Production and Economic Brokerage in Peru", in Ivar Oxaal et al. (eds.) op. cit. p. 267.
- 4) *ibid.* p. 278.
- 5) See Philip J. O'Brien, "A Critique of Latin American Theories of Dependency" in Ivar Oxaal et al. (eds.) op. cit.

explain why similar techniques or means of production structure different relationships between agents. For industrialisation conduces the possibility of both labour exploitation and its abrogation and its tempo is not independent of property forms. The failure to contemplate the relationship between the relations and forces of production is manifested in the frequent substitution of "relations of production" with "social relations of productions". Given the generality of the term "social relations", the social relations of production may be conceived as the mode of appropriation, property relations, relations within the labour process, relations of distribution, etc. Yet can relations of production be non-social? Is not sociality already implicit in "relations"? Marx writes: "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production"⁽¹⁾. Relations of production independent of men's will can only be theorised at the level of value effects for they are not social-intentional. Therefore, there can be no definition of the relations of production except with reference to these effects, i. e. the nature or value form of the goods produced.

Our reading is opposed to that suggested by Hindess' and Hirst's postulate of an articulated combination such that "There can be no definition of the relations or of the forces of production independently of the mode of production in which they are combined"⁽²⁾. The authors intervene in this discussion at two specific levels. Like Balibar, they regard the "Preface" as strongly Hegelian. At the same time, however, they reject Balibar's Spinozist conception of mode of production. "To the Hegelian conception of the mode of production whose very reproduction is also a moment of its dissolution Reading Capital opposes the Spinozist conception of mode of production as eternity. In the one conception the structure produces its dissolution as a necessary effect, in the other it produces as effects its own conditions of existence. Nothing in the latter concept can entail its dissolution."⁽³⁾

- 1) Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, op. cit. p. 20.
- 2) Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, op. cit. p. 11.
- 3) *ibid.* p. 274.

More important, however, is their definition of a mode of production: " ... an articulated combination of relations and forces of production structured by the dominance of the relations of production. The relations of production define a specific mode of appropriation of surplus labour and the specific form of social distribution of the means of production corresponding to that mode of appropriation of surplus labour ... 'Forces of production' refers to the mode of appropriation of nature, that is, to the labour process in which a determinate raw material is transferred into a determinate product"⁽¹⁾. Thus, the productive forces are not the elements of the labour process but their articulation.

The second point of their intervention stresses the necessity of establishing the correspondence between the forces and relations of production in defining any particular mode of production. That is to say, the validity of the concept mode of production as an articulated combination of corresponding forces and relations of production depends on the demonstrating of a logical necessity between the articulation of the elements of the labour process and the mode of production of surplus labour. Proof of the existence of the existence of the primitive communist, ancient, slave and feudal modes of production is then adduced within the concepts of this theory of modes of production.

We do not think Hindess and Hirst have satisfactorily resolved the question of the relationship between the relations of production and the forces of production.

We contend further that their concept of a mode of production has the character of a static model because of their category of a general correspondence. Marx has no concept of a general mode of production. The "Preface" does not represent a concatenation of invariant corresponding forces and relations of production. The relations of production are not combined into a model of economic organisation. The relations of production are "appropriate" to a given stage in the development of material productive forces. Every stage has an appropriate set of production relations, and thus, indeed, Marx nowhere speaks of a general correspondence between

1) *ibid.* pp. 9 - 10.

the productive forces and the relations of production⁽¹⁾. A general concept of mode of production presupposes a general correspondence between the relations and the forces of production. For Marx, such a correspondence is ruled out by class conflict, class conflict which furthers the development of the productive forces: "Without conflict, no progress: that is the law which civilisation has followed to the present day. Until now the forces of production have developed by virtue of the dominance of class conflict"⁽²⁾. The exploitation of labourers and the utilisation of natural elements generate the development of labour productivity to the point where living labour becomes unnecessary to economic production. Under this condition there would be no mode of production⁽³⁾, and thus there can be no general concept mode of production.

Their definition of the forces of production collapses the concept into the occupational distribution of functions within the labour process. Similarly, the relations of production are conceived as the social division of labour. The authors then argue: "The concept of a determinate labour process is sufficient to define a technical differentiation of functions between the agents of production, but it is impossible to deduce a determinate social

- 1) This "correspondence" may be a question of "translation". For example, "entsprechen" is translated correspondence in Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (W. W. Norton and Co. Ltd., New York 1972) p. 4. and Michael Evans, *Karl Marx* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London 1975) p. 61. However, in Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, op. cit., "appropriate" is the translation of "entsprechen". Correspondence is obviously stronger than appropriate to, and not a few political scientists and sociologists cling to the former in order to demonstrate ambiguities, or inconsistencies in the "Preface".
- 2) Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Work*, Vol. 4, pp. 91-92 cited in Michael Evans, *Karl Marx*, op. cit. p. 79.
- 3) This assertion raises the problem of the operation of the law of value in a communist mode of production. We would argue that it operates in the so-called lower phase, i.e. commodity production orchestrated by the proletarian dictatorship. The literature on this problem is hardly extensive. See, however, Wlodimierz Brus, *The Market in a Socialist Economy* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1972). Charles Bettelheim, *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1975).

division of labour from these functional differences"⁽¹⁾. The forces of production are here reduced from the mode of appropriation of nature to functional differences in the technical division of labour and, similarly, relations of production are conceived as social division of labour. It then becomes "impossible" to deduce the latter from the former. This impossibility, however, is based on a tautology. The productive forces are defined as the articulating of their elements by the relations of production. By definition, then, there is a unity which precludes the possibility of assigning a "primacy" to either productive forces or relations of production. Moreover, in raising the question of primacy the authors implicitly problematise the notion of corresponding forces and relations of production. In ignoring the stage of development of the productive forces, Hindess and Hirst are forced to argue for both correspondence and primacy. What is the nature of this primacy in the light of their emphasis on correspondence and combination? What articulates the relations of production? Class struggle. What articulates class struggle? Here there must be a silence, or we are faced with a circular return to the relations of production.⁽²⁾

The authors are also inconsistent in their characterisation of the relationship between modes of production and modes of appropriation. This inconsistency is hidden by the non-specification of the terms: forms of the mode of production, forms of appropriation of the surplus product variant and forms of a determinate mode of production. These terminological shifts allow a theorist infinite latitude in positing specific relationships. Not surprisingly, then, the authors could claim that "the mode of appropriation of the surplus product can serve as an initial index of the existence or non existence of a mode of production"⁽³⁾, admit to two modes of appropriation⁽⁴⁾ and yet construct concepts of four determinate modes of production. Furthermore, the mode of appropriation is sometimes conflated into mechanisms of appropriation - rents, wages, or labour services. To

1) *ibid*, p. 12.

