Contributions to realist social theory: An interview with Margaret S. Archer[1]

Margaret S. Archer and Jamie Morgan

Abstract: In this wide-ranging interview Professor Margaret Archer discusses a variety of aspects of her work, academic career and influences, beginning with the role the study of education systems played in the development of the morphostatic/morphogenetic (M/M) framework, moving on to the trilogy of works which set out her 'SAC', and concluding with discussion of her most recent two projects: the scope for a Morphogenic Society and more recent speculative prospects for personhood in the context of society's growing interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI), transhumanism and posthumanism.

Professor Margaret Archer is one of the outstanding sociologists of the last 50 years and one of the founding social theorists, philosophers and methodologists responsible for the development of Critical Realism. Her work covers many strands of realist social theory beginning with important conceptual developments regarding the structure-agent problem, related work on analytical dualism, structure, agency and culture (SAC), and what has become known as the morphostatic/morphogenetic (M/M) approach (Archer 1979, 1988, 1995). Her work has provided influential resources for critique of post-structuralist and postmodernist thought, and amongst other things (see also Donati and Archer 2015; Archer and Tritter 2000) she has drawn important attention to the nature of human personhood and reflexivity for any adequate account of social reality (Archer 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2012). Her most recent work explores the scope and significance of societies experiencing potentially rapid social change (Archer 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017) and the difference that new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) might make (Al-Amoudi and Morgan 2019; Al-Amoudi and Lazega 2019; Carrigan et al 2020; Morgan 2019).

Professor Archer began her academic career as a lecturer at the University of Reading in 1966, where she worked until 1973, but has spent much of her academic life as Professor of Sociology at University of Warwick. In 2010 she transferred to Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) where she headed the project 'From Modernity to Morphogenesis', before returning to Warwick in 2016, where she is now Emeritus. She studied at the University of London, graduating B.Sc.(Econ) in 1964 and Ph.D. in 1967 with a thesis titled The Educational Aspirations of English Working Class Parents. In 1968 she spent time at the Sorbonne as a post-doctorate, working for a time with Pierre Bourdieu's research team. She then worked on the national structuring of education through much of the 1970s (Archer 1979). This work provided the grounding for what was to become the M/M approach. It was also in the late 1970s and early 1980s that she came across the work of Roy Bhaskar and became part of the nascent organization of like-minded realists (see Archer et al 1998; Archer and Outhwaite 2004). She is the founding Director of the Centre for Social Ontology (currently hosted by Grenoble University), a trustee of the Centre for Critical Realism and a founding member of the International Association for Critical Realism (IACR). At the 12th World Congress of Sociology, she was elected as the first woman President of the International Sociological Association. She is Catholic and unusual (though not unique) amongst social scientists in not just advocating but combining realist and religious stances (see Archer et al 2004; Hartwig and Morgan 2014; Morgan 2015). She is a founder member of both the

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[1]Professor Jamie Morgan, Leeds Beckett University, j.a.morgan@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and the Academy of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences. She served as President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (PASS) 2014-2019. She has been awarded numerous honours and positions and is currently Honorary Professor, University College, London, Visiting Professor, Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, Visiting Professor, Universidad de Navarra – ICS, Pamplona, and Visiting Professor, Uniwersytet Kardynala Stefana Wyszynkiego, Warsaw.[2]

The following interview with Professor Archer was conducted by Professor Jamie Morgan for *Journal of Critical Realism*.

Jamie Morgan (JM): Your work requires no introduction for those familiar with Critical Realism, so it is in some ways difficult to know how to begin. Perhaps you might comment on how your M/M approach evolved from your work on education and why this was an important methodological innovation that clarified and developed some of the key ideas that Critical Realism had begun to develop?

Margaret Archer (MSA): Personal and collective biographies – including their contingent elements – help shape our theoretical starting blocks. What kick-started my long haul in developing the Morphogenetic Approach was my time as a post-doc in Paris as a crucial experience of confronting an educational system that both structurally and culturally *differed* from that of England, as encountered in London and Cambridge. Unless social theorizing resonates with our everyday lives in society in some respect, it simply performs abstract arabesques and the social sciences are not art forms. Certainly, there is no 'news from nowhere' and equally surely none of us has unerring discursive penetration of our own 'somewhere'. Nevertheless, this connection grounds us in some aspect of social reality that *intrigues* us, precisely because we do not (fully) understand it: we know something about what we don't know but deem important.

JM: Yes, it is a curious facet of an academic's life that we typically conform to the ideational framing of our profession – knowledge seeking, but pay little attention to the serendipity of our lives that provide the context; our personal place in a sociology of knowledge that stands behind the distinction between the context of discovery and the context of justification. Your formative 'somewhere' seems in many ways to have been extraordinary. In cultural histories of the twentieth century, events in and around key higher education centres in London and Paris loom large – not least in 1968. Would you say the political ferment intrigued you?

MSA: Yes, of course it did. But mainly it intrigued me because of the political processes of containment, the real threat of the Vth Republic falling; the 'promises' of concessions made to diffuse *les événements* and how these were then clawed back by the government to nullify the increases in autonomy temporarily (or seemingly so) granted to institutions of higher education.

JM: But it was your observation of the cultural and structural differences in education systems that was most influential – a source of intrigue…

MSA: I was immediately intrigued by lacunae; but just as intriguing was that no-one else seemed to be. Some of the lacunae were radical: *why* did State Educational Systems (SES) come about; *how* to explain their differences in terms of institutional content and consequences; *what* maintained their structural and cultural distinctiveness? These questions were ignored by both the leading sociologists of education on the two sides of the channel; Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu. Each had been very kind towards me so I hesitated to be

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[2] For information on and access to Archer's work and related activity visit:
http://www.pass.va/content/scienzesociali/en/academicians/ordinary/archer.html
https://socialontology.org
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Archer

critical until I had consolidated my answers to the above questions in what was the origin of the Morphogenetic Approach, *Social Origins of Educational Systems* (1979), now known familiarly as the M/M framework. Both Bernstein and Bourdieu, for all their insights, had universalized their theorizing as if the systemic contexts from which they had originated (and to which they applied) were irrelevant and could (unintentionally) take the form of some common bland background, like magnolia paintwork.

JM: So, something seemed to be missing from their work?

MSA: Yes, something was neglected. Both theories were reliant upon osmosis whereas what was missing was a 'generative mechanism' or, in those days prior to Critical Realism, a solution to 'the Structure-Agency Problem' (as if Culture was irrelevant). However, neglect also requires explanation and in both their cases could be distilled into three propositions:

1. The penetrability of educational institutions (to 'class codes' and 'cultural arbitraries' respectively);
2. The complementarity between education and social stratification;
3. The consequent homogenization of national or State Educational Systems (SES).

