

CHAPTER 5

Giddens, Habermas and the Prospects for a Synthesis

The prospects for synthesis are good because of the many parallels between Giddens and Habermas as stated in the conclusion of Chapter 2. This chapter now outlines the prospects for synthesis in detail. First, Giddens's and Habermas's models of agency are contrasted to demonstrate the clear differences between them. Then, the compatible metatheoretic and theoretic building blocks from each project are clarified in prelude to synthesis. The key metatheoretic concepts analysed include rationality, language and praxis. The key theoretic concepts (and criteria) of agency covered are consciousness, identity-self, intersubjectivity, emancipation and structure/system. This clarification of the strengths and vulnerability of these conceptual sources is done with a view to showing how their synthesis is possible and beneficial. Then the observer/participant relationship is examined because it is seminal to the epistemology of agency as causal (Harrison 1995, 89).

How do Giddens and Habermas contrast on agency?

I remind the reader that structuration theory and communicative rationality contrast markedly and in particular on the issue of agency. Of these two late modern projects, structuration theory emphasises motivation amongst agents of a 'risk laden' society and the importance of therapy in the duality of agents with abstract systems. On the other hand, communicative action has more direct philosophical and substantive links to situations and this gives it

more political potential than structuration theory. Their different paths can be attributed to their different approaches to causality and to structures. Giddens avoids both, whereas Habermas's critical theory is steeped in concern for these as routes to justice and emancipation.

These discussions of the differences in the models of agency of Giddens and Habermas will require slight repetition of what should be familiar after Chapters 3 and 4 but this should help to provide a coherent picture of the conceptual frameworks that are to be juxtaposed.

Giddens's stratification model of the agent

Structuration theory first acts as a statement of 'desiderata' for social theory (McLennan 1984, 127) that aims to transcend the dualism of agency and structure. It follows from this emphasis on ontology that the theory is limited in how it explains the substantive connection between agents and systems. Making this connection is important if Giddens's theory of agency is to enable, and not just to anticipate, emancipation and critique in late modernity. To allow closer examination of the embedded sets of processes that make up the model, his stratification model of the agent is repeated below from *The Constitution of Society* (1984, 5). Two striking features of this model are that the agent is at the centre of action and that the idea of causal structures is avoided.

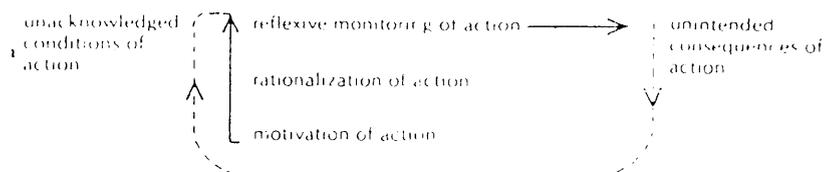


Figure 1

Figure 5.1 Giddens's stratification model of the agent

In the *internal* processes of agency Figure 5.1, actors reflexively monitor both their activities and the socio-physical contexts of their actions. They expect others in a situation to be doing the same; a view that understates the presence of dialectical interaction. Then, individual actions are rational(ised) only to the extent that reasons are presumed and can be given in the event that they are necessary. Finally, motivations, unlike discursive and practical consciousness, are less directly connected to the actions they prompt: they take direct purchase on actions only in '... situations which in some way break with the routine' (Giddens 1984, 6).

The *external* nature of agency (Figure 5.1) is that actions have unintended consequences and these may feedback, or constrain, as unacknowledged conditions. Furthermore, in keeping with Schutz's theory of distantiation, '...the further removed the consequences of an act are in time and space from the original context of the act, the less likely those consequences are to be intentional -... ' (Giddens 1984, 11). So agent control is normally limited to the immediate context of action. Contexts and institutions feed back into the actions of agents in a dialectic or duality of structure in a manner not yet made clear.

Turner (1987) has constructed a model of agent motivation that he ascribes to Giddens which I introduce briefly because it is helpful towards a schematic understanding of the inner linkages of unconscious motivation, discursive consciousness and practical consciousness (1987, 20-21). Reading Turner's Fig. 4 (in my Figure 5.2 below) from left to right, it shows that ontological security and trust are central to unconscious motivation. These two drives are mutually re-inforcing and they propel conscious activities. They are mediated by a psycho-analytic conception of anxiety (Turner 1987, 20). Practical consciousness and discursive consciousness are routinely driven

by unconscious motivation while anxiety, in social interaction or routine, will escalate motives for ontological security and trust, up to a point (Turner 1987, 21)

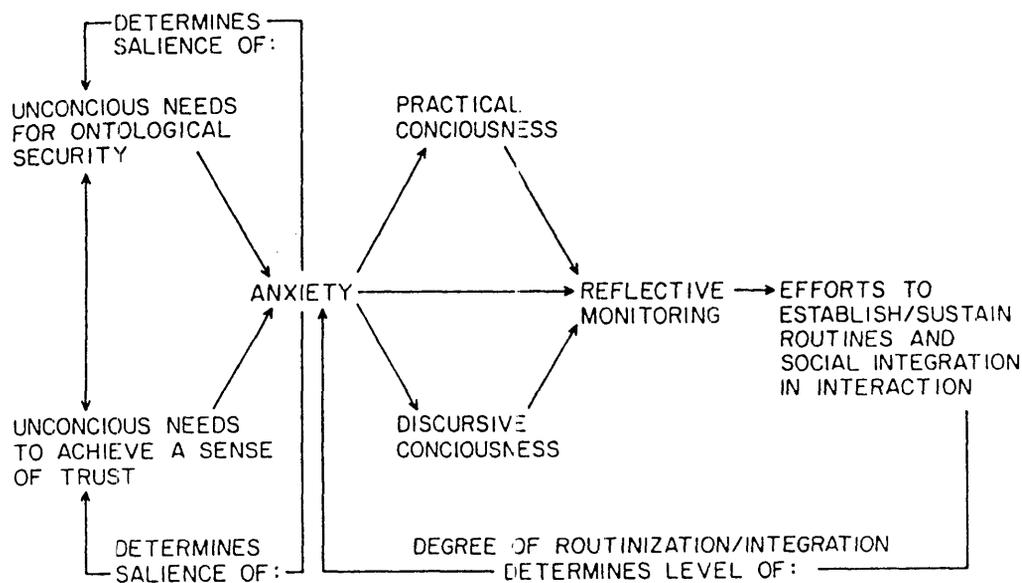


Fig. 4. Giddens's Psychoanalytic Model of Motivation

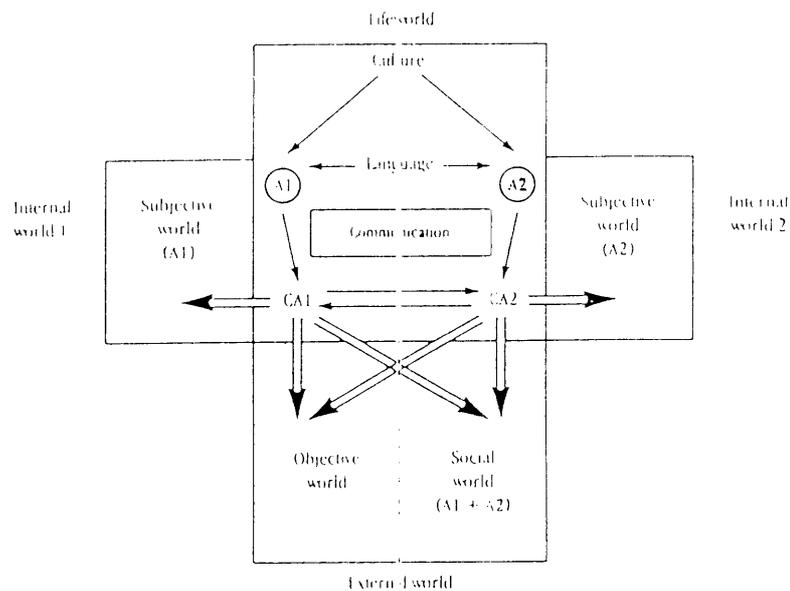
Figure 5.2 Turner on Giddens on motivation

The advantage in dissecting consciousness into the unconscious, discursive consciousness, practical consciousness is that in this way Giddens sets up an alternative conceptualisation of the psycho-analytic ego, super-ego and id. His aim is to help remedy the anthropomorphism associated with the latter (Giddens 1984, 7).

Habermas's world-relations of communicative action

Communicative rationality sets out primarily to provide a critique of instrumental reason and modernity and to suggest the procedural basis that ought to be followed to restore the confidence to act in late modern society. Despite emphasising consensus and intersubjectivity, Habermas takes care to

outline how agents are able to *interpret* relations within the lifeworld. His model below is repeated from *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol 2* (1987a, 127).



The double arrows indicate the world relations that actors (A) establish with their utterances (CA).

Figure 20 World-Relations of Communicative Acts (CA)

Figure 5.3 Habermas on inter-world relations of communicative acts

Figure 5.3 can be interpreted as follows. Language and culture are at the centre of action. The relations amongst the Subjective, Objective and Social 'worlds', embedded as they are within language and culture and mutually agreed upon by actors in communicative action, are established through the utterances of actors (CA1 and CA2). Actors are not able to step out of their language and culture or lifeworld (Habermas 1987a, 126) but instead interpret their situations against their subjective, objective and social worlds (Habermas 1987a, 122, 126). All of these worlds are related in some form in utterances, and

there can be no consensus without a concomitant lack of contradiction amongst the validity claims of the worlds (Habermas 1987a, 121). One outcome is the understatement of the internal processes of agent reflexivity in situations.

The interpretive process of agency in Habermas is as follows. In a situation, which has a theme, a goal and a plan, actors call upon the agreed understanding of the 'worlds' as they apply to that situation. The situation and the agreed understanding within the worlds must overlap but need not be consistent. There is no unassailable connection of the utterance to any world because of the potential for validity claims to be challenged. Should this latter occur in a situation or should the theme of a situation shift, then the horizon of interpretations of the lifeworld relevant to the situation will alter. This alteration is part of the 'repair work' (Habermas 1987a, 121) and 'regrouping of the individual elements of the situation' (Habermas 1987a, 122). In this process of shifting understandings and responses, those meanings and resources that are not immediate to the situation have a diminishing impact upon the outcomes for the situated agents (Habermas 1987a, 123): the greater the distance the less the impact.

