

# Science for Humanism

The recovery of human agency

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# Preface

Since the 1970s, a growing number of social scientists informed by realist philosophies of science have come to believe that they have therefore moved into a time “After Postmodernism” (Lopez and Potter 2001). What especially marks this historical movement is the opening up of a new encounter between Science and Humanism. While the old encounter was between Positivism and Humanism, the new one is between science as the realist practice that it is, and the social sciences as – quite naturally – a humanist enterprise. This unprecedented encounter is informed by Humanism’s proper regard for preserving the ontological integrity of human being. My focus on ontology (metaphysics) stems from the Science/Humanism problem of establishing the reality of human freedom against the standard view that determinism threatens it. Generally, I maintain that the way in which the reality of human freedom can be legitimately established is by formulating a theory of human cultural practice that provides ontologically adequate conceptions of human agency, embodiment, discourse, and particularly, that those conceptions should emerge from their interconnections in human social action.

Underwriting the above humanist metaphysical concern, and its conceptual ambitions from the standpoint of a realist view of natural science, is the following new understanding of the social sciences: ontology is the deep business of scientific theory, and thus the regard for the ontology of human being is a legitimate theoretical interest for social scientists so informed. It is this understanding that creates the possibility of naturalism in the social sciences. The crucial lesson of Rom Harré’s philosophy of scientific realism for the social sciences identifies what I am after, and Roy Bhaskar’s elegant understanding of it is captured in this paraphrase: in the desire to be a science in the same sense, but not in the same way, as the natural sciences, the social sciences should pursue the precision of meaning and not the accuracy of measurement. It is Harrean realism that informs us that the accuracy of measurement is an unrealistic dogma of positivist social science in its *experimental* research ambitions. It also shows us that the precision of meaning is the best that can be achieved in social science in the theoretical work that informs its *naturalistic* research endeavors. Thus, from this realist

perspective on rigor and its relevance to the social sciences I can decisively define my scientific ontological interest: the aim to establish the reality of human freedom by virtue of attaining an ontological conception of human agency, is to be seen as an instance of the pursuit of the precision of meaning. In this book, *Science For Humanism: the Recovery of Human Agency*, my theoretical interest is to show that science, properly conceived as a realist practice, promotes the recovery of human agency from the alleged fact of deterministic structures that supposedly threaten the very possibility of our agency. In this special way, science, not positivism, can be *for* humanism, in the latter's commitment to preserving the ontological integrity of human being; especially in its freedom.

The proper regard for the ontological reality of the freedom of human being that I am arguing a realist science makes possible, is the best that such a New Humanism can now offer those social scientists who understand Marshall Sahlins's (1982) correct insistence that the social sciences should be interested in the problem of freedom and determinism as a matter of course. In reference to the New Humanism, and, because of it, Foucault's attempt to discredit Humanism by virtue of the historical variability of its substantive commitments, just cannot be taken seriously any longer; certainly not from the standpoint of the work of his last period when seen from the perspective of his paper, "What is Enlightenment?" There, Foucault returns to Kant in order to reclaim a notion of human agency, on Baudelaire's terms, to inform his (Foucault's) version of his work as a Kantian critical project. However, Foucault's return results in a reclamation of agency that is in principle the same as the traditional humanist return to Kant, in order to *rescue* human agency from the natural and human worlds of alleged deterministic structures. Reclaiming or rescuing human agency in this manner simply amounts to its affirmation as a subjective truth in the terms of a belief in, or the experience of, human agency. However, such an affirmation is an antidote, rather than an answer to, the ontological question of whether it is the case that a deterministic natural world is incapable of providing a ground for a conception of the agency of physical particulars, and hence for a conception of the agency of human persons. While Foucault perpetuated the standard terms of the Science (as positivism) and Humanism debate on human agency with, wittingly or unwittingly, an earlier theory of discourse determinism, I will elsewhere show that his later work clearly reveals him to be struggling to overcome that earlier mistake. And not without some impressive success in reference to the structure and agency problem.

In referring to the irreconcilable conflict between Science (as positivism) and Humanism that centers around the traditional idea of human agency as a reality *outside* of the natural world of determinism, the structure and agency problem has, on the one hand, set up Science (as positivism) to be *against* Humanism in the name of its commitment to determinism. On the other hand, the conflict has set up Humanism to be involved in some form of a *defiance* of Science in the name of its commitment to freedom. The

upshot is that the humanist rescue, or its anti-humanist reclamation, pays the price of being unable to provide any cogent conception of human agency as a *real causal force* with respect to the worlds of nature and culture. As a direct result, the cardinal thesis that drives *Science For Humanism* is that *there can be no viable theory of human agency without a cogent ontological conception of human agency as a real causal force*. Thanks to the foundational work of Rom Harré and Roy Bhaskar in the philosophy of scientific realism, Russell Keat, importantly, and Peter T. Manicas, especially, have articulated for us the philosophical and historical mistake of conflating science and positivism. As a direct consequence of the achievement, we have been granted an insight into the inner sanctum of the Science and Humanism debate at issue. And that is, that the failure of the strategy of rescuing freedom from nature is the case only within the confines of the traditional Science and Humanism encounter wherein both sides tacitly assume that science is a positivist practice. The absolutely critical point is that positivism is rooted in Humean empiricism, which substitutes correlation (regularity or constant conjunction) for causality (causal power), and hence prescribes a metaphysic of nature which is devoid of *any* kind of real causal forces, whether physical, biological, or indeed human. Hence, Nietzsche never got it quite right: it is not that God is dead, it is that nature is dead – without agency – and so the very idea of God – the supreme agent – is impossible. In reference to Nietzsche’s story, therefore, there is no God, in the first place, to kill. This is no surprise, for, given the supremacy of Hume’s legacy, which Nietzsche and just about everybody else took for granted, Nietzsche never understood causality, and so he never understood science, to begin with. But of course, as a closet and most treacherous realist, Freud did, and then improperly assigned the status of supreme agency to the unconscious and not the person.

It is exactly on this question of the ontological viability of the humanist idea of human agency that Anthony Giddens’s work turns out to be of fundamental importance for this book. In *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976) and *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979) Giddens appears to have been the first to have transformed the traditional problem of freedom and determinism (tucked away in the Parsonian vocabulary of system and voluntarism) into the late modern problem of structure and agency. As a matter of historical fact, however, I argue that Giddens has, without quite realizing it, rediscovered Kant’s original formulation of the problem of deterministic structures and embodied human agency that centers the three *Critiques*.

In my reading, with what amounts to an implied claim to a new kind of Humanism, Giddens’s ultimate concern with preserving the ontological integrity of human being can now be appreciated as aiming to establish the reality of human agency in a natural world of other kinds of agency. In other words, in declaring that human agency is to be understood as a species of a non-Humean causality in nature, Giddens refers to it as an “agent causality.”

Here, exactly, we have Giddens's key idea: the threat of determinism to human freedom can be set to one side in favor of the deeper (originally Kantian) thesis that freedom itself is a form of determinism that is to be understood, anew. Giddens has openly admitted that, since he does not know how to fulfill the requirement of a causally grounded concept of human agency, consequently he can only make this ontological claim dogmatically. *The goal of this book is to realize Giddens's dogmatic principle that human agency is a real causal force.*

This significant principle and the call for its realization is exactly what Mestrovic (1998) has completely missed in his otherwise reasonable, although traditionally speaking, quite expected, critique of Giddens's theory of agency. Mestrovic dismisses it as being nothing more than an over-emphasis on rationality, and therefore, he insists, seriously omits human passion and irrationality. But of course in this ontologically uncritical re-emphasis on human passion and irrationality we are up against, once more, the Freudian trick of using the unconscious to ground human irrationality. Thus we have been returned to the paradigm instance of the problem of structure and agency: the loss of human agency in the deterministic structure of the (psychological, social, cultural, linguistic) unconscious. While Mestrovic abandons us to this problem, once more, a proper understanding of Giddens's version of it opens up a way to address it fruitfully.

My proposal for answering what I shall refer to as "Giddens's Call," is the following: *instead of employing the traditional humanist strategy of returning to Kant in order to rescue human agency from the natural world, a New Humanism directs us instead to return to Kant for the purpose of recovering natural agency from the physical world, which then enables us to recover human agency from a new understanding of Kant's theory of freedom for the cultural world.* Inspired by the *purpose* of Foucault's return to Kant, but *informed* instead by Giddens's Call, my return to Kant for the recovery of agency is directed by the philosophy of scientific realism that has been presented first and foremost in the work of Rom Harré, and then of course, Roy Bhaskar. In the case of Harré, his systematic work on the conceptions of causal powers and plausibility is of paramount importance here, while Bhaskar's breakthrough insight into the fallacy of the very idea of determinism is fundamental to my endeavor. Furthermore, the recovery of human agency is exactly what Harré's Kantian-centered theory of personal being (1984) and Roy Bhaskar's Kantian-informed theory of human agency (1979) presume, but do not provide.

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freedom – “the power to begin” or “the power to interrupt” – and Kant’s metaphysical realism – “the causal realism of matter in motion.”

### **Freedom and the phenomenological tradition: final remarks**

The phenomenological tradition itself, then, has, ultimately, given us an affirmation of human freedom: as a Humanist *antidote, not an answer*, to science, it too has rescued agency from the deterministic structures of the phenomenal world. But what it has not done, and cannot do, is to realize what the logic of its own theory of freedom actually demands: *the recovery of human freedom as genuine agency from the phenomenal world*. Hence, if that prospect is to be possible, the requirement that must be met to realize it I have just identified in the final assessment of Merleau-Ponty’s theory of freedom in terms of the idea of flesh: the crossing of that line separating Kantian Idealism, freedom, and Kantian realism, causality. The metaphysical resources of the scientific realism that underwrites Kant’s theory of freedom can provide a way for us to solve Heidegger’s problem of unification by overcoming the metaphysical opposition of causality and agency. In that event, the shared conviction of Dilthey, Heidegger, and Husserl that the “*feeling of life in nature ... is mysterious and inaccessible to explanation, [and it] will vanish in the analytic operations of science*” will have been discarded, once, and for all.

But of course, since this dismissal does not happen under the auspices of traditional Humanism, it can only take place with a renewal of Humanism that comes with the taking up Giddens’s Call.

In this regard, the fact that traditional Humanism is dying out by the end of the 1970s is surely presupposed in Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (1989), which appeared at the end of the following decade. For, in that huge effort he systematically fails to go beyond the existential/phenomenological tradition of affirming human agency (Taylor 1989: ix–x, 3–52). In writing a history in which the conception of human agency as inwardness, freedom, and individuality is elaborately articulated, he vindicates agency, particularly freedom, against naturalist arguments that reject the *ontological reality of agency* by merely restating the received view of Kant’s theory of freedom (Taylor Ibid: 363–67, 1985a: 15–44, 1985b: 318–37).

### **Humanism to Postmodernism: a new perspective**

During the three decades from the 1950s up to the 1980s, then, the entire philosophical complex of Kant and Dilthey entwined with phenomenology and existentialism, fueled and drove the 1960s neo-Humanist revolt in the social sciences (Tiryakian 1962; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Natanson 1973; Roche 1973; Wolff 1978: 449–556). However, between the hey-day of neo-Humanism and the 1980s, something quite important was happening to the traditional revolt of that Humanism (Hughes 1964; Toulmin 1990). The

# 1 Historical context

## Humanism and Giddens's Call

### Introduction

During the last 40 years of the twentieth century the decline of various positivist philosophies of science was accompanied by a rise in a variety of realist philosophies of science (contrary to Skinner 1990: 5–6, 1–20). This realist turn is evidenced in the works of Jerrold L. Aronson (1984, 1995), Roy Bhaskar (1975 [1998]), Mario Bunge (1979 [1959], 1996), Rom Harré (1970, 1975, 1986, 1993), Stephen Mumford (1998), and William A. Wallace (1974, 1996). At the margins of the social sciences with the 1970s and since, this new development worked its way into the philosophy of social science and thus promoted a quiet and modest pursuit of the possibility of naturalism in the social sciences. This was initially reflected in the work of Margaret Archer (1995, 1996 [1988], 2000), Roy Bhaskar (1979, 1991), Rom Harré (1979, 1984, 1991), Russell Keat and John Urry (1975), Peter T. Manicas (1987, 2006), and John Shotter (1993). There are three major results of the realist turn that I will be briefly dealing with here in order to bring out both the historical context that justifies *Science for Humanism: the Recovery of Human Agency*, and the theoretical framework that promotes it.