The effect of 1. was to eliminate the *differential* penetrability of different structures of SES and their components, in favour of accentuating educational adaptation to general social change, thus explaining the absence of educational politics in both theories. The effect of 2. was to stress functional similarities at the expense of structural differences, thus highlighting universal not variable processes of change. The effect of 3. was to result in the homogenization of macroscopic State Educational Systems.

JM: So, it struck you that their approaches, rather than explore structural difference, tended to work on the basis of complementarities and functional similarities in relational to universal rather than variable processes of change?

MSA: Yes, and I summarise this, for example, in 'Process without system' (Archer 1983):

Theories making education systems unimportant:
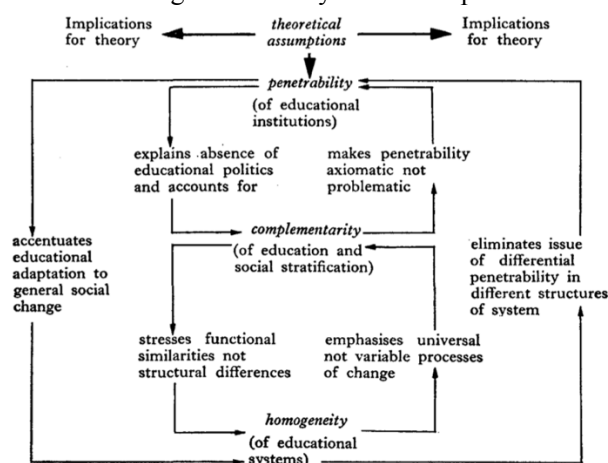
Archer (1983: 219)

JM: And you started to think in terms of generative mechanisms and solutions to a structure-agent problem?

MSA: At that time (the early 1970s), my main resort was to educational historians (such as Antoine Prost in France and Brian Simon in England) and their recognition of the ubiquity of educational power struggles, vested interests and increasingly articulate grievances – before, during and after the formation of the two country's SESs. Just as important was their acknowledgement that parties (mainly the Churches) which previously enjoyed control through their ownership of educational property and provision of teaching personnel may have lost out in the struggles but still battled on and stayed in the educational game. Increasingly I came to see in the later 1970s that both change and relative stability in education and the definition of instruction were matters of *relational contestation* – a view I have held to for institutional change ever since.

JM: More broadly though you had started to think in terms of the methodological component that sociology might adopt in order to have some adequate sense of both the universal and particular, of continuity and change?

MSA: Yes, I realised that specific accounts are required to explain *how* particular parts of the social order originated and came to stand in a given relationship to one another. It was important to ask, *whose* actions were responsible for this, through *which* interactions, *when* and *where* and with *what* consequences? In all of this, the practising sociologist has to know a great deal about the historical origins and current operations of 'x'.

JM: So, you were thinking about issues that would eventually lead to a methodology to complement the philosophical contribution realism was to offer?

MSA: Yes, but not fully appreciating this. Practitioners may feel drawn towards realism but, even with its generous under-labouring, realist philosophy of science cannot give them guidelines about how to examine the questions previously stated. This is what the 'morphogenetic approach' seeks to provide. It is an *explanatory framework*, which complements the realist philosophy of science and furnishes specialised practitioners with guidelines for explaining the problems they have in hand. Far from making such specialists (in the sociology of health, education, migration etc.) redundant, it is they alone who are qualified to *specify* the relevant parts, relationships and mechanisms pertinent to problems in their areas of expertise. What the *explanatory framework* offers are guidelines for *how* to undertake morphogenetic and morphostatic analysis, whatever the problem may be. This explanatory framework is dependent upon the philosophical ontological under-labouring of Critical Realism but adds the specificity about its practical application in given research projects. That is why I have no objection to the M/M framework being considered to be part of methodology – in fact it straddles 'theory and methods'.

JM: In retrospect, this has been an extremely important contribution, since one of the main criticisms often directed at philosophy and social theory in and for sociology and other social science disciplines is that it does not lead to or tends to substitute for practical research. Your work highlights that the two are intertwined and formally integrates them. The criticism, of course, persists but one of the reasons it is ill-founded is because of your work (and perhaps because of that of Andrew Sayer's *Method in Social Science* (Sayer 2010)*,* and perhaps in a different tradition, the mid-range theory strategy of Realist Evaluation). In general, your work has added to the diversity and nuance of the conceptual components of realism: notably temporality, culture, and the dynamics of reflexivity and the nature of personhood. Arguably, all of these strands start from your early methodological innovation, at least in so far as you start to think in terms of conceptual distinctions that are or are intended to be simultaneously philosophically adequate and empirically grounded, and this provides a sociological dynamic to the process of philosophical questioning that someone like Bhaskar had begun to use to great effect (Bhaskar 1979 [2008], 2014): transcendental question forms, immanent critique and the traditional philosophical toolkit of parsing. Bhaskar's work makes the case that reality is corrigible. However, Bhaskar's approach tends to invite emulation of form (other treatise in branches of social theory that make the

case *for* realism – under-labouring – rather than encourage the doing of realistic research). Would you agree that your work shifted the emphasis and offered new complementary opportunities, making new demands insofar as it provided, as you say, an 'explanatory framework'? By this I mean that your work shifts the emphasis from emulation to application and it strikes me that this is intrinsic to the way you think about *active* distinctions – and this begins from your explicit focus on temporality.

MSA: To begin to answer that and continuing from your original question regarding the origins of my way of approaching these issues in my early work on education, think about a characterization of the M/M as dealing with the 'problem of structure and agency' alone (this, of course, is inadequate, since stripped of culture). Because all structural properties found in any society are continuously activity-dependent, it is possible through analytical dualism to separate 'structure' and 'agency' and to examine their *interplay* in order to account for the structuring and re-structuring of social institutions such as education. Fundamentally, this is possible for two reasons. First, 'structure' and 'agency' are *different kinds of emergent entities,*[3] as is shown by the differences in their properties and powers, *despite* the fact that they are crucial for each other's formation, continuation and development. Thus, an educational system can be 'centralised', whilst a person cannot, and humans are 'reflexive', which cannot be the case for structures. Second, and fundamental to the workability of the M/M explanatory methodology, 'structure' and 'agency' operate *diachronically* over different time periods because:

1. Structure necessarily pre-dates the action(s) that transform it and,
2. Structural elaboration necessarily post-dates those actions.

Crucially, significance is accorded to the timescale through which structure and agency themselves *emerge, intertwine and redefine* one another, since this is the bedrock of the explanatory format employed in accounting for any substantive change in social structure. This is represented in the following temporal sequence of phases: {Structural Conditioning →Social Interaction → Structural Elaboration}. M/M is quintessentially temporal, and whilst the notion that temporality is important might seem obvious or trivial, failure to adequately incorporate temporality is a serious problem in social theory and applications.

