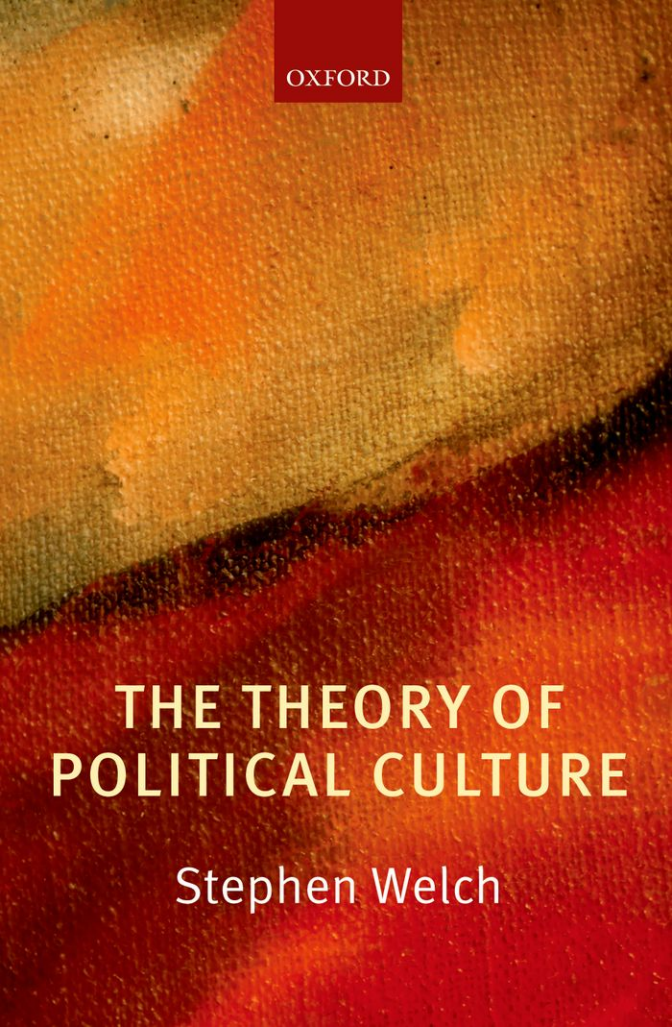

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The Theory of Political Culture

STEPHEN WELCH

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To Archie Brown

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Preface

In the Introduction to follow, I will offer the intellectual justification that a book with the title *The Theory of Political Culture* plainly needs. Here I will briefly offer justification of a more personal sort. I have been interested in political culture since I wrote an undergraduate essay on the subject in 1982. My tutor then, Archie Brown, suggested it as a doctoral dissertation topic under his supervision, and as it seemed to offer scope for both political and philosophical analysis (or to avoid the need to choose between them), I welcomed his suggestion. I wish I could say that I have never looked back. In fact I have often looked back, both during my doctoral research and in the years that followed. The intuitive plausibility of the idea of political culture has a darker side in the formidable difficulty of saying anything at all rigorous about it, and while, as they say, everything is connected to everything else, somehow political culture seems *more* connected to everything else. But despite numerous frustrations (maybe because of them), not to mention some explicit advice, I have kept returning to it. It is to acknowledge the fatefulness, for me, of Archie's initial suggestion, as well as his unflagging support since then, that I dedicate this book to him.

Some explanation is in order of the lapse of time between my first book on the subject and this one. Of course, distractions abound in an academic job, and indeed the way in which research is nowadays incentivized can, ironically, itself amount to a distraction. Nevertheless I would have to accept most of the blame myself. I have often been called a perfectionist, but I see myself rather as an 'adequatist'—and it has taken a while, given the topic, to achieve that standard. To adapt a little Robert Nozick's description in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, writing a book of this kind is like stuffing a collection of unwieldy objects into a sack, squeezing them and shaving off bits in the process, quickly photographing the sack before it bursts open, and then publishing the photo. If the shape still seems inelegant, I can only apologize, and admit that several even bulkier sacks have burst open on the way to this one.

I am therefore grateful to Dominic Byatt of OUP for his encouragement and especially his forbearance. Colleagues in the Politics Department and latterly the School of Government and International Affairs at Durham have either tolerated my lengthy labours or supported them, and I am grateful for that too. In particular I thank Maria Dimova-Cookson, Pete Kneen, Andy MacMullen, Jean Richardson, Peter Stirk, Julia Stapleton, Bob Williams, and Ruth Wittlinger, all of whom have kindly read and commented on various things I have written about political culture. Gidon Cohen's understanding of what this project was

about has often seemed better than my own. Other friends—Mark Aspinwall, Patrick Bell, Erica Benner, Bill Callahan, Anna Dickson, Caroline Kennedy, Monica Serrano, and Mike Yates—have offered over the years more general encouragement and support, which I have needed more than they probably imagined. The reviewers of my original proposal to OUP offered excellent advice, though they perhaps no longer remember doing so. Copy-editor Javier Kalhat and proofreader Rebecca Bryant were very helpful indeed.

In what follows, where there is sustained discussion of a single source, I have placed page references within the text rather than in endnotes. In quotations, all emphasis is that of the original, except where otherwise indicated.

Introduction

WHY A THEORY OF POLITICAL CULTURE?

According to one political science textbook, political culture belongs to a 'rare category' of concepts 'over which social scientists are in accord', and 'despite considerable focus on it for a number of years by scholars of different persuasions, there is overall agreement on its precise meaning and, more importantly, on its complex relationship to concepts of state and society'.[1] Conversely, it has been suggested that 'many now view [political culture] as little more than a footnote in the history of political research'.[2] Then there is the much-quoted observation of Max Kaase that defining political culture resembles an 'attempt to nail a pudding to the wall'.[3] These views suggest that a theory of political culture, the project of this book, is not needed, desired, or even possible.

A somewhat more productive observation has been made by Judith Shklar:

> Political culture is a notion that serves policy-makers well even if its scientific standing is poor . . . Political culture as a concept may not explain social conduct, but it can be used by an informed political observer to devise intelligent questions about what the likely and the unlikely consequences of political actions will be.[4]

Shklar's paradox poses the challenge of understanding how a concept whose scientific standing is poor could be of any use to policy-makers, empirically-minded and practical people as we may take them to be, and how a concept that does not *explain* conduct could be of use in formulating questions that allow us to *predict* it. Furthermore, the paradox is both broader and deeper than Shklar says: broader, because it is not just policy-makers, but recurrently academic analysts too, who have found the need to have recourse either to the concept of political culture or to something very like it; deeper, because it touches on questions of what we mean by explanation, what in general we can know about the political world within the framework of a scientific outlook, and indeed what a scientific outlook is. This book represents a response to the challenge represented by Shklar's paradox and the broader and deeper issues it evokes.

The career of the concept of political culture has been uneven, with its period of most unambiguous acceptance among political scientists being in the early 1960s. Even here, though, significant differences among the founding fathers of the concept were apparent, with the more quantitative approach taken in Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture* contrasting in not altogether acknowledged ways with the interpretive and historical one of Pye and Verba's

Political Culture and Political Development.[5] Some forceful theoretical critiques appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[6] A lively area of political culture research nevertheless developed in the study of communist states,[7] in which methods and methodology became an explicit topic of discussion.[8] Since then, the concept has fluctuated in popularity, and despite several anathemas being pronounced against it, often from the quarter of rational choice theory,[9] it has continued to experience periodic revivals.[10] Moreover, several large research programmes have appeared which owe much to the idea of political culture without always using it explicitly. Ronald Inglehart's impressive body of research into 'postmaterialism' is only one of several empirical investigations of 'values',[11] while the study of social capital, influentially defined by Robert Putnam as 'connections among individuals—social networks and the *norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness* that arise from them' has also spawned, thanks to the component I have highlighted, a large literature on the measurement of 'trust'.[12] Thus the idea of political culture, if not always the concept, has remained very much at the centre of attention.[13]

This brief but intense bombardment of references is perhaps enough to give support to my contention that political culture is an inescapable concept in the study of politics, but also a deeply problematic one, or as Jeffrey Goldfarb has more pithily said, 'Political culture—can't live with it, can't live without it.'[14] But I do not think the matter should be left where either Shklar or (as I will soon argue) Goldfarb leaves it. The paradox calls for a resolution, and this entails theoretical work. Of course the perception of a theoretical deficit is not entirely new, and there has been a succession of attempts to rethink, reinvent, or replace the concept of political culture, including Goldfarb's recent book and the doctoral research, subsequently a book, of the present author.[15] These theoretical proposals have, however, been either very partial in their coverage of the literature or else lacking in theoretical depth, and even the one of which I most approve stopped short of a fully worked out theory.[16] The difficulty, of course, is to combine breadth of coverage with depth of analysis. The present book has no better chance than any finite effort of completely avoiding the trade-offs which that combination entails. Nevertheless it has seemed to me that the alternatives either of picking one line of argument in political culture research and declaring it to be the right one, or of radically replacing the concept with something that only replicates its difficulties, should equally be avoided. Rather, the attempt to look both closely and comprehensively at the concept that we already have, useful as it evidently is, and to interrogate and if possible reconstruct its theoretical foundations, is worth making.

It is not, however, only the intellectual contention that surrounds the concept of political culture that indicates the need for theoretical work. The way the concept has actually been used also reveals a severe theoretical deficiency. It was initially introduced to express a *limit*, both causally and methodologically. In causal terms, it denoted something which gave rise to

persistence in political life and *resistance* to change. In methodological terms, the concept limited the scope of generalizations, and in particular supported a sceptical view of claims that universal laws governed political life, or that convergence towards a uniform condition was underway. But contrasting, more dynamic, uses of the concept of political culture have also been made. For instance, when students of social movements talk of 'cultural framing', they have in mind an active and creative undertaking by the promoters of political change which uses culture as its instrument.[17] When observers talk of 'culture wars', as they increasingly have in relation to American politics in the last two decades, again something very dynamic and creative is intended.[18] Goldfarb's recent book, subtitled *The Power of Culture* versus *the Culture of Power*, seeks to emphasize this creative potential of political culture (the 'power of culture') against the more static and limiting causal potential it has in the conventional view.

However, it is not particularly novel to admit the existence of an element of fluidity in political culture. In fact no student of politics would be likely to insist on the idea that political culture never changes; that the political persistence and resistance to which it gives rise are insuperable. The explicit analysis of political-cultural change which Goldfarb advocates is not new either. An example is a group of studies produced by the '*Culture Matters* Research Project',[19] whose motto is a remark by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan: 'The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself.'[20]

The problem is not to acknowledge a role for political culture both in the inertia and the fluidity of political life, but to resolve the apparent contradiction theoretically. In the *Culture Matters* Project we instead find that the 'conservative truth' is substantiated by a process of elimination of explanatory alternatives that neglect culture. With this method, 'culture' becomes just a name for the set of remaining factors, seeming to vary by country, and assumed to function causally as a set—what Beatrice Whiting has called a 'packaged variable'.[21] The 'liberal truth' is on the other hand established by case studies of deliberate cultural change, for instance through the educational system. The problem here is to get from these case studies an understanding of why attempts at deliberate cultural change sometimes work and sometimes do not. One of the studies reports 'the message of Alexis de Tocqueville: It is difficult (and probably impossible from the outside) to build democracy without a critical mass of democrats'.[22] These and similar observations reveal a problem of explanatory circularity: that to effect cultural change it already needs to have happened. Culture therefore seems to enter in as the explanation for both the success and the failure of programmes of cultural change.

The case studies of political-cultural change offered by Goldfarb similarly fail to provide more than illustration.[23] In general, simply adding the idea of

the fluidity of political culture to the idea of its inertia only formulates an explanatory wish list: it does not in itself explain anything. The mere juxtaposition of the 'conservative' and 'liberal truths' recalls the reasoning of Goldilocks, the heroine of a Victorian fairy tale who encountered, in the home of the three bears, bowls of porridge that were too hot, too cold, and 'just right', and beds that were too hard, too soft, and 'just right'. The criterion Goldilocks used was to favour the middle position on the sole grounds of the unacceptability of the extremes. When the Goldilocks criterion occurs in political culture research, and elsewhere, it is the sign of a theoretical lacuna. Neither complete environmental determinism nor complete cultural determinism is acceptable: the 'just right' account must be one in-between. For choices of breakfast and bedding this is enough, but for a theory of political culture we need more.

My claim that the theory of political culture needs considerable improvement runs into a radical objection from the interpretive tradition in political culture research, which instead insists that the point of the idea of culture is to rule out the project of theory altogether. This position has a recent strong statement in a riposte to the *Culture Matters* Project, Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz's *Culture Troubles*. These authors express their anti-theoretical position by contrasting 'political culture' with a 'cultural approach', a terminological stipulation I consider to be unduly selective,[24] although terminology is not our main concern. By emphasizing instead the idea of an *approach*, Chabal and Daloz seek to deny that there is a set of 'fixed "cultural" characteristics' (p. 109), that culture is a set of '"givens" providing the key to existing differences' (p. 171), that it should be conceptualized as beliefs, customs, or values, still less attitudes or opinions (pp. 86–8; 148); and that it can be construed as a factor or variable (pp. 95–6) or indeed as a cause (p. 145). Yet they also say that culture is a 'system of meanings' (pp. 23, 45), an 'environment', a 'matrix' or 'blueprint' (p. 21), 'software' that provides 'codes, rules and instructions' (p. 86), and that 'cultural systems have had a *deep influence* on how we live' (p. 37). The approach seems to be unable to avoid conceiving of culture as a thing, and a thing moreover with causal implications. But it disables itself from a closer look at these relationships as general processes, in favour of an undiscriminating 'inductivism' that insists that the context will always tell us what are the appropriate concepts. While no one would object to the suggestion that 'it is not enough to declare, once and for all, that the selected conceptual framework is the most appropriate' (p. 187) and that 'theoretical preference should at all times be informed by empirical reality' (p. 192), our need to understand the relationships involved invariably falls back on some kind of theory, such as notions of the 'deep influence' of culture, and analogies to blueprints or software.[25] These are substitutes for causal posits which improve on those of the *Culture Matters* Project only on the measure of vagueness. The interpretivist retort represents a denial of theory, using the

term 'denial' in the sense bequeathed to us by a popularized psychoanalysis: an attempted repression of something that cannot in fact be avoided. Yet the 'return of the repressed' points us again to the necessity of theory.

If these examples are at all indicative (which I will demonstrate they are), we find a compelling case for developing a theory of political culture, in place of the explanatory wish list produced by the usual rendering of the causal dynamics of political culture and in place of the denied theory that creeps back into interpretive accounts of culture. It is a compelling case, that is, so long as we accept that political culture is worth talking about at all. As I have argued, the concept or its analogues have been recurrent in political analysis; but this fact is in itself only suggestive. Pointing out to the opponents of political culture research that their critiques have not led to the complete abandonment of political culture research is not likely to convince them that the critiques are in error. A theory of political culture must therefore deal with the supposed alternatives to political-cultural explanation. My strategy for doing so will be to argue that the recurrence of political culture is manifest not only in the stubbornness of its exponents, but within the arguments of its opponents as well. Political culture remains worthy of our theoretical attention not just because some analysts refuse to relinquish it, but because those who insist we do cannot help but rely on it too. Just as interpretivist critique of political culture theory relies on covert and thus unanalysed causal claims, so critique of political culture research as a whole cannot dispense with culture, even while it tries to dispense with the task of understanding it.

In this book, then, I try to make the case for a theory of political culture to a wide audience: to practitioners of different ways of doing political culture research, and also to those who consider the very idea of political culture, never mind its theory, to be a dead letter in political science. My claim is not just that if we, as students of politics, are to talk about political culture we must have an adequate theory: it is that we cannot escape talking about political culture, so that the current dire condition of its theory is a matter of concern for all students of politics.

WHAT IS A THEORY OF POLITICAL CULTURE?

The examples I have just looked at give us, as it were in silhouette, an indication of what we are lacking in the theory of political culture. We lack, to put it in the simplest terms, an adequate account of what political culture is and how it works. Or to put it in more elevated language, a theory of political culture should contain both an ontology of political culture and, on that basis, an explanation of its causal dynamics.

The more elevated language brings with it a certain amount of philosophical baggage, though also the possibility of greater precision. In the philosophy of the social sciences, ontology has become the special province of the 'realist' school.[26] As I will explain in detail in Chapter 1, the realist critique of positivism has considerable merit, particularly in its insistence that causal analysis should include a focus on processes and mechanisms.[27] Up to a point, the realist imperative aligns with the phenomenological one, as I understand it (see note 16): it is indeed essential to look more closely at political culture than the macro-correlations of positivist political culture research can do. But in at least some of its formulations, realism overstates its case against positivism, and thereby excuses itself too readily from the obligation to substantiate its claims empirically. Political scientist Colin Hay, for instance, has argued that analysis must begin at a level of 'ontological depth', 'depending upon the concept of real strata apart from our knowledge of strata'. Indeed, he says, 'we must decide what exists out there to know about (ontology) before we might go about acquiring knowledge of it (epistemology)', a 'decision' that is apparently unconstrained.[28] The idea that to deal with ontology is to migrate from the realm of the empirical to a realm beyond our knowledge is one that I would join with the positivists in dismissing as metaphysical.

It does not follow, however, that one should have no truck with philosophy in dealing with ontological questions. Quite the contrary: the whole question of the ontology of political culture is raised, as the first section showed, by the failure of existing work in political science to address it. Positivism's operationalism, on the one hand, and interpretivism's hostility to theory, on the other, oblige us to seek out resources beyond the discipline of political science for the necessary closer look. I will deploy both philosophical and social-psychological resources to develop a dualistic ontology of culture, and thence political culture, which makes a fundamental distinction between two dimensions of culture, the practical and the discursive. The distinction has theoretical grounds in the philosophical arguments of Wittgenstein (as I interpret them) and Polanyi, and these have impressive parallels in some recent findings of experimental psychology.

The dualistic ontology in turn gives clear pointers to an understanding of the causal dynamics, and in particular the more or less openly admitted duality of the inertial and the fluid properties, of political culture. As I have suggested, this duality has never been properly explained, and even those who seek to address it explicitly have stopped at exemplifying it, producing only an empirical juxtaposition. We need from a theory of political culture an explanation of *why*, and not just an acknowledgement *that*, political culture can change as well as impede change, and what rates or kinds of change can be expected. Such an explanation is what I will derive from the dualistic ontology of political culture.

In developing this theory I will of course be depending considerably on the arguments of others. Even so, I will be taking an unorthodox course as far as the disciplinary expectations of political science are concerned. My view, putting it bluntly, is that disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries have become a major impediment to theoretical work.

Within political science itself, the place of 'theory' is complicated by the emergence and consolidation of a division between 'positive' theory (the operationalization of concepts and the formulation of testable hypotheses) and 'normative' theory, a branch of moral philosophy which reasons about the proper, right, or good organization of political life—often simply called 'political theory'.[29] As a consequence, political science lacks a body of theory that would play the same role that 'social theory' does for sociology, a role that marks the recognition by many sociologists that in addition to empirical investigation there is need and scope for thinking about general processes, structures, connections, and concepts that may be suggested by the overall pattern of empirical research, or that may help to construct an agenda for future empirical research. Space for a theory of politics in this sense, of which the theory of political culture would be a component, has effectively been evacuated by the institutionalized intra-disciplinary division of labour.

Further impediments to theory are presented by the division of labour represented by disciplines themselves. Political culture research originated at a moment of high ambition about the prospects of a trans-disciplinary 'behavioural science'. The failure of this positivist programme brought about a withdrawal from such ambitions, and even though lip-service is still paid to the ideal of interdisciplinary work, incentives to remain within the confines of a single discipline are strong. Fearful of 'reduction', disciplines have erected artificial barriers around their fields of study, only rational choice theory seeming to constitute a live trans-disciplinary agenda. But rational choice theory represents only an extreme version of positivism, with statistical modelling replaced by deductive modelling based on explicitly unrealistic axioms, and thus again falls short of the substantive theory political science is lacking.

Above all, it is the ever-intensifying specialization of the social sciences that impedes adequate theorization, even as it encourages the proliferation of research programmes each with its justificatory theoretical paradigm. I am acutely aware that the several arguments I will make and consider in the following chapters could each in themselves be the subject not only of a book but nowadays of an entire academic career. Against this background, an attempt at comprehensive discussion and at reopening closed disciplinary boundaries courts accusations of dilettantism, and at best abjures the comforts of membership in a tightly focused research network. But perhaps quixotically, I continue to believe that useful progress can be made in the spaces between

these ever more numerous (and sometimes unconsciously similar) intellectual strongholds.

The remainder of this book has eight chapters, followed by a Conclusion, which, as their titles will suggest, constitute four complementary pairs. In turn these add up to two halves of four chapters each, the first half setting out the necessity and possibility of a theory of political culture, and the second developing its substance. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the book.

The first pair of chapters will discuss the principal alternatives in political culture research, the positivist mainstream and its interpretive opposition. I have already provided an introductory sketch of the ways in which positivist and interpretive political culture research fall short of adequate theory, respectively by the *marginalization* and the *denial* of theory. Of course, the argument needs to be substantiated by more than a single case, and developed at greater depth. Chapter 1, on the positivist mainstream, will consider positivism as a philosophical position, noting also the realist critique, but concluding that it is not positivism per se that impedes theory in political culture research, but its implementation as a means of disciplinary consolidation, in a strategy I will call *disciplinary positivism*. The chapter will go on to examine the origins of political culture research and the effect of disciplinary consolidation on its development. It will argue that the main impediment to theoretical improvement has however been the operationalization of the concept of political culture in the attitude survey.

Chapter 2 turns to the interpretive alternative. It identifies interpretivism as a series of reactions to the progress of naturalistic social science, beginning with Herder and reaching a peak of philosophical ambition and sophistication with the work of Dilthey and Weber. Thereafter the intellectual centre of

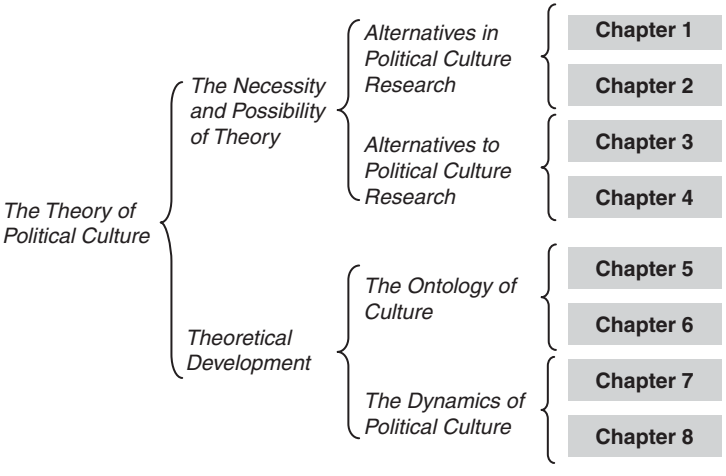


Figure 1. Structure of the book.

gravity of interpretive social science shifted to anthropology, and the chapter continues with an examination of the cultural anthropology of Ruth Benedict, Marshall Sahlins, and Clifford Geertz, investigating in particular the trajectory that led Geertz to the radical anti-theoreticism whose echo we have already heard in the work of Chabal and Daloz. The limitations of the resulting position will be demonstrated.

The next two chapters turn from alternatives *in* political culture research to putative alternatives *to* it. My argument will be that just as political culture theory recurs covertly in the interpretive denial of it, more broadly the denial of an explanatory role for political culture by various alternative positions ultimately reveals a need to address it. Hence the attempted displacement of political culture only succeeds in removing it from the centre of attention, with the outcome that it cannot be adequately theorized within the resulting framework. Chapter 3 considers 'materialist' theoretical displacements, rational choice theory and Marxism. It shows how and with what results they covertly depend on a concept of political culture, and investigates how adequately they account for it when the dependence becomes overt, as it does most substantially in cultural Marxism. Chapter 4 deals with a set of critiques stemming from the work of Michel Foucault which I label 'discursivist'. These have the peculiarity that they displace the interpretive study of culture in particular, ironically applying to interpretivism the very critique interpretivism applies to positivist political culture research: that it is a covert expression of power. But while it poses as pure critique, discursivism too relies on a causal theory, which I will show it cannot adequately develop.

I turn in the second half of the book to the development of a new theory of culture and thus of political culture. What a theory of political culture should do, I have already suggested, is explain its ontology and its causal dynamics. These topics are the respective themes of the next two pairs of chapters. Chapter 5 returns to the relationship of positivist and interpretive political culture research, now however with a view to exploring what they have in common, and what further alternatives their endless dispute obscures. It turns to philosophy for alternative perspectives, but particularly to two philosophers who dissented radically from the Western philosophical tradition, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Michael Polanyi. Interpretation of Wittgenstein is itself a large and vexed field, but Chapter 5 strikes a middle course between two polarized readings and derives from his writings on the philosophy of language a dualistic perspective on culture that distinguishes and separates practice and discourse. Polanyi's philosophy of science has emerged in recent years from a period of relative neglect, and provides, in the interpretation I will offer, a more concrete treatment of some of the themes brought to light by Wittgenstein, a treatment which focuses attention on the phenomenon of skilled practice.

Chapter 6 then consolidates the developing dualistic ontology of culture by addressing recent developments in social psychology and the theory of attitudes, the relevance of which is established by the positivist operationalization of political culture in the attitude survey. It investigates laboratory experiments that explore the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, a relationship taken for granted by political culture research. Striking parallels are discovered with the dissenting philosophical arguments considered in Chapter 5.

In the final pair of chapters I address political culture specifically, turning from its ontology (which is already established by the arguments of Chapters 5 and 6) to its dynamics. I argue that the dual dynamics, that is, the inertia and the fluidity of political culture, which have often been juxtaposed in political culture research but never given theoretical substantiation, can be understood in terms of the dualistic theory of culture. In Chapter 7 I discuss the inertial properties of political culture in terms of the theory of practice, focusing on the analytical paradigm of *skill*. In chapter 8 I turn to the fluid dynamics of political culture, and invoke, as a way of understanding the dynamics of discourse, the analytical paradigm of the *market*. In both cases I attempt to link the argument back into existing political culture research, showing how the theory I have developed offers support for some existing lines of enquiry as well as explanation of their limitations.

1

Theoretical Marginalization: The Positivist Mainstream of Political Culture Research

1.1. INTRODUCTION

I assume for the purpose of this chapter that it is not difficult to identify a 'mainstream' of political culture research; since my purpose is by no means to exclude from consideration what falls outside the mainstream (which I will address in later chapters), the designation may perhaps be allowed as roughly descriptive of work following in the footsteps of the early classic studies, with an overtly explanatory purpose and for the most part relying on attitude surveys as the means of measuring political culture. Since, on the other hand, the designation 'positivist' will do some of the argumentative work of this chapter, it should not be accepted so readily, even though it is, in fact, a label that is quite freely bandied about, perhaps more freely by those who would criticize it.

My main claim is that positivist political culture research, while it, like all research, does possess a theoretical framework, has marginalized theory in favour of operationalization and data collection. This marginalization is in part the consequence of the philosophical resources yielded by positivism. But it is more specifically the consequence of the way in which these resources have been deployed for the purpose of consolidation of the political science discipline. This second component of the explanation of the marginal status of theory in mainstream political culture research is important, since it allows some of the aims of positivist social science to be retained and deployed later for productive purposes in refurbishing the theory of political culture. Thus while this chapter amounts to a critique of positivist political culture research, it differs from several familiar ways in which positivism has been rejected, such as the hermeneutic or interpretive rejection, by being somewhat more discriminating.

The theoretical deficiencies of the mainstream of political culture research are explained, I will therefore argue, by a combination of the implications of positivism, the topic of section 1.2, with the imperatives faced by the discipline

of political science as it sought to establish and consolidate itself among the social sciences. These disciplinary imperatives will be the topic of the remainder of the chapter, which will develop the thesis that political science, and political culture research in particular, is characterized by a *disciplinary positivism*. It is this, and not positivism per se, that accounts for the theoretical deficiencies of the mainstream of political culture research.

In section 1.3 I will look at the circumstances prevailing at the inception of political culture research, which provided stimulus for the new programme of research without, I argue, entirely determining its character. Contributions to the latter were also made by the available theoretical and methodological resources, and these are discussed in sections 1.4 and 1.5. Just as (in Keynes's words) 'Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist',[1] positivist political culture researchers, with their apparatus of attitude surveys, their vast data sets, and the policy proposals they derive from them, are in fact working in the shadow of a substantive theory, namely the social theory of Talcott Parsons. Similarly, the methods themselves have a history and a theory. Thus positivist political culture research does possess at least a theoretical legacy, in the form of basic presuppositions about the causal relationships among the phenomena specified by its conceptual elements. But, as I will argue in section 1.6, the theory has been marginalized by the combined effect of the dispensation offered by positivist epistemology and the imperatives of disciplinary consolidation. The consequence is that it has never been properly examined.

1.2. PHILOSOPHICAL RESOURCES: POSITIVISM, FALSIFICATIONISM, AND REALISM

As is well known, Auguste Comte invoked the idea of 'positive' science as the third, culminating stage of human intellectual development, of which the first two stages were the 'theological' and the 'metaphysical'.[2] In the first stage, he suggested, supernatural entities were invoked as explanations of natural phenomena. In the metaphysical stage, underlying natural 'essences' were posited to account for observable natural events. Comte saw this as an only partial escape from the theological way of thinking, as it continued to rely on unobservable entities. Only with positive science had it become possible, he said, to rely for explanations only on the observable evidence, without the aid of theological or metaphysical posits whose role was effectively an expression of superstition.

The thrust towards the abolition in science of unobservable entities had already been evident for some time in the philosophy of empiricism, the thesis that knowledge rests ultimately only on the evidence provided by the senses. David Hume's theory of causation is thus of fundamental importance to positivism.[3] To put it simply, for Hume, the concept of causation was, like other general concepts, a useful fiction and an aid to thinking which it was a mistake to think matched anything in reality. All that obtained in reality was the repeated occurrence, or 'constant conjunction', of the event sequences we call cause and effect. All else, in particular our notion that the cause has some kind of 'power' to produce the effect, is a result merely of habits of thought, for we can never observe this power no matter how closely we look at causal sequences.

In his account of positivist philosophy, Leszek Kolakowski places this empiricism (which he calls 'phenomenalism') in first place among the four principal characteristics or 'rules' of positivism.[4] The 'rule of phenomenalism' denies that there is a real difference between essence and phenomenon. Science must proceed on the basis of what is observable. Kolakowski adds an important supplement in his second rule, the 'rule of nominalism', which tells us how to deal with concepts. Concepts are more than just names for things we have observed, but inevitably abstract from observation, sometimes considerably. The concept of 'dog' abstracts from all the dogs we have seen, while the concept of 'molecule' abstracts much further from experience. This is not excluded by positivism but is recognized as permissible and necessary, provided 'we do not forget that these abstractions are no more than means, human creations that serve to organize experience but that are not entitled to lay claim to any separate existence'.[5]

To continue Kolakowski's analysis, the third 'rule' of positivism is the 'rule that refuses to call value judgements and normative statements knowledge'. In effect it is the application of the first two rules to 'values', denying them any real existence unless they are construed as mere mental contents, a kind of preference. We may know our own preferences, but we cannot know such a thing as 'objective value'. Arguments in terms of 'natural law' or 'rights', therefore, would be rejected as metaphysical. Finally, positivism involves 'a belief in the essential unity of the scientific method', implying the eventual unity of the sciences and the integration and mutual translatability of all knowledge. The last of these is not strictly a rule; it does not prescribe or proscribe anything, but rather presents an implication of positivist epistemology and an anticipation of its working through the practice of science.

The apotheosis of positivism as a distinct philosophical perspective was the logical positivism, also called logical empiricism, of the first half of the twentieth century. It had (somewhat distinct) sources in the early work of Wittgenstein and in the interconnected writings of the Vienna Circle (notably those of Carnap, Ayer, and Hempel). It pushed the anti-metaphysical programme

of empiricism and positivism to its limit, indeed to an ultimately self-destructive limit, creating wide ripples beyond philosophy. Its nominalism was extreme, deeming empirically unverifiable statements, when they are not logically necessary truths like the claims of mathematics, to be literally meaningless, for the meaning of a statement was held to consist in the procedures for its verification. In ethics, too, logical positivism spawned a radical position, known as emotivism: the view that ethical statements lack semantic content and are no more than expressions of disgust or approval which happen to take a verbal form.[6]

In the work of Carl Hempel, drawing again on Hume, positivism took the form of an insistence that causal explanation could not be achieved other than by subsumption of the events to be explained under a 'covering law', i.e. a universal or a statistical generalization.[7] In the philosophy of history, where the claim was made, this was a highly controversial position;[8] it was, however, more readily accommodated by the development of the quantitative social sciences such as economics, psychology, and political science. There, it offered validation to approaches that sought to establish causal relationships by correlating statistics.