2) Indeed, class struggle is not theorised, merely "essential" to Marxist theory.

3) *ibid*, p. 183.

p. 9.

4) *ibid*, p. 10.

appropriate is to alienate an object from its owner. Appropriation therefore presupposes ownership. But while ownership is a social relation, it is by definition also private. It signifies that an object belongs to a specific agent or agency. There can be no modes or forms of appropriation. The space of the concept is intrinsically limited to one type or "case", while the mechanisms of appropriation may take forms. The authors' confusion over the concept mode of appropriation is also evinced by the following. At one point we are told: "the relations of production define a specific mode of appropriation of surplus labour"⁽¹⁾. Elsewhere, "a conceivable mode of appropriation, then, defines the relations of production"⁽²⁾. The relationship between the forces of production and relations of production is also arbitrarily designated as "a complex unity", "an articulated combination", and a correspondence "structured by the dominance of the relations of production". This in our view expresses the authors' difficulty with the problem of simultaneously demonstrating a correspondence between concepts one of which has "primacy".

We define the forces of production as the specific elements used in the appropriation of nature, i.e. raw materials, tools and labour power. A stage in the development of the productive forces is a periodisation of technical processes within the combination of these elements, for example, manufacturing, industrial and automated techniques. As Marx puts it: "It is not the articles made but how they are made and by what instruments that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs. Instruments of labour not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labour has attained, but they are also indications of the social conditions under which that labour is attained"⁽³⁾. The development of the productive forces is internal to the relationship between men and nature. It is for this reason that the labour process can be analysed "independently of the particular form it assumes under given conditions"⁽⁴⁾. Thus, the

1) *ibid*, p. 9.

2) *ibid*, p. 12.

3) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, *op. cit.* p. 180.

4) *ibid*, p. 177.

form of development of the productive forces is determined by the relations of production. Marx says the productive forces develop not because of, but within the framework of the relations of production⁽¹⁾. Thus the condition of 'appropriateness' between the relations of production and the given stage of development of the productive forces lies in the formal structuring of the productive forces by the relations of production. The development of the productive forces is an autonomous set of transactions between men and nature. The relations of production impose formal limits on, and ultimately "fetter" these transactions⁽²⁾. We define the relations of production as specific economic exchanges between agents which define them as classes. They constitute the economic structure of society. These exchanges are thus mechanisms of labour exploitation. In the capitalist mode of production this takes place through a system of commodity exchange - the wages system - through which surplus value accrues to the capitalist class.

In Balibar's general theory of modes of production, the appropriation and property connections outlive all possible combinations of the elements. Hindess and Hirst follow Balibar in arguing that "surplus labour is a necessary element in all possible modes of production. They differ not in the existence of surplus labour but in the mode in which it is appropriated. It may be appropriated collectively as in primitive communist and advanced communist (socialist) modes of production, or it may be appropriated by a class of non-labourers as in capitalism and feudalism"⁽³⁾. This postulate of the eternity of the appropriation connection is not theoretically demonstrated, and indeed, betrays a misunderstanding of the concept of appropriation. The conditions of existence of appropriation rule out the possibility of "collective appropriation". A collectivity does not appropriate the products of its labour; it redistributes them. In a communist

- 1) Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, op. cit. p. 20.
- 2) Marx asserts: "From forms of development of the productive forces these relations become fetters", *ibid*, p. 21.
- 3) Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, op. cit. p. 10. Marx wrote, however, "If the whole working-day were to shrink to the length of this portion (labour time for subsistence Y.W.), surplus-labour would vanish, a consummation utterly impossible under the regime of capital". *Capital*, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 530.

mode of production, the surplus labour-necessary labour distinction collapses. Surplus labour is labour alienated from the producers. Marx's observation here brings this out clearly: "Capital has not invented surplus labour. Wherever a part of society possesses the monopoly of the means of production, the labourer, free or not free, must add to the working-time necessary for his own maintenance an extra working-time in order to produce the means of subsistence for the owners of the means of production ... It is, however, clear that in any given economic formation of society, where not the exchange value but the use value of the product predominates, surplus labour will be limited by a given set of wants which may be greater or less and that here no boundless thirst for surplus labour arises from the nature of production itself"⁽¹⁾. In economic formations where use value predominates, the extraction of surplus labour is modified by natural wants: "Hence, in antiquity over-work becomes horrible only when the object is to obtain exchange value in its specific independent money form; in the production of gold and silver"⁽²⁾. There is nothing in this passage or in the Critique of the Gotha Programme which suggests that Marx considered surplus labour to be a feature of every economy. In the Critique of the Gotha Programme, Marx is demonstrating the conditions of production in the lower phase of communist society when the need for expanded reproduction precludes the possibility of the labourers reviewing the full proceeds of their labour. In communist society, the collectivity does not appropriate surplus labour. It allocates the global labour time such that production and consumption are a unitary process of the distribution of use values. Hindess and Hirst have an absolutist conception of surplus labour. Thus, they ignore its quantitative variations in conditions of class struggle and cannot conceive of the possibility of its non-existence. They claim: "Surplus labour, that is, labour over and above necessary labour exist in all modes of production because the conditions of reproduction of the labourer are not equivalent to the conditions of reproduction of the economy"⁽³⁾. But what is this

1) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, op. cit. p. 235.