JM: And in your work, you break up temporal sequences into T^1 to T^4?

MSA: Yes. I put this best in *Realist Social Theory* (for example, Archer 1995: Chapter 5) where I argue that 'temporality is not an option but a necessity', there is a flow to time, a historicity to reality, but also analytical value in breaking this into phases. Briefly, T^1 to T^4 refers to three temporal sequences of phases. Each phase is accompanied by a term which clarifies its key aspect (existent conditioning, interaction, elaboration) and I have summarised this in diagrammatic form many times:

The Basic Morphogenetic Diagram:

Structural Conditioning
_____
T1

Social Interaction
_____
T2   T3

Structural Elaboration
_____
T4
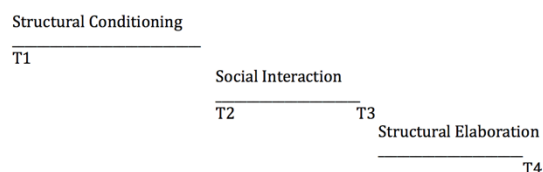
Analytical Dualism because project all lines forwards and backwards and they join up: we have analytically broken the flow

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[3] 'People and society […] do not constitute two moments of the same process. Rather they refer to radically different things.' (Bhaskar, 1989: 76).

To be clear, the sophisticated insight brought to these phases by the researcher (recalling I have already stressed how vital the expertise of the researcher is to adequate realist work) is important to how valuable the approach is as a working tool that takes temporality seriously.

JM: A point worth stressing since there is always a danger in trying to summarise your own extensively argued and justified work. The M/M, like many other practically directed endeavours in the social sciences seems ostensibly vulnerable to criticism that it is simplistic rather than merely simple or that it might be 'mechanistic' in some pejorative sense. This, however, seems to say a lot more about the tribal side of social science and how careers can be made through unsympathetic and selective approaches to critique. However, reference to your book *Realist Social Theory* raises a different issue regarding time: the chronology of events. The M/M is a key methodological innovation for Critical Realism but seems to have been a long time in gestation. It seems you were prompted to make this transition to methodology and temporal sequencing through historical study of education systems. As such, this predates Bhaskar's later Transformational Model of Social Action (TMSA), though your books *Culture and Agency* and *Realist Social Theory* come later?[4]

MSA: Yes, it was earlier than the TMSA, which is only a sketch not a working model.

JM: This, of course, raises issues regarding mutual influence and the nature of intellectual biography.

MSA: Many commentators on my works have felt free to invent and publish an intellectual biography for me, and here I have the opportunity to repudiate these! In brief it regularly goes; 'After she met Roy Bhaskar'... Well that covers anything they want it to cover – including female subordination and male domination, to which neither of us was in the least inclined.

What is a more significant fact is that Roy and I did not meet until the mid-eighties and I was not part of the original 'Battersea group'. Clearly, 1979 was an important year for the publication of my book on SES and Roy's on *The Possibility of Naturalism*, which included the TMSA.[5] It was also the year Anthony Giddens' *Central Problems* appeared and retrospectively that was a notable event for me. But the temptation to re-write the personal histories of others must be resisted. It was only much later in Roy's *Dialectic* (Bhaskar 1993: 154, 160) that I was formally thanked for saving him from the 'duality of structure'! Good friendship, excellent dinners and even better exchanges continued until his death. We saw one another as co-workers and I was amazed when I copy-edited his posthumous volume *Enlightened Common Sense* (Bhaskar 2016), which Mervyn Hartwig provided the preface for, how attentively he had read my books. This says a lot about Roy: as a self-designated under-labourer he always saw Critical Realism as a developing project and welcomed all our contributions in different parts of the social sciences as productive divisions of labour on the ground he had philosophically prepared.

JM: What would you suggest that the M/M approach adds?

MSA: What M/M adds are the important implications of the fact that every current emergent structural property does have a history and an important part of giving a complete causal account of that property is to explain where it came from diachronically and not simply how it works synchronically.

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[4] Note from Jamie: and there is extensive discussion of how M/M and T^1 to T^4 make sense in terms of the TMSA in *Realist Social Theory*.
[5] Note from Jamie: Bhaskar's *Realist Theory of Science* (RTS) and his *The Possibility of Naturalism* (PON) are now published by Routledge, but RTS was originally published by Leeds Books and has a copyright date of 1975, whilst PON was first published by the Harvester Press in 1979.

If we return to the example of education, since that is where my thinking on this began, the English and French educational systems as I encountered them in the mid-1960ies were made up of the same components – schools, universities, teachers, students, texts etc. – but the organisation of these parts represented 'decentralisation' in the former and 'centralisation' in the latter. 'Centralisation' and 'decentralisation' were not mere labels but ways of summarising how the organisation of these two kinds of system generated distinctive constraints and enablements as well as different processes of change (facilitating 'internal initiation' by teachers and 'external transactions' by outside parties in England, whilst constraining most educational change in France to be centrally and 'politically negotiated'). Equally, vested interests in reproduction versus transformation were differently distributed to the elites of other institutions because of the high level of educational standardisation in France, compared with the much greater differentiation of English education. Finally, the patterns of change were (then) 'incremental' in England, but governed by legislative 'stop-go' in France and punctuated by outbursts of direct action.

If we think of this in terms of methodology, of how research is put together, our thinking, though generally not our writing, begins at T^4. The fundamental question is often 'Why this difference?' – accompanied by its subsidiaries: Which interest groups were responsible? What interactions brought it about? When did matters become this way? To answer questions like these, I suggest that *in practice* the social theorist generally moves *backwards* to the $T^2 - T^3$ period, in quest of answers that take the form of 'Who did what, with or against whom?'.

The M/M approach directs us to think systematically about what occurs in time. Notably, it maintains that complete explanations require the *structural contextualisation* of the interaction initiated at T^2. In short, it is necessary to broaden the temporal frame and return to the state of affairs at T^1. In my early work that was in and for education, this further backtracking alone yields the source of motives, of *positions prises, that is the source of vested interests*, of ideological commitments, of strategies adopted but, above all, of precisely what was wanted (and, often more importantly, not wanted) sufficiently to motivate agents to engage in interaction. None of that can be understood without introducing the prior structural context that *conditioned* interaction between T^1 and T^2.

JM: So, what you were doing was setting out a sequence of change and exploring the interactions in order to consider causes, types and degrees of change – and whether the consequence could be described as morphostatic or morphogenic? T^4 becomes a pivot?

MSA: It occurred to me that at any given T^4 something radical happens, not only to structure but also to agency. In cases of macroscopic change this affects the 'people' through transforming four 'parts' or levels of the social order: the systemic, the institutional, the role array and the positional (the life-chances of different sections of the population). This is the 'double morphogenesis' in which agency is itself transformed, through 're-grouping' in the transformation of structure that they bring about. T^4 thus becomes the new T^1 of the next M/M cycle.