The action situation is the centre of the lifeworld for those involved. Situations are connected to each other and the lifeworld through 'contexts of relevance' or new elements introduced into a situation from, until then, the taken for granted lifeworld (Habermas 1987a, 124). However, at the present level, the immediate means for interpreting the relations with the three worlds are the agent's aptitudes for the dimensions of rationality. While agents interpret their intersubjective worlds, their personal autonomy and the essence of a dialectic with these worlds are overshadowed by the 'always already' language and culture (Habermas 1987a, 125). It is a striking feature of Habermas's Figure 20 (1987a, 127; Figure 5.3 here) that the only return or dialectical arrows are those between agents in communicative action (CA1 and

CA2) and not directly those between agents and the 'worlds', *most significantly not between agents in CA and the subjective world.*

The metatheoretical building blocks of the prospective synthesis

Rationality, language and praxis, but more particularly the first, are at the heart of the philosophy of consciousness debate. Within these debates generally, foundationalism, grand narratives and instrumental consciousness are now strongly criticised; the structuralist understanding of language is challenged; and the Marxian definition of theory as praxis is further problematised for social scientists. These three sociological phenomena, nevertheless, offer or anticipate an explanation and understanding of agency from within the theoretic decentred-self paradigm. This is because these phenomena are at once metatheoretic and substantive, collective and individual. These three integrated phenomena are artificially separated now to simplify discussion. Coupled with the suggested 'manifest' agent capabilities of reflexivity, identity formation and critique, they can set the external and internal conditions for exploring the mechanisms of interaction: mechanisms that link the agent and system through a model of the agent and agency that is still consistent with the decentred-self paradigm.

So how do Giddens and Habermas compare and contrast on these phenomena and what form could their synthesis justifiably take? In this discussion, Giddens's position on rationality is set out, then that of Habermas, followed by their prospective synthesis. This same format is used for language and then for praxis.

Rationality

For structuration theory, individual agent competence is founded upon rationality. Actors have a continuing 'theoretical understanding' of the origins

of their activity which they use to generate social action (Giddens 1984, 5). Giddens's notion of rationality includes the Kantian view that rationality is not simply a conscious activity but is intrinsic to the routine action that is reproduced and produced over time. '...I think a lot of the rationality of social life resides in hidden processes of rationalisation that we just do routinely,...' (Bleicher and Featherstone 1982, 73). Unlike Habermas, he is careful not to infer that rationality, in this latter sense, is a transcendental and 'primary principle' that is manifest in historic events and in the evolution of advanced capitalist society.

The three central elements of Giddens's concept of rationalisation are discursive rationality, instrumental rationality and reflexivity. Discursive rationality, or the giving of reasons as motive, occurs in the interaction between the agent and structure (as in norms) or between the agent and 'the other'. So reasons are for Giddens also causes (Giddens 1984, 345) - even if he does eventually give more attention overall to ontological security as the cornerstone of motivation. In this sense of giving reasons, his concept endorses the notion of 'validity claims'. Then, discursive consciousness is to a large measure instrumental rationality - which includes most forms of knowledge in modern society (Wuthnow et al. 1984, 189) - and it is therefore synonymous with the notion of 'strategic rationality'. Nevertheless, in structuration theory, rationality is not confined to the discursive or instrumental modes. Alternatives to these are acknowledged by Giddens including, for example, unconscious motivation and aesthetic expressiveness.

Reflexivity, as the third element, facilitates the agents' capacity to distinguish or to judge as acceptable any activities within the context of interaction (Giddens 1977, 130). Judging or making choices is a key capability of the knowledgeable competence of the actor. Frequently, intended action is denied to the agent but not choice, as this remains a prereflective notion before

its activation. A judgement or choice is made on the strength of the interpretation of the prevailing norms. Giddens does not declare how normative consensus emerges from the process of judgement and choosing. This is partly due to his emphasis upon unconscious motivations and his aversion for determinism. Also it is his view that emancipatory action tends to be 'away from' rather than 'towards' exploitative relations (Giddens 1991, 213). Then, Giddens does not ascribe to rationality any particular role in the process of judging, for example, right or wrong, as actions could well be irrational. These evasions of the questions of ethical judgements or their impact upon consensus need to be addressed before structuration can become grounded more firmly in substantive emancipation.

For communicative action, rationality is not simply about language and better arguments because '...in everyday communicative practice utterances are often not in explicit speech, or have no verbal form at all, what [Habermas] is really looking at is not the communication in itself but its coordinating effect on subsequent action' (Brand 1990, 26). The coordination of rational action in communicative action has three interrelated elements (Habermas 1984b, 297). Brand puts it a little more simply;

the listener reacts to a claim presented in a speech act by (a) understanding its meaning, (b) taking a 'yes' or 'no' position to it and (c) if the former is the case by following this up with action in accordance with conventionally established action obligations (if s/he takes a 'no' position the interaction can be switched off or changed into discourse in which both speaker and listener can change their positions) (Brand 1990, 26-27).

I wish to emphasize that in Habermas's view the action that follows communication is co-ordinated through the warrants or imperatives that

underly the communicative act. These same warrants also allow the speech acts to be typologised into types of communicative action which in turn allow for the identification of the dimensions of rationality. However, what is missing in this co-ordination of rational action is a clear idea of the *dialectic* within which these dimensions of rationality are enacted and how they in turn impact upon the identity of the agent and society.

Synthesis

Habermas's rational action in communicative 'discourse ethics' demonstrates how Giddens's furtive concept of collective action, as validated reasons for normative change, could adopt a more transformative position in social reproduction and still avoid the pitfalls of the philosophy of consciousness. The K-C theory sets out to achieve this advantage. Furthermore, this kind of move towards transformative pragmatics makes the duality of structure idea, which otherwise conflates intersubjectivity and social action, less opaque and the actors potentially more ethical in their behaviour. Without an explanation of collective action as more than social integration, structuration theory remains in the clouds of ontology at a time when Giddens has identified, in *The Consequences of Modernity* (1992a) and *Beyond Left and Right* (1994a), a need for practical and collective action that engages the Utopian-Immanence climate prevalent in advanced capitalism.

Language

Giddens is against structuralism or the view that social life is like a language. His is a turn against the idea of language becoming used by social scientists as the source for those rules that underpin all social interaction; rules that have '...an underlying logic of basic oppositions...' (Outhwaite 1994, 121) that would then be adopted into the social sciences for use in

comprehending social activity. In its place, Giddens emphasises the intersection of language, meaning and society (Bryant and Jary 1991, 12). He emphasises that language signs have symbolic significance in a specific time-space context and require an interpretation (Giddens 1987, 102).

Following his reservations about structuralism, Giddens has several problems with his own notion of syntactical rules as components of a virtual structure which underpins all social interaction. His primary concern is with the methodical execution of the syntactical rules which provide 'meaning' (Giddens 1984, 21). These rules form a base for sanctions which act as the medium (in part) for the constitution and reproduction of day-to-day life. This link to the pragmatic through language is desirable, but should language rules in this sense be interpreted as the model for social practice then there is the problem for society of the slow rate of change that language structures undergo. Also, language rules depend for their applicability not only on the agent but on the shared and sustained interpretation of the members of a community, both of which are not always likely. 'Rather than generating practices, rules collapse into them' (Callinicos 1985, 139). This is a major problem for a theory that relies on the interpreting subject (or agent).

Despite these criticisms of language use, which are problems that are not easily resolved, it is significant for the achievement of substantive work in sociology that Giddens '...explores the intersection between language and the constitution of social practices' (Giddens and Turner 1987, 199). To this extent his ideas are compatible with those of Habermas. Giddens's notion of language though does not emphasise how language praxis connects with personality and change (or emancipation). As 'talk', language connects culture to communication thereby playing a significant role in what meaning is to be interpreted (Giddens 1987, 101). It is unfortunate that Giddens goes no further with this or specifically towards exploiting *talk and language as means for*

interpreting the pragmatic experience of culture, environment and self as enabling for the agent.

In Habermas's project, the propensity for language presupposes in agents the skill of communicative action and intersubjectivity. The latter is particularly achieved through the 'speech act'. So for Habermas, 'language does not just have a cognitive function' (Brand 1990, 21), it also serves to foster interaction; the kind of interaction that includes amongst its motives the egoistic calculation of one actor over that of others (Brand 1990, 23), that is, knowledgeability power. This connection between language and the knowledgeability power of the agent is not quite spelt out by Habermas and in this way a vital internal instrumentality of the agent, reminiscent of the modernity project, is put out of reach. Habermas, remember, by insisting on the intersubjective or formal-pragmatics, cannot allow the agent to drive modernity (Habermas 1991, 241-243). Yet, I shall argue that there is a place for knowledgeability, a concept essential to communicative competence amongst actors, as a point of departure for reviving the aspirations of the modernity project for the individual.

Synthesis

Discerning the worlds of meaning sheltered behind the dimensions of rationality does much to reveal what agents' are 'doing' in their life politics and pure relationships. Agents can do this intuitively. These meaning interpretations of actors in duality of structure can be made clearer by utilising the objectified nuances of language contained in Habermas's dimensions of rationality in the speech act and the ideal-speech situation. In line with this type of synthesis, the K-C use of speech acts and the ideal-speech situation is due to their capacity for allowing substantive critique, therapy and change. Johnson, Dandeker and Ashworth (1984) have made a similar, more general,

point for the value of language in bringing about transformation. 'Human beings, through language,...are able to continually alter the criteria by which they recognise the world, so producing new meanings within it' (Johnson et al. 1984, 206).

Giddens does not agree that the speech act or ideal-speech situation can be used for situational analysis (Kilminster 1991, 93). His argument is that such a situation is just an 'ideal' and therefore cannot be used to analyse concrete linguistic situations. Kilminster (1991, 93) argues that Giddens misunderstands Habermas (and Karl-Otto Apel) in taking this position. It is rather the case that speech acts ought to be understood in their transcendental analytical status, as a regulatory principle. The K-C theory of agency utilises this latter view of the normative role of the speech act.