Positivism in the extreme form of logical positivism shortly encountered a devastating critique from a sometime member of the Vienna Circle, Karl Popper.[9] In *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, he attacked the very centre of logical positivism, the idea of verification, showing, ironically by drawing on Hume's arguments about the problem of induction, that general statements such as those found in science could never be shown to be conclusively true by observing instances, no matter how numerous. The possibility of finding an exception would always exist in the future. Popper reversed, and also narrowed, the verification principle. He narrowed it by seeking a criterion not of meaningfulness but of scientific utility; he reversed it by arguing that the possibility of falsification, not of verification, was the hallmark of a scientific generalization. Science should (and did) consist not of accumulations of observations but rather of conjectures that lent themselves to empirical testing and could be accepted as true only as long as they withstood that test. The role of theory in science was thus rescued from the lowly status of generalization from observation to which logical positivism had consigned it, in a view of science, both bolder and more dynamic, as a series of 'conjectures and refutations'.

Popper regarded himself as an opponent of logical positivism,[10] emphasizing its dependence upon the principle of induction. Although later critics such as Thomas Kuhn have found his picture of scientific practice to be unduly heroic,[11] Popper did come much closer than the logical positivists had to a clear view of the reasoning actually done by scientists. It is also true and important that Popper left more space for the theoretical thinking, or indeed mere entertaining of hunches, that precedes the formulation of testable

hypotheses than did logical positivism—a distinction later understood in terms advanced by Hans Reichenbach, namely the 'context of discovery' and the 'context of verification'.[12] But like the logical positivists, he advanced an *exclusionary* precept. Whereas earlier positivists had diagnosed superstition, metaphysics, and sheer meaninglessness in statements and arguments that did not meet their proposed empiricist criteria, Popper instead labelled such statements 'unscientific'. The aim of exclusion and purification remained the same.

A more comprehensive challenge to positivism has come in recent decades from various positions grouped together as *realism*. As the name implies, it attacks positivism for its exclusionary programme, seeking to readmit as both meaningful and scientific theoretical elements that positivism, and Popper, had excluded. Realism differentiates itself from positivism precisely at the point of nominalism, with the corollary that Hume's nominalist theory of causation is denied. The importance of this is evident in the use of Hume's theory of causation by Hempel, that is, the view that reduces causation to mere correlation, and thus licenses the exclusive use of statistical correlation as the explanatory mode of the sciences, including of course the social sciences. Realists think there is more to causal relations than constant conjunction and thus more than can be discovered by merely correlating measurements. They maintain that causation does indeed involve causal 'powers', or as they more often say, causal *mechanisms*. True explanation is yielded only by discovering these, and a statistical correlation is of use only as an indication of the possibility that a causal mechanism exists—an indication that can sometimes be illusory.[13]

As with Popper's 'critical rationalism', the realist critique of positivism falls short of the full-scale alternative it sets out to be. Positivism has two possible, and related, counter-moves, a defensive and an offensive one. In the first place, it can argue that Hume's nominalist theory of causation was never intended to rule out causal mechanisms. In the second, it can insist that realism's 'mechanisms' too ultimately stand in need of empirical verification. In the face of these objections, the difference between realism and positivism starts to dissolve.

The first argument would begin by noting that Hume was an enthusiastic observer of the science of his day and would therefore be familiar with the hidden causal processes that, for instance, were revealed by the use of the microscope. It would be an absurdity to suggest that his claim was that causation could never be analysed in terms whose referents were not apparent to the naked eye. As Kolakowski puts it, 'positivists do not object to inquiry into the immediately invisible causes of any observed phenomenon, they object only to any accounting for it in terms of occult entities that are by definition inaccessible to human knowledge'.[14] To take Hume's famous example, there is no reason to think that he would have resisted on philosophical grounds the suggestion that the elasticity of billiard balls—in his time

understood merely as a summary generalization for the kind of observations one could obtain by setting them into collision with each other—could have an explanation in terms of microscopic structures as yet invisible to optical technology. Such indeed is the implausibility of this suggestion that a recent development in Hume scholarship is the promotion of a 'new Hume'—a so-called causal realist.[15] But instead of revising the interpretation of Hume to meet the terms of the realist critique of positivism, one might instead take the simpler course of wondering whether realism does indeed establish an alternative to positivism.

The positivist can go on the offensive by asking what it is that our newly powerful microscopes, etc., actually reveal. Certainly a causal mechanism—but is this not just a further set of constant conjunctions, now involving much smaller observable entities? Indeed, the positivist will say that the realist too is on scientifically insecure ground until at least the prospect of observing the causal mechanism is established, as moreover some professed realists have also admitted.[16] The realist, just like the positivist, will have difficulty with the idea of a causal mechanism that permanently and in principle cannot be observed. This again suggests the dissolution of the realist—positivist distinction.

Indeed the counter-attack can be pressed further, in my view to a conclusion, by looking at the application of realism to the most microscopic of all phenomena, those under the purview of quantum physics. As Arthur Fine has discussed in detail,[17] Einstein was notoriously suspicious of a (positivist) science that seemed forced to remain content with the observable or 'surface' manifestations of the processes it described—manifestations like cloud-chamber tracks and Geiger-counter ticks. Physicists could not probe quantum phenomena any more closely or microscopically without altering them in the very act of observing, according to Heisenberg. As a realist, Einstein wanted there to be observable mechanisms involving 'things' that could be observed in themselves, not merely via their traces. Positivists, on the other hand, are content to find causation evidenced in the traces: for them, that is all ultimately that causation ever is. They regard the question of whether quantum phenomena are 'really real' as meaningless. Now, if realism cannot be given a concrete application, or indeed even made sense of, at the level of the most basic constituents of the material world, it seems futile to promote it at any other level.

In defending positivism against realism at the level of philosophy, I do not mean to suggest that the realist critique is of no use. On the contrary, it is precisely because, at the level of disciplinary implementation of positivism (in particular in positivist political culture research), the realist injunction to look beyond correlations and discover causal mechanisms is extremely useful that I have introduced the realist critique. My point is that one does not have to accept what realism's critique of positivism implies, and sometimes outright states, namely that knowledge of phenomena might have a basis that can never

be redeemed by empirical enquiry, in order to agree that going beyond the measurements that a discipline happens to provide might be justified and informative. There is, in other words, a powerful realist argument against what I am calling disciplinary positivism: the deployment of nominalism or operationalism to justify the particular set of techniques that a discipline adopts to defend its own specificity. As I will show in the remainder of this chapter, exactly this has happened in the case of positivist political culture research.

1.3. DISCIPLINARY FACTORS IN THE INCEPTION OF POLITICAL CULTURE RESEARCH

In recent years, intellectual historians have paid increasing attention to the history of disciplines. The topic is of intrinsic interest only if the naive view is abandoned that the structure of disciplines is simply a reflection of the structure of the world; that chemistry exists only because there are chemicals, and political science only because there is politics. That view is by no means prima facie implausible, and doubtless continues to be widely held. But once one begins to think of a discipline as a socially organized, more or less institutionalized, collective intellectual and educational enterprise, doubt must arise as to the inevitability of the particular array of disciplines existing at a given time—all the more so if one entertains, under the influence of Michel Foucault, the thought that at least one of the things a discipline does is to *discipline*, to channel activity and introduce sanctions for violation.

Foucault's view of the disciplinary functions (to exploit his own pun) of the social sciences is, I will argue in a later chapter, an exaggeration. But it is surely difficult after exposure to his arguments to return to the naive view that disciplines are nothing more than the division of intellectual labour necessary to address our unfolding view of reality. The history of disciplines tells us that they have come and gone in ways that, while not unrelated to what is known at a given time about the world, do not closely track it. Alchemy, for instance, was a surprisingly persistent scientific discipline, despite its recurrent failure. Closer to our topic, Thomas Haskell has described the advent of the social sciences in the United States, showing how the dissolution of the Social Science Association into associations representing the disciplines we now know was a response to a wide range of factors.[18] The pluralization that this history displays has not been unilinear either: 'behavioural science' was proclaimed in the post-war period as a new means of reuniting the social sciences.

Disciplines, I suggest, have a 'relative autonomy' from what is known about the world (that is, what is discovered by other disciplines), and also a relative autonomy from the arguments prevalent in philosophy as to how to go about

adding to knowledge. Relative autonomy is to be distinguished from the total autonomy of disciplinary power imagined by Foucault, but also from the zero autonomy implied by the naive realist view that the consolidation, fragmentation, and occasional dissolution of disciplines merely cleaves ever more closely to the real structure of the world.

It therefore becomes relevant to ask what are the factors that have given the discipline of political science, and within it, political culture research, its particular trajectory. The state of the world is relevant, even when we reject the 'zero autonomy' thesis, as it establishes demands for certain kinds of explanation. So too, however (even when we reject the 'total autonomy' thesis) are the intellectual resources made available by other disciplines, including the generalized resource of philosophical positivism. In this section I outline the reality to which political culture research was a response. To do so goes some way to explaining the character of the response, but as I have suggested, not all the way. Thus in the succeeding sections I will consider the role played by the contemporaneously available theoretical and methodological resources, before, in section 1.6, describing the process whereby disciplinary positivism closed off disciplinary exchange and established the marginality of theory in political culture research.

The origins of political science are in one respect very distant, if one takes that discipline to be merely a recent form taken by humanity's intellectual interest in power and government. The same can indeed be said of political culture research, as its modern founder, Gabriel Almond, suggested in a retrospect published in 1980 which nominated an impressive list of precursors including Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Tocqueville, and Weber, all of whom are represented as groping towards the formulation Almond and other behaviouralists achieved in the late 1950s.[19] If, on the other hand, we think of a discipline as not only a set of intellectual concerns, but also as an institution, the foundation of the American Political Science Association in 1904 might serve as a starting point. The Association acquired 214 members in its first year, about 1,500 by 1913, 4,000 by 1946, over 7,000 by 1960, and 14,000 by 1976.[20] Evidently, disciplinary take-off had already been achieved before political scientists started to concern themselves with political culture.

The concept of political culture was introduced by Almond in the midst of the 'behavioural revolution' in political science. This phase of disciplinary expansion and optimism had already progressed so far that by 1961 one of its leading participants could write an 'epitaph for a monument to a successful protest' in celebration of it.[21] Charles Merriam had written in 1925, 'Some day we may take another angle of approach than the formal, as other sciences do, and begin to look at political behavior as one of the essential objects of inquiry,'[22] and doctoral students from his department in the University of Chicago soon graduated to positions of prominence in the behavioural movement, Almond among them. Assessing several views as to the nature of

behaviouralism, Dahl concludes that the approach represents 'an attempt to improve our understanding of politics by seeking to explain the empirical aspects of political life by means of methods, theories, and criteria of proof that are acceptable according to the canons, conventions, and assumptions of modern empirical science'.[23]

Of some interest is that Dahl did not feel compelled to say what those canons, conventions, and assumptions were. Writing before Kuhn's critique of Popper, the realist critique of positivism, and the rest of the 'post-positivist' upheaval in the philosophy of science, Dahl could take the nature of science for granted. That nature was a positivist one, in the terms in which I have outlined it. It was empiricist and nominalist, it rejected the idea of objective value in favour of subjective 'values', and it aspired to the unification of science, taking the form of 'behavioural science' in the social sciences.

The empiricism of behavioural political science was expressed in its very name: political behaviour was, it was assumed, straightforwardly visible as events in the world, and had only lacked adequate means of collation and measurement. These became available in the form of the survey method, which, as Dahl says, 'provided direct access to the characteristics and behavior of individuals'.[24] The 'formal' approach to which Merriam had sought to promote an alternative had involved an emphasis on laws and institutions (hence the label 'legal-institutional' that has sometimes been applied by behaviouralists to this earlier mode of analysis),[25] whereas behaviouralism would expand the purview of political science to the informal, considered as behaviour. Vast new areas of investigation were thereby opened up, such as the field of 'voting behaviour' and more generally that of political participation. Even in the study of governments, the behavioural approach radically changed the way in which, for instance, the operation of a legislature could be studied.

Political culture represented the outermost reach of the behavioural expansion of disciplinary purview. It represented the maximum of 'informality', as expressed in Almond's initial proposal: 'Every political system is embedded in a particular pattern of orientations to political action. I have found it useful to refer to this as the *political culture*.'[26] But the maximum informality of a phenomenon of course entailed the maximum difficulty of its measurement. As Almond noted in his 1980 retrospect, crucial for the inception of political culture research as an empirical research programme was the invention of a particular kind of survey, the attitude survey. Among the 'characteristics of individuals' that the survey method could measure were, thereby, their 'orientations'; from surveys, a 'pattern' could be discerned, and thus the 'embedding' of the political system in this pattern of orientations demonstrated. Political culture thus became the principal conceptual instrument by which values were made safe for political science—converted from something

behaviouralist political science had to avoid to something it could embrace as a topic.

The expansionism of behavioural political science showed up also, and more straightforwardly, as an extension of geographical scope. While behavioural political science has been called, not entirely unjustly, an 'American science of politics',[27] this did not mean that its interest was focused exclusively on American politics. 'Comparative politics' was also a major focus. In this connection we of course have to take note of the imperatives and opportunities created for the discipline of political science by the global political circumstances. The first thing to notice about these is that they were indeed *global*. We do not need to enter into dispute about whether the post-war period was the first global political conjuncture in order to know that the Second World War had been an unprecedentedly widespread conflict that eventuated, unlike the First World War, in an ongoing global political engagement made unavoidable by the nuclear military technology that the war had spawned.

Moreover, specific political and intellectual challenges had arisen within this global environment. For the United States, the challenge was a political one of control and containment, but this presented also an intellectual challenge. The Second World War itself, and particularly its origins in German politics, needed to be understood. The Cold War setting made the intellectual demands more pressing and added a specific focus, the Soviet Union. And a major effect of the war, the dissolution of the European global empires, presented a set of problems analogous to the interwar East European problem of the survival of democracy, but on a more massive scale that made them unavoidable.[28] In the context of the Cold War, the democratic prospects of the new nations became a matter of acute concern. Political culture was one of several concepts introduced to address this problem, forming a more pessimistic counterpoint to the optimistic projections of the theory of socio-economic modernization.

The positivist ideal of the unity of science was manifest, as already noted, in the aspiration to create a unified behavioural science. Noting the diversity of the disciplinary locations of a range of scholars doing behavioural work, Dahl took it as 'a sign of the extent to which a concern by "behavioral scientists" with similar problems now tends to transcend (though not to eliminate entirely) differences in professional origins'.[29] In political culture research, interdisciplinarity was evident both in the operationalization of the concept, which drew on the attitude survey method developed in market research and by nascent political psychology, and in the theoretical framework that was invoked in support of the explanatory programme, a framework that Almond expressly borrowed from the 'Weber-Parsons tradition in social theory'.[30] The theoretical and methodological resources upon which political science drew to

meet the needs established by its disciplinary mission and by world events are the respective topics of the next two sections.

1.4. THEORETICAL RESOURCES: PARSONS'S THEORY OF SOCIAL ORDER

The role of theory at the inception of political culture research differs from the more marginal role that it would have as the research programme became consolidated. The reason is easy to understand: political culture was expressly introduced as a conceptual innovation, giving rise to the collection of new measurements. Such an enterprise could not be motivated by the explanatory yield of the findings, in terms of correlations that indicated causal connections, before the findings had actually been produced. Only a theoretical formulation of the significance of political culture could do this, and it required more than the mere statement that the political system is 'embedded' in the political culture, as Almond well realized.

It would be difficult to overstate the influence of Talcott Parsons's social theory in the mid-century period in which political culture research was launched. Nor is it easy to make a general evaluation of his contribution, as the impressive zenith of his influence was followed by a set of reactions that were also impressive in their scope, if not always for their appreciation of what they were objecting to. Thus the nature of Parsons's theoretical contribution to social and political science is much debated.[31] The apparatus and terminology of Parsons's later theory has not aged well, even though talk of 'system' and 'equilibrium', key terms of that theory, shows up plainly in early formulations of the idea of political culture, not least Almond's initial one of 1956.[32] However, Almond already showed some hesitation about the implications of Parsons's system theory, particularly his notion that 'we can translate back and forth between large-scale social systems and small groups'.[33] Almond instead suggested that 'macrocosmic social systems' (that is, states and national societies) might need distinct kinds of analysis.

More relevant than the systems framework of Parsons's later social theory to the inception of political culture research is, I suggest, a position which he developed before the idea of system and its architectonic implications began to dominate his work: the theory that social integration is the consequence of a prior 'normative order'. Parsons developed this view in his first major book, *The Structure of Social Action*,[34] in which he combined elements of the theories of Durkheim and Weber, with a crucial admixture of some fragments of Freud. It was a combination with powerful implications for both the way political culture was conceived and the way it was to be measured.

Parsons's early social theory revolved around the 'problem of social order'; the problem of explaining how it is that a multitude of individuals with different interests could come to cohabit in sufficient harmony for a society to exist and be reproduced. It is Hobbes whom Parsons credits with the first formulation of this problem, and his famous solution to it was the 'Leviathan', a sovereign power which enforced social order coercively. Parsons dispenses with Hobbes's solution peremptorily, arguing that Hobbes's Leviathan is, theoretically, a *deus ex machina* (p. 314). The Leviathan itself would have to be accepted by the population in order to come into existence, to remain in existence, and to be effective, but Hobbes's supposition that the population's concerns about security would lead them to accept such an authority 'stretch[es], at a critical point, the conception of rationality beyond its scope in the rest of the theory, to a point where the actors come to realize the situation as a whole instead of pursuing their own ends in terms of their immediate situation' (p. 93). It is a powerful criticism, which tells against all efforts to derive social norms from individual interests.

Parsons traces attempts to deal with the problem of order in the work of Locke, Malthus, Spencer, and others, arriving at Emile Durkheim via his critique of Spencer's theory that in capitalist society coercion had been replaced by contract as the source of social order, and that this normative foundation persisted by virtue of the mutual advantage that it generated for the contracting parties. Durkheim's critique of this proposal, according to Parsons, 'reraise[d] in a particularly trenchant form the whole Hobbesian problem' (p. 314). It pointed to the need for something beyond contract that would sustain it. If this were not to be once again the Hobbesian sovereign and its imposed apparatus of law, it would have to be some independent source of normative authority: authority, that is, which is accepted as binding by the population. For Parsons, Durkheim's crucial contribution was the idea of a '*conscience collective*', a 'system of common beliefs and sentiments' (p. 338), as the source of this normativity.

However, Parsons diverged from Durkheim's insistence that *conscience collective* is 'something totally different from the consciousnesses of individuals, although it is only realised in individuals. It is the psychological type of society, one which has its properties, conditions for existence and mode of development, just as individual types do, but in a different fashion.'[35] For Parsons, this flirtation with the idea of a group mind (even if that way of putting it is, as Parsons made clear [p. 463], something of a caricature of Durkheim's position) is a product of Durkheim's insistence that constraints on the individual, even if normative, would have to take the form of external and non-individual 'social facts'.[36]

In order to overcome this deficiency, Parsons combines Durkheim's insistence on a normative framework, standing prior to contract and to political authority, with Weber's interpretive sociology. Unlike Durkheim, Weber was a

methodological individualist; but unlike other individualists such as the classical economists and their utilitarian philosophical brethren, he had a catholic understanding of what could constitute 'meaningful action'. For Parsons, Weber's emphasis on meaningful action, and on the 'adequacy at the level of meaning' of a successful sociological explanation (a criterion which Durkheim's stress on the externality of the normative could not meet), was his distinctive contribution to social theory. Parsons combines the Durkheimian theory of normative constraint with the Weberian theory of meaningful individual action in the bold proposal that norms have a psychological existence: through 'socialization' they are 'internalized' by the individual. A crucial role in facilitating this merger is played by Freud, as it was his work that made the idea of 'internalization' plausible. Parsons writes, 'The normal concrete individual is a morally disciplined personality. This means above all that the normative elements have become "internal," "subjective" to him. He becomes, in a sense "identified" with them' (pp. 385–6). He then adds, in a footnote: 'They are, in Freudian terminology, "introjected" to form a "superego"' (p. 386, n. 1).

Norms are therefore inserted into the individual personality through the process of socialization, and social order is secured by the generation of wants from these norms. Wants in turn become components of social explanation in the manner of 'subjective' factors envisaged by Weber. In the words of Francesca Cancian, 'the potentially anarchic individual is harnessed to society through the internalization of norms and values'; individuals '*want* to do what they are supposed to do'.[37] The problem of order is solved by the specification of normativity as the necessary concomitant of order, and by the realization of normativity in turn as a deep aspect of individual psychology.

The contribution of the Parsonian theory of social order to the inception of the positivist mainstream of political culture research was fundamental.[38] It associated political culture research with the most fully developed expression of general social theory, thus promoting the aspiration of the unity of science. It promised to overcome the opposition between materialist (what Parsons called positivist) and idealist explanation, which would remove a long-standing objection to the extension of scientific method into the study of society. And more specifically, it provided a mechanism for the production and reproduction of social order that captured the normativity of society while avoiding the drift into metaphysics which Durkheim's treatment of normativity, encapsulated by the 'collective conscience', had (Parsons thought) failed to avoid. Socialization was a concrete and individual psychological mechanism, thus in principle (and unlike the nebulous 'group mind') amenable to empirical investigation. Parsons appeared to have captured the persuasive force of Durkheim's demonstration of the necessity of a normative background, but in a radically new and scientifically reputable manner.

We also need, however, to recognize the additional work necessary to construct political culture research out of the Parsonian theoretical framework. I have noted Almond's reluctance to accept the idea of homology across all scales of social groups, which of course is a move towards protecting the empirical space of political science from sociological reduction. With this defence in place, the problem of political order could then be seen as the problem of the *form* of politics, or of the state—for instance, its democratic or undemocratic character. It is a short step to defining political culture as that part of the normative order which sustains the political segment of the social order, as the informal 'morality' of politics upon whose foundation formal political activity—political institutions and state forms—rests. I mentioned also in section 1.3 that the need felt by political science was for a concept that would address the contemporary situation of fluid politics and variable state form. These factors provided an incentive for political culture to be understood as a variable, whose correlation with variation in state form—its 'fit' with the political system—could be empirically investigated.

Most important is to notice that Parsons's move towards the empirical specification of the normative basis of social order was incomplete. The 'incurable theorist' sought an empirical, or non-metaphysical, solution to the problem of order, but left its details very vague. He was subsequently represented as a 'consensus theorist',[39] which must be an oversimplification, as the problem of order could not have arisen for him in the first place if he had perceived an overt consensus in society. As his early critic David Lockwood put it, 'the presence of a normative order, or common value system, does not mean that conflict has disappeared, or been resolved in some way. Instead, the very existence of normative order mirrors the continual potentiality of conflict'.[40] But in view of the limited psychological analysis that Parsons provided, drawing instead on suggestive and influential but empirically questionable Freudian ideas,[41] something of a vacuum did remain in his explanatory framework, and it was natural that this should be filled by interpretations such as consensus theory.

For political culture research, the vacuum was filled by the new method of the attitude survey, and it is to the theoretical background of this method in political and social psychology that I now turn.

1.5. METHODOLOGICAL RESOURCES: THE THEORY AND MEASUREMENT OF ATTITUDES

Gabriel Almond, as we saw, initially defined political culture as a 'pattern of orientations', the term 'orientations' doubtless deliberately chosen at that

founding moment to point research in a general empirical direction while leaving room for more detailed operational specification later. Examining the Parsonian theory that Almond drew on, I showed in section 1.4 that a similar combination of empirical (anti-metaphysical) tendency with descriptive latitude was left by Parsons's attempt to locate the normative sources of social order in individual minds, and to explain their presence there by the idea of socialization.

Thus the programme of political culture research was primed and made ready for launch; but it could not get underway until the empirical promise of Almondian 'orientations' or Parsonian 'norms' could be redeemed. This was made possible, or so it seemed, by the advent of the attitude survey. It was a fortunate convergence of explanatory need, theoretical framework, and newly elaborated method. The off-the-peg character of this method allowed political culture research to develop rapidly into a large research programme, but also limited the duration and extent of the disciplinary exchange involved. Questions as to how this method was arrived at, and what its own theoretical basis was, could be readily ignored.

To pursue the enquiry that political culture research left undone we need again to reach beyond the boundaries of political science, this time into psychology. We find there a picture complicated not only by significant disciplinary subdivisions, both topical and methodological (for instance, between largely field-based political psychology and largely laboratory-based social psychology), but also by enormous shifts in the overall approach of psychology during the twentieth century. Given the fact that positivism in political science took the form of the so-called behavioural revolution, some care is mandated by the fact that psychology had its closest encounter with positivism in the form of *behaviourism*. Although psychological behaviourism and political-scientific behaviouralism have much in common,[42] in particular a common focus on behaviour and the programmatic claim that this focus represents a revolutionary overthrowing of previous empirically inadequate approaches, it would be an explanatory short-circuit to deduce the character of positivist political culture research directly from that psychological source.

Behaviouralism, we have seen, sought to overthrow a study of politics whose focus was the supposedly objective values that were the concern of political philosophy, the procedural standards of constitutional law, or the deeds of the great men of political history. The exclusions effected by behaviourism were far more radical: it ruled out mental contents and the method of introspection that had admitted them into psychology. Effectively, it brought the very idea of the psyche into question. Extending the insights suggested by Pavlov's discovery of behavioural conditioning, behaviourists suggested that more and more complex behaviour could be explained by 'operant conditioning', reinforcement of behaviour by its favourable consequences. As B. F. Skinner confidently put it, 'The contingencies under investigation have become steadily

more complex, and one by one they are taking over the explanatory functions previously assigned to personalities, states of mind, feelings, traits of character, purposes, and intentions.'[43] Even human culture would ultimately fall under the rubric of operant conditioning.[44]

Behaviourism and behaviouralism have some overlap in the mid-twentieth-century aspiration to create a unified 'behavioural science', the manifestation at that time of the positivistic programme of the unity of science. But behaviourism both originated and peaked earlier than behaviouralism. It was being swept aside by the 'cognitive revolution' just when the behavioural revolution was convulsing political science—an indication of the relative autonomy of respective disciplinary trajectories. Behaviourism manifested a radical positivist nominalism that, in psychology, has come and largely gone.[45] But that does not mean that the positivist impulse has waned, for here as in political science we need to remember the difference that can be made to philosophical precepts by their particular disciplinary manifestation.[46]

Behaviourism could not of course accommodate the concept of attitude as we now understand it, although that understanding is fairly recent. It arose, according to Gordon Allport, from Thomas and Znaniecki's definition in their 1918–1920 study *The Polish Peasant* of an attitude as the 'state of mind of the individual toward a value'.[47] This definition marked the separation of the concept of attitude from its long association with the idea of bodily readiness or posture, an association which had indeed allowed the concept of attitude to survive the onset of behaviourism.[48] But in its new meaning, 'attitude' could not be acceptable: 'It might even be exorcised as a metaphysical ghost, pale and wanly qualitative.'[49]

The development of attitude research in field-based political psychology did not however mark the mere continuation of introspective psychology unaffected by the positivist nominalism of the behaviourists. Survey methods seek to make attitudes visible, and amenable to scientific analysis, by the identification of the attitude with the verbal response to the survey item, which is of course a form of behaviour. Of course, the respondent is assumed to introspect in order to produce the response; but once the data yielded by attitude surveys begins to flow, attention could be turned by positivistically minded researchers to the responses as facts, and behavioural anxieties about their origins put, as it were, out of mind. Considerable methodological refinement soon followed: the Likert scale allowed for a means of measuring the strength of attitudes, Guttman scaling provided a means of purifying a set of indicators of attitude so that they would reliably measure the same underlying phenomenon, and Lazarsfeld's idea of 'latent structure' justified a statistical approach to attitudes that conceived of them as the underlying explanation of statistical patterns of response.

Positivist nominalism was therefore manifest in psychology in two different ways. Field research into attitudes developed rapidly once a measurable

behavioural indicator of attitude had been discovered. Meanwhile, laboratory research under the behaviourist dispensation had embarked more radically on a course whose expected terminus would be the complete elimination of the concept of attitude, and much else besides. With the cognitive revolution against behaviourism, which rested both on doubts about how much of human behaviour conditioning could explain and on the development of laboratory techniques which offered to open up the 'black box' of mental contents, a degree of reconvergence of field and laboratory methods could take place: 'To an increasing extent, political psychologists and social psychologists use a common language to address an overlapping set of research questions.'[50] This state of affairs might appear to have consolidated the status of attitude research, but in fact points of tension between field and laboratory work still exist.[51] Nevertheless, under the dispensation of the tamed positivism of the cognitive revolution,[52] attitude survey research and the field of political psychology have proliferated massively.

It seems, then, as though the reach of political science into psychology, timed as it was to avoid the most corrosive of the mentalistic doubts promoted by behaviourism, yielded just what the nascent programme of political culture research needed. However, the very burgeoning of political psychology, and indeed of positivist political culture research, provides grounds for thinking that a marginalization of theory has occurred, and that it represents a problem. Recall that the need of political culture research was for an empirical specification of 'orientations' and 'norms'. 'Attitude' seems to meet the need. Fleming indeed suggests that much of the appeal of the concept is that it is compatible with the induction of the mass of the population into political life, i.e. with democratization, but at the same time incorporates both cognitive and affective elements in its description of that mass, thus avoiding both overly optimistic expectations of popular rationality and overly pessimistic fears of the emotionality of the irrational mob.[53] The concept thus seems ideally suited for use in political-cultural analysis.

Fleming further suggests that in the idea of latent structure analysis Lazarsfeld introduced a basis for distinguishing attitude from opinion: attitudes could be seen as underlying and not directly measurable phenomena which showed themselves through statistical analysis as a pattern of probabilities of survey responses. The concept of attitude was thereby 'deepened': 'attitudes have come to stand for the deeply imbedded tendencies, extended in time and cutting across opinions from beneath, that underpin the individual's visible reaction to his environment'.[54] Missing, however, from Fleming's useful conceptual history of 'attitude' is mention of a concept which this 'deepening' evokes: the concept of 'value'. Corresponding to the pressure exerted 'downward' upon attitude by the concept of public opinion, there was a pressure 'upward' stemming from the idea of value. This fact has certainly compromised the 'triumphant progress of the concept of attitude'.[55]

Values are usually defined in terms of their generality. Robin Williams characterizes them in contradistinction to norms, which he conceives of as 'rules for behaving': values are instead 'standards of desirability that are more or less independent of specific situations'.[56] Milton Rokeach, perhaps the most influential political-psychological analyst of values, conceptualizes values 'as consisting of a relatively small number of core ideas or cognitions present in every society'.[57] In the words of Maio and Olson, following Rokeach, 'Values are rated in terms of their importance as guiding principles in one's life, whereas attitudes are rated by using scales that reflect varying degrees of favourability towards an object.'[58] Yet despite following explicitly in the tradition of Rokeach, leading values researcher Shalom Schwartz asserts that there is 'an almost infinite number of specific values one could study'. As a result, a further deepening is needed, to a level where he identifies 'value types'—there are ten of them in Schwartz's theory, which are then further resolved into two bipolar dimensions.[59] Williams makes another stab at defining values, noting that the term 'has been used variously to refer to interests, wants, goals, needs, aversions and attractions, and many other kinds of selective orientations'. He now emphasizes 'the presence of criteria or standards of preference', so that 'Values merge affect and concept.'[60] But just this combination has been taken, in an influential social-psychological model, to define *attitudes*.[61]

The conceptual instability apparent in the attempt to define a concept that combines depth and measurability, which shows up particularly as the inability to agree on the relationship between attitudes and values, does not appear to cause great concern to political psychologists. Still less has it troubled the positivist mainstream of political culture researchers. The problem, however, is that while the survey method comes 'off the peg', we have a large number of different outfits to try on. The different lines of empirical attitudes and values research, such as Inglehart's one-dimensional typology of materialism/post-materialism, Rokeach's two-value model that suggested that equality and freedom comprise orthogonal dimensions, and Shalom Schwartz's model of ten value types, do not match up, suggesting the possibility that each confirms no more than its own operationalization.[62]

Recourse to the concepts of attitude and value, to the method of the attitude survey, and to the considerable technical sophistication with which Lazarsfeld's proposal to identify attitudes as 'latent structures' through statistical analysis has been developed, does not therefore lend to mainstream political culture research the rigour and certainty that might have been hoped. The disciplinary positivism of political culture research is mainly expressed by its turning a blind eye to the actual complexity we can see even in a brief look at the background and development of the attitude survey method. It is the kind of complexity that calls for theoretical work, but that work is recurrently deferred by the operationalist accumulation of data. The deferral is reinforced

when this multiplicity of findings and conceptualizations is taken on by political science as *the* attitude survey method on a 'ready-made' basis. Thus theory is permanently marginalized by the existence of the survey method, when it is ironically the very proliferation of the research done by this method that makes theoretical work essential.