JM: The emphasis you place on the scope for 'double morphogenesis' is often overlooked by commentators when drawing inferences about cycles. However, the focus on cycles seems analytically extremely useful, in so far as it provides a way to think constructively about processes in time – the overall characterisation of phases as morphostatic or morphogenic (the M/M). You stated earlier that your work on education inspired you to think about '*how* particular parts of the social order originated and came to stand in a given relationship to one another.' It strikes me that being 'intrigued' by the comparative difference in processes at play in education was a context conducive to making broader connections that clarify important issues relevant across the social sciences. I am thinking here about the characteristics of systems and how we make sense of different varieties of causation (upward, downward, Aristotelian etc.). Overall, your work seems to be a form of social theory that

directs researchers to place everything in context and to seek to make sense of the multifaceted complexity of continuity and change for any given focus; but in so doing it necessarily requires a broader understanding of the development or evolution of systems. It is important to be aware of whether systems are and are becoming more or less integrated and what that might mean, since this has significant consequences as causal processes unfold – something that becomes clearer the more emphasis one places on temporality. Would you say this is crucial to the insight offered by your work?

MSA: It is crucial in many ways. For example, the relationship between System Integration and Social Integration (as David Lockwood advanced it in 1964, see Archer 1996) can make all the difference: their mal-integration is conducive to social transformation, thus distinguishing it from intense social antagonism alone. Social antagonism has no necessary consequences for systemic change since it lacks any mechanism inducing upwards causation. Making sense of causation is important, and yes, looking at education systems was conducive to making broader connections and to developing a more generally relevant social theory later. Consider the T^4 emergence of an educational system. One of its immediate effects is to exercise downward causation by re-dividing the population, not necessarily exhaustively, into those with vested interests in educational maintenance and change respectively. This will be according to the situations in which they now find themselves – involuntarily for the majority of people. Clearly, interests matter and to characterise an interest as a 'vested' one is to associate it with a particular position, the implication being that if positions (roles, institutions) change, then so do interests.[6] So, once you start to explore the complexity involved then you are necessarily led to think about the conceptual distinctions that need to be made to do this effectively.
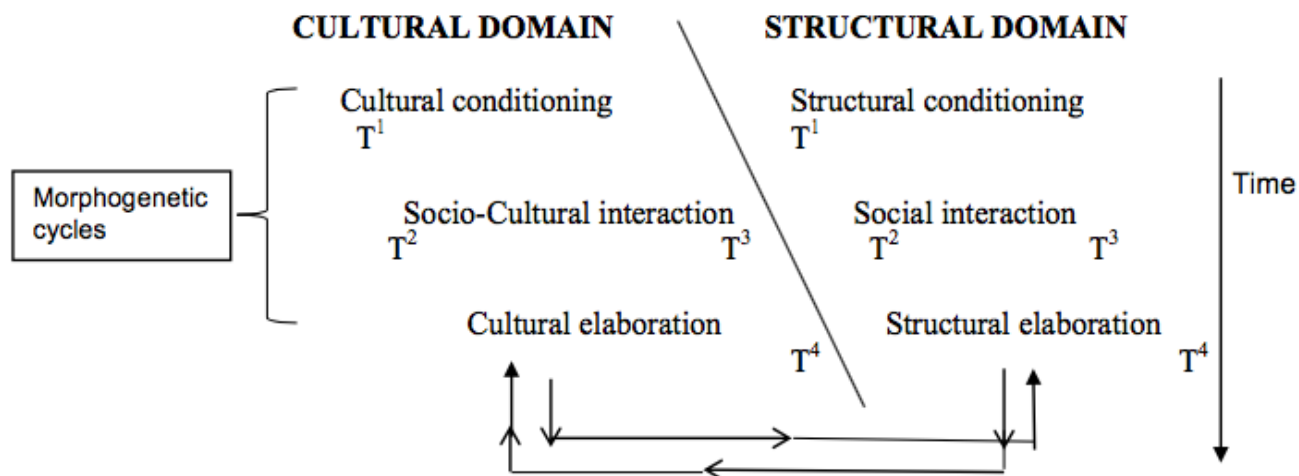
JM: Though not everyone makes the links or clarifies the distinctions effectively?

MSA: No, which is why I have consistently critiqued conflation and noted the dangers of (implicit and explicit) denial of the importance that careful distinctions make.

JM: A point that allows us to turn to your advocacy of SAC. Integration and its lack seems an important issue here?

MSA: In the M/M approach it is when 'Culture' and 'Structure' are most closely integrated that they exert complementary influences upon agents (as Weber first illustrated for Ancient India and China); ones that perpetuate morphostasis, without giving it eternal life. However, when 'Culture' and 'Structure' follow different morphogenetic pathways their effects are to intensify opposition between the two and to fuel agential antinomy between them. I illustrated this in *Realist Social Theory* and various other places. The configuration of domains matters in itself, and for morphogenesis (Archer 1995: 323, Figure 20):

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[6] As Doug Porpora later put it in his highly regarded 'Four concepts of social structure' paper: 'among the causal powers that are deposited in social positions are interests. Interests are built into a social position by the relationship of that position to other positions in the system […] actors are motivated to act in their interests, which are a function of their social position. Again, this doesn't mean that actors always with necessity act in their interests, but if they don't they are likely to suffer.' (Porpora 1989: 208; see also, Porpora 2016).

CULTURAL DOMAIN **STRUCTURAL DOMAIN**

Cultural conditioning
T^1

Structural conditioning
T^1

Time

Morphogenetic cycles

Socio-Cultural interaction
T^2 T^3

Social interaction
T^2 T^3

Cultural elaboration

Structural elaboration

T^4

T^4

JM: And conflation is a problem in what sense?

MSA: Instead of distinctive properties and powers pertaining to structure, culture and agency, any pair is conflated with one another, thus ruling out examination of the (changing) interplay between them and its theorization. Adequate application of M/M requires appropriate recognition of the distinctions made in SAC and the complexity of phased interactions this allows a researcher to explore.

JM: Amongst other things you have suggested conflation is a general characteristic of recent theory.[7]

MSA: A significant guiding metaphor in contemporary theory is of 'flows' or Zygmunt Bauman's 'liquidity' – and it depends upon a prior dissolution of all three components of SAC. Thus, the leading trope of 'liquid modernity' explicitly depends on an eclectic combination of denials of 'structure', replaced, for example, by theoretical assertions about 'destructuration' in the work of Ulrich Beck (see Archer 2012: 3), denials of 'culture' as anything more than what people carry in their heads, endorsed by David Elder-Vass (see Archer and Elder-Vass 2012), and susceptible of kaleidoscopic permutations, and of 'agency', rendered fluid by notions of serial self-reinvention, thus severing ties with personal and group 'identity', 'interests' and 'commitments' (if anti-humanism does not make such notions irrelevant by reducing agents and actors to 'actants'). In consequence, the picture of the social order being shaped and re-shaped by groups seeking to advance their material interests, their ideal interests and who they are is obliterated by the imagery of fluidity.