In my judgment, there has been a particular result of the shift to scientific realism in the social sciences that is of cardinal importance: the reopening of the Science and Humanism debate on the ontology of human being, especially with respect to its key problem of freedom and determinism. In the second half of twentieth-century social science that problem has gone through two critical formulations: while Parsons's vocabulary of "(social) system and (individual) voluntarism" dominated the three decades from the 1950s to the 1970s, the last 25 years of the twentieth century witnessed its transformation into Giddens's new vocabulary of "(social) structure and agency." As we will now see, the realist turn in the philosophy of science is presupposed by the sociological problem of *social* structure and human agency, and that very fact encourages the move to *generalize it to be the problem of deterministic structures and human agency*.

In each of the social sciences their respective theoretical interests have given us the traditional structures of the psychological, the social, and the



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cultural. I now want to propose that the theoretical thread that connects these three structures into a fundamental metaphysical problem is based on the non-traditional structures of biology and language. Biology can then be understood as resolving into two internally related concepts: the organism and the body; and language can also be understood as resolving into two internally related concepts: practices and discourse. The second somatic revolution in the social scientific theorizing of embodiment that stems from the combined work of Drid Williams, Brenda Farnell, and Charles Varela leads to the proposal that biology and language can be assimilated under the key concept of dynamically embodied discursive practices (Farnell and Varela 2008 in press; Williams 1982: 161–82). Hence, I can now assert that the general problem of structure(s) and agency can be given an enriched formulation: *the problem of deterministic structures and dynamically embodied discursive agency*.

In this book, my interest is restricted to the fundamental problem of deterministic structure and human agency. For the sake of convenience, although he never presented it, as far as I know, with this generalization and enrichment in mind, I will refer to this new formulation simply as Giddens's problem of structure and agency.

The realist turn and the problem of structure and agency, furthermore, are connected in what I will refer to as Giddens's Call. The "Call" is articulated in the *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976: 91): a viable theory of structuration is in need of a suitable realist philosophy of science in order to ground its concept of human agency in a concept of "agent causality." Particularly important for this book's interest is the understanding that there is a specific implication in Giddens's theory of structuration: any prospect of a solution to the structure and agency problem will take the form of an answer to that "Call."

The second result of the realist turn is an examination of the phenomenological theory of freedom that threads together the philosophical work of Wilhelm Dilthey, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty from the perspective of Giddens's Call. This theory of freedom in all of its varieties has been of great importance, for it has informed and fueled the Humanist revolt against Science in the social sciences in the three decades that spanned the 1950s to the 1970s. The use of Giddens's perspective allows us to discover that the theory of phenomenological freedom turns out to be, itself, the crucial reason for the demise of the Science and Humanism debate as we entered the 1980s. *In other words, the death of traditional Humanism in the social sciences must be laid at the doorstep of the phenomenological tradition.* To see this clearly, the key theorist here is Merleau-Ponty: his representative theory of freedom openly addresses the structure and agency problem, and in doing so, human freedom is, technically speaking, actually being cast as the "power of agency." However, in Merleau-Ponty's traditional phenomenological denial of science that was his signature to the very end, it will be shown that this concept of

freedom as a power of agency is thus deprived of any possibility of being correctly grounded in a concept of "agent causality." Thus, this particular effort to rescue freedom from determinism is fatally limited to being a defiance of determinism by the theoretically ineffective act of merely affirming freedom. Here, precisely, is the very reason why the phenomenological theory of freedom leads to the death of traditional Humanism. And yet, Merleau-Ponty's theory of agency as a "power" can be given a new lease of life if it is simply addressed in terms of the entire metaphysical context of Giddens's problem of structure and agency. Indeed, I now want to propose that this entire context of the problem of structure and agency, the call to ground agency in "agent causality," and the turn to scientific realism that the call implies, is indeed the emergence of a New Humanism in the social sciences.

The third major result will be an examination of both the Postmodernism of Knowledge and its complementary, the Postmodern Philosophy of Science (Best and Kellner 2003: 285–88; Giddens 1979; Harré 1998: 353–77; Newton 1997: 8–44). The two Postmodernisms together make up a serious challenge to the view taken here, that structure and agency is a genuine problem, and thus is open to possible solutions under the auspices of a suitable realist philosophy of science. The challenge to this view from the Postmodernism of Knowledge is found in Jacques Derrida's theory of language and in Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyper-reality. Specifically, it is an implication of Derrida's theory that human freedom is to be identified with the spontaneous structural activity of human language that constitutes a reality wholly unto itself. Thus, the world of natural causation is not a problem for human freedom because the latter is imprisoned in the solipsism of the lived life of human language. The other challenge from the Postmodernism of Knowledge in the case of Jean Baudrillard goes one step further. His outright banishment of "reality" and the "social" seems to eliminate both "structure" and "agency" as possible problems. For, the implication is that there is no natural reality for there to be any problem of deterministic structures, and there is no social reality for there to be any issue of human agency. But there is another similar but deeper challenge to taking seriously Giddens's problem and its possible solution that issues from the Postmodernism of the philosophy of science.

Harré's analysis of the idea of science in the works of Nelson Goodman, Richard Rorty, Bruno Latour, and Ian Hacking, indicates that they converge, however unwittingly, on a common outcome: the delegitimation of the rational and empirical authority of natural science. The concept of nature, the sovereign pillar of Western theological, philosophical, and scientific realism, is exclusively reduced to being the social construction of the scientific cultural community. And as a direct consequence, science itself thus is taken to be just another community that of course arbitrarily privileges its ontological beliefs. From such a standpoint, the problem of deterministic structures and the freedom of human agency is an artifact of a radical social constructionism. In short, there can be no such problem.

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The three major results of the realist turn in the social sciences are here intimately connected: the reopening of the Science and Humanism debate promotes the question as to the possible relevance of the phenomenological tradition and the two Postmodernisms to the advancement of social scientific theory, specifically with respect to the prospect of a solution to Giddens's problem of structure and agency. The answer that I will present is that a fatal inadequacy in the theory of phenomenological freedom and in the two Postmodernisms of Knowledge justifies the conclusion that they are irrelevant to the new Science and Humanism debate concerning the problem of structure and agency. Thus, in consequence, I am afforded the opportunity to take the Science and Humanism debate seriously, and, under the auspices of Giddens's New Humanism, to present an answer to his Call: *the recovery of human agency*.

### **Humanism in defiance of science: Kant, Dilthey, and Heidegger**

Throughout the modern history of the encounter of Science and Humanism the debate on the problem of freedom and determinism has been based on this theme: *in its idea that determinism is the reality behind the appearance of freedom Science is against Humanism; in its affirmation of freedom in defiance of that determinism Humanism is against Science*. The theme is underwritten by the following principle: since the natural and human worlds are constituted by a metaphysic (ontology) of deterministic structures, there can be no metaphysical space for the grounding of natural agency in the physical world nor human agency in the cultural world. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Kant proposed a two-world (or two-story) solution as a way out of this predicament with respect to human freedom: within the metaphysical framework of scientific naturalism, freedom is to be located in the noumenal realm and determinism is to be located in the phenomenal realm (Allison 1990, 1995). The metaphysical character of Kant's two-world solution, however, poses a serious problem, to which Pistorius, Dilthey, and Heidegger have given us three complementary interpretations. In 1794 Herman Andreas Pistorius famously articulated this problem, which, today, Henry E. Allison informs us is still accepted in modern philosophy as the essence of the difficulty of Kant's theory of freedom (Allison Ibid: 29).

I readily confess that this double character of man, these *two I's in the single subject*, are for me, in spite of all the explanations which Kant and his students have given it, particularly with respect to the resolution of the well known antinomy of freedom, the most *obscure* and *incomprehensible* in the entire critical philosophy

(Allison 1990: 29, emphasis provided)

Pistorius's specific reference to the resolution of the antinomy of freedom is the actual site of the problem, to be sure. However, he is, nevertheless,

crucially vague concerning the specific issue of the perplexity of the two "I's" in the third antinomy. For now, this perplexity can be quickly indicated in a single statement when Kant says that, "Reason in its causality is not subject to any conditions of appearance or time" (Kant1985a: A 556 B 584). It must be precisely noted that in *this* statement Kant does *not* actually say that freedom as reason is a causal act that is "not in time," but that it is "not subject to any conditions of ... time." For now, this difference, and it will be shown to be a significant difference, will be set to one side; I will, then, treat this issue according to the received or traditional view in the history of philosophy. In that history, Kant's theory of freedom is a revolutionary response to the Judeo-Greco-Christian traditional theory of *Transcendent* freedom: a *spiritual* power that is a reality *neither in time nor in space*. This, technically, is the root of the commonsense version of this theory referred to as freedom of the will; in short, free will. Thus, in the case of Kantian theory the issue of freedom can be stated as follows. When human subjects are considered to be in the phenomenal realm (the first "I") and therefore are in space and *in time*, they are thus under the conditions of determinism: hence freedom is impossible; nevertheless, when those same subjects are considered to be in the noumenal realm (the second "I") and are *not in time*, they are in consequence under the conditions of freedom: hence freedom is possible. Concerning the distinction between phenomenal determinism and noumenal freedom, it is important to observe, as the quote clearly reveals, that Kant actually took the distinction to be a reference to two types of causality: for the former, the "causality of nature," for the latter, the "causality of (or through) freedom." Kant thus provided us with a two-world theory of the problem of freedom and determinism, which has been interpreted as giving us a special and specific solution to that problem: *the possibility of freedom is a matter of rescuing freedom from the phenomenal world by locating it not in the spiritual but in the noumenal world*.

It is in this strict sense of the location of freedom in reference to space and time that Kantian freedom and religious freedom can be precisely differentiated: the former is transcendental but not transcendent, whereas the latter is transcendent but not transcendental. Furthermore, ontologically speaking, transcendental freedom is thus situated in the metaphysical space of naturalism, and so, of course, transcendent freedom is situated in the metaphysical space of supernaturalism. Ultimately, therefore, the Kantian theory of freedom is integral to his Copernican Revolution in philosophy, as the latter is located within the context of the Scientific Revolution.

### **Dilthey: noumenal to phenomenological**

In the late nineteenth century Dilthey's revolt against Kant's theory of freedom, I contend, was precisely a revolt against (let us now say) the Pistorius issue of the atemporality of freedom (as clarified above); and this can be seen in the following three quotes from Dilthey's *Introduction to the Human*

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*Sciences* (1989). The important point to pick out here is that Dilthey gives us a three-part conception of human agency, or what he in fact calls an “efficacy of the will” – “power,” “temporality,” and “dynamic embodiment” (Farnell and Varela 2008).

### Power

Here we only want to emphasize what we find in our own *lived experience*, namely, that the will can direct our representations and set our limbs in motion, and that it has this capacity *even when it is not exercising it*. Indeed, in the event of an external restraint, *this capacity can be immobilized* by a similar or greater force, *but is nevertheless felt as present*. Thus we grasp the representation of an *effectuating capacity* (or a *power*) which precedes the particular effective act; particular voluntary acts and deeds flow from a sort of *reservoir of effective force* [thus a power]. ... [a] productive force.

(Dilthey Ibid: 20–21, my emphasis)

### Temporality

*It is much more difficult to conceive the ideality of time than that of space, since time is just as much the form of inner lived experience [of the efficacy of the will] as of outer processes* [constituted by the efficacies of other wills and physical and biological entities]. The increase in the intensity of attention or the feeling of pain is given as reflexive awareness. It is contained in every reflexive awareness of our vitality, and, since consciousness of the state and experienced vitality exist undifferentiated here, it is nonsense to place an appearance between consciousness and vitality, which are, after all, totally undifferentiated. [We can therefore say that] *Duration, succession in time, is a psychic state rooted in the nature of consciousness, which manifests itself in terms of acts [i.e. of perception and/or the will]*. It is our consciousness that imparts this property of itself to the process.

