

## CHAPTER 1

# MARKING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTIES

### 1 1 INTRODUCTION

“The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles” So begins chapter 1 of the communist manifesto. And in a footnote Marx elaborates “that is all written history”

This position motivates the dissertation. Broadly speaking, we will lock horns with the contending views which propose the absence of contradictory, antagonistic class positions, the absence of multiple positions, or, to put it the other way round, the presence of one position (which amounts to inconsequentiality of the concept ‘position’ itself), the presence of equality.

To be specific, we aim to demolish the myth of equality as a possible rule for ordering society. We will put in the dock two equality concepts which are generally, uncritically, perceived to be engaged in a struggle, but which our cross examination will reveal to be each constituted by displacement of the constitutive principles of the other. the equality principle of the liberal bourgeois, the equality of the so called free world; and the community equality principle, emanating from the East.<sup>1</sup> Epistemologically, the community or caste-equality principle, which pretends to emerge from the East to challenge the individual equality principle of the Western

liberal bourgeois, belongs to the Great White Mythology of ontological essence. To show this will be a part of the project

Commodity Fetishism is a much talked about issue in Marxist quarters. We will point to some of the elisions in such discussions. Our focus, here, however, is on community fetishism and the latter's kinship with commodity fetishism. *Community* is a fad within the Subaltern Studies group<sup>2</sup> the hegemonic cultural studies group in India, with substantial influence and following within American academia. If West is grounded on commodity equality, Subaltern Studies' concept of East builds on a kind of equality deriving from community principle, a vaguely defined, un(der) theorised, quasi-empiricist category. This is deployed to construct the East as culturally different from the West, while the ubiquitous concept of equality, a characteristic of modernism, captures the aspect of sameness in the two cultures. Subaltern Studies valorise 'our modernism' built on community equality as distinct from 'their modernism' celebrating individualism.

One of the objects of my dissertation is to explode this myth of "our modernism". I will call into question, interrogate and prise open the cracks in the ground of this concept. Precisely, my proposition is *community equality (fetishism) is a displacement of commodity equality (fetishism)*

This entails some detailing and supplementation of the existing literature on commodity fetishism. In turn this calls for revisitation of the site of value theory in order to bring out some of the moments of commodity process usually overlooked in

the Western Marxist literature. It is a journey down a path treaded by fellow travelers in Calcutta (Chaudhury, et al, 2000) — a journey in which I too had the occasional pleasure of being a comrade. The initial chapters of this thesis dwell on these points, first, in terms of a fable (ch. 2) and then algebraically (ch. 3). My value added here is the discussion of additional issues such as critique of Spivak - Derrida (Spivak, G 1987) reading of **Capital**. *My central proposition in this segment is that their misunderstanding of categories of political economy has led them to fundamental errors in the deployment of postmodern strategies for interrogating the texts on commodity.* Where they fault Marx, generally, the fault lies in their misunderstanding of Marx. The shift in emphasis from Chaudhury – Das – Chakraborti (op. cit) is only too visible. My intervention in Marxian value theory makes way for dismantling community fetishism.

I see through community fetishism and see that globalisation of India is, in fact, a process of Indianisation of the globe. *Globalisation is nothing other than postmodern articulation of Asiatic mode of production on a global plane.* That is a tricky, titillating proposition that I hint at in the last chapter, by way of conclusion. *On the way, I am thrown into the thorny issue of Marxian theory of absolute capitalist ground rent and differential rent. I disentangle the issues in an entirely novel way. Our questions are new. Conceptual tools are new. Our treatment of value theory is new. And the proposition we wish to arrive at — Globalisation as variant of Asiatic mode of production — is wholly new.*

## 1 2    PREVIEW

I claim full authorship for chapter 2 in the formal, academically proper, (legal) proprietary sense. That is in a sense that will also stand the scrutiny of due process of (bourgeois) law. Other ways, other wise, is of course, another discourse . of fraternity, with illicit, uncodified properties, of silences, where, in any case, the dissertation position is untenable.

