CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGICAL INDIVIDUALISM IN
RECENT PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES:
AN OVERVIEW OF A DEBATE

We have thus far analysed the 'individualism' of three representative thinkers, namely Popper, Hayek and Watkins. We have also clearly defined our criterion of selecting these three rather than a host of other prominent philosophers, scientists and sociologists who have also substantially contributed towards the solution to the problem of individualism and collectivism.

In this present chapter, therefore, we shall attempt a critical study of individualistic or anti-collectivistic or anti-individualistic or collectivistic positions adopted by a few prominent philosophers of social sciences, namely, E.A. Gellner, Steven Lukes, May Brodbeck, L.J. Goldstein, Maurice Mandelbaum, A.C. Danto and K.J. Scott. This discussion would ultimately help us to develop a philosophical position and a re-definition of individualism - both methodological and ontological.

E.A. GELLNER

Prof. E.A. Gellner's concern with the debate of methodological individualism and collectivism is wider than that of other social scientists, as he tries to understand the moral and political implications of the corresponding positions. The problem for him is to understand what is 'historical explanation' which seems to be the centre of all controversies. If we can formulate 'unchangeable and wide-ranging' historical generalisation, i.e. explaining the historical processes, then the concept of individual responsibility and consequently individual autonomy seems to be pseudo, he affirms.

The prevailing undercurrent in the debate, Gellner points out, is that each side believes to be correct beyond any
question of doubt. Gellner sums up the position in the following:

To the individualist, his own position appears so true that it barely needs the confirmation of actually carried out eliminations, whilst he gleefully points out that in practice the holist can and does only approach his institutions etc. through what concrete people do, which seems to the individualist a practical demonstration and implicit confession of the absurdity of holism. By contrast (and with neat symmetry) the holist sees in the fact that the individualist continues to talk in holistic terms a practical demonstration of the unworkability of individualism, and he certainly does consider the fact that he can only approach groups and institutions through the doings of individuals to be something which he had implicitly denied and which could count against him. Both sides find comfort in the actual practice of the opponent.

We are not concerned with the political or moral implications of the two positions which are, for Gellner, the focal points of the debate. Our concern, however, is to study the methodological and ontological positions on the basis of which Gellner rejects individualism and accepts holism, although in a very diluted form compared to most collectivists.

Gellner begins his study with the analysis of the notion of causation which for him is the index of existence in reductivist terms. The individualist believes, according to Gellner, "that which is merely a construct cannot causally affect that which 'really exists'" and therefore wholes cannot be causes of any events. An explanation of social phenomena has to be ultimately in terms of individual dispositions. The holistic counter-argument maintains that "if something (a) is a causal factor (b) cannot be reduced, then in some sense it 'really and independently exists'".

The philosopher's dilemma, according to Prof. Gellner, consists on the one hand, formal arguments show that the explanatory reduction must be possible, but on the other hand, in actual practice is found to be both incomplete and impossible. The

2. Ibid., p.250.
3. Ibid.
situation seems to be similar to that of phenomenologist trans-
lations. Gellner takes up Watkins' position for a detailed ana-
lysis and subsequently attempts to refute individualism. The
individualistic contention, in Gellner's understanding, has two
basic claims: (a) an explanation specifies individual dispositions
i.e., statements about things other than individuals are ex-
cluded from a final explanation, and (b) that it specifies individual
dispositions, i.e., statements which are not about dispositions
are similarly excluded. What is disposition? It is some-
thing 'intelligible', a conceivable reaction of human beings to
circumstances, not necessarily one we share, still less neces-

erily one we can 'introspect', but still something opposed to what
we would call 'dead' physical causation where 'anything could
cause anything',.

There are four positions one can adopt regarding the
problem of reduction, out of which three are immediately taken up
for discussion by Gellner, as they are the ones that the individ-
ualists reject.

(1) Holistic subject plus intelligible disposition.
This is equivalent to a 'group mind' theory.

(2) Holistic subject without intelligible dispositions
- i.e., attributions of regularity or pattern to wholes, without
any suggestion that these patterns express conscious or purposive
reactions.

(3) Individualistic subjects without intelligible disposi-
tions. 3

Gellner claims that it is only by an inconvenient and
arbitrary fiat, that "semi-deliberate and blindly causal events
are so often intimately fused in life brings out the inconvenience
of excluding one kind." 4 The second kind of the four possibili-
ties are the explanations of historians, sociologists, anthropo-
logists, etc., who, while explaining their related phenomena do
mention individual dispositions. To reject this alternative is to

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2. Cf. Ibid.
3. Cf. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
translate their phenomena in terms of the dispositions of individuals. For example, 'the monarchy is strong' cannot be translated into individual dispositions of the subjects, because, by and large, claims Gellner, "institutions and social structures and climates of opinions are not the results of what people want and believe, but what they take for granted." ⁴ Even if we assume that 'in principle' this translation is possible, there are formal doubts whether such a programme of translation will ever succeed. Two specific points, according to Gellner, force the holist to accept 'holism'. First, there are statistical regularities in society which may not be present at individual level, and secondly, there are certain 'holistic concepts' and individuals often act in accordance with them. Gellner cites the 'idea of France' as a 'holistic' concept.

According to Gellner, the reductionist assumes apprioristically "the possibility of human dispositions being the dependent variable in an historical explanation ... and preclude the possibility of causes, in the sense of initial conditions." ² He concludes saying that the full clarification of the issues he discusses would be possible only if the notion of 'causation' in social sciences is clearly defined. His has been an attempt to reject formal methodological arguments which are the bases of 'explanation'. Next he attempts to give non-formal refutation of the 'methodological principle' in relation to historical explanation.

Gellner's argument begins with the presupposition that what is said about human sciences is also true of non-human ones. Because, the fact that wholes are composed of their constituent parts, it does not follow anything about the nature of initial conditions in dependent statements. Like the formal refutation, the present issue also cannot be understood without a thorough analysis of the notion of 'causation' (for the present, in social contexts). But as there is hardly any consensus regarding the notion in historical and social sciences, it creates formal difficulties in the methodological problems.

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² Ibid. p.254.
Gellner's best attempt in the study of the problem of individualism is his diagnosis of two series: (i) "Jones is going to Germany. All members of the platoon are going, etc. All members of the company are going, etc. All members of the battalion are going, etc." (ii) Jones. The Platoon. The Company. The Battalion." 1 The first series begins with a singular statement, and continues to increase its generality, at each stage containing the individual propositions, and depending for its truth upon the truth of the earlier proposition. The second series is one of terms or concepts, in which the proceeding is at each stage a part of the subsequent one. The latter members depend for their existence upon the existence of the earlier members, "though not necessarily on any definite list of them." 2

Prof. Gellner's most important point in his analysis is that he sees no "logic or fact why causal sentences should in their antecedent clauses (or consequent clauses, for that matter) be restricted in their subjects to items of the kind that would only appear at the beginning of the series. If 'complexity of causes' obtains, which it often seems to, causal sentences in ordinary language if they are to be expressed in subject-predicate grammatical form will have to have later members of the series as their subjects." 3 It is true, accepts Gellner, that when we speak of societies, we speak of generalizations about classes of human individuals, and hence a proposition would be true only if the proposition about the individual is true. But we also speak of societies such as 'groups, complexes, constellations of facts', argues Gellner. Although they can exist only if their parts exist, still "their fates qua fates of complexes can nevertheless be the initial conditions or indeed final conditions of a causal consequence." 4

The basic argument of Gellner can be summed up in the following: "A generalization is true in virtue of the truth of singular propositions. A whole is made up of its parts. No a priori legislation is possible concerning the complexity of links in causal chains." 5

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. p.258.
The above three statements, for Gellner, are compatible. As he explains:

Jones is not caused to go to Germany by the general fact that all other members of the battalion are going: the general proposition merely says, amongst other things, that Jones is going. But there is no reason whatever for excluding a priori the possibility of unanimity, influencing Jones to volunteer to go. That all members of the unit feel the esprit de corps is a generalization (which is seldom true); but to say that esprit de corps has influenced an individual is not to say that he has been influenced by isolable individuals or their acts.

Hence Gellner concludes that the individualist conclusion that the third proposition is false on the basis of the first two analytic propositions, is false. Gellner analyses another example to prove his point. 'All men in the square were excited' which is simple generalization which has no independent factor from that of individuals. But, 'there was an atmosphere of tension in the square', is not a merely conjunction of individuals in the square. One cannot explain 'tension in the square' in terms of 'state of mind' of the individuals in the square without referring to the situation as a whole, argues Gellner. He goes even further to say that there is a pattern by which individuals are capable of isolating some characteristics and not merely abstracting. He claims that this pattern is 'really there'.

Societies do not have group minds, but individuals do believe that the mores, institutions, etc. of the society in which they interact are independent and external fact, as much as the physical environment. And if it is so of one individual, Gellner claims that it is so for the totality of individuals composing the society.

Gellner's argument is no an immediate conclusion from the fact of complexity of causes. It is not that constituents of a complex cause make up a 'whole', but if they are perceived as a whole or referred to as a whole, then only they make up a 'whole'. Individuals, claims Gellner, are led to behave in a particular manner because of their perception of the 'social fact'.

Gellner observes two basic problems in the analysis of 'social behaviour'. First, in the context of social behaviour, the two parts constituting it, namely the individuals and the social context, the former is tangible whereas the latter one is not. The reductionist desire to reduce the latter to the former with the assumption that there is a necessary connection between the two is fallacious. Secondly, Gellner claims that as the subjects in the social context are conscious individuals and the observer is also a conscious observer, there is a double complexity in our attempt to explain, which renders reduction inconclusive.

Next, Prof. Gellner studies the 'picture or mirror theory of explanation' which is often employed to support individualistic claims. For instance, an explanation for the proposition 'The committee decided to appoint Jones' could consist of series of 'partial biographies and character studies' to meet the individualistic requirement. Gellner accepts that generalisations and abstractions do not give us additional facts, but asserts that this 'does not follow that all propositions whose subjects seem to include the 'atoms' of a particular discourse, are therefore necessarily generalisations, abstractions or somehow constructs.'

'Explanation' in individualistic terms of the above example, is, according to Gellner, merely verification and not an explanation. If to explain is gathering confirmation, then all explanations in history and social sciences are merely attempts at illustration. Gellner alleges that even an individualist does not claim this. But the individualistic attempt, to seek 'something more', according to Gellner, leads him to look for broader generalisation. This, according to him, leads to psychologism, which has been condemned by Popper. Prof. Gellner next employs Popper's argument to disprove the causal impossibility of dispositions of individuals being independent of social context. They are not even logically independent of social context, as we cannot describe them without social reference, alleges Prof. Gellner.

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2. Ibid.
The individualistic attempt at explanation is explained as a transition from Active to Passive voice. However, Gellner reminds us that the nature of dispositions is such that we have to refer back to institutional context. For example, "it would be perfectly impossible ... that there are no psychological differences of any importance between two European countries/widely divergent institutions, and that to explain the differentiation is only possible in sociological, not in psychological terms." 1 Gellner ends on a serious note: "The harm done by the kind of Individualism discussed, if taken seriously by investigators, is that it leads to a conviction that such differences must always be present and be significant. The danger of this pre-conception seems to me greater at present than the one which worries the Individualist, namely that of 'reifying' abstraction." 2

In an attempt to instantiate his position, Gellner argues that 'segmentary patrilineal structure maintained by tribesmen' is irreducible to individualistic terms. Hence, social phenomena is irreducible to dispositions of individuals interacting in the social context. This also applies to historical facts. As he says, "history is about chaps — and nothing else. But perhaps this should be written: History is about chaps. It does not follow that its explanations are always in terms of chaps. Societies are what people do, but social scientists are not biographers en grande série." 3

Gellner's position does not demand any new arguments by way of refutation. His has been an attempt (like many other half-hearted attempts made by sociologists) to find a via media between individualism and collectivism. However, in more specific terms, Gellner’s rejection of reductionism on the basis of the notion of 'causation' raises several issues. Both his formal and non-formal refutations rest on this notion, which he does not clearly define, as he himself realised that there is no consensus on the notion in the historical and social sciences.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. p.265.
It suffices to point out at this stage that reduction is possible and that the number of examples forwarded by Gellner can surely be explained in individualistic terms. In the example of 'two series', the last of the second type of statements, is reducible to a series of statements about the individuals composing the battalion. Further, we can explain 'why Jones is going to Germany' not in terms of the battalion going to Germany but in terms of intentions, dispositions, etc., not only in the battalion but with reference to other individuals that interact with Jones, such as the rulers, the family members, relations, acquaintances, etc. The same analysis would also apply to Gellner's example of 'there was an atmosphere of tension in the square'.