JM: So, there are a whole set of problems created by failing to respect the difference that difference makes? As I understand it, and as your reference to Elder-Vass indicates (see also Morgan 2014, and Elder-Vass 2012, 2010), you see this as a potential problem for realists too. You attribute a problem to 'weak realism' and, for example, are concerned by how 'mediation' is conceived?

MSA: Without allowing for the personal powers of agents, it is impossible to explain the variability of their actions in the same circumstances. However, some question the notion of mediation itself. Peter Manicas, for example, asks 'why postulate the existence of structure or culture as causally relevant if, to be causally effective, these must be mediated by social actors?' (Manicas 2006: 72). Since he leaves the question there, it is presumably held to be unanswerable. However, structure (and culture) could only be deemed causally

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[7] Note from Jamie: see also the forthcoming publication of Archer's lecture presented at the annual IACR conference, Southampton July 2019, (Archer 2020).

irrelevant if what was being mediated was, in fact, invented then and there by actors whose own personal powers were entirely responsible for it. This 'ban' upon 'mediation' seems as untenable as holding that the wires bringing electricity into my house are entirely responsible for the working of my lights and that the existence of a national grid and electricity generators are causally irrelevant.

JM: And in what sense would you describe this as 'weak realism'?

MSA: It involves some form of concession to conceptual positions that undermine the adequacy of a realist ontology. For example, it reflects a tendency to require some kind of instantiation of properties of structure by agents before they are accorded any role in an explanation. In other words, far from their *impinging upon* agents, it is human subjects who literally bring them into play. Such a voluntaristic bias obviously provides protection against being charged with reification and so can be attractive. Examples would include John Searle's notion of 'the Background', to which back-reference is made, for example, by listeners to disambiguate statements that require contextualization (Searle 1996: Chapter 6). But it is wheeled in and out for this purpose rather than being constantly influential. Similarly, Manicas relegates structural (and cultural) properties to being 'materials at hand', without the capacity to exert causal powers but also, from his standpoint, without any explanation of why some are within easy reach of certain actors but out of reach for others.[8] Manicas's book is a virtual repetition of commitments found in the work of Anthony Giddens and it is unsurprising to me that Searle's favourite sociologist appears to be Bourdieu. Ultimately, these authors favour the theoretical stance of 'central conflation' and I have consistently rejected this stance, notably in *Culture and Agency* (Archer 1988) and *Realist Social Theory* (Archer 1995).[9]

JM: And along with *Being Human* (Archer 2000) these form a trilogy that explore each facet of SAC?

MSA: Yes, given the importance I attribute to the distinctions of structure, culture and agency, within a systematic whole to which they refer (SAC), it's not surprising that I have produced a core trilogy, devoted to each part of the acronym.

JM: Since we have limited space, perhaps you might elaborate regarding *Culture and Agency* – not least because culture is something we have said little about so far, and this rather reflects the neglect the concept often receives relative to agency and structure in social theory.

MSA: Since the start of my academic life as a sociologist of education, I have always been dissatisfied with culture's Cinderella status in relation to structure, in the sense that there were no cultural units to parallel structural 'roles', 'positions', 'organizations' and 'institutions' and 'systems'. Instead, cultures had to be grasped as a whole and were, merely the reflection of those material interests dominant in society, yet ironically could then be assigned the role of society's bandmaster or the opposite. *Critique of this 'wholeness'* was fundamental to being able to talk about cultural morphogenesis. Yet this central notion of culture as an integrated whole, grounded in German *historismus,* echoes down the decades in what I called the 'Myth of Cultural Integration.'

JM: In your original article in *British Journal of Sociology* (Archer 1985) you state the concept of culture is both weakly developed and 'vacillating' in its role in sociological theory.

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[8] For example, '[P]ersons are the dominant causal agents in society – even while, of course, they work with materials at hand'. (Manicas 2006: 75).
[9] For a discussion of 'central conflation', see *Culture and Agency* (Archer 1988: Chapter 2, 3 and 4) and *Realist Social Theory* (Archer 1995: Chapter 3 and 4).

MSA: And this has had consequences, in terms of the issue of the Myth of Cultural Integration. For example, Bronislaw Malinowski's conceptualisation of an individual culture as a coherent whole reverberates through Ruth Benedict's 'cultural patterns', Meyer Shapiro's 'cultural style and Alfred Kroeber's 'ethos of total cultural patterns,' to resurface in Mary Douglas's notion of 'one single, symbolically consistent universe'. This generic approach, based upon the intuitive grasp of cultural phenomena, entailed a crucial prejudgement, namely that coherence was there to be found - and a corresponding mental closure against the discovery of cultural inconsistencies and contradictions. In short, 'cultures' were integrated by definition.

JM: And this is another area in which conflations have occurred?

MSA: From the beginning, this conventional anthropological approach conflated two distinct levels (the Cultural System or C.S. and Socio-Cultural interaction or S-C), through eliding:

1. The notion of *cultural coherence* - or ideational unity and consistency, with
2. The notion of *uniform practices* - or a community smoothly integrated into a common way of life.

Running the two together, as 'a community of shared meanings', conflated the 'community'(S-C) with the 'meanings' (C.S.). As such, the Myth perpetrated a basic analytical confusion between these two elements, which are both logically and sociologically distinct.

JM: And the consequence is?

MSA: What were inextricably confounded in the Myth have remained a problem in the canon:

1. *Logical consistency*, that is the degree of internal compatibility between the components of culture (C.S.), and
2. *Causal consensus*, that is the degree of social uniformity produced by the ideational influence of one set of people on another (an S-C matter).

Logical consistency is a property of the world of ideas, which requires no knowing subject, whilst causal consensus is a property of people and their interaction. The proposition I advance is that the two are both analytically and empirically distinct, hence they can vary independently of one another. Certainly, this distinction was least visible in primitive society, although Ernest Gellner (1974: 143-4) maintained that it was not invisible. Nevertheless, the constancy of routine practices was readily made part and parcel of ideational consistency. The intensity of this anthropological image can be gauged from E. E. Evans-Prichard's (1937: 195) conflationary characterisation of the Azande. "In this web of belief every strand depends upon every other strand, and a Zande cannot get out of its meshes because it is the only world he knows. The web is not an external structure in which he is enclosed. It is the texture of his thought and 'he cannot think that his thought is wrong'."

