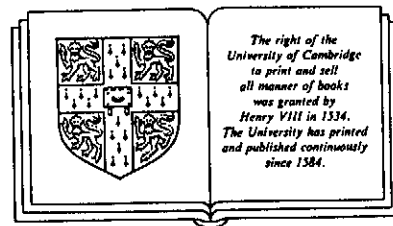


CRITICAL
TRADITIONS IN
CONTEMPORARY
ARCHAEOLOGY

Essays in the philosophy,
history and socio-politics of
archaeology

EDITED BY

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE
NEW YORK PORT CHESTER
MELBOURNE SYDNEY

1989

Chapter 6

Dialectics, critical inquiry, and archaeology

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Introduction

Developing in tandem with, and as a result of, the new wave of self-reflective analysis in archaeology is an interest in Marxist philosophy and social theory. An increasing number of archaeologists are turning to the Marxian tradition to develop new frameworks for understanding the past (e.g., Bender 1978, 1985; Friedman and Rowlands 1978; Gledhill, 1981; Gledhill and Rowlands 1982; Kohl 1981; Kristiansen 1982; Leone 1982; Marquardt 1984; various contributors to Hodder 1982c, Miller and Tilley 1984b, Spriggs 1984b). This work is 'critical' in orientation; it seeks to recast the philosophical presuppositions of archaeological inquiry, exploring alternative ways of conceptualising past societies and of producing and evaluating knowledge claims about them.

To date, Marxian theorists have made greatest headway in the former, theoretical pursuit. Their work has stimulated new thinking about the nature, sources, and developmental implications of variation in human social arrangements. Relatively less progress has been made in the realm of epistemology. While Marxian theorists are persistently critical of the empiricism that has long informed archaeological inquiry, they have been much less explicit about what is to replace this traditional framework. There has been little extended discussion of Marxist epistemology and its implications for archaeological practices of theory construction and evaluation. This lacuna has serious consequences. Recent critics of Marxian discourse reject

it as just another interpretive 'fad' capable of delivering little in the way of empirically valid knowledge, or progress toward a truly 'scientific' discipline.¹

My concern here is to fill something of this lacuna by discussing the organizing features and practical implications of a Marxian theory of knowledge. In the first part, I outline the basic epistemological principles of Marxian science; these consist of guiding assumptions about the nature of theory, truth, and the methodology of science. In the second part, I discuss what this orientation comes to in an archaeological context: what it fosters in the way of methodological self-consciousness, and mandates for theoretical practice. I also briefly counterpose the Marxian approach with other post-empiricist philosophies emerging in archaeology. My hope is that this will stimulate further discussion, clarification, and enrichment of a Marxian approach, and will throw into sharper relief its differences with non-Marxian modes of thought.

Marxism and epistemology

Marx's philosophical framework has been understood in a variety of ways within the social sciences. He has been interpreted as holding empiricist (Hudelson 1982), rationalist (Cutler *et al.* 1977), and realist (Keat and Urry 1981) epistemological positions, among others. I understand Marx's epistemological outlook to be best captured by the concept of dialectical materialism. The distinctiveness of this position has

been most cogently articulated by Louis Althusser (1974) and others working within a broadly defined Althusserian tradition.²

A dialectical epistemology conceives of thought and reality as existing in a reflexive, inter-effective relationship; thought structures reality, and vice versa. More specifically, thought exists as but one constituent aspect of a *singular* social totality. Embedded in this totality are all manner of other social processes – political, economic, and cultural (the latter subsuming processes of thought) – each of which is in complex interplay with all the others. Each, then, can only be understood as a product of the combined influences of all the others, which continually shape and change it. Thought may be said to exist only in so far as it is the site or locus of a complex array of influences exerted upon it by all the other processes constituting social existence. To coin a Freudian term adapted to Marxian philosophy by Althusser, thought is ‘overdetermined’.³

Acting together, the various non-theoretical processes constituting the social totality propel the thinking process in different directions, conditioning the development of different and opposed ‘sciences’ of social life. These sciences are organised by divergent concepts of what the totality is like, how it is organised, and how it changes. Through theoretical development of their respective concepts, different sciences produce different knowledges of the totality, and offer different justifications for these knowledges. The produced knowledges have impact, in turn, on the totality by informing the strategies and policies people use to cope with, and intervene in, the world around them. Thought thus constitutes a very real material force which helps shape and transform the social totality of which it is a part.

