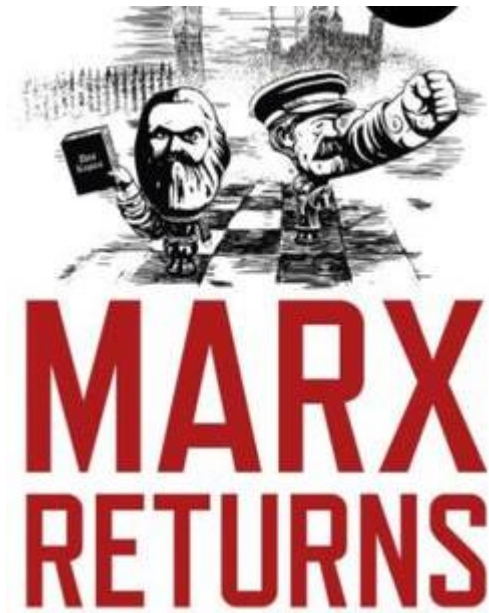
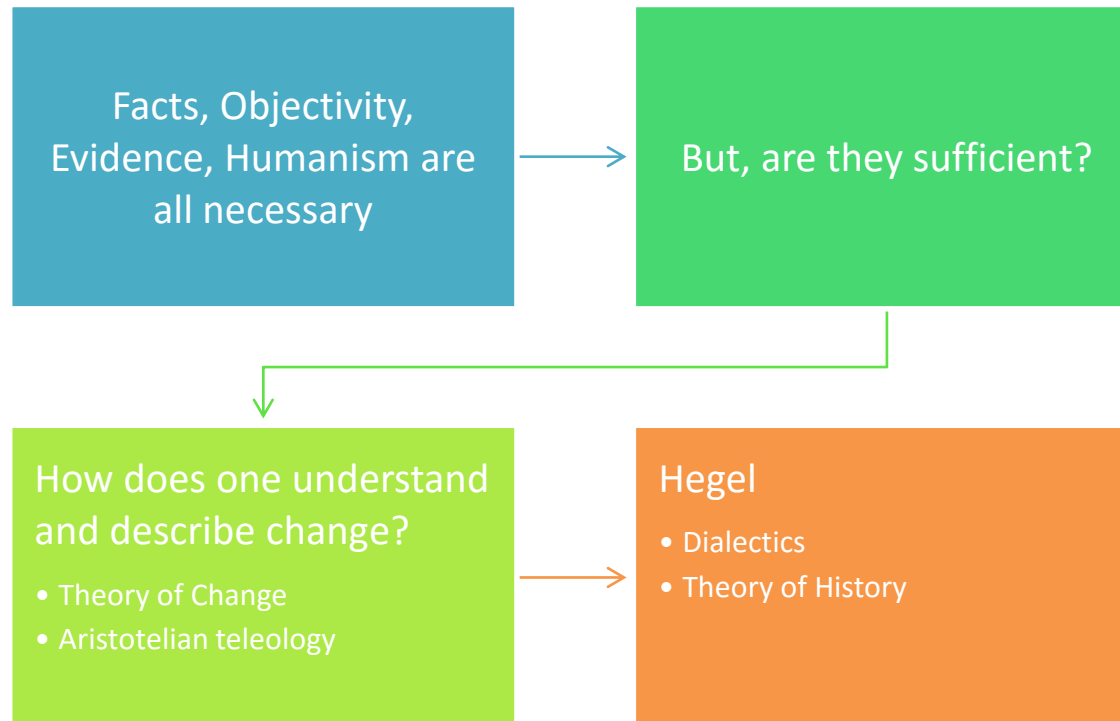


Marxist History

- Aniket Alam
- Introduction to History
- HSS343a



Starting Off...



Materialism

- Matter Primary, Idea Secondary
 - Understanding the material world in which human beings survive has to take precedence over understanding the intentions or ideas which activate human actions
 - Ideas cannot exist without matter
 - Matter can exist without ideas
- Dialectical Materialism
 - Matter <-> Motion <-> Higher Stage of Matter <->
 - Brain <-> Mind <-> External World <-> Ideas
 - Lower stage exists within the higher stage