2) *ibid.*

3) Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, op. cit. p. 26.

economy, separate from labourers in communist society? We see here how the general concept mode of production vitiates their analysis. The economy is real, absolute and eternal.

The authors' assertion: "No surplus product, no mode of production and therefore no social formation"⁽¹⁾ is based on a confusion of the concepts surplus labour, necessary labour, surplus value and necessary consumption. Surplus value is the difference between the value of what the labourers produce and what they consume. The value of what they consume is relatively necessary labour. For it represents the labour time congealed in the production of goods consumed by the labourers relative to conditions of class struggle and the level of labour productivity. As the quote above from Marx shows, surplus labour too is relative. There is no general concept of surplus labour, or necessary labour, because there is no general concept mode of production. In the capitalist mode of production, the working day is divided into labour necessary for the reproduction of the labourer and his family (V) and labour which produces capital (C). It is possible to argue that C is unnecessary labour, labour pumped from the labourer because of the "boundless thirst for surplus value". It may be necessary from the capitalist's standpoint of expanded reproduction, ad infinitum. The necessity stops there. In the communist mode of production, necessary labour includes the labour time required for simple reproduction, i.e. the generation of the inputs necessary for expanding the production of use values. Thus the concept of "the appropriation of surplus labour by the mechanism of the redistribution of the product is self-contradictory"⁽³⁾. Appropriation is necessarily private, although it takes atomistic or separate forms. A collectivity's setting-aside of part of its produce in

1) *ibid*, p. 27.

2) *ibid*, pp. 26-27.

3) *ibid*, p. 11. Indeed, the authors contradict themselves in admitting "The appropriating of surplus labour presupposes that means of production are in the hands of the capitalist since otherwise there would be no necessity for the labourers to obtain means of consumption through the use of their labour power", p. 10. We may add, since labour power is not property in a communist mode of production, there is no necessary nor surplus labour time.

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case of exigencies, or for future consumption is not the appropriating of surplus labour. Indeed, the concept is tautologous. Surplus labour is appropriated labour, in the sense that it is an expenditure of labour power that accrues to non-producers, gratis⁽¹⁾. In the capitalist mode of production this surplus labour, or surplus value, is used to generate capital, the expanded reproduction of the means of production. Hindess' and Hirst's conception of surplus labour means simply the unconsumed part of the global product and this explains why they assert that "surplus value must always be extracted by some means"⁽²⁾. In other words, society must contain mechanisms ensuring that all its produce is not consumed. Their conception then, does not differ from that of the idealists whom they criticise⁽³⁾.

The commitment to the construction of a general concept mode of production leads Hindess and Hirst astray from what is perhaps their most original insight, namely that appropriation is the defining characteristic of the capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production. In this sense, these are only two possible modes of production - exploitative and non-exploitative. The so-called slave, feudal, Asiatic ancient and capitalist modes of production are but variants of the exploitative mode of belonging to what Marx called the "pre-history of human society". The specificity of the capitalist variant lies in its continual production of exchange value and the universalisation of wage labour. A non-exploitative "mode of production of material life" is an association of producers engaged in the reproduction of the conditions of redistributing use values⁽⁴⁾.

- 1) Cf. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, op. cit. Ch. XVIII.
- 2) Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, op. cit. p. 27.
- 3) *ibid.*, p. 24.
- 4) The problems which puzzle students of modes of production - the pockets of wage labour and commercial activities in antiquity and medieval Europe as well as the persistence of use value production in the capitalist world economy - lose their enigmatic character as soon as we abandon the project of the chronological classification of economic history and concern ourselves with the conceptions of labour exploitation within historical texts. In this sense, Karl Polanyi's classification: reciprocal, market, and redistributive economies is defective in that it ignores the labour process. See Karl Polanyi, "The Economy as Instituted Process" in Karl Polanyi, Conrad M. Arensberg and Harry W. Pearson (eds.) *Trade and Market in Early Empires* (The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1957).

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Structural theorists are correct in contending that there is no general concept mode of production in Marx's texts. The term is used always in a qualified conjunction with others. The attempt to construct a "general concept mode of production" is therefore peculiar to structural theorists. Hindess and Hirst condemn the historicist enterprise of a general theory of modes of production without realising that they thereby nullify the possibility of a general concept mode of production. The following passage applies to both projects; the construction of a general theory (Balibar) and a general concept (Hindess and Hirst) of modes of production: "A general theory of modes of production must represent each particular mode as a particular variant form of a single general structure. The general theory is therefore a structuralism; it is a theory of a structure and the possible forms in which it may be realised. In this case, the structure is the mode of production in general ... ⁽¹⁾. A general concept of a mode of production is also an eternity and as such an impossibility. For example, if the mode of production of material life takes place under conditions of complete automation of the labour process such that living labour is redundant, then no set of relations of production can be defined. There would be no economy, or mode of production, although there would be a way of producing material goods.

In our view, then, any attempt to construct a general concept mode of production, as opposed to a determinate mode of production, necessarily leads to a model of an economy. This is alien to Marx's project, for there can be no general economy. An economy is always of a particular structure. "Eine Produktionsweise" is necessarily unspecified and in Marx's texts, it is always "die Produktionsweise", qualitatively designated as "bourgeois", "feudal", "ancient"; etc. A mode of production as a concept can only become a glorified substitute for economy, or a specification of general conditions of productions. Marx puts it this way: "The conditions without which production cannot be carried on. This means in fact, that the essential factors required for any kind of production are indicated. But this amount actually, as we shall see, to a few very simple

1) *ibid.*, p. 7.

definitions which are further expanded into trivial tautologies"⁽¹⁾. Any general concept of a mode of production faces the intractable problem of "reproduction, "dissolution" and "transition". These are false (insoluble) problems derived from the initial project of specifying general conditions of economy. It is not a mode of production which comes into being, or dissolves, or remains at rest. Rather, particular relations of production generate class struggles which both develop and fetter the productive forces. A different particularity is induced by a specific stage in the development of these productive forces. At a certain stage of development of the productive forces - and these may be manufacturing, industrial or automated - these elemental exchanges between agents become incompatible with the former's further development. For example, relations of commodity exchange within which the exchange value of labour power limits the circulation and production of commodities ipso facto place a barrier on the development of automated production.