1.6. DISCIPLINARY CONSOLIDATION AND THE BIFURCATION OF POLITICAL CULTURE RESEARCH

I have shown how closely the behavioural movement in political science, and its epitome in political culture research, adheres to the positivist criteria identified by Kolakowski of empiricism, exclusion of objective value, and unification of science. In section 1.5 I looked at the ways in which positivist nominalism affected psychology. While nominalism—the view that concepts are heuristic only and 'are not entitled to lay claim to any separate existence'—is described correctly by Kolakowski as a derivative of the precept of empiricism, it nevertheless plays a distinctive and important role in its own right, notably when positivism is established in a disciplinary setting. For positivism, indeed, the very idea of a disciplinary setting must be ultimately problematic, in view of the aspiration of the unity of science. For the implication of the unity of science is the reducibility of the claims and concepts of specific applied sciences to those of more basic ones, ultimately physics. Disciplines can only be, like concepts themselves, provisional and heuristically useful constructs: a division of labour that will be abolished when the true interconnections are discovered. Yet it has been the fate of positivism to be implemented within disciplines. Moreover, positivism contains, in addition to its post-disciplinary aspiration, a resource for the consolidation of disciplines, enabling them to resist the threat of reduction. That is what nominalism is.

For all the obeisance paid to Parsons during the founding period of political culture research, and for all the hopeful talk of a unified behavioural science, Almond made some crucial modifications in his borrowing from Parsonian social theory. These were designed to retain the specificity of the political, and indeed, more precisely, of the state. For Parsons, social order and thus the integrity of the social system as a whole was secured by the internalization of norms and values by individuals in the socialization process. Almond added two things to this view: the method of the attitude survey which would be the operationalization of the norms and values required by the theory, and the corresponding specification of the state as a variable, which might or might not 'fit' the political culture.

In his 1980 retrospect Almond remarked, 'Political culture is not a theory; it refers to a set of variables which may be used in the construction of theories.'[63] This did not prevent him from describing, not long after, the study of communist states as a test case of 'political culture theory', in that it showed (as he read it) the stability of political culture in the face of radical revolutionary change in state form and prolonged and substantial efforts by the communist regimes to 'resocialize' their populations.[64] This equivocation as to 'theory' perfectly captures the role of theory under the dispensation of positivism. The 'positive theory' allowed by positivism means the establishment of causal hypotheses that may be tested empirically once the concepts invoked by these hypotheses have been operationalized. At this point, theory retreats to the margins. But it can never be dispensed with altogether; it is necessary periodically to have a reminder of the overall point of the empirical investigations facilitated by the methodological operationalization.

Harry Eckstein, another early contributor to political culture research, claimed boldly in a retrospect in 1996 that Almond and the other founders 'got the concept exactly right'. His justification for saying so is revealing:

> political culture is not some 'real thing out there' that may be characterized correctly or incorrectly. Political culture is a concept—an abstraction, a mental construct—intended for theorizing. As such it should be taken to mean what the patent holders intended it to mean, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so.[65]

A clearer expression of positivist nominalism would be hard to find. The claim is that as Almond's concept had produced an empirical return, there could be no sense in questioning it (unless, that is, the 'compelling reasons' could be specified—which of course they were not). Political culture is 'not entitled to lay claim to any separate existence' beyond what its 'patent holders' had specified as its operational form, namely the results of attitude surveys.

Earlier in this chapter, I outlined the realist critique of positivism, one of whose points was that positivism's correlational theory of causation left causal mechanisms unspecified. Although at the level of philosophy the realist idea that we might escape altogether the obligation of providing empirical substantiation for ontological posits is problematic, it does not follow that we have to endorse Eckstein's positivist nominalism, the claim that we have no business enquiring what political culture 'really is' beyond the specification provided by those who conceived and operationalized it. Denying an extra-empirical reality does not oblige us to deny a reality that may lie outside the purview of a particular discipline, with a particular set of operationalized concepts, at a particular time. The principle of nominalism is in effect the exclusionary implication of empiricism (a position that on its face seems open-minded), declaring that the 'operational meaning' of a concept is its *only* meaning. This overlooks the narrowing of empirical gaze that disciplines necessarily and

deliberately bring about. Realism provides an effective challenge, insisting that it is indeed a valid question to ask what the concept actually refers to.

The exclusionary effect of nominalism is not immediate. It cannot be, otherwise new conceptual proposals such as political culture could not get off the ground. Nor is the exclusion ever complete. Reminders of the point of the ever more sophisticated statistical correlations are necessary from time to time, as in Almond's restatement of 'political culture theory'. But nominalist claims such as Almond's that political culture is not a theory but merely a set of variables, or Eckstein's that political culture is not 'some real thing out there' but merely a construct that happens to work to produce data, nevertheless marginalize questions about political culture that might usefully be asked, and perhaps answered, if one looked beyond the prevailing disciplinary setting.

Positivism therefore leaves a contradictory mandate: the expansionist unification of science, and the exclusionary nominalist defence of the prevailing techniques of a discipline. Once the 'patent' has been claimed, the generation of a set of data can begin: to extend Eckstein's business metaphor, the data set becomes *proprietary*, the property of the discipline and a contributor to its *raison d'être*. Positivism becomes disciplinary positivism. Theory can then take the 'positive' form of the construction of hypotheses which can be tested using the data. 'Theory' in the sense of asking what political culture really is and how, in detail, it works, is thereby marginalized.

The marginalization of theory by disciplinary positivism has several consequences. The 'legacy theory' of Parsonian normative integration is of course never repudiated, but is removed from active attention and becomes taken for granted. This means that it is effectively separated from its own vital sources of critique and revision in social theory. Some of this has indeed found its way sporadically into political culture research,[66] but without seriously disturbing the positivist mainstream, which has been sufficiently insulated from it by its nominalism, and sufficiently occupied with the gathering and treatment of its proprietary data set. But not only the overall causal framework of Parsonian theory, but also the causal mechanisms assumed by it and by its attitude-survey operationalization, have been subject to development and critique in their proper disciplinary settings (social theory and social psychology) in the period since Almond's extra-disciplinary outreach. This too has gone unnoticed by political culture researchers.

Somewhat more visible than these exclusions and omissions have been the problems created for political culture research by the optimistic expansionism of the period of its inception. These became apparent fairly quickly, but they have never been adequately dealt with, producing a series of challenges to the positivist mainstream which, remaining unresolved, have doubtless contributed to the problem of the simultaneously necessary and disreputable character of the concept of political culture that I have dubbed 'Shklar's paradox'.

These problems stem from Almond's fateful choice to borrow from anthropology the term 'culture'.

Even if we were to accept, which I have argued we should not, Eckstein's nominalist prohibition on looking more closely at what political culture actually is, it would be hard to agree with his starting point, that the founders of political culture research 'got the concept exactly right'. This cannot be true, because as soon as political culture research established itself as an empirical research programme, deep divisions as to the understanding of the concept became apparent. Immediately after introducing the idea of political culture, Almond found it necessary to issue a health warning:

> the political culture is not the same thing as the general culture, although it is related to it. Because political orientation involves cognition, intellection, and adaptation to external situations, as well as the standards and values of the general culture, it is a differentiated part of the culture and has a certain autonomy.[67]

Culture, here referred to as 'the general culture', was of course a key concept in several other disciplines, chief among them anthropology, where it had acquired the connotation (to be explored more fully in the next chapter) of a whole way of life, internally coherent, and distinctive in its entirety. It was not to be confused with political culture, constituted in part by 'cognition and intellection' and (*as a result*, one might suggest, for its cognitive aspect would make political culture more readily expressible) measurable by surveys—a technique anthropologists had not thought of using.

In the first substantial empirical application of the concept of political culture, the classic study *The Civic Culture*, Almond and his co-author Sidney Verba built on the idea that political culture has 'cognitive, evaluative and affective' elements by deploying a multi-item survey that enquired about political knowledge as well as about evaluations such as trust in the political authorities. The findings are well known: among their five cases, Almond and Verba discovered a type of political culture they called the 'civic culture' only in the established democracies of Britain and the United States. In this form of political culture, knowledge of politics was widespread, but it was combined with two distinct evaluations: trust and distrust. The civic culture was defined as a balance between these 'subject' and 'participant' orientations.

In its own terms the argument is not very convincing, as the sample of cases is not large, and the key criterion of 'balance' is not clearly specified (nor indeed was the explanandum, 'established' democracy). However, the study does represent an implementation of Almond's initial proposal, contrasting starkly with anthropological uses of 'culture'.

Extending the reach of political culture research further proved problematic, however. Here it came into contact with another of the intellectual developments prompted by the global political conjuncture of the post-war and Cold War period, area studies.[68] This is the name given to the ideally

multidisciplinary analysis of countries and areas, analysis in which the idea of culture serves as a device for integrating literary, anthropological, historical, and political approaches to the area in question—so that the concept becomes necessarily holistic. I say 'ideally', because the multidisciplinary skills necessary are not very often found, so that 'area studies' is often a summary label, under whose shelter a group of scholars has worked, each ploughing a separate disciplinary furrow. Nevertheless it continues to serve as an intellectual aspiration and guide to research.

In this intellectual setting, which was prevalent in the study of both the 'Second' and 'Third Worlds' (i.e. the communist and the developing countries), Almond's attempt to contain the implications of 'culture' in political culture did not carry the day. Lucian Pye suggested that area studies would typically stress different factors in different areas while behaviouralist comparative politics attempted to compare a fixed range of factors. But he hoped that a satisfactory combination of these approaches could be found, and argued that the concept of that 'culture' was its ideal vehicle.[69] Pye was somewhat critical (he revealed in a later methodological essay) of the possibility of using such a capacious term as 'culture' to specify a variable for correlational arguments. 'Orientations', as revealed by attitude surveys, were, he thought, too 'bountiful', too numerous and various, to admit of treatment as a single variable.[70]

Among the founders of political culture research, Sidney Verba, Almond's collaborator on *The Civic Culture* and the co-editor of *Political Culture and Political Development*, had, as might be expected from this positioning, the clearest insight into the difficulty of the simultaneous expansion and exclusion Almond was trying to effect.[71] While Pye's Introduction to the latter collection had struck an optimistic note, Verba's concluding essay was less confident. The widely varying approaches to political culture taken by contributors to the symposium confounded the attempt to fit them into a single theoretical framework. In response, Verba adopted a 'broad and rather loose definition' of political culture, intended to 'direct attention to a general area of concern', but *not* to be 'an explanatory term in propositions about political systems'. 'If political culture is so generally defined', he recognized, 'it is of little use to say that the political culture of nation X explains why it has political structures of form Y'.[72] This is a significant admission, already acknowledging in one of the founding works of political culture research what many of its critics have laboured to establish. In effect it announces the failure of the reconciliation of behavioural comparative politics and area studies.

Thus the initial wave of empirical studies immediately showed that in fact two incompatible lines of research had been initiated. Almond had not succeeded in excluding the anthropological and area-studies implications of the concept of culture, especially when the geographical expansion the concept of political culture was intended to serve was fully realized. Furthermore, the

tension within political culture research did not diminish, reaching a high level of explicitness in a debate within communist studies as to whether political culture should be defined in the Almondian fashion or rather in the synoptic and comprehensive fashion of area studies (see n. 64).

1.7. CONCLUSION

It is not novel to describe the mainstream of political culture research, or the behavioural political science of which it is a leading example, as positivist, or to criticize it for its positivism. Often, however, the epithet is applied in a cursory manner, as if it simply meant 'scientific', 'empirical', or 'quantitative'. In this chapter I have pressed both the description and the critique somewhat further. While positivist epistemology contains the aspiration to be 'scientific', it also establishes some distinctive precepts as to what being scientific means. These were laid out in section 1.2, with an emphasis placed on the exclusionary mandate of positivism, on its modification by Popper, and on the nominalism that it, and particularly its account of causation, presumes. The *irrealism* of positivism is highlighted by the recent realist critique of positivism in the philosophy of science. Positivism is indeed, as its critics have insisted, an epistemology, not an ontology, concentrating on what we can know about the world, not, in the transcendental manner of realism, on what the world must be like in order for us to know it.

I have combined this account of the philosophical resources of positivism with a disciplinary analysis of political science. Even the behaviourism that prevailed in psychology in the first half of the twentieth century, its derogation of mental phenomena in favour of observable physical movement so plainly an expression of positivism's nominalist precept, has been shown to have its own roots in the prior development of the discipline of psychology.[73] This is true too, I have shown, for political science's equivalent, the similarly named behaviouralism. Positivism was not the cause of behaviouralism, but provided a resource upon which political science could draw in its expansive behaviouralist phase.

It was a resource that both justified that expansion, in topic, in scope, and in disciplinary outreach, while also providing the means of limiting it. The expansionary impulse of behavioural political science was tempered by the desire to consolidate the discipline, which meant above all that it should be defended against reduction to the terms of any adjacent disciplines. The borrowing from sociology of the theory of normative integration, and from anthropology of the concept of culture, by nascent political culture research courted this reductive outcome, and necessitated defensive efforts at disciplinary consolidation.

Positivism does not dispense with theory altogether, but relegates it to a preliminary role. 'Positive theory' is that ratiocination which produces testable hypotheses out of operationalized concepts. The concepts do first of all have to be conceived, as political culture was by Almond in 1956. That cannot fail to be a theoretical moment. But it is an all-too-brief moment: once the operationalization is achieved, methods take over. The possibility that these methods may not be capturing what is of most interest—that, as Ian Shapiro has put it, 'if the only tool you have is a hammer, everything around you starts to look like a nail'[74]—is obscured by the nominalist precept of positivism, which defends the existing methods as long as they continue to yield data on the grounds that there is no reality beyond these methods.

There may, as positivist epistemology claims, be no observable reality beyond all of our methods—beyond, that is to say, our perceptions, as supplemented by various measuring instruments. But that is very different from claiming that there is no reality beyond the particular set of methods available in a particular discipline at a particular time. Positivist epistemology does not support such *disciplinary* positivism—it only seems to. In the 'context of discovery' of political culture, also the context of the greatest ambitions of behaviouralism, an adventurous reach beyond the discipline of political science was made. But it was hedged about immediately, with the result that the intellectual resources that were borrowed were not examined closely, particularly with regard to their mutual compatibility, and were not maintained or upgraded in line with arguments and developments in the donor disciplines. Political culture research was left with a marginalized 'legacy theory', and with a recurrent problem of accommodating the expansive implications of 'culture' within its positivist remit. To improve on this marginalized theory we will have to reopen the initial disciplinary exchange.

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2

Theoretical Denial: The Interpretive Alternative in Political Culture Research

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter critically examines the main alternative to the positivist mainstream in political culture research, which could be called 'culturalist', 'historicist', or 'hermeneutic' but can with more generality and less question-begging be labelled 'interpretive'. Of course, it is wrong to suppose that interpretation is altogether excluded by positivism, even in the natural sciences: no one has been expelled from the ranks of epidemiologists for making an interpretation of statistical data, or those of particle physicists for interpreting cloud-chamber tracks. The label 'interpretivism' itself, therefore, perpetrates something of a caricature of the position it opposes. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the interpretive moment in positive science is not advertised as its chief merit. For interpretivism, on the other hand, interpretation is that and more.

As with my discussion of positivism in the preceding chapter, in this chapter I will avoid taking the meaning and content of interpretivism for granted. That is the course of the partisan in the positivism–interpretivism dialectic, whereas my ultimate aim is to transcend it. The analysis, like that of Chapter 1, will serve not merely an exegetical, nor only a critical, purpose, but also a constructive one. It contributes to the purpose of this book by showing, as Chapter 1 did, the scope and necessity of theoretical work on the concept of political culture. Both positivism and interpretivism leave a gap where theory should be. Interpretivism, however, does so in a more radical way, especially in its most recent formulations: it seeks to show that theory is entirely misplaced. It effects not just the marginalization of theory, but the denial of it. I will show that this is a denial in the pop-psychological sense (that is, an attempt to suppress what cannot be suppressed), as I suggested in respect of the example I outlined in the Introduction; the task here is to make the argument more general and explain the origins of the denial.

Thus there are important parallels between positivist and interpretive political culture research, as well as important differences. The argument of this book will ultimately be that parallels outweigh differences, but any temptation to jump ahead with a schematic exaggeration of the parallels should be avoided. If indeed there are *any* resemblances between positivism and interpretivism in the conduct of political culture research this will be a surprising discovery, given the antithetical relationship these positions have had.

As with the preceding chapter, there are both philosophical and disciplinary issues to be considered. Like positivism, though in a very different manner, interpretivism has a tendency to transcend disciplines. Like positivism too, it has been implemented within disciplines, though it maintains an interdisciplinary openness which positivism has only demonstrated in its more expansive phases, as at the inception of political culture research. The interpretivist historian, for example, may keep a close eye on developments in literary theory, while the positivist political scientist is likely to be quite ignorant of developments in social psychology, however reliant she may be on the concept of 'attitude'. These parallels and distinctions, however, will be more readily explained by looking at the interpretivist arguments and their implementation, a task to which I will shortly proceed. Even so, a brief outline of what I take interpretivism to be is in order.

In disciplinary terms, interpretivism has always had the character of a reaction to developments in the construction of the natural sciences and their extension into the realm of human life. The reaction has taken various forms, as one would expect since the natural-scientific stimulus itself has not stood still. Only gradually has the relationship between naturalism and interpretivism come to have the predominantly methodological character it does (not yet without contestation) today. This development responds to the increasing methodological sophistication of the natural sciences. The point at which ancient debates over free will or the soul achieved the degree of precision needed to ground the dialectic of interpretivism and positivism is impossible to specify, though I have chosen to begin with a discussion of reactions against Enlightenment social science, where some at least incipiently methodological issues can be identified. Perhaps the most ecumenical way of understanding the distinctiveness of interpretivism is nevertheless in terms of a substantive concern with *meaning*, for this concern links long-standing humanist and indeed theological concerns to questions about the meaning of words, utterances, and texts, which give rise to distinctive methodological formulations.

The broad remit I adopt in the present chapter may be contrasted with a recent, rather facile identification of the 'interpretive approach' with the two premises, 'people act on their beliefs and preferences' and 'we cannot read off

people's beliefs and preferences from objective facts about them such as their social class, race or institutional position'.[1] In view of the existence of a large academic and commercial industry devoted to ascertaining beliefs and preferences in a positivist manner, in the form of opinion polls, attitude surveys, and market research, these supposed premises fall well short of differentiating interpretivism from its opposite, let alone exploring its variations. Positivism extended its reach to these phenomena at the very inception of political culture research, and an interpretive critique of this extension must do more than simply restate what it was an extension *to*.

Recent interpretivists Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz at least base their approach on a careful reading of the most influential promoter of interpretivism in the social sciences, Clifford Geertz. In the positioning of their argument, however, they commit an error opposite to that of Bevir and Rhodes, by supposing that interpretivism must constitute an alternative to, rather than within, political culture research.[2] As my discussion of Almond's struggle with the concept of culture in Chapter 1 showed, interpretivism is already present, and was from the outset, as an alternative *in* political culture research. It was exemplified by the work of Lucian Pye and Robert C. Tucker, and more generally in area studies applications of political culture. Confining use of the concept of 'culture' to interpretivism, and remanding 'political culture' to the exclusive care of positivist political science, would therefore be an uncritical acceptance of Almond's initial attempt at disciplinary exclusion.[3]

In sections 2.2 and 2.3 I will expand on my preliminary characterization of interpretivism in terms of its emphasis on meaning by illustrating its evolution as a series of reactions to the incursion of science into the study of humanity and society. I will discuss, in section 2.2, the foundational contribution of Herder to the position I will call 'culturalism', and Wilhelm Dilthey's attempt to provide a philosophical basis for the related position of 'historicism'. In section 2.3 I look at the 'interpretive [*verstehende*] sociology' of Max Weber, which in fact marked an attempt to combine causal analysis with the interpretation of meaning. Weber's sustained attempt gives us the chance to assess the prospects of such an approach.

In section 2.4 I will discuss the further development of interpretivism in the twentieth century, when in methodological terms anthropology came to be its leading edge.[4] I will discuss Ruth Benedict and Marshall Sahlins, but will pay particular attention to Geertz. Not only an authority within (or in Chabal and Daloz's hands against) political culture research, Geertz has also been influential in the study of history, as well of course as being a leading figure in cultural anthropology. His work shows an interesting evolution towards a position of outright hostility towards the possibility of a theory of culture—not his initial view, which came closer to that of Weber in seeking to

reconcile the interpretation of culture with causal analysis. This final position of Geertz's, I will show, is a theoretical denial in the sense I have explained.

2.2. BEFORE INTERPRETIVISM: CULTURALISM AND HISTORICISM

In speaking of the emergence of interpretivism in a series of reactions to the development of a naturalistic approach to the study of society there is of course a risk of improving on Gabriel Almond's teleological picture of the development of political culture research (see n. 19 in Chapter 1) only to the extent of adding a second teleology to the first. In terms of explicit labels, it is an anachronism to speak of interpretivism at all until the disciplinary developments of the twentieth century. More generally, all attempts to conceive of political thought in terms of broad competing traditions are vulnerable to death by a thousand qualifications—no less, indeed, than is the attempt to encapsulate the thought of a single thinker in a single word.

However, it remains my view that the effort to understand entire lines of thought and their relationships is worthwhile. It is indeed a necessary complement to detailed qualification of such generalities, whose whole point would be lost without it. The systole and diastole of qualification and generalization are no less jointly essential to understanding than are the corresponding motions of the heart to human life. In this section, where generalization is perhaps made especially hazardous by the fact that the figures I will mention were themselves reacting against it, I will therefore note, but not be unduly detained by, some large questions of definition and classification.

Beginning, as I will, with the Enlightenment and the reaction against it, such questions are immediately encountered. Neither 'Enlightenment' or the more recently investigated 'counter-Enlightenment' are uncontested terms.[5] Nevertheless, some key figures on either side have contributed to the development of the idea of political culture. Herder indeed was the first writer to use the term:[6] more generally, though, he stands, as Raymond Williams has put it, at the origin of a conception of culture as 'the "informing spirit" of a whole way of life, which is manifest over the whole range of social activities but is most evident in "specifically cultural" activities—a language, styles of art, kinds of intellectual work'.[7]

We can gain an indication of Herder's significance, and through him of the nature of the counter-Enlightenment, by looking at his reaction to Montesquieu. Montesquieu's presence in the Pantheon of authorities set up in Almond's account of the origins of the idea of political culture is suggested by the very title of his most famous work, *The Spirit of the Laws*. Montesquieu,

in the words of Robert Wokler, was 'Of all the major eighteenth-century thinkers . . . perhaps the most tenacious supporter of the proposition that the laws of nature and the operations of the human mind must be understood in the same way'. Yet the same observer points out that 'Above all his contemporaries, Montesquieu was specially sensitive to the local variety, specificity, and uniqueness of social institutions, custom, and mores.'[8]

We should not therefore lose sight of the empirical open-mindedness and curiosity about distant societies that was a feature of Enlightenment thought, and assume that it represented only the rationalist desire to subsume everything under a single theory, as Isaiah Berlin, who displayed great sensitivity to the authors of counter-Enlightenment responses, has himself been accused of insensitively doing. But even though Herder himself drew on Montesquieu's writings,[9] he found grounds for disagreeing vehemently with them.

Montesquieu wrote, 'If it is true that the character of the spirit and the passions of the heart are extremely different in the various climates, *laws* should be relative to the differences in these passions and to the differences in these characters.'[10] Herder said something similar: 'Human nature under diverse climates is never wholly the same.'[11] But he objected to the naturalism he saw in Montesquieu's invocation of climate,[12] and more generally found the Baron's treatment of cultural difference to be reductive and lifeless: 'The history of all times and peoples, whose succession forms the great, living work of God, is reduced to ruins divided neatly into three heaps, to a mere collection even though it does not lack noble and worthy material.'[13] He was insistent on the humanly produced character of cultural differences, suggesting for instance a cultural genealogy: 'Roman civilization hailed from Greece; Greece owed its culture to Asia and Egypt; Egypt to Asia; China perhaps to Egypt, and so on.'[14]

While the relationship between Herder and Montesquieu does not capture the entire dialectic of Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment, it does reveal the significance of that dialectic for the development of political culture research. For political culture research has been since its modern inception concerned, like Montesquieu, with difference; yet it too has been found wanting in the extent of its embrace of that difference.

Berlin writes: 'That the creation of integrated wholes out of discrete data is the fundamental organising activity of human nature is a belief that is central to Herder's entire social and moral outlook';[15] for Herder, 'every culture has its own centre of gravity' or *Schwerpunkt*.[16] The notion of holistic cultural integration, which we might term 'culturalism', at first sight presents an insuperable methodological obstacle: how is the 'whole' of a way of life to be appreciated? The problem only ramifies massively when its development over time becomes part of the whole, as for Herder it certainly does. Yet a solution is offered. Herder's notion of cultural integration directs the student of culture and of 'ways of life' to certain particular manifestations of culture which

provide insight into the whole as its paradigmatic instances. The idea that cultural products, and some particular ones among them, inherently manifest the cultural whole marks a crucial and influential methodological innovation.

Herder is, of course, a problematic figure in terms of his supposed political legacy, for his culturalism lent itself, as the same position does today, to political use. Herder's critique of the *philosophes* became entangled in a critique of all things French—the representatives, he thought, of his *bête noir*, inauthenticity. 'Great Reich, Reich of ten peoples, Germany! You have no Shakespeare, but have you no ancient songs of which you can be proud? . . . Were we poor Germans from the beginning destined only to translate, only to imitate?'[17] Sentiments like these were first intensified by the experience of French occupation under Napoleon, and then converted into ideology by nationalist commentators during the nineteenth century; 'An aesthetic, culturally oriented approach to nationality increasingly gave place to the ideal of the national state.'[18] In the twentieth, such ideas not only of national difference and 'genius' but of national superiority joined with scientifically based racism and the experience of further affronts to German *amour propre* to produce an extremely virulent combination. As a supposed contributor to this development, Herder's thought fell under considerable opprobrium.

Yet Herder's criticism of the 'philosophical spirit' pointed, in a fashion strikingly reminiscent of some recent arguments that criticize 'orientalism' (to be discussed in Chapter 4), to the risks of oppression involved in unsympathetic or too hasty classification of the alien. He presciently observed and criticized the first symptoms of the use of national and linguistic categories for repressive purposes, the 'official nationalism' of Joseph II of Austria, leading a recent student to conclude that 'a strong argument exists for seeing Herder's position as the antithesis of nationalism', a claim which reinforces an earlier defence by Barnard.[19]

It is highly partial, therefore, to blame Herder for the political excesses of culturalism, just as it would be to suppose that Enlightenment social and political science had no emancipatory potential and was bent only on domination. Still, we can see in Herder a tension between the emphasis on the human creativity that gives rise to culture, and the idea of a cultural 'centre of gravity', visible in the tangible products of a culture. It is the tension between process and product. But if it is possible to identify a cultural 'essence', that implies a figurative fixing that if anything becomes more powerful if it is seen as the product of a special insight not available to mere empirical science. The invocation of culture in political conflict, as between France and nascent Germany in the early nineteenth century, pushed further in this essentialist direction.

It would be some time before Herder's conception of culture as an 'informing spirit' could be put to use in the detailed investigation of foreign cultures within a disciplinary setting: this development awaited the advent of

cultural anthropology in the late nineteenth century. But before I turn to that continuation of culturalism, I will look at a set of reactions to later phases of naturalist social science that focused on the extension of cultural integration over time, and thus engaged with the issues raised by Herder in the context of the philosophy of history. These reactions have been termed the 'crisis of historicism', and again it was German thinkers who were at their centre.

With the term 'historicism' we again encounter severe problems of definition, but I will put these to one side.[20] I suggest that historicism is usefully seen as a necessary complement to culturalism, following directly from it. The 'integration' of culture supposed by Herderian culturalism is not merely a momentary coexistence of elements, but must be understood as developing through history. History, in turn, is understood by culturalism in terms of specific and separate sequences of cultural development, not as a single movement undifferentiated across space. Particularly when culture is invoked in defence of, or to promote, national identity, there can of course be no doubt as to its historical dimension.

The 'crisis of historicism' of the late nineteenth century was a particularly intense phase of the dialectic of naturalism and interpretivism. The evolution of Enlightenment naturalism into positivism, in the work of Comte and especially John Stuart Mill, was one cause of this intensity. But the very necessity pressed by culturalism, of exploring in detail the historical development of cultural difference, had by the end of the century, and particularly in Germany, posed the question of how to justify an increasingly professional and specialized historiography's methods and findings.

The most sustained attempt to deal with the latter challenge was that of Wilhelm Dilthey. He was determined to resist not so much the encroachment of natural-scientific methods into the human sciences, as the exhaustive and exclusive justification of them that had been provided by their philosophical defenders and rationalizers, chief among them Mill. In his *System of Logic*, Mill had denied any distinction between the approaches of the 'moral' and natural sciences: both worked by the subsuming of events under natural laws. Dilthey resisted this claim and the empiricist epistemology, stemming from Hume, that underlay it.

He wished, however, to go beyond a reactive position and instead to philosophically substantiate the alternative represented by the *Geisteswissenschaften* or 'human sciences'.[21] Dilthey admired the achievements of the 'German historical school', exemplified by the work of Ranke and Droysen, but 'ultimately he believed that the "historical turn" of nineteenth-century German scholarship lacked a genuinely scientific foundation'.[22] Dilthey's account of the distinctiveness of the human sciences rested fundamentally on the question of how historical knowledge is substantiated.

In his 'Introduction to the Human Sciences', Dilthey commended historicist thought for its avoidance of Enlightenment progressivism and universalism.

But he faulted historicism for its tendency to descend into relativism. As Rudolf Makkreel expounds Dilthey's view, 'The tendency of historicism was to interpret history in terms of seemingly self-sufficient national contexts with the dangerous consequence of reifying the *Volksseele* (the soul of the people of a nation).'[23] Clearly the latter concept lends itself to political use and abuse, and suffers as well from a degree of mysticism and obscurity. Dilthey thought that a proper foundation of historical study should not and need not have such an implication.

Dilthey's model for the foundation of historical study was Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.[24] Kant's achievement had been to formulate what he took to be the constitutive or 'transcendental' presuppositions of the practice of natural science, which included a priori conceptions of time, space, and causality. Dilthey aspired to establish an equally transcendental and foundational, but necessarily different, philosophy of history.

His starting point, in contrast to Kant's emphasis on autonomous reason, was life itself, in the form of *Erlebnis* or 'lived experience'. Acknowledging a 'beginning' of the requisite approach in Herder, Dilthey contended that the main current of philosophy had neglected this factor: 'No real blood flows in the veins of the knowing subject constructed by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but rather the diluted extract of reason as a mere activity of thought.'[25] How, then, might one know the content of 'life itself'? Dilthey is often associated (influentially by Weber) with the method of 'empathy'. It is of course difficult to see how such a method, if it can be called one, could achieve the rigour to which Dilthey aspired.[26] But in any case, Dilthey identified, in the essay 'The Rise of Hermeneutics', a new and systematic source for the necessary insight: the rules of textual interpretation, or 'hermeneutics', that had been formalized by Friedrich Schleiermacher.