A dialectical understanding of the relationship between thought and reality, in which thought is but one constituent aspect of a unified whole, implies that no science or theory can capture the singular truth about reality or social existence. Rather, truth is *relative* to the respective processes of thought which produce it. What each science sees as the truth about reality depends on the particular way it experiences reality through its organising concepts, theories, and methods. Sciences select different ‘facts’ of experience to scrutinise and relate, and have different ways of producing, defining, ordering, ‘testing’ and reworking the concepts which give such facts meaning. For a dialectical epistemology, knowledge of the world is fully conventional and situational. It is constructed in conformity with the foundational principles of a particular science, and is dependent on the time and place of the thinker.

This understanding of the knowledge process has traditionally represented a minority position within Western thought, and continues in that role today. The bulk of Western science is underpinned by epistemologies that sharply contrast with a dialectical view, in the main, empiricism and rationalism. Far from positing the unity (inter-effectivity) of thought and reality, these epistemologies postulate a radical disjunction between thought and reality, and assert the

possibility of acquiring truly ‘objective’ knowledge of reality. Empiricism and rationalism differ only in the method each uses to bridge these two realms, and in the standards they use to evaluate claims on the singular truth they presume to exist.

For empiricism, this singular truth lies in the independent ‘facts’ of experience given to thought; these serve as a standard for judging the truthfulness of different theories of how the world works. Rationalism, by contrast, attributes to the facts of experience no such independent power to adjudicate the truth and falsity of theories. It is, rather, the essential ‘logic’ of the world which first must be grasped if sensory experience is to be correctly understood. Rationalists debate not facts but the precise specification (deduction) of the science, paradigm, or conceptual framework best able to capture reality’s underlying logic, its essential ‘order’.⁴

Neither of these traditional theories of knowledge is sustainable from the standpoint of dialectical epistemology. It is inconceivable for a dialectical logic that the world holds out an essential empirical factuality or rational order which can simultaneously serve as the singular object *and* measure of thought. An epistemology founded on a recognition of the over-determination of thought yields unequivocal respect for the variety of existing sciences as different, as complexly constituted products of a single totality which literally ‘see’ and understand their facts differently. Observational and theoretical statements are frequently shared across sciences but this in no way undermines a dialectical epistemology. Far from establishing that facts ‘transcend’ theories or supporting optimism about the quest for a ‘unified’ science of society, such commonalities merely indicate the over-determination and interaction of the various existing sciences.

The respect engendered by dialectical epistemology for the particularity of each existing science and for the relativity and internality of their truths does not, however, foreclose empirical and theoretical dispute. Dialectical science cannot claim a relativist indifference toward alternative sciences (cf. Feyerabend 1975), nor a hermeneutical interest in merely keeping the ‘conversation’ with those sciences open (cf. Rorty 1979). The possibility of actively discriminating among relative truths is guaranteed by the relational character of dialectical epistemology, specifically, by its notion that sciences are both effects *and* causes of the social totality. The ways in which sciences relate to experience (what they construct as their analytical objects, what they emphasise as significant facts, and how they link concepts and facts) have important consequences for the evolution of thought and the development of society.

A dialectical epistemology focuses critical attention on these consequences. It examines how philosophical propositions influence the kinds of observations made on a subject matter, how these observations are connected to each other, and what they suggest about the nature of society, history, and socio-historical causality. It also directs attention to the consequences of what the different sciences leave out of account, systematically repress, or deny outright, as such omissions preclude other possible understandings of the world. Dialectical

epistemology holds that *all* sciences and theories have such consequences, regardless of their subject matter, inasmuch as all are constituted by the relationships organising and reproducing social life in the here and now. The 'falsity' of theories lies, then, in the particular social implications of their propositions, not in their inadequate relation to a pre-given empirical factuality, or lack of conformity with a received wisdom about how the world works. Of course, these consequences for thought and society are not self-evident. What individual theorists see as consequential in a science is itself over-determined and contingent, varying with the understanding each has of the sciences they contest, and with their own personal views of where social inquiry and the wider society are headed.

Herein lies the key to the rejection by Marxian theorists of traditional epistemology and their activist struggle against a wide range of theories rising from it. Where traditional epistemology endorses the presupposition that science has a singular object and seeks absolute truth, these theorists recognise that it presents serious obstacles to alternative forms of science. It precludes development of a full range of possibilities for change in thought and society and blocks exploration into both the causes and consequences of varying conceptualisations of reality. This, of course, denies Marxian theorists the option of justifying their *own* conceptualisations on privileged epistemological grounds. They necessarily see their claims in a radically different light, as the products of over-determined, *strategic* choices which have concrete political, economic, and cultural import. To illustrate what is at stake in this matter, I briefly examine below the consequences of a central theoretical claim of Marxian inquiry in archaeology: the distinction which is often drawn between class and pre-class societies.