Praxis

For structuration theory, praxis is the pivotal concept for interpreting the duality of day-to-day life, for social practices '..., are considered to be at the root of the constitution of both subject and social object' (Giddens 1984, xxii). It refers to social action both as intentional behaviour and as routine practices. Due either to reflexivity or the situational context or both, it is never always the same. Praxis is where shifts in normative expectations occur but the manner of such incremental change is unclear. Giddens's idea of change as taking place in each social action at the instant of its enactment is true to the idea of the duality-of-structure, but it confines the explanation of change to the immediate, the miniscule, the particular and the recurrent. Epistemologically, because the knowledgeable actor 'makes things happen', the constraints that are encountered by this actor can be discovered. But these constraints in themselves are not deemed to be causal. Causality rests rather in agent reflexivity.

By focusing on routine as the simultaneous reflector of ontological security and the reproduction of social practices, structuration theory conflates the two processes of social change and social reproduction. Should an individual choose to divert from the routine, is this indicative of social change, or an expression of personal autonomy in the environs of social reproduction, or both? At what point is routine simply undercut by larger institutional change, or more importantly, is the security system at the core of routine being threatened? At what point do we have the beginnings of a social movement or the usual reproduction of social organisations because 'both involve "reflexive regulation" ' (Johnson 1990, 124)?

In Habermas's project praxis takes the form of language in most instances. It is the lifeworld vehicle for both strategic and communicative action and therefore, by implication of the latter, it is an instrument for realising judgements and critique. Such critique includes that of self, norms, society and systems; wherever agents can engage in mutual discourse. Language is not the only form of praxis though, because meaning-construction and consensus is also influenced by the prevailing circumstances, the historical epoch and the maturity of the culture. But language has been shown by Habermas to be the phenomenon that links the agent, interaction and structure/system in a manner less prone to the drawbacks associated with the philosophy of consciousness (cf. Chapter 4, pages 120-123).

Synthesis

In structuration theory the nature of the agent is defined and social action is emphasised as the purposive or routine activity of agents in duality with systems/institutions. By contrast, in 'ideal' practice, Habermas's lifeworld *procedure* of communicative action includes deliberate, collective and transformative 'doing activity' in a situation of specific discourse. This action

is undertaken by knowledgeable yet tenuous actors seeking understanding and consensus through linguistic interaction. The K-C theory integrates the structuration and communicative approaches to agents' praxis.

Now I unpack (the criteria and) concepts from Giddens and Habermas that constitute the building blocks of my alternative model and hypothesis. This is done by first discussing the merits of Giddens's view, then Habermas's and then suggesting the form that their synthesis can take.

The conceptual building blocks of the prospective synthesis

There are five conceptual bases and they follow the criteria set out in Chapter 1 (pages 13-16) to guide the new synthesis towards an active yet decentred-self model and to orient the concept of agency for the thesis as a whole.

1. (Consciousness) Knowledgeability with communicative competence

Knowledgeability

Giddens's notion of agency rests on the claim that human beings are knowledgeable agents who know all the time what they are doing and why (Giddens 1984, 281). As a phenomenon, knowledgeability refers to everything actors know tacitly, consciously and intuitively about their own and others' circumstances. This notion of knowledge is not centred around the subject but around the subject in relation to the other. In everyday life, knowledgeability is skilful activity or know-how: actors' 'know' how to produce acceptable modes of action; how to sustain the social encounter; and how to judge the acceptability of forms of activity. These skills are brought to bear in an indeterminate range of circumstances of action that produce and reproduce the social milieu (cf. Layder 1994, 133). They exist on the premise that reasons can be given for their enactment.

What internal components direct or motivate an agent's knowledgeability? They are practical consciousness or routine; discursive (or reason giving) consciousness and unconscious motivation. In everyday living, the bulk of the knowledgeable actor's conduct is routine rather than discursive. A routine consists of knowing rules and tactics for day-to-day living (Giddens 1984, 90). The actor's awareness of broader conditions of life, otherwise expressed at levels of discursive knowledge, is revealed in the manner by which routine activities are carried out. An example is the tension between autonomy and submission amongst the workers that is reflected in the routine of the work place. Rules and tactics *underlying* routine are not the only 'bounds' upon knowledgeability; unacknowledged conditions, unintended consequences of action and the unconscious serve this function equally well. The level and nature of knowledgeability is also influenced by social factors such as the access that actors have to knowledge by virtue of their social locations; the modes of articulation of knowledge, whether hearsay or via social science; the validity of the belief claims (or false consciousness); and the means of dissemination of knowledge (oral, written or printed) (Giddens 1984, 91). Most importantly, knowledgeable actors exercise reflexive monitoring of their action 'characteristically applied as part of the rationalization of action' (Giddens 1977, 130).

Communicative competence

Communicative competence is that quality or capacity of an agent to operate within the basic structures and fundamental rules that display rationality, as they are evident in and *as they underlie* the use of language, in order to achieve shared understanding (McCarthy T. 1984, x; Brand 1990, 124). Communicative competence is connected to communicative rationality in the sense that agents can intuitively or explicitly distinguish between strategic

action and communicative action, even when the speakers themselves cannot always point out this nuance. Communicative competence functions alongside identity formation in the process of communicative action (McCarthy T. 1984, xxii; Brand 1990, 18).

The rules referred to are not those for the production of sentences, as in grammar, but those rules for the *use* of sentences in utterances made in social situations, for example, perlocutionary utterances in which the speaker has egoistic calculations over another. It is these rules which underly the agents' intuitive distinctions between one type of action and another '...between the various validity claims (claims to truth, to rightness, to sincerity and authenticity), and the worlds they refer to (the objective world, the social world, the inner world of subjective experience)' (Brand 1990, 19). Communicative competence allows the agent to discern in practice the discrete dimensions of linguistic rationality and to engage in emancipatory critique which '...is rooted in the very structures of intersubjective communicative competence' (Bernstein, 1985 : 17)' (Brand 1990, 116).

The Synthesis being proposed in this thesis gets its foundation and its name Knowledgeability-Communicative Competence from the formal amalgamation of these two overlapping concepts. It is clear from both Giddens's and Habermas's usage that *both knowledgeability and communicative competence are claimed as endemic to being human and agential*. Both refer to the capacity of agents to sustain encounters, produce acceptable responses, understand behaviours and make judgements. *Knowledgeability* includes but is more than what is in consciousness, consensus, or immediate substantive context and it covers, for example, intuition, feelings and memories. In instances of rational social action it becomes directly causal, as in imperative power. *Communicative competence* or discerning amongst types of action and validity claims, facilitates

emancipatory action, which is, the identification by actors of unfilled wants, recognition of the obstacles and action towards change or reform. This term of Knowledgeability-Communicative Competence or K-C makes conceptual provision for the causal and critical powers of the agent or agency.

2. (Identity-self) Social action with interaction

Social action

In structuration theory social action is either routine or intentional behaviour. In social action, knowledgeable actors interpret or decide upon the semantic rules, tacit knowledge and norms of social life (Giddens 1977, 133). But, apart from the notion of duality as explanation, Giddens says little about the processes involved in the decisions that actors make - decisions that become fateful moments in an agent's life project. 'Fateful moments are transition points which have major implications not just for the circumstances of an individual's future conduct, but for self-identity' (Giddens 1991, 143). However, he does point out the constrictions on the power of the agent due to abstract systems of global society and the persistence of the features of 'virtual' structure.

Interaction

In terms of the context for agency, Habermas's primary concern is with the 'discourse ethic', that is, with interaction and achieving consensus. In this context agents are not strictly autonomous. The ontological binding force of intersubjectivity is transcendent rationality and it is manifest through language and communicative competence. Also important for understanding interaction is the expectation that the result of communicative action amongst agents ought to be consensus on matters of norms or ethics if not on matters of

action, that is, communication of this type does not equate to the action of actors (Habermas 1984b, 101; Outhwaite 1994, 111). In fact, consensus may not necessarily provoke action.

I shall suggest that Giddens's knowledgeable and autonomous agent of *social action* can be integrated with Habermas's incomplete notion of an agent of *communicative action* in the new K-C theory of transformative agency and change. How can this be done? First, the intersubjective emphasis of communicative action presupposes subject knowledgeability (Hunter 1994, 104), and is evident in Habermas's Figure 20, shown earlier (Figure 5.3), which illustrates how agents establish world relations. In return, agent knowledgeability in social action (or duality), shown earlier in Giddens's Figure 1 (Figure 5.1), presupposes awareness of both the 'other' and the system. So at some point, presumably in praxis, the two concepts connect to each other. Second, the nature of agents in the theory of communicative action is not clear while, for its part, the nature of intersubjectivity in Giddens's duality-of-structure is also unclear. The strength of one is the weakness of the other. Habermas's critique of modernity is deficient on the nature of the agent/actors who carry out the institutional roles he identifies for them in classical and advanced capitalism. Yet, Habermas's ideas of the consensual ethic and intersubjectivity in communicative action can lend weight to realising Giddens's increasingly critical stance on advanced capitalism. Without it, Giddens's critique burdens individuals with the transformation of institutional axes, abstract systems and partner relationships armed essentially with the unclear skill of the duality of structure.

3. (Intersubjectivity) Agency with intersubjectivity

Agency

Giddens confers a high level of responsibility for the reproduction of modernity upon agency and so it is consistent that he has provided a theory of the agent. The agent, or stratified active self, is a body that is capable of causal intervention in the events that constitute the 'environment of behaviour' (Giddens 1987, 216). In general, agency 'refers to doing' (Giddens 1984, 10). Alternatively, Giddens at times refers to agency as a human quality of knowing '... , virtually all the time, under some description, what one is engaged in and why' (Giddens 1987, 5). The dual emphasis on 'doing' and 'knowing' is seminal to the inception of K-C theory, as is Giddens's referral to agency as 'purposive' activity (Giddens 1984, 3). Giddens always interprets agency with a sense of power endemic to it and this means power in the generalised sense of a 'transformative capacity' (Giddens 1985, 7). However, his notion of 'making a difference' in the world 'as an ongoing part of daily life' (Cohen 1986, 131) is without connection to interdependent action. Nevertheless, his overall definition of agency has an ethical implication, and one that allows emancipation and critique.