In this essay, Dilthey restated his problem: 'these disciplines [the human sciences], like history itself, depend for their methodological certainty upon whether or not the understanding of individual existence may be raised to general validity'.[27] But he now made the point that 'even the most attentive concentration [on the words of a speaker] can develop into an orderly and systematic procedure—one by which a measurable degree of objectivity can be reached—only where the expression of life has been fixed, so that we can return to it again and again'. He continues: 'That is why the art of understanding centers on the exegesis or interpretation of those residues of human reality preserved in written form.'[28] The transition to hermeneutics follows directly: 'As the life of the mind only finds its complete, exhaustive and therefore, objectively comprehensible expression in language, explication culminates in the interpretation of the written records of human existence. This art is the basis of philology. The science of this art is hermeneutics.'[29] With Schleiermacher, Dilthey claimed, textual hermeneutics had achieved the purpose Dilthey sought to make general: 'to preserve the general validity of

interpretation against the inroads of romantic caprice and skeptical subjectivity, and to give a theoretical justification for such validity, upon which all the certainty of historical knowledge is founded'.[30]

Schleiermacher had indeed made important steps in formalizing the practice of textual interpretation. He originated the idea of the hermeneutic circle: that language is understood by means of its components, but these only make sense in relation to the language as a whole. The momentary intention of the author has a similar relationship to his whole life. And the author's discourse is constrained by language at the same time as it creates it: 'he is also a constantly developing spirit, while his discourse remains an object within the context of other intellection'.[31] Nevertheless Dilthey exaggerates Schleiermacher's achievement. Schleiermacher had presented a more rigorous account of the method of interpretation than had been achieved before. But it involved a demonstration of the necessary incompleteness of interpretation. Surely that cannot ground the 'certainty of historical knowledge'. Hermeneutics had become systematic, but it had not thereby become objectively valid.

Dilthey's failure to complete the 'critique of historical reason' stood, for later writers, as testimony to the error of seeking to model the human sciences on the natural while retaining their specificity. R. G. Collingwood, for instance, suggested that Dilthey 'surrenders to positivism'.[32] Stopping short of that criticism, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer nevertheless used Dilthey as a foil for the development of a 'philosophical hermeneutics'. These writers reject historicism more comprehensively than Dilthey did, seeing his work indeed as its culmination and final failure, but pursue more radically his insight into the foundational character of history. This is now seen as an ontological and perhaps even a moral claim rather than a methodological or epistemological one.[33]

However, Dilthey left more than a bequest of failure. His turn to textual hermeneutics laid the foundation for later work which developed the 'model of the text' (as Ricoeur calls it)[34] in interpretive contexts outside literary criticism, work which includes the influential writings of Geertz, which I will discuss later in this chapter, as well as a vast range of appropriations of literary theory within the social sciences, some important versions of which I will examine in Chapter 4.

2.3. WEBER AND INTERPRETIVE SOCIOLOGY

In contrast to Dilthey, in whom interest, though it has been growing, has always been a rather specialized affair among Anglophone writers, Weber has been a focus of sustained attention and debate since the first appearance of his writings in English. Perhaps, indeed, too much of a focus, because Weber's

intellectual prestige has made him a prize worth claiming in the dialectic of positivism and interpretivism.[35] That is not to mention the voluminous discussion of his substantive arguments, such as the Protestant Ethic thesis or the thesis of disenchantment and rationalization in the West. Despite or perhaps because of all of this attention and debate, Weber's contribution to interpretivism, notwithstanding his expressed aim to establish an 'interpretive sociology' (*verstehende Soziologie*), is difficult to pin down.[36]

Weber, like Dilthey, lived through the confrontation between positivism and historicism in the acute form of the 'crisis of historicism' in German intellectual life around the turn of the twentieth century. Weber's position, as I will show, was a mediating one, rejecting overambitious abstraction, generalization, and theorization, but nevertheless insisting that some degree of abstraction, generalization, and theorization was necessary. This mediation was his typical posture, and gives rise to the claiming of his authority by diverse later schools of thought. But when an author is repeatedly fought over in this way by rival packs of intellectual predators, one might wonder whether there is not some inherent weakness that leads him to become prey in the first place.

In Weber's methodological writings his anti-naturalism is more visible than his anti-historicism.[37] What he opposed was the illegitimate extension of natural science concepts and theories into the social realm where they were radically descriptively incomplete. Such overextension he regarded as 'dilettantism', and his criticism of it was often excoriating.[38] He does not, however, extend the objection to the use of the *logic* of the natural sciences, including its basis in empirical observation and its use of theory and generalization.

Like Dilthey, Weber hoped to establish the objectivity and validity of the human or cultural sciences. But Weber did not attempt to do this by constructing an independent philosophical foundation. He followed and extended a line of argument, institutionalized in the 'Southwest German school', which had progressively softened, without abolishing, the distinction between the natural and the cultural sciences. Wilhelm Windelband, in a famous essay, had rejected a distinction between the natural and cultural sciences that rested on a fundamental difference in their objects. This view implied that the universe consisted of two discrete realms, the physical and the spiritual. As well as recoiling from the somewhat metaphysical overtones of this idea, Windelband pointed to the emergence of experimental psychology, which seemed to deal with 'mind' while remaining a natural science. He therefore proposed a different distinction, between 'nomothetic' and 'idiographic' sciences.[39] The former sought, he argued, to develop generalized knowledge in the form of laws; the latter sought knowledge of particulars. In physics and chemistry most of the specific conditions that obtain in a laboratory are abstracted out in the production of scientific knowledge. Conversely, it is what is specific about the French Revolution that we are most interested in.

Heinrich Rickert modified this distinction by noting that even 'idiographic' knowledge cannot be full and direct knowledge of all the particulars of a case. Reality, he observed, was both extensively and intensively infinite: there was an infinite array of connections with and influences on any individual case, and another infinity was revealed by examining the case at limitless levels of detail.[40] Thus here too there would have to be conceptualization, by which this 'infinite manifold' could be handled.[41] Rickert still maintained the distinction Windelband had drawn, but made it in terms of the general versus the specific nature of the concepts respectively used. Because conceptualization was not dictated by reality but was rather a prior act by which reality is made intellectually tractable, it must have an independent source. Rickert found this in the values with which we approach scientific work.[42]

Rickert hoped, like Dilthey, to establish the objectivity of the cultural sciences. This made it necessary to establish the possibility of objective values. As Guy Oakes has demonstrated, Rickert never succeeded in this.[43] At this point, the distinctiveness of Weber's position can be established. He accepted Rickert's argument that it is our values that ultimately determine what our scientific interests will be. But he did not think that these values had an objective status. He posited the inescapability of ultimate value *choice*, a view which aligns him with radical thinkers such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.[44] Weber still prized the objectivity of the cultural sciences, but asserted that it was to be achieved by the same means as in the natural sciences: by the methods themselves, not any philosophical a priori, whether Diltheyan or Rickertian.

This brings us to Weber's anti-historicism. His opposition to historicism does not show itself as vividly as the scathing criticism Weber made of overambitious positivists, but is, I would argue, more deep-seated. He was averse to what he took to be the intuitive methods of historicist methodology: the 'empathy' that seemed to demand genius of the interpreter and had connotations of mystery and metaphysics. While he had sarcastically debunked the overenthusiastic positivists, he differed from historicists at a more fundamental level: their errors could not be cured by the mere exercise of restraint.

Weber's focus shifted from history to the potentially more systematic sociology, but even in his earlier methodological writing on history, a *categorical* distinction between the cultural and natural sciences is hard to identify. Although conceptual overextension such as Ostwald's (see n. 38) showed its error in descriptive inadequacy and spurious quantitative precision, Weber did not mean to suggest that exactitude was peculiar and distinctive to the natural sciences. Like Mill, he noted that inexact meteorology could still be counted as a natural science. Mill, however, had had the expectation that the social sciences would eventually become more exact and take their place alongside the natural sciences. More consistently with the meteorology example, Weber

argued that both the natural and the cultural sciences could have only the degree of exactness fitting to their subject matter, which varied from discipline to discipline and would not necessarily converge on the standard set by physics.

Fritz Ringer and Susan Hekman have suggested that a theory of 'singular causation' is Weber's criterion of demarcation between the natural and the cultural sciences.[45] This is a more sophisticated way of expressing the distinction between nomothetic and idiographic sciences, but the evidence is that Weber had progressed considerably beyond this distinction. Ringer and Hekman note the parallel Weber drew between the assignment of responsibility in court cases and the assignment of cause in historical explanation. While insisting on the uniqueness of each case they treat, both jurist and historian arrive at plausible explanations, judging that a specified event—or cause—'favoured' an outcome which would not otherwise have occurred, and thus was decisive for it. In neither legal nor historical explanation would such reasoning involve the invocation of exact and complete causal laws, and it could never hope to do so.

Even so, the causal sequence involved in such examples can hardly be labelled 'singular', unless by a criterion by which *any* causal sequence could be so labelled, because of its infinitely specifiable and therefore unique detail. Weber is clear that both the jurist and the historian rely in reaching their conclusions on 'empirical rules', which are inexact generalizations based on familiarity with typical human behaviour. Weber did not indeed flinch from saying that such rules have a 'nomological', or law-like, character, even though they were probabilistic rather than fully deterministic.[46] Concurring with Rickert that reality was both extensively and intensively infinite, Weber also did not find it at all problematic, but rather considered it necessary, that knowledge even of historical individuals should take the form of an abstraction from experience. Thus neither conceptualization nor generalization were by any means precluded by him from application to the cultural sciences: they were, in contrast, essential.

Thus while Weber lambasted inappropriate conceptual extensions from the natural into the social sciences, and took issue with Mill's supposition that the social sciences were immature in relation to natural science, he nevertheless made arguments that weakened a clear demarcation of the two categories of science. Along with Windelband and Rickert, Weber denied an ontological or substantial difference between the categories in terms of their objects. But further, he differed from these predecessors by softening the distinction between knowledge of the individual (typical in historical research) and of the general (the aim of natural science). Knowledge of the individual would not only, as Rickert had already said, have to abstract from the full detail of the case, but it would also include causal knowledge. This in turn, though it has been dubbed knowledge of 'singular' causation by later expositors, necessarily

rested on abstraction and generalization. The softening of the distinction only became more visible, but certainly did not appear for the first time, when Weber began to present his research under the heading of sociology.[47]

The sense in which Weber was an 'interpretive sociologist', despite the identification of this approach with his name,[48] therefore needs careful consideration. His manifesto-like statement of interpretivism occurs in the essay 'Basic Concepts in Sociology', which also appears as the first chapter of *Economy and Society*: 'Sociology (in the sense in which this highly ambiguous word is used here) is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences.'[49] Causal explanation is not excluded; rather it is linked with interpretive understanding, or '*Verstehen*', through the key word 'thereby'. But as Eliaeson notes, the nature of the linkage is not clear: it could mean either that interpretive understanding *constitutes* causal explanation, or that interpretive understanding is a *precursor* of causal explanation. It is regrettable, as Eliaeson puts it, that 'in the very cornerstone of his sociology, Weber manages to confuse posterity with a formulation resistant to unambiguous interpretation'.[50]

The thesis that, for Weber, interpretation was a *precursor* to causal explanation is supported by his ideas of 'value-relevance' and 'ideal types'. These are derivations of his Rickertian view that values determine our interest in science, our particular interest in the various disciplines, and our conceptualization of the empirical field we encounter within the disciplines. Ideal types are the concepts we produce in order to help us address reality within a particular region. They are on the one hand implementations of our values: our scientific activity is value-relevant. On the other, they are inevitably 'one-sided accentuations' of reality.[51] They are not real things that we can observe, but are conceptual aids that assist us in the investigation of real relationships. The latter examination, he said, 'is made with the goal of being, in principle, "objectively" valid as empirical truth absolutely in the same sense as any proposition at all of empirical knowledge'. Therefore,

> It is not the determination of the historical 'causes' for a given 'object' to be explained which is 'subjective' . . . rather it is the delimitation of the historical 'object,' of the 'individual' itself, for in this the relevant values are decisive and the conception of the values is that which is subject to historical change.[52]

Interpretation 'presents "tasks" for the causal work of history and thus is its *pre-supposition*'.[53]

Many followers of Weber have been content with this account of an interpretive precursor that selects material whose causal relationships can then be investigated empirically, that is, with the distinction between the value-relevance of topic *choice* and the value-freedom of topic *treatment*.[54] One can, as Weber says, have an interest in or indeed a deep ethical commitment to a topic—say the

condition of marriage in Western society—while still being able to analyse objectively data such as divorce rates. Scientists are able to check for the intrusion of commitment into the latter phase, and to reject findings that are tainted by it. Indeed, one might entertain the idea that Weber's interpretive and value-laden 'ideal types' should be thought of in the same way that positivism thinks of its general concepts: not as necessarily referring to something in reality, but as heuristic aids to the formulation of hypotheses that we can test against reality. Ideal types are relegated to the 'context of discovery', while in the 'context of verification' it is objective correlations that count.

This positivist appropriation of Weber, though it appears to be licensed by the 'precursor' understanding of the relationship of interpretation and causal explanation, is however contradicted by Weber's own practice. In *The Protestant Ethic*, for instance, we do not find a brief exposition of a hypothesis, followed by a careful statistical demonstration of the relationships it posits, as is typical of positivist political science. We in fact find the reverse; while Weber does invoke some statistics,[55] it is these that form the trigger for his analysis, which consists in the main of the interpretive unfolding through the study of texts of a set of relationships between various denominations of Protestant theology and the 'spirit of capitalism'.

It does not therefore seem possible to confine the role of values and interpretation, as Weber outlined them, to the merely precursory role. In *The Protestant Ethic*, values and interpretation do not merely set up a hypothetical correlation; they go 'all the way down' to the causal sequences themselves. It is not logic, of course, that connects Calvinism with the spirit of capitalism; as Weber notes, the logic of predestination would entail abandonment of any effort to influence the believer's chances of heavenly reward. Weber is interested in the 'psychological sanctions which, originating in religious beliefs and the practice of religion, gave a direction to practical conduct and held the individual to it'.[56]

Of course the Protestant Ethic thesis might be wrong. Some writers have treated is as a positivistic hypothesis and found it to be falsified in various settings.[57] But we are interested here in the question of Weber's methodology. This example seems to suggest (referring back to Eliaeson's terms) not the precursory, but the *constitutive*, reading of what Weber thought the relationship between interpretation and causal explanation to be. Others have thought the same. David Zaret has done more than most to point out that, in light of Weber's Rickertian epistemology, 'facts' themselves must be constituted by interests and values.[58] But then it is not easy to see how we can have objective knowledge of causal relations between phenomena that we can identify only subjectively.

It is therefore not surprising that Weber's work has produced very contrasting sequels. Zaret, for instance, reprimands Parsons for 'sever[ing] critical

links between historical research and theoretical synthesis' that Weber had forged. However, 'This does not imply that Weber perfected a *rapprochement* between history and sociology, only that their intimate connection in his work disappeared in the early works of Parsons and Schutz.'[59] An 'intimate connection' that falls short of a '*rapprochement*' between history and sociology, or more generally between the cultural and the natural sciences, or more generally still between 'subjective' interpretive understanding and 'objective' causal explanation, is a good description of what Weber achieved. His legacy could not fail to be contested.

Weber and Dilthey represent two very different responses to the crisis of historicism—the reconstruction, more intensely debated in Germany than elsewhere, of historicist thought in the face of the advance and success of positivism. Each sought to respond to positivism without fully adopting it. Dilthey's response was to try to match positivism at a foundational level with a Critique of Historical Reason that would parallel, while not replicating, Kant's transcendental foundation of the natural sciences. There is a sense, highlighted by Dilthey's successors, the promoters of 'philosophical hermeneutics', in which this project already concedes priority to the scientific thought it seeks to resist. Even so, it was the *unscientific* character of the Diltheyan *Geisteswissenschaften* that was identified as their major defect by the Weberian response under the rubric of Rickertian *Kulturwissenschaften* and later 'interpretive sociology'. For Rickert and Weber, Diltheyan historicism suggested mysterious 'spiritual' substances, and mysterious empathetic means of access to them.

Weber's concessions to natural science were of a very different sort, acknowledging a place for generalization and abstraction while remaining hyper-vigilant against 'dilettantish' short-cuts provided by social-scientific 'naturalists', borrowing concepts directly from physics, chemistry, and so on. But Weber's own philosophical starting point, the neo-Kantian idea of the extensive and intensive infinity of reality, led him to acknowledge the role of ultimate and non-objective values, ideal-type constructs, and interpretation in the explanation of cultural and historical matters. The combination, I have just argued, was a strained one, in a different way, but no less fatally, than Dilthey's combination of *Lebensphilosophie* (the philosophy of life) with Kantian foundationalism. 'Weberian' social science as a result has followed a plurality of trajectories and has been a site of recurrent controversy.

Thus neither Dilthey nor Weber achieved the reconstruction of historicist thought in relation to the natural sciences that they aspired to. It must certainly be acknowledged, though, that the attempt in each case was a sustained and serious one; indeed it was their life's work. Neither can provide the basis of a theory of political culture, and the failure of their efforts, whose intensity has not subsequently been matched, strongly suggests that such a

theory is not to be found in a resolution of the dialectic of interpretivism and positivism.

2.4. INTERPRETIVISM IN ANTHROPOLOGY: BENEDICT, SAHLINS, AND GEERTZ

Historicism and culturalism, I suggested earlier, are aspects of the interpretivist alternative to positivism that are mutually entailing. However their respective emphasis on the temporal versus the spatial dimensions of the integration they each put forward makes for difference in their respective disciplinary expression. Weber's turn from history to sociology is an illustration of that difference, although sociology did not retain the broad comparative character that he achieved in his study of the world religions. The full unfolding of the spatial dimension of Herder's culturalism had to await the development of cultural anthropology. A classic expression is Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*.[60]

According to Benedict, 'A culture, like an individual, is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action' (p. 33). Now one should not overlook the qualification in this statement. Benedict did insist, like Herder, on the *contingency* of the achievement of cultural patterning by human populations: 'We do not need a plank of configuration written into the platform of an ethnological school' (p. 165). Some cultures, she accepted, have an extreme lack of integration. The tribes of British Columbia, for example, 'have incorporated traits from all the surrounding civilizations', with the result that 'their culture gives an impression of extreme poverty. Nothing is carried far enough to give body to the culture' (p. 161). But these harsh words themselves suggest the expectation of integration. Such notions of a self-contained and integrated world are reinforced by the poignant sense Benedict shares with many anthropologists of the erosion of cultures. She quotes a Digger Indian chief thus: 'in the beginning, God gave to every people a cup, a cup of clay, and from this cup they drank their life. They all dipped in the water, but their cups were different. Our cup is broken now. It has passed away' (p. 15, interpolations omitted). Qualifications notwithstanding, then, it is cultural integration that is most strongly emphasized in her text, and for which it is chiefly remembered. Indeed Benedict suggests that 'The importance of the study of the whole configuration as over against the continued analysis of its parts is stressed in field after field of modern science', and cites Dilthey as the source of this tendency (pp. 36, 37).

While noting this continuity of anthropological culturalism with Diltheyan historicism, we should also notice that Benedict adopts rather elliptical formulations when dealing with issues of causation. For example: '[The] unevenness of the extent to which behaviour is coloured by the dye of the cultural

pattern is evident in Kwakiutl life.' Formulations such as this, in which causal claims are made with the help, or perhaps the disguise, of metaphor, indicate that the aim of giving causal explanations has not been abandoned, but that there is a discomfort as to how precisely to combine them with cultural interpretation. This marks a retreat from the attempt to tackle causality made by both Dilthey and, especially, Weber, prefiguring what was later to happen in Geertz's work.

The notion of a cultural configuration achieved a more systematic expression, and one also less ready to acknowledge qualifications, in structuralist anthropology. Structuralism identifies not just configuration, but *logic*, in culture, and analyses that in turn as the replication of a basic particle of meaning, the 'binary opposition'. From Saussure's insight that a sign has only an arbitrary and conventional relationship to what it signifies, and that signs therefore take their meaning from relationships of similarity and difference with other signs, structuralists derived the idea that meaning could be reduced to a set of contrasts, and parallels between contrasts. Vladimir Propp applied this approach to the study of folklore,[61] while Lévi-Strauss used it as the basis of his ethnography.

Marshall Sahlins's *Culture and Practical Reason* is both a leading expression of anthropological structuralism and a statement of the strong antithesis between culturalism and positivist naturalism. Sahlins sees the antithesis as a choice between

> whether the cultural order is to be conceived as the codification of man's actual purposeful and pragmatic action; or whether, conversely, human action in the world is to be understood as mediated by the cultural design, which gives order at once to practical experience, customary practice, and the relationship between the two.

It is not, he continues, a difference that will 'be resolved by the happy academic conclusion that the answer lies somewhere in between, or even on both sides . . . The opposition . . . cannot be compromised; . . . the relation can only be an encompassment.'[62]

Sahlins's opponent, the 'practical reason' of his title, is a position he associates with Marxism, the reading off of culture from social structure.[63] Sahlins recognizes a culturalist potential in Marx, who wrote, 'Neither nature objectively nor nature subjectively is directly given in a form adequate to the *human* being', and thus acquits him of a 'crass economism of the enterprising individual' (p. 126). On these grounds, Sahlins says, 'the modern ethnologist must recognize in Marx an anthropological brother' (p. 134). But Sahlins argues that a more reductive Marxism has prevailed, the position expressed in Marx's famous statement, 'The hand-mill will give society with a suzerain; the steam mill, society with industrial capitalism' (p. 158). Sahlins's explanation of the transition from the former to the latter position is that something is missing in Marx's earlier proto-culturalism: 'the paradigm was never fully symbolic'

(p. 127); there is an 'absence of cultural logic in the theory of production that becomes a standing invitation to all sorts of naturalism' (p. 148).[64]

Sahlins deploys this structuralist variant of culturalism in an interpretation of modern American society, and in particular the peculiarities of its patterns of consumption. He has no difficulty disposing of any suggestion that 'material needs' explain much of American consumer behaviour—why, for instance, 'pants are produced for men and skirts for women, or why dogs are inedible, but the hindquarters of the steer are supremely satisfying of the need to eat'. The 'material forces', such as need for shelter and food, 'taken by themselves are lifeless' (p. 207). What gives them life is their incorporation into a symbolic system, and that in turn is organized as an array of binary oppositions, which one can read as a set of homologies across folklore, mythology, and consumer behaviour.[65]

It is plainly true that the 'objective environment' does not exhaustively account for the use that is made of it in human society. But how the culturalist alternative works as an explanation, rather than a mere critique, is not advanced by its systematic formulation in structuralism any further than it was in its looser configurationist one by Benedict. Sahlins writes of the patterns revealed by structuralist analysis:

> Their recognition by the anthropologist or economist, like their existence in the society, reflects a real experience of that society—if always the only kind of real social experience, namely, that mediated symbolically. The anthropologist did not put them there, any more than the people just made them up and thereupon decided to live by them. They are the true armature of the cultural order, and the anthropologist in arranging them in a way faithful to experience does no more than discover that order. (p. 217)

Fundamental questions are avoided by this slippery passage. How did the symbolic structure that mediates contact with the environment come into existence? Has it always been there, and does it ever change? If it is already 'experienced', in what sense does the anthropologist 'discover' it? And most fundamentally, how does it make the people do anything? The last question is dodged by making the cultural order, *ipso facto*, into the social order. The whole complex is a sustained avoidance of questions of causation. The causal relations posited by 'practical reason' are rejected, but nothing is put in their place.

Cultural structuralism has in fact entered political culture research in a minor way, but that is not the reason for my paying attention to it here.[66] I have sought instead to show how, although it has what could be called a 'theoretical' character in the sense of invoking abstract terms such as 'binary opposition', and of positing their generality across human settings, structuralism fails to engage with questions of causation. Indeed, by virtue of the elaborate form of its interpretive framework, it can falsely seem to have

captured a general cause even when it has eschewed all mention of cause, except in metaphorical terms such as 'the armature of the cultural order'.

A different and more explicit avoidance of theory can be traced in the work of Clifford Geertz. Geertz said of structuralism that it sets up an 'infernal culture machine' that 'replaces the particular minds of particular savages in particular jungles with the Savage Mind immanent in us all'.[67] He also criticized Benedict for her supposition of a 'harmony of meaning' in culture.[68] But the main significance of Geertz for the purpose of this book is the large influence he has had on the social sciences and on historiography, especially on the practitioners of political culture research.

Geertz's work, however, did not always carry the anti-theoretical message that has propagated widely from his book *The Interpretation of Cultures* and its successor, *Local Knowledge*.[69] Indeed his trajectory from theory to programmatic anti-theoreticism, and in particular anti-causalism, can be traced within *The Interpretation of Cultures* itself, although it is not visible if attention is confined, as it usually is, to the first and last chapters, the famous essays 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture' and 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight'. Of course some shifts of position over the fifteen-year period that separates the earliest and latest of the essays gathered in the book are neither surprising nor objectionable. Nevertheless, given the large impact of the more recent of these essays, the contradictions and shifts are worth investigating, as a way of resisting the increasingly formulaic use of Geertz's writings.

Among the more obvious contradictions one might mention Geertz's early embrace of the view that culture is best seen as 'a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call "programs")—for the governing of behavior',[70] contrasted with his later *criticism* of the view that describing a culture is 'the writing out of systematic rules, an ethnographic algorithm, which, if followed, would make it possible so to operate, to pass . . . for a native'.[71] More generally, Geertz's earlier essays display a degree of comfort with general concepts such as the state and modernization (the latter is indeed a recurrent theme in *The Interpretation of Cultures*),[72] and agreement with the grand sociological theorists of these matters such as Sorokin and Parsons, that is at odds with his later disdain for the theoretical aspirations of social science. He very much sympathizes with the view that we need 'a theoretical analysis of symbolic action comparable in sophistication to that we now have for social and psychological action'.[73] But theoretical analysis, he says, is always in danger of becoming 'scholastic', an error that is in need of ethnographic correction by looking 'toward the behavior of actual people in actual societies living in terms of actual cultures', yielding 'ever increasing insight into both what values are and how they work'.[74]

Geertz's arduous quest for a position between sterile theorizing and 'the thrill of learning singular things' (see n. 70) is perhaps best illustrated by his essay 'Ritual and Social Change'. Here one learns a number of singular and also very poignant things about the disruption of funeral rituals in a Javanese *kampong*, an 'enclave of peasants-come-to-town' (p. 150). The ritual's blending of Islamic, Hindu, and native animist elements had been disrupted by the politicization of the divide between Islam and the rest, itself attributed to socio-economic modernization, which, when it reached into the *kampong*, meant that 'The complex of beliefs and rituals which had for generations brought countless Javanese safely through the difficult postmortem period suddenly failed to work with its accustomed effectiveness' (p. 146). Geertz's description of the resulting example masterfully captures a scene of awkward inactivity and indecision, rising tension, and unwonted emotional outbursts.

His analysis at this point by no means shrinks from theory. He ascribes the failure of the funeral to 'a discontinuity between the form of integration existing in the social structural ("causal-functional") dimension and the form of integration existing in the cultural ("logico-meaningful") dimension'; 'socially kampong people are urbanites, while culturally they are still folk' (p. 164). The parenthetical and quoted terms are from Piotr Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, and refer to the types of integration found in the social system and culture respectively. Geertz glosses the distinction as follows:

> By logico-meaningful integration, characteristic of culture, is meant the sort of integration one finds in a Bach fugue, in Catholic dogma, or in the general theory of relativity; it is a unity of style, of logical implication, of meaning and value. By causal-functional integration, characteristic of the social system, is meant the kind of integration one finds in an organism, where all the parts are united in a single causal web; each part is an element in a reverberating causal ring which 'keeps the system going'. (p. 145)

Sorokin's position is similar to that of Parsons who, as Geertz notes, in his later work added the 'personality system' to this two-aspect theory, insisting on the mutual irreducibility of the three aspects. Geertz's presentation of the funeral example is intended to demonstrate the 'utility of this more dynamic functionalist approach' (p. 146).

What happens in Geertz's more widely cited later writings is that the gap between interpretive and causal explanation is further widened; causal argument recedes further from view and is eventually cast aside altogether; and 'theory' is finally identified with causal argument and therefore also dismissed. Geertz writes in the Preface of *Interpretation of Cultures* that an 'earlier concern' with functionalism is replaced by a later one with semiotics (p. ix), but it is really only in the widely cited essays 'Thick Description' and 'Deep Play' that the crucial steps are taken. The problem of connecting the events of politics with the 'web of meaning' of culture—of connecting a 'clutter

of schemes and surprises' with a 'vast geometry of settled judgements'—is posed in the 1972 essay 'The Politics of Meaning', and is said among other things to require for its solution 'a less aesthetic view of the latter [i.e. culture]' (p. 311). Geertz recommends here what he dubs 'thematic analysis' (a label that did not catch on even with him), a method which would need to avoid describing culture in ways that are 'merely evocative', or that 'place a series of concrete observations in immediate juxtaposition and . . . pull out (or read in) the pervading element by rhetorical suggestion' (p. 312).[75] Required instead is 'an analysis of meaning . . . which will be at once circumstantial enough to carry conviction and abstract enough to forward theory' (p. 313). He had argued in 'Person, Time, and Conduct in Bali' (1966) that the public nature of culture allowed it to be observed and thus allowed its study to be a 'positive science like any other' (p. 362). It is, he argues against Benedict, an empirical matter whether or not culture is a 'seamless web': 'if one must have images' (an unconvincing demurrer from this writer, from whom images issue forth generously), Geertz offers 'the octopus, whose tentacles are in large part separately integrated . . . yet who nonetheless manages both to get around and to preserve himself' (pp. 407–8).

Yet with the 'Thick Description' and 'Deep Play' essays, the decisive step away from these struggles with the theory of culture and the causal role of culture is taken. A 'theory of culture', as the first essay's subtitle indicates, is still seen by Geertz as a possibility, but now it is hermeneutic and literary theory that is intended, with references not to Parsons and Sorokin but to Paul Ricoeur, Kenneth Burke, and Northrop Frye. 'Logico-meaningful' integration has expanded into the entire subject matter, and an 'aesthetic' reading of it is embraced. Geertz's widely quoted 'definition' of culture is as follows:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. ('Thick Description', p. 5)

One might question a number of things about this statement. Firstly, Weber's position regarding meaning and causality was, as we have seen, more complex than Geertz allows. Secondly, something of a caricature of causal explanation is advanced, since one does not have to perform experiments to discover 'laws'. Above all, Geertz's metaphorical style leaves us unsure what being 'suspended' in a 'web of meaning' amounts to. It suggests some kind of constraint, i.e. a causal relationship, but at the same time, being metaphorical, it avoids any closer engagement with this suggestion. Generalization, thought by Weber among others to be essential to the establishment of such causal relations, is precluded.

Even more revealing of Geertz's movement away from the challenge he faced in the 'Ritual and Social Change' essay is his widely quoted assertion,

'culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly—described' (p. 14). This and related statements about the nature of cultural interpretation do not, in one respect, differ significantly from the exposition Geertz gave of 'logico-meaningful integration' in 'Ritual and Social Change', but what is different is the denial of any anthropological interest in the question of causation. This marks the maximum of the discomfort with which culturalism, in its development through the twentieth century, dealt with the question of causality.

In 'Deep Play', Geertz depicts the Balinese cockfight and the side-betting that surrounds it firstly in fairly conventional terms as a working out of status tensions, a 'simulation of the social matrix' (p. 436), whose vividness and violence is 'a depiction not of how things actually are among men, but . . . of how, from a particular angle, they imaginatively are' (p. 446). But he decisively rejects any claim of the causal significance of the cockfight: it is not a *reinforcement* of status relationships but a 'metasocial commentary' on them, a 'Balinese reading of Balinese experience, a story they tell themselves about themselves' (p. 448). Therefore, cultural analysis shifts from being 'in general parallel to dissecting an organism, diagnosing a symptom, deciphering a code, or ordering a system . . . to one in general parallel with penetrating a literary text' (p. 448). This parallel, Geertz says, 'has yet to be systematically exploited' in anthropology (p. 449). He discounts structuralism in this role as its method takes the form of deciphering a code rather than interpreting a text (p. 449, n. 38). The interpreter is left with little constraint: 'As in more familiar exercises in close reading, one can start anywhere in a culture's repertoire of forms and end up anywhere else' (p. 453). Not only is it hard to see how this activity could be made systematic, but its *point*, beyond aesthetic appreciation, is elusive too. It appears as though Geertz has succumbed not to 'the thrill of learning singular things', but to the even greater intellectual pleasure of freely interpreting them.