Thus far I have argued that a dialectical theory or knowledge eschews traditional beliefs in the 'unified aim' of science, and in a single scientific community dedicated to the pursuit of a 'correct' scientific practice (cf. Brown 1979). Dialectical epistemology envisions the development of a diversity of sciences, each the unique site of convergent processes and each producing a different knowledge of how the world works. These sciences have different interests, aims, and tolerances of one another's claims to scientific status. They struggle with each other over facts, theory, and interpretive conclusions, and wrestle with their own internal contradictions. Beyond generating continuous change in science, these confrontations guarantee little in the way of progress given the over-determination of thinking by a host of non-cognitive personal, professional, and social relations. Sciences and theories can endure despite repeated falsification through traditional mechanisms of scholarly discourse. From a dialectical perspective, theories do not end until the entirety of their social conditions of existence end.⁵

Dialectical epistemology and archaeological inquiry

What does a Marxian theory of knowledge lead us to conclude about archaeological inquiry? Put most directly, it

suggests that all knowledges of the past are *constructions*, products of particular sets of general concepts that have been transformed (through determinate forms of theoretical practice and rules of quantification and measurement) into specific concepts with empirical referents in the archaeological record.⁶ From the standpoint of dialectical epistemology, archaeological observations are neither more nor less difficult (their meanings are neither more nor less self-evident) than other kinds of observations, historical or contemporary. Like the subject matter of other sciences, the archaeological record holds out disparate, disordered fragments of empirical raw material that must be assigned meaning. The archaeological enterprise is not subject a priori to any special constraints because its cultural subject no longer exists. Inasmuch as the identification of relevant data and their interpretation in *any* existential domain is a creative process, there are no limits to archaeological inquiry that are not set by the conventions of one's own paradigm, that is, by the irreducibly circular way one interacts with experience.

This view of archaeological inquiry yields explicit guidelines for responding to current uncertainty about the goals and anthropological relevance of archaeology (Binford and Sabloff 1982; Dunnell, 1982b; Moore and Keene 1983; Trigger 1984b). To adopt a constructivist position in scientific practice is to throw every established 'fact' open to reconceptualisation, every set of observations to new orderings, and all of archaeological inquiry to radically new possibilities. This potential will only be successfully realised, however, if several additional obstacles imposed by the objectivist ambitions of traditional epistemology are removed. These include the notions, long the corner-stones of traditional epistemology, that concepts must be verifiable (that is, they must make reference to measurable qualities) and universally applicable in order to be scientifically useful. Such notions inform Wenke's (1981) recent appraisal of Marxian thought as a sterile and unproductive pursuit, because of the difficulties that individual theorists have encountered when applying concepts such as 'surplus', 'exploitation' and 'contradiction' (among others) to the archaeological record (see also Price 1982 for a broadly similar critique).

Within Marxian theory, however, the scientific utility of concepts turns neither on the ease with which they can be empirically designated and measured, nor on the number of different situations to which they can be analytically applied. Dialectical epistemology's distinction between general and specific concepts, and its understanding of knowledge as a construct means that the utility of concepts lies in their potential to produce, (within discourse, and according to rules of verification) *other* general and specific concepts which can help illuminate manifest phenomena. Such is the case with the concept of 'surplus'. Within Marxian science, this concept plays a variety of discursive roles; it provides a means for theorising the economic class processes which integrate diverse groups of people into a productive whole, a means for producing related concepts of class conflict and development, and a means for

comparing and contrasting societies with respect to the precise forms of the class and non-class processes that constitute them (Amariglio 1984; Hindess and Hirst 1975; Resnick and Wolff 1982b).