Intersubjectivity

Habermas, on the other hand, sees little difference between individual and social needs and concentrates rather on intersubjectivity. It is of little surprise then that he ignores the will, thereby neglecting agency and motivation (Brand 1990, 118). He also, by implication, neglects the body and the inner person. His pre-occupation with justice, values and norms, as central to intersubjectivity, is such that he '...fails to recognise the skilful and knowledgeable character of the everyday participation of actors in social practices' (Giddens 1982a, 114).

The agent is absorbed into the ideal-speech community to the point of becoming obscure (Hunter 1994, 104).

But how adequate is this criticism that his agent is 'obscure'? Does it mean that the knowledgeable agent is absent or ineffective? Not so, because of the emphasis placed by Habermas on conversational discourse, on the mature autonomous ego (White 1988, 82) and on human praxis. Furthermore, a necessary requirement for reaching consensus through speech acts is the participation of competent and knowledgeable agents. For their part, knowledgeable agents bring to the discourse their experience and knowledge formulated within their respective lifeworlds or cultures, or in other words, their life histories. I use this mutuality of structuration theory 'without connection to interdependent action' and communicative action 'with an indistinct agent' to build a new model of agency and interaction.

4. (Emancipation) Confluent love ethic with Discourse ethic

The confluent love ethic is embodied in the structuration concept of pure-relationships and the 'discourse ethic' in communicative action. Each has been earlier defined and so the emphasis here is upon their prospects for synthesis.

Confluent love ethic

This ethic fosters non-destructive emotion in the conduct of an individual in a pure-relationship with another. It is nurtured by reciprocity (Giddens 1991, 93), communication and trust, and is negotiated as part of a person's sexuality. This kind of opening of oneself to new forms of relationships and intimacy is part of the 'risk-taking' and democratic decision-making that Giddens understands to be required of agents and agency in post-traditional

society. These criteria of reciprocity, communication, trust/understanding and negotiation exist also in Habermas's discourse ethic or communicative action.

Discourse ethic

Communicative action also refers to reciprocal interpersonal relations between two or more agents. Their aim is to reach understanding in order to co-ordinate action and confirm their own or group identity. This understanding becomes emancipatory when achieved within the conditions of free, open and equitable argument. These conditions or standards of discourse constitute an ethic for personal and intersubjective behaviour. Unlike the emphasis on non-destructive emotion and intimacy in the confluent love ethic, in communicative discourse the democratic import is more clearly collegial and political. Yet, synthesis between the two appears to be without impediment.

With synthesis in view, Habermas's concept of 'open reciprocity' can capture the essence of the confluent love ethic along with that of discursive action. It refers to building genuine connectedness of understanding amongst agents free of 'better than' imperatives by one party over the other. Also, it includes in its praxis agent autonomy, interpersonal interaction, commitment and morality. In these terms, open reciprocity would appear to be a plausible start for describing the source or 'naturalistic core, so to speak' (Habermas 1990, 170) of ethical agency. Ethics in this sense will refer to personal and communal ties.

5. Addressing the problem of structure/system and change

There are two problems of late modern theory shared by Giddens and Habermas which a new synthesis must not overlook and if possible attempt to address. The first is that both projects describe structure indeterminately. To this effect, Giddens's ontological theory interprets structure as 'virtual', while

Habermas's systems-lifeworld critique of institutions remains always in need of substantive verification. This indeterminism, or openness, in each is linked to the move by each to transcend or overcome the philosophy of consciousness paradigm: it tends to weaken the objective facticity of the classical concepts of structure and system generally. This is understandable because, in the trend to transcend/overcome the subject-object dualism, metatheoretic abstraction increases and pragmatic everyday concerns are neglected. Even the distinction or relation between ontology and epistemology becomes blurred. In response, the new synthesis attempts to hypothesise structures (or objects) and mechanisms of practical action while still seeking to transcend the subject-object dualism.

How is this done? By separating and realigning the concepts of structure and system. In usual practice, the understanding of system has been either as an objective structure ascendant over the agent, or it has been bracketed in preference for discerning the subjective meanings of actors. More recently, the social interrelations within the system assume particular importance for conceptualising agents as 'decentred-selves'. In structuration theory for instance, system refers to 'patterns of social relations across time-space' (Giddens 1984, 377), and in communicative rationality it refers to a dominant and particular type of relationship that is governed by instrumental rationality (and integrated through the media of power and money). It is in this relational and intersubjective sense that system is to be understood in the new synthesis. *In the new synthesis the concept of structure will impute real, if not visible, objects upon which transforming systems of relations play themselves out. These real underlying objects will be the dimensions of rationality, the dialectic of control and the modes of interaction.* But more of this in Chapters 6 and 7.

Their second problem is that of social change. Giddens has no substantive theory of social change and so postulates instead a typology of four crucial

institutional axes in global society whose conjuncture serves to constrain or enable reflexive agents within systems. These axes, and more recently the contractual 'confluent love' ethic, enable or transform systemic and personal relationships respectively. The how of their 'enabling' or 'transforming' though is opaque. On the other hand, Habermas's system-lifeworld critique and communicative action, while identifying the causes and processes of change, do not conceptualise the power of agents in the context of change. In response to Giddens's 'reflexive monitoring' and Habermas's 'reflexive interpretive' models of agency in social change, the new synthesis will seek to introduce *the idea of the moral/ethical agent as the social embodiment of critique and as the instrument of personal and systemic change*. After all, there is no 'late modern' society without agent activity (Bhaskar 1979, 42).

The observer/participant methodological impasse

Habermas has the methodological problem of two competing perspectives, namely, that of the observer and that of the participant actor in everyday communication. This tension between the external observer of the system and the individual actor in the lifeworld (Layder 1994, 195) threatens to undermine the clarity of communicative rationality (Habermas 1991, 250-254) - even while Habermas's reply to this criticism is that he does not make such a sharp distinction (Brand 1990, 131). Comparatively, Giddens uses the notion of the double hermeneutic to describe this observer-participant relationship but this concept compacts into one level both the interpretive and everyday action. So, which approach is to hold sway in the new synthesis?

The observer/participant dichotomy associated with the system/lifeworld schemata in Habermas is compatible with that implied in the duality-of-structure in Giddens. Both Habermas and Giddens are of the view that the observer, as critical agent, has an intellectualised access to the counterfactual

strategy but, it is Habermas who demarcates more specifically how the observer and the participant criticise each other from *mutual inherence*. This occurs in their constative speech acts or conversation where the understandings and validity claims of both are judged. Any validity claim is perceived therefore as open to critical examination. Because such claims can only emerge in communication, they can only be redeemed in spheres of human discourse - for there is no obvious source of validity claim external to human discourse (Wellmer 1995, 53).

Also, constative speech acts capture more specifically the capability of the agent as observer and everyday actor in tandem:

When behaviour is described, however, in terms of communicative action there is no difference between actor and interpreter as far as their potential for interpretation is concerned. Thus those who act and those who theorise about their actions can mutually criticise each other '(Brand 1990, 136-7).

Unlike the double hermeneutic, communicative action engages the everyday actor as more than a second level collaborator with the critical theorist or observer. The two are equally reflexive if separate monitors of action. The advantage of such an approach to the K-C synthesis is its de-emphasis of the authoritative impact of the solitary-ego. But what of the criticism of particularism or relativism which the merging of the observer and participant attracts? Habermas replies that, for communicative action, the group and its agent members are the critical means to penetrate a context, to revise errors and to correct mistakes (Brand 1990, 137).

Because the immanent logics of each of Giddens's and Habermas's projects has left us with a disconnected agent, restoring the agent or agency

will require the support of a parallel philosophical source; one that is conducive to these particular and strategic aspects of Giddens and Habermas. Also, this philosophical backdrop would need to share their concerns for emancipation and the transformation of the present social condition, as well as allowing a clear conceptualisation of the agent as healer - which is lacking in Giddens and Habermas. Bhaskar arguably meets these requirements of conduciveness and of agents as active transformative actors. Incorporating Bhaskar's project into the proposed synthesis should make possible some claims about core reasons and other mechanisms that illustrate the causal power of actors in the lifeworld (Collier 1994, 151). It should facilitate and advance the healing and emancipatory intent of structuration theory and communicative rationality for late modernity.

CHAPTER 6

Bhaskar's Critical Realism

Why is a realist account preferred before hermeneutics or positivism? A problem with a strictly hermeneutic approach is that although it allows some access to agents' meanings, it tends to ignore both the causal mechanisms, and the complexity of agent-system influences - especially those not given to everyday awareness. Hermeneutic approaches can be rather uncritical, even of their own limits (Outhwaite 1987, 72-73). As much of Bhaskar's project is primarily a critique of the epistemology of positivism or the epistemic fallacy, an advantage that it has for restoring the healing agent or agency is that it hypothesises a model of causal agency with links to material outcomes. Furthermore, it also allows for depth analysis and for arguments to be made for both cognitive and non-scientific practices such as conversation, self expression, aesthetics and love (Collier 1994, 260). Most significantly, this form of critical realism is compatible with non-anthropocentric values, as in the natural world, in a way that idealism and empiricism are not. However, on the down side, realism is overly dependent for explanation upon structures that are not directly connected to the activities that they presume to govern (Collier 1994, 245) and hence are not easily verified.

This chapter is a brief outline of Bhaskar's philosophical project and its pivotal role and value in my attempt to restore the material and ethical agent of late modernity that appears to have become disconnected from system in structuration theory and communicative rationality. As a realist position in philosophy his project consists '...', of a theory about the nature of being, rather

than the knowledge, of objects investigated by the sciences...' (Bhaskar 1986, 6). As indicated earlier, he is critical of both positivism and subjectivism (Bhaskar 1986, 27) and offers his project as an alternative (1986, 102). I do not use Bhaskar's project as an authorisation for an alternative theory but as a source of ideas on which to draw for the synthesis of Giddens and Habermas in a way that enhances the theorisation of the healing or transformative agent of late modernity. It is a resource for taking their conceptualisation of the agent and agency to a new level which is otherwise not available through the present integrity or cohesion of structuration theory and communicative action.