(Dilthey Ibid: 382, 385, my emphasis)

### Dynamic embodiment

The attempt by idealists to reduce this fact [of the efficacy of the will] to a mere representational concept of efficacy and resistance produces an intellectualist illusion. ... *The will's experiential content as given in reflexive awareness lies in the relation between efficacy and resistance*. ... [Which is to say that] the will becomes reflexively aware of that which is outside of itself and which exerts resistance in the form of something that impinges on it. [Therefore,] *the sense of touch is the primary sense that guarantees thinghood (reality, materiality)*. It is characteristic of the sense of touch that through it an object and a state of the subject are felt simultaneously. ... *The kinesthetic feeling is nothing other than the reflexive awareness [immediate experience not reflective and thus*

*representational awareness] of the strength and direction of an impulse of the will toward movement.*

(Dilthey Ibid: 356, my emphasis)

For Dilthey, as he shows us above, the alternative to Kant's noumenal or atemporal freedom is phenomenological freedom, that is the *freedom that is internal to human lived experience*. Thus, as it should be, dynamically embodied freedom *is* temporal, "since time ... is the form of inner lived experience." The Pistorius perplexity of the two I's is, presumably, resolved: the subject is now in space and always in time. Nevertheless, Dilthey has left us with a new perplexity: the subject and its freedom may well be "in time," but the subject is in a phenomenological "region" and thus, somehow, not "in" the phenomenal realm? But, as "next door neighbors," so to speak, how is freedom rescued from phenomenal determinism by locating it in the phenomenological region of human being?

### **Heidegger: the two causalities problem**

What should now be brought out in reference to the Kant/Dilthey legacy are two themes of cardinal importance for this discussion. First of all, in his very important study of Kant's theory of freedom, *The Essence of Human Freedom* (2005), Heidegger has identified a crucial question intrinsic to that theory that has been either unnoticed or implicitly dismissed by Dilthey (the question, not Heidegger) in his justified revolt against the idea of what Heidegger refers to as the "extra-temporal" theory of freedom (Heidegger Ibid: 164–65). Heidegger is raising a question with regard to Kant's distinction between the two causalities under the auspices of his, Heidegger's, ontology of "Being" in "Time" (Heidegger 1962). And from that standpoint he comments that,

Kant's view that the intelligible causality of freedom runs parallel to, but independently of, natural causation raises the additional problem of explaining *how man can unite both types of causality* (XXXI).

(quoted in Wood 2000: 75, emphasis provided)

In light of Heidegger's question, Dilthey's resort to the phenomenological alternative to noumenal freedom certainly begs a next question that is implied by that alternative. What would be required in order to "unite both types of causality" and thus, in effect, nullify Dilthey's alternative? This brings us directly to the second and related theme.

There is an overlooked deep consensus between Kant's concept of "causality of freedom" and what can now be called Dilthey's the "power of freedom" (in place of "efficacy of the will"), and it is, I contend, something very much like Giddens's idea of "agent causality." And this of course suggests that there is a connection of some importance between Kant and Giddens on the issue of agency. It comes to this: Giddens's Call for a concept of "agent

causality” in reference to the need for a concept of human agency can, I believe, be understood to be, more fundamentally, a call for an answer to Heidegger’s question. And it is quite a different answer than that which Heidegger himself gives in his study of Kant’s theory of freedom (Heidegger 2005: 205–8). Heidegger’s answer stems from a metaphysics of (the) “Being” (of beings) rather than a metaphysics of the “powers” of beings (or “agent causality”) (Heidegger Ibid). Since I will show that for the prospect of recovering human agency the latter metaphysic and not the former is exactly right, I must therefore give a formulation of Giddens’s position.

### **Giddens’s Call**

The context of Giddens’s discussion is the proposal that a thesis of the personal agency of human beings presupposes that “reasons are causes” (1993 [1976]: 91). The issue involved in this presupposition is that there are two counter-claims concerning it: “reasons” and “causes” *are and are not* internally related. The conclusion for Giddens is that, most importantly, which claim is to be chosen depends on which notion of causality is going to be adopted: “*agent causality*” or “*event causality*.” Giddens’s Call is articulated in this context.

I think that it would be true to say that most of the contributions to the debate [on causality and reasons] have been made ... within the framework of Humean Causality. A detailed discussion ... is impossible ... [in this] ... study, and here I shall dogmatically assert the need for an account of *agent causality*, according to which causality does not presuppose “law” of invariant connection ... but rather (1) the necessary connection between cause and effect, and (2) the idea of causal efficacy. The action is caused by an agent’s reflexive monitoring of his or her intentions in relation to both wants and appreciation of the demands of the “outer” world, supplies a sufficient explication of freedom of conduct for the needs of this study; *I therefore do not oppose freedom to causality, but rather “agent causality” to “event causality.”* Determinism in the social sciences, then refers to any theoretical scheme which *reduces human action solely to “event causality.”*

(Giddens Ibid: 91–92, emphasis supplied)

Note that Giddens’s thesis that human conduct is free specifies the concepts of, first of all, “person” and “agency” for the idea of “personal agency”: a *person* as a “knowledgeable actor” – one is enabled to *use reasons as causes of action*; and second of all, “agency” and “efficacy” for the idea of the “efficacy of agency” – *a person is enabled* to use “reasons” as causes of action (Giddens 1984: 345–46). And also note the following: the concept of personal agency demands a concept of “agent causality” so that the “efficacy” of agency is taken to be “causal”; now, this is explicitly opposed to treating personal agency according to the tradition of “free will,” in which

case “efficacy” is assigned instead to the “will.” There is a subtle point here: the implicit idea of “power” should no longer be exclusively identified with the tradition of “free will.” For, in the traditional case indicated above, “power” is not a reference to “causality” in nature but to “causality” in some “other-worldly” spiritual ontology. The link between the two is that the realist theory of “causal powers” accounts for the fact that “agent causality” is a “this-worldly” “causal efficacy” rather than an “other-worldly” spiritual “causal efficacy.” For the sake of clarity, we can refer to the traditional case of free will as the transcendent (other-worldly) theory of freedom and the Giddens case of personal agency as an immanent (this-worldly) theory of freedom. And since, as it will be shown in Chapter 3, Jean-Jacques Rousseau explicitly formulated the idea of free will in transcendent terms, I will from this point on refer to free-will theory as *Rousseau's transcendent theory of freedom*. The implication of all this is of paramount importance in this book: in being transcendental, *Kant's theory of freedom is a “supersensible” and thus not a “supernatural” dimension of the human subject.*

### **Kant and Giddens: internal connection**

We are now in a position to note the direct evidence for the Kant/Giddens connection here in reference to the “subtle point” concerning the location of the “power” of personal agency. That evidence is found in this comment of Kant's.

What has always so greatly embarrassed *speculative* reason in dealing with the question of freedom of the will, is its strictly *transcendental* [not transcendent] aspect. The problem, properly viewed, is solely this: whether we must admit a *power of spontaneously* beginning a series of successive things or states.

(Kant 1985a: A449 B477, emphasis is also mine)

Heidegger approvingly saw this clearly when, in using this quote, he declares that for Kant the problem of freedom “does not relate specifically to will-governed or spiritual being. ... It is by no means the case that Kant posits being-free as ... essentially spiritual. ... ” (Heidegger *Ibid*: 150). Now, although in this quote Kant did not in fact italicize “power,” I did, there is every reason to suppose that he is to be taken seriously on this score. In the following quote (and note that it and the one above are from the first *Critique*) it is clear that he means to indicate that the “absolute spontaneity,” which is the freedom through causality to begin something anew, is indeed underwritten by the idea of “power.”

It is possible to admit present things, substances, which have the power of acting out of freedom.

(Kant 1985a: A 450, B 478)



Once more, the issue is the location of that power, and here Kant is deeply ambivalent and of course problematic: although the “power” of agency is not transcendent, nor is it clearly immanent, it is noumenal. Thus, overall, we have four distinctions: *Rousseauan freedom, transcendent; Kantian freedom, transcendental; Diltheyan freedom, immanent but phenomenological; and Giddensian freedom, immanent but not phenomenological.* Kant and Giddens are connected in their theories of freedom only with respect to the idea that freedom is an “agent causality” and not with respect to the location of the “power” of that causality. And together, their theories imply that neither transcendent nor phenomenological freedom is acceptable.

### **Kant, Dilthey, and Giddens**

In view of the above discussion, Kant, Dilthey, and Giddens are significantly connected in their various notions that are underwriting their theories of human freedom: “*causality of freedom,*” “*power of freedom,*” “*personal agent,*” respectively. Certain implications of the relation of Kant and Dilthey to Giddens in reference to the Science against Humanism debate in the history of the social sciences can now be worked out. The implications have to do with two historical facts concerning the social sciences with their emergence and development at least since the late eighteenth century: the institutionalization of a belief that involves the conflation of natural science and positivism, and the consequent institutionalization of a belief regarding the relationship between causality and agency. The implication of the institutionalization of this conflation is that any metaphysical talk of causality, in reference to either physical or human particulars, is being snuffed out. Of course, as we will see later, that is historically what happened with the developing hegemony of the positivist conception of science as we moved from Hume to Comte to Mill to Ernst Mach, and of course on to Logical Positivism/Logical Empiricism.

The standard belief regarding causality and agency that comes to be institutionalized in the history of the social sciences that is given with the conflation of science with positivism is this: the idea that *determinism is agent-less in being causal, and the idea that freedom is a-causal in being agentive.* Thus, *causality and agency are presumed to be metaphysical opposites.* But now it is particularly important to remind ourselves that it is the case that Dilthey has perpetuated this standard belief. For, the suggestion that Dilthey’s temporal and embodied freedom is a conception of “agent causality” is true enough, as the quotations give definitive testimony. *However, Dilthey’s remarkable achievement for that time was seriously compromised by his damning dismissal of the realism of science.* Having adopted the positivist standpoint that was hegemonic in his day, Dilthey is therefore absolutely sure that any idea of such unobservables as “substance” and

“causality,” as well as “atom,” “force,” and “gravitation,” etc., are, as he says, “the phantoms of metaphysics,” that thus can only be “heuristic construction(s)” in science (Makkreel and Rodi Ibid: 217, 192–206, 207–40). And then he goes further with a view that Heidegger is to take on later and fully exploit in his fundamental ontology of Being.

Since the rise of the mechanistic conception of nature, literature has preserved the great *feeling of life in nature, which is mysterious and inaccessible to explanation*. Similarly, poetry everywhere protects the content of lived experience which *cannot be conceptualized*, so that *what is experienced will vanish in the analytic operations of science*.

(Dilthey Ibid: 206, my emphasis)

Dilthey, on the one hand, has relegitimated the positivist dogma that agency is to be associated only with “subjects” and causality is to be associated only with “objects,” and on the other, he has perpetuated the defiant Romantic/Humanist dogma that consists in the mystification of the ground of human freedom or agency in some alleged phenomenological region that is certainly in the natural world, but yet is apart from the phenomenal region that constitutes the rest of the world.

At this juncture, stepping back, what we should especially emphasize is that the foregoing discussion brings a crucial issue to the fore: despite the fact that the theories of freedom of both Kant and Dilthey link agency with causality, in their own way they then make it impossible to ground human agency in the causality of the phenomenal world. Apparently from within the natural world, Kant carves out the noumenal realm for a conception of transcendental freedom, and again from within the natural world, Dilthey carves out the realm of “lived experience” for a conception of “phenomenological” freedom. Furthermore, in both theories, human agency and phenomenal determinism have been radically segregated: in Kant’s theory, the Great Gap between the noumenal and the phenomenal; in Dilthey’s theory, the mystical gap between the phenomenological and the phenomenal. And, as I have already indicated, what is gaining prominence throughout the nineteenth century and is about to virtually totally obscure the Kant/Dilthey legacy with the turn of the twentieth century in the social sciences, is the belief that causality and agency are metaphysical opposites. Thus, what has happened is that *the association of causality with and not against agency in the theories of Kant and Dilthey is never actually noticed, and thus never articulated*. After all, of all people, Giddens (in his published writings on the issue) has not recognized that the idea of “agent causality” was anticipated, first by Kant, and then again, but a bit more clearly, by Dilthey, in their respective conceptions of freedom.

On the eve of the twentieth century the traditional debate between Science and Humanism began to crystallize from out of the traditions of Kant and

Dilthey. *Humanism now was in possession of what had become the two standard safe havens of the noumenal and the phenomenological with which to rescue freedom from the determinism of a Hull in psychology or a Freud in psychoanalysis, a Marx or a Durkheim in sociology, and a Kroeber or a White or a Levi-Strauss in anthropology.* Freedom then, in the Humanist tradition of the defiance of science, is to be rescued from nature for human beings and their social life in culture. In view of this history of the Science and Humanism debate on the topic of human agency, a thesis of the recovery of agency from the natural world, in order to then recover human agency from Kant's theory of freedom for the cultural world, is an impossible one to conceive of. What is required for such a thesis to be conceivable is that Humanism must get beyond its antagonistic encounter with science. As we will now see, in the second half of the twentieth century this required the death of traditional Humanism and the emergence of a New Humanism.