Finally, a word about Gellner's understanding of the notion of 'explanation' as merely verification, if attempts are made to explain a given phenomenon (for example 'The committee decided to appoint Jones') in individualistic terms. We must draw Gellner's attention to the fact that 'holistic' explanations are not altogether rejected by the individualists. They are, however, regarded as 'half-way explanations', and as Watkins points out, we must not rest content till we reach at 'rock-bottom' explanations to claim high/certainty about our conclusions.

STEVEN LUKES

Prof. Steven Lukes begins his study of methodological individualism by tracing back its origins to Hobbes who claimed that "it is necessary that we know the things that are to be compounded before we can know the whole compound" for "everything is best understood by its constitutive causes", the causes of the social compound residing in "men as if but even now sprung out of the earth, and suddenly like mushrooms, come to full maturity, without all kinds of engagement to each other." 1 Thinkers

of Enlightenment by and large followed the individualistic mode of explanation. And Comte ("society was no more decomposable into individuals than a geometric surface is into lines, or a line into points") and J. S. Mill ("the laws of the phenomena of society are, and can be, nothing but the action and passions of human beings," namely, "the laws of individual human nature", men are not, when brought together, converted into another kind of substance, with different attributes") are considered as forerunners of methodological individualism, which Lukes understands as "a doctrine about explanation which asserts that all attempts to explain social (or individual) phenomena are to be rejected (or, according to a current, more sophisticated version, rejected as rock-bottom explanations) unless they are couched wholly in terms of facts about individuals." 

Lukes first aims at distinguishing the central tenet of methodological individualism from other seemingly identical positions. The second task is to prove that methodological individualism "even in its most vacuous sense ... is implausible." To understand Lukes one would have to understand his fundamental assumptions, or what he himself calls, set of truisms. Lukes assumes that "society consists of people. Groups consist of people. Institutions consist of people plus rules and roles. Rules are followed (or alternatively not followed) by people and roles are filled by people. Also there are traditions, customs, ideologies, kinship systems, languages: they are ways people act, think and talk. At the risk of pomposity, these truisms may be said to constitute a theory made up of banal propositions about the world that are analytically true, i.e. in virtue of the meaning of words." 

On the other hand, Lukes believes that Popper, Hayek, Watkins and others regard that it is equally truistic ... to say

5. Ibid.
that facts about society and social phenomena are to be explained solely in terms of facts about individuals." 1 This he claims is the doctrine of methodological individualism.

The first task Lukes sets himself is to distinguish the methodological individualism from other methodological or ontological positions that have been mistakenly identified with it. He identifies five such positions.

I. "A set of such purely truistic assertions as that society consists of people, that groups consist of people, that institutions consist of people, who follow rules and fill roles, that traditions, customs, ideologies, kinship systems and languages are ways that people act, think and talk. These are truistic propositions because they are analytically true, in virtue of the meaning of words. Such a set of truisms has, of course no implications as to the correct method of explaining social phenomena." 2 The position which is known as Truistic Social Atomism, Lukes claims, has been mistakenly identified even by Watkins as individualism proper.

II. The second thesis that has been mistakenly identified with the methodological individualism proper according to Lukes is the theory of meaning whereby we claim that every statement about social phenomena is either a statement about individual human beings or else it is unintelligible and consequently is not a statement at all. It implies, therefore, that predicates of social activities are translatable into predicates of individuals without any loss of meaning. The oft quoted example is that of 'army' which is regarded as merely a plural of 'soldier'; and applying our theory, all the statements about the army could be translated into statements about particular soldiers in the army. Lukes explains that such a position is a "crude verificationalist theory of meaning." 3 He claims that if such is not the claim then "although statements about armies are true only in virtue of the fact that the statements about soldiers are true, the former are not equivalent in meaning

to the latter, nor a fortiori are they 'about' the subject of the latter."  

III. The third position mistakenly identified with the methodological individualism, according to Lukes is the position adopted by Karl Popper and F. A. Hayek. It is a theory of ontology that assumes that in social world only individuals are real. Further, it carries with it, claims Lukes, "the corrective doctrine that social phenomena are constructions of the mind and 'do not exist in reality'."  

Lukes argues that it is absolutely false, if we mean by this theory that in the social world only individuals are observable, because we have cases in which individual and/or social phenomena are sometimes observable and sometimes unobservable. Consequently, both individual and social phenomena have observable and unobservable characteristics. Lukes proceeds with his analysis by refuting three possible interpretations of such an ontological position — this can be summed up in his own words: "If it means that individual phenomena are easy to understand, while social phenomena are not (which is Hayek's view), this is highly implausible; compare the procedure of the court with the motives of the criminal. If the theory means that the individuals exist independently of, e.g., groups and institutions, this is also false, since, just as facts about social phenomena are contingent upon facts about individuals, the reverse is also true. Thus, we can only speak of armies: only if certain statements are true of armies and other true of soldiers. If the theory means that all social phenomena are fictional and all individuals are factual, or that would entail that all assertions about social phenomena are false, or else neither true nor false, which is absurd. Finally, the theory may mean that only facts about individual are explanatory, which alone would make this theory equivalent to methodological individualism."  

IV. There is another belief that sociological laws are

2. Ibid.  
3. Ibid., p. 117. (Italics are mine).
impossible or an assertion that law-like statements explaining social phenomena are always false. Lukes claims that such a position has been taken by both Popper and Hayek. This negative doctrine, asserts Lukes, is refutable by a single counter-instance. Luke further claims that there are such instances which even Popper recognized.

V. The fifth and the last position mistakenly identified with methodological individualism is sometimes known as 'social individualism'. The theory claims that the teleological role of society is the good of individuals. Lukes believes that when 'social individualism' is analysed (or dissected) it can mean either one or all of the following positions: "(a) social institutions are to be understood as founded and maintained by individuals to fulfil their ends (as in e.g. Social Contract Theory); (b) social institutions in fact satisfy individual ends; (c) social institutions ought to satisfy individual ends." 1

Prof. Lukes claims that the first position has no wide following, whereas, the second is clearly the position of Hayek, who attempts to explain market in individualistic terms, and the third position is held by Popper which could be labelled as political liberalism. It is however claimed by Lukes, that both second and third positions are not "logically or conceptually related to methodological individualism," 2 whereas the first one is a version of it.

The second task Lukes sets himself is to pin point the central tenet of methodological individualism and at the same time point out what it is not. To repeat an earlier statement of Lukes, methodological individualism "asserts ... that all attempts to explain social and individual phenomena are to be rejected (or, for Watkins rejected as rock-bottom explanations) unless they refer exclusively to facts about individuals." 3 The attempted definition immediately raises two issues: (a) what is the meaning of 'facts about individuals' and (b) what is the understanding of

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p.118.
'explanation'.

For Lukes the question 'what are facts about individuals' amounts to asking 'what predicates may be applied to individuals?'. Lukes forwards the following examples for consideration:

1. genetic make-up; brain states,
2. aggression; gratification; stimulus-response,
3. cooperation; power; esteem,
4. cashing cheques; saluting; voting.

The above examples, according to him, have a continuum of individual predicates, from (1) type of examples to the (4) types, there is a gradual change from non-social to the most 'social' predicates. The first type refers to human beings as purely material forms - as in the case of explanation given by H.J. Eysenck for political actions of human beings. In this type of phenomenon no reference is made to conscious human actions, whereas in the second type of examples reference to consciousness is made but no specific reference to social groups or institutions is made. Hobbes' theory of appetites and aversions, Pareto's theory of residues and Freud's libido, etc. are such examples. The third type of examples are those that have minimal social reference.

According to Lukes, they presuppose "a social context in which certain actions, social relations and/or mental states are picked out and given a particular significance (which makes social relations of certain particular sorts count as 'cooperative', which makes certain social positions count as positions of 'power' and a certain set of attitudes count as 'esteem'). They still do not presuppose or entail any particular propositions about particular form of group or institutions." Examples of this type would be all those explanations given by traditional sociologists who assume that a phenomenon can be explained in terms of "general and, 'elementary' forms of social behaviour." 3

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1. H.J. Eysenck in Psychology of Politics attempts to explain the distinction between the Radical and Conservative on the basis of the notion of 'tough-minded' and 'tender-minded'. He explained the phenomenon with reference to modifications of the central nervous system.


The fourth type of examples that Lukes furnishes are those that are maximally 'social' in character and which presuppose or, and entail reference to particular social groups or institutions. Lukes believes that there are widespread examples of this fourth type. The phenomena which "appeal to facts about concrete and specifically located individuals," ¹ in order to explain them, belong to this fourth type. In such cases, "the relevant features of social context are, so to speak, built into the individual. Open almost any empirical (though not theoretical) work of sociology, or history and explanations of this sort leap to the eye." ²

What methodological individualism suggests as four alternative possibilities of explanatory model is not sufficient, according to Lukes, to prove its credibility. The refutation of methodological individualism, therefore, involves, claims Lukes, "showing that these types of explanations are either implausible and unpromising or question-begging. I would certainly wish to claim that types (1) and (2) are highly implausible and unpromising ways of approaching the explanation of social phenomena, that type (3) is very partial and cannot account for the differences between institutions and societies, and that type (4) is question begging because it builds crucial social factors or features of society into allegedly explanatory individuals." ³

The second issue that is to be clarified is the notion of explanation. Commonly speaking, to explain entails overcoming obstacles, i.e., make something/some phenomenon unintelligible, intelligible. There are, according to Lukes, many ways of doing this: (1) identifying a piece of behaviour, a set of beliefs, etc., or identifying the hidden structural features of a phenomenon. For example, the anthropologists' interpretation of religious or sociologists' explanation of the rise of bureaucracy. Lukes further points out that the individualistic interpretation of Mandelbaum's ⁴ example of bank-teller would amount to rejecting

². Ibid.
³. Ibid.
⁴. We shall discuss the example of bank-teller in more details in the section on M. Mandelbaum.
most ordinarily accepted explanations of every-day life, Lukes argues that "if the methodological individualist is saying that no explanations are possible (or rock-bottom) except those framed exclusively in terms of individual predicates of types (1), (2), and (3), i.e., those not presupposing or entailing propositions about particular institutions or organizations, then he is arbitrarily ruling out (or denying finality to) most ordinarily acceptable explanations, as used in every-day life, but also by most sociologists and anthropologists for most of the time. If he is prepared to include individual predicates of the type (4), he seems to be proposing nothing more than a futile linguistic purism. Why should we be compelled to talk about the tribesmen but not the tribe, the bank-teller but not the bank? And let no one underestimate the difficulty of the importance of explanation by identification. Indeed, a whole methodological tradition (from Durkheim through Weber to Winch) holds this to be the characteristic mode of explanation in social science."  

The second type of explanation enumerated by Lukes is deductive explanation, in which statement concerning individuals and particulars are deduced from the general and universal statements. The deductive method with various minor modifications has been accepted by all individualists as the model of explanation. The issue, however, is to find out how to apply this model to the different types of phenomena discussed above, alleges Lukes. Eysenck's attempt to explain social phenomena exclusively in terms of the workings of central nervous system, claims Lukes, has "little point in taking it seriously, except as a problem in philosophy. Neuro-physiology may be the queen of the social sciences, but her claim remains entirely speculative."  