However much he advocates the transformative and emancipatory character of human activity, Bhaskar too gives insufficient attention to the mechanisms/processes of interaction amongst agents because of his focus on the relations between position-practices and '..., not between the individuals who occupy/engage in them' (Bhaskar 1979, 52). Also, his primary interest is in the larger problem of the epistemic fallacy which is associated with the dualism and which involves the misunderstanding that 'statements about being' can be reduced to 'statements about knowledge' (Bhaskar 1986, 6, 23). Bhaskar's clearly emancipatory and critical philosophy, like Giddens and Habermas, is weak on the practical question of how emancipatory ideals are realised (Dandeker 1983, 201).

What is critical naturalism?

Bhaskar's philosophy of science project gravitates around the argument that both the social and the natural worlds are equally agents, products and possible objects of scientific investigation. The difference between them is in the kinds of properties or powers that they separately possess (Bhaskar 1979, 145; 1993, 155). His critical naturalism project exists against the backdrop of naturalism, which is '...the thesis that there is (or can be) an essential unity of

method between the natural and the social sciences' (Bhaskar 1979, 3). However, for critical realism there are key ontological limits to this thesis. First, unlike natural structures, social structures do not exist independently of either the activities they govern or of the agents' conceptions of what they do in their activity. As a result, social structures may be only relatively enduring because they manifest themselves in open systems (Bhaskar 1979, 57).

Critical naturalism argues against reductionist positivism, scientism and idealism (Bhaskar 1986, 51; Collier 1994, 237). It is an emancipatory project, within the social sciences, with its ontological roots planted in the realist principle that an activity has non-visible, underlying structures that make empirical investigation of it possible. Social and natural sciences are entrusted with the task of demonstrating these underlying structures and their contingent modes of articulation (Bhaskar 1986, 108). Put differently, the project rests upon the notion of transcendental realism and a transformational concept of society (Bhaskar 1986, 5-6, 11-12).

Transcendental realism is scientific realism which is '...the theory that the objects of scientific enquiry exist and act, for the most part, quite independently of scientists and their activity' (Bhaskar, 1986, 5). Statements about knowledge of a social entity do not equate to 'statements of being'. Bhaskar's account of science therefore hinges upon two theorems; knowledge is socially produced in historical circumstances or transitive continuity; and changes over time are anchored in objects/structures that are intransitive in nature. The sustained dialectic between these intransitive and the transitive dimensions - or the relatively unchanging real objects which exist outside of the scientific process and the changing cognitive products of science (Bhaskar 1986, 51) - enables deeper and deeper levels of the strata of reality to become known and reknown (Bhaskar 1986, 92).

So, for Bhaskar, knowledge - and this includes social theory - derives from the power of mind brought to study and research as a social activity. It is dialectically engaged with the intransitive objects that make up reality. As an object of study, the lifeworld is not wholly knowable but can become increasingly transparent because we live in it as knowing beings. The underlying mechanisms that generate, or that are causal to, the social and natural worlds exist at different levels that are not reducible to each other but they may co-exist and interact dialectically (Bhaskar 1986, 101). Bhaskar's stratified paradigm is intended to avoid the pitfall of the epistemic fallacy that '...ontological questions can always be transposed into an epistemological key,...' (Bhaskar 1986, 6). He repudiates this fallacy and its import that knowledge and being are indistinct - the Janus faces of the philosophy of consciousness which '...reduces nature to our cognitive appropriation of it, ...' (Collier 1994, 149). Instead he provides a strata of theoretic and practical models of explanation for research in the sciences (Bhaskar 1986, 68).

Bhaskar's capacity to explain the agent/structure divide is a crucial part of his work; his integrative pluralism '...situates a fuller matrix of possibilities than monism and atomism,...' (Bhaskar 1986, 117). How is this fact of Bhaskar's project helpful to my proposed synthesis? His stratified explanation of the agent/structure problem is without the same sense of dislocation for the agent as either a causative source present in communicative action or the sense of neglect of the intersubjective actor in structuration theory. Central to his capacity to straddle this divide in any material sense in sociology is his notion of the relational interaction of position-practices in the system. But where do we locate the element of critique in this project?

The answers are in Bhaskar's concepts of social scientific enquiry and of explanatory critique (Bhaskar 1986, 5, 56). Social objects '...are internally *complex, pre-interpreted* and *transient*,...' (Bhaskar 1986, 108) and social

sciences are therefore to some measure concrete, hermeneutical and historical. Once social objects are isolated, for instance in social science, then reasons are given to explain, that is, to critique them. If there is adequate ground to suppose that a belief is false and there are grounds for supposing that the source of the belief co-explains that belief, then social science must pass to negatively evaluate the source, all things being equal, and to positively evaluate rational action to remove this negative social source (Bhaskar 1986, 177). Conversely, it can be implied from explanatory critique that the possibility of alienation and anomie and actions to reduce their impact are inherent to a realist view of social activity.

At the heart of Bhaskar's explanatory critique is the notion of unfilled emergent needs. Agents or scientists perceive an injustice, cognitively or unconsciously, and this may lead to the identification of an obstacle and to action for transformation. Unfilled needs are the deeper concrete needs that are due to oppressive experiences, such as apartheid or poverty. Here, acting on the agent's need for a release from a sustained and unwanted condition can only leave the agents better off. This type of critique calls for the change of the structures that bind the agent, and not just readjustment at the cognitive or reform level (Bhaskar 1986, 170-171). Explanatory critique then may exist at personal, collective and societal levels and requires a clear recognition of the underlying, if non-visible, structures. These structures again are deemed to exist by virtue of the activities that attest to their presence. It is important to note that for Bhaskar these structures are not 'necessary', as in indispensable, but may be recognised to be different by different scientists using tools credible within their own disciplines.

In lieu of the assault on subjectivity and neo-positivism in philosophy and social theory, a pivotal insight of the critical naturalism project is Bhaskar's breaching of the long standing scientific premise of the fact/value divide (cf.

Bhaskar 1979, 70-83). Theorists widely concur that values pertain to all scientific activity, but Bhaskar has argued that facts and values are interdependent rather than independent. What I believe about x and what is true about x are in many instances interdependent, all things being equal (Collier 1994, 174). According to Bhaskar, the bridging mechanism for factual and value discourses is their common commitment to truth and consistency (Bhaskar 1979, 81), such as in instances of explanatory critique. In seeking to bridge the fact/value divide Bhaskar looks to ground his transcendental realism in the material (rather than ideal) world or nature. Social activity emerges from this naturalist base. Realism places man in nature and not the inverse.

What is Bhaskar's value to the prospective synthesis?

Bhaskar's project explains the power of the agent as clearly one amongst other equally effective *causal* sources that co-exist within the lifeworld, whereas with Giddens agent power intertwines with that of the system, and with Habermas agent power is *implied* in intersubjective activity. Bhaskar situates agent motivation in individual reasons or belief before unconscious motivation or consensus. Independent reasons generate action 'analogous' to the causal structures of nature and they are empirically knowable (Bhaskar 1979, 106; Collier 1994, 152). They tip the scale in favour of an action which the agent then enacts (Bhaskar 1986, 122, 127) and such enactment is indicative of the agent's freedom. 'The belief may be unconscious, unformulated or tacit, and it may be wrong; but it must be there or we are indeed dealing with purely natural phenomena' (Bhaskar 1986, 163). Further to the merit of 'reasons as cause' - an issue not disputed by Giddens and Habermas - the distinction that Bhaskar makes between belief and action and between belief and belief about beliefs is a crucial and discerning point of departure for the exercise, by

actors/social scientists, of therapeutic practice (Bhaskar 1986, 163-165). Through this latter emerge moments for the construction of identity-self and ethics. It is Bhaskar's strong sense of personal power via reason and/or belief and its indubitable link to therapy and political action that render it suitable for restoring the transformative and healing agent to the late modernity project.

While it is true that Bhaskar, Giddens and Habermas all acknowledge the special capacity of psychology for understanding the interior complexity of the agent, Bhaskar endorses unequivocally the practical and emancipatory impact of the personal or individualised social action. This co-joining of praxis and the underlying social mechanisms of action makes for a platform upon which to realise a model of agency capable of effectively restoring the agent - formerly of the modernity project - as a discerning and causal being. Further to this potential, critical naturalism places scientific value upon the personal narratives of the agents which unfold in the context of what agents do and what happens to them (Bhaskar 1986, 112), in other words, their identity-selves.

There are overtones of dualism in Bhaskar's project both at the level of the solitary-ego and at the level of intransitive realist structures. This lean towards dualism, while re-affirming the difficulty encountered in attempts to transcend the dualism and implicitly threatening to disqualify Bhaskar's transcendental realism as compared to the de-centred subject approaches of Giddens and Habermas, should not be too readily criticised. The projects of Giddens and Habermas have been unable to capture the same clear sense of pragmatic power for the agent or agency that they have courted or implied in their own analysis of late modernity and emancipation. Furthermore, Bhaskar offers a model of a 'causal relational agent' that is mindful of the problem of the dualism and is set in a mould contra to the epistemic fallacy. The agent is one part of an emergent stratified whole rather than an either/or part of social action. 'There is no one Great Divide here, but many divisions

between mutually irreducible strata' (Collier 1994, 242). This stratified approach to agency and the agent in the broader critique of rationality does not dislocate agency or the agent from the lifeworld in preference for a foundational consensus or ontological coherence. Bhaskar's 'social cube' (Bhaskar 1986, 130) explanation of social reality avoids a central conflation-type of concept or theory such as duality of structure (Willmott 1997, 105). Instead it emphasises structure, agency, and socialisation as generative mechanisms. These should be evident from its reproduction in Figure 6.1 below.