### **Science and Humanism: traditional encounter**

In "Notes from Underground" part I, Dostoevsky dramatically anticipated what, in the first half of the twentieth century, was to become the stance of a defiant spirit of Humanism in its encounter with science in European philosophy. Under its influence, as I will specify below, that spirit was of cardinal importance for the neo-Humanist revolt of the social sciences in the 1960s (Hughes 1964; Toulmin 1990).

Can I have been constructed simply to come to the conclusion that all my construction is a cheat? Can this be the whole purpose? I do not believe it. ... Good heavens, gentlemen, what sort of free will is left when we come to tabulation and arithmetic, when it will all be a case of twice two make four? Twice two makes four without my will. As if free will meant that!

(Dostoevsky in Kaufman 1977: 76, 80)

In specific reference to what looks like Dostoevsky's anti-scientific declaration in the defense of human freedom, there have actually been two programmatic statements with regard to the emergence and development of what now must be acknowledged to be the two faces of twentieth-century Humanism. The first one, and my main interest here, is the traditional Humanism that came to predominately ground the neo-Humanist revolt in the Dostoevskyan idea of the freedom of the "being" of the human "subject"; the second that also informs neo-Humanism promotes the idea of the freedom of "Being," that is the ground of both natural "being" and human "being." The first face of Humanism is found in Husserl's Vienna lecture of 1935, *Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity*. In the same year, the second face of Humanism is to be found in Heidegger's Freiburg lecture course *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935) (Heidegger 2000: 154, 159, 173,

213). But it is in the famous *Letter on Humanism* (1947) that the import of Heidegger's anti-scientific declaration of 1935 and the turn to poetry is made quite clear: against the phenomenological Humanism of Husserl and hence the existentialism of Sartre, Heidegger pits his fundamental ontology of Being which he denominates as a "humanism' in the extreme sense" (Heidegger 1993: 245, 245–55).

That Husserl presents traditional Humanism as a magnificent expression of the Dostoevskyan spirit can be seen in the close of his Vienna lecture.

The crisis of European existence can end in only one of two ways: in the ruin of a Europe alienated from its rational sense of life, fallen into a barbarian hatred of spirit; or in the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy, through *a heroism of reason that will definitively overcome naturalism*. Let us "good Europeans" do battle with this *danger of dangers*, with the sort of courage that does not shrink even the endless battle....If we do ... the phoenix of *a new inner life of the spirit* will arise as the underpinning of a great and distant human future, for the spirit alone is immortal.

(Husserl 1970 [1935]: 192, emphasis provided)

In the *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962 [1945]), Merleau-Ponty, on the one hand, articulates the humanist objection to science that "Notes from Underground" has expressed, and, on the other, carries forward Husserl's theme of "overcoming naturalism," the "danger of dangers."

Husserl's first directive to phenomenology ... to return to the "things themselves" is from the start the forswearing of science. *I am not the outcome or the meeting-point of numerous causal agencies which determine my bodily or psychological make-up*. I cannot conceive of myself as *nothing but a bit of the world*, a mere object of biological, psychological or sociological investigation. *I cannot shut myself up within the realm of science*.

(Merleau-Ponty 1989 [1945]: viii, 434, emphasis provided)

In *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre 1965 [1952]: 137–46, 263–68) Sartre rounds out the Husserlian tradition of the Humanistic revolt against science in reference to the social sciences.

All knowing is consciousness of knowing. Thus the resistance of the patient implies on the level of the censor an awareness of the thing repressed as such, a comprehension of the goal toward which the questions of the psychoanalyst are leading, and an act of synthetic connection by which it compares the *truth* of the repressed complex to the psychoanalytic hypothesis which aims at it. These various operations in their turn imply that the censor is conscious (of) itself. But what type of

self-consciousness can the censor have? It must be the consciousness of being conscious of the drive to be repressed, but *precisely in order not to be conscious of it*. What does this mean if not that the censor is in bad faith? ... Will anyone speak of the unconscious here?

(Sartre Ibid: 144,146)

Thus human reality does not exist first in order to act later; but for human reality, to be is to act, and to cease to act is to cease to be. [And so], if *human reality is action*, this means obviously that *its determination to action is itself action*. If we reject this principle, and *if we admit that human reality can be determined to action by a prior state of the word or of itself*, this amounts to putting a given at the beginning of the series. *Then these acts disappear as acts in order to give place to a series of movements. Thus the notion of behavior is itself destroyed as with Janet and with the Behaviorists. The existence of the act implies its autonomy.*

(Sartre Ibid: 264, emphasis provided)

Sartre's revolt is seen here in his celebrated dismissal of Psychoanalysis and Behaviorism for their joint commitment to science and Determinism against Humanism and Freedom: the concept of bad faith replaces the concept of the unconscious, and the concept of action replaces the concept of behavior as physical movement. To be sure, Sartre's conception of action presupposes a theory freedom:

As Sartre memorably put it, the nothingness that "lies coiled in the heart of being" – "like a worm" – is the source of human freedom. Without it, he suggests, determinism might be true of human thought and action: nothingness, intervening between every putative "cause" and "effect," makes it the case that the former cannot necessitate the latter.

(Richmond 2005: 4)

In view of the fact that Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty were committed to and thus perpetuated the Humanist defiance of science and its determinism, their important position on the question of human freedom must now be considered. Since Heidegger's preference for poetry as a general artistic process of intuition in defiance of the "mathematical formalism" of modern science is what he shares with the three above, he is included in this consideration (Heidegger 2000: 294). I will show that he is nonetheless to be set quite apart from them on the issue of human freedom, for, to Heidegger, it is an *ontological* and not a *phenomenological* issue. Hence, the relevant question to my thesis of recovery with regard to the latter is this: why is there a problem in the fact that the phenomenological theory of freedom is nothing more than an affirmation of Humanist belief? What I will now uncover is that the conceptual substance of this theory, *against Merleau-Ponty himself*, can be plausibly read to be more than the affirmation of freedom. Which is to say, that there is a

prospect of recovery that is implicated, but not implicit, in Merleau-Ponty's discussion of freedom. In fact, because of that very implication, we will see that Giddens could well have been inspired, perhaps only in part, to articulate his "Call" as a direct result of the connotations of that conceptual substance.

### **Freedom: affirmation by default**

Concerning the problem of structure and agency with reference to the alternatives of rescuing agency or recovering agency, the position of Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty on the nature of human freedom is certainly consistent with the tradition of rescue. But now we can explicate their conception of freedom to see its connection to the prospect of recovery. First of all, their position is true to the theme of Kant's theory of freedom: freedom as a "spontaneity" of mind and action is an experience that a community of individuals inwardly have of themselves as individuals. We've seen that Dilthey transformed Kant's noumenal version of "inward experience" into a phenomenological version of "lived experience." However, and here's the rub, there is a serious limitation of this Diltheyan idea of freedom that ramifies throughout the phenomenology of Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. But it is, I think, most clearly brought out in Merleau-Ponty's discussion of freedom in the last chapter of *Phenomenology of Perception* (1989: 434–56). Indeed, his discussion, in my judgment, is the culmination of the discussion of human freedom in the phenomenological tradition. As it makes very clear, in stemming directly from the two perplexities of the Kantian problem, the discussion is still carried on in the very terms of those perplexities. When Merleau-Ponty presents the idea that freedom is a "power," the perplexity of comprehension and the perplexity of unification are, in effect, being brought forward as implied issues. *What he winds up with is a concept of the "power" of freedom the efficacy of which can have no ground in the natural world of causation.* This special failure of "comprehension" demands that a unification of the "power" of freedom and the "power" of causation be somehow realized, on pain of utter and total irrelevance. In other words, the phenomenological tradition winds up with a theory of freedom as an affirmation because of a failure to provide a genuinely viable theory of freedom as a power. In short, in failing to take up Heidegger's problem of the unification of the two causalities it is an affirmation by default.

### **Phenomenology of freedom: if not an experience, what power?**

Ironically, for Merleau-Ponty the reality of freedom is not, strictly speaking, phenomenological. Note from his earlier quote the assertion that "I cannot *conceive* of myself as nothing but a bit of the world." What is it, exactly, that he cannot conceive? Certainly, it is revealed in what came before the above assertion: "*I am not the outcome or the meeting-point of numerous causal*

*agencies which determine my bodily or psychological make-up.*” Of course, this means that Merleau-Ponty, himself, could not possibly have the phenomenological experience of being the outcome of a determinism. But still, why isn’t the issue strictly phenomenological? In other words, why isn’t it a matter of our “experience” of ourselves in our own human being rather than our “conception” of ourselves with regard to our own human being? Merleau-Ponty is here showing himself to be a very good Kantian who has learned a key lesson of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that “thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” – he understands that, from the transcendental perspective of the possibility of an experience, freedom can only be an experience exactly because “percepts without concepts are blind” (Kant 1998 [1781]: 193–94). And this is absolutely right. To see this with the sharpest clarity, note in the quote below that Levi-Strauss is going to tell us, not about what he *conceives or does not conceive*, but rather about what he *perceives or does not perceive* in his “lived experience” with regard to freedom and determinism. In other words, we are going to see here the irony of an anti-humanist structural anthropologist who is speaking as if he is an existential phenomenologist! This is certainly odd coming from the mechanical determinist against whom Bourdieu revolted in his celebrated *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977); and of course, we are therefore right in being suspicious.

[One should] remember that I have written that myths get thought in man unbeknownst to him. [Identically in my case]. ... I have the feeling that my books get written through me. ... [Thus] for me [this] describes a *lived experience, because it says exactly how I perceive my own relation to my work.* ... I never had, and still do not have, the perception of feeling my personal identity. *I appear as the place where something is going on, but there is no “I,” no “me.” Each of us is a kind of crossroads where things happen. The crossroad is purely passive; something happens there. There is no choice, it is just a matter of chance.* [Of course] I don’t pretend at all that, because I think that way, I am entitled to conclude that mankind thinks that way ... [Nevertheless] ... the fact that I personally have this idiosyncrasy perhaps entitles me to point to something which is valid, while the way in which my colleagues think ... are equally valid.

(Levi-Strauss 1979: 3–4)

Merleau-Ponty and Levi-Strauss are in a flat-out contradiction of each other. Given that each human being “is a kind of crossroads,” for Merleau-Ponty, his “lived experience” is such that there *is* a “self,” thus there is an “I” and a “me,” and the crossroads of this is of a self that is *purely active*; for Levi-Strauss, his “lived experience” is devoid of an “I” or a “me,” thus *there is no self*, only a *purely passive* “individual”! However, Levi-Strauss deserves to be severely chastised here since he evidently has not properly learned the

Kantian lesson about the necessity of conception for perception: his “lived experience” of himself as a purely passive crossroads has been made possible because of his tacit acceptance of the Kantian principle that determinism is the rule of phenomenal experience. Clearly, speaking technically, he denies Dilthey’s distinction between the “phenomenal” and the “phenomenological.” In short, because Levi-Strauss therefore cannot conceive of himself as anything but a bit of the phenomenal world, since that is the only world that exists, he has the appropriate perception and the correct “lived experience,” in this case, namely, of being a patient and not an agent. And the metaphysical character of that tacit conception comes out in his celebrated critique of Sartre’s appropriation of the Kantian idea of the absolute spontaneity of human freedom that turns up in his work as the “absolute spontaneity of consciousness” (Sartre 1957: 98–99, 106).

Sartre seems to have remembered only half of Marx’s and Freud’s combined lesson. [Given that man sees himself living meaningfully in everyday life] ... *this meaning is never the right one*: superstructures are *faulty acts* which have “made it” socially. Hence it is vain to go to historical consciousness for the truest meaning.

(Levi-Strauss 1966: 253–54)

The upshot here is that Levi-Strauss reveals the classic strategy of reification and its reality/appearance schema: to steal agency away from persons (hence the appearance of freedom) and to then ascribe it to an unobservable structure (hence the reality of determinism) – in this case his transformation of Freud’s psychological unconscious into an anthropological version of a Marxian social unconscious, a cultural cognitive/linguistic structure (Rossi 1974: 7–30).

And it must now be pointed out that Levi-Strauss’s variety of reification can also be traced back to the metatheoretical principle that informs the theoretical focus and aim of his structural anthropology. The focus is on *Being itself, and not Being in relation to oneself* (Levi-Strauss Ibid: 62); and, given that (a) Being is culture, (b) Culture is language, and (c) Language is “human reason, which has its reason ... of which man knows nothing,” the aim is to understand that unconscious collective “Reason” behind the conscious individual “reason” of human beings (Levi-Strauss Ibid: 252). But, it must be asked, where does Levi-Strauss get this metatheoretical principle that has underwritten his structural anthropology? Well, he gets it from the man who is in the background differentially informing the work of both Levi-Strauss and Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger.