An equally important and more comprehensive function of this concept is that it provides the basis for challenging the distinction between the individual and society which Marx saw preserved in the bourgeois theories of his time (a distinction which persists today in theories of social life built upon concepts of 'Economic Man') and which he knew had to be destroyed for a new science and society to take shape. Effective use of the concept of surplus in this or any other role does not require a process of quantification and measurement or, indeed, any specification of empirical standards as to what counts as surplus. To assess concepts on the basis of their theoretical and non-theoretical *adequacy* rather than their *productivity* is to remain tied to traditional empiricist epistemology.⁷

The philosophical mandate for a more open-ended but no less foundational approach to archaeological inquiry (one no less committed to the careful specification, justification, and subsequent development of concepts) is not unique to a Marxian concept of science. In recent years, a number of archaeologists and philosophers of archaeology, influenced by non-Marxist, post-empiricist philosophers of science as diverse as Kuhn (1970) and Habermas (1970), have trained a critical eye on the empiricist underpinnings of the discipline and found them wanting (e.g., Gibbon 1984; Hodder 1982b, 1985; Miller 1982; Price 1982; Salmon 1982b; Watson *et al.* 1984; Wylie 1982b). These critics in turn have called for broader conceptions of science and more flexible inferential methods as a means of expanding the scope of archaeological inquiry and realising its anthropological potential. Many of the epistemological insights articulated above emerge, with varying degrees of prominence, in this body of critical work. Recent commentaries have stressed that empirical observation is theory-dependent, that science is value-laden, and that scientific reasoning is fundamentally circular. Indeed, those critical commentators call for testing strategies that dovetail with the prescriptions of dialectical epistemology, treating the relationship of theory to data as recursive, interactive, and reflexive rather than confrontational as in the empiricist scheme.

In several other respects, however, important differences remain between Marxian and non-Marxian contributions to post-empiricist philosophy in archaeology. For example, none of the work cited above achieves the particular resolution of the problem of theory evaluation described in the first part of this essay. Instead of embracing the twin concerns for the *particularity* and *effectivity* of theoretical formulations, this work falls back on the traditionalist belief that theories must, at some point, *converge* so that their truthfulness can be determined. Among the pan-theoretic standards proposed as useful in this regard are such criteria as scope, simplicity, efficiency, and utility. For a dialectical epistemology, these criteria are theory-relative – they are comprehensible only within a particular philosophical framework – and hence are of

dubious value as general criteria for choosing between theories.⁸

Such features of post-empiricist philosophy in archaeology attest to the powerful hold that traditional epistemology continues to have on contemporary thought. Evidence that this is true even of the Marxian tradition supports the call for greater epistemological self-consciousness voiced here. The status of claims made by Marxian theorists for the truth of their conceptualisations of the past often have a distinctly traditional character. With enough regularity to warrant concern, Marxian knowledges of the past built around assumptions of social totality, historicity, human agency, and so on, are justified entirely on the basis of their fit with archaeological facts or, alternatively, through appeals to their reasonableness, credibility, or conceptual adequacy. Such justifications are not consistent with the rejection of pan-theoretic evaluatory standards or with the commitment to more relativist concepts of truth and testability – both central to dialectical epistemology. Indeed, they stand to undermine the critical project of Marxian theory to the degree that they, like traditional epistemology, prevent a more comprehensive critical analysis of competing conceptualisations in terms of their causes and consequences, both theoretical and non-theoretical.

The urgent need to attend to this issue can be substantiated briefly by examining the implications of one particular theoretical claim of recent Marxian archaeology. If anything unites the various Marxian approaches in archaeology, it is a belief in the 'classless' nature of prehistoric, non-capitalist societies that form the objects of study (e.g., see Spriggs 1984b). This is a striking claim, given that class represents perhaps the single most distinctive analytical concept in the Marxian storehouse. Bloch (1983) discusses what the abandonment of class as an organising concept in the analysis of 'primitive' societies has meant historically to the Marxian tradition in anthropology. He makes clear how this move has invited into the tradition a host of social theories that postulate various forms of determinism and teleology, and he recommends the recovery of the concept of class as a means of redressing these compromising revisions of Marxian theoretical commitments (see also Amariglio 1984).

While such imports are a continuing cause for concern, the consequences of a discursive abandonment of class in favour of other organising concepts extend far beyond ethnographic and archaeological study of 'the primitive'. Contemporary Marxism is currently engaged in intense debates over what class means and what different concepts of class imply for the rest of Marxian theory and its practical objectives (e.g. Aronowitz 1981; Callinicos 1982; Cutler *et al.* 1977; Resnick and Wolff 1985). It is far from clear what sort of class analysis is best suited to the variety of theoretical and practical goals harboured by Marxian science. In light of this, and given the unique role of archaeology in shaping contemporary thought and action through the production of knowledge about the past, the status of the concept of class within archaeological theory is a matter of profound significance. At best, the

designation of distinct categories of class and pre-class societies buttresses an empiricist understanding of the concept as something given in and recoverable from reality, thereby undermining its status in dialectical epistemology as a conceptual tool for dissecting and, indeed, reshaping reality. At worst, this designation preserves and reinforces *particular* concepts of class which are clearly problematic theoretically and politically.⁹