We begin chapter 2 with our version of the Mosaic story of Adam and Eve. Adam hunts and Eve cooks. To start with there is no surplus production, that is production beyond socially determined needs. Output is distributed according to needs. Needs being quantitatively different, equality means qualitative equality. None-the-less equality is a sufficient rule for ordering this no surplus paradise. Put another way, the rule of equality can, by itself, determine equilibrium in this system. We show that it affects the essence, the sufficient ground —equality—not a bit whether this economy is organised through the market or through community principles. We then see that equality is an insufficient principle for ordering this economic at the moment of surplus production . a supplementary<sup>3</sup> rule, say of capital, has to be introduced to define equilibrium. Thus, surplus production leads to surplus meanings<sup>4</sup>. In other words surplus production indicates a symptom of the order of equality. We stretch the story further and show that if the Adams or Eves choose to remain independent petty producers within the changed scenario, they will, necessarily, be transformed into

metonymic workers appropriating no surplus value but denied recognition as workers

At this point we acknowledge the insight of Marx's Asiatic Mode of Production distant (capitalist) ruler appropriating the surplus product of (surrogate independent producer) subject. We extend the fable to modern times of global capital. Capital imports the metaphor of self-employed Adams (or Eves) to dislodge the workers from the factory to its outside, in capital's homeland, which is everywhere. Denied the privilege of working-class position, won through long drawn struggle, the deemed needs of the worker-turned-independent-producers are depressed. Neither can mobility between employment inside and outside the factory increase the petty producers' entitlement, simply because working people are locally confined and, even if globally such employment be available, locally it is not. Of course, the writing on the wall is that globalisation will celebrate the death of the factory system and rejuvenation of petty producer (retaining no surplus) system. At the level of the discursive, the table is being turned: Asiatic mode displacing class process narrative.

The rest of the dissertation is just an attempt to be academically proper, follow the rules of academic propriety which demand annotation of debts, marking of differences and originality, and summarising traditions, that is traditional ancestors.

In chapter 3 our entry point<sup>5</sup> is the no surplus producing simple commodity economic. We show that this is the economic which is ordered both by Hegelian as well as (essentialist) Marxian conception of bourgeois equality. We show that the ground of

equality shows up cracks (of logic) at the moment of surplus production. The cracks then have to be cemented with the hierarchy of capital-worker.

Substantially, this story has been told through the Adam and Eve fable. In this chapter we just undertake the deconstruction of commodity fetish through the interrogation of various texts that it has spawned. We deconstruct the various value to price transformation narratives, as well as the deconstruction of Marx's texts by postmodernists Derrida and Spivak. Into the latter project we also weave a reading of some of Marx's texts themselves.

In the deconstruction of the value price (V-P) narrative our originality is limited to our analysis of the sociology of the blunder of the essentialist reading of the transformation exercise, that is to the analysis of why this reading was dominant for such a long period in spite of its obvious flaws. The deconstruction of the postmodern forays into Marx's texts, as well as our own ventures into Marx's texts are original (!).

In chapter 4 our entry point is the community (or caste) equality based economic read out of the works of the "subaltern studies" group, and, more precisely, from the works of one member of this group — Chatterjee (Chatterjee, 1994). We summarise Chatterjee's position. The narrative of community is violently suppressed by the history of primitive capitalist accumulation. The illogic of the state/civil society narrative of the West stems from this suppression of the narrative of (family) community which refuses to go away. The suppression and the lack of logic can be sighted only from the East where capital has not annihilated community. The East

can, therefore, also conceptualise an equality whose presupposition is community not self

We also construct the elementary economic space which constitutes a level of Chatterjee's (community) equality ordered social space.

Originality, authorial presence in this chapter is sited at the critique of Chatterjee's critique. We show that what was claimed as a historical failure was, actually, the failure of the method of Hegel. Further, if the method, the theory of construction itself is flawed, then Chatterjee's ideal (community equality) also falls through, because it is propped up by the same logical structure. The critique of community equality's economic shows it up as constituted by displaced principles of commodity equality. Thus it is open to supplementation at the moment of surplus production. This, of course, was an obvious lesson of our fable. The chapter is just an embellishment in the cause of Ph.D.

In chapter 5 and 6 we move beyond the times of chapters 2 to 4 and beyond critique to our position about the East.