### **Heidegger: Being or power?**

The metatheory of Levi-Strauss’s structural anthropology can, and I contend, would have to be, traced back to the strange, and yet, on second



thought, not so strange, amalgam of the realism of the scientism of Marx and Freud, and Heidegger's fundamental ontological turn to Being without Dasein. After all, it is the received view that

In 1947 Heidegger wrote his famous *Letter on Humanism*. ... This essay is more or less a direct reply to Sartre's 1945 essay "Existentialism is a Humanism," and as a result became highly influential in France. Heidegger's critique of Humanism as a metaphysical concept and his displacement of man [and subjectivity] in favor of Being played a significant role in the recent emergence of anti-humanism in recent French thought (in Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida, among others [certainly Levi-Strauss]). ... Being appears through humankind [as the] "Shepherd of Being" and [in the fact that] "language is the house of Being."  
(Moran 2000: 216)

In order to properly confront the contradiction between the concepts of pure agency and pure patiency we have to critically engage Levi-Strauss's not so strange amalgam, for, it must be declared here that for Heidegger fundamental ontology is itself a realism. This will extricate us from Levi-Strauss's bogus challenge, and thus allow us to take seriously Merleau-Ponty's discussion of freedom as a power.

In what he himself called a "turning" (die Kehre), Heidegger turned away from science in realizing that there was no subject matter left for metaphysics after the triumph of what he called the positive sciences, and later he even turned away from traditional metaphysics in realizing that transcendental philosophy is a secular theology that ultimately depends on divine creation as the measure of objects and subjects (Moran 2000: 208). However, this freed him to fully devote himself to his vision and investigate what has always been its major theme – the nature of Being, being, and human being, and its major principle – the grounding of being and human being in Being as the essence of freedom. In my understanding of Heidegger's vision and its relevance to the Merleau-Ponty/Levi-Strauss contradiction, this is a matter of seeing that the ultimate Kantian problem of the unification of the two causalities is the issue that is at the center of Heidegger's theme and principle. And in view of this understanding, from the standpoint taken here in this book, I see no other position to plausibly take than the following: the legitimacy of the Heideggerian problem of unifying the two causalities of nature and freedom, and thus the only way of saving that problem from dissolving into mystification after Heidegger's apparent abandonment of the realist metaphysics of nature and powers to a realist metaphysics of Being and beings (things and persons), will be found in returning to science and its variety of metaphysical realism. And I say "apparent abandonment," precisely because in Heidegger's ontological language, *the issue of its content to one side*, is not incompatible with the scientific language of nature and powers. In *Introduction to Metaphysics* a key thesis is that

Being at bottom means nothing other than the coming to presence of what is present at hand. It is not present at hand in as crude and tangible way as tables and chairs.

(Heidegger 2000: 213)

Note the obvious anti-positivist reference to the claim that Being is not to be identified with beings, that is the crudeness of an empiricism that reduces the Being of tables and chairs to mere tangibility. Now, Heidegger explicates the anti-positivist point he is making as he goes on to say that

Being ... [is] not a present-to-hand fact. Being is the fundamental happening, the only ground upon which historical Dasein is granted in the midst of beings that are opened up as a whole.

(Heidegger Ibid: 204)

In other to words, to paraphrase Heidegger with his own words: “the unconcealment of beings and thus of Being in the work [of nature art and history]” is the process by which “that which comes to presence is produced into unconcealment” (Heidegger Ibid: 205). Thus there is a determinateness to Being in its unconcealment. Now the crucial question is, how so? Heidegger’s answer is that

The determinateness of Being is not a matter of delimiting a mere meaning of a word. It is *the* power that today still sustains and dominates all our relations to beings as a whole, to becoming, to seeming, to thinking, to the ought.

(Heidegger Ibid: 217)

Hence, in order to promote the pursuit of the solution to the Giddens problem as the solution to the Heideggerian problem of uniting the two Kantian causalities of nature and freedom, I will formulate the compatibility of Heideggerian fundamental ontology of Being and beings and the scientific ontology of nature and powers in the following theses:

- Being is the production (pro-duction) of being.
- Being is to being as Power is to force.
- Power is latent force; and force is manifest power.
- In summary: Being is the ground of being as the power “to be.”

Now, that that compatibility, it certainly seems to me, is genuine, and is so because it is closer to science than it is to positivism, consider a letter that Einstein wrote to Schlick.

In general your presentation fails to correspond to my conceptual style insofar as I find your whole orientation ... too positivistic ... I tell you

straight out: Physics is the attempt at the conceptual reconstruction of a model of the real world and its lawful structure. In short, I suffer under the unsharp separation of Reality of Experience and Reality of Being. You will be astonished about the “metaphysicist” Einstein. But every four- and two-legged animal is de facto in this sense a metaphysicist.

(in Manicas 2006: 18)

Heidegger and Einstein, in being one of those two kinds of animal, should have known each other; what another “turning” there might have been.

### **Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty: power is the key**

Now we will see that *the compatibility of scientific realism and Heideggerian realism is, in effect, at the heart of the matter in reference to Merleau-Ponty’s discussion of the nature of human freedom*. And we can begin by asking this question – what possible connection could there be between Merleau-Ponty’s conception of freedom as a “power” and Heidegger’s conception of freedom as the gift of “Being ... [as the] ‘quiet power’ of the favoring-enabling ... of the possible?” And more to the point: if Being is the power of production and human agency is a power to begin, how could the ideas of the power of Being and the power of agency be substantively different, and still remain metaphysically viable and thus coherent? I therefore am going to declare that there is no difference, on pain of the mystification and hence irrelevance of both ideas. We can thus leave the Heidegger question behind. As for Merleau-Ponty, now from this point we can say the following: he has not only learned the Kantian lesson that I pointed out above that Levi-Strauss never did learn concerning the need of perception for conception; in learning so much more from Kant, Merleau-Ponty has gone beyond Levi-Strauss in his understanding of the legitimacy of a belief in human freedom in a deterministic world. He was therefore absolutely correct to declare, “I cannot *conceive* of myself as nothing but a bit of the world.” There can be no question here, I am convinced, but that Merleau-Ponty has dismissed Dilthey’s move to “hide” the conception of freedom behind the “lived experience” of freedom. In other words, on the question of freedom as a power, we have been taken back to Kant.

### **Phenomenology of freedom: metaphysical incoherency**

There is no freedom without some power.

Merleau-Ponty (1989: 454)

As a most excellent Kantian who knows something about the discussion of the third antinomy, Merleau-Ponty states that, “we should not seek freedom in the act of will” (Merleau-Ponty *Ibid*: 436), but must instead conceive of freedom as “*the power to interrupt,*” “*a power to begin,*” and, that a question

must be asked of freedom conceived of as a “power,” “*But what is this power?*” (Merleau-Ponty Ibid: 438). At the same time, however, that freedom is regarded as the “power of action,” and hence as somehow “real” in view of the fact that human beings *do* “interrupt” and *do* “begin” (again), that very “power” of human agency is not compromised in any relationship to structures of causation in the form of the physical world, the mind and body, and of society.

Again, it is clear that *no causal relationship is conceivable* between the subject and his *body, his world or his society*. ... We ought, therefore, to reject not only *the idea of causality [as external], but also that of motivation [as an internal causality]*. The alleged motive does not burden my decision; on the contrary, my decision lends the motive its force.

(Merleau-Ponty Ibid: 434, 435, 452–54, added emphasis)

With this in mind, now let us remind ourselves that in an earlier quotation Merleau-Ponty has declared the following: the rejection of science, human beings are not objects, and the thesis that unites them both, “*I am not the outcome or the meeting-point of numerous causal agencies which determine*. ...” It must be presumed here that when Merleau-Ponty ends these comments with the definitive proclamation, “*I cannot shut myself up within the realm of science*,” we may come to a definitive conclusion. The import of all this is that the standard belief that causality and agency are opposing metaphysical categories underwrites Merleau-Ponty’s position on freedom (despite the fact that he never realized the self-contradiction involved in referring to “causal agencies”). And this bodes ill for his explication of that freedom. The consequence of this separation of causality from agency is unmistakable: *the “power” of freedom is “power-less” – action is thus devoid of any natural ground of genuine efficacy*. And this consequence, it must be mentioned, issues from the standpoint of the premiere theorist of embodiment! The one who carried forth the phenomenological tradition of embodiment initiated by Dilthey and which was also carried forward by Husserl. There is, therefore, a fatal limitation to what has been a Husserlian heroic affirmation of human freedom in phenomenology and existentialism. *If freedom is a power that is not grounded in causality, then what is the ontological basis for its declared reality?* Especially in view of the critical fact that, in the case of Merleau-Ponty, he does not justify the belief in freedom by an appeal to Dilthey’s or to Husserl’s notion of “lived experience,” or Sartre’s “absolute spontaneity of consciousness,” or, for that matter, Heidegger’s radical notion that “Causality is grounded in freedom” (in Wood Ibid: 75; Heidegger Ibid: 205–8), but rather to Kant’s understanding that freedom is a matter of conception (though as only a belief, it cannot amount to a genuine concept – knowledge). Clearly, at the very least, it can be said that Merleau-Pontyan existential phenomenology has not taken us beyond the legacy of Kant’s and Dilthey’s solutions to the threat to freedom from the determinism

of the phenomenal world. The metaphysical incoherency of his position on freedom – a power that is power-less, a power of action that is unconnected to the body of the personal agent – makes that impossible.

And that metaphysical incoherency remains: 15 years after Merleau-Ponty's death in 1961, Zygmunt Bauman's Humanist treatise, *Toward A Critical Sociology*, systematically confronts the sociological "science of unfreedom"; the only "solution" that he, in effect, offers to the problem of nature's "unfreedom" as a threat to the freedom of culture, is the Husserlian declaration that human subjectivity "is an *entity* characterized above all by its intentionality, *the only active element capable of generating meaning*" (Bauman 1976: 47–49, emphasis provided). Now, this resort to, on the one hand, the phenomenological tradition of merely affirming human freedom and, on the other, the same tradition's disposition to suggest only, and no more, that the freedom affirmed is a power (of generation), strongly encourages me to say that Bauman's attempt to, in effect, maintain the relevance of phenomenology/existentialism to the Science and Humanism debate with regard to Giddens's problem clearly does not succeed. This is further seen in the fact that, in discussing the problem, Bauman's use of the vocabulary of structure and *action* is at best a theoretical step short of Giddens's vocabulary of structure and *agency*: Bauman never gets to (for he cannot) the metaphysical issue of the concept of agency that the concept of action is parasitic on (Bauman 1976: 47–48, 43–68, 79–81). What we have then at the center of the phenomenological theory of freedom, still, is a metaphysical dead end.

### **Phenomenology of freedom: metaphysical dead end**

This definitive dead end can be extended to the philosophers of phenomenology generally. This is, first of all, seen in Sartre's own deeply flawed critique of Kant's atemporal argument for freedom.

The free project is fundamental, for it is my being ... the fundamental project which I am is a project concerning not my relations to this or that particular object in the world, but my total being-in-the-world; since the world itself is revealed only in the light of an end, this project posits for its end a certain type of relation to being which the for-itself wills to adopt. *This project is not instantaneous, for it cannot be "in" time. Neither is it non-temporal in order to give time to itself afterwards. That is why we reject Kant's "choice of intelligible character."* The structure of the choice necessarily implies that it be a choice in the world. ... There is [therefore] only phenomenal choice, provided that we understand that the phenomenon is here the absolute. *But in its very upsurge, the choice is temporalized since it causes a future to come to illuminate the present ... .*

(Sartre 1965: 455–56, my emphasis)

How can we get around the fact of this quotation that Sartre's rejection of the "choice of intelligible character" is so muddled that it is just not helpful: the project of choice all at once is such that, it "cannot be 'in' time" (and so its atemporal?), yet it is "neither ... non-temporal" (and so it is temporal?), for it is "a choice in the world," which is "only phenomenal choice" (and so it is determined?), and as such, "the choice is temporalized since it causes the future ... " (Sartre Ibid). As a consequence of my overall analysis to this point, I can only judge Sartre's conviction that "A special phenomenological method will be necessary in order make this initial project [of the ontology of human being in its freedom] explicit" (Sartre Ibid: 455) to be just that and nothing more, a conviction whose evidence is its sheer assertiveness. But of what? After all, what the method has made explicit is that it has led him to respond to Kant's noumenal/atemporal argument with one that either is self-contradictory, or is simply muddled. If freedom is temporal and therefore is phenomenal choice, how is determinism avoided? For example, when Sartre presents the idea of freedom by saying that

We may therefore formulate our thesis: transcendental consciousness is an impersonal spontaneity. It determines its existence at each instant, without our being able to conceive anything *before it*. Thus each instant our consciousness life reveals itself to be a creation *ex nihilo*. Not a new *arrangement*, but a new existence

(Sartre 1957: 98–99)

it is understood that he means that freedom is an "absolute spontaneity of consciousness."