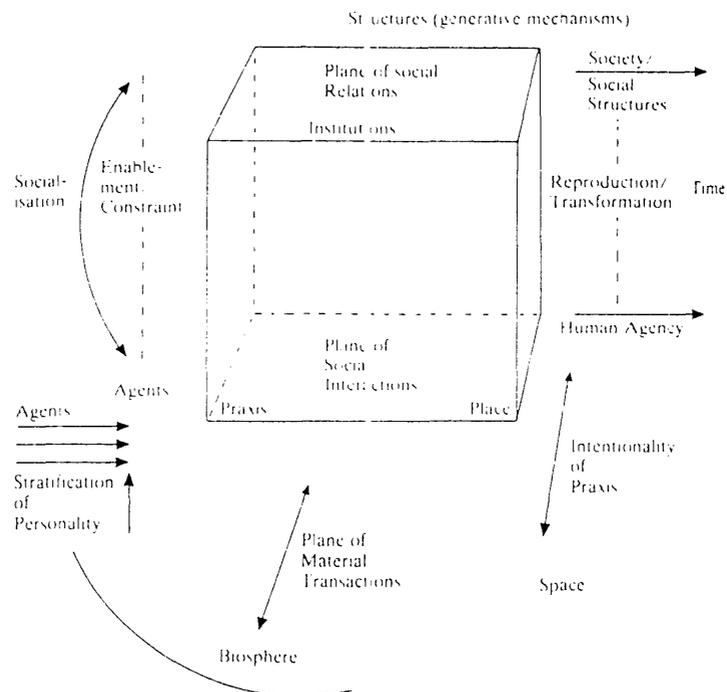


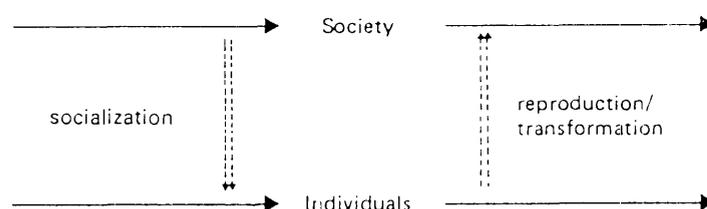
Diagram 2.10: *The Social Cube in a Natural Setting*

Figure 6.1 Bhaskar's social cube explanation of social reality

The key mechanisms here are those of society/social structures and human agency shown on the top right half of the diagram. Human agents (in the plane of social interaction) reproduce and transform social structure while they in turn (in the plane of social relations) enable or constrain agents (socialisation) as shown on the top left of the diagram. The lower half of the diagram identifies the natural setting within which society and agents are inescapably 'earthed'. The plane of material transactions, space and the biosphere impact upon agents and societies in world history.

Bhaskar's transformative model of the person/society is more elementarily reproduced in the quotation below from *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1979, 46). While it hinges on the dual strands of society and individual, the emphasis for their connection to each other or 'filling in' falls to the *individuals who enable reproduction and transformation*. Conversely, society is the source of socialisation or enablement and constraint.

It is important to stress that the reproduction and/or transformation of society, though for the most part unconsciously achieved, is nevertheless still an *achievement*, a skilled accomplishment of active subjects, not a mechanical consequent of antecedent conditions. This model of the society/person connection can be represented as below.



Model IV:
The Transformational Model of the Society/Person Connection

Society, then, provides necessary conditions for intentional human action, and intentional human action is a necessary condition for it. Society is only present in human action, but human action always expresses and utilizes some or other social form. Neither can, however, be identified with, reduced to, explained in terms of or reconstructed from the other (Bhaskar 1979, 46).

It is these capacities of agents for reproduction and transformation that make this model the philosophical precedent for the synthesis and integration of knowledgeability and communicative competence. It is also important to emphasise that Giddens's model of the reflexive monitoring agent is without a precise external and transformative connection to the material world, and that Habermas's model of the reflexive interpretive agent is without a clear intentionality connection to the subjective world. Bhaskar's model of the causal relational agent embraces agents' reasons and society's socialisation (Bhaskar 1979, 45-46).

Nevertheless, like Giddens and Habermas, Bhaskar does not elaborate upon the unfolding of ethics despite the implications for this in his concept of human emancipation (Collier 1994, 182,197). This may be a result of his pre-occupation with emancipation at the deeper level of structures and unfilled needs as opposed to the mere personal needs associated with liberation and choice. His explanatory critique is '...not about whether we may be said to act or choose or believe or know, it is about the structural sources of the options from which we, in our everyday practices, more or less freely, choose' (Bhaskar 1986, 207). However, Bhaskar does argue for the existence of human rights grounded upon the notion of a common human nature - a replica here of Giddens's move towards the notion of universal values - that is historically

specific and enabling of unique individuals. This componentialisation of human nature rests upon moral discourse grounded in philosophical anthropology.

The Transformation Model of Social Activity

The role of this model in Bhaskar's project is to specify '...precisely those properties of the allegedly emergent domain not explicable in terms of different sets of conditions of purely natural laws' (Bhaskar 1986, 117). It is especially relevant to my thesis of the ontologically disconnected agent of the late modernity project because it attempts '...to articulate the formal conditions for substantive object-constitution in the social sciences...' (Bhaskar 1986, 122); because of its grounding upon the agents' capacity for intentionality (Bhaskar 1989, 92); and because of its portrayal of the transformative nature of human agency, social structures and social mechanisms.

Bhaskar's view is that we need to first understand the nature or properties of society and people if we are to have knowledge of them as social entities (Bhaskar 1979, 17): only people make up society, which is the material result of their actions (Bhaskar 1979, 37). This understanding is necessary if scientists are to know the mechanisms that operate to create personal and social life. Rather than focus on agency or structure conceptualisations of people and society, Bhaskar develops a relational conception of society (Bhaskar 1979, 32). The relations that necessitate social phenomena are the cornerstone of any knowledge constructed around society. Sociology is concerned with relations '...between individuals (and groups), and with the relations between these relations (and between such relations and nature and the products of such relations)' (Bhaskar 1979, 36). In this way sociology, as a science, can focus on relation structures that have continuity and through which varieties of agents pass. The task that Bhaskar sets himself then is to discover the strata of

generative mechanisms separately underlying social and personal being and the relations between these. He does this through the transformation model of social activity which is the core of his social ontology (Bhaskar 1986, 125-130; Collier 1994, 141).

Furthermore, as indicated previously, purposive agency and causal social structures create society but each does this differently. Bhaskar is clear about this *analytical* distinction. Because societies are made up of relations and ramifications of relations between people, society is the outcome of human agency. Then, the pre-existing societal contexts determines what actions are possible. Actors' accounts are constrained by unacknowledged conditions, unintended consequences, tacit skills and unconscious motivation (Bhaskar 1986, 126). But there is more to Bhaskar's analytical distinction of agency and society. They possess a dual character, namely, the duality of praxis and the duality of structure. The duality of praxis is both the conscious production by agents, and normally unconscious reproduction of the conditions of production or society. The duality of structure refers to both the ever-present condition and the continually reproduced outcome of human agency (Bhaskar 1989, 92; 1997, 43-44).

These analytical distinctions have a relevance specific to the psychological sciences and the social sciences - you might say therapy and politics. The duality of praxis is action (including consciousness, agency, motive, belief, etcetera) that generates production; as reproduction, action is driven by social mechanisms. The two coincide when people intentionally transform their social structure. (This kind of inner connection through intentionality is not as pointedly available in communicative action, while Giddens's response is to use therapy as a symptom of the pre-eminence of reflexivity in late modernity.) As a rule, the duality of praxis is significant for psychological knowledge. On the other hand, the subject matter of the social sciences is better described by

the duality of structure because these sciences are concerned with mechanisms through which social structure is an outcome of its own condition (Collier 1994, 146). This distinction between the psychological and the social sciences illustrates two distinct strata, two different mechanisms of duality and two networks of relation. '...: people are not relations, societies are not conscious agents' (Collier 1994, 147). It is useful to recall now Bhaskar's insistence upon the need to understand the different nature or properties of people and society if we are to come to know the mechanisms that create personal and social life.

Due to this hiatus between people and society, Bhaskar argues that '...we need a system of mediating concepts, encompassing both aspects of the duality of praxis, designating the "slots", as it were, in the social structure into which active subjects must slip in order to produce it; that is, a system of concepts designating the "point of contact" between human agency and social structures' (Bhaskar 1979, 51). The links between action and structure must be enduring and occupied by individuals; he calls this relational system the position-practice system. For him it is the subject matter of sociology as a social science (Bhaskar 1986, 124). Here, with position-practices, Bhaskar's importance for addressing the dissociation of the agent-structure/system in Giddens's duality of structure, mentioned in Chapter 3 (page 85), should start to become clear.

The transformational model of social activity or TMSA presupposes interest in the relations between position-practices. For Bhaskar though, his use of position-practices as the point of overlap for personal and collective activity is undeveloped and has room for a closer analysis of the mechanisms of interaction and ethics that find expression in the positions, their practices and the identity of agents. Such analysis of relations amongst agents need not be left to the historian or the psychologist (Collier 1994, 150) because ethics has a

formative, if infrequent role, in individual motivation and social formation/transformation. This concern for mechanisms and ethics appears to be much more pressing in late modernity where individuals and communities face the task of constructing life-projects in a lifeworld full of contradictions and competing beliefs.

Emancipation

In Bhaskar's project, emancipation means the replacement of '...an unwanted with a wanted source of determination...' (Bhaskar 1986, 201). Central to understanding emancipation is the concept of emergence. '...a property possessed by an entity at a certain level of organisation may be said to be emergent from some lower level insofar as it is not predictable from the properties found at that level' (Bhaskar 1986, 104). Emergent phenomena require realist explanations which in their turn have emancipatory implications. Bhaskar insists therefore that, in the light of the emergence phenomenon, emancipatory politics and therapeutic practice 'depends upon a realist science' (Bhaskar 1986, 104) and that these practices are dependent upon the social activity of the actors.

So what are Bhaskar's conditions of possibility of emancipatory practices as realist science? Briefly the conditions which must be satisfied are as follows: reasons must be causes; values must be immanent in existing practices; critique must be internal to its objects; there must be a 'coincidence of subjective needs' and 'objective possibilities' at the emancipatory moment; and knowable emergent laws must operate, as fallibly suggested by explanatory theories (Bhaskar 1986, 210-211).