JM: It seems then, that the form of critical analysis you apply here, which identifies a Myth of Integration, shares similarities with Bhaskar's techniques of argumentation, albeit in sociological form.[10]

MSA: The important point is that the statement 'he cannot think that his thought is wrong' is an obvious fallacy and if it is taken as epitomising the Myth, it is very clear how the resulting canon conflates culture and agency, such that neither is granted distinct properties and powers. This being so, then there can be no

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[10] Something Bhaskar shares with Nicholas Rescher (see Rescher and Morgan 2020).

interplay between the 'parts' and the 'people', and thus there is no source of internal cultural dynamics which could account for change.

JM: Which surely has consequences for the sociology of knowledge – the focus, concerns and common sense of the field.

MSA: It is no accident that the locus of change was always located *externally* - in cultural contact, clash, conquest or colonialization.

JM: And in *Culture and Agency* you make clear links to the scope for cultural learning and your concluding chapter to the revised edition specifically addresses 'the possibility of a unified theory'.

MSA: Yes, but if we recall why we are discussing the subject of culture and the issues that arise in *Culture and Agency*, then three points need to be recognized (which I later clearly state in *Realist Social Theory,* Archer 1995: Chapter 7):

1. That no element of SAC can be presumed to be highly integrated in itself;
2. Since the three elements are interrelated and this is also the case within any morphogenetic cycle, then all must be incorporated into analysis of that particular cycle and successive ones;
3. When there is a higher degree of integration between SAC components, this will be related to Morphostasis; and where a low extent of integration prevails, relational contestation will generate Morphogenesis, though usually involving significant turbulence.

JM: And so, thematically this returns us to the importance of time, temporality, continuity and change with a clearer understanding of SAC and the contribution of the M/M approach to Critical Realism. Still, *Being Human* was only published in 2000, more than a decade after the first edition of *Culture and Agency*.[11]

MSA: The third book in the trilogy, *Being Human* (2000), was devoted to agency. Despite the many works written on the structure-agent problem over the years, it seemed to me that the weakest link in Critical Realism in the 1990s was precisely the conception of agency itself. With SAC in mind, an adequate concept of agency entailed two developments; a specification of *how* structural and cultural powers *impinged upon agents* (rather than consigning this to a vague process of 'social conditioning') and, equally importantly, *how* agents use their own personal powers to react 'so, rather than otherwise' in such situations.

JM: The latter, of course, is an important consideration because there is always the danger that the human appears to be no more or less than a social agent defined by and reducible to the many roles or positions they occupy or engage; if the concept of the human is left at this, then even sophisticated accounts of agency have problems making sense of why social activity occurs, what happens and what it means to each of us (if we take the person with powers and projects to be more than a social dupe in the form of a vessel for aggregated roles or merely a series of socially constructed consequences or conversational performances).

MSA: If we return to the point I made earlier regarding the significance of mediation, I agree wholeheartedly with Bhaskar's statement that 'causal power or social forms are mediated through social agency' (Bhaskar 2014: 26) because unless we accept that structural and cultural factors ultimately emerge *from* people and are efficacious only *through* people, then social forms are reified. But, as a sociologist, I thought it worthwhile to go back to the drawing board and rethink some basic issues. I started from our ineluctable placement in the real world into which we were born at any given time. As I suggest at the beginning of *Being Human*: 'Bodies have

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[11] Though during this period Professor Archer did devote considerable time to having a family. 'I wrongly thought that babies slept a lot!'

properties and powers of their own and are active in their environment, which is broader than 'society's conversation'.' (Archer 2000: 4). Analytically I distinguished three naturalistic 'orders'; Nature itself, the Practical (material culture) and the Social which any neonate necessarily encountered and had to care about to some degree.

JM: These distinctions matter because each provides some insight into the nature of the self, human relations, knowledge, and emotion (see for, example, Archer 2000: Chapter 4 and 5)?

MSA: Certainly, but as the new millennium approached I was much occupied with Nature's unavoidable effects on human agency because constituted as we are, for all time we all had to have some (variable) *concern* about our relations with Nature. This was before it was widely publically disseminated by climatologists that the effects of the industrial revolution added up to climate change, and it was mainly the 'deep ecologists' who were concerned about the human effects of agency (the Anthropocene) on Nature.[12] Today is the first time that globally we live with the possibility of the extinction of humanity, so for the first time the entire global population must choose between succumbing to its ultimate *liability* or collaboratively co-operating, using its combined *capacities*, to avert this fatal conclusion. Facing finitude is an unprecedented (morphogenetic) feature that now outweighs our other concerns. Perhaps, recognizing our shared finitude may prompt a higher collective regard for universal thriving, helping it for the first time collectively to override zero-sum competition.

At the time of writing *Being Human*, however, my interest spanned different varieties of inescapable relation: in addition to Nature, we cannot be unconcerned about our 'performative competence' in the Practical domain (minimally sufficient to earn our keep) and in the Social order where 'self-worth' is determined (for diagrammatic summaries of the three 'orders' to which this pertains see Archer 2000: 162, 199). The problem for our concept of the agent is that as *concerns* these are not necessarily compatible, yet none can be repudiated. Agents have to prioritize – promoting some and subordinating other relations in order to arrive at a satisfying and sustainable *modus vivendi,* even though changes in themselves (ageing) and in the world (such as war, conquest and climate change) call for revision. My question then was, how did they perform this fundamental task? What influences the 'so, rather than otherwise'? This is where Reflexivity came in and it was to this I then turned over the next few years (Archer 2003, 2007, 2010, 2012).

JM: This is another huge subject, one easily misrepresented when reduced for the purposes of brief conversation, but this notwithstanding, how would you characterise reflexivity and what significant role does it play in your thinking?

MSA: As I state at the beginning of *Making Our Way in the World*: 'reflexivity is the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa' (Archer 2007: 4). Our 'internal conversation' is not exclusively cognitive (we use visual imagery), nor infallible, nor even realistic. Neither do we all practice reflexivity in the same way. There are different dominant modes (communicative, autonomous, meta- and fractured, Archer 2003: Chapter 6, 7 and 8), although each day most of us practice all of the modes depending on the situation and our knowledge in relation to it. Dominant modes of reflexivity have their histories, and for the three main volumes on this subject in-depth interviews were conducted (see for example, methodological appendix, Archer 2012). According to those interviews, the mode that is now adopted agentially is closely related to the density and

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[12] Note from Jamie: high profile climate scientists such as James Henson, formerly of NASA, had, of course, already made the link between emissions and atmospheric changes (for example, as an expert witness to a Congressional hearing in 1988, where he stated that incipient temperature change was 99% likely a consequence of human activity). It is also worth noting that the first science on the subject was commissioned by oil companies in the late 1960s, but not made publically available at that time. For the political economy see Gills and Morgan (2019).

duration of our families and friends and how close we stay to them. Modalities are therefore strongly influenced, but not determined by relationality. Nevertheless, as I argue in *The Reflexive Imperative in Late Modernity* (Archer 2012) intensive morphogenesis does mean that now there is a 'reflexive imperative' (a requirement to be reflexive) because standard guides to what action is appropriate, such as folkways and *habitus,* that may have worked for many in the past, can only mislead in the present.[13]

JM: Your reference to intensive morphogenesis is a reminder that your work over the last two decades has not just been conceptual elaboration it also deepens and applies the M/M framework. This too has context?