It is highly significant that Hindess and Hirst admit to the urgency of the need for the construction of "a theory of monopoly and finance capital, or a theory of the capitalist mode of production dominated by these forms"⁽²⁾. It shows the authors' conception of capitalist relations of production to be as yet un-theorised. The capitalist mode of production is necessarily dominated by capital and its sectoral fractions with their conflicts are not forms external to the relations of production. Not to perceive this prevents the comprehending of the duality of capital which allowed Marx to posit an apparent contradiction: "The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself"⁽³⁾. A similar error occurs in their account of the capitalist transformation of the labour process where modern industry is said to involve a movement "from the unity of means of labour and labour power constituted by the tool, to the unity of means of labour and object of labour constituted by the machine"⁽⁴⁾. This formulation obscures the

- 1) Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, op. cit. p. 191.
- 2) "Letter to Economy and Society" in *Economy and Society*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 232.
- 3) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, op. cit. p. 250.
- 4) Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, op. cit. p. 11.

process of the labourer being a living tool in competition with, and tied to, dead labour. In Marx's words, "The instrument of labour when it takes the form of a machine, immediately becomes a competitor of the workman himself"⁽¹⁾. "In manufacture the workmen are parts of a living mechanism. In the factory we have a lifeless mechanism independent of the workman who becomes its mere living appendage."⁽²⁾ The worker being annexed to the machine has its counterpart in the capitalist's subservience to the periodic cycles of capital accumulation. Hindess' and Hirst's conception of the capitalist mode of production, scattered surreptitiously throughout their text, ignores these critical moments. They fail to develop an adequate analysis of the capitalist processes of production as the necessary precondition for the analysis of "pre-capitalist modes of production".

For Marx the development of the concept of the capitalist mode of production does not terminate at the level of theoretical proof of the existence of the concept. Rather, the concept is a part of the analysis of capitalist processes of production as the domination of capital. Now since capital only exists as movement, the concept of mode of production with corresponding forces and relations of production is necessarily limited to the analysis of pre-capitalist modes of production. Marx's comments may be here relevant: "Capital as self-expanding value embraces not only class relations, a society of a definite character resting on the existence of labour in the form of wage labour. It is a movement, a circuit-describing process going through various stages, which itself comprises three different forms of the circuit describing process. Therefore it can be understood only as motion, not as a thing at rest. Those who regard the gaining by value of independent existence as a mere abstraction forget that the movement of industrial capital is this abstraction in actu"⁽³⁾. In the capitalist mode of production the processes of production generate the accumulation of capital through the extraction of surplus value from labourers whose labour power is an exchange value. The production of commodities is a means to the production of capital. This is what

- 1) Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 430.
- 2) Ibid, p. 422.
- 3) Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. II, op. cit. p. 108.

distinguishes commodity production from capitalist commodity production: "The mode of production in which the product takes the form of a commodity, or is produced directly for exchange, is the most general and most embryonic form of bourgeois production⁽¹⁾. The capitalist mode of production produces capital through a mode of appropriation of surplus labour which works by means of commodity exchange. The condition of existence of capital is the alienation of the labourer from the product of his labour. Marx formulated the concept of capital in the following manner: "The concept of capital implies that the objective conditions of labour - and these are its own products - acquire a personality as against labour, or what amounts to the same thing, that they are established as the property of a personality other than the workers⁽²⁾. The products of labour become a force against labour when they are alienated as part of an endless cycle of capital accumulation⁽³⁾. This growth of capital has specific consequences for the growth, utilisation, spatial distribution and organisation of the labouring class.

The constant increase in the extraction of surplus value and its transformation into productive capital necessitates the expanded reproduction of labour power or the mass of labourers which services capital. This expanded reproduction of labour power is possible because labour processes develop unevenly and create disparities in labour utilisation, i.e. regional labour surpluses. Any shrinkage of the sectors containing pre-capitalist labour processes releases labour reserves which act as a lever in the determination of wages. In Marx's words: "If the quantity of unpaid labour

- 1) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, op. cit. p. 82.
- 2) Karl Marx in Eric Hobsbawm (ed.) op. cit. p. 118.
- 3) It follows from this that the abolition of capitalist commodity production begins with the labourer's taking control over the products of their labour. This act, through "despotic inroads into the rights of property" is not a sufficient condition for the abolition of commodity production per se. For this, a crucial prerequisite is that no labour time be embodied in the production of material life. It is in this context that capital's inexorable displacing of living labour should be understood. Capital, however, is its own contradiction and this displacement is limited by capital itself. Thus there are objective limits to the introduction of automation. See Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, op. cit. pp. 51-52.

supplied by the working class, and accumulated by the capitalist class, increases so rapidly that its conversion into capital requires an extraordinary addition of paid labour, then wages rise, and, all other circumstances remaining equal, the unpaid labour diminishes in proportion. But as soon as this diminution touches the point at which the surplus labour that nourishes capital no longer supplied in normal quantity, a reaction sets in: a smaller part of revenue is capitalised, accumulation lags and the movement of rise in wages receive a check⁽¹⁾. The accumulation of capital is the growth of the proletariat⁽²⁾. This growth, however, leads to a point where labour becomes scarce and expensive relative to the mechanisation of the labour process. Investments in this direction then displaces labour and effects a disparity between the demand for and the supply of labour.