Bhaskar's explanatory critique involves a stratified theory of practical reason. Unlike Habermas, he upholds the idea of epistemic relativism, '...that all beliefs are socially produced, so that knowledge is transient and neither

truth-values nor criteria of rationality exist outside historical time...' (Bhaskar 1986, 72). He identifies several levels of rationality which he uses to show how science can help us answer the existential questions that co-exist with us, namely, '...what to do and say, feel and think' (Bhaskar 1986, 169). Each of these levels can transform existing and ongoing practice because the theory can supplement or contradict some of the ideas implicit in the practice (Collier 1994, 190).

Level 1. *Technical Rationality*. This means-to-ends form of practical rationality is used in positivistic science (Bhaskar 1986, 181). If such human sciences provide an explicit account of implied human purposes, then technical rationality is transformed into assertoric perspectives. In this way needs become unearthed which militate for the removal of obstacles.

Level 2. *Contextually-Situated Instrumental Rationality*. Explanatory rationality increases the range of real rather than utopian possibilities. This empowers the oppressed or the oppressors in a particular context. 'The human sciences are not neutral in their consequences in a non-neutral (unjust, asymmetrical) world' (Bhaskar 1986, 182).

Level 3. *Intra-Discursive Critical or Practical Rationality*. This rationality implies criticism of incompatible theories and the practices derived from them. The mere existence of a theory implies criticism of its rivals (Bhaskar 1986, 183).

Level 4. *Explanatory Critical Rationality*. This is critical and emancipatory in that it exposes defective and unfilled being. It does not specify any form of action; it rather '...focuses on action which "frees" us to act' (Bhaskar 1986, 185). To this end, the critical role of the human sciences is to identify, describe and explain the 'ideas' in human history (Bhaskar 1986, 193).

Level 5. *Depth-Explanatory Critical Rationality*. This refers to Marx's account

of ideology that rationalises a particular consciousness that is purported to reflect the social reality of capitalism.

Level 6. *Depth-Rationality*. This is a '...co-operative enquiry, which includes the frustrated agent(s) concerned, into the structure of some presumed set of mechanisms, constituting for that agent an unwanted source of determination, with a view to initiating, preserving or restoring the agent's wellbeing, including her capacity to think, speak, feel and act rationally' (Bhaskar 1986, 202). It is open ended with possibilities of discovery or disillusionment. It accommodates psychoanalysis and external circumstances that might cause frustration.

Level 7. *Historical Rationality*. This concerns questions about the unactualised powers and transformative tendencies that may generate, in the context of some theory, the possibility for human action (Bhaskar 1986, 209-210).

Bhaskar intends these seven levels of rationality as the means for identifying social practices without overlooking how the individuated instances are interlaced; in this latter he is distinctly more sympathetic to the agent or agency than is Habermas. The case for the individuated instances is that 'agents' own accounting procedures' can be utilised (Bhaskar 1986, 154). The situation for the more general instances is less clear, so Bhaskar reinforces the view that the hierarchy he provides is only a framework for '...empirically-controlled *investigation* of the patterns of coherence which emerge within human history' (Bhaskar 1986, 158). The TMSA implies that there is no general a-historical theory of relations amongst the strata of the social totality - and here he is in stark contrast to Habermas's discourse ethic. Nevertheless, the TMSA seeks to maximise explanations of power, mindful of its own subjection to error and revision by the social practices in the lifeworld.

Further to this concern with emancipation, the primacy of practice holds in each of the levels. I use this idea of the integration of practice and critique in

Bhaskar as well, in order to explore the synthesis of autonomous agency from structuration theory with interpretation and interaction from the theory of communicative action. While these latter two theories seek to revive the modernity project, I have argued that their attempts have difficulty in providing an integrated and substantive theory of the causal nature of the agent of 'late' modernity. This is largely a consequence of the paradigm shifts that both have made in response to the critique of the philosophy of consciousness.

How is critical naturalism a resource for a new synthesis?

From the alignment of Giddens, Habermas and Bhaskar that follows, the suitability of Bhaskar's philosophy and model of agency for acting as the philosophical resource for my thesis of the 'reflexive causal agent' should become visible. His project is particularly crucial in that it lends strength *in material and transformative terms* to the notion of a causal and autonomous agent once familiar to the modernity project.

Three models of agency

The reader should be aware that these figures and diagrams extend over two pages and that they have appeared separately, and been briefly explained, earlier in this discussion. They are followed here by a re-iteration of their differences, similarities and developments (highlighted as * points).

Giddens

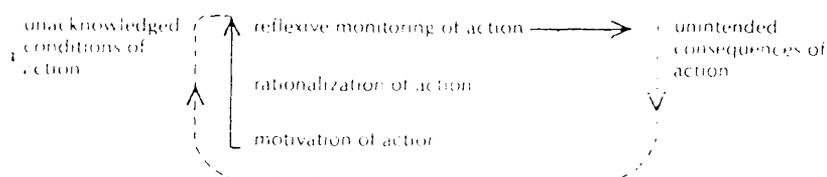
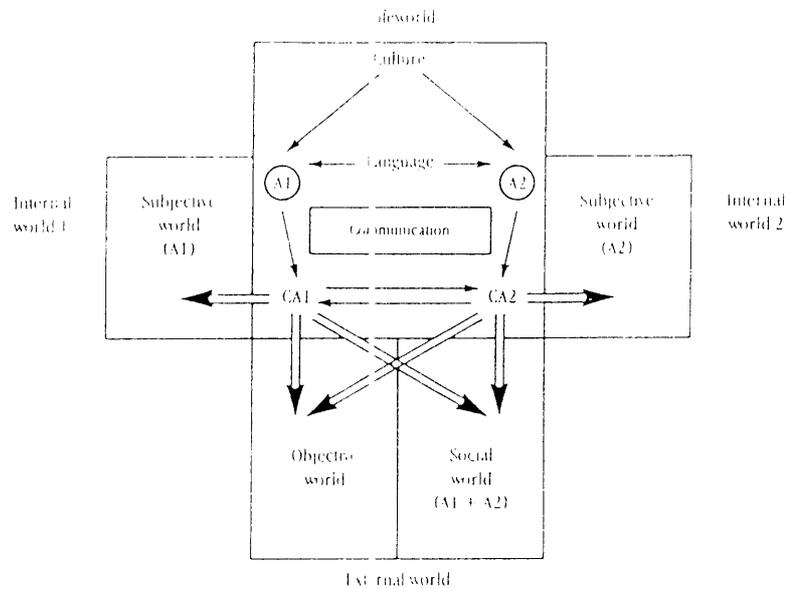


Figure 1

Habermas



The double arrows indicate the world relations if factors (A) establish with their utterances (CA).

Figure 20 World-Relations of Communicative Acts (CA)

Bhaskar

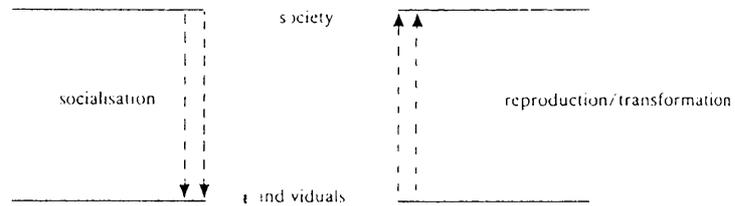


Diagram 2.5

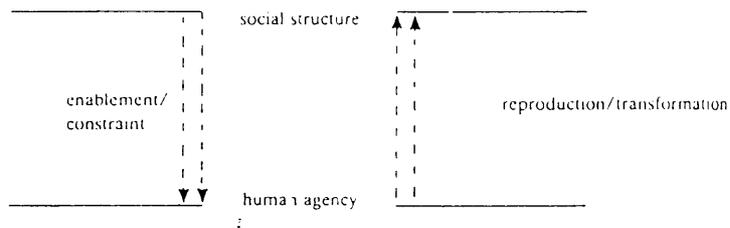
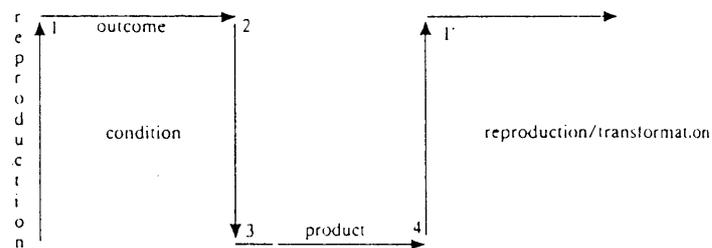


Diagram 2.6



N.B.: 1, 1' = unintended consequences
 2 = unacknowledged conditions [properties of practices]
 3 = unconscious motivation
 4 = tacit skills [properties of agents]

Diagram 2.7: The Transformational Model of Social Activity

Figure 6.2 The alignment of Giddens/Habermas/Bhaskar on models of agency

* The centre of social action for Giddens is the agent and any sense of the causal mechanism is avoided. At the centre of Habermas's social action is language, and the subjective, autonomous world of the agent is overshadowed. For Bhaskar, the individual and society are at the centre but responsibility for the transformation and reproduction of society rests upon individual agents.

* Bhaskar's emphasis on the pre-existence of social forms is greater than Giddens's (Bhaskar 1983, 85). Because society pre-dates the individual, it is able to socialise the agents via its institutions and forms. Nature too is part of this relation. My position is that Bhaskar's transformation model of social activity provides real concepts for mechanisms and can be used to integrate concepts from structuration theory and communicative action into a more definitive late modern conceptualisation of the processes of agency and emancipation.

* Affirming Bhaskar's conduciveness with the others is the fact that his project shares key concepts with Giddens (Bhaskar 1989, 94) and complements Habermas on the issue of constructing '...symbolic universes under material and cultural conditions' (Dandeker 1983, 201-205). For instance, as shown earlier in Bhaskar's Diagram 2.7 (Figure 6.2, page 173), he shares Giddens's concepts of unintended consequences, unacknowledged conditions, unconscious motivation and tacit skills and expands upon these later to include a theorisation of the contact from unconscious motivation to an agents' praxis in Diagram 2.8 or Figure 6.3.