I do not mean to indict current Marxian research as somehow misdirected, or to call for archaeologists to embrace one true, class-analytic Marxism. Rather, I raise these issues to substantiate the worry that the Marxist approach, by and large, still lacks the sort of philosophical self-consciousness necessary to distinguish it from other established approaches. In a remarkable commentary on some recent Marxian work in archaeology, Faris (1984) puts his finger on what now seems required: discourses which distinguish and justify themselves not through 'privileged (appeal to epistemology) determinations', but rather through 'explicit political reading and critique' (Faris, 1984, p. 873). I understand this as a call both for the abandonment of critical and self-justificatory arguments that claim the greater adequacy of particular sciences, paradigms, or conceptual frameworks over others, and for the establishment, instead, of arguments that emphasise the relationships between theoretical and non-theoretical positions, goals, and current practices. While some significant steps have been taken in this direction (e.g., Rowlands 1984), the philosophical ground on which such discourses can flourish is far from fully prepared. Much more discussion and debate is necessary if Marxian science is to develop and, most important, transcend the constraints of the existing epistemological tradition.¹⁰

Conclusion

My primary aim has been to outline the key features of a Marxian theory of knowledge and of its mandate for critical inquiry in archaeology. The critical goal of Marxian science is to specify the differences between itself and alternative sciences with respect to how each conceives of objects, subjects, and the mediating knowledge process. Its positive goal is to change, in specified ways and through concrete forms of theoretical and empirical work, the social totality of which it is both cause and effect. This project demands that Marxian theorists maintain a persistently critical attitude toward other sciences, as well as toward their own research efforts. A complete defence of this philosophical project has not been offered here. Rather, my concern has been to *specify* the Marxian position on epistemological issues.

My secondary aim has been to place this dialectical epistemology within the general stream of post-empiricist philosophy in archaeology. The critical concern of Marxian theory with the causes and consequences of different conceptualisations of the past distinguishes it from other approaches that seek to define a new epistemological terrain for archaeological inquiry. The task of fully articulating and

implementing such an approach remains incomplete within archaeology and within the Marxian tradition in archaeology. I have been concerned to sketch some of the epistemological issues that an explicitly Marxian approach to the scientific process must address if it is to succeed in this task.¹¹

Notes

1. See, for example, Binford (1983a); Dunnell and Simek (1984); and Wenke (1981). These authors impugn the knowledges produced by the discipline's 'ists' and 'isms' as so many 'just-so stories' or 'social philosophies', and criticise them as 'tautological' (providing no reasons for acceptance outside their own paradigmatic conventions), and as 'immunized' against empirical refutation. I respond to these charges below.
2. Resnick and Wolff (1982a) have been particularly successful in clarifying the Althusserian contribution to Marxian philosophy. I am indebted to their recent review and reformulation in what follows. Further inspiration is drawn from Hindess and Hirst (1977), and Suchting (1983). Although influenced by Althusser, these authors develop the implications of his work somewhat differently than do Resnick and Wolff. The work of Harvey (1973, 1974) and Scholte (1981) has also informed the present discussion. While these authors do not claim kinship with Althusser, their understandings of dialectical materialism and its implications for method and theory in the social sciences converge with Althusser's in several important ways. Finally, the influence of various non-Marxist philosophers must be noted. The philosophies of Kuhn (1970), Feyerabend (1975), Brown (1979) and Rorty (1979) all share important features with a dialectical approach, while diverging in several critical ways. The points of divergence are indicated at various junctures in the text.
3. Within Marxian philosophy, over-determination is a relational concept. It does not imply an ordinary concept of the relationships obtaining between different aspects of the social totality. The impact of one aspect on any other or the whole is never straightforward given the complicating influences of all the others. The development of each aspect is thus always difficult and contingent. Marxian theory's commitment to over-determination and a 'decentred' concept of social totality explains why it cannot sanction determinist forms of social theory, economic or otherwise. For Marxian theory, there can be no final cause or determinant of society or history, nor any universal laws of development. To forsake determinism and assignments of causal priority, however, is not to deny the importance of analytical focus. The considerations which influence Marxian theory's choice of an analytical entry point are taken up later in the text.
4. 'Pure' examples of empiricism and rationalism are, like anything else, difficult to find in reality. The more common tendency is to vacillate *between* epistemological positions, that is, to invoke empirical fact and governing theory simultaneously, when justifying or challenging competing knowledge claims. Harvey (1974, pp. 216-17), Hindess and Hirst (1977, pp. 9-33), Layder (1981, p. 10), Resnick and Wolff (1982a, p. 33), and Suchting (1983, pp. 23-5) all note the tendency for empiricists and rationalists to violate their own presumptions - that is, to invoke forms of argumentation characteristic of the other - when pressed to defend their knowledge claims.
5. Given the view that Marxian theory holds of scientific activity, it can come down on neither side of the rationalist-irrationalist debate over the nature and mechanisms of scientific change. Tribe (1982) reviews the different positions in this debate, and suggests a position similar to that summarised here. Latour and Woolgar (1979) show how these conclusions about scientific