We begin chapter 5 with our very own reading of Marx' texts on Ground Rend (GR). A symptomatic reading (in an Althusserian sense) to produce GR as symptom (in a Lacanian sense). GR as symptom of space in the time of work. Access to space as supplement which is beyond supplement. Let us explain this beyond of supplementarity. Writing is the deconstructive reversal of speech. Supplement

Supplement which leads to the overdetermined space of langue-parole. But differential GR (DGR) leads to no such more embracing, tranquil, overdetermined order. GR as disruptive symptom. GR bringing indeterminacy into the V-P discursive. GR as symptom but also read symptomatically. Need for symptomatic reading signaling subterranean paradigm shift from overdetermination to “mimicry of overdetermination”, to name it after an emerging tradition (Chaudhury, et al 2000). I claim patent rights for this entire reading contrivance. Significance of space lies in its specificity. This space and that space. GR as constituent of the discourse on economic interaction between the capitalist and noncapitalist spaces. So on to the V-P discursive.

We examine, first, the implications of economic interaction between the noncapitalist (commodity and noncommodity) economic producing no surplus and the capitalist economic. We then follow the consequence of production of surplus by the noncapitalist economic. We show that there is a transformation of the noncapitalist producer to a metonym of a worker. DGR indicates production without value. It is the symptom of all productive resources outside the ambit of commodity-capital order. This outside has to be denigrated, misrepresented or put under erasure for closing the gap indicated by DGR as symptom. This supplement which is beyond supplement, an incurable malaise, is another way of looking at what has been christened *margin of margin* (ibid). In the course of this reading of GR we elaborate a methodological innovation which we inaugurate in chapter 3. difference between a genetically

disorderly supplement (supplement II) and an orderly supplement, or what may be generally termed a Derridian Supplement (Supplement I) Correspondingly, we have symptom II and symptom I

We claim authorship for the whole of chapter 6 which is also the concluding chapter In this chapter we bring to the foreground an important question which has been lurking in the background for quite some time, particularly at the times of chapters 2 and 5 · closures other than that of class rule to suture the tear in the weave of logic which shows up at the moment of surplus production.

Another closure, other closure : the Asiatic Mode of Production closure. So we revalue, catachrestically, the much maligned Asiatic Mode of Production In a different way then, (different from the postcolonial way) we also revalue 'Asia' in this era of globalisation.

AMP in its ideal form . The absolute ruler — God—absolved from existence because of His/Her infinity. Represented, metonymically, here and now by the Brahmin The priest appropriating surplus in the name of God, who is all and, therefore, in the name of the community, from the community And globalisation : market as God. "In the end, neoliberals cannot and do not offer an emperical defense of the world they are making. To the contrary they offer — no, demand — a religious faith in the infallibility of the market " (McChesney, Rober W., 1998) The market spirits sway the surplus from the non-capitalist sector (as we discuss in ch 5) The world community, the global village, constituted by commodity fetish with its surplus

vanishing to appear as profit, the sacrifice on the alter of the global *dharma* — efficiency — the touchstone revealing (wo)man's devotion to the market. So beyond the class process closure, which was our initial entry-point — closure of gap in logic at the moment of surplus production by a non-class process — the AMP process. We also propose that the AMP process and transition are homologous. Transition as non-transition.

### 1.3 PEDIGREE

Let us detail our genre.

This dissertation belongs to the intersection of New Economic Criticism (NEC) and Postcolonial studies (PCS). More to the space of PCS as reconstructed by NEC.

#### **We claim affinity with NEC**

NEC itself is an interdisciplinary field — the critical vision which reveals the overdetermined relation between literature and economics. On the one hand, “an emerging body of literary and cultural criticism founded upon economic paradigms, models and tropes”; on the other “a movement in economics that attempts to use literary and rhetorical methods to unveil the discipline's buried metaphors and fictions” (Osteen, Marc and Woodmansee, Martha, 1999, P3). We harp on the latter order of constitutivity — the economic as interrogated through the deployment of literary — philosophic, or philosophic — literary, or, better still, ~~philosophic~~ — literary strategies.

Already these symbols signal our debt to Derrida and postmodernism. But, as is true of all NEC, we go beyond deconstruction or pure relativity.

New criticism of the economic — obviously an essentialism embedded in the premise in our definition of the economic. Not just 'economic' (indeed, there cannot be any such, as such), categorically the economic constituted by the focus on production and appropriation of surplus (Initially, fundamental class process focus, but later we go beyond it). Thus we distance ourselves from the postmodern faith in absolute (!) openness, and mark our solidarity with those who have worked within the paradigm of ontological openness with discursive closure (Resnick – Wolff, Robert, Callari, Cullenberg, Laclau – Mouffe)

Let us elaborate. 'New' criticism in any discursive space, today, bears marks of postmodernism. Postmodernism — illusive, elusive. One way in which it has been provisionally fixed is as poststructuralism, post-Saussure.