Lukes concludes his analysis of methodological individualism by forwarding two reasons why the positions adopted by Popper, Hayek and Watkins need not be methodological individualisms. First he observes they are opposed to holism and historicism, but this opposition does not entail that they accept

2. We have already discussed the notion of explanation in Chapter One and also argued why the deductive model of explanation is preferable and guarantees greater degree of certainty.
methodological individualism, because (a) one can explain 'situations' and 'interrelations between individuals' in terms which do not refer to individuals and also without holistic or historicist implications; and (b) the explanation may be impossible with reference to individualistic terms, but even then such individualistic understanding may be imperative "either as part of an indentifying explanation in the statement of a general law or of initial and boundary conditions." 1

Although Lukes analysis has been thorough and consistent, he has proposed no new argument in defence of collectivism or against individualism. Lukes' position is a helpless surrender to a methodological position that demands less analysis and leaves such ground for the formulation of speculative theories that do not come under the rigours of either the principle of verification or falsification. For instance the claim that 'army' is not merely the plural of soldiers, is never questioned by any serious individualist. But the methodologist cannot posit a 'being' (army) merely to explain the complex relationships between the member soldiers, the rulers, relations, etc. If Lukes position regarding the 'collectivity' of the army is upheld, then how would he explain desertion by a soldier when the whole 'army' is still at war?

Lukes task of distinguishing various allegedly methodologically individualistic positions from what he believes to be methodological individualism, is inadequate. For, he fails to distinguish between the narrow and strong sense of the word methodology (a more detailed discussion will be taken up in the last chapter). In the strong sense, methodology does imply the ontological, epistemological and even conceptual analysis of any phenomena.

Prof. Lukes defence of collectivism and his anti-reductionistic stance becomes ineffective when he claims that explanations in neuro-physiological terms are purely speculative. He seems not only to underestimate the future growth of psychology and physiology, but is blind to various conclusions of psychology and physiology regarding the nature of emotions, drives, dreams etc.

Dr. May Brodbeck deserves a more detailed treatment than we would be able to give, as she characteristically submitted to a deep scrutiny the whole debate of methodological individualism and collectivism. But unfortunately, after analysing the positions, she takes the stand characteristics of the medieval mystics that claimed the Aristotelian 'golden mean'. She ends her essay "On Philosophy of Social Sciences" saying:

In some instances, laws are closer at hand if the scientist sticks to the macroscopic level of the complex concept. From these laws he may construct theories. In other instances, the microscopic or psychological approach might be more fruitful; in still other, a combination of these approaches, certainly, given the still rudimentary condition of social theory, a crusade for the verifiable which insists that the scientist wait upon developments in psychology, or, what is worse, act on his own psychological hunches, can only cripple research by restricting it to the trivial. This is not to recommend methodological licence, only methodological liberty for the social scientist to find his laws and explanations where he may.

which is clearly disservice to her brilliant analysis.

Brodbeck begins her study with an analysis of law and theory. She points out to four different patterns in the contemporary theory of the social sciences:

1. Essential identity in method between social and physical sciences. Social theory is reducible to psychological and physiological - physical.

2. Unique character of sciences of man or geisteswissenschaften - organists, holists, emergentists.

3. Marxists and pragmatists attempted to unite the empiricist, scientific tradition with anti-analytical holism and historicism. For them the study of society must be objective and scientific. But the laws of society are different from those of physics or psychology.

4. Reductionist in one sense and anti-reductionist in another. The behaviour of groups must be explained in terms of the

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the behaviour of the individuals, but the psychology of the individuals cannot be reduced to anything else. Although it opposes organicism, it too rejects the so-called unity of sciences, and insists like the holists on a unique and perhaps, subjective method in the social sciences.

According to Brodbeck, all the four positions share one common feature of man and society. For the proponents of physical reduction, human and social characteristics 'are' in the same sense of 'are' — ultimately atoms and electrons. For the organicist, society is a unique whole. The Marxists and the pragmatists fuse these visions. But for Prof. Hayek, neither organic wholes nor electrons take honours — the uniqueness resides in man.  

Brodbeck next indulges in a personal criticism of social scientists and more particularly philosophers who, in her words, "abhorr a vacuum, ... rush in where scientists fear to tread." Fortunately, she does recognize that philosophers in their speculations "are anticipating the results of future scientific research, making guesses about what would be shown in an ideally completed science." Well, it is but natural that every theoretical analysis is based on most perfect system (whether they exist or not). Even Brodbeck indulges in the study of 'ideal social science theories' in her own works.

Brodbeck's major concern has been Hayek's thesis of 'methodological individualism'. She claims that it is the ideological motive at the horror of planned economy that has led Hayek to accept an individualistic position. She calls the issue a moral one rather than scientific or philosophical. There are three aspects of Prof. Hayek's thesis of individualism, according to May Brodbeck: (a) Social sciences are 'systematically subjective', (b) use of macroscopic, collective, non-psychological concepts is always illegitimate and (c) explanation in social sciences must be in terms of individual motivation and behaviour.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
Brodbeck’s criticism of Hayek’s thesis consists of a claim that Hayek failed to understand the subject-matter of social sciences. Brodbeck asks Hayek how is that there is an unbridgeable gap between the methods of natural and social sciences if the subject matter of social sciences is like that of natural sciences, observable? For Hayek claims that it is people’s opinions, attitudes, beliefs, etc. that is the subject matter of social sciences. Brodbeck points out two fundamental problems in the ‘scientism’ of Hayek, namely objectivism and collectivism. We are aware of the inherent problems in Hayek’s and Popper’s positions which Brodbeck tries to highlight. At this stage, however, we are concerned with Brodbeck’s philosophical position regarding the debate between individualism and collectivism.

Prof. May Brodbeck recognises two different problems regarding the methodological individualism and collectivism. The first issue is that of nature of the terms or concepts of social sciences, and the second, nature of laws and theories in social sciences and their relationship to those in other areas. The first issue is the problem of meaning and the second is the problem of reduction. Brodbeck follows a descriptive mode of argumentation rather than a logical analysis of the issues involved. She accepts two kinds of properties, namely, relations and group properties. The former can be exemplified by characteristics or properties of an individual but which can be understood only in relation to another individual or object as ‘tall’, ‘short’, etc. The latter are exemplified by properties attributed collectively to a group “so that the group itself is the subject of the proposition”, 1 such as ‘Indians are disappearing’. By group, Brodbeck means “an aggregate of individuals standing in certain descriptive relations to each other.” 2 Brodbeck further affirms that “descriptive terms, which do particularly concern us, may be either physical, in the narrow sense, like ‘loud’ or ‘dirty’ or behavioural or sociological, like ‘efficient’ or ‘wealthy’. 3

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
She hastens to add that there is no issue about the occurrence of group characteristics. The only existing issue for her is whether there are any such attributes which are undefined or undefinable. Briefly, we are there attributes of groups not definable in terms of (a) the behaviour of the individuals which compose the group and/or (b) the relations between these individuals. Brodbeck believes that there are such undefinable terms referring to properties of individuals, things or persons such as colour etc. The question, however, is to know whether there are such undefinables in terms of group properties, for instance, can we define "responsive audience" without reference to responsiveness of individuals in the group? Or, do groups or instances have purposes not definable in terms of individual purposes? Further, we can immediately observe the similarity of the above problems with that of 'group entities' and 'group mind'. The logical extension of the above problem leads us to ask whether there are such 'group minds' and if there are such entities, then do they have characteristics of their own such as political opinions, etc. It is clear, therefore, that there is just one question in Brodbeck's terms: Are there or are there not undefinable descriptive properties of groups?

The individualistic reaction is:

(a) There are no indefinable group concepts.
(b) The laws of the group sciences are in principle reducible to those about individuals.

(a) denies descriptive emergence and (b) denies explanatory emergence. (a) and (b) are general tenets of empiricist tradition. (a) is required by the logic of concept formation within the individualistic, empiricist framework, whereas (b), i.e. regarding the composition of laws cannot be a prioristically decided. Brodbeck argues that descriptive emergence is compatible with and may be used as an argument for the necessity of explanatory emergence. We shall see in detail Brodbeck's argumentation, but it suffices here to note that her claim "the empiricist commitment to definitional methodological individualism does not logically imply a commitment to explanatory individualism, that is, to reduction," is too premature.

Dr. May Brodbeck after analysing the traditional differences between those who accept the 'undefinable group properties' and those who deny it, concludes saying: "In principle, of course, for whatever cold comfort that may be, all such concepts must be definable in terms of individual behaviour. In practice, however, we frequently cannot do this. Are we then prepared to say that whatever context these terms occur they are wholly ambiguous as to meanings? I hardly think so? The course of science is not always as smooth as the logical analyst would like, and it seems to me that there are cases in which the best we can do is point out the distinctions and the difficulties. The most we can ask of the social scientist whose subject matter requires him to use such 'open' concepts is that he keep the principle of methodological individualism firmly in mind and as a devoutly to be wished-for consummation, an ideal to be approximated as closely as possible. This should at least help assume that never more will be dally with suspect group-minds and impersonal 'forces', economic or otherwise; nevermore will non-observable properties be attributed to equally non-observable group entities. At the same time, he will not by methodological fiat he struck dumb about matters on which there is, no matter how imprecisely, a great deal to be said." ¹

At this stage, Brodbeck seems to be an ontological individualist, and methodologically a helpless holist and teleological individualist. The confusion creates is not due to her lack of understanding of the involved principles, but due to her ability to take assumptions to their logical extensions. Another one of her such ventures we are about to study is the notion of 'reduction'.

'Reduction' is considered as the basic presupposition of the empiricist tradition. Reduction here means that all group of macroscopic concepts are definable in terms of individual behaviour. In the present debate, reduction is, in Brodbeck's words, a "denial of descriptive emergence". ² In general,

² Ibid. For Brodbeck, Descriptive emergence consists of admitting that 'supra-individual group properties' can be attributed to things. But for methodological individualists, reduction arises in connection with explanation of laws and theories.
'Reduction' is a problem of whether one can explain a phenomenon in one field in terms of another field - e.g. chemistry in terms of physics, etc. Reduction involves deduction and is achieved by deducing the explicandum from given true premises. Further, it is only statements and not concepts that are the natural parts of explanation. In Brodbeck's terms, "explanation is in fact a major reason for deduction" as the deductive reduction also serves as an explanation. For example, we explain Galileo's law of falling bodies by deducing it from the Newtonian laws of gravitation. So far, Brodbeck's analysis is non-controversial. But Brodbeck does not allow in the same vein, the reduction of sociological events to psychological ones or psychological events to physiological ones. Her contention is that the subject-matter which is determined by the terms and concepts of different areas of study, cannot be said to be deduced from another area of study, cannot be said to be deduced from another area of study when there are "no terms or variables in common" and hence one cannot have a "deductive consequence of the other". The logic of reduction, argues Brodbeck, "of macroscopic thermodynamics to mechanics differs from that of the reduction either of chemistry to physics or of psychology to physiology, and these all differ from the way in which the reduction of sociology to psychology would take place, if we could do it." To understand Brodbeck, as she herself points out, we shall have to study the distinction between definitions of terms and reduction of laws and the distinction between perfect and imperfect knowledge.

Brodbeck calls knowledge 'perfect' when we are aware of all the variables that would affect a given phenomena, and on the basis of this we could test out knowledge by the test of prediction. Brodbeck gives an example of an economic theory of behaviour regarding consumption, income, saving profits, etc.

Assume that we are given the equations (laws) of this theory, the numerical values of its constant coefficients or parameters, and a set of initial conditions.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
that is, the observed values of its variables at any particular time or for a specified geographical area. By a leap of imagination, assume moreover that from this system we can predict the future course of all our variables or compute their entire past history; we know how changes in one variable produce changes in any other; we know to what extent by tinkering with the system we can bring about desired changes, to what extent we are powerless. If we know all this, either in economics or for that matter in any other social science, there is clearly nothing else we could possibly desire to know, at least as far as these variables are concerned.