The reinvestment of surplus value in order to augment its magnitude determines the degree of utilisation and spatio-temporal distribution of labour resources. The accumulation of capital is accompanied by its concentration and centralisation. These developments emerge from the competition between individual capitalists. Capitalists confront one another as atomistic commodity producers vying over the augmentation of their investible surplus. Fluctuations in the demand for commodities, the price of labour, or raw materials, the spatial distribution of enterprises, all these factors result in the expropriation of capitalists by capitalists: "Capital grows in one place to a huge mass in a single hand, because it has in another place been lost by many. This is centralisation proper, as distinct from accumulation and concentration"⁽³⁾. Accumulation and centralisation, then, give rise to a regional concentration of productive

- 1) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, op. cit. p. 620.
- 2) Capital accumulation means therefore not processes of re-investment but "the reproduction of capitalist relations of production on an extended scale". Cf. Geof Hodgson, "The Theory of the Falling Rate of Profit", *New Left Review*, No. 84, March-April 1974. This Luxemburgian conception avoids the associating of capital accumulating with the mere heightening of capital-intensive processes of production.
- 3) Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 626.

forces and employment and at the same time increase the disparity between demographic growth and the labour absorptive capacity of the productive forces in other regions⁽¹⁾. In consequence, there emerges relatively higher rates of unemployment in particular regions and hidden unemployment, Marx's latent form of the industrial reserve army, in the agricultural sector. For these same reasons, the reserve army of labour within metropolitan regions will comprise "migrant" labourers. The phenomenal emigration of workers from both the American South and the 'Third World' is a case in point. In these regions, or sectors, labour was repelled by the mechanisation of agriculture (including the deliberate curtailment of agricultural production in the South) without a commensurate development of industrial production⁽²⁾. A simultaneous drift of metropolitan workers to the expanding industrial sector effected the access of "migrant" workers to the relatively labour intensive infrastructure - postal, transport and hospital services and to "the reserve army of labour".

The industrial reserve army is generated by the conflict between capitals and between capital and labour. Both conflicts result in the

- 1) For an account of the monumental level of unemployment in the 'Third World', see Edgar O. Edwards (ed.) *Employment in Developing Nations* (Columbia University Press, New York 1974).
- 2) This passage in Marx is exceptionally appropriate: "As soon as capitalist production takes possession of agriculture, and in proportion to the extent to which it does so, the demand for an agricultural labouring population falls absolutely, while the accumulation of the capital employed in agriculture advances, without this repulsion being, as in non-agricultural industries, compensated by a greater attraction. Part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban or manufacturing proletariat, and on the look-out for circumstances favourable to this transformation. (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all non-agricultural industries). This source of relative surplus-population is thus constantly flowing. But the constant flow towards the towns pre-supposes, in the country itself, a constant latent surplus-population, the extent of which becomes evident only when its channels of outlet open to exceptional width." *Capital*, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 642.

transformation of the labour process, the centralisation of already existing capital and the concentration of production within a decreasing number of units. The concept deviates radically from the orthodox economic analysis of unemployment. The latter is inadequate by virtue of being isolated from the processes of capital accumulation. It takes the nature and volume of employment as given and hence, cannot raise the problem of the productive utilisation of labour resources. From our analysis, judging from the level and fluctuation of black unemployment, unemployed "blacks" are a part of the "reserve army of labour" consistent with the under-utilisation of human resources in capitalist production and functioning to cushion long term cyclical dislocations within the exigencies of capital accumulation⁽¹⁾. However, the increasing redundancy of their labour is because the absolute demand for labour progressively decreases as a result of the incessant changes in the technical composition of capital. These developments also affect the variable constituent of capital so that a smaller proportion is transformed into labour power. It is the relationship between constant and variable capital which determines the demand for labour. It decreases relatively to the magnitude of total capital, in textbook language, the volume of investment - and increases in a diminishing proportion to the rate of investment of growth of total capital. Growing unemployment among blacks is responsible to increasing disinvestment in labour resources. For this and demographic reasons, the fate of a large section of black workers must, therefore, approximate that of the "stagnant form" of the reserve army " ... a part of the active labour army, but with extremely irregular employment. Hence, it furnishes to capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour power. Its conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working-class; this makes it at once the broad basis of special branches of capitalist exploitation. It is characterised by maximum of

1) For evidence of the causal relationship between the business cycle, war and black unemployment, see Sidney Willhelm, *op. cit.* Ch. IV. James Tobin echoes here a common observation: "The fact is that the economy has not operated with reasonably full utilisation of its manpower and plant capacity since 1957". J. Tobin in L. A. Ferman et al. (eds.) *Negroes and Jobs: A Book of Readings*, *op. cit.* p. 532.

working-time, and minimum of wages. We have learnt to know its chief form under the rubric of "domestic industry". It recruits itself constantly from the supernumerary forces of modern industry where handicraft is yielding to manufacture, manufacture to machinery. Its extent grows, as with the extent and energy of accumulation, the creation of a surplus-population advances. But it forms at the same time a self-reproducing and self-perpetuating element of the working-class, taking a proportionally greater part in the general increase of that class than the other elements. In fact, not only the number of births and deaths, but the absolute size of the families stand in inverse proportion to the height of wages, and therefore to the amount of means of subsistence of which the different categories of labourers dispose. This law of capitalistic society would sound absurd to savages, or even civilised colonists. It calls to mind the boundless reproduction of animals individually weak and constantly hunted down⁽¹⁾. This passage constitutes a succinct summary of workers', or the "black experience" in all its pathological ramifications. The instances of low wages, low level of education and industrial skills which are characteristic of black workers are an effect of their reserve army status. Because of capital accumulation, they 'over-supply' the "labour market" and are therefore vulnerable to the extraction of both relative and absolute surplus value.

We recall Marx's distinction: "The surplus value produced by prolongation of the working day, I call absolute surplus value. On the other hand, the surplus value arising from the curtailment of the necessary labour time, and from the corresponding alternation in the respective lengths of the two components of the working day, I call relative surplus value".⁽²⁾ As a "stagnant form" of the reserve army black workers compete intensively amongst themselves and with other forms of the reserve army as well as the active army for the opportunity to serve capital. This facilitates their use as cheap labour (the extraction of relative surplus value) and, in so far as they are compelled to work overtime, the extraction of absolute surplus value. Race relations theorists appear to grope for an understanding

1) Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, op. cit. p. 643.