(Please turn over)

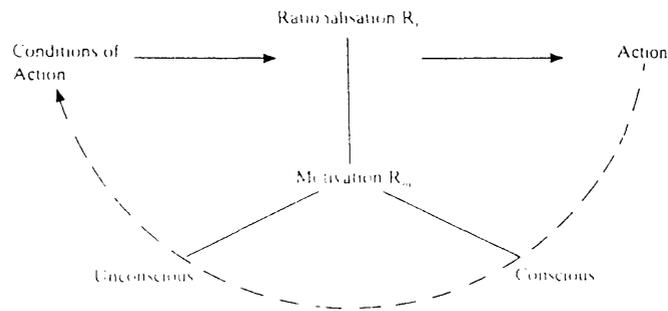


Diagram 2.8: *The Stratification of Action*

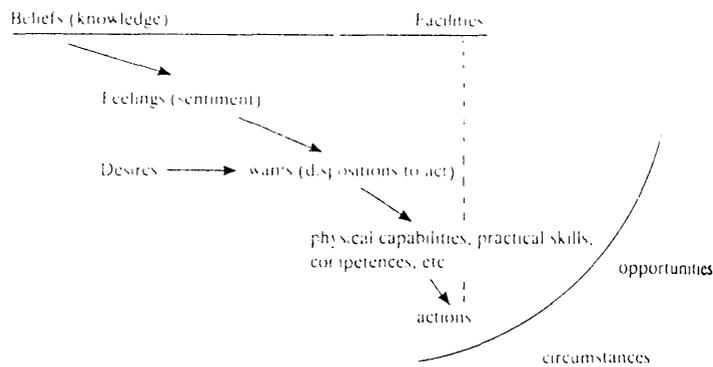


Diagram 2.9: *Beliefs, Wants, Abilities and Action*

Figure 6.3 Bhaskar's exploration of the stratification of action

The connection from the unconscious is made through 'real' or possible reasons which are the wants that prompt action. Such efficacious reasons may be conscious or unconscious beliefs (Bhaskar 1986, 127) trained on objects of desire and composing a cognitive-conative-affective vector. What is produced from these beliefs is expressed as *sentiment* (Diagram 2.9) manifested through physical capabilities or practical skills.

* With this transition from reasons-to-sentiment, Bhaskar has a parallel with Habermas's notion of aesthetic-expressiveness. Habermas's notion and its preferred status in K-C theory will be fleshed out in Chapter 7. Conversely, Bhaskar's project is open to support from Habermas. While Bhaskar makes the conceptual connection between knowing and emancipation, Habermas's critical theory also generates a model of a free society along with procedures by which it can be upheld, features not endemic to Bhaskar's project (Dandeker 1982, 203).

* Then, in *Dialectic* (1993), Bhaskar expands upon his Diagram 2.8 and 2.9 (1993, 165-166) - they now become Figures 2.28 and 2.29 - where he builds other steps onto them. See Figure 6.4 below for 2.99.

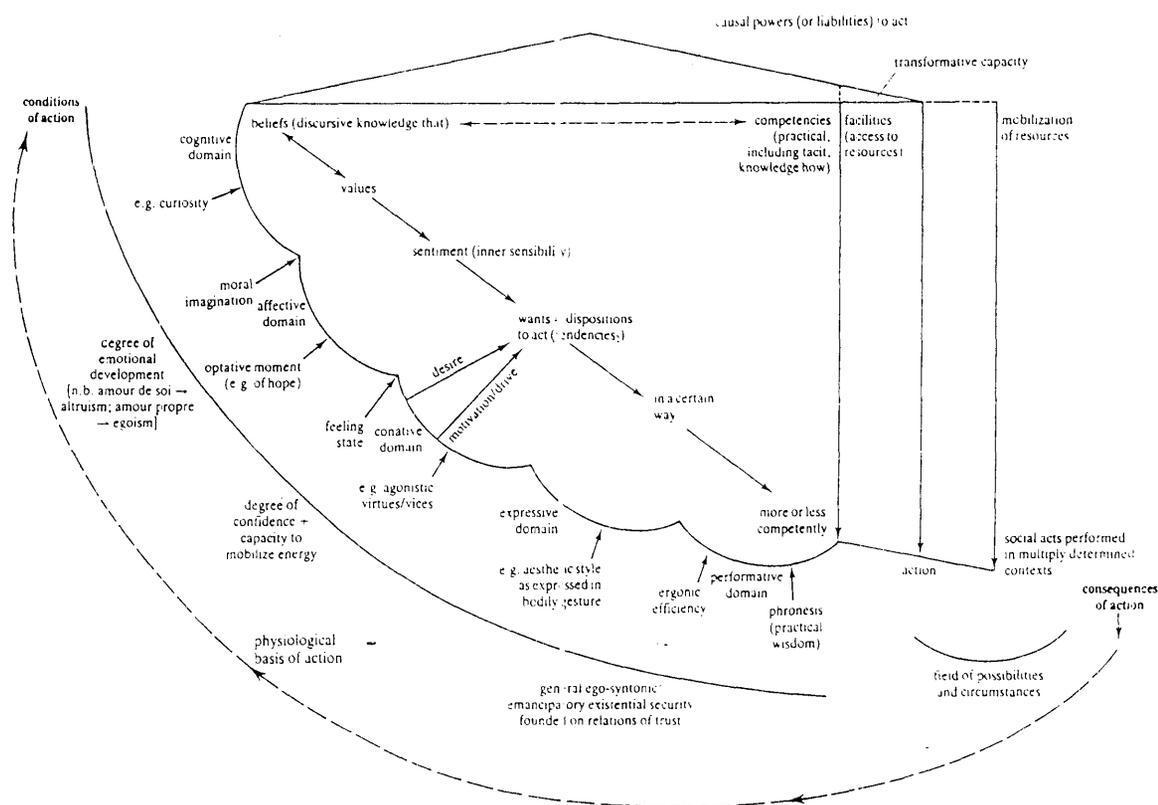


Figure 2.29 The Components of Action

Figure 6.4 Bhaskar's components of action

His Figure 2.29 is reproduced here solely for its own detail. It should suffice to say that it affirms his ongoing and deepening exploration of the components or 'springs' of action (1993, 164), such as beliefs, wants, feelings etc.

* Before his excursion into the deeper levels of reflexive agency, Bhaskar uses structuration concepts to focus on the cognitive limits of agents. Before emancipation can occur, social and psychological sciences must identify the opaque structures behind the unintended consequences and unacknowledged conditions that limit agent-understandings of the social world. These sciences can also identify the hidden motives and unrecognised powers behind the unacknowledged motivations and tacit skills that limit agent-understanding of the self.

* The focus by Bhaskar on the cognitive limits of agents' reasons, reflexive agency and the ecology in his social cube model in Diagram 2.10 or Figure 6.1 (page 163) enhances the potential for restoration of the healing agent or agency of earlier modernity. This is because it puts into relief the connection between generative mechanisms, such as, structures, social relations, human agency and praxis. He himself is not so clearly set in this restorative direction but Giddens and Habermas are.

Bhaskar's use of diagrams to engage the internal-external workings of agency enables sociologists to deduce other hypotheses or consequences and to look for indirect evidences. But more importantly they also open the way for my own figures and hypotheses later. Unlike Bhaskar, my engagement with Giddens leads out from his definition of the nature of agents towards the mechanisms of interaction - where Habermas's communicative action becomes an important adjunct.

The way should now be reasonably open to explore conceptually how the autonomous agent can participate in the renewal of the personal and societal uncertainties that characterise contemporary life and still be framed within a

sociological model mindful of the deeper critique of the philosophy of consciousness. But prudence requires that some of the pitfalls of realism be reasserted and assessed before proceeding.

Collier criticises Bhaskar for throwing out the idea of 'the correspondence theory of truth' which ought to be retained in a realist approach (1994, 239). This is because Bhaskar concedes too much to relativism, that is, denying that one scientific theory can be rationally preferred to another on the grounds of its relation to reality. In Collier's sense, a 'correspondence theory of truth' provides a definition of truth but is not a criterion of truth: it is also not a resemblance theory or a truth statement which resembles what it is about (1994, 240). Collier's contrary view is that despite Bhaskar's claim to reject the correspondence theory of truth, his argument to this effect is not clear. Neither does he demonstrate that realism 'entails' the rejection of correspondence theory (1994, 240-241). Collier cites examples in everyday life where simple sentences like 'this place is just as it was described' are comparisons that need the word 'correspondence' rather than resemblance.

A further difficulty with realism is associated with the reliance by the social sciences upon human 'ideas' for their ongoing genesis as opposed to the reliance by the natural sciences on the experiment. This dependence is due to the nature of societies as open systems, multi-layered and incapable of natural or artificial closure that makes experiments tenable. It follows from this that '...the human sciences cannot be predictive and so must be exclusively explanatory' (Bhaskar 1983, 84) and that '...our capacity to correct, revise and add to the knowledge derived from agents' conceptions is immeasurably more advanced in those sciences where experiments are possible' (Collier 1994, 248). In social science we are therefore more likely to get things wrong and much less likely to correct them. But Bhaskar does not see that the inability of the social sciences to isolate and test a single mechanism as any need for too much

worry. For they can find partial analogues to experiment and compensators for its absence (Collier 1994, 162).

These two criticisms do cast doubt upon the capacity of Bhaskar's realism to connect knowledge of social events (or the concrete) to the actual abstract mechanism and structures (or intransitive objects) that cause them. Layder argues also that '...', the situated character of social activity is accorded no particular importance in [Bhaskar's] schema (1990, 131). These criticisms do not, however, deny that Bhaskar's stratified levels of rationality have the capacity in social science to expose ideological illusions, unconscious motivations and so on (Collier 1994, 248), and that they have the power to abstract and to analyse the underlying mechanisms that may impact upon the concrete. The latter instances especially have credibility when the individual concrete instances are subjected to depth-analysis (Collier 1994, 257) of the sort that is identified with therapy. In the political sense, the causes of oppression and the conditions of emancipation can still be announced (Collier 194, 260), and the mechanism, underpinning day-to-day living can still be sought out with the aid of a realist model of the agent or agency. To the question of how concrete experience and events can be connected to underlying mechanisms, the new synthesis proposes to make this connection through identity-self processes and the central role of ethical judgements in designing a life narrative and institutional project.