To summarize my own attempt at a 'close reading' of Geertz's *Interpretation of Cultures*, I would say that Geertz's anthropology was initially engaged in an intense and intellectually serious attempt, not unlike Weber's, to understand the role of culture in social life while avoiding both empty generalization and the facile embrace of contextual specificity. But his most influential statements stem from the period after his abandonment of that struggle, and manifest instead his avoidance of it. When Geertz suggests in *Local Knowledge*, first published in 1983, that 'calls for "a general theory" of just about anything social sound increasingly hollow, and claims to have one megalomanic',[76] he is merely putting the seal on the abandonment of his earlier aspirations.

Cultural anthropology has been the principal disciplinary setting in which culturalism has developed during the twentieth century. I have examined some representative figures; Geertz, the most influential of them on political culture research, most closely. In the context of this chapter as a whole, it can be seen that anthropological culturalism has involved a retreat, much of it covered by a smokescreen of metaphor, from Weber's attempt to combine causation and interpretation. The smokescreen is finally blown away and the retreat made entirely visible by Geertz's shift to a completely hermeneutic position first licensed by Dilthey and his abandonment of interest in causal relations. Just at this juncture, Geertz's work became widely influential, an ironic outcome for political culture research as it is a signal virtue of much of his earlier work that it engaged seriously with political questions, with important writings on nationalism, on state-formation, and on socio-economic and religious modernization. Indeed, Geertz's statement that 'One of the things that everyone knows but no one can quite think how to demonstrate is that a country's politics reflect the design of its culture',[77] is an exemplary expression of the problematic of political culture research. But with his own hermeneutic turn, Geertz moved further from the possibility of explaining the relation of 'reflection' that is indicated here. The consequences for the theory of political culture are typified by the causal and theoretical avoidances in Chabal and Daloz's *Culture Troubles*, which I looked at in the Introduction.

2.5. CONCLUSION

'Interpretivism' is a relatively recent term for a recurrent reaction to advances, or claimed advances, in the understanding of human and social affairs on the model of the natural sciences. Since what is understood by 'the model of the natural sciences' has itself changed, the relationship between interpretivism and its 'naturalist', and recently positivist, opponent has had a complex course. I have traced it in this chapter from its origins in reaction to the proto-social science of the Enlightenment (a reaction in which the term 'political culture' made its first appearance), through debates in Germany as to the intellectual foundations of historical research, and Weber's interpretive sociology, into the cultural anthropology of the twentieth century.

In the twentieth century interpretivism, like positivism, had a disciplinary expression that contributed imperatives beyond the implications of its philosophical basis. In philosophy itself, elaboration of interpretivism has continued, in the form for instance of Gadamer's 'philosophical hermeneutics'. But it has not had a major influence on the conduct of social science, and indeed if Gadamer is to be taken at his word, the influence could only be a critical one, and never a guide to alternative methods. The principal

disciplinary expression of interpretivism as an alternative method has been in cultural anthropology. Despite Almond's efforts, anthropology's understanding of the concept of culture could not be excluded from political science's development of the idea of political culture: to the contrary, it contributed greatly to the wide appeal of the new concept.

My discussion of work in cultural anthropology has been intended to illustrate some of the principal ways in which it has implemented the interpretivist approach. Benedict's notion of a cultural 'configuration' echoed Herder's understanding of culture. Sahlins was prominent among many anthropologists who were influenced by French cultural structuralism. Structuralism took further, indeed to a limit (in that its units of meaning, binary oppositions, were maximally small and maximally universal), the configurationist understanding of culture. But by far the most influential of the cultural anthropologists on work outside anthropology, Geertz, rejected cultural structuralism in favour of a position that came to stress the interpretation of cultural practices as 'texts' having the uniqueness and richness of a novel, and requiring the sensitivity of the literary interpreter to grasp them.

I examined Geertz's intellectual trajectory in detail because it encapsulates (as well as having influenced) the manner in which interpretivism has come to position itself in relation to positivism. In very different ways, Dilthey's and Weber's contributions and reactions to the 'crisis of historicism' at the end of the nineteenth century had sought to respond to the advance of positivism while still drawing on its strengths: in Dilthey's case by emulating what he took to be its philosophical foundation, and in Weber's by conjoining its interest in causation (which he understood as 'regularity', some later expositions in terms of 'singular causation' notwithstanding) with an interest in the interpretive understanding (*Verstehen*) of subjective meaning. Geertz himself initially embraced Weber's programme of reconciliation, but in the end abandoned it in favour of a radical denial of the possibility of general theory and of causal explanation.

But as my analysis of the interpretive culturalism of Benedict, Sahlins, and Geertz, as well as my introductory discussion of Chabal and Daloz's implementation of Geertz's anti-theoreticism, showed, causal questions cannot be so easily avoided. Causation invariably reappears, cloaked in vague terms such as 'influence' or 'tendency', or under metaphorical descriptions such as structuring 'armature' or suspending 'web'. The vagueness and metaphor perpetrate a theoretical denial.

Interpretivism therefore reaches an impasse. Attempts to achieve a reconciliation with positivism have repeatedly failed—such failures in the twentieth century, such as that of Parsons, in fact being only reprises of the lifelong struggles of Dilthey and Weber. Yet the avoidance of the causal reasoning on which positivism stakes its success is also impossible. Despite the periodic fury of the mutual opposition of positivism and interpretivism, and the recurrent

failure of attempts at reconciliation in more placid moments, an unexpected similarity is apparent between the marginalization of theory in positivist political culture research and the ultimate denial of theory in its interpretivist alternative. The implication of this similarity is that both approaches have been missing the point. The point is not to abjure an interest in causal relations, but to take this interest much more seriously than the positivist construction of political culture as a macro-variable or the interpretive promotion of culture as a comprehensive semiotic context have done, by looking much more closely at what political culture is and how it works. One cannot meet this obligation either by doing attitude surveys or by reading culture like a book. What is needed is a theory of political culture.

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3

Theoretical Displacement (I): Materialist Alternatives to Political Culture Research

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the Introduction of this book I noted that political culture remains a live issue for political science, contrary to the view that agreement had been reached on either its clear meaning and importance or alternatively its scientific vacuity and dispensability. It was not difficult to show that there was no such agreement but rather a set of contentious assertions, and in the first two chapters I have drilled down into the sources of the contention, showing how debates within political culture research represent not just a microcosm but indeed the crux of fundamental questions about the philosophy and methods of political and more generally social science.

It would, however, be too easy to base a defence of the project of theorizing about political culture on the fact that it remains a debated concept, when many of the contributors to the debate take the position, or make arguments that imply the position, that we would do better to abandon it altogether. Especially in a book which sets out to avoid the partiality and selectivity of many previous theoretical discussions, it is necessary not just to note the existence of, but also to inspect carefully, arguments that the whole enterprise might be misplaced.

My argument in this chapter and the next is that the varied attempts to make something other than political culture the centre of analytical attention cannot avoid dealing with it or something like it. But because they have decentred political culture these attempts are poorly equipped to understand its analytical re-entry. This is the intellectual sequence I am calling 'theoretical displacement'. A reply might be that it is not a 'displacement' of a theory of apples to put forward a theory of oranges—it is just something different. Nevertheless I will show that the considerations addressed by the concept of political culture cannot actually be set aside, so that they necessarily reappear in a disguised form. The 'displacement' is thus in each case a purported theory of oranges that surreptitiously relies on an underdeveloped theory of apples.

This finding adds support to my contention that a theory of political culture is needed.

I will not consider every possible theoretical displacement, as this could amount to the whole of social and political thought, and in view of the incessant brand differentiation of political analysis would be both an ever-expanding and also increasingly redundant task.[1] Even so, I aim at a fairly wide-ranging and ecumenical treatment. The theoretical displacements I will consider fall into two categories, though needless to say there are cases of overlap, both in the sense of transitional cases and in the more interesting sense of unacknowledged 'looping back' to an earlier position.

The first of these categories, materialism, is at first sight easier to grasp as a displacement of political culture research: it embraces both rational choice theory and a variety of approaches deriving from Marx. It will be my contention, however, that our 'first sight' of the contrast between materialist and cultural explanation is misleading: I will show in each case either that the problem of political culture recurs implicitly, or that when it is addressed explicitly the prior theoretical assumptions undermine the attempt to incorporate it.

In Chapter 4, I will go on to discuss a position I will call 'discursivism', much as its proponents would resent being suspected of any kind of '-ism'. Its subject matter is a politically inflected concept of discourse, derived mainly from Michel Foucault, which has been deployed in numerous critical and 'deconstructive' critiques, among them—and for our purposes the most important—the critique of 'culture' itself. While the critique has merit, I will suggest that an implicit causal framework underlies discursivism, which when made explicit is not very convincing.

Thus my argument will be that in the various materialist and discursivist displacements, political culture is not fully displaced but becomes part of a theoretical framework in which, however, theoretical attention is focused elsewhere, so that its contribution remains unexamined. While Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrated the inadequacy of the existing theory of political culture, this chapter and the next will show that we have no choice but to formulate a better one.

3.2. RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

Rational choice theorists have been prominent critics of political culture research,[2] while for their part political culture researchers have often recognized rational choice theory as their principal opposition.[3] This state of affairs sets up the first condition of a displacement, namely a shift of theoretical attention, but the antithesis seems so stark as to entail, if rational choice theory

were to be accepted, a complete dismissal of political culture research. That some writers have seen scope for a rapprochement between rational choice and political culture is a first clue that the relationship is not quite as antipathetic as the polemics have suggested.[4] But in fact to speak of a rapprochement is already to overstate the distance between the supposed contenders. Establishing even the possibility of a rational choice theory on the terms normally assumed is impossible without recourse to phenomena associated with political culture—our first illustration of the impossibility of a materialism altogether insulated from culture.

The notion of some interpretivists that positivist political culture research can scarcely be distinguished from rational choice theory as aspects of a Western-centric 'comparative politics' has its complement in the widespread but erroneous supposition that an emphasis on culture in response to the explanations proposed by rational choice theory is necessarily a methodological turn to interpretivism.[5] The relationship between rational choice theory and political culture research has thus become caught up in the broader dialectic of positivism and interpretivism, but evidently in a rather confusing and inconsistent way. It will be better, especially as I have already addressed that dialectic at length, to address the relationship at a less philosophically elevated level, namely the level of their respective causal frameworks. While this way of proceeding suggests partiality towards the positivist construal of political culture, the fact that interpretivism's denial of problems of causality is in fact unsustainable shows the partiality to be merely an appearance.

Rational choice theory generalizes the methods of economics, or to be more precise 'positive economics'. The qualification is worth making for reasons that are relevant to our discussion. These have to do with the origins of academic economics and with its possible future trajectory. The emergence of economics as a free-standing discipline in the nineteenth century was accompanied by a reaction which formed part of the methodological dialectic of interpretivism and positivism. The German *Methodenstreit* at the turn of the twentieth century, an aspect of the crisis of historicism I discussed in Chapter 2, centred on the question of the universality of economic laws. It could not fail to have important policy as well as purely methodological implications for a country like Germany, which was entering into economic rivalry with a more established competitor (Britain) whose liberal and laissez-faire economic doctrine, promoted as scientific truth, seemed advantageous to itself and disadvantageous to its emerging competitors.

It was the proponents of universal economic laws who prevailed. This did not of course mean the immediate installation of laissez-faire policies, or the disappearance of academic interest in national variation in economic trajectories. Rather, the discipline of economics became less directly concerned with these questions, remanding them to economic historians, or leaving them to the growing numbers of applied economists working for governments, firms,

and banks. The tendency in economics as a discipline was instead towards improvements of its calculative apparatus, building on the 'marginalist revolution' that was the foundation of mathematical economics in the late nineteenth century.[6]

As the discipline consolidated around this core, reactions against it increasingly took an external form: critiques *of* economics rather than *within* it. Parsonian social theory, which I discussed in Chapter 1, integrated what Parsons saw as several of the key critiques, notably those of Weber and Durkheim. Parsons saw economistic explanations of social order as 'positivist' in the particular sense he gave to this word: as involving environmental determinism.[7] Political culture research took forward this reaction, converting it within its own disciplinary setting into a reaction to the universalizing expectations of modernization theory, whose own basic hypothesis dealt with the political consequences of economic growth.

In economic explanation of the prevailing positivist form, the notions of utility and rationality are fundamental. Decisions and the ensuing courses of action are explained by supposing, on the part of actors, perfect information as to the range of possible actions and their consequences, and in particular the existence of a mathematical function relating actions to outcomes that will enable calculations of marginal cost and benefit to be made. Actions are entered into so long as they yield marginal benefit over inaction or some other action. Economic explanation is thus able to derive action from circumstances: a set of circumstances combined with a set of utility functions will entail a determinate outcome. Herbert Simon puts it thus:

> The classical theory of omniscient rationality is strikingly simple and beautiful. Moreover, it allows us to predict (correctly or not) human behavior without stirring out of our armchairs to observe what such behavior is like. All the predictive power comes from characterizing the shape of the environment in which the behavior takes place. The environment, combined with the assumptions of perfect rationality, fully determines the behaviour.[8]

The positivist character of this enterprise was expressed well in a famous essay by Milton Friedman, 'The Methodology of Positive Economics'.[9] Friedman argued that the unrealistic nature of the assumptions of perfect information and calculable utility functions was irrelevant, so long as these assumptions produced models that enabled reasonably accurate predictions and retrodictions to be made. Among explanations which met this test, the preferred one should be chosen by the application of 'Occam's razor', the principle that the simplest explanation should be accepted. When the choice between alternative explanations is made solely on the grounds of their predictive capacity plus their theoretical elegance, the question of the descriptive adequacy of the assumptions drops out of consideration. Friedman's essay thus represents a

classic statement of the nominalist or operationalist precept of positivism, and 'positive economics' is aptly named.

There are signs that the positivist mainstream of economics is coming under increasing threat. Dissent from its nominalist indifference to the accuracy of its assumptions has been growing over several decades. Early signs included Simon's modification of the assumption of rationality: he proposed the concept of 'bounded' in place of perfect rationality, and 'satisficing' in place of 'optimizing' action. He recommended developing 'decision theory' by looking 'anthropologically' at the process of decision-making in specific settings.[10] A more recent development has been the turn by 'behavioural economics' to psychology as a source for investigating decision-making empirically. A significant line of thought in economic theory has been the 'heuristics and biases' research initiated by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman's study of deviations from valid reasoning, which has produced a rich catalogue of different modes of calculating risk and complex utility functions that provide a better description of decision-making under particular circumstances (for instance, people make different choices when comparing large probabilities of small gains with small probabilities of large losses than they do in the converse situation, whereas classical assumptions suggest identical utility functions in the two situations).[11] When even a Nobel laureate (Simon) proposes anthropological study of decision-making in place of abstract modelling, and another (Kahneman), having turned instead to the psychology laboratory, is awarded the prize for his 'having integrated insights from psychological research into economic science',[12] one can question how long Friedman's nominalist indifference to the empirical accuracy of motivational assumptions will continue to prevail.

The possibility that economics, having become the site of the most triumphant expression of positivism in the social sciences, might be transformed into a more descriptive discipline (which indeed raises questions about its disciplinary distinctiveness) constitutes an important background for the assessment of its derivative, rational choice theory, and its relationship with political culture research. While the advanced detachments of economistic thought have been actively colonizing adjacent disciplines, especially political science, the base from which these detachments have emerged, and from which they receive intellectual supply, is itself subject to infiltration from disciplines and approaches with an interest in the empirical reality of decision-making. Rational choice theory, for the most part, has not caught up with these developments, and continues to rest its case on the parsimony of its assumptions and the elegance of its theoretical framework.

A less sophisticated recognition of the problem of the reality of economistic assumptions has however been shown by rational choice theory in the distinction between what is known as 'thin' and 'thick' rationality. John Ferejohn explains this distinction as follows:

> In . . . a 'thin-rational' account, the theorist assumes only that agents are (instrumentally) rational, that they efficiently employ the means available to pursue their ends. In a 'thick-rational' account, the analyst posits not only rationality but some additional description of agent preferences and beliefs. Thick-rational choice theorists generally assume that agents in a wide variety of situations value the same sorts of things: for example, wealth, income, power, or the perquisites of office.[13]

The 'thicker' or more substantive assumptions mentioned by Ferejohn are made, for example, in the study of voting behaviour, where the formerly prevailing thesis of 'party identification' (the retention of party loyalty over the long term and across electoral offices) has been largely displaced by a rational choice theory that predicts voting choices on the basis of evaluations of government performance.[14] Of course the two theories would not be at odds if party loyalty were to count as 'interest' to be 'maximized', which means that by definition a rational choice theory of voting that *differs* from party identification theory has to posit some specific value *other* than party loyalty—usually an economic one (though this can be defined in a number of different ways, for instance 'egocentrically' or 'sociotropically', and 'prospectively' or 'retrospectively'). In general, it must be the case that whenever rational choice theory is put forward as an *alternative* to an explanation—for instance a 'cultural' one—in which motivated behaviour is assumed, it must posit *different* motivations, and this means that it must be a 'thick' rational choice theory. It is not therefore always a 'vulgar misunderstanding', as Michael Hechter alleged, on the part of critics of rational choice theory to suppose that it assumes selfishness or 'materialism'.[15] Neil Smelser makes the same point when he observes, 'The idea of rational choice in economic and other analysis is, indeed, an idea of culture, however thin that idea may be.'[16] Conversely, a 'thin' rational choice theory that applied the calculus of interests only after the existence of common values had been empirically established would not be alternative to, but would rather be dependent upon, that prior empirical investigation, which would be an investigation of the kind offered by positivist political culture research.

If the task is to explain how an individual with a given interest, or a set of people with identical interests, will act, then rational choice theory contributes nothing beyond what political culture research would provide, since political culture research already incorporates the calculative rationality posited by thin rational choice theory. Barry Hindess has criticized rational choice theory for its assumption of what he calls the 'portfolio model of the actor', which

> treats action as resulting for the most part from intentions that are themselves the product of a portfolio of beliefs and desires which the actor carries round from one situation to another . . . In this model the contents of the actor's portfolio may

> change from time to time, but at any given moment they are to be regarded as relatively stable.[17]

What Hindess does not recognize here is that it is not only rational choice theory which makes this assumption: the Parsonian theory of values which provided the theoretical framework for political culture research does the same.[18]

Rational choice theory may be thought to make a distinctive and non-trivial contribution when the context of action is a competitive one, and actors have to consider the behaviour of others when seeking to promote their interests or realize their values. In such a strategic context, rational choice theory contributes insights in the form of 'game theory', known as 'public choice' when it addresses societal decision-making. But the game-theoretic calculus is applicable only when either common interests, or (more typically) different interests that are nevertheless comparable by a common metric, exist among the competitors. Thus it too rests either on covert assumptions about motives, or on overt empirical determination of them, along with a further assumption of their commensurability.

A much-discussed contribution of game theory to political analysis is the 'collective action problem' investigated by Mancur Olson.[19] Olson's argument that the incentive to 'free ride' when efforts are underway to achieve a collective benefit will undermine the very possibility of such collective action has found numerous applications, not the least of them the rather troubling implication (troubling especially for rational choice theory, which claims to be able to explain voting choices on the grounds of economic self-interest) that voting itself may not be rational: the so-called 'paradox of voting'.[20] The *problem* for the 'collective action problem', as Olson himself observed, is that collective action does in fact take place. His solution was to suggest that the promoters of collective action offer 'selective benefits' only to the participants, and these, additional to the collective benefits which the larger collectivity (perhaps the whole society) will receive, motivate joining the collective action. A large literature has arisen that has tried to define various kinds of selective benefit.[21] Any such solution to the predictive failure of the theory of collective action has to show what will motivate the provision of these costly selective benefits in the first place; but this cannot be accounted for within the terms of the theory. The same is all the more obviously true when 'cultural' factors are introduced to account for the possibility of collective action, as when the paradox of voting is resolved by positing 'civic duty' as a motive.[22] Such moves weaken the simplicity of the game-theoretic assumptions and dissolve the contrast between rational choice theory and political-cultural explanation.

Rational choice theory is both a trans-disciplinary trend, intellectually supported by its origin in economics, and a sub-disciplinary position which,

in political science, sets itself up in opposition to political culture research. Gabriel Almond, the founder of positivist political culture research, has complained that rational choice theory reflects 'the current priority of method over substance in political science'.[23] This anti-nominalist complaint, which evokes the realist critique of positive economics,[24] strikes me as ironic coming from the 'patent holder' of political culture research, who has said of political culture that it is 'not a theory, but a set of variables that may be used in the construction of theories'. My examination of rational choice theory supports Almond's criticism, but in a way that calls his own position into question. Rational choice theory, while representing itself as the antithesis of political-cultural explanation, has not managed to insulate itself from the concerns of political culture. In its 'thick' variant, it posits without investigating motives that are substantively or narrowly self-interested, such as pecuniary ones. In its more austere, 'thin' variant, it can provide only hypothetical explanations, which if one wishes to apply to actual events await filling in with an empirical investigation of uniform or commensurable interests or—what in this context become indistinguishable—values.

Going beyond the assumptions of both rational choice theory and political culture research is a task for a later chapter. In this chapter, my aim is to display the pattern of theoretical displacement of political culture, a pattern in which intellectual attention is diverted elsewhere, in this case to 'interests', but in which the theoretical programme turns out to depend implicitly on the cultural. Rational choice theory illustrates this pattern perfectly. It is explicitly antipathetic to political culture research, yet is also rather nakedly open to the re-entry of culture into its explanatory framework. Its disciplinary foundation, economics, relies on an increasingly challenged disciplinary positivism, the challenge pointing to the need to investigate economic motives empirically rather than assume them. Its thick and thin versions respectively make cultural posits directly or require cultural factors to be discovered. And it is prone to rely on cultural posits to rescue its predictions when they go wrong, as in its most heavily promoted research programmes they evidently do.

3.3. MARXISM: CULTURE, IDEOLOGY, AND HEGEMONY

The consideration of the Marxist displacement of the theory of political culture in only a section of a chapter perhaps needs some additional warrant: Marxism constitutes, of course, a vast literature, as well as being a political position and revolutionary doctrine.[25] I will not attempt a thorough survey, but rather will take a close look at three phases of Marxism's engagement with

culture. The justification for doing so is that little effort is necessary to show that a 'vulgar', 'dogmatic', or 'economistic' Marxism, a Marxism, that is, for which Marx's slogan 'The hand-mill gives you society with a feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist' is his principal insight,[26] would have little use for a concept such as political culture; by the same token, however, it has little plausibility.

Most Marxists, certainly including Marx himself, have instead recognized the need to deal with culture, even within the framework of an explicitly materialist theory. Our question then becomes, how effectively did they do so, and what impediments did their theoretical starting point present? To answer it, I will look at the first substantial expression of a political analysis of culture and ideas, namely Marx and Engels's *The German Ideology*, then at Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, and finally at the post-Gramscian development of a Marxian 'cultural studies'. This set of instances of what has become known as 'cultural Marxism' should give us the best chance we have of discovering resources for a critique of existing political culture research and the formulation of an alternative. My conclusion will nevertheless be that the theoretical displacement effected by the materialist starting point brings these resources into doubt.

3.3.1. Origins of the Problem: *The German Ideology*

Culture enters into Marxism in the first place as a foil, for Marx initially defined his position against Hegel and the Young Hegelians, whom he accused of committing the 'idealist' error of assuming that it is ideas that drive human activity and human progress. Marx's 'materialism' is therefore first of all a deflation of the causal efficacy of ideas, and therefore of culture.

Hegel's idealism undoubtedly had elements of the 'culturalism' originated by Herder, particularly in his concept of '*Sittlichkeit*' ('customariness' or 'ethical order'), but Hegel did not end where Herder did, with the proposition and celebration of cultural diversity. Instead he posited an evolutionary path towards a universal 'Idea' as the culmination of human rationality. An 'objective' idealism has therefore often been attributed to him, or indeed the metaphysical view that philosophy is (in his terms) 'objective theology'. He understood human history as the unfolding of this Idea, and found an incomplete manifestation of it in the contemporary Prussian state.

The political implications of this view were not necessarily conservative, and indeed Hegel promoted reform. The Young Hegelians however insisted that not reform but rather revolutionary change was necessary to realize the rational organization of society implicit in the historical unfolding of the absolute Idea. Marx and Engels did not of course differ from these revolutionary aspirations, but they sought to show that the Hegelian idealist origins of such revolutionary radicalism deprived it of all purchase on the world it

sought to change: it encouraged the supposition that the world could be changed by changing thought, which as Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach famously states, is a distraction from proper revolutionary activity.[27]

The expectation of the movement of history towards a fully rational and self-conscious outcome was the Hegelian legacy retained by Marxism, but a radical shift was made in the understanding of the role of ideas in this process. All notions of the immanent development of ideas were abandoned, and explanatory priority was instead placed on the material conditions of life. But just at this point of the initial crystallization of the Marxist materialism there emerges a fateful tension in its understanding of culture.

In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels write:

> The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they *really* are; i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.[28]

Here Marx and Engels express the materialist opposition to idealism. They continue:

> The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, law, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people.

Thus 'at first', ideas, conceptions, and consciousness are a 'direct efflux' of material behaviour. And in a rather rapid move, the same relationship is said to apply between material behaviour and 'the language of politics, law, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc.', in other words the culture of a whole people. Hence, 'Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness . . . no longer retain the semblance of independence . . . Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.'[29]

The directness of the relationship ('direct efflux') between material behaviour, on the one hand, and ideas and culture, on the other, is however soon modified, in a way already licensed by the 'at first' qualification of the 'direct efflux' theory. As the division of labour progresses, Marx and Engels say, the distinction of mental from physical labour enables consciousness to 'really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it *really* represents something without representing something real'.[30] Once this happens, ideas cease to be a 'direct efflux'. The way is open for the much-quoted passage:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.[31]

An important transition is therefore made in arriving at this thesis, the 'dominant ideology' thesis.[32] From an immediate materialism in which ideas, and at the collective level culture, are seen as directly emergent from material behaviour, Marx and Engels arrive at what might be called a structural materialism, in which not only is there a differentiation between classes, but there is also a differentiation of functions, separating out from other material behaviour the working of the 'means of mental production'. A new source of ideas is created, and since this source is in the possession of a class, ideas can be generated for a particular purpose. The theory remains materialistic, but a key transition has taken place in how its materialism is to be understood: at first, as the emission of ideas in the course of material life, but later as the production of ideas by an apparatus whose materiality consists in its being owned by the ruling class.

The dominant ideology thesis has of course been enormously influential within and indeed beyond Marxist thought. It has become an increasingly central and necessary component of that thought as Marxists' revolutionary expectations and aspirations have been further and further postponed. Marx and Engels anticipated the intensification of class conflict and the utter immiseration of the proletariat; only the total expropriation of the working class would enable it to serve as a 'universal' class whose revolutionary victory would mark not merely a further redistribution of private property but its abolition.[33] These expectations have not been fulfilled. Marxists have in consequence sought an explanation of the ability of the ruling classes of the advanced capitalist countries to remain in place, while those of late-industrializing or yet-to-industrialize countries such as Russia and China succumbed. Control of the means of mental production provides that explanation.

Once a separation is made between immediate and structural materialism, inevitably there is the possibility of a gap between the true ideas which the Marxist revolutionary seeks to promote, and the false ideas, originating with the ruling class, which are at large among the subordinate classes. The subordinate classes no longer produce ideas from their material behaviour, but instead acquire them artificially, from the authors of ideology. The revolutionary then has the task of persuading the subordinate classes what their material situation really should mean, when that is not what they spontaneously take it to mean.[34] The risks inherent in this task are manifold. Indeed they were quite apparent to Marx, who diagnosed in the adoption by left-Hegelian Ludwig

Feuerbach of a contemplative position 'superior to society' an idealist assumption of the priority of his own free-standing thought.[35] In the *Communist Manifesto*, the place of the radical critic was instead explained thus:

> in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class.[36]

But even on this account the character of the crisis is still not so glaring that the subordinate classes can adequately perceive its meaning on their own. It is not a large step to Lenin's theory of the 'vanguard party', which gave a creative and instigating role to the radical intellectuals on the basis that without this assistance the working class might develop only 'trade union consciousness'. Lenin wrote, in a surprisingly idealist vein: 'in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of social-democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia'.[37]

We therefore find in Marxism, as an expression of its reaction against idealism, an immediate materialism that represents ideas as a 'direct efflux of material behaviour'. But it is quickly superseded by a developing account of the causal role of ideas both in the impeding of revolution (as a dominant ideology produced by the controllers of the means of mental production) and in promoting it (as revolutionary consciousness-raising). Underlying this analysis is a structural materialism. Between these two forms of materialism there is an unresolved tension, which in the history of Marxism has recurrently allowed the development of a posture, as Marx said about Feuerbach, 'superior to society'. As a theory of culture, it is a politicization that amounts to a theoretical displacement, for its imperative is to look behind culture for the structural conditions which generate it and in the process make it a cloak for their operation.

3.3.2. Gramsci: The Theory of Hegemony

It is well known that the main line of development of Marxism was in a direction away from a fuller engagement with the problem of culture and ideas, towards the position known as 'historical materialism', a theory of the sequence of social formations driven by class conflict and technological progress, culminating inevitably in communist society. Certainly this development has been promoted by accretions to Marxism added by Engels along the lines of his famous epitaph, that 'Just as Darwin discovered the law of

development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history'.[38] Later expositors such as Karl Kautsky, and Lenin and his successors as leaders of the Bolshevik party, further promoted it. Some have suggested, with both approval and regret, that it is a result of a change of emphasis by Marx himself.[39] But the seed of historical materialism is the structural materialism with which Marx and Engels overlaid their basic materialist insight that 'life determines consciousness'.

In its crudest, Stalinist, form historical materialism contributes little to a theory of culture. Our interest is in that Marxism that seeks to address culture and make it central to its analysis, a Marxism that has recurrently dissented from structuralist or historical materialism and sought to recover the immediacy of culture. Antonio Gramsci's contribution represents, according to Leszek Kolakowski, 'an attempt at a Marxist philosophy of culture whose originality and breadth of view cannot be denied'.[40] Kolakowski suggests that only Gramsci's imprisonment, and effective isolation from contemporary communist politics, prevented the expulsion from the party to which his views would inevitably have led as the orthodoxy was consolidated under Stalin.[41] But we need not of course accept Stalin's definition of what counts as Marxism, and the scale of Gramsci's effort to theorize culture gives us the best test of the possibility of such a theory within the Marxist framework.

An early sign of Gramsci's revisionism was his response to the Bolshevik revolution in his essay 'The Revolution against *Capital*': 'Events have exploded the critical schemas whereby Russian history was meant to develop according to the canons of historical materialism.'[42] But it is in his polemic against historical materialism, which he variously refers to as 'mechanism', 'evolutionism', 'economism', and 'fatalism', in the later *Prison Notebooks* that the extent of his revision is fully unfolded.

Gramsci does not condemn the historical materialist interpretation of Marxism altogether. Indeed he recognizes the necessity of it in the early stages of revolutionary propaganda, as the idea of an inevitable succession of historical stages on the basis of changes in technology is both easy to grasp and a necessary psychological prop for communist revolutionaries where circumstances for revolution do not seem propitious. But at more advanced stages and in more advanced settings (such as the Italy of his time) something more sophisticated than this quasi-religious notion of predestination—'a replacement in the popular consciousness for the cry of "'tis God's will"'—was needed.[43] Revolution, he said, could take the form of a confrontational 'war of manoeuvre' in a setting such as wartime Russia; in Western Europe, on the other hand, a more painstaking 'war of position' was called for (pp. 235–9). This required above all the effort to persuade the working class and other subordinate classes of the rightness of the Marxist analysis. Persuasion in turn must be on the basis not of the key to history offered by the materialist dogma—

which inevitably involved also submission to the intellectual authority of the revolutionary leader—but of the conformity of the analysis with the experience of the workers themselves.