MSA: The world is different in many ways. For example, since roughly 1980, relationships between the three orders of natural reality have been transformed. New contradictions have emerged between them, some of which are objectively unsustainable in ways that were unpredictable and unprecedented. Each affects human agents by accentuating their *liabilities* and restricting their *capacities*. The current state of the world, meaning the relationships between its three constitutive orders, is unconducive to the thriving of the global population as a whole. Historically, this is new; although there has never been an era whose social formation did not depend upon intensifying the liabilities of some to the benefit of others. But, there are important new questions to answer now, such as what are the consequences if Eudaimonia becomes beyond the reach of all?

JM: This brings us to your recent Morphogenesis project, since the scope for human flourishing is central to that project.

MSA: Following the work I did in the early part of the new millennium exploring reflexivity, I was invited by the Swiss Federal University in Lausanne (EPFL) to establish the *Centre d'Ontologie Sociale* (Centre for Social Ontology, CSO). Given the increasing interest in such concepts as liquid modernity, and the interest in sociology and social theory in the rate and status of change in the world, the new Centre's main focus, informed by a degree of scepticism regarding what new theory seemed to be suggesting, was the prospect for a coming global Morphogenic social formation. From 2013 the work centred around a group of 10 or so distinguished international theorists.[14] We produced a book a year considering rather than endorsing the advent of Morphogenic Society.

JM: And this resulted in an initial five-volume series edited by you and published by Springer (Archer 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; Morgan 2016).

MSA: Yes, the group met annually to discuss a series of related themes and issues and to work through material that each then contributed to that year's volume. As the work on the possibility of a new social formation evolved, we eventually derived a series of summarising propositions that depend on characteristics that may not yet fully obtain (Archer 2017: 3):

1. Morphogenetic processes increasingly predominate over morphostatic ones;
2. A great leap forward takes place in late modernity; one based upon 'variety fosters greater variety', in ideas, techniques, skills, products and life-styles;
3. This tendency intensifies dramatically when Structure and Culture both become morphogenetic and enter into synergy with the other, rather than reinforcing one another's morphostatic consequences;

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[13] Note from Jamie: For response to critical comment regarding the relationship of reflexivity to habit, focusing on the concept of trust see Colledge et al (2014).

[14] The initial group included: Margaret S. Archer, Douglas V. Porpora, Tony Lawson, Pierpaolo Donati, Andrea M. Maccarini, Emmanuel Lazega, Ismael Al-Amoudi, Mark Carrigan, Colin Wight, Kate Forbes-Pitt, and Wolfgang Hofkirchner, but has also included John Latsis, Jamie Morgan and Gazi Islam.

4. When Morphogenesis becomes predominant, shared Normativity can no longer serve as the basis for social order;
5. The 'new' is not automatically commensurate with the 'good'.

So, for example, 1. Implies positive feedback dominates negative feedback, meaning that 'change' prevails over mechanisms restoring 'stasis'. Ismael Al-Amoudi and John Latsis had interesting things to say in this regard based on the concept of 'morphonecrosis', i.e. the extinction of certain social forms.

JM: And the other propositions?

MSA: Each bears careful exploration. The simple statement in 2. that *'variety fosters greater variety'* has numerous consequences, in so far as it pertains. For example, it can result in a partial shift away from the competitive situational logic typical of modernity, with its zero-sum production of winners and losers in almost every field. Instead, a new situational logic of opportunity can emerge from the generation of new variety through *synthesising* connections – at least in so far as instrumental rationality ceases to be the sole motor or motive driving relevant areas of social change.

JM: As I recall this refers to, amongst other things, new digital commons?

MSA: Yes, this and many other novelties.

JM: But making sense of these novelties involves continuity in terms of your approach? As I understand it, it is this continuity – the developed ontology – that leads to your general scepticism regarding the various proclamations and assertions that abound in modern social theory regarding a generalised radical novelty or newness to society.

MSA: In addressing 3. for example, it is important not to elide structure and culture (see also Porpora 2016). It is only when distinguished for conjoint exploration that the significance of synergistic contemporary 'complementary compatibilities' can be appropriately appreciated.

In any case, the group withheld any proclamation of a new social formation. Propositions 4 and 5 are also important here. Arguably, for a Morphogenic society to prove stable it would need to supply better conditions for the flourishing of most people than that which it displaced. If the good can be made commensurate with the new then more people can do what they do best, for remuneration, pleasure or pro-social ends, and this would provide the stepping stone to the 'good life' in society. Yet, given the enduring and sometimes increasing social inequalities, augmented by austerity measures, we were not convinced and thus resisted proclaiming the advent of a Morphogenic society. Our scepticism was both observational and conceptual. Conceptually it seemed important to resist two undesirable tendencies in current social science:

1. So many contributions from the end of the last century have been uni-factoral. This is disclosed by how they are named: among others the Liquid Society, Knowledge or Information society, Networked society, Reflexive Modernization (associated with Beck, Giddens and Scott Lash and which was *not* about reflexivity). All of these promoted *one* significant change as if it had the power to transform 'the rest', subordinating material and ideational interests vested in them with those interests always being too weak to resist. At their most extreme these are all forms of 'factorial determinism'.
2. These contributions tend to share a dismissal of the stratified nature of the social order in general, to the point of discountenancing even the conventional distinctions between the micro-meso- and macro-

levels.[15] This is perhaps at its most blatant in Beck and Beck-Gersheim's (2002) reduction of its components to 'institutionalized individualism'.

Collectively we never lost sight of the fact that agents, singular and collective, as Primary or Corporate agents, by aggregation or relationality, are the ultimate prime movers of societal transformation.

JM: Still, your work since these five volumes does open-up interesting new issues regarding who *future* agents might be. Since completing the first five volumes, the CSO has moved and is now hosted at Grenoble Ecole de Management.[16] Its focus has turned more recently to a planned four volume series exploring the scope for technological augmentations, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to change society (Al-Amoudi and Morgan 2019; Al-Amoudi and Lazega 2019; Carrigan et al 2020). Transhumanism, posthumanism, fears regarding a 'singularity' and many other issues have become current. In the first three volumes, you have pursued a line of argument exploring the nature of personhood. Besides engaging with Christian Smith's well-known work (Smith 2010), what has driven this interest?