A theory for Brodbeck consists of "a set of terms or concepts, undefined and defined, and a set of statements, called generalizations or laws, about how the referents of some of the terms affect others." For a prediction on the basis of such theories, it is necessary that we must have a set of statements regarding the state of the system at a particular time \((t_1)\). But assume that a prediction is made on the basis of the given data and consequently rejected or falsified by the course of events. How do we explain this? There are two possible answers or rather sources of error: (a) the inductive generalizations may have been over-generalized and (b) measurement has gone beyond its limits. On the basis of this, Brodbeck distinguishes between hard and soft sciences but immediately adds that the difference is only one of degree. But this difference is based on two characteristics of certain physical theories, namely closure and completeness, which Brodbeck claims are lacking in theories of social sciences. Consequently, it is this that makes the difference between 'hard' and 'soft' sciences: "(a) Whether or not the referents of the terms of the theory interact only among themselves and with nothing else at the time and within the geographical area considered and (b) whether or not any variables that in fact do make a difference have been omitted from the expression of the theory." 3

What means closure and completeness for Brodbeck?

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2. Cf. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
'Closed' system consists of theories that contain process laws, \(^1\) i.e., "the values of any one variable at any time can be computed by means of the laws from the values of all the others at any other time." \(^2\) Brodbeck further points out how the theory is also complete. She claims that when the connections among the variables are reversible or symmetrical, then the system is complete. Assume that in a theory, a variable \(x\) brings about a change in variable \(y\), and conversely a change in variable \(y\) brings about change in \(x\), then we say the connection between \(x\) and \(y\) is symmetrical. In social sciences, Brodbeck affirms, that this is not the case. We may know \(A\) causes \(B\), but we "are rarely in a position to say how changes in \(B\) affect \(A\) or even what happens to \(B\) if \(A\) is not present." \(^3\)

Brodbeck attempts a theoretical study of 'closure' and 'completeness' with reference to social science theory and laws. The issue at present, however, is whether social laws and theories can meet the requirement of 'closure' and 'completeness'.

Brodbeck argues that a "wholly autonomous social science, closed and complete by itself, is ... not likely," \(^4\) because of physical, geographical and physiological factors that participate in its phenomena. It is therefore necessary to know (i) conditions for closure of 'human' systems, which leads to (ii) variables affecting a theory of social sciences.

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1. Brodbeck does not attempt to give a precise definition of 'process law', but the following statement would probably come near to a definition if we attempt to find one such statement. Process laws are laws wherein "the values of the variables mentioned in the laws are completely determined for every moment of the temporal sequence." (R. Brodbeck, (1973a), p.298) And this is possible, according to Brodbeck, only in the laws of physics which are very specific in their concepts and permit prediction not only to 'some future time', but also to compute conditions sometime in the past and for any given moment. Brodbeck therefore lays down a twofold requirement of a law being a process law: (a) simultaneous reaction of \(x\) on \(y\) without time lag between the changes in the two variables and (b) reversibility that applies to time present, past or future, i.e., given knowing the present conditions we can compute conditions for any time in the past etc. Laws of social sciences fail to meet the twofold condition and hence cannot be regarded as 'process laws'.

2. Brodbeck cites the example of celestial mechanics and non-atomic thermodynamics in classical physics as nearly perfect theories.


4. Ibid., p.304. (Italics are mine).
To prove that social sciences suffer from imperfection and separation of variables, Brodbeck distinguishes between two types of variables or terms that are commonly employed in the social sciences. In psychology for instance we distinguish between stimulus variables and response variables and in economics we distinguish between exogenous and endogenous variables. After briefly explaining the distinction, Brodbeck concludes that this division is "a reflection of the inadequacy of a given theory, whether in psychology or in economics, to fully account for changes in all the variables." She further claims that no individual social science can by itself achieve completeness, as it is dependent on various other social and natural sciences. Any theory of human behaviour has some references to either political, psychological, economic, religious, etc. factors in the individual's environment. It is, therefore, said that one social science depends on the findings of other sciences. Completeness in the strict sense, i.e. "exclusive mutual dependency among the terms of the theory", is possible only if there is one all encompassing social science of human behaviour.

The failure to meet the requirement of closure and completeness naturally leads to imperfect knowledge. Social scientists have resorted to statistical techniques to achieve the certainty of natural sciences and consequently give a "semblance of closure and completeness" which is the feature of perfect knowledge. Social scientists, points out Brodbeck, have so much employed the statistical techniques that they have nearly forgotten why in the first place they began using these techniques. There are both rewards and hazards of using the statistical method, hazard because the knowledge gained is imperfect and reward because it is better to have imperfect knowledge rather than no knowledge. It is, therefore, because of the incompleteness of our explanations that we are led to employ these techniques.

After pointing out what could be commonly called the characteristics of 'knowledge at its best', i.e. closure, completeness, precisely identifiable referents, temporal definiteness

2. Ibid. p.300.
3. Ibid. p.305. (Italics are mine).
of prediction or computation, Brodbeck inquires into the possibility of such characteristics being applied to theories referring to group concepts. "Group concepts" refer to complex patterns of descriptive, empirical relations among the individuals, claims Brodbeck. "The study of the behaviour of these complex results in the formation of laws which we may call macroscopic from the nature of their terms. Such laws will be different from laws about the behaviour of single individuals. There need not be and will not be any similarity between the behaviour of a complex and the behaviour of the elements of a complex." ¹ Brodbeck exemplifies the notion of 'macroscopic laws', i.e. laws that contain group variables, with the law of "stratification causes increased efficiency." ² She, however, agrees that the kinds of individual behaviour such as 'giving orders', 'taking orders', 'communication' etc., are the undefined terms of sociological system, but even then these alone do not enable us to deduce a law. She cites two reasons for this: (a) Individual behaviour need not be in terms of existing psychological theory, and even if they are, then it is still not sufficient for the deduction of a law. She argues: ³

In addition to the elementary laws telling how an individual acts in the presence of one or a few others, we must also have composition of laws stating what happens, under certain conditions, as the number of people is with increases. The latter of course, state how he behaves in a group. Assume, more particularly, that we have the elementary laws, none of which mentions stratified groups, about how Jones, that is, an individual with certain characteristics, behaves in the presence of a person like Smith and about how Jones behaves in the presence of a person like Brown. In addition, assume we have a composition law revealing how Jones behaves when he is confronted with both Smith and Brown under the conditions defined as 'stratified'. We would then know how one individual with certain characteristics behaves as a member of a certain layer of a stratified group. If in addition to these composition laws about interactions of various kinds of people and the definitions of the group concepts, we are also given the (statistical) description of the initial composition of the group, then we can predict the behaviour of the group, that is, we may derive laws of group behaviour.

It is clear from the above passage that Brodbeck in principle accepts the possibility of such an explanation of the

². Ibid.
³. Ibid.
sociological theory where the composition laws contain only psychological terms. But Brodbeck concludes that "it does not follow ... that we can scrap all macroscopic social sciences." 1

(b) The second reason is the nature of composition laws. Composition laws are empirical generalizations and being generalizations they are liable to fail at some point, claims Brodbeck. She points out that even laws of physics are prone to such mistakes. And logically it is possible to point out any scientific law to be false the moment initial conditions are increased. The basic reason is the problem of induction and measurement. Brodbeck, however, attempts to show more reason than the 'uninteresting' theoretical one of induction. She explains why prediction fails once the number of individuals is increased by assuming that once human behaviour has reached certain level of complexity, there aren't laws of human behaviour. Brodbeck, of course, is not so emphatic about this possibility. But she claims that it could be that not only laws of composition but also determinism break down. The addition of a 'new' variable to the present situation would make prediction false as it affects the behaviour of the other variables already existing. We fail to understand here why Brodbeck does not demand the reformulation of 'prediction' on the basis of the additional information available by the addition of the 'new' variable.

Prof. Brodbeck proposes alternative explanatory emergence. 2 Explanatory emergence deals with "laws of group behaviour, which even though their terms are defined as they should be, are still not derivable from the laws, including whatever composition laws there are, about individual behaviour." 3 In her view, with regard to explanation, the anti-emergentist merely denies in principle

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2. Explanatory emergence is not the same as descriptive emergence which we have discussed somewhere in this study. Brodbeck herself points out 'descriptive emergence' which applies to group properties such as group-mind, etc., and which are undefinable in terms of individuals making up the group, is different from the present concept of explanatory emergence.
we cannot derive laws about group from laws about individuals. The emergentist, however, denies the very existence of such composition laws about group behaviour because, he claims, that the composition rules necessary for reduction are lacking. The above position, claims Brodbeck, is also held by some type of historicists who believe that there are laws of society of history. This is same as to claim that there are laws of social processes, which, according to Brodbeck would only force us to explain indeterminism in terms of individuals rather than groups. At this point, however, Brodbeck turns out into a committed collectivist.

To sum up Brodbeck's arguments, we can point out to three different positions taken by her. **First**, "it is logically possible that a class of group concepts form a complete set of relevant variables of the social process."[^1] Hence, it is logically possible to formulate a process theory and further it is logically possible to formulate a complete theory of psychology "with only behavioural, non-physiological variables."[^2] Consequently, we can attain perfect knowledge of society on the basis of laws containing only group or macroscopic variables without any definitional reduction. **Secondly**, Brodbeck points out to the existence of organic chemistry to show how the study of organic complexes and formulation of relevant compositions is more feasible and practical than the study of interactions of the fundamental particles in the study of physics. From natural science, Brodbeck jumps to the plane of social sciences and discusses the plausibility of such 'macroscopic' laws on the basis of which we could, like in natural sciences, predict the state of society at time t. And **lastly**, Brodbeck claims that if perfect knowledge on the basis of group variables is not possible — there is another possibility, i.e. we could formulate approximate laws of all kinds based on group variables, which though imperfect, could without considering the individual variance, be still used for prediction. Statistical knowledge is a perfect example of the their alternative Brodbeck proposes.

[^2]: Ibid.
For Goldstein's position we depend upon his two articles, namely, "The Inadequacy of the Principle of Methodological Individualism" and "Two Theses of Methodological Individualism". Although chronologically "The Inadequacy of the Principle of Methodological Individualism" is prior (it is an essay based on his doctoral dissertation), Goldstein position is more precisely formulated in the second paper. In the second paper, Goldstein distinguishes between the methodological thesis and the ontological thesis which have been used synonymously by most of the exponents of methodological individualism. According to Goldstein, Watkins' principle of methodological individualism so long as it means "that human beings are only moving agents in history, and if sociological holism means that some superhuman agents or factors are supposed to be at work in history, then these two alternatives are exhaustive" ¹ and does not create controversy. But, Goldstein believes that the second principle of Watkins, i.e. "that all explanation in social science must, in the end, be reduced to individual dispositions", ² is questionable. The first position is different from what is generally considered to be methodological individualism. And hence, Goldstein calls the former, ontological individualism and the latter methodological.

There are two reasons why Goldstein presents his analysis of the present debate and this sums up his understanding of the principle of methodological individualism. The first comes from the confusion created by assuming that denying ontological thesis implies the denial of methodological thesis. And the second is the inseparable link that is assumed between methodological holism and historicism.

Many social scientists have been busy with the problem of 'risk of ontological error'. Simmel, Durkheim, Ginsberg and others have realised that to ascribing characteristics to groups is not considering them as entities existing independently of the individuals that compose them. The study of all these authors

² Ibid.
point out that there is no need of believing in hypostatic social entities, yet they claim that there is no need of insisting that all social explanation should be individualistic.