practice hold even within the natural sciences. Their two-year ethnographic study of a modern research laboratory reveals that scientific practice is remarkably disorganised and socially over-determined, governed by complex struggles for and against different possible 'orderings' of reality. In a more polemical vein, Harvey (1973, especially pp. 120-52) argues that the philosophy of social science is potentially *superior* to that of natural science, given its self-consciousness about the responsiveness of inquiry to external factors. He concludes that fusion of the two fields of study will best be achieved not through attempts to 'scientise' social science, but rather through the 'socialisation' of natural science.

6. It is implicit here that the concept of an 'archaeological record' is itself a construct. Patrik (1985) discusses alternative theories of what the archaeological record 'records', and the implications of each for archaeological inference.
7. This constructivist understanding of the knowledge process similarly implies opposition to the notion that the evaluation of alternative ordered *sets* of concepts requires a distinct, empirically grounded and operationally objective 'observational language'. Binford (1982a, 1982b, 1983a), of course, has been the most forceful advocate of such 'middle range theory', and many have echoed his call for its development (e.g., Dunnell 1984b; Trigger 1984b). The problem of the sources of such a language remains, however. Dunnell and Simek (1984) point out that the meanings of observations made in 'actualistic' contexts such as ethnoarchaeology and experimental archaeology, two proposed sources of middle range theory, are not given, but must be assigned. While these critics leave open the possibility that such a language may be formulated on other bases, this is inconceivable within a dialectical logic. For dialectical epistemology, *no* act of observing, describing, measuring, comparing, and evaluating is metaphysically innocent.
8. Layder (1985) provides a fuller treatment of this tendency of many versions of post-empiricist philosophy to collapse back into traditional thought. His critique is particularly relevant in that his target is 'realist' philosophy of science, a philosophy recently endorsed by several commentators (e.g., Gibbon 1984; Miller 1982; Wylie 1982b).
9. Precisely *which* concepts of class are being reinforced is unclear. Despite agreement among Marxian theorists on a basic division between class and pre-class societies, several different concepts of class cross-cut the archaeological literature. These include concepts of class as a power relation, as a wealth or property relation, as a process of surplus extraction, as an aspect of human consciousness, and as various composites of these factors. As the contemporary Marxist literature cited above demonstrates, each of these concepts has theoretical and practical costs and benefits. Awareness and analysis of these is a pressing need for Marxian theory, whatever its particular subject matter.
10. That this ground will not be easily won is indicated by another recent review of Marxian inquiry by Trigger (1985a). He sets an agenda for Marxian work which is strikingly at odds with that suggested by Faris. Specifically, Trigger suggests that Marxian theorists need to work harder at demonstrating, through direct competition with established sciences, the superiority of Marxism as a way of knowing. This means embracing the regulative ideals of traditional epistemology, including its concern for testing propositions which are amenable to empirical control (p. 120), and for establishing empirical and rational standards by which the sophistication and comprehensiveness of competing explanations can be determined (p. 116). Trigger considers this the only way to carry through fundamental Marxian commitments to understand and change the world. The position endorsed here is that it is precisely Marxism's failure to break

with established epistemological practice that has compromised its scientific and social revolutionary promise.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following people for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay: Jack Amariglio, Art Keene, Bob Paynter, Bill Fawcett, Dave Lacy, and Tom Leatherman. None of them is to blame in any way for the final product. I also thank John Cross, Mark Leone, Barbara Bender, Tom Patterson, Kristian Kristiansen, and Randy McGuire for conversations which, unbeknown to them, helped to shape the essay's form and tone. I am indebted to the Amherst study group of the Association for Economic and Social Analysis, especially Steve Resnick and Rick Wolff, for the tremendous intellectual stimulation they have provided over the past few years.