So beyond structure. Structure of production, structure of meaning. Beyond, more than, surplus : surplus production, surplus meaning.

We deploy a strategy which is the stuff of new economic criticism : homology. The homology of surplus production and surplus meaning has not been explored so far in this genre. This is a feather in our cap. The homologies which are commonly pursued are money and language, exchange and message.

Surplus production — beyond difference (of needs) — difference — supplement the supplement of class rule So initially we take an *essentially* Marxist position ‘So’ not in a cause – effect sense Class process which appears here, in the order of discourse, as a result, is actually the point of departure **My entry point** position, already embedded in my deployment of homology through the common space (common between language and economics) of ‘surplus’. One can, elucidate this point by marking out the difference between a founding assumption (which, of course, appears as a conclusion) of neoclassical economics and this, my position In the perfectly competitive market economic, surplus production and appropriation (as super normal profit) is an aberration — surplus which is appropriated at the aberrant rentier position (quasi-rent). In the state of rest, *nirvana*, there is no surplus No surplus and equal (self-seeking) selfs constitute an overdetermined position. (This we show in the course of our discussion). Surplus and hierarchical (class) positions constitute a different overdetermined position which is my entry point position

So **my entry point** constitutes a Marxist position. Thus, essentialism on two counts . one, the entry point delineated is **my entry point** connoting **my** subject position not just as the author of the thesis but subject position constituted by the overdetermined social, cultural and political processes in which I participate ontologically, two, a Marxist **entry – point**, shutting out, at least provisionally, other possible positions

Then, what remains of our anti-essentialist stance ? We contest essentialism as a truth gesture — an ontological position. Thus far we are postmodern But we reject the pure

relativism of postmodernism. Neither do we subscribe to Spivak's strategic essentialism to contest the power-play of hegemonic essentialism. We confront hegemonic essentialism with the counter hegemonic essentialism of the producer of surplus. We are not shame-faced about this. But we do not pretend to possess the truth against the falsity of hegemonic essentialism. To put it pithily, while we subscribe to discursive (essentialist) closure, we uphold ontological (postmodern, relativist) openness.

**We also claim the space marked out by post colonial studies<sup>6</sup>**

Colony, new colony, neo-colony, Orient, on the one hand, the imperial centre, West, on the other. So exchange, negotiation, intercourse between two discursive subspaces occupies the postcolonial discursive site.

The intercourse between two different economic subspaces through the process of displacement, condensation, metaphoric transfers and metonymic stabilisation (terms which we elaborate with due acknowledgement in the course of our discussion) also concerns us. So we claim to stage a postcolonial play also. An overlooked, homologous play : transition — the displaced intercourse between two socio-economic subspaces along the time axis (the one present, the other potential). So we mingle space (Postcolonialism) and time (transition).

But we also stake out territory in the realm of **NEC of Postcolonial Studies(PCS)** . focusing the search light of NEC on PCS. We claim, with pride and trepidation, to

participate in a play which is just beginning to unfold in a (neo/new) colonised, being - reduced - to - shanty - town called Calcutta A joust (un)friendly, where marginal academia contest the high priests of postcolonialism (especially of the hybrid variety) on synthetic turf (Chaudhury, A 2000) NEC — so we start from an (essentially) defined field, an analytical focus PCS as she is disciplined — dealing only with the problem of discursivity in the context of discursive power exercised by one cultural space (imperial) over another cultural space (colony) We mix them up Not randomly, but hierarchically — with NEC on top Our concern in the postcolonial theoretic is with limits and limitations of the discursive order(ing of the neo/new colonial space) generated by the mode of extraction of surplus specific to the imperialist — neo/new colony relation in the era of globalisation

This immediately distances us from postcolonial studies as she is cherished — a branch of cultural studies, of cultural domination constituting discursivity Power, within this (con)text follows the venerable Indian adage : “Practice without hope of fruition”. The practice of power is, definitionally, the discursive practice of the imperialist constituting the other — the colony — as different. So discourse is both the site at which power is constituted and the object of power. We displace and resite it within the economic analytic. It is the power of one economic space to extract surplus from another economic space We too are concerned with the problem of discursive constitution of the other — the colony, the neo-colony. But our focus is on the other as constituted by, and as an effect of, power to appropriate material surplus

