Abstract
Modern Western culture is based upon the tension between a basic universalism and its permanent Romantic counterpoint. Science is one of the main expressions of the universalistic attitude and the Romantic genius dealt actively with it, criticizing and transforming it in many different ways. The emergence of modern human sciences (originally conceived of as the Geisteswissenschaften, or moral sciences) is due to this tension, in the sense that they came to provide a sense of reality and knowledge very different of that prevailing in the pristine universalistic ideology. The themes of difference, totality, uniqueness, flow, drive, experience, and understanding inspired or challenged the great founding fathers of the human sciences eventually in contradictory directions. They remain nowadays as powerful as ever, either as the necessary rationalization for any anthropological research or as the channel for the so-called post-modern speculations. To make them explicit and understandable is the task of this article.

Keywords
Romanticism; Human Sciences;
Universalism; Individualism;
Post-Modernism.