On the other hand, experience must manifest itself as 'theory' or 'philosophy' in order to be the effective basis of revolutionary politics. This philosophy must not be brought to the workers as a prophecy from on high, but must at the same time be more than their spontaneous wishes, because these—what Gramsci called 'common sense'—can be the product of 'submission and intellectual subordination' on the part of a 'group' (Gramsci's term for 'class') that has 'adopted a conception that is not its own but is borrowed from another group', i.e. the ruling class (p. 327). In order that Marxism be neither a dogma alien to the workers' experience nor a merely spontaneous consciousness, which Gramsci agreed with Lenin might eventuate only in 'trade union consciousness' (or indeed, given the recent example of the fascist coup in Italy, something much worse), there should be only a 'difference of degree' (p. 199), a difference in the degree of integration and comprehensiveness of outlooks (pp. 323–4), between 'modern theory' (Marxism) and 'common sense'.

Theoretical ideas, in the form of Marxism, are necessary if the subordinate classes are to form a sufficiently critical and coherent view of their position, but the intellectuals who formulate these ideas must themselves be organically connected to the working experience. The test of the validity of the Marxist critique would then be the recognition of it by the workers themselves: 'A compelling proof that . . . a . . . new synthesis is historically mature is constituted by the very fact that such a process is understood by the subaltern class' (p. 202). This understanding in turn will be manifest in behaviour, and Gramsci seems to have in mind the 'factory councils' that had appeared embryonically in post-war Turin: 'It is precisely in the organisms which represent the factory as a producer of real objects and not of profit that [the worker] gives an external political demonstration of the consciousness he has acquired' (p. 202).

This very example, however, shows the weakness of Gramsci's attempt to reconcile experience and spontaneity, on the one hand, with philosophy and theory, on the other. The factory councils and other symptoms of workers' self-organization were a recurrent disappointment. While it is not true that Gramsci drops all reference to factory councils in the *Prison Notebooks*,[44] by the time of his imprisonment he could much less readily than in the immediate post-war period envisage them as the nucleus of the wider leadership of the workers over all subordinate classes. While Gramsci dealt in a far more sustained way than did Marx and Engels with the problem of the relationship between ideas as a 'direct efflux' and the ideas that could be deliberately produced, both by ruling class and 'organic'

intellectuals, under the conditions of the advanced division of labour, he did not resolve it.

The chief legacy of Gramsci's effort is the concept of 'hegemony'. He did not of course invent this concept, nor did he use it entirely consistently. Nevertheless he usually defines it by contrast with 'domination', 'dictatorship', or 'coercion', and glosses it as 'intellectual and moral leadership' or 'consent'.[45] Thanks to Gramsci, hegemony has come to be understood by Marxists as the mechanism through which culture exerts causal effects. It is the mechanism not only of ruling-class domination, but also of the prospective leadership by the working class of all other subordinate classes (sometimes called 'counter-hegemony'). It is always effected by a consciousness which has become self-aware, critical, and coherent—qualities already possessed by the ideas of the ruling class (which has its own intellectuals), but only incipient among the workers and their intellectuals.

Yet for all its considerable appeal to later Marxists, the concept of hegemony does its theoretical work only assertorically. As 'intellectual and moral leadership' it is distinguished from the emergent 'common sense' of the workers, though if it is the hegemony of the Marxist party it will extend and systematize this—without, however, becoming alienated from it. Whether a course could be navigated between the spontaneous efflux of the workers' material life process and the dogmatic philosophy of the party of scientific Marxism was already in doubt in Gramsci's time, and his writings show a sustained attention to the problem rather than a solution to it. His chief legacy has in fact been the use of the concept of hegemony to describe the capacity of the ruling class to remain in place. Yet that capacity too is only labelled, and not explained, by the concept.

Gramsci's revisionism was evidently driven by his awareness that Marxist historical materialism had somehow lost touch with the experience of the subordinate classes, and his concept of hegemony marks an attempt to think about the politics of culture in a way that readmitted these classes to the discussion. Against historical materialist dogmatism, he reaches for the experience of the workers as validation of the 'philosophy' of Marxism. But like all Marxists, he recoils from the details of what he finds there. Thus he does not manage to resolve the persistent tension between two understandings of materialism: in terms of the local, ongoing, everyday 'life process' and in terms of the class structure and the advanced division of labour which allows specialized intellectual production (by the ruling class and, in particularly advanced conditions, by the workers' own intellectuals). In the end, the theory of hegemony is not a theory of what culture is, but of how it is used, which from the perspective of this book is a theoretical displacement. One will never understand how culture can be used without understanding what it is.

3.3.3. Applying the Theory of Hegemony: Social History and Cultural Studies

Although he contributed some important descriptive ideas, such as the concept of 'Fordism', Gramsci's circumstances of course made his work largely theoretical. That is no disadvantage in terms of my own theoretical purpose, but it will nevertheless be useful to see what can be made of Gramsci's ideas by those able to undertake empirical analysis. In this section I will look at the historical analysis of class consciousness provided by E. P. Thompson, and then at the cultural studies pioneered at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham.

Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* was apparently written without significant assistance from Gramsci's theoretical contribution to cultural Marxism, which indeed was only just becoming known when the book appeared.[46] Nevertheless it represents very closely the kind of empirical analysis which Gramsci's discussion of hegemony suggests—more closely, I would suggest, than does the more explicitly Gramscian work of cultural studies, which combined Gramsci with theoretical sources of a very different kind.

Thompson's aim was to rescue the working poor from what he famously called the 'enormous condescension of history',[47] by which he meant not only the erasure of the poor from historical attention (which social history in general had set out to rectify), but also the subsumption of the experience of the poor, when it *was* considered, under theories that made it the mere consequence of large-scale social developments. Not only Weberian versions of this condescension, such as the thesis of the influence of Methodism on working-class radicalism, but also Marxist versions were his target, the latter indeed somewhat more pointedly. 'The working class did not arise like the sun at the appointed time', he wrote against historical materialism, but 'was present at its own making' (p. 8).

Class is, for Thompson, a cultural phenomenon, as he explains in the following famous passage:

> class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs. The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born—or enter involuntarily. Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms. If the experience appears as determined, class-consciousness does not. We can see a *logic* in the responses of similar occupational groups undergoing similar experiences, but we cannot predicate any *law*. (pp. 8–9)

Evident here is a clear recapitulation of Gramsci's attempt to mediate between the immediate 'common sense' of workers' experience—the 'direct efflux of their material behaviour'—and the distinct intellectual organization of this experience as politically effective consciousness, its 'handling' as 'traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms'.

Some critics have faulted Thompson for beginning with 'common experiences', on the grounds that studies that do so 'take as self-evident the identities of those whose experience is being documented and thus naturalize their difference'.[48] Gareth Stedman Jones writes: 'Consciousness cannot be related to experience except through the interposition of a particular language which organizes the understanding of experience, and it is important to stress that more than one language is capable of articulating the same set of experiences.'[49] The criticism is wide of the mark, since Thompson makes it clear that 'The changing productive relations and working conditions of the Industrial Revolution were imposed, not upon raw material, but upon the free-born Englishman—and the free-born Englishman as Paine had left him or as the Methodists had moulded him.'[50] But in fact it is the chief merit of Thompson's account that he did try to recapture that experience. For his critics, an immediate materialism of the kind initially outlined by Marx and Engels is already a lost cause. Our question is a more subtle one: how far did he succeed in reconciling that immediate materialism with the structuralist emphasis on class?

Thompson remains very much aware of the distinction between experience and its 'cultural handling'. It shows up inevitably as a differentiation of social and political roles, between the 'experiencers' and the 'handlers'. The textile factory was not, Thompson makes clear, the location of the majority of workers, and the factory life famously depicted by Engels was not typical of the disruptions brought by industrial capitalism. Capitalism also impinged, but in very different ways, upon the way of life of artisans and weavers, as well as rural labourers. Thompson's sensitive depiction of these experiences of the disruption of traditional practices is exemplary (even if it has not gone uncontested), but of course only makes more challenging the task of explaining how a unitary class consciousness could emerge from them. Thompson therefore also considers at length the activity, and in particular the writings, of political radicals who sought to formulate the diverse experience of capitalist disruption as a collective identity—writers like William Cobbett, who '*created* this Radical intellectual culture, not because he offered its most original ideas, but in the sense that he found the tone, the style, and the arguments which could bring the weaver, the schoolmaster, and the shipwright, into a common discourse' (p. 820).

The fundamental question, then, remains that of the relationship between the articulate intellectual culture and the massively diverse experience of social and economic disruption which the intellectuals sought to 'handle'. But while Thompson's study impresses in its profusion of detail, his insistence on the *diversity* of experience actually suggests, contrary to his intention, that the making of the English working class was a fragile and provisional achievement at best. We know very well that the English workers have not to date achieved anything other than a fleeting and contested revolutionary class consciousness. The category of 'working class' did achieve long-lasting salience in British discourse, but its implications for political behaviour have fluctuated widely over time and have never come close to being uniform across people.[51] This must confirm that Thompson's account of its 'making' is actually an account of a temporary and incomplete conjuncture of experience and cultural handling. It is in effect a sustained *juxtaposition* of the two elements of the Marxist theory of culture (the direct emergence versus the specialized intellectual production of culture) whose distinctness has never been properly theorized.

Cultural studies merits our attention not just because it puts the Gramscian theory of hegemony to work in empirical research, but also and particularly because it has been cited, by Margaret Somers, as the basis of an improved approach to political culture, or a 'new political culture project'.[52] However, a foundation in the Gramscian concept of hegemony does not, in the light of the criticism I have already made, promise a very satisfactory resolution of the problems Marxism has had with culture, and the resolution does not become any more likely with the admixture, in the theoretically eclectic manner that became typical of cultural studies, of resources from Foucault and Althusser.[53]

The 'culture' addressed by cultural studies was defined in a manner reminiscent of Thompson as 'the way, the forms, in which groups "handle" the raw material of their social and material existence'.[54] At once we can see that it is cultural 'products' that are to be the topic, although distinctively cultural studies paid close attention to the everyday and popular form of these products, such as television and pop music. The topic is addressed using the Gramscian concept of hegemony, 'the exercise of a special kind of power—the power to frame alternatives and contain opportunities, *to win and shape consent*, so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant classes appears not only "spontaneous" but natural and normal'.[55] By way of explication of this 'special kind of power', one of the programmatic statements of cultural studies provides the following:

> Hegemony prevails when ruling classes not only rule or 'direct' but *lead*. The state is a major educative force in this process. It educates through its regulation of the life of the subordinate classes. These apparatuses reproduce class relations, and

> thus class subordination (the family, the school, the church and cultural institutions, as well as the law, the police and the army, the courts).[56]

But of equal importance is the non-deterministic character of hegemony:

> Hegemony . . . is not universal and 'given' to the continuing rule of a particular class. It has to be *won*, worked for, reproduced, sustained. Hegemony . . . is a matter of the nature of the balance stuck between contending classes: the compromises made to sustain it; the relations of force; the solutions adopted. Its character and content can only be established by looking at concrete situations, at concrete historical moments.[57]

Such equivocation at the level of theory is replicated in cultural studies research. It constantly tacks between the themes of resistance and submission. In his study of the 1970s youth subcultures of punk and reggae, Dick Hebdige cites Althusser's theory of ideology, but also promotes a Gramscian analysis that can address (as he correctly implies Althusser's cannot) the 'crucial question' of 'which specific ideologies, representing the interests of which specific groups and classes, will prevail at any given moment, in any given situation'.[58] Hebdige writes of youth culture as 'a truly subterranean style',[59] a creative response to and reworking of not only 'mainstream' aesthetic styles but also previous phases of youth and musical culture itself. But while the creativity and sophistication of the punk phenomenon is constantly emphasized, the theme of reuse of everyday and trashy commodities (safety pins, lavatory chains, bin liners), the 'stealing' of 'humble objects' which are made to carry '"secret" meanings', strongly suggests too an important constraint on that creativity.[60] Paul Willis's ethnographic account of 'learning to labour' places the emphasis on submission: in his view, the 'resistance' of the working-class 'lads' he observed in a London secondary school, their disrespect for the teachers and mockery of the academically conscientious 'ear'oles', was actually an effective preparation for a working life of subordination and lack of initiative.[61] Studies of the media considered both the 'encoding' of dominant messages and the unpredictable 'decoding' of these by the audience.[62] The work of David Morley indeed shifts from one of these emphases to the other, from the 'encoding' of the dominant ideology in the current affairs programme *Nationwide* to the ethnography of cultural consumption in *Family Television*, with its account of the mixture of inattentiveness and ironic detachment with which television programmes are actually viewed.[63]

As an empirical matter, it is doubtless correct to observe that hegemonic claims are sometimes effective and sometimes not. Cultural studies has made a virtue of the open possibilities established by Gramsci's concept of hegemony, with its explicit or implicit complement (viz. counter-hegemony), Stuart Hall noting in a later essay that its 'richness' and empirical scope (that is, its application to cases both of resistance and of submission) gives the concept of hegemony a comparative advantage over the theories of Althusser and Foucault.[64] Certainly cultural studies cannot be accused of displacing culture

onto social structure in the manner of the dominant ideology thesis. But its exploitation of the contingency and indeterminacy of Gramsci's concept is so thorough that it cannot but reveal how little that concept adds to our understanding of the way culture works. Cultural studies thus marks a step towards arguments, which I will look at in the next chapter, which displace political culture not onto the class structure but onto a self-contained play of discourse itself. That is indeed a step which brings Marxism back to the idealism that it began by opposing. It is as far as can be imagined from the immediate materialism that saw ideas as the 'direct efflux' of material behaviour.

3.4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, as I will do in the next, I have used the term 'displacement' to refer to a shifting of political culture from the centre of theoretical attention. The most extreme forms of displacement simply suggest, sometimes explicitly, that we can manage without such a concept altogether. The suggestion is explicit in the arguments of rational choice theorists, who supplement their denial of the causal efficacy of culture with a tendency to find it methodologically suspect as a bridgehead of interpretivism. It is implicit in so-called 'vulgar Marxism', but such vulgarity among the significant contributors to Marxist thought is quite difficult to locate, for beginning with Marx and Engels's *German Ideology*, and indeed before that in Marx's earliest writings, Marxism has attempted not to reject culture outright, but to incorporate it into its theoretical framework, firstly as ideology, and later in a more sophisticated way as hegemony.

Rational choice theory has its basis in the parsimonious assumptions and deductive modelling of positive economics. In economics itself we see many signs of an erosion of confidence in the assumptions: although they were never meant to be realistic descriptions, even as models their fruitfulness has been brought into question by behavioural economics in its various forms. Rational choice theory for the most part continues to rest its case on the virtue of parsimony, but it is crucial to observe that at its most parsimonious, when making no assumptions about motives but only a 'thin' claim about the behaviour that results *given* certain motives, the theory remains inert until motives are added. Often, instead, motives are in fact assumed, in a 'thick' rational choice theory that assumes 'materialism' in the sense of a desire for money, a lust for power, or some other 'base' motivation. In either case, political culture enters into rational choice theory: as a necessary empirical supplement or as an unjustified posit. A fundamental commonality indeed exists between rational choice theory and political-cultural explanation, expressed by Hindess's concept of the 'portfolio model of the actor', a commonality which I will be critically

interrogating in Chapter 5. But it is plain that a theory of political culture cannot be expected from a position which readmits the concept covertly.

Marxism readmits culture in a more self-aware fashion, above all in the work of Gramsci and the cultural Marxism that stemmed from it. Originating in a reaction against Hegel's idealism, Marxism at first sought to debunk and deflate culture, to 'expose' it in the light of a fundamental materialism as an instrument of class rule. With Gramsci came a recognition of the terrain on which ruling class ideology was met by the consciousness of the working class, which is of course a cultural terrain, and needless to say a political one. Even so, the Marxist starting point made problematic if not impossible an understanding of how culture has its political effects. As with rational choice, a theory which begins by rejecting culture but which comes to depend on it is disabled from the outset when it attempts to understand how culture works.

I have evaluated the various materialist displacements considered in this chapter, as that label suggests, in terms of their contribution either to the theory of political culture or to a theory which explains why we do not need such a thing. The evaluation has found them wanting. We do need a theory of political culture, and the materialist displacements neither disprove that, nor provide one. In the next chapter I turn to a radically different kind of displacement, closer in many ways to political culture research itself, but for all that no closer to providing its needed theoretical basis.

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4

Theoretical Displacement (II): Discursivist Critiques of Political Culture Research

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The displacements I discussed in Chapter 3 are themselves, explicitly, theories; that is, they make general explanatory claims and do not eschew the language of causation. This makes it relatively easy to understand the sense in which they constitute a theoretical displacement from the point of view of political culture research. A more complex picture arises in the case of the theoretical displacements I will term 'discursivist'. In the first place (and despite their often highly abstract or 'theoretical' mode of expression), they share with the interpretivism I examined in Chapter 2 a programmatic opposition to causal theory.[1] They are, indeed, for the most part interpretive in methodological terms themselves. Yet ironically it is on the interpretive deployment of culture that much of their critical attention has been focused, the irony becoming sharpest when Geertz himself, the opponent of 'megalomaniacal' theory, comes under attack.

A second source of difficulty in understanding the sense in which discursivism constitutes a theoretical displacement of the theory of political culture lies in the fact that its key term, 'discourse', can readily (and, I will argue in a later chapter, correctly) be thought to be a part of culture, and when it is understood politically, as without exception it is in the discursivist critique, one might think that what discursivism offers is not a displacement of the theory of political culture, but a better version of it.[2] However, 'discourse' is not simply another word for culture, any more than 'ideology' or 'hegemony': like them, it expresses a distinct approach to and explanation of culture. In the discursivist analyses I will consider, the approach is a 'reflexive' one, which turns its attention towards academic and political use of the concept of culture. This often adds to our knowledge of, for instance, the relationship between scholarship and political and state interests, but of necessity it involves a turning of attention away from the world with which this scholarship and these interests deal. A displacement results. Discursivism indeed effects a

double displacement of the theory of political culture: in the first place, in the manner of the materialist displacement, by dispensing with culture only in fact to rely on it, and in the second place, in the manner of interpretivism, by denial of its own character as causal and explanatory theory, posing exclusively as critique.

I will of course need to be selective in the discussion of the diverse field of discursivist analysis, which ranges over the loose categories of postmodern, post-structuralist, and deconstructionist thought, and over numerous disciplines.[3] I will be focusing much attention on Foucault in section 4.3, whose work has a more directly political aim and character than that of other representative authorities such as Jacques Derrida. He has been the chief influence on the discursivist critique of cultural interpretation, whose impact in area studies and in anthropology I will discuss in sections 4.4 and 4.5 respectively. I will begin, however, with an example of discursivism which makes an explicit transition from Marxism and thus links this chapter with the preceding one.

4.2. FROM HEGEMONY TO DISCOURSE: POST-MARXISM

We saw in Chapter 3 that Gramsci did more than any other Marxist to comprehend theoretically the place of culture, developing in his theory of hegemony an account of both the 'dominant ideology' of the ruling classes and the striving of the subordinate classes for a world view that would allow an escape from it, with emphasis on the role of intellectuals in both aspects of hegemony. Gramsci acknowledged more fully than many Marxists the element of contingency and conjuncture in the process of hegemony and counter-hegemony, a fact which has lent his work a particular appeal for researchers interested in the messy and halting way in which the processes of class formation and class conflict have been empirically manifested in history. But the scope for contingency and conjuncture is nevertheless limited in Gramscian cultural Marxism and in all the empirical studies which echo or follow it by the fact that a 'correct' theory of history—a 'rational will', as Gramsci called it in Hegelian terms—is the ultimate guide to what is progressive and what is reactionary in historical events and present-day developments. For without this there would be no way to distinguish Marxist analysis of culture from what Marxists would term 'bourgeois' analysis, such as the pluralist account of the unpredictable struggle for power and advantage among spontaneously emerging social groups.

In their unapologetic post-Marxism Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe take a step further, though they reveal their debt to Marxism by situating their argument at the terminus of a sequence of Marxist thinkers from Rosa Luxemburg to Gramsci: thinkers who sought, always under the constraints of Marxist theory, to come to terms with the contingency implied by the intervention of culture and consciousness in historical change.[4] Indeed Marxist cultural studies, which they do not consider, itself made a large step towards the position of Laclau and Mouffe, as I suggested in Chapter 3.

Laclau and Mouffe see Gramsci's theory as a 'watershed', which 'break[s] with the reductionist problematic of ideology', that is, the reduction of culture to class, by positing a revolutionary 'collective subject' whose 'organic ideology does not represent a purely classist and closed view of the world' (pp. 67–8). But despite this advance, they say, 'For Gramsci, even though the diverse social elements have a merely relational identity . . . there must always be a *single* unifying principle in every hegemonic formation, and this can only be a fundamental class . . . Class hegemony is not a wholly practical result of struggle, but has an ultimate ontological foundation' (p. 69).

Laclau and Mouffe's argument against this core of Marxism is not wholly theoretical. It also responds to the fact that in the post-war period, and particularly from 1960 onwards, class antagonism had been far from the most dynamic and vivid manifestation of social conflict. Globally, anti-colonialism had become a powerful force, and while this of course had economic aspects, its racial, national, and ethnic aspects were evident too. In the West, the growth of feminism, the campaign for racial civil rights in the United States, and the emergence of numerous other movements under the capacious heading of 'identity politics', placed greater strain on the class analysis and class teleology of Marxism. The response of subsuming these diverse movements under class theory, either by showing that the overt issues in fact mapped onto class conflict, or by arguing that the overt issues were not fundamental and arose only as the result of a 'divide and rule' strategy by the ruling class, became less and less plausible, and of course these movements themselves did not remain silent in the face of such a response. Feminism, for example, mounted a critique of hidden gendered claims in Marxism.

The concept of discourse is the key term in Laclau and Mouffe's proposed alternative to the 'totality' implicit in Marxist theory. They first deny the fixity of social positions or identities, a move borrowed from Althusser's theory of 'interpellation', though stripped of the Althusserian claim that it is the capitalist mode of production that ultimately determines the array of subject positions. They then define 'articulation' as 'any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice'. Discourse is then defined as 'The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice' (p. 105). Foucault's concept of a discursive formation is drawn upon explicitly here, with a particular emphasis:

> This ensemble [the 'totality' of discourse or the discursive formation] is not the expression of any underlying principle external to itself—it cannot, for instance, be apprehended either by a hermeneutic reading or by a structuralist combinatory—but it constitutes a configuration which in certain contexts of exteriority can be *signified* as a totality. (p. 106)

The idea of a 'context of exteriority' is not the concession of a realm outside discourse, but rather the observation of the existence of multiple discourses: 'The exterior is constituted by other discourses' (p. 146, n. 20). In the 'field of discursivity' (p. 111), and its articulation of social positions, nothing can be fixed: neither 'society' nor the subject are other than claims within discourse. But then,

> The impossibility of an ultimate fixity of meaning implies that there have to be partial fixations—otherwise, the very flow of differences would be impossible. Even in order to differ, to subvert meaning, there has to be *a* meaning . . . Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre. We will call the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation, *nodal points*. (p. 112)

For Laclau and Mouffe, the error of the Marxist theory of the class origins of culture is to situate class identity outside discourse, making it therefore a criterion of the correctness of discourse, and, in the case of the ruling class, the cause of it. Both the dominant ideology thesis and Gramsci's more subtle discussion of hegemony and counter-hegemony commit this error. Laclau and Mouffe instead give discourse itself explanatory priority. But also excluded is the attempt to understand discursive formations 'either by a hermeneutic reading or by a structuralist combinatory' (that is, an interpretation in terms of the binary oppositions posited by cultural structuralism). A discursive formation is not 'mental', but material (p. 108). A 'practice of articulation . . . cannot consist of purely linguistic phenomena; but must instead pierce the entire material density of the multifarious institutions, rituals and practices through which a discursive formation is structured' (p. 109). However, nor can material relations exhaust a discursive formation, for this would exclude relations such as metaphor and contradiction, relations which can exist between 'objects of discourse' but not between 'entities' (pp. 109–10).

From this series of refusals Laclau and Mouffe claim to derive an approach which 'contain[s] all the necessary elements to resolve the apparent antimonies with which the logic of hegemony confronted us' (p. 114). But what they present as a transcendence of the dichotomy of discourse and practice, or the mental and the material, is as we can see merely an alternation between them. Semantic relationships are first ruled out as a basis for the totality of a discourse, then readmitted in the form of metaphor and contradiction. And where one is in most need of a concrete or material specification of the basis of

the 'privileged' discourse that achieves 'partial fixation' we encounter only the idea of a 'nodal point' in the 'field of discursivity'. What is crucial to notice about this idea, which is nodal also in Laclau and Mouffe's argument, is that the authors nowhere explain it further, or indeed give any indication that they think it is in need of explanation. What makes a 'nodal point' in discourse nodal, that is, a provisionally fixed point against which meaning can be defined? No clue is offered beyond the play of discourse itself.

Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism has been found to be 'still too Marxist' for instance by Michèle Barratt, who judges that 'they adopt a highly "functionalist" and "reductionist" and classically orthodox "Marxist" formulation about the welfare state and the reproduction of labour power and one which has been explicitly criticised by feminists'.[5] A more fundamental reason for thinking Laclau and Mouffe have not fully freed themselves from Marxist teleology—but one that would apply also to Barratt—is their continued reliance on the category of 'progressive' to judge the discursive articulations that they describe. By means of this category they distinguish between for instance fascist or populist articulations and feminist or anti-colonialist ones. The criterion for membership in the category is not however explained, and surely for Laclau and Mouffe the 'progressiveness' of an articulation must itself be up for grabs within discourse.

Marxism, thanks to the structural materialism embraced at the outset by Marx and Engels, provides a theory of culture only by displacing it onto the material basis, ultimately onto class (though in the case of cultural studies, a maximum of contingency enters into this displacement, prefiguring Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism). Post-Marxism constitutes a theoretical displacement of a different kind. It provides, to be sure, an abstract but also apt description of the way in which discourse creates identities, with political consequences for those identified (one might think, for example, of the shifts in connotation of the word 'queer', and their political consequences).[6] But the abstraction does not advance us any distance as an explanation. The deliberately indeterminate idea of the 'field of discursivity' leaves us quite unable to understand what might limit or constrain discursive change, even though such constraint is recognized as necessary if discourse is to convey meaning at all. 'Nodal points' of temporary fixity in the flux of meaning are merely posited, and their explanation is addressed only by ruling out the Marxist claim that they are secured by control of the means of intellectual production. Nothing to replace this theoretical refusal is offered. Tempting though it may be to see Laclau and Mouffe's account of discourse as both a remedy for the prolonged travails of the Marxist theory of culture, and as a distinctively political theory of political culture, it turns out to be a theoretical displacement onto a position that can establish itself only negatively,[7] refusing the attempt to substantiate

causal claims on which it nevertheless relies. It is a form of double theoretical displacement.

4.3. FOUCAULT: DISCOURSE AND POWER

Like Laclau and Mouffe, for whom he is a major source, Michel Foucault was also engaged in a reaction against Marxism. And although his reaction went further, lacking even the residual obeisance to Marx that Laclau and Mouffe's self-description as post-Marxists manifests,[8] nevertheless it is useful to keep in mind what Foucault was reacting against. In addition, Foucault differentiated his views explicitly from the structuralism that prevailed in French intellectual circles and which had been injected into Marxism by Althusser. Both Marxism and cultural structuralism involved a kind of theoretical integration of critique that he ostensibly opposed.

Foucault could in one sense be regarded as the author of the ultimate theory of political culture, a theory which offers both the most purely political analysis of culture, and the most purely cultural analysis of politics. The irony of this suggestion does not consist only in the fact that Foucault did not address political culture, political culture research, or indeed political science in general. It is plain that he would regard them as much too easy targets for the kind of critique he was mounting. The further irony is what gives Foucault's work its importance for the argument of this chapter: that his anti-theoreticism is quite explicit, being a major aspect of his reaction against Marxism. Foucault displaces the theory of political culture, but it is fundamental to his approach that what it is displaced *onto*—'power'—is not theorized in any of the conventional ways. Thus in the work of Foucault we find something obviously in need of investigation in this book: the ultimate theory of political culture that is also the ultimate displacement of a theory of political culture.

Foucault's varied historical researches, which directed critical attention towards the 'will to truth' inherent in ways of knowing such as psychiatry and penology, have been very influential, but also much contested, within their respective fields. I will look later at some substantive research influenced by Foucault with close application to the study of political culture, but for now I will focus attention on his programmatic statements about his work, of which indeed there is no shortage.

Foucault's reaction to Marxism is, as I said, a useful starting point. Its significance is registered for instance in his remarks on the concept of ideology, which he found 'difficult to make use of, for three reasons':

> The first is that, like it or not, it always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth . . . The second drawback is that the

> concept of ideology refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject. Thirdly, ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant, etc.[9]

The first of these objections taps into the key theme of Foucault's work, the relationship between discourse and power, which I will turn to momentarily, but for now we can note that it is *Marxism's* claim to truth, and to scientific validity, which is at issue here. The 'subject' of ideology refers to the ruling class as its author, and this class, and its capacity to authorize ideology, of course stems in Marxist theory from material and structural conditions within the capitalist mode of production. It is worth noting that the objections are not much weakened if we substitute the term 'hegemony', at least in its initial and most influential formulation by Gramsci—although in later stages of its theoretical development in cultural studies, as we have seen, Althusserian ideas of the creation of subject positions themselves began to be advanced, coming closer to Foucault's own views on what he called the 'author function'. Thus Foucault, like Laclau and Mouffe, rules out the set of theoretical displacements of culture that fall under the heading of Marxism, which ground it on something non-cultural.

Therefore, one must study discourse itself. What does this involve? In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault characterized his research topic in the most sweeping terms: the 'vast field' of 'the totality of all effective statements (whether spoken or written), in their dispersion as events and in the occurrence that is proper to them'.[10] On its face, this is a daunting task, suggesting a gigantic act of cataloguing that, while finite, would be both humanly impossible and aggregatively meaningless. Foucault however has something else in mind. His question is, 'how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?' This is not a question about the 'intention of the speaking subject', nor even about what unconsciously might have been *meant*, a silent discourse beneath the discourse that is spoken and written. Instead 'we must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes'.[11]

Talk of 'correlations' here might lead us to imagine a spectacularly comprehensive content analysis, in which the world's discourse is poured into a computer and its patterns and correlations quantified. Indeed, while this is far from Foucault's actual method, it is an image that he might not altogether reject, since it captures the indifference to classification of the raw material of discourse—the denial of the fundamental importance of prior categories of selection such as theme, genre, or tradition—that is expressed in the large variety of his own historical studies. Yet it is the human analyst—Foucault himself—who must provide the computation, and if only for the sake of their

tractability, he must draw on the materials of discourse as they are packaged in scientific disciplines. Such packaging itself is, in any case, part of the 'conditions of existence' of discourse, necessary therefore to its analysis: the discipline itself, Foucault insists, is among other things an apparatus for including and excluding statements.

His field thus narrowed to a range compatible at least with *his* intellectual capacity, Foucault provided a series of examples of discourse at work. It is important to notice the concreteness of his historical accounts, which speak of buildings, apparatuses, and procedures as much as of learned treatises. Yet for all this specificity, Foucault strove to capture the *general* character of the political effects of discourse. It is an ambitious and radical goal, emerging more clearly as Foucault's project develops. There were, indeed, a number of mutations in that project, announced in his programmatic manner by Foucault himself: a turn from 'archaeology' to 'genealogy', for example. These mutations are important, but I suggest mainly as stages in the development of Foucault's analysis of the generality of discourse to a more explicitly political one.

His first approach to the problem of the generality of discourse and discursive effects was through the concept of '*episteme*'. In *The Order of Things* he wrote:

> what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the *episteme* in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection but rather that of its conditions of possibility.[12]

By the time of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, the preferred term, though it did not fully replace the earlier one, was 'discursive formation'. In this later term we can detect a less intellectual emphasis, less of a hint of an interpretive centre like Herder's *Schwerpunkt*, any suggestion of which Foucault would of course reject. Against conventional analysis in terms of object, style, concepts, or themes, and implicitly against his own proposal of *episteme*, Foucault stresses the diversity of discourse:

> Rather than seeking the permanence of themes, images, and opinions through time, rather than retracing the dialectic of their conflicts in order to individualize groups of statements, could one not rather mark out the dispersion of the points of choice, and define prior to any option, to any thematic preference, a field of strategic possibilities?