MSA: One of the features I've already stressed for Critical Realism is that it has to be developmental. This does not mean minutely tending Roy's patrimony, nor any form of 'beyondism', pretending to originality by 'refining', 'reconciling or 'revisiting' the existing corpus in bids to make a mark. But it does mean keeping up with social change, if we take this to be increasingly morphogenetic. Given the central role Critical Realism assigns to 'agency' this is crucial. Humans, of course, are continually 'enhanced' and always have been since pastoralism, but with transplants, genetic modification and so on, the definition of 'being human' is carried further away from naturalism (see Archer 2019a) and we don't need movements such as the World Transhumanist Association (Humanity+ as now is) to give it a shove.

Concurrently, with the development of robots, and then the potentials of Artificial Intelligence (AI) the tables have been turned, leading implicitly to the question, 'so are they not persons too?'. Given the influence of the Arts, especially sci-fi, in popular imagination and academia, a Robophobia dominates Robophilia.

JM: And this issue is what intrigues you today? In many ways, it seems speculative, but also deeply rooted in the continuity of culture, change and both fear and fascination with the new and with near future potentials.

MSA: I am curious, why this fear amongst regular users of robotics in everyday life? The paradox is that the public admires the AIs who defeated chess and Go world champions; are content with AI roles in care of the elderly, with autistic children, and in surgical interventions, but the fear of AI 'taking over' remains and evokes Isaac Asimov's laws of robotics from the early 1940s.

JM: One way in which you have been exploring this issue is the nature of essentialism and personhood. Many philosophers (Alisdair MacIntyre, Peter Singer) have considered the degree to which some animal species may be like us and science fiction has produced many great works on the subject of AI and personhood, but there is still a powerful contemporary sentiment that characterises us as unique and this confuses different issues of essentialism doesn't it?

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[15]Amongst our group Emmanuel Lazega consistently provided empirical evidence regarding meso-level institutions that refutes this. For example, he documented how both upward and downward causation depended upon meso-level interaction amongst interested parties to pass and press demands up and down for the Commercial Court of Paris, nation research centres for cancer research, a provincial Catholic Diocese and others.
[16] Visit: https://socialontology.org
Original group members Tony Lawson and Wolfgang Hofkirchner have not contributed to the latest volume series (for latest see Lawson 2019).

MSA: Agreed, but I would add, it reinforces the ranks of the 'Robophobiacs'. Instead I question the three main barriers used to deny the possibility of personhood ever belonging to AI beings. These obstacles can be distilled into three (Archer 2019b). First, the Normative Barrier. AIs don't know the difference between right and wrong. So 'human safeguarding' must be pre-programmed into them or they must be taught our 'morality' (Whose? Which?). Yet with the shift from Law to Bureaucratic Regulation, the social need for shared normativity diminishes. Second, is the Emotional Barrier. AIs lack feelings, they are cognitive beings, but is affect indispensable? If they concluded Ѳ was a likely outcome in a situation (such as a fire in public spaces) their cognition might avert Ѳ (such as human panics in exits) more effectively than with displays of affectivity. Third, the absence of Qualia, a 'subjective feel', held to be uniquely human. However, we cannot share these sensations with fellow humans (as in describing my toothache to a dentist), so how can I assert 'my pain is like your pain and different from AI pain', if there is such a thing'?

Instead, I maintain, alongside Lynne Rudder Baker (2000, 2013) that although *a body is necessary for selfhood, it is not a sufficient condition for personhood, nor need it be of a particular kind* i.e. wholly or partly organic. What matters for persons is that they have an inner perspective, which she named 'the first person perspective' and I, more demandingly, term 'reflexivity' because it entails I* (myself), that is 'me in my social context', considering what I should do there. Since different agents in much the same objective social situations engage in different courses of action, we also have to introduce 'what matters to them' (see reference list Archer 2019b). Such 'concerns' give the traction that reflexivity works upon to design actions they (fallibly) hope will lead to the *modus vivendi* different agents seek in society.

JM: These are fascinating yet highly contestable matters that raise deep questions regarding future potential and cultural learning, they depend on characteristics of putative entities that may never be, and yet if they ever 'are' then the being that they are will matter to us (since it surely matters for how we treat them – there is all the difference in the world between a technology I can own and a being who I oppress – though current discourse regarding electronic personhood owes just as much to legal matters of liability as it does to any genuine sense of consciousness).

MSA: Certainly, not all Critical Realists are likely to agree with me and some already do not. For example, what I have just said is in contradistinction to Christian Smith's Realist Personalism in which 'Personhood is the hallmark feature of human being and dignity is an ineliminable feature of personhood' (Smith 2010: 478). This entails an essentialist speciesism.[17] It aligns Smith with the Robophobiacs, but allows me to explore the possibilities of Robophilia, in terms of humans and AIs working in synergy, living in friendship, and fostering the emergence of humane properties and powers that are their own forms of enhancement beyond the metallic calculating machine.

JM: Tenuous though it might initially appear, since we are coming to the end of this interview and have not touched on some issues (not least your collaboration with Pierpaolo Donati in Donati and Archer 2015) would you draw any links between your work as a Critical Realist scholar, your recent CSO project work and your work in the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (PASS)?

MSA: Well, there are many links and they are more obvious than you might expect (since I know you are an atheist and not overly familiar with this). The Vatican is more than remarkable décor. I have just finished my five-year term of office as President of PASS. Pope Francis, who appointed me in 2014, pursues a humanitarian social agenda, ecumenical in outreach, which I have no problem at all in promoting. I often say that he has turned the Church into a social movement; despite internal opposition and external indifference. For example, his first initiative was to move against human trafficking and this was infectious. Thus, I edited

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[17] I discuss this in the essay Margaret S. Archer, 'Can Humans and A.I.s be friends?' which is intended for Volume IV of the Future of the Human project.

books, wrote chapters – no different from what you are all used to – and ended up starting a small charity in my home town for trafficked women and their children (Archer 2019c). The issue of climate change was directed to our older sister, Pontifical Academy of Science (PAS), which deals with the natural sciences, and assembled the world's top climatologists. However, I was present at COP21 in Paris, 2015, because PAS is scrupulous about respecting the border with the social sciences. My role was to field questions on social implications. Take advantage of our publications – they are free to download, and not pious. As one Cardinal advised me, 'Write about global social problems, but don't tangle with theology'. As for my more recent work on CSO projects these too broadly align with a lifetime interest in emancipatory and explanatory social science and my curiosity remains unabated in regard of a world that continues to 'intrigue'.

Notes on Contributors

Margaret Archer is Professor Emeritus University of Warwick. She is the author of numerous books and articles. Additional detail is given in the interview.

Jamie Morgan is Professor of Economic Sociology at Leeds Beckett University. He co-edits the Real-World Economics Review with Edward Fullbrook. He has published widely in the fields of economics, political economy, philosophy, sociology and international politics.

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