Goldstein uses Durkheim analysis to emphasize his own argument. Durkheim is accused of creating 'group-mind', but Goldstein defends him saying that the failure to explain some of the social phenomena is due to his lack of application. Further, Goldstein assumes that Durkheim could very well explain the phenomena by appealing to 'sociological emergence'. 'Sociological emergence', in Goldstein's language, is the assumption that "when human beings live together, share common experiences, and so forth, there emerges common sentiments and modes of representation which would never have arisen apart from group life and which cannot be analysed into the bio-psychological characteristics of unsocialised individuals. A view such as this does not require the support of holism." 1 Goldstein ends his defence on a high note of certainty when he says: "Social scientists may develop non-individualistic theories without being holists. And it has the further advantage of forcing the methodological individualist to defend their methodological thesis on methodological grounds. If non-individualistic social science does not commit outward ontological sins, the methodological individualists are required to find better ground for its rejection. The doctrine that all explanation in social sciences is ultimately in terms of individual dispositions is not established, indeed, in no way supported, by the untenability of holism." 2

The proper methodological individualism is one that is proposed by Watkins which claims that all explanations in social sciences are to be individualistic, i.e., explanations should be carried back step by step until it turns into psychological ones. Watkins' claim that what we are interested in explanation of the social phenomena is individual dispositions and not dispositions of societies or other holistic entities. Watkins answers Goldstein's hypothesis that the theory of kinship is unexplainable in terms laid down by a methodological individualist in the following: "What gives kinship system its stability and distinctive

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2. Ibid., pp.281-282.
characteristics is, ... certain rules about marriage, inheritance, residence, etc., which govern the behaviour of each member of his 'relations'. But a local rule of inheritance, say, is simply a disposition shared by pretty well everybody in the locality to deal with the property of dead persons in a determinate way. I conclude that there is no difficulty in the idea of an anthropological explanation of the characteristics of kinship system in terms of dispositions and beliefs."

Goldstein makes a half-hearted defence of his previous paper, but finally takes recourse to 'precept-practice' argument that has been so often used by the methodological holists. Goldstein claims that "detailed individualistic explaining may well be an ideal for which to strive, but in most instances it is not a realisable goal, and there seems to be no point in virtually ruling the social sciences out of business by insisting upon it. All of the examples quoted are instances of those so-called anonymous dispositions. They are not only dispositions of specific individuals with whom a factual evidence may yet become available, the same characteristics or dispositions described." Goldstein does not claim that individual dispositions make no difference to social explanations. But together with Hardock, Goldstein believes that although behavioural psychology and psychoanalysis are relevant to his theory, still in the actual formation of a theory or deriving results from a theory, individual dispositions play no logical role.

As a reaction to Watkins' proposal, namely, that the ultimate explanatory basis should be in terms of individual dispositions or dispositions of anonymous individuals, Goldstein refuses to accept the very notion of 'dispositions of anonymous individuals or anonymous dispositions'. He calls these "non-individual characteristics of societies or part of societies, or socially induced ways of behaving." He further claims that "there is no science of the 'anonymous'. What we have are not the characteristic dispositions of people we don't know, but the social behaviour of people in given situations quite apart from

2. Ibid. p.285.
3. Ibid. p.286.
their personal dispositions."

To bring his point more emphatically, Goldstein proposes a study of the notion of theory and tries to forward a non-individualistic socio-cultural theory, such as 'the explanation of nomenclature and kinship, its socio-ethnological relevance and understanding' by Redcliffe-Brown and 'functional explanation of kinship and nomenclature' by George Peter Murdock.

Goldstein's non-individualistic socio-cultural theory has two basic characteristics: First, "it is not amenable to analysis according to the prescription of methodological individualism and yet is not holistic or historicistic,"² alleges Prof. Goldstein. Secondly, "it is not psychologistic in-as-much as all its concepts are entirely upon socio-cultural level making no appeal to the psychological dispositions of individual people."³ Goldstein, however, will have to account for the origin of such a custom if the explanation based on the above theory is to be adequate.

Goldstein proceeds undisputed and claims that while a theory is not individualistic, it is neither holistic nor historicistic because there is neither any appeal to the nature of the whole nor any mention of the inherent potentiality. Further, no individual characteristics are taken into account when discussing such theories. Goldstein further believes that such a theory is not psychologistic, whereas Prof. Murdock (whose functional explanation Goldstein borrowed) believes that behaviouristic psychology has considerably influenced the theory. The difference of opinion between Murdock and Goldstein is due to the confusion between enculturation of the individual and socio-cultural change, according to Goldstein. He believes that the former may require reference to psychology as it deals with individuals, whereas the latter does not have such a requirement. Goldstein claims that "while the comparatively stable bio-psychological nature of the human race may be necessary conditions for human socio-cultural systems, it is not a sufficient condition, for the specific forms of any of them." ⁴

Goldstein’s positive thesis consists in showing that there are events which should be explained in collectivistic terms. He begins with the distinction between synchronic and diachronic social research. Anthropologists are concerned with the development of synchronic rather than diachronic social research. Methodological individualism, on the other hand, rules out the possibility of diachronic social theory. Methodological individualism reiterates the distinction between ideographic (historical) and monothetic disciplines and insists that only by historical reconstruction can we answer to diachronic questions. Goldstein points out that even historical reconstruction would require the use of general laws, as it is the very essence of explanation. Goldstein asserts that "if the well-known selective character of historical research is not to give way to promiscuous subjectivity, the utilization of socio-historical or socio-cultural laws as providing criteria of relevance is certainly both required and implied." ¹ Goldstein seems to have an upper hand when he says that Popper fails to specify the logical properties of trivial laws that make the laws more acceptable than the historical or socio-cultural laws. But then Goldstein assumes that Popper’s fear is due to his belief that there can be no socio-cultural law that is not historicistic.

Goldstein concludes his study by briefly pointing out how methodological individualists caricature the views of their opponents — for example, they suggest that methodological holists believe in peopleless systems of culture. He points out that this is not the case even with the ontological holism and accepts that "what we know about social systems we have learned from observing the behaviour and probing the thoughts of particular human beings. Furthermore, the only way to test the truth or falsity of any diachronic theory of socio-cultural change would be to observe individual behaviour. Noticing that certain changes were taking place, we might predict that after a while, say a generation, a certain type of kinship system will prevail in a given society. This means that under specifiable conditions of human intercourse specific behaviour may be expected; people will be related to others in determinate social ways and will act in ways compatible with these relations." ² Goldstein seems to be a good

¹ ibid., p.272
² ibid., pp.274-275
methodological and ontological individualist in the above passage, except that in a sudden volte face he begins to use holistic terminology. If our 'social' theories are formulated on the basis of our observing and probing the thoughts of particular human beings and furthermore tested on the same basis where lies the transcendence of 'society' over the individual behaviour?

Goldstein seems to answer to our query while saying that "general concepts of social science (cannot) be exhaustively analysed in terms of actions, interests, and volitions of specific individuals", ... such a view would have no 'power of prediction or explanation.' 1 Goldstein contention is simply indefensible. Even staunch methodological collectivist would grant the point that explanations and predictions are more precisely formulated in individualistic terms than collectivistic.

Again, Goldstein rejects Watkins' contention that only concepts or types constructed on the basis of observed social activity are admissible. Goldstein forwards Murdock's theory of kinship to prove his point. We have, however, already observed how Murdock's theory fails to assert anything to refute individualistic assumptions.

And finally, Goldstein affirms that "in as much as the problems of social science differ from those of psychology - the former being concerned with at least in part, with questions of socio-cultural development, persistence and change, the latter with individual behaviour - the claim that all socio-cultural concepts are, in the end, psychological, is untenable. While the experience of each person is subjective, neither the content nor the occasion of the experience is. The individual subjectively experiences the norms of society and its accumulated knowledge and lore, but the social scientist deals with these contents in their objective or social character. I strongly suspect that no little amount of confusion on this point stems from the failure to distinguish between the psychological or subjective and the phenomenological or sociocultural concepts of mind." 2

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2. Ibid., pp.275-276.
To accept this argument, Goldstein will have to first answer what is the basis of assuming that the social science problems differ from the problems of psychology. Goldstein will be accused of committing the fallacy of 'begging the question'. Secondly, Goldstein creates confusion (more than his suspicion that the individualist creates) by identifying subjective with psychological. Psychological experiences need not be subjective.

MAURICE MANDELBAUM

Mandelbaum's position regarding methodological individualism is well defined. He believes that natural sciences and social sciences are fundamentally different with respect to the type of concepts, the techniques of research and the purpose with which the scientific enterprise is carried out. The aim of Mandelbaum's paper "Societal Facts" is to show that "one cannot understand the actions of human individuals as members of a society unless one accepts 'societal facts' i.e. 'facts concerning the forms of organization present in a society', as opposed to those there are 'psychological facts' which refer to thoughts and actions of specific human individuals.

Mandelbaum immediately takes up the issue of reduction of sociological facts to ultimate physiological ones. He points out that it is impossible to reduce societal facts to psychological ones because "if it be the case, ... then those concepts which are used to refer to the forms of organization of society cannot be reduced without remainder to concepts which only refer to the thoughts and actions of specific individuals." 7 Mandelbaum takes up the phenomenon of 'money withdrawing bank procedure' for a detailed analysis to prove that any attempt at reduction leaves a remainder. He claims that even if we are able to explain every action of the individuals involved, still there must be statements that explain the rudiments of banking system. He concludes saying that "the actual behaviour of specific individuals

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towards one another is unintelligible unless one views their
behaviour in terms of their status and roles, and the concepts
of status and role are devoid of meaning unless one interprets
them in terms of the organization of society to which the indi-
viduals belong." ¹

The often quoted objection to this position is that
"the status of the individual is itself analysable in terms of
how specific individuals behave towards other individuals, and
how these in turn behave towards them. Thus, the explanation of
individual's behaviour demands introduction of concepts referring
to 'social status' – and such concepts themselves are reducible
to further statements concerning the actual or probable forms
of behaviour." ² Consequently, we could conclude that 'societal
concepts' are merely heuristic means by which we can sum up the
trends in behaviour of number of individuals.

Mandelbaum rejects the suggestion saying that a particu-
elar behaviour (say, bank-teller's) would remain unexplained,
if we attempt to explain 'status' (in the present case, of bank-
teller) in terms of recurrent patterns of behaviour. Each of us
recognises the bank-teller to have a particular status. It not,
it is impossible, claims Mandelbaum, to understand why bank-
teller hands us money when he is in teller's cage and refuses
when we meet him at a party. He, therefore, concludes: "It is
impossible to escape the use of societal concepts in attempting
to understand some aspects of individual behaviour: concepts
involving the notions of status and role cannot themselves be
reduced to a conjunction of statements in which these or other
societal concepts do not appear." ³

Mandelbaum does not claim that all facets of individu-
also be explainable in terms of societal facts, for
example, two bank-tellers and their attitude towards x would

² Ibid.
³ This applies also to attempts at translating societal concepts
in terms of thoughts of individuals rather than in terms of
their overt behaviour because in such an attempt the thoughts
themselves will have social referents, claims Mandelbaum.
differ. Hence, he believes that (a) "in understanding or explaining individual's actions we must often refer to facts concerning the organization of the society in which he lives, and (b) ... our statements concerning these societal facts are not reducible to a conjunction of statements concerning the actions of individuals." 1

Mandelbaum next proposes the criterion of 'irreducibility' to prove his thesis that societal facts cannot be translated into individuals facts about the behaviour of participating individuals. Let us assume, suggests Mandelbaum, that there is a language $g$ in which sociological concepts such as 'institutions', 'modes', 'ideologies', 'status', 'class', etc. appear, and further, let us assume that there is a language $l$ in which we refer to the thought and actions and capabilities of individual human beings. For example, 'the president of U.S.A.' explained with reference to the constitution of U.S.A., where language $g$ is employed, and 'D.D. Eisenhower' explained with reference to name and statements concerning his personality, where language $l$ is employed. Hence, all statements in language $g$ must be translated in language $l$. Mandelbaum claims that it is by no means certain whether such a translation can take place without using concepts which appear in sociological language. However, even if these concepts in turn are translated in language $l$, the translation would never be complete and hence would result in incomplete translations. Consequently, there cannot be translations from language $g$ to language $l$ which are effected without remainder. Mandelbaum, therefore, formulates the principle: Sociological concepts cannot be translated into psychological concepts without remainder. 2

The immediate objection raised by reductionists is that inability to carry out translations without remainder, represents a practical difficulty and not a theoretical inability. The inability arises due to the indefinite or long conjunction of statements to be analysed. Mandelbaum retorts saying: (i) "We are concerned with the problem of relations between two empirical disciplines. Therefore, if it be admitted that it is impossible

in practice to reduce statements which contain societal terms to a conjunction of statements which only include terms referring to the thoughts and actions of specific individuals, the rejoinder in question might conceivably be significant from the point of view of a general ontology, but it would not affect my argument regarding the autonomy of the social sciences." ¹ And, (ii) "the problem of reducing statements which conclude societal terms to statements which only concern with specific individuals is not merely a question of how we analyse action statements, but how we may explain certain facts." ² For example, a detail explanation in relation to physical movements of a bank-teller does not explain why of his actions.