But then, to name it "phenomenological," is a terminological dodge. For, in terms of Kant's logic, if choice is temporalized, it may well cause the future, but that "inward experience" must be judged to be the case precisely because it is being caused to do so. Marx and Levi-Strauss, Freud and Hull, and all other determinists understood the point and responded appropriately. Their responses, different in theoretical character, to be sure, nevertheless shared the same theme: "being caused" is the reality behind the appearance of "causing the future." Is it any wonder that Levi-Strauss reacted to Sartre in the way that he (in)famously did? Surely, the master of structural anthropology was mocking the entire phenomenological tradition in his donning the role of a phenomenologist, and reflexively reporting that determinism experientially structures his lived experience of his human being. And so, the lived being of us all. Which means, to be sure, the lived being of his dear friend, Merleau-Ponty, whose picture still sits, I believe, on Levi-Strauss's desk.

But even more clearly, the dead end can also be noted in Merleau-Ponty's attempt to abandon his work in *Phenomenology of Perception*. In the posthumous *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968) he is taking up (or he can be so understood) the problem that seriously mars his discussion of freedom that I have indicated above. Consider that the question, "But what is this power?"

suggests the following: some kind of notion of “causation” is presumed by some kind of notion of the “power” of freedom in Merleau-Ponty’s declaration in the quote discussed earlier that human agency is not compromised by any of the classic deterministic structure(s) of naturalistic social science. In this posthumous work, that some kind of notion of “causation” is being offered in Merleau-Ponty’s conception of “flesh.” I have found at least seven interrelated formulations of “flesh” (Varela 2003: 127). Using three of Merleau-Ponty’s own words for this new term – efficacy, power, fecundity – the following simple formulation is offered that integrates them around the theme of human agency: human agency is an *efficacy* that is the *power of fecundity* (Varela Ibid). Thus, agency entails that it is internally connected to causality, and that is because causality and power are internally connected. Clearly, Merleau-Ponty has returned, at the very least, to the spirit of Aristotle’s ontological conception of living forms as quadratic causal entities. Quite simply, *what we have in the idea of human agency as the power of fecundity is the mirror image of the realist idea of causality as the power of production*. And here, exactly at this ontological moment that promises the dissolution of the principle that causality and agency are metaphysical opposites, Merleau-Ponty goes over the edge. He renews in this very volume his original commitment to the Dilthey/Husserl/Heidegger tradition of renouncing science (Varela 1994: 177–79). Thus, to the very end, *Merleau-Ponty proposes a conception of freedom as a power that cannot be “real,” since without a grounding in a suitable realist metaphysic of causation, that power is power-less*.

### **Merleau-Ponty and Sartre: convergence**

Now it can be acknowledged that Merleau-Ponty and Sartre can be reasonably seen to actually converge in their views on human freedom. For, if, as Sartre says, “man is free [means] man *is* freedom,” his old existential principle that “existence precedes essence” is essentially discredited, and thus must be rewritten as a new principle – “*the essence of human existence is freedom*” (Sartre 2007: 17–25). Furthermore, when he also asserts that, “for human reality, to be is to act, and to cease to act is to cease to be,” hence to be consistent with the new principle of existentialism, one is constrained to say that that is because action *is* real (Sartre 1965: 264). Hence, what can now be called the Sartre/Merleau-Ponty thesis can only be salvaged under this condition: *the essence of freedom as a power of fecundity must be grounded in a realist metaphysics of the causal power of production*. And that of course is precisely what Giddens’s “agent causality” is calling for. However, if it is not, so that it is not either transcendent freedom – free will, or transcendental freedom – noumenal self, once again, we certainly have another theory of human freedom whose upshot is mystification. My own judgment is that, Sartre to one side, Merleau-Ponty was in effect stranded, and completely at a loss, at the very boundary of Kant’s theory of

ontological debate with science on the determinism/freedom issue was fading out at the end of the 1970s just as Postmodernism as an intellectual challenge to philosophy and to the social sciences was in ascendance with the beginning of the 1980s (Smart 1993: 11–39; Bertens 1995: 111–37; Best and Kellner 1997: 3–37). In pointing out the end of traditional Humanism and the crystallization of Postmodernism, the historical connection I intentionally have in mind is “coincidence,” for, in my judgment, the latter has nothing to do with the former with specific regard to the ontology of human agency. While the fade out entailed that the phenomenological and existential traditions were disappearing as relevant resources for the very idea of having a debate, the ascendance of Postmodernism entailed the quashing of the legitimacy of debate with the insistence that any such debate is one of incommensurable language games that are thus ruled by fate, force, and chance. With respect to Kant and his relation to the social sciences, especially, the resources were certainly dissolving. Indeed, Clifford Geertz and Peter Berger (and Kellner) reveal this fact of the “end” of Kant’s importance in their work of the early 1980s (Berger and Kellner 1981: 91–121).

In the introduction to his essays on anthropology and philosophy, *Available Light* (2000), for example, Geertz comments that he set off on his anthropological career by abandoning Kant to then be inspired by the late Wittgenstein (Geertz 2000: xi–xiii). And that importance of Wittgenstein over Kant is quite evident in his anthropological theory of mind presented in the paper of 1982, “The Way We Think Now” (Geertz 1983: 147–66): Geertz marries a notion of mind as a matter of semantics and not a mechanics with the notion of “forms of life.” However, as a parallel to the failure of phenomenology, mind as a semantical act of freedom intrinsic to forms of life begs the question of its metaphysical relationship to the causal determinism that instantiates mechanics, and thus must instantiate those very forms of life that “house” freedom; abandoning Kant for Wittgenstein cuts Geertz off from any possible discovery of that deep problem, and hence from any possible solution. In short, in 1982, since Giddens’s *Call* is completely missed here, Geertz’s paper cannot possibly be the “way we *should* think now.” In *Sociology Reinterpreted* in 1981, Berger (and Kellner) resorts to Kant’s two-world solution in finding a place for human freedom in sociological theory, to be sure (Berger and Kellner 1981: 91–121). To my knowledge this is the last time in the social sciences that Kant’s solution is used for that purpose within the framework of traditional Humanism. Outside of that humanism and in search of a different conception of the “human,” Foucault is the only other “social scientist” who returns to Kant to retrieve human freedom; but, he does so by simply ignoring the two-realm solution for an esthetic one. And, I am afraid, that detour to freedom by way of esthetics is a theoretical dead-end: the Heideggerian problem of unifying the two causalities in order to save the failure of the Sartre/Merleau-Ponty tradition to find a metaphysical ground for freedom as a power in phenomenal nature is simply not identified, not addressed, and, therefore, never solved.



## Lingering Humanism: voices of disappearance

In my judgment, in Ernst Cassirer's *The Logic of the Humanities* (1961 [1942]), and 25 years later in Jurgen Habermas's *On the Logic of the Social Sciences* (1989 [1967]), we already have an indication that the Science and Humanism freedom and determinism debate is ready for its clear disappearance in the decade after Habermas's volume of 1967. As a faithful Kantian, Cassirer maintains the same nature and science/culture and social sciences separation that was central to neo-Kantianism and philosophical anthropology in his treatise in the philosophy of social science: phenomenal causation (nature and nature-concepts) is reserved for the natural sciences, and the creation of form (culture and culture-concepts) is reserved for the humanities (Cassirer 1961: 158, 159–81). The Kantian question of freedom in nature Cassirer takes as given, and it is left absolutely untouched, for it never surfaces at any point in the book. Now, I cannot see that Habermas's unusually thick description of "The Dualism of the Natural and Cultural Sciences" differs from Cassirer's treatment in any substantive way with regard to the Science and Humanism debate at issue (Habermas 1961: 1–42). The concluding chapter, "Sociology as Theory of the Present," is, I believe, conclusive on this point: the discussion of causality and motives, and of causality and unconscious motives, is left at the very threshold of the problem of freedom and determinism (178–86). In the second half of the next decade Giddens's transforms that discussion into the new discussion that I have referred to as Giddens's Call. But of course, this would reasonably intimate what is at issue here in my discussion to this point, the dead-end to the traditional Science and Humanism debate on human freedom in deterministic nature which Cassirer and Habermas exemplify in their two works of distinction. In short, it is disappearing.

Audrey Borenstein's *Redeeming the Sin: Social Science and Literature* (1978) gives us reason to believe that the disappearance is certainly very well in evidence with the close of the 1970s, and does so in the fact that she now expresses the traditional defiance of Humanism against science as merely a *rhetoric* (in the sense of a linguistic style, and not a theory of social action; see Herzfeld, discussed below). In other words, without metaphysical content, we are given only the form of protest. Her take on the issue is given solely in the title: determinism is the original sin of the social sciences, and the magic of naming it as such is offered as our best answer to the hope of redeeming that sin by simply proclaiming our freedom. To be sure, there have been a few social scientists who were still defending freedom in more or less the traditional way of Humanism throughout the 1970s and in the early 1980s, for example, Isidor Chein in *The Science of Behavior and the Image of Man* (1973), John Shotter in *Images of Man In Psychological Research* (1975), Alan Dawe in "Theories of Social Action" (1978: 362–417), and Peter L. Berger and Hansfried Kellner in *Sociology Reinterpreted* (1981: 91–121), as I've already mentioned. But then, soon after, there is an exemplary

demonstration of that disappearance in a social scientist who is, for many of us, one of the two greatest anthropologists of the second half of the last century. Clifford Geertz is certainly one of them, and the other would have to be Marshall Sahlins.

### **Sahlins: “It’s history”**

In Sahlins’ 1982 publication “Individual Experience and Cultural Order,” the anthropological variety of the structure and agency problem is taken up and a solution to it is being explored. Thus, Sahlins is certainly reaching for human agency, but it is not in order to rescue it from determinism. Is it then a recovery? What is clear is that in this paper, freedom is being declared in the name of G. H. Mead, against determinism in the name of Kroeber and White. But, paradoxically, while Sahlins pits Mead’s freedom against the “determinism” of Kroeber and White, at the same time, he is embracing the “determinism” of Emile Durkheim. The relevance of Sahlins’ situation is that he is doing it outside of the Science and Humanism debate, altogether (Sahlins *Ibid*: 277–91). The reason for that is to be found, I believe, in this fact: in being asked by me to comment upon the relevance of the traditional Science and Humanism debate in Anthropology as of 2003, Sahlins’ response was marvelously witty, and unsuspected by him, unmistakably revealing. “It’s history,” he said. Sahlins’ paper in the context of this comment is of such importance to the overall problem of the recovery of human agency from the marriage of Kantian freedom and Kantian realism under pursuit, that I must interrupt the immediate discussion of the theme of the disappearance of the Science and Humanism debate, in order to examine it. It will be shown that he, however inadvertently, is at the center of the question of the rescue and recovery of human agency, and in particular, he is peculiarly entangled with the issue of Kantian freedom and its noumenal argument.

Now, in looking at Sahlins’ paper in relation to the themes of recovery and disappearance, I want to suggest this question. Can there be an anthropological recovery of human agency after Humanism, where the only resource in this matter is Postmodernism? Does this then leave the anthropology of recovery, as Frank Tortorrello has brought to my attention, in the space of Michael Herzfeld’s “militant middle ground between Positivism and Postmodernism” (Herzfeld 2001: viii)? In the allusion to that position, I will simply point to the fact that, while embracing the structure and agency problem in order to give an answer to it by ethnographically exemplifying Giddens’s theory of structuration rather creatively, Herzfeld, himself, in passing, makes this remarkable statement: “it is important not to separate rhetoric [as a theory of social action] from the material world to which, as a causative agent, it belongs” (Herzfeld 1997: 142). In other words, in effect, presumably acknowledging, if only in spirit, Giddens’s Call, Herzfeld then leaves it unanswered, or, he leaves it for others to answer? And so, would Herzfeld

Traditions are invented in the specific terms of the people that construct them.