In a manner of speaking, postcolonial studies are concerned with the problem of the colonial subject being robbed of a voice, or talking with nobody-that-matters listening, or some-that-matter listening only when that voice has been deflected, contorted. Some are also worried about how this not listening, or mimicry of listening, affects the powerful. We are concerned with the distortions, the contortions of voice of the colonial subject, or even before (!) that, how the colonial / neo-colonial subject is made to see him/her self. But our primary concern is with bread and butter or, rather, with rice and salt : how the neocolonial subject is surreptitiously robbed of these. Our concern with the mutilation of the neo-colonial subjects' power of imag(in)ing (self) and articulation is limited (provisionally, for the space of this dissertation) to the extent that it is engendered by, and in turn shores up, the primary deprivation. We plead guilty to any possible charge of sectarian closure. But in fairness to our commitment (to political economy), we must point out that neither can the accredited postcolonial theorists analyse the problem of material exploitation. In fact, to this stream, domination-subordination in any discursive segment is just the same as domination - subordination in any other, in the endless, open ended discursive play of difference. Postcolonialism within the certified academic lacks the theoretical wherewithal to fence off one discursive segment from another. In plain words, it lacks tools of analysis. Every image, every concept, every relation is reduced to the general problem of discursivity — to a never ending dissemination of the power of discourse, the power to discourse.

Postcolonialism, in all its sanctioned variants is bogged down in a logical circularity power is the force which excludes or distorts the other discursively, and the object of power is a to exclude or distort the other. The postmodern varieties show a degree of subtlety deconstructing the 'distorted' images, they point to hybridity, to mimicry and the reverse order of determination on the coloniser

We differ. We are with the postmoderns in their deconstructive venture But we are also acutely aware of the need to include within the domain of discursivity thinking about doing Action is always premised on a closure in thought Action doing to things, doing to self, doing to others. Also being the object of action: being done in. To be able to build a discourse of being done in materially, here and now, that is our prime concern. That is a variant of the narrative of economic subordination Marx's narrative of exploitation. We introduce a specific closure, a focus — political economic — in discourse So to an awareness of the need to be unceasingly alive to ontological openness while bringing discursive closures into play and work Thus we invoke Resnick-Wolff (R-W) and Laclau – Mouffe (L-M) But while we borrow from their bag of conceptual tools we also refashion them.

While we set to work within the epistemology of overdetermination and the method of discursive (essentialist) entry point closure which is derived from R-W, we are fundamentally concerned with the **process** of overdetermination — a question which they have not, as yet, taken up. This is true even of their discussion on transition Our concern with process brings us to Freud (displacement, condensation) and Lacan

(metaphor, metonym) Our second difference . we start from overdetermination as a symmetric causation, but we are pushed over the brnk to a world of asymmetric constitutivity in the context of AMP and postcolonialism or colonialism in the era of globalisation or new colonialism. So we are back with Freud, and Lacan and L-M  
Third difference · our concern with the intercourse between discursive subspaces is not yet shared by R-W

We also have our differences with Lacan, L-M. We do not agree with them that the metaphor /metonym binary exhausts the indicative potential of the displacement / condensation binary. Thus while the former may bear fruit on the ground of postcolonialism, the latter, more flexible binary can better analyse transition, as elsewhere argued by me (Basu, 1997). Again, like R-W, L-M are not concerned with intercourse between cultural subspaces We also differ from L-M in that we are less postmodern In dislodging the concept of hegemony from its essentialist moorings, L-M also sever the link between hegemony and power : hegemony as exercised by the dominant agency over the subordinate agency. (Chaudhury et.al, 2000) Our concern being essentially (!) with the power to extract surplus, discursive hegemony within the field generated by the interaction between the social/economic spaces is related to the question of this power. Our position is that discursive hegemony rests with the site which is essentially specified by its power to appropriate surplus from the other site

A word, a different word (difference – differ<sup>a</sup>nce) to end, that is to stop for the time being in marking out (or forcing) distances, in distancing myself from others who have worked within partially similar problematics. I am just paying respect to academic tradition, i.e. furthering my vested interest in my thesis position (summary → critique → authorial position  $\equiv$  thesis → antithesis → synthesis). But my epistemological subsumption of ontological openness forces me to be self-critical.

We depart from equality-as-end-of-history narrative through the gaps forced in triadic logic at the moment of surplus production. Initially, we suture the tear, provisionally, with class process appropriation and distribution of surplus. But our epistemology informs us that this entry-point is a closure for the time being, to shut out inchoate glimpses, to make intelligible the incoherent voices of producers of surplus, to coalesce the discourse, to act, that is to put down on paper.