There is an ontological objection to this thesis which Mandelbaum attempts to refute. It is claimed by the reductionists that societal facts have no status of their own since no such facts would exist if there were no individuals who thought and acted in specific ways. Mandelbaum immediately reminds us that he does not deny the presupposition of individual thoughts and actions, which he claims does not entail that societal facts are reducible to facts of individual behaviour. As all human beings are born in a society — their behaviour patterns are societally oriented.

The reductionist explanation, according to Mandelbaum, is that, the beginning of human race there were individuals who were born into a non-existing society — and these "individuals must have formed a societal organization by virtue of certain pattern of repeated interpersonal actions." ³ Mandelbaum claims that this is genetic fallacy, because one cannot argue that the nature of present societal facts is reducible to facts about the individual behaviour because the origins of a particular system was due to certain repeated forms of behaviour. He claims, if this was the case then we can explain every current Broadway play as a religious festival because modern drama is based on Greek drama which was a religious festival.

². Ibid., p.228.
³. Ibid., p.230.
Mandelbaum's position is best observed in the following: 1

It is, I hope, adequate to show that one usual form of countering my position is untenable; yet, the essential paradox remains. One can still legitimately ask what sort of ontological status societal facts can conceivably possess if it is affirmed that they depend for their existence on the activities of human beings and yet are claimed not be identical with these activities. There are, it seems to me, two types of answer which might be given to this question. In the first type of answer which might content that a whole is not equal to the sum of its parts, and a society is not equal to the sum of activities which go to form it. This familiar holistic answer is not the one which I should be inclined to propose. In the first place, it is by no means certain that the principle of holism (as they state) is philosophically defensible. In the second place, such an answer assumes that what may be termed the 'parts' of a society are to be taken to be individual human beings, and this assumption which I should be unwilling to make. All of the preceding argument entails the proposition that the 'parts' of a society are specific societal facts, not individuals. If this were not the case, societal concepts could be translated into terms referring to individual behaviour if we had sufficient knowledge of all the interrelations among these individuals. Instead, we have found that an analysis of a statement which concerns a societal fact will involve us in using other societal concepts; ... Thus, from the arguments which have been given, it follows that the 'parts' of a society are not the individual human beings, but are the specific institutions, and other forms of organization, which characterize that society. Once this is recognized, it remains an open question as to the extent to which any specific society (or all societies) are to be conceived holistically or pluralistically."

The second argument Mandelbaum proposes is that one set of facts may depend for its existence upon another set of facts and yet they cannot be regarded as identical, for example, the epiphenomenalist distinction between contents of consciousness and the brain events. Mandelbaum accepts that there could be various objections to the epiphenomenalist hypotheses, but in the present case, the epiphenomenalist position is analogous to that of societal facts. "Just as ... the component parts of a society are the elements of its organization and are not the individuals without whom it would not exist, so the epiphenomenalist would ... say that the parts of the individual's field of consciousness are to

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be found within the specific data of consciousness and not in
the brain events upon which consciousness depends." 1

The second objection raised against the above thesis
is an epistemological objection, i.e. the claim that societal
facts cannot be pointed out as we do the material objects. This
is based on the tenet that "all empirically meaningful concepts
must be ultimately reducible to data which can be directly ins-
pected," 2 and consequently, all societal concepts are reducible
to the patterns of individual behaviour. Mandelbaum tries to dis-
prove the epistemological objection by claiming that the epistemo-
logical position "cannot account for our apprehension of the
nature of individual action." 3 For instance, insists Mandelbaum,
we cannot directly observe the connection among the series of
actions, i.e. the intention of the actor, in the present case the
bank-teller. The alleged objection to this is that we learn to
attribute intentions to agents on the basis of our own experience
of intentions and when we observe a certain pattern of behaviour,
we interpret them in terms of intentions. Mandelbaum does not
hesitate to claim that this is another genetic fallacy because the
origin of our knowledge is not the knowledge itself.

Mandelbaum next points out that he never held the view
that there are no facts concerning individual behaviour which are
independent of societal facts. The objection that holding societal
facts to be independent from individual behaviour patterns leads
to individual men becoming "pawns of society, devoid of initiative,
devoid even of a common and socially conditioned nature, concei-
ving of them as mere parts of a self-existing social organism", 4
is uncalled for, according to Mandelbaum.

In another article entitled "Societal Laws" Mandelbaum
argues that like there are "societal facts" which are irreducible
to facts concerning the individual behaviour without remainder,
there are "societal laws" which are irreducible to laws concerning
the individual behaviour.

2. Ibid. p.253.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
He claims that to reject methodological individualism does not necessarily involve the acceptance of methodological holism—there are other alternatives to methodological individualism. He believes that Popper's and Hayek's positions are attacks on historicism, organicism and social holism, which equate the rejection of methodological individualism with the acceptance of methodological holism. Again, Maurice Mandelbaum asserts that methodological holism has been mistakenly identified with certain forms of historicism, and not with methodological collectivism of political scientists, economists, anthropologists and sociologists. Further, it is often claimed that rejection of methodological individualism would regard the component parts of a social system as being institutions which comprise the system. But this does not follow, according to Prof. Mandelbaum, that individual human beings are determined by society as a whole. The assumption, to reject the metaphysical thesis ('the whole is greater than the sum total of its parts') would be acceptance of methodological individualism, is erroneous.

Mandelbaum's attempt to prove the existence of "societal laws" takes him to analyse various types of laws. He begins by distinguishing between Law of Functional Relation and Law of Directional Change, which are also known as synchronic and diachronic laws. The distinction can be illustrated in natural sciences. Boyle's law or Newton's law of inverse square law would be examples of functional laws whereas the second law of thermodynamics would be an example of directional law. In history, the distinction would be between laws concerning history and the laws of history. Marx's doctrine of superstructure (relation between economic organization of a society and other institutions of that society) would be functional law, i.e., law concerning history. Whereas, dialectical development as an attempt to formulate a law stating the necessary pattern of directional change in history, is a law of history.

The two laws seem to be obviously different, for Mandelbaum. The functional law, "would enable us to predict immediately subsequent events, and each further prediction would have to rest
upon knowledge of the initial and boundary conditions obtaining at that time." 1 The directional law "would not demand a knowledge of subsequent initial conditions (though it would assume stability of boundary conditions), for if there were a law of directional change which could be discovered in any segment of history we could extrapolate to the past and to the future without needing to gather knowledge of the initial conditions obtaining at each successive point in the historical process." 2

The second distinction is between abstractive laws and global laws. Abstractive laws state the relation between x characteristics or components at time t, so that it can be applied to all cases where x characteristics are present. In the formulation of such a law the nature of the phenomenon in which x is present does not enter the law itself. It is considered only with respect to 'the initial boundary conditions' which should be regarded in the application of the law. Whereas, in case of global laws, it is possible to regard some entities in terms of their global properties, and analyze as unitary systems or wholes. In such a consideration, law-like statements may be formulated concerning changes in the "global properties or concerning relationships between the nature of the system as a whole and the manner in which its component parts behave. In stating such a law we are considering the system as a system and a reference to the properties of the system is included in the law which we formulate." 3 Acceptance of global laws does not entail position of 'emergence' or 'holism', claims Mandelbaum. Because, such laws may be derivative from laws concerning the parts and may be reducible to abstract laws.

Mandelbaum regards this distinction between abstractive and global laws as not a distinction between laws formulated in terms of particular aspects or components which have been abstracted from a concrete state of affairs, and laws which are in terms of the nature of particular types of the system.

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
"Abstractive laws", says Mandelbaum, "are about the relationships between two aspects of components that occur in a variety of different concrete situations; the nature of the situations in which these aspects are embedded constitute the initial and boundary conditions which must be taken into account in applying the laws. Global laws, on the other hand, are about the properties of systems, attempting to show how these systems change over time, or how the system as a whole is related to its component parts." 1

Next, Mandelbaum studies the four different types of law-like statements and their relation to holism. The four types of statements would be schematised as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law of Functional Relation</th>
<th>Abstractive Law</th>
<th>Global Law</th>
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<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directional Law</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
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A) Law-like statements which are both functional and global. "Such laws would relate the global properties of a social system as a whole to one or more of its component parts, i.e. to its specific institutions or sanctional usages," points out Mandelbaum. There are two ways of establishing laws of this type, according to him:

1. "Regard the global properties as determinants of the properties possessed by component parts of the system" as in case of Ruth Benedict's descriptive analysis of particular patterns of culture. (ii) As in case of Marx, who derives "certain global properties from one specific component within that system", for example, his analysis of 'feudalism' or 'capitalism'. Mandelbaum reminds us that all these attempts are not holistic in the same sense.

B) Law-like statements which are global and directional: Such laws are derived not by relating properties of a system as a whole to one or more component parts but by formulating law-like

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2. Ibid.
statements concerning successive states of a system, i.e., "a law of this type would be a statement concerning a pattern of directional change in a social system considered as a whole."  1

C) Law-like statements which are abstractive and directional:
To establish a law of directional change in a specific institution from some more ultimate law of change is not incompatible. For example, theories of necessary stages of religious development, or marriage systems. There are two kinds of this type of laws: (i) laws concerning the direction of change in the total system, which are directional laws of global type, and (ii) laws concerning the changes in the nature of the human mind.

D) Law-like statements which are abstractive and functional:
Statements concerning the relationships between modes of production and marriage systems; between size of population and political organization, forms of economic organization and political organization, etc. are abstractive functional laws. These laws have no direction of historical change as a whole. Mandelbaum cites two characteristics of these type of law-like statements: (i) Being abstractive, such laws try to explain changes as they occur in terms of "successive initial boundary conditions which obtain at specific points in time," 2 and (ii) they do not claim that these conditions are identical to all societies. Further, "they try to remain uncommitted to the questions whether any particular society (or every society) can be regarded as a single organic whole," 3 asserts Mandelbaum. By this, Mandelbaum proves that acceptance of abstractive-functional societal laws does not necessarily imply acceptance of historicism or organicism.

According to Mandelbaum, the first three types of laws are possibly reducible, but abstractive-functional laws, i.e., abstractive laws concerning functional relations between specific types of social facts are irreducible.

Mandelbaum's final remark is regarding the relationship between psychological laws concerning the behaviour of individuals

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. p.245.
and abstractive functional laws or laws that attempt to explain social structures. If we are to accept the methodological individualistic position that the so-called societal laws deductively follow from the laws of individual behaviour, then, there are no irreducible societal laws. On the other hand, if we accept that there are irreducible societal laws, then there are two possible positions: (i) One can claim that the 'irreducible' laws are sufficient to explain the social phenomena, which, of course, methodological individualists would not accept as such a position renders human action nugatory in social phenomena. (ii) One can, however, claim that an adequate explanation of social phenomena must consist of psychological and societal laws. Mandelbaum points out that in different natural phenomena (such as soil conservation programme) two different types of laws (psychological law about human behaviour and physical law regarding the environment) are employed without any claim of need of one being reduced to another. Similarly, he claims, we could employ psychological and societal laws for an adequate explanation of social phenomena. Such a position would neither result into 'historical inevitability' nor holism nor rejection of psychological laws and their necessity to explain social phenomena. The only claim of the above thesis, claims Mandelbaum, is that there is some phenomena which cannot be adequately explained without the use of abstractive functional generalizations.

Prof. Mandelbaum's position can be summed up in the following two statements: (1) There are 'societal facts' which are not heuristic devices, but have their own status which is not analysable in terms of individual behaviour and the reductionist attempts cannot be effected without remainder. (2) There are 'societal laws', which like 'societal facts', are irreducible to natural laws determining individual behaviour.