(Sahlins 1998: 408)

Obviously, after 1976, and with the 1982 paper, Sahlins makes it evident that he was always for invention; *but as regards the only concern of this critical review, the need for an adequate metaphysical grounding of freedom, it remains problematic* (Sahlins 1998: 399–421, 2000 [1982]: 277–91). Although culture as a system is not deterministic in the sense of Kroeber and White, yet, Sahlins insists that, “It seems incorrect to deny that individual action is culturally determined, since this is all it can be” (Sahlins Ibid: 281). He then leads us to the root of the cultural source of individual action, to be found in “Durkheim’s famous sociological epistemology,” stating that “Nothing is socially known or communicated except as it is encompassed in the existing cultural order” (Sahlins Ibid: 281). Paradoxically, so it seems, Sahlins is claiming *both*, that, from the Durkheimian standpoint, culture must be “deterministic,” and from the Kroeber/White standpoint but contrary to it, culture is not “deterministic.” For the sake of coherency let us restate the paradox: while culture is not “deterministic” (Kroeber/White rejected) it is, nevertheless, “determinate” (Durkheim accepted). I have no doubt that Sahlins certainly knows very well and believes that this must be so in some sense that escapes the Giddensian criticism that Durkheimian social structure is the traditional paradigm example of sociological determinism. In other words, to put it in the most challenging way, *Durkheim is the father of the very determinism of Kroeber and White’s anthropological variety*. And so, Sahlins finds himself in a predicament: he is reaching for a metaphysical space in order to legitimately locate freedom or agency in reference to human action in such a way that it is not compromised by the “determinateness” of the cultural dimension of action. However, that space can only be available if there is a different and substantive sense to the second case of “determinism,” and there’s the rub. To tell the difference between “deterministic” and “determinate,” in this context, a suitable theory of causality and agency that unifies them is required. This feature of Sahlins’ predicament brings us to the direct relevance of the Giddensian critique of sociological determinism in the name of the new vocabulary of structure and agency.

### **Giddens: three-part insight**

I now contend that Giddens too wants to realize that difference between “determinism” and “determinate” that will promote the recovery of human agency. For, first of all, the critique presupposes that any appeal once more to the noumenal or to the phenomenological is of no importance at this point in time. And second of all, this understanding is the backdrop to Giddens’s three-part insight between 1976 and 1979: in *The New Rules*, we have seen that he calls for a non-Humean notion of determinism in order to

have a concept of “agent causality” that can ground the concept of human agency for a theory of the human knower; in *Central Problems*, the old Parsonian vocabulary of (social) system and (individual) voluntarism is dropped, and the new vocabulary of (social) structure and (individual) agency is introduced; and thus the two works together simply suggest that *the “Call” is the reason for the new “vocabulary.”* Hence, between the *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976) and *The Constitution of Society* (1984), *the import of this trajectory is the overall realization that the Humanist failure to rescue human agency is total and definitive.* The implication here of course is that neither Kant’s theory of noumenal freedom nor Dilthey’s phenomenological theory of freedom are relevant to answering the “call.” The crucial import of the trajectory is the suggestion of a New Humanism: the problem of establishing freedom in the teeth of determinism requires that the traditional Humanist strategy of rescue is to be supplanted by the strategy of recovery. And for recovery to be possible, as a realist theory of science permits us to see this as being implied by Giddens’s Call, a new scientific metaphysical ground is needed to reconcile causality and agency.

Although Sahlins, and most of social science, missed Giddens’s three-part insight (see Joas 1993: 172–87) and thus its relevance to his anthropological desire to reconcile agency and structure, yet, to his credit, it must be pointed out that he makes no such appeals to the phenomenological in his attempt at reconciliation. As we will soon see, however, he must be judged to be making an appeal, of some sort, to the noumenal in his objectivist conception of “culture as constituted.” And of course he does make an appeal to G. H. Mead (with Schutz in a marriage with the shifters of discourse) by simply taking on his theory of the agentic self (there is an innocuous resort to Sartre’s existential notion of individuality as the indicator of freedom, but it merely agrees with the more basic Meadian thesis of the agentic self). Understandably, in missing Giddens’s insight and its relevance to the White versus Durkheim problem, he also passes over the apparently metaphysically free-floating presumption of Mead’s conception of the freedom of the self (Sahlins *Ibid*: 282–85).

For, to adopt Mead’s vocabulary, if there is a “me” that incorporates the attitude of some group at some level of generality, there is *also an “I” that retains a potential freedom of reaction to the “generalized other”*  
(Sahlins *Ibid*: 285, my emphasis)

I believe that we can now say that Sahlins has a double need for a theory of causality and agency that will overcome their oppositional relationship. In the 1982 paper in question, Sahlins is unable to metaphysically ground his conception of “culture as constituted” as a “determinate” “system” so as to avoid the charge of its reification as a “deterministic” system; and, in merely accepting without argument G. H. Mead’s thesis of the agency of the human self, he also is unable to metaphysically ground that concept of human

agency so as to justify the belief in its status of freedom. Concerning the former difficulty, for example, Sahlins' reply to me on the paper that Harré and I published on the reified character of the very idea of social structure, because of its violation of causal powers theory, was that he, Sahlins, merely ascribes somewhat of a more objective character to his notion of cultural structure (Varela and Harré 1996: 313–25). His only response to my skeptical reaction to his lingering objectivism, expressed by my question as to why Plato never dies, was that, “there is something real about it” (Varela 2003). Sahlins and I can only agree that, yes indeed, “there is something real ...” involved here, but about what “it” is, there can be no agreement between us. Why? For example, Sahlins specifies the reality of culture in the following way.

[It is] a dual mode of existence. It appears both in *human projects* and intersubjectively as a *structure or system*. Intentionally arranged by the subject, it is also conventionally constituted in the society ... [In other words] *structure is a state; but action unfolds as a temporal process* ... [so that] the two dimensions of culture are indeed *mutually irreducible*, [although] ... they are *dialectically impenetrable*.

(Sahlins Ibid: 286–87, emphasis provided)

Thus we have here a sixth proposition for his theory: *culture is constituted as a determinate system of meaning, but culture is lived as the indeterminate projects of personal being*.

### **Sahlins from Kant: muddle or what?**

Is Kant's theory of freedom rattling sub rosa around in Sahlins' theory of culture as a system of traditions? Here, in effect, is an answer.

Fundamentally, they [cultural states of structure] are *atemporal*, being for the people conditions of their form of life as *constituted*, and considered *coeval* with it. It follows that if such traditions are authoritatively narrativized, or when they contingently rise to consciousness, they will be aetiologized, that is, as *charter myths*.

(Sahlins 1998: 408, emphasis provided)

And now we have a refinement of the sixth proposition: *as a determinate system of meaning culture as constituted is an atemporal state of a structure, but as the indeterminate projects of personal being culture as lived is a temporal process of action*. In other words, what we have then is the following contention: Sahlins' argument for the dual existence of culture is rooted in Kant's argument for the spontaneity which is the agency of human freedom, and the ground of the cultural moment of moral autonomy. *The point of Sahlins' appropriation of Kant's arguments is that he has transformed them into*

*the problem of Durkheimian objectivism.* It is therefore relevant to ask this question: what are the properties of that objective reality of culture that are picked out by Sahlins, and how are they connected to Kant's argument for human freedom as it functions as the mechanism of the invention of culture?

Sahlins lets the Kantian cat out of the bag, so to speak, when he tells us that,

In practice, the individual is the Archimedean point of the cultural universe: for the coordinates of his standpoint, hence of his interests, all of culture is *transcendentally laid out*, and all meaning, which without him are merely virtual or possible, become actual, referential, and intentional.

(Sahlins Ibid: 283, emphasis provided)

The transcendental givenness of culture as a structural state of a system of meanings is not "actual" but "virtual." This distinction supposedly reveals the reality of cultural structure. Though virtual, cultural structure is objective in virtue of its being *atemporal, irreducible*, and hence *coeval* with culture lived as a temporal process of action. Care must be taken: while cultural structure is declared to be transcendental, the arguments for objectivity are not reflexively presented as being Kantian, that is as either derived or transformed from Kant's theory of freedom. Nor is there any direct indication that the arguments of atemporality/irreducibility and coevalness are derived from the Saussurean principle of the ahistorical character of linguistic structure, though contextually that is quite a plausible inference (Sahlins Ibid: 286). Over all, what is to be made of this? To address that question, keep in mind Kant's atemporal argument for freedom from the first critique.

### **Kant to Sahlins: use and abuse of an argument**

In order to intelligibly understand the alignments of the Kantian argument for freedom and the Sahlinsian argument for cultural objectivism, consider the following parallel between Kant and Sahlins in this regard. Whereas in *Kant determinism is phenomenal and freedom is noumenal*, in *Sahlins human freedom is phenomenal and cultural determinateness is noumenal*. The tell-tale property of "atemporality," when used by the philosopher and the anthropologist, reveals something rather odd. In the one, *freedom is atemporal*, for the other *determinateness is atemporal*; for the one, *determinism is phenomenal*, for the other *freedom is phenomenal*. Sahlins, then, it seems to me, has certainly rendered Kant's argument simply incoherent in transforming it for his purposes: *invented determinate culture is noumenal, inventing culture freely is phenomenal*. It is one thing for Dilthey to renounce the atemporality argument and then boldly face up to, though not all that well, the problem of relocating freedom temporally but not phenomenally, by inventing the sacred space of the phenomenological; it is quite another for Sahlins to relocate the "determinism" of culture in the noumenal realm of atemporality, and then,

dismissing the phenomenological, to leave individual lived culture in the phenomenal realm of time and space, while the freedom of the individual is simply added on by an innocent appeal to Meadian theory. Under the structures of the problem of abandoning the Old Humanist tradition of rescuing agency and adopting the New Humanist tradition of recovering agency from a realist understanding of Kantian freedom, Sahlins' fashioning a theory of cultural structure and individual agency from the noumenal argument of Kant's theory of freedom is certainly incoherent. But, I also think that it is the fatal abuse of the entire Kantian argument for freedom: in being dismantled for no coherent reason, and then incoherently reassembled for use in his conceptions of constituted/lived culture, neither the objectiveness of Durkheimian structure nor the reality of human freedom as a variety of "agent causality" has been established.

### **Summary remarks**

Stepping back from this examination of Sahlins' work, my judgment is that he is wandering, lost, and ultimately unfruitful, in his search for a way to ground culture and agency in an appropriate region of metaphysical space that avoids reification and honors the causal question that envelops them both in relationship to each other. This is the crucial import of the fact that Sahlins has not understood Giddens's Call for a conception of an "agent causality," nor the suggestion that that Call stands for a New Humanism. What is clearly presumed by the New Humanism is that it demands that one turns to the philosophy of science for help. But of course, a turn to the philosophy of science in search of any discussions relevant to the problem of understanding causality and agency in a way that would help to distinguish the determinism of a White and that of a Durkheim, is absolutely absent in "Individual Experience and Cultural Order." Or anywhere else in Sahlins' entire corpus of work that concerns structure and agency, for that matter (Sahlins 1976a,b, 2000: 271–583). And this is definitively revealed in an observation of Sahlins' work in relation to the history of anthropology, apart from Kroeber and White. This has to do with the Science and Humanism debate that Sahlins himself has dismissed as "History." At the time that that witticism was uttered, I had no doubt that it would someday come back to haunt him. Now it has.

### **Bidney: stranded in between humanisms?**

In the Humanist Manifesto, *Theoretical Anthropology* (1953), David Bidney declares a clear and firm position on culture and human freedom.