Materialism

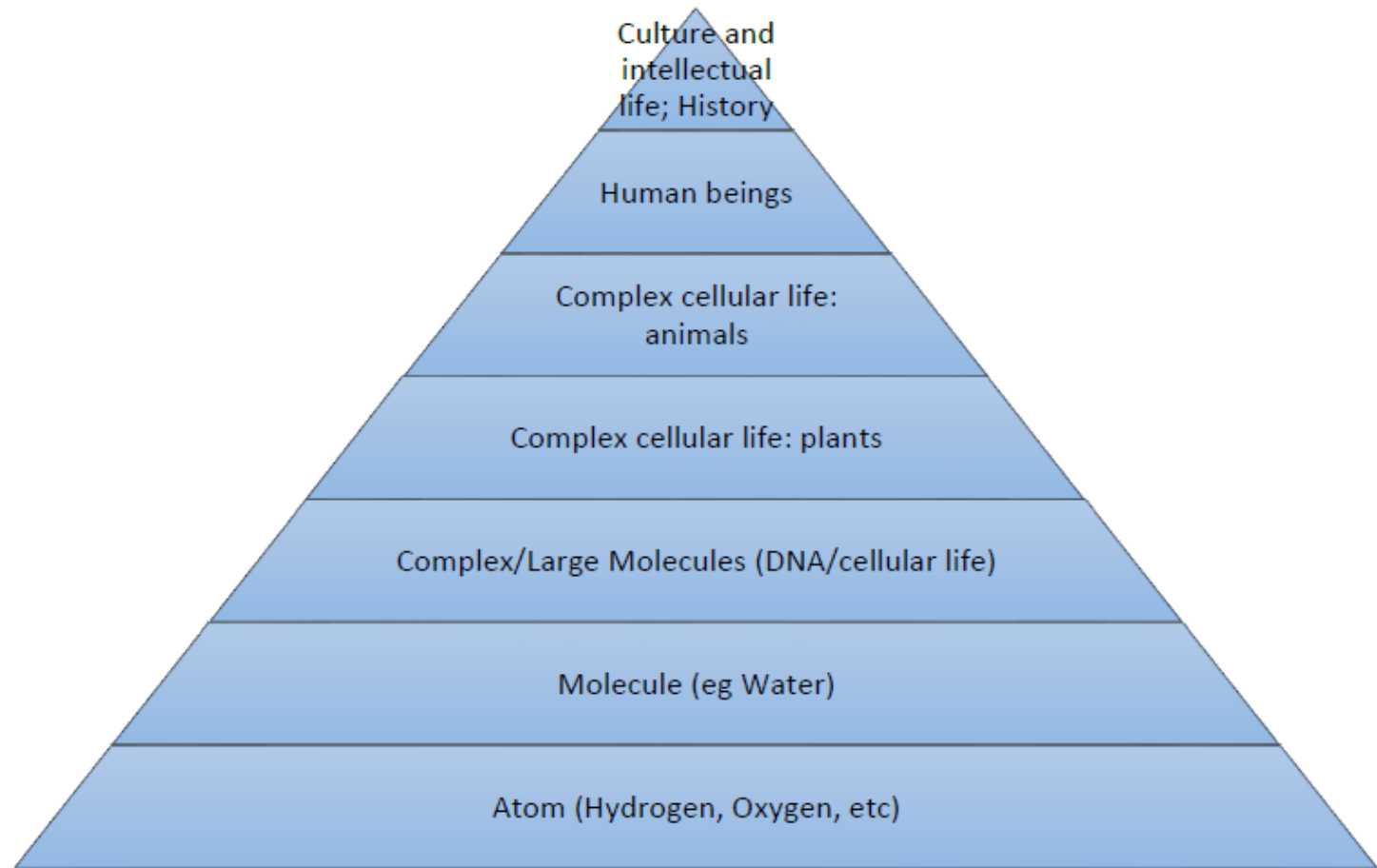
According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing, and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organisation under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of the development of labour on the one hand and of the family on the other.

~Fredrick Engels~

Dialectics

- Against Dualism
- Reality is not two (or more) different states of being but different expressions of the same thing
- Theory of Contradiction
 - Thesis -> Anti-Thesis -> Synthesis (thesis)
 - Idea of Negation
 - Evolutionary
- Cannot know self without the other

Dialectical Pyramid



Dialectical - Materialism

- Marxism first to provide rigorous causal and methodological primacy to materialism
- No conceptual break between natural world and the human world
 - Bound together in a common explanatory grid
- History (or human life over time) is merely a particular form of “Matter in Motion”

Labour

- Labour distinguishes Humans from Nature
- Labour is conscious action
 - Purpose
 - Plan
 - Learning from Failure
- Human condition is the result of the dialectical relation between labour and mind
- Labour makes us Human; Labour also creates all value

“the hand is not only the organ of labour, it is also the product of labour.”