The self-critical character of our epistemology shows up in the transitional character of our initial closure. The sights unseen — outside of the capital-labour frame — are effaced from the class process premised image, but only to bloat it : their surplus — spirited away by a non-class process – fattening the positions within the frame. The same process, but working asymmetrically, constitutes the outsider as bereft of surplus product. But this is not the honourable working class position in whose cause we entered the discourse. Denied entitlement to surplus, surreptitiously, the outsider is not assigned the recognisable position of being drained through a class process.

This denial is not just a nice theoretical paradox but a question of life and death for the outsider · the historically won checks on working day, etc, are of no avail to the outsider position. But there is more to it · the wise capitalist learns and forces his workers off the premise (the factory labour process) to join the ranks of the outsiders

So in this age of globalisation, surplus production and appropriation (therefore, all (production) is only marginally ordered by class process. The discursive process generated by premise of ontological openness has caused the devaluation of the initial entry-point position · self criticality embedded in the premise It is this self criticality which will have to be continuously sustained and worked to contest the insidious, unseen, permeation of neoliberal hegemonism into each capillary of labour and life process.

## NOTES

- 1 The equality principle espoused by the West is familiar : equality of selfs Less familiar is the ideal equality of communities, specifically what Chatterjee calls the being-for-self of caste (communities) (Chatterjee, P , 1994) This ideal caste-community is developed, through triadic logic, from the immediate reality or being-by-self of caste
- 2 Subaltern Studies' group is a group of scholars mainly devoted to the study of history, whose views are broadly similar and expressed in volumes of an occasional anthology called Subaltern Studies, as well as in other works of these scholars The sobriquet 'subaltern' is derived from Gramsci (Gramsci, A, 1971, P 52-55) Subaltern classes do not autonomously constitute their own histories "The history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups" (ibid , P 55) The theme which connects these studies is that Indian history has been written from the view point of dominant groups or elite - imperialists, nationalists and orthodox Marxists The categories used have necessarily reduced the subaltern to unconscious objects assimilated to dominating categories Subaltern studies intend to uncover subaltern consciousness in a pure form, unadulterated (ontologically) by elite organisations or (discursively) by elite categories "The apparent anarchy in peasant rebellion shows a pattern, a structure The subaltern inverts the signs of dominance and subordination, turns things upside down Guha (Guha, R , 1983) (following Gramsci), calls these the first glimmer of consciousness because the subaltern has no project of its own it has no notion of an alternative form of society." (Chaudhury, A , 1995) But Chatterjee disagrees (Chatterjee, P , 1989) "The subaltern contests the elitist notion of the totality, supercedes it, brings forth a higher moment of the totality All these are implicit in the structure of

subaltern consciousness as signs, one only needs to read and decipher them. In particular, Chatterjee in his analysis of caste and subaltern consciousness shows how the subaltern rejects the prevailing caste system which implies hierarchy and projects an alternative caste system in which all castes are equal" (Chaudhury, A 1995). This ideal (caste) community equality is our entry point

- 3 Postmodernists argue that no logical system is a closed totality. At every level of generality there will be insufficiency of ground or inadequacy of the conceptual domain. To cement these gaps one has to refer to concepts belonging to a different domain. This is supplementation. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this work.
- 4 The term is used in a postmodern sense. Surplus meanings are the significances of a signifier (or an association of signifiers) beyond or in excess of the signified with which it is bound by the sign system, within which the signifier is apparently situated. One could think of the surplus meanings as vertically associated signifieds as opposed to horizontally associated signifieds, à la Saussure. Surplus meanings generate symptom.
- 5 Concepts like overdetermination, class process, entry-point have been developed by 'Rethinking Marxism' group though they have originated elsewhere (generally Althusser, thus the tag neo-Althusserian). These have been most comprehensively elaborated by Resnick and Wolff (Resnick & Wolff, 1987, Ch 1). By the 'Rethinking Marxism' group I mean the group of Marxist thinkers like Wolff, Callari, Roberts, Ruccio, Cullenberg and others who have been, or are, actively associated with the publication of the journal named "Rethinking Marxism".

By overdetermination one means an epistemological position premised on mutual constitutivity of sub-domains within the ontological domain and, hence, within the discursive domain, too.