Now, the two issues are in fact one single presupposition in sociology or a claim that there is 'society' over and above individuals and consequently, it follows that the behaviour of this 'society' is a 'societal fact' and the laws that govern this behaviour are 'societal laws'. The whole methodological thesis of Prof. Mandelbaum will crumble, if we can uphold the reductionist principle — which, in fact, we carry out in the last chapter of the present study.
A.C. Danto deserves a place in this study more for his views on the nature of history than for his contribution towards a theory of methodological individualism or collectivism. Nevertheless, his discussions on Watkins' notion of 'methodological individualism' deserve equal attention. Speaking of the debate between individualism and collectivism, Danto goes beyond mere 'collectivism' that is identified with holism to a more politicized form of collectivism, namely, 'socialism'.

Danto, as he himself claims, tries to refute the substantive theory of history. He accepts an analysis of history based on 'language of time'. He begins his study by defining 'historical sentences' which he regards as sentences which state some fact about the past. Historical writings employ such sentences which have proper names or definite descriptions of individual human beings as their grammatical subjects. It is understandably true that such a linguistic feature of historical writings does not always give us a criterion of distinguishing a historical writing from non-historical. A cursory glance at the existing historical writings will show that they do not always have only such 'historical sentences'. Although, on the one hand, according to Danto, it is logically inconceivable to have historical writings without such historical sentences, on the other hand "there is little difficulty in conceiving an historical writing in which none of the historical sentences which compose it employ expressions which refer directly to individual human beings who actually existed." Danto further claims that it is difficult to conceive historical writing that contains all the sentences having proper names or definite descriptions as grammatical subjects.

Historical writings not only employ individual human beings (proper names or definite descriptions of human beings) as historical subjects but also 'social individuals' such as bourgeoisie, national groups, religious organizations, large-scale

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2. Ibid.
social events, etc. Danto, however, for his immediate analysis is concerned with social and particular individuals only.

The protagonists of the former theory seem to believe that the social world is made up of individual human beings and 'other super-human' individuals who have individual human beings and their parts, are not to be identified with their parts "which enjoy a life of their own." Danto believes that for Watkins the present problem is not an ontological one, rather a methodological issue. He believes that Markle's thesis, unlike that of Watkins, is an ontological one based on an epistemic hypothesis, namely, "x is real, if and only if, we experience x", which means that for an x to be real, it has to be experienced. Taking this to its logical extreme, such a position is not different from Berkeley's esse est percipi. The difficulties of Berkeley's position are too well known to deserve any mention here. Compared to Markle, Watkins' position does not deserve to be called ontological because, Watkins claims, according to Danto, "human beings are the ultimate constituents of the social world, and the context quite clearly implies that he means, by ultimate, that human beings are only moving agents in the social world. It does not follow from the fact that human individuals are the only members of the social world but only that, whatever else may be a member of the social world, it is not a moving agent. So Watkins, whether in addition he would also subscribe to Markle's ontological thesis, is actually concerned with a thesis about explanation. What he seems to be saying is this: if indeed there are such things as social individuals, their behaviour is to be explained, ultimately, with reference to the behaviour of other social individuals. This is because (he would claim) human beings alone are causal agents in history." But Danto never claims that both Watkins and Markle ascribe to a 'reductionist' theory. In a 'typical historical account', any mentioned made to individuals is not because of any intrinsic value the individuals have - but because of their historical significance, claims Danto. It is, however, left to be seen

2. Ibid., p.375.
3. Ibid.
how Danto would react if a historical account such as 'Thirty Years War' by Miss Wedgwood, were to be re-written in individualistic terms, i.e. by applying the reductionist principle. 1 An alternative explanation regarding the use of individuals in a historical explanation, is possible, which Danto would have to take account of. The mention of individuals may be explained as due to the major role played by X, and the minor roles played by other individuals and because of their similarities (intrinsic or extrinsic) they are reduced to collectivities.

Arthur C. Danto studies purposeful behaviour in historical situation to assert that changes in history take place not in individuals but in society. He believes that the changes that have occurred in history were unintended ones. "Men", he assumes, "followed their purposes, acted in the light of their views of their situations, were not alive to the 'significance' of what they were doing. Moreover, the changes here described may not have been reproduced within biography of any single individual who lived through the change." 2 He believes that even if certain individuals did in fact change, we cannot deduce from this alone the scope of the change which incontestably took place.

Danto although recognizes purposeful and non-purposeful behaviour, intended and unintended behaviour, still does not attempt to distinguish between degrees of intention and also between consciously and unconsciously intended behaviour. He also should keep in mind the distinction between a biography and a 'log-book'. A log records both significant and insignificant events that take place on a 'journey' whereas a biography is concerned only with the significant events and that too in the eyes of the biographer.

1. By 'reductionism' Danto means "if we have a set of (S) of sentences which employ terms of kind (T) ostensibly referring to objects of kind (O), and another set (s) of sentences employing terms of kind (t) ostensibly referring to objects of kind (o), then if we replace every context \[ T \] in (S) with one or other context \[ t \] in (s) we will only need to admit objects of kind (o) in our ontology." (A.C. Danto, [1973], p.315). He hastens to add that if such a programme were successful, it does not follow that there are no objects of kind O at all.

The second important contribution of Danto is his study of Watkins¹ position. He observes four different positions which are mistakenly considered to be methodological individualisms.

I. Methodological individualism, Danto claims, is not a theory of meaning. He says, "it (methodological individualism) does not hold that every statement about social phenomena is 'real' or 'ultimately' a statement about individual human beings. Nor does it propose to demonstrate that every predicate, nominally true of social individuals, may be explicitly defined by means of predicates which range over individual human beings. Hence, it is not an analytical theory, in accordance with which sentences about social individuals are held to be, at least in principle, translatable, without loss of meaning, into sentences wholly about individual human beings. On the other hand, it does require that there be some kind of relation between these two classes of sentences."¹ Danto points out that it is true that certain statements about social systems can be verified only through observation of individual behaviour. But this is Verifiability Criterion of meaning, and the methodological individualist is not necessarily committed to this. Hence, he concludes that such sentences about social individuals (or social phenomena) are irreducible. A committed methodological individualist will not indulge in purely linguistic controversy that carries him nowhere. Danto may have come across some illicit formulations of methodological individualism which were identifiable with some sort of theory of meaning.

II. Methodological individualism, claims Danto, is not a constructionist theory in Russellian terms.² In Danto's words, methodological individualism "does not hold that societies are logical constructions out of individuals in the way in which Russell used to say that stars and tables are logical constructions out of sense data."³ Danto believes that like the theory

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² Russell's constructionist theory assumes that "inferred entities should always, in the interests of parsimony, be replaced with logical constructions.
of meaning, constructionism may be regarded as quite a challenging task - but a failure of such an attempt will not upset the methodological individualist. He claims that what Watkins wanted to propose was not a metaphysical theory but a scientific one whose task was to account for 'social systems' and not to eliminate them by reducing to their parts. "Such a theory," asserts Danto, "has sentences about individual human beings at its base, but we must distinguish between base of a theory and the rest of the theory; quite clearly the concept of base loses all meaning if there is not something else, distinguishable from it, for which it is the base: a building cannot be all foundation." There is, we believe, a clear misunderstanding of Watkins' notion of methodological individualism. If ever Watkins uses the term base, it will never be in the sense of foundation, as alleged by Danto. Watkins in most clear terms asserts that individuals are the ultimate constituents of society and that every explanation of social phenomena or system should ultimately be in terms of individuals if it is to be adequate and complete.

III. Another position that is very often identified with methodological individualism is an ontological thesis which assumes that only human beings are real in the 'social world', points out Danto. 'Social' individuals depend on particular individual human beings for their existence and hence there would be no 'social' individuals or societies if there were no particular individual human beings. But Danto argues that even if something exists contingently, it still exists. Danto takes up an 'analogous situation in the study of images which are regarded either as brain states or not. The methodological individualist who holds the above position, according to Danto, is like epiphenomenalist "who holding that images (and mental events generally) are distinct from brain processes (and physical events generally), still insists that the former are causally connected with the latter in a unilateral way, and can only be explained with reference to the latter." Danto's criticism that such an 'ontological position' is not methodological individualism need detailed

2. Ibid.
study, which we have presented in the last chapter.

IV. Finally, Danto believes that methodological individualism does not deny the possibility of general law-like sentences which relate various properties of social systems. Furthermore, he alleges that it does not follow that such laws, if found, would only be laws describing individual behaviour. Danto's contention is preposterous as he tries to restrict legitimate and logical extensions of methodological individualism.

The above four positions, according to Danto, are not part of methodological individualism. A methodological individualist does not deny the possibility of law-like sentences which explain the workings of social systems, argues Danto. However, he does maintain that the different law-like sentences can be confirmed only through the analysis of the behaviour of individual human beings.

What is then methodological individualism, according to Danto? He characterizes the following five features of methodological individualism:

(i) "sentences about social individuals are logically independent of sentences about individual human beings,

(ii) "social individuals are ontologically distinct from individual human beings,

(iii) "social individuals are causally dependent on the behaviour of individual human beings and not the other way about,

(iv) "explanations of the behaviour of social individuals are always to be rejected as ultimate unless these explanations are framed exclusively in terms of the behaviour of individual human beings,

(v) "the explanation of the behaviour of individual human beings must never be in terms of the behaviour of social individuals."

Danto's five features of methodological individualism say not only what methodological individualism is, but also what it is not. The first is a theory of meaning, the second and third

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rejects what he earlier called 'ontological individualism' and fourth and fifth explain some of the characteristics of methodological individualism or as he call them "theses about the ideal form of a social science." Danto's attempt to study methodological socialism (which he regards as the position opposite to methodological individualism with an ontological theory of society) suggests that he himself identifies methodological individualism with a sort of ontological theory of society.

Danto believes that there are some misconceptions in methodological socialism, like you find in methodological individualism. Marxism is the result of methodological socialism, according to Danto. Marx's historical materialism is based on the assumption that there is "one-way interaction between social processes and at least some psychological processes," that is, "we explain some facts about systems of production with reference to other facts about systems of production. and we explain some facts about individual human beings with reference to some facts about systems of production; but we never explain any facts about systems of production with reference to any facts about individual human behaviour; and finally, we never explain any facts about individual human behaviour with reference to other facts about individual human behaviour." Danto's comparative analysis between Marxism and methodological individualism brings out one fact clearly, namely, that psychology is an instantiation of a theory that satisfies the criteria of Methodological Individualism.

Prof. Danto studies Mandelbaum's position which provides for him 'interesting' arguments to reject the extreme methodological individualistic position. Danto distinguishes four theses regarding Mandelbaum's relations between psychological and societal facts.

(i) "Sentences about societal facts cannot be translated into sentences about psychological facts without having so--

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. p.323.
societal remainder.

(ii) "Sentences about societal facts must be ('it is ... necessary to ...') particularly translated into sentences about individual facts, for 'unless we do so we have no means of verifying any statements we may make concerning societal facts.'

(iii) "Societal facts may depend for their existence 'upon the existence of human beings who possess certain capacities for thought and for action'. But this does not entail that the former set of facts is identical with the set of facts upon whose existence it is contingent.

(iv) "The existence of societal facts does not entail that there are no individual facts or that individuals are not 'real'. Rather there are these two distinct sets of facts which may be said 'to interest'. Thus: 'There are societal facts which exercise external constraints over individuals, no less than there are facts concerning individual volition which often come into conflict with these restraints.'" ¹

Danto believes that for the greater part of the argument, there is incompatibility with the methodological individualism - the incompatibility is with the tenets that merely resemble methodological individualism. The point of disagreement, according to Danto, comes from the thesis (iv), which Danto claims that it accepts 'two-way interactionism' unlike thesis (iii). Further, Mandelbaum's fifth (v) thesis, i.e. "in understanding or explaining an individual's action, we must often refer to societal facts, i.e. facts concerning the organization of the society in which he lives," ² is incompatible with (iv).