2) *ibid*, p. 315.

of these forms with the notion of a racially-inspired super-exploitation of "blacks". If, however, we ask why "blacks" today, rather than, why blacks? the racial suggestiveness disappears. For we may then perceive that the logic of capital accumulation imposes these forms of exploitation on all workers, but that given the cyclical and uneven nature of this accumulation, the imposition must be spatio-temporally variegated. Again, the comparatively high level of unemployment among "blacks" would suggest that they constitute the greater portion of the reserve army of labour. But if the concept is seen as encompassing both the employed and the unproductively active, then not black, but female labourers may be said to comprise the bulk of unused labour resources⁽¹⁾.

Indeed, within the terms of the following categories of the unemployed, "blacks" are not necessarily over-represented among the unemployed: "open unemployment", "underemployment", the visibly active but underutilized including disguised underemployment, hidden unemployment and prematurely retired workers"⁽²⁾. The demand for labour as well as the relation between the demand for and the supply of labour has crucial effects on the labourers organisation in struggle against the encroachments of capital. Capital is dead labour set in motion against living labour such that labourers are thrown into seemingly endless processes of competition. Capital accumulation is consistent with the separation of the supply of labour from the supply of labourers. For competition among capitals increases, but disproportionately, both the demand for labour and the flow of labourers. Since the latter stabilizes wages and increases the labour expenditure of the employed, they organise themselves to curtail this flow. Labourers, then, are inherently in competition in conditions of capitalist production.

- 1) This, indeed, is Harry Braverman's position. He asserts that in the American economy "... the female position of the population has become the prime supplementary reservoir of labour". Harry Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capital* (Monthly Review Press, New York 1974) p. 385. See also Wally Seecombe, "Housework under Capitalism", *New Left Review*, No. 83, Jan-Feb 1974. The concept of productive-unproductive labour appears much misunderstood. All workers by definition produce. We may, however, categorise their activities into: those which produce consumer or capital goods, goods useful for the destruction of life, goods and services specific to the extraction of surplus value and its redistribution among different capitals. For a useful summary of Marx's use of the concept, see Ian Gough, "Marx and Unproductive Labour", *New Left Review*, No. 76, Nov-Dec 1972.
- 2) Cf. Edgar O. Edwards (ed.) *op. cit.* pp. 10-11.

The omnipresent reserve army of labour set in motion by the laws of capital accumulation is therefore an integral element of the intrinsic competitiveness of wage labour and as such competition between labourers: "The essential condition for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage labour. Wage labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers"⁽¹⁾. This competition, however, must not be interpreted voluntaristically and it is not at all eradicated by Trade Union organisation. Given the non-social ownership of the means of production, the owners of mere labour power must compete amongst themselves on the so-called labour market. Manifestations of this competition would be hostility towards capital-intensive technology and new entrants to the labour market, and the forming of closed trades or crafts⁽²⁾. Marx expected labour competition to decrease, with the inexorable industrial concentration of workers leading to their revolutionary association. The abolition of labour competition on the other hand begins with workers control over the labour process and the production of use values. Both conditions are necessary and they are in turn contingent on the level of development of the productive forces, and Marx's theory. Wage labourers must be in explicit competition among themselves over occupational jurisdiction and mobility and the respective and relative prices of their labour. They engage in veiled competition with the unemployed and are torn by the division into organised and unorganised workers⁽³⁾. An empiricist social science interprets this competition as regional, national, sexual and racial realities. Thus, Leggett, for example, posits that "racial differences engender an uneven distribution of class consciousness within the working class"⁽⁴⁾. Leggett has, in our view, inverted the relationship. For it is the "racial differences" which are an

- 1) K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 1. pp. 45-46. See also Wage Labour and Capital, *ibid.* pp. 91-94.
- 2) See Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, *op. cit.* Ch. XV, Section 5.
- 3) For a useful analysis of these phenomena, see Jack Barbash, *op. cit.* pp. 7-8 and Ch. 11. Ray Marshall, *op. cit.* p. 26. Milton Cantor (ed.) *op. cit.* p. 139.
- 4) Leggett, *op. cit.* p. 7.

effect of the uneven distribution of class consciousness. But even so, this consciousness is not "uneven". It is atomised, a condition attributable to the nature of social scientific theoretical practices as well as the capital movements – investment shifts and the perfection of labour displacing industrial techniques – which repel sections of the labour force and throw them into competition with others.

It follows from this that the gamut of objections by "white" workers to "blacks" are but part of the enduring conflict between wage labour and capital, where the labourers are not organised politically as a class opposed to capitalist relations of production. Secondly, that Trade Unions are defencist organisations of the working class reflecting its theoretical entombment in the commodity fetishism of bourgeois society and as such cannot but perpetuate even intensify the labour competition out of which they were partly born⁽¹⁾. For the first organisation of workers (the Craft Union) aimed at preventing the cheapening of labour (and was thus anti-capitalist) through the operation of "closed-shops", but thereby formalised the competition with the unskilled and unemployed. Trade Unions, a development out of Craft Unions, have always been classic organisations of simultaneous resistance and accommodation to capitalism and the understanding of this structural ambivalence is crucial to any explanation of "white working class racism". We may say that the degree of "revolutionary working class consciousness"⁽²⁾ is in inverse proportion to the frequency with which workers respond to attempted intensifications of exploitation by isolating other workers.

Not surprisingly, the distinction between trade union consciousness and revolutionary working class consciousness is an established one in

- 1) See Sydney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1965) Ch. 1. Alfred B. Badger, *Man in Employment* (MacMillan, London 1966) pp. 27-8 and Ch. 4. J.A. Banks, *Trade Unionism* (Collier-MacMillan London 1974). See Ch. 1. for a conclusive analysis of the relationship between trade unions and guilds.
- 2) Or, as perhaps Althusserians may prefer, the scientific, theoretical understanding of the capitalist mode of production by the exploited agents.