"To theorise society as a totality of overdetermined processes and hence devoid of any determining essence(s) implies the question: 'How can one make sense of this totality?' If every process in (aspect of) society is completely overdetermined by all the others, any explanation of such an aspect would require an exhaustive examination of all those others and their interaction. Such an examination would be interminable" (ibid, P 25). Perhaps more to the point, such an examination could not start.

Marxian theory has a particular answer to this question. Marxian social theory has a starting point, but the theory never ends in the sense of a "complete" social analysis. Indeed, one way to distinguish social theories is by referring to their different starting or entry points. By entry point we mean that particular concept a theory uses to enter into its formulation" (ibid).

The sub-domain chosen as entry point has only a sequential priority in the discursive domain, not in the ontological domain.

- 6 The dominant postcolonial discourse is, of course, not a monolith. In our purposive reading (can there be any other?) the differences emanate from the degree of internalisation of the problems of discursivity. Said and Fanon, for example, are innocent of paradoxes in their position. Said, of **Orientalism**, appears to be quite simple minded (uncritical). Orientalism is a discursive deployment which is part of the hegemonic project of Western Imperialism. Debt, obviously, to Gramsci. All modes of representation of other, the colony, and even the will to knowledge, itself, are linked to the exercise of power. Discourse, the medium which constitutes (imperial) power and through which it is exercised (over the colony) constructs the object of knowledge (as oriental). The parent theoretic in this case is, obviously, Foucault's. Said differs with Foucault to the extent of his faith in individual agency. For us what is important is that discourse constructs power (of imperialism) — it is defined as such — it is exercised through discourse, by the discursive construction of the Orient shutting out the real East from (again!) discourse.

Said does not have any intimation of postmodern interrogation of discursivity. This shows up in his blindness to the unavoidable gaps, the pitfalls of Orientalism, the unintended paradoxes of his text: who is Said? How is he outside the network of Imperial power? How can one conceptualise changes in modes of power if power is just denial of voice?

In contrast, Spivak is almost entirely taken up with the deconstruction of the texts of the colonisers, the colonised, as well as those of the post colonial critics. To her, discourse constructed around the coloniser-colonised relation (within, about, at the margin) is, by force of the relation, impregnated with a large mass of hidden metaphors, paradoxes, tropes as camouflage for the holes, cracks and fissures in the ground of logic. Her project is mainly to deconstruct these discourses to question the rationality of Imperial power. Spivak also uses deconstruction in an 'affirmative mode' to generate greater awareness of marginalised (colonised) segments, to subvert binary systems sustaining relations of power (including the coloniser – colonised relation), and to prevent anti-colonial (as all radical) "political programmes and forms of cultural analysis alike from reproducing values and assumptions which they ostensibly set out to undermine" (Moore – Gilbert, Bart, 1997). Implicit is Spivak's acute awareness of the paradox of her own position, indeed of the position of all postcolonial theorists. Thus Spivak's catachrestic style and fragmentary themes.

Bhava is also sensible of the tension which inheres in any discursive position, more so his own. The colonised occur ostensibly as a sign for the other (the coloniser). This is what Said, Fanon, et al, see. But the Oriental (say) is also an image. And an image is psychically generated by a process which is always a process of containment of tension in an economy of representation. In the coloniser's psyche there is a tension between desire for, and fear of, the colonised. To enforce stability within the economy of representation, the sign of the colonised is raised to the level of a fetish. Analogous to Freud's treatment of the role of fetish for a fetishist, is Bhava's analysis of the role of the image of the colonised (say, Oriental) for the coloniser. The fetish substitutes the real and works in the service of "containing severely conflictual feelings and attitudes" (ibid, P 118). The dreamwork (condensation / displacement) of desire for, and fear of, the colonised, which generates the image as fetish is named, analogously, as "mimicry" (Said, Anglicised as mimicry of English "almost the same but not quite") "At the heart of mimicry, then, is a destabilising ironic compromise. . . the desire for a reformed, recognisable other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhava quoted in ibid, P 120). Mimicry also distorts the colonising subject which (because of the need to constitute the other as 'not quite') is itself marked by characteristics which are alien to its own discursive constitution (say, the lack of (bourgeois) equality). Then we have the home grown variety of postcolonialism — Subaltern Studies. And predictably it is not quite home grown. They take an almost unreconstituted Said position (of Orientalism).