If so, then

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations) we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*.[13]

The key term here is the 'system of dispersion', or what Foucault in a lecture of the same period called 'a theory of discontinuous systematicities'.[14] There can, Foucault makes clear, be nothing inherent in a set of statements that unites it into a discursive formation, that makes it into a system. What can there be, then?

> We must conceive discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them; and it is in this practice that the events of discourse find the principle of their regularity . . . [W]e must not go from discourse towards its interior, hidden nucleus, towards the heart of a thought or a signification supposed to be manifested in it; but, on the basis of discourse itself, its appearance and its regularity, go towards its external conditions of possibility, towards what gives rise to the aleatory series of these events, and fixes its limits.[15]

At this point we can see a parallel with Laclau and Mouffe's insistence that the 'field of discursivity' accounts for its own structure. But Foucault's move away from anything that could suggest the 'hidden nucleus' of discourse, finding instead its 'principle of regularity' in discursive practice, progressed in his work of the 1970s, and was verbally registered as a shift of attention towards *power*. What was lacking in *The Order of Things*, he says, 'was [the] problem of the "discursive régime", of the effects of power peculiar to the play of statements. I confused this too much with systematicity, theoretical form, or something like a paradigm.'[16] In moving, as one of his interlocutors put it, from *episteme* and discursive formation to 'apparatus' and 'discipline', Foucault acknowledges that 'the *episteme* is a specifically *discursive* apparatus, whereas the apparatus in its general form is both discursive and non-discursive, its elements being much more heterogeneous' (*Power/Knowledge*, p. 197).[17]

Yet there is continuity through this development, since Foucault's earlier work highlighted the function of an *episteme* in including and excluding statements, an effect of power: 'When I think back now, I ask myself what else it was that I was talking about, in *Madness and Civilisation* or *The Birth of the Clinic*, but power?' (p. 115). Also continuous through these mutations, however, is the problem of accounting for the generality that is recognizable in its dispersed instances. This generality is now not at all to be confused with a 'theoretical form, or something like a paradigm', but is a 'system of dispersion' whose elements are ever more heterogeneous, whose unity is captured by the idea of 'power' itself.

But this has to be a fundamentally different concept of power from that to which we have become accustomed. The difference is twofold. In the first place, power works, as Foucault knew all along but finally makes explicit, through discourse. He writes:

> in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these

> relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse . . . We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. (p. 93)

Secondly, Foucault insists on the 'capillary' nature of power. Implicated here is Foucault's anti-Marxism, as we have seen in his remarks on the concept of ideology. But the Marxist theory of the ruling class is only a modified form of a broader current of political thought which has located power in a centre, from which it is projected out over the rest of society. This view, symbolized but not exhausted by the personal sovereignty of the monarch, Foucault rejects entirely in his famous pronouncement: 'We need to cut off the King's head: in political theory that has still to be done' (p. 121).

Power is then found, and should most appropriately be studied, 'at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, [at] those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions', for example, in the prison or in the clinic (p. 96). Such study enables one to see 'the mechanisms of power which have invested human bodies, acts and forms of behaviour' (p. 61): 'Once knowledge can be analysed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power' (p. 69).

If, perhaps incautiously, but for the sake of argument, we consider culture as an analogue of what Foucault, also without great terminological caution, variously calls discourse, knowledge, and truth, we find in his 'analytics of power' an account of the political character of culture that expressly denies the theoretical displacement of locating this character in something outside culture, such as class or state, and conversely an account of power that sees it always constituted by, and not merely utilizing, culture. Moreover, we find this presented in a form which is said to allow the very mechanism, or process, to be exhibited in detail: the closer look at political culture that both the positivist mainstream and the interpretive alternative in political culture research deny us. Is it not, therefore, the very theory of political culture we have been seeking?

But that Foucault's analytics of power is defined precisely *against* a 'theory of power' is more than a terminological obstacle to the discovery of the ultimate theory of political culture in his work.[18] Power operates in Foucault's hands, we have seen, as that which secures the system of dispersion of discourse—that which enables it to be recognized as a system. But how then is power recognized? The problem of making sense of a system of dispersion, or a discontinuous systematicity, recurs now under the heading of power—supposedly the solution to the problem. Power is said to embody a 'strategy' yet to be independent of any authorship and lacking any centre. It has a

'coherence', but not that of its internal homologies, nor that of a subject whose strategy it is. One must

> conduct an *ascending* analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been—and continue to be—invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination.[19]

The grammatical subject of the typically long and rhythmic string of verbs—the 'user' of infinitesimal mechanisms—is mechanism itself, coalescing into 'forms of global domination'. Power becomes its own explanation, as did discourse in the related view of Laclau and Mouffe.

In the introductory volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault explains at greater length how power relations can be 'both intentional and nonsubjective':

> they are imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives. But this does not mean that it results from the choice or decision of an individual subject; let us not look for the headquarters that presides over its rationality; . . . the rationality of power is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed . . . tactics which, becoming connected to one another, attracting and propagating one another, but finding their base of support and their condition elsewhere, end by forming comprehensive systems: the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them, and few who can be said to have formulated them: an implicit characteristic of the great anonymous, almost unspoken strategies which coordinate the loquacious tactics whose 'inventors' or decisionmakers are often without hypocrisy.[20]

Thus, where power is 'calculating', 'explicit', and 'loquacious' (in its capillary settings, such as the psychiatric examination or the child-rearing manual), it is, without any suggestion of the bad faith of its practitioners, not recognized as part of a system. Yet a coalescence of these dispersed and unrecognized acts into a comprehensive system nevertheless takes place, and a single logic can then be discerned. Not knowing themselves as a potential unity, discursive and non-discursive acts of micro-power nevertheless 'attract and propagate one another', and create a unity. Just here, where the consolidation takes place, and not in the explicit acts of power that are naively recognized merely as curing the psychiatric patient, or managing the sexual development of the child, is where the mechanisms need to be specified. But they are not.

Foucault's analytics of power is often criticized from a political perspective, as implying the totality of power and the impossibility of resistance. His denials of this claim do indeed ring somewhat hollow. He does, it is true,

leave room for resistance wherever there is power, and also, as we have seen, for the 'aleatory', that is, for chance events. But these lacunae only leave more mysterious the process of formation of the simultaneously unitary and dispersed system of power that is his main topic and his principal contribution to political analysis.

What is it that reveals the comprehensive system and its singular logic and shows the error of the local practitioners' naive self-understanding that they are curing the patient, or protecting the child? Foucault's answer cannot of course be: the scientific discovery of better cures, or the scientific conclusion that masturbation is harmless. These are for him only newer instances of power. Because no answer is provided, the only answer can be: the free-floating recognition of the unity of power by the interpretive gaze of its analyst. The mechanism that does the attracting and propagating, yielding the singular decipherable logic, is never specified, and cannot be. The failure is thus fundamentally not a political but a descriptive one, a fact concealed by Foucault's insistence that it is power in its most minute manifestations that is being described. It is in this sense that Foucault's analytics of power, which bears the promise of being the ultimate theory of political culture, actually effects the ultimate displacement of theory: the very mechanism that the analytics rests upon and is supposed to reveal is nowhere to be seen.

4.4. THE DISCURSIVIST CRITIQUE OF CULTURE IN AREA STUDIES

As I noted in section 4.3, Foucault's investigations of the relationship between discourse and power turned towards the study of specialized 'knowledges', to use a Foucauldian term, or what we normally call professional specialisms and disciplines. Much of his work can indeed be seen as an extended working out of the multiple meanings of the word 'discipline'. While of course Foucault remained concerned with the role of discourse in securing power throughout society, there is also a reflexive turn implicit in his concentration on disciplines, and it is this turn of academic attention towards itself that has been the principal and massive legacy of his work. A consequence has been to leave in some obscurity the world, if indeed it is allowed that there is one, beyond specialized discourse. I will focus on the reflexive application of discursivism to the category of culture itself, and will suggest that while it makes a powerful and in part effective critique, too much is left out of the account for this critique to serve as an alternative to the theory of political culture: instead it continues to be a displacement disguised by a theoretical denial.

For the most part the critique of culture mounted by discursivist post-culturalism has been aimed not at the positivist mainstream of political culture research, but at the interpretive and 'humanist' critical alternative and its sources.[21] Area studies and indeed ethnography itself have been the targets, so that in terms of the theory of political culture, what we observe here is the critique of a critique. This does not of course mean, on the basis of the principle 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend', that discursive post-culturalist critique returns us to positivism, in other words to attitude surveys as the proper means of discovering culture. Nevertheless, some unexpected empiricist traces do lurk within the programmatically anti-empiricist reasoning of discourse analysis.

I will focus attention in this and the next section on two widely influential critiques of the study of culture, in the fields respectively of area studies and ethnography. The topic of this section is Edward Said's monograph *Orientalism*.[22] So influential has Said's critique of Orientalism been that it is now difficult to use the term with reference to anything other than an error, the error of a 'Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient' (p. 95). That it was for many years the self-applied name of a 'discipline', in a broad sense of the term, and that self-named 'Orientalists' populated university departments now seems hard to conceive (though there remain some residues).[23] But the orientalist critique has ramified far beyond its application to the discipline of Orientalism. It has been applied in numerous branches of area studies, and this gives it an exemplary character for the purpose of this book, since as I argued in Chapter 2, an area-studies use of political culture has been a significant if secondary current in the history of the concept.[24]

Nevertheless, the question does arise whether Orientalism is a typical example of area studies. It is not in fact altogether easy to specify the area whose study Said is criticizing. The Orient is of course the East—the Near East, the Middle East, and the Far East, though these are terms which themselves have come into question thanks to the orientalist critique, since they derive from the imperial perceptual grid established by the meridian line drawn though Greenwich observatory. It means also south and southeast Asia. In the main, Said is interested in the study of the lands and peoples variously designated as 'Arab', 'Moslem', 'Islamic', or 'Semitic', though his argument is directed against *any* such synoptic labels. But a degree of imprecision regarding geographical scope is of far less importance than a corresponding degree of equivocation in the *theoretical* scope of Said's critique. Said sometimes makes arguments that question equally any possible 'Orientalism', that is, any possible area studies, and sometimes arguments that find the orientalist error to be particularly egregious in the case of what is nowadays called Middle Eastern Studies. The more specific critique is the more persuasive; the more general one is of course the one in which we are interested. To some extent, it is the force of the critique of the study of the Middle East that has allowed

Said's arguments to resonate more widely. But his arguments do not justify their doing so.

Said summarizes the 'dogmas of Orientalism' as follows:

> one is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior. Another dogma is that abstractions about the Orient, particularly those based on texts representing a 'classical' Oriental civilization, are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities. A third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically 'objective'. A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared . . . or to be controlled. (pp. 300–1)

There is no question that Said amply documents these claims in his survey of Orientalist texts. It is perhaps no surprise that Edwardian colonial administrators held derogatory opinions about their subject populations, or that Dante held them about Islam (pp. 68–9), but Said's careful dissection of the work of numerous nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers and specialists operating at a greater or lesser distance from the political authorities reveals the same disposition towards synopsis and derogation. That this disposition can be tracked to the present is no less revealing: Said adds an afterword to the 1995 edition that discusses post-Cold War manifestations such as Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis (already quite precisely prefigured in the 1978 text),[25] and of course the 'Islamist' terrorist attacks of 9/11 yielded a rich harvest of similar discursive responses.[26]

We can therefore accept that the orientalist error was indeed committed by numerous Orientalist writers, and it is likely that it continues to be. How widely can we generalize this finding? Said does note variation and development within Orientalism: variation, for instance, between British and French writers stemming from their different colonial relationships with the Middle East, and between individual authors stemming from the specificities of their own experience and background; development, for instance, in the already noted absorption of Orientalism into area studies and absorption by it of positivist social science techniques, and the earlier shift in Orientalism, typified by the writings of T. E. Lawrence and other 'imperial agents and policymakers', 'from an academic to an *instrumental* attitude' (p. 246). At the same time, his thesis requires him to downplay these variations and developments. He does so by distinguishing 'manifest' from 'latent' Orientalism, the former the site of variation and development, the latter 'an almost unconscious (and certainly an untouchable) positivity' whose 'unanimity, stability, and durability . . . are more or less constant' (p. 206). At this point Said's argument assumes a potentially limitless generality, as it evokes Laclau and Mouffe's

'structured totality' and Foucault's 'system of dispersion', and like them relies on interpretation to capture the totality.

The critique is at its most general in Said's rejection of interpretive and synoptic culturalism. What he calls the 'summational attitude' of Orientalism is its

> equivalent of attempts in the purely Western humanities to understand culture *as a whole*, antipositivistically, intuitively, sympathetically . . . The idea of using specific texts, for instance, to work from the specific to the general (to understand the whole life of a period and consequently of a culture) is common to those humanists in the West inspired by the work of Wilhelm Dilthey, as well as to towering Orientalist scholars like Massignon and Gibb. (p. 258)

As already noted, Said's anti-antipositivism does not entail positivism: he dismisses 'highly sophisticated-appearing social-science techniques' and sees their associated concepts, such as political elites, modernization, and stability, as 'old Orientalist stereotypes dressed up in policy jargon' (pp. 296, 321). Despite these rather casual swipes at positivism, interpretive culturalism remains the chief target.

In *Orientalism*, it therefore remains unclear just how wide a critique of cultural analysis Said is mounting. Some assistance is offered by a later essay in which Said discusses Foucault and Derrida. 'Foucault', Said writes there, 'takes a curiously passive and sterile view not so much of the uses of power but of how and why power is gained, used, and held onto'. As a result, 'What one misses in Foucault is . . . something resembling Gramsci's analyses of *hegemony*, historical blocks, ensembles of relationships done from the perspective of an engaged political worker.' In particular, Foucault 'seems unaware of the extent to which the ideas of discourse and discipline are assertively European and how . . . discipline was used . . . to administer, study, reconstruct—and then subsequently to occupy, rule, and exploit—almost the whole of the non-European world'.[27] These are important deviations from what are, as we have seen, some of the most distinctive aspects of Foucault's work, because they make possible the identification of the unity of Orientalism in terms of a state-centred imperial project formulated in London and Paris. This restores what Laclau and Mouffe disallowed, the 'underlying principle external to discourse', and in effect reattaches the King's head.

But the reconciliation of Foucault and Gramsci requires the reconciliation of a theory of discourse in general with an account of the particular sources of the orientalist error. The more general theory is suggested thus: '*like all enunciative capacities and the discourses they enable*, latent Orientalism was profoundly conservative' (*Orientalism*, p. 222; emphasis added); 'the real issue is whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they *are* representations, are embedded first in the language, and then in the culture, institutions and political

ambience of the representer' (p. 272). Conversely, however, Said often seeks to show that Orientalism is *worse* than other instances of cultural representation, and even that the Orientalism that takes 'the Arab' or Islam as its topic is worse than other Orientalisms. The Orientalism whose topic was Islam, he says, developed a

> retrogressive position when compared with the other human sciences (and even with the other branches of Orientalism) [shown in] its general methodological and ideological backwardness, and its comparative insularity both from developments in the other humanities and in the real world of historical, economic, social, and political circumstances. (p. 261)

Said also notes that 'Islamic Orientalism has led a contemporary life quite different from that of the other Orientalist subdisciplines' (p. 301)—less self-aware, more synoptic, and above all more derogatory in its treatment of its topic.

Said clearly perceives no contradiction here, assuming (as his followers have done) that his specific strictures against Orientalism merely *exemplify* the more general discursivist critique of culturalism. But this relationship of exemplification does not work, for the general critique does not tell us how there could be a more adequate kind of Orientalism or culturalism, as Said says there is in other fields, while the particular factors that make for the 'backwardness' of Islamic Orientalism—the strategic interests of Britain and France in the times of their global imperium, and nowadays the energy needs and pro-Israeli stance of the United States—loom as extraneous factors beyond their discursive representation in Orientalism.

Indeed factors beyond discursive representation constantly recur in Said's analysis, notwithstanding his anti-empiricist assertion that there cannot be a 'true representation of anything'. The 'brute reality' of cultures and nations in the East, and their 'lives, histories, and customs', is acknowledged 'tacitly' at the outset (p. 5), but then rather more overtly later on: 'To look into Orientalism for a lively sense of an Oriental's human or even social reality—as a contemporary inhabitant of the modern world—is to look in vain'; the Orientalist image of 'the Arab' 'wipe[s] out any traces of individual Arabs with narratable life histories' (pp. 176, 229). Most crucially, Said's 'contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness' (p. 204). But if this relative weakness is a reality, and not entirely a false claim of Orientalism itself, then the attempt to discover what feature of the Orient as a whole might have given rise to it cannot be ruled out a priori.

It is by no means a deficiency of Said's account that such empirical realities keep breaking through; indeed they save it from becoming a recapitulation of the 'textualism' that he diagnoses in Orientalism itself. They do mean,

however, that the scope of the challenge made to culturalism by the thesis of the orientalist error is sharply reduced. The orientalist critique of culturalism is weakest when its scope as a theory of discourse is greatest, and conversely strongest when it is indexed to the particular circumstances of Western interest in the Middle East. But even then its reflexive character—its interest in what the West is saying about the East—leaves in deep analytical shadow the 'reality' of the East.

It is indeed important to consider the role of discourse in securing the self-belief necessary to a project of domination, as Said does compellingly. But the shadow in which this reflexive turn towards the conditions of production of culturalist texts leaves the Middle East itself still begs for illumination. We learn from Said the dangers involved in projecting this illumination from a distance, but as he also is clear in rejecting the view that 'only a black can write about blacks, a Muslim about Muslims' (p. 322), we are left in a difficult position from the point of view of a theory of political culture. Said hopes that his book will answer questions like 'How does one *represent* other cultures? What is *another* culture? . . . Do cultural, religious and racial differences matter more than socio-economic categories, or politicohistorical ones?' (p. 325). But the book tells us only how *not* to answer these questions.

I exaggerate slightly. Said does give a brief hint as to what an adequate account of the culture of the Orient would look like: 'An excellent recent instance is the anthropology of Clifford Geertz, whose interest in Islam is discrete and concrete enough to be animated by the specific societies and problems he studies and not by the rituals, preconceptions, and doctrines of Orientalism' (p. 326). Yet this endorsement is deeply ironic, because the 'discrete and concrete' studies provided by cultural ethnography would shortly feel the disruptive effects of the wave of criticism unleashed by Said's book, and particularly because Geertz himself would be a principal target in the reflexive critique of the Western anthropological gaze. That is my topic in the next section.

4.5. THE DISCURSIVIST CRITIQUE OF CULTURE IN ANTHROPOLOGY

The discursivist 'reflexive turn' on the part of Western academia towards the form and conditions of its own intellectual production found a rich vein of material in anthropology, and in particular in its characteristic method, ethnography. Founded on what was called, until the reflexive critique made this label problematic, 'participant observation', ethnography has shifted from the professional standard for the empirical work of anthropology to a focus of

intense questioning, and this 'crisis of ethnographic authority' has led in turn to a 'crisis of anthropology'.[28] The crisis was influentially described in the collection *Writing Culture*; an apt title since its topic was precisely the enterprise of writing down a cultural description, which ethnography both literally and etymologically is. I will centre my discussion on this collective work.

The reflexive critique of anthropology fixed its attention on the use of the concept of culture, and paid a good deal of attention to the interpretive cultural anthropology of Clifford Geertz. These are two good reasons for looking closely at it here, for in the concept of political culture we have found an inheritance from historicism and culturalism that positivists have had difficulty excluding, while their interpretive critics have for their part drawn explicitly on Geertz—as of course have cultural historians and many other interpretively inclined writers in the social sciences.[29]

The history of ethnography involves its initial emergence out of, and then separation from, the writings of colonial delegates, missionaries, and travellers, with a crucial step being the promotion of the method of participant observation by Bronislaw Malinowski. James Clifford makes the point that while this method seems on its face to involve a deep and sustained immersion in the local setting of ethnographic research, the professionalization of anthropology actually imposed a significant limit on the extent and duration of the immersion. In order for participant observation to become a component of a feasible academic career trajectory, it could not be enormously lengthy, and it became established that a relatively superficial 'working knowledge' of the local language, supplemented by the assistance of local informants, established in fieldwork taking no more than two years and often much less, would be sufficient for the purpose. Clifford paraphrases the objection of Robert Lowie in 1940, that 'no one would credit a translation of Proust that was based on an equivalent knowledge of French', but notes that this was already a 'rearguard action' in the face of the establishment of the fieldwork method within the professionalized discipline.[30]

Certain tropes became established as components of the ethnographic account as a part of its effort to establish its own authenticity. An example is the story of arrival, which dramatizes the magnitude of the cultural adjustment that faced the ethnographer but also tells how this estrangement was overcome, often in a crucial moment. Geertz's account of his joining with the Balinese in fleeing a police raid is a classic instance.[31] There are also characteristic omissions from classic ethnographic accounts, among them the role of the native informant, who often compensated for the relative estrangement and linguistic impediments of the Western visitor, in effect serving as a local ethnographer.

According to Clifford, participant-observer fieldwork of this type, a 'peculiar amalgam of intense rite of passage and scientific analysis', was established

as the method of anthropology between 1920 and 1950, and 'remains the chief distinguishing feature of professional anthropology'.[32] Challenges to it have become increasingly prominent and influential, however. In many cases these have involved greater frankness and self-consciousness about the conditions of fieldwork. Matters that were widely discussed among anthropologists as 'corridor talk' but which had hitherto seldom reached a wider public began to be written about. A milestone in this process was the publication in 1967 of Malinowski's fieldwork diaries, a revealing record of alienation, periodic doubt and dejection, and 'longing for civilization, for a white woman'.[33] Acute self-consciousness is now as much a feature of anthropology as it is of Middle Eastern area studies.

Ethnographers have not always taken 'culture' as their explicit topic, particularly in the British tradition of social anthropology, which has often paid primary attention to variously defined 'social structure'.[34] To some extent the deployment of the concept of culture has been in anthropology as in political science an index of the degree of alienness encountered, or recognized, by the observer. Yet this degree is never zero, for difference is part of the disciplinary specificity of anthropology itself (even when it turns its attention to Western society). Moreover, as I showed in connection with Geertz in Chapter 2, cultural interpretation does not render the alien impenetrable; rather it works, as Clifford has argued, by rendering the alien as similar to something we already know. Finding an analogue of the Western class structure or reading the culture as an analogue of a Western novel are thus not so very different: 'ethnography's narrative of specific differences presupposes, and always refers to, an abstract plane of similarity'.[35]

But the reflexive critique makes additional objections to cultural interpretation per se. As Said did in the case of Orientalism, it objects to the generalization implicit in the idea of culture. As Clifford puts it, 'A textualized ritual or event is no longer closely linked to the production of that event by specific actors. Instead, these texts become evidences of an englobing context, a "cultural" reality.'[36] 'Textualized' ritual is a reference to Geertz's reading of Balinese culture as a text, which as we saw makes a reading of the event and then makes it into 'a story [the Balinese] tell themselves about themselves'.[37] Thereby, suggests Clifford, '"The Balinese" function as the author of Geertz's textualized cockfight.'[38]

Vincent Crapanzano's chapter in *Writing Culture* uses Geertz's later ethnography to illustrate one of several rhetorical devices he identifies in ethnographic representation, namely hypotyposis (vivid visual description), realistic narrative, and (the device illustrated by Geertz's work) 'interpretive virtuosity'.[39] As my discussion of Geertz in Chapter 2 showed, it is an apt characterization. Like Clifford, Crapanzano notes the way in which Geertz 'blurs his own subjectivity . . . with the subjectivity and intentionality of the villagers', but he

goes further: 'Despite his phenomenological-hermeneutical pretensions, there is in fact in "Deep Play" no understanding of the native from the native's point of view. There is only the constructed understanding of the constructed native's constructed point of view.'[40]

With this observation, and with Clifford's assertion that ethnography inevitably 'presupposes an abstract plane of similarity', we see the kind of broad-spectrum critique of ethnographic discourse that Said, in some of his statements, directed against any attempt to represent other cultures. Correspondingly, against Clifford we can ask whether any description, if it is to be understood, can avoid being an analogical evocation of what is already understood by the listener, thus invoking an 'abstract plane of similarity'. And against Crapanzano we can ask whether any utterance can be free of rhetoric. The reflexive critique of ethnographic discourse employs arguments that are so sweeping in their implications that it is hard to see how ethnography could continue in the face of them—yet continue it has, and not just by dismissing or ignoring the reflexive critique, but in many cases while ostensibly embracing it. Of course this can happen only by somehow lessening the critique's deconstructive force: by calling 'dialogical' a book which nevertheless comes out under the authorship, and advances the career, of the Western anthropologist,[41] or by insisting that a sufficient display of self-consciousness permits the ongoing production of 'detailed, committed, critical studies'.[42]

It is one thing to *assert* that 'Textual, epistemological questions . . . do not necessarily inhibit those who entertain them from producing truthful, realistic accounts',[43] but it is another to show how the trick is done of pulling the truthful, realistic rabbit out of the discursively constituted hat. I cannot see how it is done other than by taking the textual questions not entirely seriously. To be more precise, it appears that an *effective* but narrower discursive critique must somehow be distinguished from the broader, *ostensible* one—a combination we also noticed in Said's *Orientalism*. But the 'somehow' of this distinction is precisely what is obscured by the 'epistemological' elaboration of discourse, making that elaboration a theoretical displacement.

The generality of the reflexive turn towards the interrogation of cultural writing is criticized, along with cultural writing itself, in Lila Abu-Lughod's essay 'Writing against Culture'.[44] For her, what brings culture into disrepute as an analytical category is above all its overgeneralization: 'Interpretive anthropology . . . in its critique of the search for general laws in positivistic social science, notes a failure to take account of the centrality of meaning to human experience. Yet the result has been to substitute generalization about meanings for generalizations about behavior' (p. 150). But the critique mounted by *Writing Culture*, with its reflexive emphasis on the rhetorical strategies and disciplinary self-justifications of ethnography, is correspondingly overgeneral.

Its reflexive self-preoccupation means that it fails to identify the empirical lapses produced by cultural generalization: inattention, for instance, to 'people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage . . . [and] the indigenous anthropologists to whom they are related' (p. 137).[45] Thus the 'second problem with generalization derives not from its participation in the authoritative discourses of professionalism but from the effects of homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness it tends to produce' (p. 152), that is, from its empirical omissions.

To rectify these, Abu-Lughod extends Said's call for 'discrete and concrete' studies and proposes 'ethnographies of the particular'. Rather than saying 'things like "The Bongo-Bongo are polygynous"', anthropologists 'could refuse to generalize in this way, instead asking how a particular set of individuals—for instance, a man and his three wives in a Bedouin community in Egypt . . . —live the "institution" that we call polygyny' (p. 153).[46] Doing so would 'subvert the most problematic connotations of culture': instead of homogeneity, coherence, and timelessness, anthropologists would find that

> Individuals are confronted with choices, struggle with others, make conflicting statements, argue about points of view on the same events, undergo ups and downs in various relationships and changes in their circumstances and desires, face new pressures, and fail to predict what will happen to them or those around them. (p. 154)

On the basis of such reconstruction of 'people's arguments about what they are and others are doing', Abu-Lughod claims boldly that we can 'explain how social life proceeds'. An explicit reconceptualization of 'discourse' underpins this aim:

> In its Foucauldian derivation, as it relates to discursive formations, apparatuses, and technologies, it is meant to refuse the distinction between ideas and practices or text and world that the culture concept too readily encourages. In its more sociolinguistic sense, it draws attention to the social uses by individuals of verbal resources. (pp. 147–8)

If Foucauldian discursivism promotes a reflexive turn towards the rhetorical strategies of 'writing culture', Abu-Lughod is promoting a *re*turn from the discourse of ethnography to the discourse of her ethnographic subjects. It is a reassertion of the difference which the concept of culture itself highlighted in its earliest uses by Herder, but in a more microscopic form. The cultural anthropologist's refusal 'not in my tribe' has been substituted by the particularist ethnographer's 'not for my informant'. But does this ever closer look really explain, as Abu-Lughod claims, 'how social life proceeds'?

To do that, it is invariably necessary to have recourse to theory, and in Abu-Lughod's work generalization therefore creeps back in unacknowledged,

giving rise to another theoretical displacement. Describing a Bedouin wedding, she writes:

> In this sequence of events in a particular family in 1987, we can read what we call the 'larger forces' that made it possible, things like the growing opportunities for wage labor, the commercialization of Bedouin weddings, and the influx of goods from the cities. Yet because these 'forces' are only embodied in the actions of individuals living in time and place, ethnographies of the particular capture them best. (p. 156)

In the later essay 'The Interpretation of Culture(s) after Television', Abu-Lughod considers how Geertzian 'thick description' 'needs some creative stretching to fit mass-mediated lives'.[47] She suggests that 'Taking television seriously forces us to think about "culture" not so much as a system of meaning or even a way of life but as something whose elements are produced, censored, paid for, and broadcast across a nation, even across national boundaries' (p. 121).[48] In a 'mobile ethnography' that seeks to express the experience of both the consumers and the producers of television programmes, Abu-Lughod certainly asserts the 'need to rethink the notion of culture in the singular, as a shared set of meanings distinct from those held by other communities sometimes called "cultures"' (p. 121). Yet Abu-Lughod is on more familiar territory when arguing that 'The hegemonic or ideological—and thus power-related—nature of mass-mediated cultural texts in the service of national, class or commercial projects is undeniable' (p. 121).

The 'larger forces' that impinge on the Bedouin wedding, and the 'hegemonic mass-mediated cultural texts', enter into these descriptions no less essentially than the 'particular configurations of power, education and wealth in particular places' (p. 127). But the particularism Abu-Lughod promotes leaves the forces and the hegemony as shadowy externalities, perhaps on the assumption that it is some other discipline's job to investigate them. She sympathizes with feminist Dorothy Smith's critique of sociological theory, with its categories of 'class, modernization, formal organization', 'freeing the discursive realm from its ground in the lives and work of actual individuals and liberating sociological inquiry to graze on a field of conceptual entities'.[49] Again, however, we find that this orientation cannot permanently expel general concepts from ethnographic analysis; yet because they have been the object of a programmatic exclusion, they re-enter haphazardly and unsystematically. There is a return of the repressed theory.

The turn to discourse in anthropology has been a complex, protracted, and much-disputed movement of thought. I have tried to get some kind of grip on it in this section by resolving it into two forms, though as they interconnect somewhat a better term might be 'moments'. Both of them entail a critique of 'culture'. The critique whose *locus classicus* is *Writing Culture* is emphatically

reflexive. Its interest is not in culture, but in what Western anthropologists have written about culture, what political relationships have lain behind and been promoted by this writing, and how its authority has been rhetorically secured. From this critique has emerged a more self-conscious form of ethnography, sometimes more openly collaborative or dialogical. As in the case of Said's influential argument against cultural interpretation in area studies, objections to 'writing culture' are sometimes made so sweepingly (and with similar disregard for variations among the critical targets) that the possibility of knowing anything about 'the other' that does not implicate hierarchy in the very grammatical form of the paradigm 'I understand them' seems to vanish. That ethnographies continue to be written, however, even by the promoters of the reflexive critique, shows that the critics cannot mean all that they ostensibly say.

Drawing on this reflexive critique, but nevertheless differing from it in frankly embracing the project of explaining how social life actually proceeds, is the empirical discursivism of Abu-Lughod. Her critical focus on culture is on its tendency to generalize, though the more radical suspicion persists that generalization is not only empirically wrong but also tantamount to domination. In effect Abu-Lughod continues the line of thinking that Geertz's later work advanced, itself a revival of the use of culture by interpretive critics since Herder, namely to disturb generalizations about social life formed in the West. She continues also Said's endorsement of analysis like Geertz's for its discrete and concrete character.

The sense in which the reflexive turn to the study of ethnographic discourse is a theoretical displacement is obvious. It makes 'culture' political, of course, but the 'culture' remains in quotation marks, for it is the 'culture' found in the tropes and strategies of ethnographers. Like Said's reflexive critique, it gives little clear guidance as to how, after reading it, we should do ethnographic description. It leaves at best an air of guilty conscience over the ethnographic enterprise—though if the critique were ever to be taken at face value, it might abolish ethnography altogether.