Marxist political writing⁽¹⁾. Marx himself did not offer precisely formulated reasons and criteria for his differentiation; but it may be inferred from his writings that the highest level of working class consciousness is attained when the abolition of the wages system has become the watchword of the labour movement⁽²⁾. Working class agitation organisation and struggle within the confines of wage labour are historical forms of defence against the encroachments of capital. In this defensive stage, not the wages system, but any agent of the diminution of the wage level becomes an object of hostility and opposition.

It is a moot point whether industrial unions constitute a realisation of Marx's optimism that, with the development of capitalist industry, workers would subsequently form themselves into a revolutionary combination. However, we may say that it was the decrease of labour competition involved in the transition from craft to industrial unionism which ameliorated the labour situation of "blacks" in America⁽³⁾. This fact highlights the decisive influence of working class political organisation on the socio-economic situation of "blacks". Industrial unionism, and the

- 1) See Richard Hyman, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism* (Pluto Press, London 1971) for a well documented analysis of Marx's appraisal of Trade Unionism. W. Lenin's statement to the effect that the working class by itself can only attain union consciousness does not distinguish between trade unionism as a political strategy and trade unions as organisations. V. Lenin, *op. cit.* pp. 31-32. Lenin's scepticism, however, pales beside Frank Tannenbaum's "Trade Unionism is the conservative movement of our time. It is the counterrevolution". *The True Society* (Jonathon Cape, London 1964) p. 3.
- 2) Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1. p. 229. Here Marx suggests this to be the ultimate in the development of working class consciousness standing opposed to spasmodic struggles against the movements of the price of labour.
- 3) Not that the Craft Unions are "racial", Ray Marshall marginally moves away from race with: "The foregoing evidence demonstrates widespread racial discrimination, but it should be emphasised that racial restrictions by the building-trade unions are not due entirely to racial reasons". *The Negro and Organised Labour*. *op. cit.* p. 129.

diminution of labour competition which it fosters, leaves unresolved the other ramifications of capitalist labour exploitation - unemployment, redundancies, low-pay, work conditions - i.e. the existence of wage labour and commodity production itself. For since the means of consumption and welfare remain commodities, the easing of industrial labour competition does not prevent or eliminate competition over commoditised goods and services such as housing, schooling and higher education⁽¹⁾.

These other levels of competition over "scarce" goods and welfare amenities can be explained in terms of the thesis that inter-class struggle becomes intra-class struggle in specific theoretical-subjective conditions. Race relations analyses in which anti-immigration demonstrations and opposition to 'bussing' are "race problems", make a particular contribution to the formation of these theoretical-subjective conditions. But if we conceive the economic basis of modern society as the perpetual production of surplus value via commodity production, we may explain not only status stratification, but black poverty, unemployment and the so-called poor white or working class racism. Since neither behaviour nor historical events is fully clarified by a methodological emphasis on actors' inferences⁽²⁾, and given the strict relationship between class consciousness and the industrial experiences of "blacks", what needs to be analysed is not the racist sentiments (race prejudice) which are expressed in the course of opposition to "black" workers - and it is obviously incorrect to treat prejudice as a cause - but the factors responsible for the given level of political development of "white" workers. In other words, we must examine the relationship between the development of class

- 1) Reference can be made here to 'white' opposition to Headstart, AFDC payments to 'blacks' and "bussing". In support of an interpretation of this in terms of economic scarcities, see Thomas Sowell, *Black Education, Myths and Tragedies* (David McKay and Co., New York 1972).
- 2) As John Rex succinctly put it: "... the reasons which men give in order to account systematically for their behaviour are added after the behaviour is complete, and are not adequate to account for it". *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, op. cit. p. 137. This makes all the more enigmatic Rex's emphasis on a colonial ideological legacy to explain white opposition to black workers.

consciousness and ideology.

Arguing for a more serious consideration of Marx's theory of working class consciousness, Michael Mann delineates four levels of conceptualisation: "Firstly, we can separate class identity - the definition of oneself as working class as playing a distinctive role in common with other workers in the productive process. Secondly, comes class opposition - the perception that the capitalist agents constitute an enduring opponent to oneself. These two elements interact dialectically; that is to say opposition itself serves to reinforce identity and vice versa. Thirdly, is class totality - the acceptance of the two previous elements as the defining characteristics of (a) one's total situation and (b) the whole society in which one lives. Finally, comes the conception of an alternative society a goal towards which one moves through the struggle with the opponent. True revolutionary consciousness is the combination of all four ... ⁽¹⁾. The Movement or development of working class consciousness is from everyday political affiliations and collective militancy to the perception of phenomenal omnipresent interconnections and then the theoretical transcendence of the extant social order. Trade Union consciousness reflects the stage of mere opposition to capitalism. It is an ambivalent form of class struggle. The ambivalence in this opposition finds expression in the simultaneous denunciation and practice of excluding the Negro worker. What it illustrates is the spatio-temporal vicissitudes of the transition from lower to higher forms of class consciousness as well as the intrinsic limitations of trade unionism as a revolutionary strategy.

The development from fragmented solidarity and sectional militancy to an hegemonic alternative consciousness and collective action would obviously depend on the dissolution of bourgeois ideology. For the "naturalness" of capitalism either "because human nature stinks" or because non-commodity production is "practically impossible" and potentially totalitarian, this naturalness is reflected in the wage-bound economism of Trade Union struggles. As Alan Fox noted "It is probable

1) Michael Mann, *Consciousness and Action among the Western Working Class* (MacMillan, London 1973) p. 13. This, however, cannot be a series of linear stages, generalised within the worker's movement.

that for much of the time most men do not perceive the conventional and arbitrary social arrangements under which they live, and suppose them to be the only possible ones given 'the nature of things' - a notion which usually includes a belief in an unchangeable 'human nature' ... what this all means is that when union or work group representatives take their place with managers at the negotiating table they do so ... as men who have already been socialised, indoctrinated and trained ... ⁽¹⁾ Fox's observation, although it contains a simplistic approach to political socialisation, is a rare one and this highlights the fact that social theorists have too readily taken Trade Union wage-demands at face value. There has been a reluctance to examine the theories of society which underlie working class "militancy", which is then counterposed to abstract theories and theorising ⁽²⁾. Yet insofar as the demand for the highest of wages, i.e. the "watchword" of the abolition of wage labour, is shunned by working class militants and "revolutionary" parties because "it is utopian", then, at root, it is the theoretical subservience to bourgeois ideology which perpetuates wage labour and labour competition.