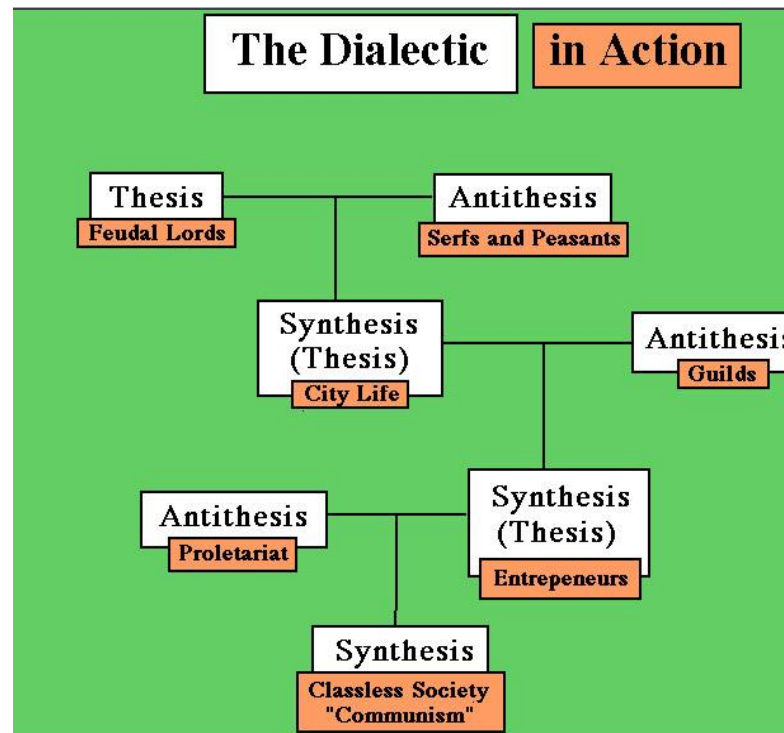
Surplus

- Surplus is accumulated labour
- Labour creates Humans; Surplus creates civilisation
- Dead Labour
- Turns dialectics from relation between
 - Man and Nature to Man and Man
- Divisions within society
 - Who has Surplus (dead labour) and who has (living) Labour

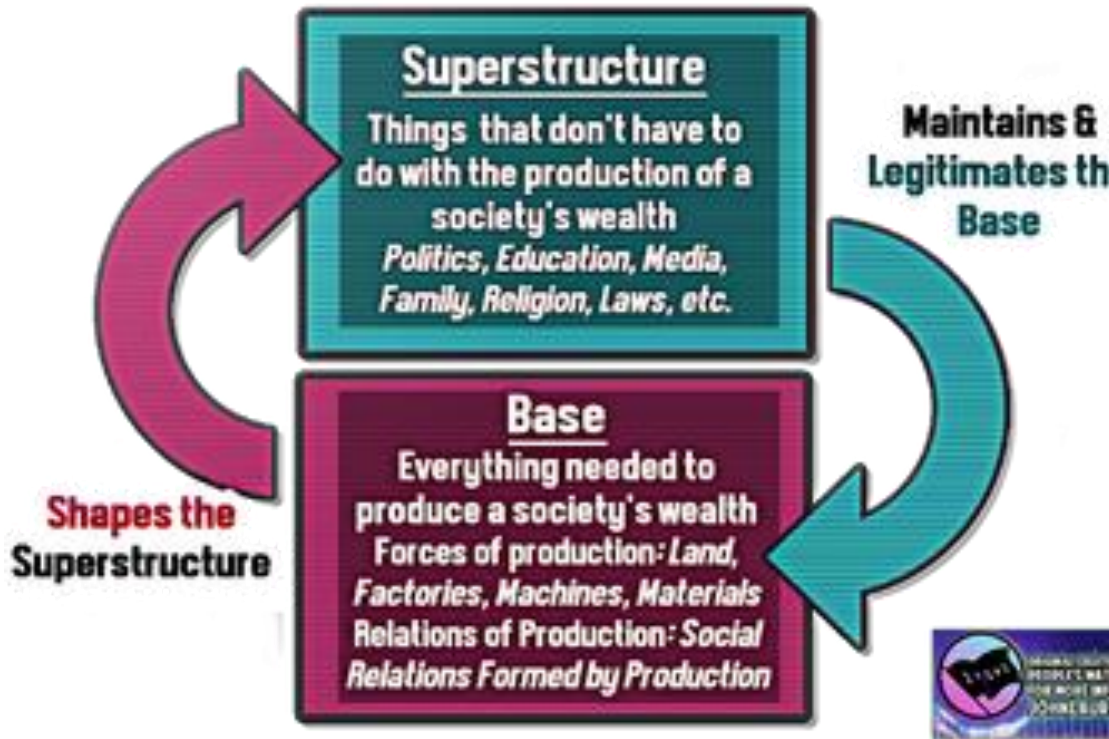


Class Struggle

- Motor of History: Struggle between dead labour and living labour
 - Means of Production and Relations of Production
- Form of this Struggle defines form of society
 - Primitive, Slave, Feudal, Capitalism
- Dialectics of history creates new society within old society
 - Move to higher level of relation between dead and living labour or collapse



The Material Architecture of Society



- Means of Production and Forces of Production form base of society
- Superstructure is what keeps the base stable and running
- Economy as base
- Politics, Laws, Culture as superstructure
- In Dialectics can these be so fixed?

Base -
Superstructure

Three Advances



- One: does not ask us to make any *a priori* assumptions of first cause of History
- Two: provides us with a theory to understand causation in history without necessarily reducing it to determinism
- Three: Enables us to link understanding with explanation.
 - Move from knowledge to practice is contained within the same theory; that it allows for theory to become practice.

Three Problems

- Determinism
 - Laws
 - The relation between Structure and Agency
- Hierarchy of Causation
 - Economic Determinism
 - Teleology
- Closed Explanatory System
 - Historical Inevitability
 - History begins and ends at definite points