Danto forwards two reasons why Mandelbaum holds (v):

(a) Informal or Wittgensteinian reasons: Explaining someone outside our culture and economic system the work of a bank-teller would mean to explain the phenomena or events with reference to societal facts.

(b) Formal or Translatability Thesis: Suppose we have a language $L_2$ (describing societal facts) and another language $L_1$ describing individual's actions, thoughts, etc. - we cannot

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2. Ibid., p.325.
translate the former $L_0$ to $L_1$ without remainder. Danto asserts that Mandelbaum is not quite sure of this thesis — he (Mandelbaum) even accepts that theoretically it may be possible to translate — but in practice it is immensely difficult — and of no scientific interest. For Mandelbaum, in Danto’s view, the real issue is not how societal facts are analysed — but how individual actions are explained — hence the argument goes back to informal reason. Mandelbaum’s two language thesis, claims Danto, is confusing. For, it is doubtful whether there are “terms which refer to individual human thought and action which do not involve that sort of presupposition.” 4 Danto then proceeds to analyse the notion of ‘remainder’ in Mandelbaum’s theory. He considers three different statements or sentences:

1) The bank-teller certifies the withdrawal-slip.
2) The man makes marks on the piece of paper.
3) The man certifies the withdrawal-slip.

Danto calls the sentence 1 S-sentence containing only S-predicates (S stands for societal) and sentence 2 I-sentence containing only I-predicate/s. Sentence 3 is a mixture of the two i.e., contains not only I-predicates but also S-predicates. The I-predicates, Danto claims, are trans-cultural whereas the S-predicates are peculiar to the organization or society in which they are employed.

Consider the terms employed in the three sentences:

- bank-teller
- man
- certifies
- makes marks on
- withdrawal-slip
- piece of paper

Danto rightly claims that there is no relationship of entailment between the corresponding terms, i.e., we cannot claim that $x$ is a man from the fact that $x$ is a bank-teller nor that $x$ is a bank-teller from the fact that he is a man. Similarly, there is no relation of entailment between certifies and makes marks on or between withdrawal-slip and a piece of paper. 2

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2. One exception that Danto discusses based on peculiarities of certain societies does not refute his position. Take the case of British society in a period when only males were allowed to be bank-tellers. Statements regarding such cases presuppose another S-sentence, namely, ‘only males can be bank-tellers.’
Extending to its logical extreme, (v) seems to be a thesis about the meaning. According to Danto, therefore, Mandelbaum does not by this, refute individualistic position. The individualistic position that deserves to be refuted is that "there are laws covering the behaviour of societies ... these laws are ultimate ... and we are able to explain the working of societies simply by reference to the behaviour of individual human beings." Hence, Danto concludes that Mandelbaum's theses are "even when tightened up, ... are not merely compatible with methodological individualism, but they are utterly irrelevant to questions concerning the latter's status. The fact that they could have been so much as considered to be relevant is due, in the end, to the equivocation of the word 'explain'."  

Danto next devotes his attention to Watkins' refutation of methodological socialism. Danto does not agree with the contention that the logical impossibility of methodological socialism automatically proves the logical necessity of methodological individualism. According to Danto, Watkins' is one such attempt to refute historical materialism, which does not imply that we can by the same argument refute methodological socialism. Danto reduces Watkins' argument to four distinct theses:

1) "There are predicates which range over social individuals.

2) "There are predicates which range over individuals.

3) "It is a necessary condition for $\exists$ to be an adequate explanation of a phenomenon $\mathcal{A}$, that a sentence describing $\mathcal{A}$ be exhibited as a deductive consequence of premises.

4) "There can be no non-logical term in the conclusion of a deductive argument which does not appear in that argument's premises."  

He points out that "... if there is to be an explanation $\exists$ of some piece of individual behaviour $\mathcal{A}$, the explanandum, i.e., the sentence which is used to formulate $\mathcal{A}$, must employ predicates which range over individual human beings. Let $\mathcal{A}$ be such a sentence.

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2. Ibid, p.329.
3. Ibid.
The explanation will minimally require that \( \mathfrak{B} \) be exhibited as a deductive consequence (c) of premises, and amongst these premises must appear at least one sentence which contains at least one predicate which ranges over individual human beings (d). Accordingly, from premises containing sentences which employ only predicates ranging over social individuals, \( \mathfrak{B} \) cannot be deduced and hence \( \mathfrak{B} \) cannot be explained." 

Danto admits that the consequence although not necessarily true, is a deductive conclusion from the above premises. But the same argument can be construed, by substituting 'predicates which range over social individuals' for 'predicates which range over individual human beings' and vice-versa, to show that methodological individualism fails. Danto further suggests that the best thing at this stage is 'logical disarmament and peaceful co-existence', which seems to be his task in the debate rather than trying to find a solution to the problem.

In Danto's terms, methodological individualism should be such that the "explanation ... of the behaviour of some social individual, must employ, amongst its premises, at least one sentence which employs at least one predicate ranging over social individuals," and similarly, methodological individualism should be such that it allows "amongst its premises of its explanations at least one sentence which employs at least one predicate which ranges over individual human beings." 

To sum up, Danto leads us to believe that it is impossible to choose between methodological individualism and methodological socialism. It is difficult to find one good reason, according to Danto, why we should accept one position and reject the other.

Danto position is legitimate so long as one accepts what Danto believes to be methodological individualism. It is enough to point out at this stage that Watkins' 'methodological individualism' (which we have seen at length in Chapter IV) is an explanatory thesis rather than methodological in the strong sense of the word.

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2. Ibid., p. 330.  
3. Ibid.
Scott takes a very critical view of the debate between methodological individualism and collectivism. He observes that the label 'methodological individualism' has been applied both to the methodological principle (as in case of Hayek) as well as to the epistemological principle (as in case of Popper). And the third position, Scott claims is that of Watkins, who does not distinguish between the two positions adopted by Hayek and Popper. Scott claims that Watkins distorts Hayek's methodological individualism when he reinterprets the principle.

According to Scott, Hayek's principle is about the methods that should be used in collecting data in the social sciences and formulating theories on the basis of these data. Popper's principle, as Scott understands it, is a blanket epistemological principle which demands that we should not be satisfied with "collective" explanations of the social phenomena. Scott, therefore, concludes that Popper's demand that the behaviour and actions of collectivities should be reduced to the behaviour of human individuals is an analytical process, whereas Hayek's claim that an individualist begins with concepts which guide the individuals in their actions, is a synthetic process. Hence, the difference between the two, according to Scott, is: Hayek believes that social sciences do not deal with social wholes but reconstruct such models; and Popper believes that 'institutions' should be analysed in individualistic terms. Another difference pointed out by Scott is that Hayek is concerned with how theories are formulated, whereas Popper is concerned with how theories are tested. Popper's explanation of the principle, namely, that we must understand all collective phenomena in terms of actions, interactions, hopes, aims, thoughts and traditions created and preserved by individuals is considered as an additional criterion, and hence Scott tries to understand the former in relation to Popper's views on 'purpose' of social science. In Popper, Scott observes twofold purpose of social sciences, namely, first, to form sociological laws analogous to natural laws, and second, to give explanation of some regularity of law. Scott argues that the
confusion can be solved by accepting "that in a law what matters is testability, but an explanation must comply with the principle of methodological individualism, (and) laws do not need to comply with this principle." ¹ Scott further adds that most of the examples of sociological laws Popper proposes contravene the individualistic principle.

Scott accuses Watkins of distorting both Hayek’s and Popper’s principle of individualism. Distortion of Hayek’s principle consists in asserting that "knowledge of social phenomena can only be derived from knowledge about individuals, requires qualification... there are certain overt features which can be established without knowledge of psychological facts, such as the level of prices, or the death-rate." ² Scott points out that the circularity lies in the definition of 'overt features', i.e. "something which can be ascertained without referring to people's dispositions, etc." ³ whereas Hayek’s principle has universal applicability.

Popper’s principle of individualism, alleges Scott, is distorted when Watkins "down-grades Popper’s laws to 'unfinished or half-way explanations'." ⁴ Watkins believes that any complex social phenomena or institution is the result of a "particular configuration of individuals, their dispositions, situations, beliefs, and physical resources and environment." ⁵ The proposed explanations of these complex and large-scale phenomena may be unfinished or half-way explanations, however, we have not arrived at rock-bottom explanations until we have "reduced an account of them from statements about the dispositions, beliefs, resources, and inter-reactions of individuals." ⁶ The individuals may often remain anonymous. Watkins’ two illustrations which Scott denies as 'half-way explanations that are reducible to rock-bottom' are:

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. p.169.
1."An example of such a superhuman, sociological factor is the alleged long-term cyclical wave in economic life which is supposed to be self-propelling, uncontrollable, and inexplicable in terms of human activity, but in terms of the fluctuations of which such large-scale phenomena as wars, revolutions, and mass-emigration, and such psychological factors as scientific and technological inventiveness can, it is claimed, be explained and predicted."

Scott reminds us that the Russian economist Kondratieff whom Watkins mentions in the footnote as the one who propounds such a theory, is no more mentioned in the later editions of the article. Besides, Kondratieff does not say that 'long-term cyclical wave is self-propelling, uncontrollable, and inexplicable in terms of human activity'. Kondratieff, on the other hand mentions that he has no intention of laying foundations for a theory of long waves.

The second illustration of Watkins which Scott denies as 'half-way explanation reducible to rock-bottom is:

2. "Marx, for instance, professed to believe that feudal ideas and bourgeois ideas are more or less literally generated by the water-mill and the steam-engine. But no description however complete of the productive apparatus of a society, or of any other non-psychological factors, will enable you to deduce a single psychological conclusion from it, because psychological statements logically cannot be deduced from wholly non-psychological statements."

Scott claims that what Marx says is fully in accordance with methodological individualism, and quoting from Marx's The Poverty of Philosophy, shows what exactly Marx believed: "In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you, society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist." 2

Another distinction between Popper and Watkins is that Popper clearly distinguishes between methodological individualism and methodological psychologism. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Popper considers it as a mistake to accept psychologistic reduction as a consequence of methodological individualism. Watkins, however, at one stage accepts psychologism as in "Ideal Types and Historical Explanation" and rejects it as in "Historical Explanation in Social Sciences". Scott quotes two passages to point out this shift of positions: 1. "From this truism I infer the methodological principle which underlies this paper, namely, that the social scientist can continue searching for explanations of a social phenomenon until he has reduced it to psychological terms." 1 And 2. "Another misunderstanding of methodological individualism is that it has been confused with a narrow species of itself (Popper calls it psychologism ...)" 2 Scott accepts change in views of a writer, but these changes should be explicitly registered and not purported to be merely extensions of their earlier views.

The last serious criticism of Scott is that Watkins has not answered to Maurice Mandelbaum's criticism and position regarding the societal laws, particularly the fourth class of sociological laws known as 'abstractive-functional societal laws'. Scott further points out that though Mandelbaum is non-commital as to the existence of societal laws, still in later passages of his article instantiates her laws with examples such as statements concerning relationships between modes of production and marriage system, etc.

Popper refuses to accept the distinction between 'laws' and 'attempts to formulate laws' as he does not accept distinction between hypotheses and laws. But, Scott argues, if attempts have been made to formulate laws, then hypotheses have been forwarded. But even granting that Mandelbaum has not mentioned that hypothesis of his fourth class has been made, it still remains unanswered why Watkins believes that certain types of theories cannot legitimately be postulated because of certain defects. Mandelbaum believes that there are certain theories that are free from such

alleged defects.

Prof. Scott's study of the debate has been consistent and analytic. He has succeeded in pointing out various inconsistent positions taken up by both Popper and Watkins who together with Prof. Hayek can be regarded as the main protagonists of methodological individualism. Scott, however, remains satisfied by presenting his 'negative' analysis (namely, a critical review of the positions adopted by these philosophers). Further, he remains uncommitted regarding his own position and does not take up any serious analysis of methodological individualism and collectivism per se.