Human freedom may be conceived as the human *power of action* ... [Hence] the issue is *not* whether man's will is free ... undetermined or causeless, but whether man as a whole is or is not to a limited extent the

*active agent and efficient cause of cultural process. ... [In short] culture is to be conceived as the ... invention of human freedom.*

(Bidney 1996 [1967, 1953]: 123, 124, 114)

In a nutshell, Bidney's thesis is that culture is certainly a human invention; but that is so by virtue of the fact that human freedom, not free will, is a variety of efficient causality (Bidney *Ibid*: 14). Is this the kind of solution Sahlins needs? Well for sure, he absolutely makes no reference to Bidney on this issue, and we may add, apart from Sahlins, and in all fairness to him, that there is very good reason for that. Bidney's thesis comes off as didactic and stilted, at the very least. But worst of all, in view of the characteristic misunderstanding that science is positivistic that has plagued the history of the social sciences, the mixing of the categories of freedom and efficient causality, *especially at that time*, comes off as jarringly muddled and just plain weird. After all, as I have indicated, the perfectly simple way to state the problem of deterministic structures and human agency is precisely in terms of the conflict between efficient (agent-less) causality and freedom (a-causal agency). And so, of course, from that standpoint, Bidney's thesis is what Sahlins needs in the resort to Mead, *but only with Giddens's Call understood and answered*. Hence, Bidney's Kantian notion that freedom is an efficient causal power of action, and thus is the basis for the thesis that human culture is an invention, is a notion that was not properly understood, then, or now, by social scientists restricted, as Sahlins is, to the confines of the traditional Science and Humanism debate, which he has dismissed, and the Postmodern aftermath, which he so rightly challenges. The reason I think is now eminently clear: Bidney was stranded between the Old Humanism that, in already being metaphysically bankrupt by the early 1950s with regard to the issue of the ontology of human agency, was thus on its way out and eventually so by the 1980s, and a New Humanism that as yet had not emerged, and had not taken center stage in the philosophy of science. Indeed, the latter may only be happening in the early part of the twenty-first century. And clearly, that is exactly why Sahlins never could have thought of revisiting Bidney's *Theoretical Anthropology*. But note: the relevance of Bidney's notion of the efficient causality of freedom to Sahlins' search for a solution to the structure/agency problem is, of course, the very fact that it is Kantian. And Kant again comes up in reference to Sahlins' search when one remembers how Sahlins gets freedom into his theory of culture – his resort to Mead. I would venture the guess that Sahlins has never imagined to this very day that there is any connection between Mead and Kant concerning Mead's conception of the agentic self. Now, as a matter of historical fact, there is a surprising dimension here with regard to Mead's notion of the self whose freedom is in fact internally related to Kant's theory of freedom. That dimension takes us to the very center of the recovery thesis in relation to Sahlins' metaphysical difficulties.



### **Mead and Whewell: the Kant connection**

It is absolutely important to know (as Harré has informed me) that Whewell brought the idea of causal powers from Kant in Germany to England, and Mead was reading Whewell on this general theme, and, he had also been reading Kant's two critiques at the very least (Harré 1986; Joas 1985). This reading subsequently figured in the publication of his first major theoretical paper in 1900, "Suggestions Toward a Theory of the Philosophical Disciplines." Here, he is focusing on the agentic status of the human being, and indeed conceives of the self as active in being a problem-centered actor situated in an environment that has a social character (Mead 1900: 6–24, 19). Now, it is quite important to consider that in this first effort of Mead's reaching for a concept of the self as an agent, there is implied, however sketchily, an association with Kant's conception of causal powers. In a footnote, Mead makes a reference to Whewell's observation that, in the scientific thinker's systematic connecting of facts together, it is done not simply as a result of "logical induction," nor from the "suggestions of the situation," but, "from an element of novelty" (Mead 1964 [1900]: 19; Varela 1993: Chapter 7). Here we have then the link between Kantian freedom and causal powers, Whewell's mediation, and Mead's conception of the active self. *Now note, carefully, that Kantian spontaneity of "consciousness" turns up as Whewellian "novelty," which then becomes the Meadian "active self."* This "novelty" of the self's solutions to situational problems indicates that the property of being "active" is the property of autonomy; in turn, that autonomy is internally connected with the idea of a power of action grounded in causation. And lo and behold, Mead's active self winds up in Sahlins' 1982 paper, and does so absolutely innocent of all of these pregnant and most important connections. The point here is that Kant's notion of human agency was explicitly formulated in the two critiques as the efficient causality of freedom. Thus, with this in mind, I will finally declare that the answer to the question of Bidney's relevance to Sahlins' metaphysical needs then must be, now, an absolute yes. *To be sure, once more, his updated restatement of Kantian autonomy as efficient causal power can only be effectively relevant when human agency is recovered as an answer to Giddens's Call.*

### **Humanism: Old to New**

While in Sahlins' 1982 paper the Science and Humanism framework is deliberately excluded, by the mid-1990s there is one last work of the twentieth century in which, although that framework remains intact, yet the disappearance of the debate concerning the ontology of human agency now seems to be complete with the closing of the twentieth century. Kenneth Bock's defense of human agency in *Human Nature Mythology* (1994) is my cardinal evidence. In his introduction Bock ends the discussion with this call that centers his entire book.

In the *Essay on Man*, Ernst Cassirer called for a renewal of the unified image of humans that once prevailed in the Western world. Amidst the growing signs that we are losing our nerve in the face of an increasingly complex social life, *we need a restoration of faith in human dignity*

(Bock 1994: 10, my emphasis)

The defense is being cast in the exclusive terms of a moral or ethical prescription, that is it is a plea to affirm human agency. Bock therefore presents it as matter of *mythology* and thus not *metaphysics*, that is *faith* and not a proto-theoretical *conception*. This is sharply exposed in the discussion of the social sciences where Giddens's stance on agency and causation is actually noted!

John Calvin at least allowed people the power and the freedom to decide to do evil. ... The point is made by Anthony Giddens when he calls for recognition of the *causal* significance of human intentions, reasons, and motives in any explanation of social activity. ... When Giddens turns, then, to acknowledge and deal with the fact of society as a collectivity, it is with due caution to avoid losing sight of "the necessary centrality of the active subject." Structure exists, and ... we should ... activate structure itself, to view it as a process of "structuration" in which primacy is reserved for acting persons. *How successful this effort to reconcile human freedom and the aims of sociological analysis might be will depend on different readings, but Giddens has surely proceeded with unusual sensitivity about the predicament in which social science has placed humankind.*

(Bock Ibid: 97, emphasis provided)

Despite my deep respect for Bock's elegant and impassioned plea for a renewal of faith for the affirmation of human freedom, he, as the saying, almost, goes, is only preaching to the departed. He simply has not recognized that Cassirer's call for the renewal of the unified image of human being in fact has resurfaced in something quite beyond Cassirer's understanding, that is Giddens's Call. After all, in Cassirer's discussion of the concepts of "substance" in traditional premodern philosophy and "function" in modern mathematics and science in his classic, by the very name of those two concepts, there is absolutely not even a hint of the conception of causal power (Cassirer 1953). Indeed Bock has glided over Giddens's Call, insight, and the implied demand that a return to the philosophy of science must take place in order to conceptually realize that "agent causality" is the real ground of human agency. Otherwise, how is that faith in and affirmation of human freedom to be seriously realized?

And so it is absolutely no surprise that, at the beginning of the second millennium, Todorov's reconstruction of the legacy of Humanism for the future presents the theme of affirming freedom against determinism as if the Science and Humanism debate *never existed*.

Against the proponents of scientism, the humanists maintain ... the possibility of freedom: the human being is not the plaything of forces from which he cannot hope to escape

(Todorov 2002: 33)

Nowhere in Todorov's book in which he presents a chapter entitled "The declaration of autonomy," is the ontology of the freedom/determinism issue revisited, re-examined, evaluated, and a response of any traditional kind offered (Todorov Ibid: 47–79). Or a new one provided, or even its need suggested. Consider now for a moment the fact that the classic Humanist defiance of Science and its determinism is again being rehearsed in 2002 in this manner: clearly, for Todorov, Giddens's call for a new understanding of determinism, causality, and agency in order to ground human freedom in the phenomenal world of science *has never been heard of*. And this is not conjecture on my part.

Rather than a science or a dogma, humanist thought proposes a practical choice: a wager. Men are free, it says; they are capable of the best and the worst. Better to wager that they are capable of acting willfully, loving purely, and treating one another as equals than the contrary. Man can surpass himself; this is what makes him human. "You must wager. ... " Not to wager is to make the opposite wager; and in this case there is nothing to gain.

(Todorov Ibid: 236)

From the "sin" of determinism and the redeeming of our freedom by the magic of naming our freedom, to "The Declaration of Autonomy" through the taking up of a "wager" in its favor against the necessity of its opposite, is once again to indulge in magic. *What we are presented with here from Borenstein to Todorov is the death, not, I contend, of Humanism, but of the Old Humanism of the twentieth century in philosophy and the social sciences*. It is, to repeat, my declaration that Giddens's Call for a new metaphysical approach to the Science and Humanism debate on the ontology of freedom constitutes the rebirth of Humanism. And while it certainly is not Heidegger's fundamental ontology that constitutes that rebirth, since that ontology is divorced from science, nevertheless, it is a Humanism in the extreme. And, that extreme is the "Real Humanism" that Louis Althusser could not have reached; and in this regard, I contend, that the critiques of Anthony Giddens and Susan James of the Althusserian project carry just that point by implication: when Althusser announces his central thesis, "Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects," and thus its corollary, "There are no subjects except by and for their subjection," it is clear that the theory of "Ideological State Apparatuses" is a return to a sociological determinism which, ultimately, gives us a Marxist (and especially a Durkheimian) cultural/normative version of the structure and agency problem;

in other words, we have an exemplar of reification: the ideological constitution of the subject *is* the structural determination of the subject and the appropriation of its agency (Althusser 1995: 100–40, 128, 136, 129–36, 1996: 242–47; Giddens 1986: 217–18; James 1990: 151–56). For, the “Real Humanism” comes to us with the rebirth of a Humanism that is constituted by this fact: with the realism of scientific practice from Newton to Faraday to modern physics that makes Science for Humanism finally possible, the recovery of human agency is a prospect that is thus realizable. In Ernest Gellner’s “The Scientific Status of the Social Sciences,” one clearly sees that this promise is entirely lost in another merely ritual appeal to the traditional deterministic argument against the traditional Humanist defiance of science in the name of freedom (Gellner 1986: 124–25).

Perhaps it now will not be too far fetched to suggest the following: the idea of Giddens’s Call more than simply resonates with Corliss Lamont’s 1949 proposal of a new theory of “Contingency, Determinism, and Freedom” (Lamont 1990: 155–69). It fulfills it.

Every free choice is equivalent to a *free cause*. In short, *you* – a thinking, initiating, choosing agent – can be and frequently are the free cause of your own actions. ... [Hence], If my position on freedom of choice is correct, we must discard as untrue all systems of religion and philosophy that are fundamentally deterministic and fatalistic.

(Lamont Ibid: 169)

The only correction here is this: Lamont’s position on freedom is originally Kant’s.

(Herzfeld 1997: 113) thus endorse Ortner's (1984: 143) answer to the structure/agency question in this assertion of hers?

... it is our location "*on the ground*" that puts us in a position *to see* people not simply as *passive* reactors to and enactors of some "*system*," but as *active agents* and subjects in their own history.

(Ortner Ibid, emphasis provided)

In which case, by implication, not intention, is it not the case that Ortner, in effect, is dismissing Giddens's Call as an irrelevant appeal to "philosophy"? And that would be so for this reason: an appeal to the traditional empiricism (positivist empiricism or empirical realism) of the social sciences apparently will do. Ethnography thus is that empirical ground that "puts us in a position to see" "deterministic structures" and to see "human agency." Is this true for Herzfeld? Is this "truth" true about anthropology, today; I think not, certainly not in the case of Henrietta Moore's argument, in effect, against the philosophical naiveté of Ortner's residual empirical realism, that is that, for Moore, seeing human agency is a matter of an ontological and not an epistemological judgment (Moore 1999: 17–19)? Well, in the case of Sahlins, that Ortnerian truth not his, to be sure. However, in not appealing to Positivism or to Postmodernism, what could be the "middle ground" that he is looking for in reaching for human agency in "Individual experience and Cultural Order?" To explore this properly, I am going to address Sahlins' paper from the standpoint of *Culture and Practical Reason*.

### **Sahlins: anthropology after Humanism?**

*Culture and Practical Reason* (1976a) offers a theory of *Culture* in five propositions that takes its point of departure from the basic and initial proposition of *Practical Reason* that *custom is not fetishized utility*. Thus, starting from the negative proposition of that view of custom

- 1 Meaning is the specific property of the anthropological project.
- 2 Cultures are meaningful orders of persons and things.
- 3 Since these orders are systematic, they *cannot be free inventions of the mind*.
- 4 *But anthropology must consist in the discovery of the system.*

(Sahlins Ibid: x).

I propose that Sahlins' last two propositions can be combined into a statement, such that it requires a solution to this problem: *If culture is a system, then it cannot be a free invention of the mind*. Now, in view of the problem of cultural structure and human agency, the question that must be raised is this: is culture, nevertheless, an invention? If so, what is the freedom of it, and how is to be understood? But note this comment of Sahlins almost 16 years later.