"White" workers are therefore not to be seen as racially discriminating in the sense of being racially motivated. For, insofar as they accept the immutability of the labour market and the immanence of commodity exchange, they must favour guerilla struggles within the wages system and "black workers are then a distinct economic threat". As Cayton and Mitchell correctly argue: "It would be fruitless to attempt to understand the situation of the Negro in industry from the point of view of emotional racial antipathy alone. The existence of racial prejudice in both employee and employer groups is, of course, an indisputable fact, but it is only when we view race prejudice within the broader perspective of its role in the conflict between classes that we gain some insight into the problems

- 1) Alan Fox "Industrial Relations: a Social Critique of Pluralist Ideology", in John Child (ed.) *Man and Organisation* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London 1973) p. 217.
- 2) This fundamental error in the "militant" approach which de-emphasises the influence of widely disseminated ideological constructs and stresses crisis situations and working class material activity at the point of production is that it treats "experiences" as raw theory-free events.

confronting the Negro in industry"⁽¹⁾. Yet they too succumbed to the common confusion between the existence and the operation of race prejudice⁽²⁾. An "indisputable fact" of the existence of a prejudice does not sociologically imply its behavioural agency. Moreover, the fact that the Negro-labour policies of both "racially-prejudiced" and "non-prejudiced" employers are often identical suggests the operation of other conditions. For example, an employer's labour policy is not independent of the labour organisation of his employees⁽³⁾. As Smith and others have shown, what is often interpreted as employers' prejudice and racial discrimination could be seen as their fears of labour disruptions from the established (white) labour force, in the event of "fair employment practices" towards the Negro. Either way, then, a concept of class is necessary.

All workers are, therefore, trapped in a vortex of the over-supply of labour which capital movements generate, the capitalists' drive to minimise labour costs and the protective economism of Trade Unionism. It is, therefore, possible to situate the racist sentiments of "white" workers and the "anti-racist" struggles of "black" workers in terms of labour competition and, ultimately, their theoretical-political positions. This means that had the problem of the development of the theoretical-subjective conditions of revolution been "the problem of the twentieth century" the nature of these struggles could not have been economic. Instead of this we are inundated with race relations texts so that it is not generally recognised that theories of the social rejection of "blacks", racial inequalities, black poverty and racial discrimination contain hidden conceptualisations of the mechanisms of capitalist commodity production.

Their problem is "race". But they necessarily, sporadically change terrain so that the capitalist mode of production emerges here and there. It is this which gives the impression that our object of study is not distinct from theirs. It is distinct, however, for we investigate the

- 1) Horace R. Cayton and George S. Mitchell, *Black Workers and the New Unions* (McGrath Pub. Co., Maryland 1939) p. 1x.
- 2) *ibid.* pp. 17, 37.
- 3) See David J. Smith, *op. cit.* pp. 5, 57 and Ch. VI.

capitalist mode of production and the logically necessary relations between its agents embodied in the term "classes"⁽¹⁾. Race relations cannot remain on this terrain, for "race relations" are not theoretical relationships but as sociologists admit, illusions in the minds of empirical actors. Thus, the designation, "black workers" is an effect of not conceiving capitalist relations of production as fundamental to the understanding of the exploitation of labourers in the capitalist mode of production. Yet how is the selection of "blacks" as an object of study to be justified? This is a question the race relations investigation must answer. For why not yellow or pink workers? Nor must a "specificity" of the situation of particular workers which constitute them as "blacks" be presumed, or taken as obvious. It must be demonstrated prior to the investigation. Yet it is impossible to carry out such a demonstration. For the specificity of the black workers' situation is a specificity of labour exploitation.

This observation, however, is still within the empiricist terrain of "race relations". We make it in order to illustrate the theoretical superficiality of such studies and as part of their displacement. For the term "black workers" is impossible as a concept. It is an empirical referent that has no empirical reference. Who are these black and white workers? The skin colours of workers are not polarised into black and white. Even so, a worker is not the person,⁽²⁾ but a specification of a

- 1) E.P. Thompson captures the anti-empiricist current in Marx's concept of class: "There is today an ever-present temptation to suppose that class is a thing. This was not Marx's meaning, in his own historical writing, yet the error vitiates much latter-day 'Marxist' writing. It, the working class, is assumed to have a real existence, which can be defined almost mathematically - so many men who stand in a certain relationship to the means of production ... If we remember that class is a relationship and not a thing we cannot think in this way". *The Making of the English Working Class*, (Penguin, Middlesex, 1968) pp. 10-11. But why then "English Working Class"?
- 2) For the capitalist, as Marx observes: "The worker here is nothing more than personified labour time. All individual distinctions are merged in those of "full-timers" and "half-timers". *Capital*, Vol. I, op. cit. p. 243. A capitalist cannot be concerned with race, only with the exploitability of the labourer.

particular relation to the means of production, an embodiment of "particular class relations and class interests". To impute a colour to this relationship is to make it as absurd as, in Marx's phrase, a "yellow logarithm". Metaphorically, who are "black workers"? The poor? the underpaid? the unemployed and under-employed? But these are merely manifestations of certain conditions of labour exploitation, labourers, the utilisation of whose labour power conforms to the vagaries of capital accumulation. Workers can be neither white nor black. Such designations have political purposes. Their "reality" derives from the institutionalised research which continues not in the interest of "science" or "black liberation", but as a political strategy of *divida et imperia*.

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