Abu-Lughod's empirical ethnography of the particular is a theoretical displacement of a different kind, essentially recapitulating at the microscopic level what the concept of culture initially did at the macroscopic, that is, insisting on difference at the expense of conceptual generalization. Against Abu-Lughod, though in line with the actual practice that inevitably seeps back into her ethnography, I maintain that this closer look only has a point when it expressly aims at developing an understanding of general processes. One cannot usefully do it while pronouncing an anathema on general concepts: they will return from this repression, but one will not then know how to handle them. Nature may or may not abhor a vacuum, but it seems clear that the human mind abhors an explanatory vacuum, and will fill the vacuum left

by ever more particular ethnographic description with vague notions of interests, class, or power even when these have been ruled out.

4.6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have established a category of analysis, discursivism, and evaluated its contribution to the theory of political culture. In one respect the category is uncontentious, since an explicit focus on discourse is common to all of the examples I have considered, as well as to many more within the general camp of the post-structuralist, postmodern, or deconstructive. But my purpose in adding the '-ism' was to do what might be regarded as contentious by the members of that camp, namely to suggest that it is a mode of explanation as well as of critique. The very fact that it is exclusively as critique that discursivism likes to pose is the most general form of its displacement of the theory of political culture. For, willy-nilly, discursivism makes causal claims.

Discursivism displaces the problem of the theory of political culture by asking, reflexively, what we are doing when we invoke culture, and suggesting that we do not escape Geertz's feared 'megalomania' when we investigate culture by doing ethnography rather than by administering surveys. It is a valid query and a productive suggestion, but of course it leaves altogether unaddressed, and indeed derogated as hopeless naivety, the questions put by the theory of political culture, namely what political culture is and how it works. Except, of course, that it cannot leave these unanswered, or maintain without qualification the posture of interest only in what other academics have written: the 'facts' that talk of culture has tried to address call for attention, as the 'post-reflexive' discursivist Abu-Lughod has suggested. But since they have been theoretically displaced, they cannot be properly dealt with, and they re-enter covertly. When 'difference' is denied, what remains is 'sameness', which far from being a lesser generalization is indeed a universal one, inviting universalistic analysis such as that provided by materialist theories, or (what is just an undeveloped form of the same thing) a looser reliance on unspecified 'interests', which locutions such as 'strategy' inevitably involve. In its overt form, materialist theory constitutes a failed displacement of political culture, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3; still less can be expected from it in the covert form it takes in discursivism.

I looked first at the explicitly post-Marxist discursivism of Laclau and Mouffe. It radicalizes the arguments of Gramsci, and seeks to solve the problem of reconciling hegemony with materialist class analysis by dissolving the latter component altogether. Hegemony then becomes nothing other than the specification of various 'subject positions', of which class is merely one. One can sympathize with the desire, in the late twentieth century and beyond,

to be free of the obligation to discover revolutionary potential exclusively in the working class. But from the perspective of our interest in political culture, what we are left with is the mere assertion that hegemony simply *is*, and discourse simply *has*, the specified political effects, somehow simply fixing itself at nodal points which allow meaning to emerge from the discursive flux. Intractable though the problem was, for cultural Marxists, of showing in detail how the ruling class uses culture for its benefit (as opposed to merely asking *cui bono*?), one could hardly solve it by denying that there was a ruling class, or subordinate classes, and asserting that discourse simply produces its repressive effects on its own.

With Foucault's work one finds the promise of the ultimate theory of political culture, but also the ultimate displacement of such a theory. The promise arises both empirically, from Foucault's effort to look closely, microscopically as he puts it, at the intimate settings of discursive power, and theoretically, from his insistence that in all cases it is power that he is looking at. No more effective demonstration, if it were a valid one, of the operation of *political culture* could be imagined. But Foucault's achievement is nevertheless a displacement because he cannot tell us in a clear way—without the benefit of mystifications such as the 'system of dispersion'—what it is that makes these events, events of power. *Savoir*, discursive knowledge, is simply identified with *pouvoir*, power. Where we hoped to find a mechanism, we find only a definition.

When culture rather than class became the target of discursivist critique, the reflexive turn allowed an easier identification of the culprits: academic fellow travellers of an imperialist or post-imperialist project of domination. I looked at two influential critiques of the analytical use of 'culture', respectively in area studies and anthropology.[50] Again, there is no need to deny that the critique has been in many cases deserved, although after a while one can begin to sense a quality of parlour-game in the recurrent exposure of the academic political agenda, an endless outflanking on the left for which, if Foucault does not satisfy, one can turn to Derrida. Where the political linkages can be demonstrated, then of course they should be. But often, the critique is advanced under the cover of Foucault's argument about a generic, decentred, capillary 'power' which operates through discourse, but whose agents lack culpability or awareness. It then becomes assertoric, as well as theoretically obscure.

The return *from* reflexive critique to an 'ethnography of the particular' promoted by Abu-Lughod itself has some salutary features, its empiricism echoing that which we found struggling to emerge in Said's remarks about the 'real lives' of the Orientalist 'subjects'. Doubtless someone somewhere has 'deconstructed' this empiricism too by now. In any case, its theoretical denial only replicates what culture did in the first place. While we certainly need to take a closer look at the process of political culture, that look should subserve the project of theory if it is to succeed in explaining anything. Otherwise we have only anecdote.

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5

The Dualistic Ontology of Culture (I): Philosophical Arguments

5.1. INTRODUCTION

I have suggested that the task of a theory of political culture is to explain what political culture is and how it works, or in more elevated language its ontology and its dynamics. In this and the next chapter I will take up the question of ontology, treating the dynamics of political culture in Chapters 7 and 8. The title of this chapter and the next refers to culture rather than political culture. While my arguments in Chapter 2 suggest the undesirability of making a fetish of this distinction, nevertheless my terminology is chosen deliberately, for it points our attention beyond the disciplinary boundaries that, I have argued, have cabined political culture research in its current theoretically undeveloped state.

It may seem that not much can be usefully added to the vast literature which seeks to explain the concept of culture. One thinks for example of the more than 150 definitions famously catalogued by A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn or of Raymond Williams's assertion that culture is 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language'.[1] I have already discussed in Chapter 2 the history of the use of culture as an interpretive concept in response to successive waves of positivist incursion into the social sciences. My investigation will now go deeper. Rather than pointing out differences, I will point instead to underlying commonalities in the analysis of culture, across even the divide in the social sciences between naturalistic and anti-naturalistic methodologies that shows up in political culture research as the two alternative modes I have discussed. Indeed the commonalities recur even in the attempted displacements of political culture theory we examined in Chapters 3 and 4, not unexpectedly once it is recognized that these displacements could not avoid dealing, even if covertly, with the same kinds of explanatory questions as the variously culturalist positions they were criticizing.

Once we expose the philosophical basis of the features shared by positivist and interpretive approaches to political culture, which are obscured both by mutual antipathy and by interpretivism's tendency towards theoretical denial, it will be possible to identify the limits of that philosophical basis, and thus to perceive alternatives to it. Political culture research, I will show, rests upon a deep foundation in the Western philosophical tradition, but it is not an uncontested foundation. The chapter will explore the radical critiques and alternatives that have been put forward by philosophical dissidents, with an emphasis on the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Michael Polanyi. Section 5.3 will discuss the difficult problem of the interpretation of Wittgenstein's critique of philosophy, and section 5.4 will examine the rather less well-known writings of Polanyi. A brief discussion of the work of John Searle in section 5.5 will consolidate the argument.

Each of these philosophical critics advanced, in their respective fields, what can be read as a dualistic theory of culture, though in Wittgenstein's case it emerged as a philosophy of language, and in Polanyi's as a philosophy of science. This dualistic theory of culture has immediate implications for the theory of political culture and for political analysis in general, implications which I will develop in Chapters 7 and 8.

5.2. CAUSALITY, INTELLIGIBILITY, AND CULTURE

If one took seriously only the programmatic statements of interpretivist political culture research, one might think that the difference between it and the positivist mode is that it concerns itself with the intelligibility of culture while positivist research focuses only on causation. I have mentioned Geertz's description of cultural analysis as 'not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning',[2] and have alluded also to his growing concern as to the megalomaniacal character of causal explanation. Drawing on Geertz, Robert Tucker defended a similar use of political culture:

> Might not the central importance of a concept like that of political culture be that it assists us to take our bearings in the study of the political life of a society, to focus on what is happening or not happening, to describe and analyze and order many significant data, and to raise fruitful questions for thought and research—*without explaining anything*?[3]

Chabal and Daloz, we saw in the Introduction, maintain the same programmatic aversion to causal explanation, which they take to be the domain of political culture research per se. More generally, interpretivism has taken an exclusionary line on the much-debated question of the relationship between reasons and causes: that is, it has insisted that the two are fundamentally distinct. This

distinction is usually the preamble to an argument that remands reasons to interpretive and causes to positivist social science.[4] However, programmatic statements aside, the exclusion of questions of causality from interpretive political culture research has been impossible; it is hard to see what sense could be made of the idea that 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' unless both the spinning and the suspension are understood as causal relations and as imposing causal constraint.

My present point is not, however, to rehearse the difficulty interpretivism has had in avoiding causal questions; it is the converse, that the intelligibility of culture is for its part deeply embedded in the causal analysis presented by positivist political culture research. It is indeed hard to escape or even to question the supposition that culture consists of intelligibilia. One reason is that we might first think of culture in the sense of cultural products or achievements, high or low, like *The Wasteland* or *The Lucille Ball Show*. But even if, in the line of thought initiated by Herder, we think of culture as the 'informing spirit of a whole way of life' (in Raymond Williams's phrase), we do not get very far from a focus on intelligible cultural products in that these will constitute at least exemplars (in Dilthey's understanding)—if one of them is not indeed selected as the *Schwerpunkt*, centre of gravity or paradigm—of culture, as Geertz claimed the cockfight was for Balinese culture. Dilthey's attempt to find 'lived experience' in fixed and interpretable cultural products, taken up by Geertz in the idea that culture is a text, thus only ratifies the identification of the cultural with the intelligible, the propositional, the representational, or the discursive.

Gabriel Almond, we saw, tried to distance political culture research from these anthropological connotations both theoretically and methodologically. But the theoretical framework which Almond derived from Parsonian social theory did not deviate from the assumption that culture was propositionally intelligible. Parsonian 'values' (to pick one of a number of alternative terms that the literature has thrown up) are effectively principles from which specific preferences can be logically derived; they are, as Parsons made clear in his first major work, psychological instantiations of the *conscience collective* described by Durkheim, which itself consisted of 'social representations'. The methodological operationalization of the Parsonian framework in the attitude survey cleaved still tighter to the supposition of the intelligibility of culture, in that a survey response was the explicit answer to a question, and was thus necessarily discursive. The Lazarsfeldian suggestion that attitudes (or later, values, or value types) were underlying 'dimensions' or 'clusters' revealed by statistical analysis of survey responses made no difference in this respect, for what such analysis revealed was only a set of super-propositions, or principles, from which the surface responses could be inferred.

Thus in the methodological dialectic of positivism and interpretivism, once we set aside the intensification provided by programmatic exaggerations such

as interpretivism's denial of interest in causal relations, or the nominalist indifference to what measurements measure that is proclaimed by disciplinary positivism, we can find a common interest in the discovery of the intelligible sources of behaviour. Of course, such has been the intensity and longevity of the methodological dialectic that it is difficult to see it as a single complex to which there may be an alternative of an altogether different order. Even if it is agreed that the pursuit of the intelligible sources of behaviour is common to each side, the further step of questioning the assumptions that support that pursuit is difficult to take or even to envisage.

The difficulty stems from the fact that supporting the common aims of positivist and interpretivist social science, including political culture research, are even more widely and deeply held assumptions about the nature of understanding itself and the nature of human action. The social-scientific pursuit of the intelligible sources of behaviour, in either its positivist or interpretive methodological variants, is supported by deep-seated aspects of our intellectual heritage,[5] manifest both in philosophy and in 'folk psychology', our everyday understanding of human action and motivation.[6] The philosophical tradition supports the aims of social science by virtue of its own pursuit of intelligibility, which underpins all of science—with which indeed philosophy, the 'love of wisdom', was initially identified—and whose conditions and general character philosophy has made its particular concern as it has become a more specialized branch of knowledge. Folk psychology supposes that action is intentional, and an intention is a motive that can be put into words, paradigmatically in a sentence beginning 'I want . . . '. This notion that behaviour originates in something intelligible, something that can be understood discursively or propositionally, is of course a widely held and fundamental assumption, seldom explicitly challenged.

I will postpone the interrogation of the common-sense or folk-psychological aspect of the pursuit of intelligibility to the next chapter. In the present chapter I will address philosophical arguments, and that means finding resources for questioning (and thus allowing the development of alternatives to) the predominant tradition of Western philosophy.[7] The philosophical tradition, for all its internal differentiation and contestation, has sought above all else intelligibility, and moreover a rigorous intelligibility, founded on the most thoroughly and generally consolidated basis. Indeed as philosophy became separated from the various sciences and became a specialized intellectual activity, its foundational character became more and more apparent.

Philosophers as widely different as Plato, Descartes, and the early Wittgenstein have exemplified the tradition by their maximalist claims to rigour. Plato sought certainty in the ideal realm of the perfect forms, knowledge of which could be approached only with the guidance of the philosophers. Descartes relentlessly pursued the goal of 'clear and distinct ideas' by posing radical doubt, and reached his goal (significantly for the connection between the

philosophical tradition and folk psychology) by finding a bulwark against doubt in his own self-awareness. The early Wittgenstein wrote: 'Without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries.'[8] Influenced by him, the logical positivists sought to purify language of its ambiguity and make it a fit instrument of science, a transparent record of facts and perfect vehicle of logic. As I have suggested, 'culturalist' reactions to Enlightenment social science and its successors, while they have been highly influential as a critical current, did not for the most part deviate fundamentally from the philosophical pursuit of intelligibility.[9] Herder, Dilthey, Weber, and Geertz still sought intelligibility when they spoke of culture.

But philosophers have from time to time emerged who have set themselves so far against the prevailing philosophical tradition that they seem to call into question the very idea of philosophy; they seem not, indeed, to 'love wisdom' of the sort philosophy has aimed to provide. Blaise Pascal's poetic phrase 'the heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing' expresses this dissent, and situates it in a criticism of Descartes, thought by Pascal to be 'among those who probe science too deeply'.[10] Pascal's aim was to rehabilitate religious faith, as was Hamann's (see n. 9), but this has not been the only aim of the philosophical critics of philosophy.

Pascal's translator ascribes to him the 'paradoxical position of appealing to reason in order to communicate truths which, on his own showing, are outside its province'.[11] This is the characteristic condition of philosophers of the radically critical type I am seeking to distinguish from the anti-positivists we looked at in Chapter 2. Indeed the difficulty extends to the description of this position itself, for just by virtue of its opposition to the philosophical tradition it largely resists assimilation (as interpretivism does not) into a school or movement of thought of its own. This problem can be illustrated with another example, that of Henri Bergson, who, as F. C. T. Moore has put it, 'did what philosophers are not supposed to do. He questioned the primacy of human reason.'[12]

Bergson is among the thinkers who H. Stuart Hughes argues produced an 'intellectual revolution' in the period 1890–1930.[13] Hughes's influential synthesis in *Consciousness and Society* counts Sigmund Freud as the 'towering figure' of this movement of thought, whose other key contributors, in addition to Bergson, were Weber, Croce, Pareto, Sorel, and Jung.[14] Hughes wrestles for a while with the problem of how to label this group of thinkers, concluding that as a group they were neither 'romantic' nor 'irrationalist', but rather shared only a reaction against positivism, which Hughes characterizes as 'the whole tendency to discuss human behavior in terms of analogies drawn from natural science'.[15] But just because it makes Bergson into a 'less typical' figure, Hughes's large category insufficiently recognizes the different orders of radicalism that it contains.[16] To be sure, Freud, Sorel, Weber, and others

discovered, and in some cases promoted, irrationality in human motivations, radically destabilizing various forms of social science. Bergson, however, went further by attacking philosophy itself.

The philosophical character of Bergson's radicalism makes it harder to classify, and has rendered it vulnerable to both marginalization and vitriolic rejection. From the direction of logical positivism, Bertrand Russell was scathing: 'When his philosophy will have triumphed, it is supposed that argument will cease, and intellect will be lulled to sleep on the heaving sea of intuition'; but from an opposing position, the Catholic Church was equally fearful that his writings would lead to 'the unleashing of instincts'.[17] Bergson's philosophy of vitalism made a distinctive if for a long time largely forgotten contribution to the anti-modern reaction: it launched an attack on the capability not just of the scientific idiom, but of language itself, to capture human experience. Experience, he argued, was elusive by virtue of its quality of duration, while language could only ever capture static snapshots. Certainly this position is anti-positivist (though, as Suzanne Guerlac explains, Bergson was unusually sensitive to contemporary developments in the natural sciences such as relativity and quantum theory, and indeed sought to apply them in his own thought),[18] but it is also in a sense, because it is founded in experience, an *empirical* philosophy.

It is this form of thought that I wish to pick out as a resource for the closer investigation of the ontology of political culture. It is surely clear that the dialectic of positivism and interpretivism has exhausted its potential so far as the theory of political culture is concerned. The more radical anti-philosophical reaction of thinkers like Pascal and Bergson hint at an explanation of the ultimately unproductive nature of the dialectic: positivism and interpretivism have a fundamental commonality in their approach to culture, stemming from the aspiration of the philosophical tradition to achieve complete clarity and explicitness. Interpretive approaches to culture, and the positivist mode of political culture research that sought, by using attitude surveys, to proceed with greater rigour, share the deeper assumption that the order and character of social life—the culture—can be made intelligible. Interpretivism does this synoptically and holistically, while positivism resolves culture into its measurable constituent parts, an aggregate of attitudes. Notwithstanding such differences in the way in which culture is made intelligible, and for that matter in the degree to which the explanatory dimension of that investigation is acknowledged or denied, even if these differences mark a deep division in the methodology of social science, we can see an underlying commonality of purpose. Recognizing it, we might hope to move beyond it.

However, the critical philosophy of Pascal or Bergson only point us towards the *possibility* of new ways of thinking about culture. The resources they provide for doing so are as yet slender. Recent manifestations of this intermittent current of empirical philosophy have stressed neither primal and irrational

psychic forces nor pure experience. They have instead drawn critical implications from a focus on practice or practical capacity. This, I will suggest, is a rich source of implications for the study of political culture. The first example I will discuss is the later Wittgenstein.

5.3. WITTGENSTEIN: RULES AND PRACTICE

The later Wittgenstein's philosophical radicalism is evident both in his specific arguments and also performatively in his philosophical style. He aimed not at solving philosophical puzzles, but at dissolving them. This in part meant showing that much of what philosophy has taught us to think is problematic is quite straightforwardly handled in daily life. He therefore proceeds in a way that deflates philosophy, by posing rhetorical questions, leaving the inadequacy of the suggestions of an imagined interlocutor to be figured out by the reader, or making declarative statements that are so pared down as to be spurs to thought rather than definitive conclusions.[19] Thus despite the brevity and simplicity of their mode of expression, Wittgenstein's arguments remain difficult to understand. A consequence has been a wide range of different and sometimes antithetical readings. I will deal first with a set of readings which assimilated Wittgenstein to the interpretive reaction against positivism, and with an argument that he rejected any kind of 'theory': these must both be dispensed with if Wittgenstein is to aid us in constructing a theory of political culture.

5.3.1. The Interpretive and the Anti-Theoretical Wittgenstein

A first wave of readings of Wittgenstein goes under the collective name of 'ordinary language philosophy', exemplified by the work of Austin and Ryle. It marked, as Richard Bernstein has observed,[20] a modified continuation of the impulse of analytical philosophy, the dominant mode of Anglo-Saxon philosophy in the twentieth century, but with a turn towards analysis of the ordinary use of language promoted by Wittgenstein's slogan 'meaning is use'. The shift of focus paralleled the radical modification of Wittgenstein's philosophy itself; its later form, culminating in the *Philosophical Investigations*, reacting sharply against the earlier, embodied in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. The *Tractatus* was widely regarded as a foundational text of logical positivism, by virtue of its aspiration to produce a model of language that would simplify and purify it.[21] Language would, with the help of philosophical analysis, be purged of ambiguity, metaphysics, and mysticism, allowing it to play in other fields the role it was taken to play in the natural

sciences: the role of a transparent medium for transmitting the findings and arguments of empirical investigation.

The later Wittgenstein came to see this aspiration itself as 'metaphysical', because it set up a false ideal of language, the so-called 'picture theory of language', and ignored its actual use: 'What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.'[22] Bernstein argues that Wittgenstein's critique of logical positivism was readily extended not just to a distinctive position in the philosophy of language but also to an interpretive and anti-positivist position in the philosophy of social science.[23] Bernstein writes: 'post-Wittgensteinian philosophers have been challenging the claim that there is nothing more to causation than nomological functional correlations', and counts as manifestations of this response interpretivists such as Louch, Taylor, and Winch.[24] Thus on Bernstein's account, which is doubtless an accurate report of the reception of Wittgenstein by the early 1970s, Wittgenstein was received as a critic not of the philosophical tradition as a whole, but of its manifestation in positivist social science.

Peter Winch's version of this ostensibly Wittgensteinian critique of positivist social science was probably the most widely cited, and continues to be discussed, though it was far less influential on the actual practice of interpretive social science than the later work of Geertz. Its interpretive credentials, and implications for political culture research, are illustrated by this passage:

> The inhabitants of such a country may perhaps be cajoled into going through the motions of marking slips of paper and dropping them into boxes, but, if words are to retain any meaning, they cannot be said to be 'voting' unless they have some conception of the significance of what they are doing.[25]

Such indeed has been the impact, in the philosophy of social science, of Winch's work that, in the view of Wittgenstein scholar Nigel Pleasants, Winch has become 'the "official translator" of Wittgenstein's philosophy for the social sciences'.[26] But if the hermeneutic reading of Wittgenstein by Winch and the other interpretivists cited by Bernstein were accepted, at this point we would loop back to the topic of Chapter 2—and the problems of the interpretive denial of causal explanation we found there. Progress beyond the dialectic of positivism and interpretivism under Wittgenstein's name would seem to be barred.

However, Winch's hermeneutic Wittgenstein is an odd reading of a philosopher who explicitly objected to an overemphasis on interpretation.[27] Wittgenstein's account of rule-following, which I will discuss in detail shortly, emphasized instead its automatic and thoughtless character. His point was not to insist on the rule-governed character of behaviour (and thus the necessity for the student of that behaviour to understand the rules), but rather to make a deeper enquiry into what following a rule actually involved. Wittgenstein was

read too quickly as a critic of positivist social science, when his critical target was much broader.

But if Winch's Wittgenstein is too narrowly critical to make him a useful source of progress in the theory of political culture, Pleasants's reading creates the opposite difficulty. In *Wittgenstein and the Idea of a Critical Social Theory* he takes issue with the use of Wittgenstein's arguments by social theorists Bhaskar, Giddens, and Habermas, as well as by Winch. He presents Wittgenstein's project of radical dissent within philosophy as necessarily also a critique of anything that could be called 'social theory', a form, as Pleasants puts it, of 'ontological theory' which seeks to reveal the underlying forms and structures of social life. Wittgenstein, says Pleasants, opposed any such aspiration. He did not claim 'to be in possession of any special insight into (social and political) reality'.[28] Indeed, as Pleasants points out more than once, Wittgenstein said: 'we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place' (§ 109).[29]

In terms of the project of a theory of political culture, we seem to have jumped out of the frying pan and into the fire, for if Winch's Wittgenstein simply returns us to an earlier point in the argument of this book, Pleasants's Wittgenstein would have us abandon the project altogether. But while I do not want to defend the arguments put by the theorists Pleasants discusses, I suggest that he misconstrues Wittgenstein's philosophical radicalism in ruling them inadmissible. For it is, first of all, a *philosophical* radicalism, dealing with philosophy, not with social science. It is philosophy that in Wittgenstein's view has made the mistake of seeking to *explain*, whereas it must try to give a straightforward *description* of what we are doing when, for instance, we use language. It does not follow that the very idea of explanation, in fields where it belongs, has to be abandoned.

Whatever may be the validity of Bhaskar et al.'s ontological or a priori arguments (or the validity of describing them in that way),[30] it is surely a considerable stretch of Wittgenstein's position to suppose he wished to exclude all attempts at explanation in social science. As David Bloor puts it, '[Wittgenstein's] target was the metaphysical illusion that some deep, justificatory truth could be discerned behind or underneath our practices'; it is 'philosophical not scientific explanation' that Wittgenstein is objecting to.[31] I suggest, then, that it is quite within the spirit of Wittgenstein's work, with its frequent adversion to simple empirical examples, to *look and see* whether social life does in fact have the character attributed to it by various social theories, such as that of Parsons, and on the basis of such an investigation to construct a better theory.

Having cleared away readings of Wittgenstein which merely return us to an earlier phase of the present argument, or which make his work a solvent of any kind of theory in social science, we can turn to his specific claims.

Unfortunately the expository difficulties only get worse. But it is worth pressing on because of the unique force which Wittgenstein's critical arguments possess.

5.3.2. The Communitarian and the Individualist Wittgenstein: From Polarity to Duality

Wittgenstein's attack on the philosophical ideal of the perfection of language takes him beyond language, to a more fundamental question: what is it to follow a rule? Rules and language are of course closely related: language contains rules (the rules of grammar, or the definitions of words), while rules are in turn stated in language. And, while political culture was quite extraneous to Wittgenstein's project, it is clear that his arguments about language and rule-following must bear on both the general supposition of cultural analysis which links intelligibility with causation, and the specific theoretical framework deployed by positivistic political culture research, namely the Parsonian theory of normative integration. Indeed several writers have seen Parsons's theory of social order as already and directly implicating rules in the explanation. Clifford Shearing and Richard Ericson, for instance, count Parsonian theory as an example of 'rule-based' explanations of social order, while Richard Hilbert says that for Parsons, modern society is 'analogous to a huge megabureaucracy'.[32] While these critics perhaps rather hastily assimilate Parsons's values to rules per se, they are right nevertheless to subject Parsonian theory to Wittgensteinian critique, for even if attitudes and values are not rules, they are, as I have argued, like rules in being intelligible, discursive, and propositional in form.

Wittgenstein's argument on rule-following is both simple and powerful.[33] The first step is the demonstration that there is nothing in a rule which tells us how to follow it, so that the rule itself cannot be the explanation of our behaviour when we do so. The second step is to observe that, nevertheless, we do seemingly follow rules. So the question then arises of how we manage it, how the following of rules can be explained. It is in respect of this final step, Wittgenstein's own explanation of rule-following, that expository controversy breaks out.

Wittgenstein's examples in the first step of his argument are drawn from diverse settings or 'language games'.[34] For example, in the setting of way-finding, a direction sign does not tell you to follow the direction of the pointing finger (§ 85); an arrow does not tell you to follow the pointed and not the feathered end (§ 454). In cryptography, a code table does not tell you to read from symbol to meaning horizontally, rather than say in shallow diagonals that go to the meaning of the next entry down, returning to the top for the last entry (§ 86). In arithmetic, we can from an early stage in our education

readily continue a simple number series like 2, 4, 6, 8, . . . How do we know what to do when we reach a number we have not encountered before? Of course we follow the rule. But how do we know the rule is *add 2* and not, say, *add 2 up to 1,000, then add 4* (§ 185)? Both alternatives may be consistent with the examples we were given when learning the rule, for these always cover only a finite number of its applications.

The first step then shows that our capacity to follow a rule must come from something other than the rule. It cannot come from another 'implicit' rule associated with the explicit one, for that would be subject to the same objection. The implicit rule might be something like 'read the code table horizontally'. But then, in order to apply that rule, we need to know what 'horizontally' means. Shall we look it up in a dictionary? But that is set out just like a code book. More generally, in order to continue the series of even numbers 'in the same way', we need to know how to apply the rule that defines sameness. Wittgenstein entertains an objection here, but rejects it: 'We seem to have an infallible paradigm of identity in the identity of a thing with itself . . . Then are two things the same when they are what one thing is? And how am I to apply what the *one* thing shows me to the case of two things?' (§ 215). Sameness is no more self-evident than any other rule.

At first sight the problem suggested by Wittgenstein is hard to take seriously. For hardly anyone does indeed have difficulty following direction signs, continuing series, and the like. One way of making clear the significance of the problem is to note, as ethnomethodologists have done, the practical consequences of the inexhaustibility, or what is sometimes called the infinite regress, of rules.[35] The problem is encountered not only in ethnomethodological breaching experiments, but also in real-life situations in which excessive faith is placed in rules. An example discussed by Hilbert is the project of 'Competency Based Teacher Education' to specify the 'competences' of school teachers, one of whose manuals listed 1,301 specific competences without at all reducing, but only increasing, the amount of further glossing required.[36]

Wittgenstein's point in the second step of his argument is, however, a different one: the impossibility of a complete specification of rules only brings into relief the fact that we really have no difficulty in following them. We follow rules 'blindly' (§ 219), we simply 'know how to go on' (§ 154), and 'If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned' (§ 217). But despite these apparently argument-stopping formulations, Wittgenstein's analysis does go further, into its controversial third step. He explores some possible answers to the question of what accounts for our ability to 'go on', and several commentators have found in these explorations pointers towards a more substantial theory. However, that these remained only pointers has encouraged quite radical differences in the interpretation of Wittgenstein's third step.

Interpretations fall into two types, the individualist and the communitarian.[37] Both of course accept the basic premise of Wittgenstein's approach, namely that there is no *philosophical* mystery to be unearthed as an answer. Our ability to go on will be an irreducibly practical and empirically observable matter. But that does not mean, these interpretations insist, that 'knowing how to go on' is itself analytically primitive. It is analysed, by the two interpretive positions, as a capacity inherent respectively in the individual and in the community of which the individual is a member.

Winch's hermeneutic reading of Wittgenstein has a starting point that is emphasized by all communitarian readings: he argues that when we follow a rule unthinkingly, as a 'matter of course', this 'must not be just a peculiarity of the person whose behaviour claims to be a case of rule following'.[38] For unless other people are involved, as observers of and commentators upon the behaviour, there will be no possibility of making a mistake in following the rule: 'A mistake is a contravention of what is *established* as correct; as such, it must be *recognisable* as such a contravention.'[39] This argument has ample justification in Wittgenstein's remarks that 'To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions)' (§ 199) and 'it is not possible to obey a rule "privately": otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it' (§ 202).[40]

Saul Kripke's communitarian resolution of what he calls Wittgenstein's 'sceptical paradox'—that we have no difficulty following rules, but cannot formulate an adequate analysis of our ability—rests on the same basis, though it displays more psychological discrimination. He shows that Wittgenstein excludes an explanation in terms of conscious mental states, for instance an 'image' of what I have to do to follow the rule. This would be like an interior version of the rule itself, and my capacity to follow it would still need to be explained. He says further that an unconscious 'disposition' could also not be Wittgenstein's explanation. Saying that my ability to go on is the mere expression of a disposition would not leave any room for the rightness or wrongness of my action in relation to the rule.[41] A disposition would not, as Kripke puts it, *justify* my going on. He cites Wittgenstein's remark, apropos of my attempt to write down a particular symbol in my diary whenever I have a particular sensation, that in such a case 'whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about "right"' (§ 258). Since in fact we do talk about right and wrong ways of following a rule, a mere disposition cannot, Kripke concludes, be the source of our following it.

Justification, Kripke goes on to argue, is a necessarily social activity. If someone thinks he is following a rule, but actually is not, someone *else* must be making that judgement. The community is the source of the justification of a person's going on correctly. However, Kripke is careful not to suggest that what the community therefore shares is a *concept* of how to go on: other people's concepts would be no more adequate a guide to following the rule

than a single actor's, and would invite the original objection. Kripke thus avoids the overextension of Wittgenstein perpetrated by Winch. It is, Kripke says, just a 'brute fact' that the community generally agrees in its response to attempted rule-followings such as the continuation of a number series. That unanalysable agreement is, Kripke suggests, what Wittgenstein meant by a 'form of life' in his much-quoted and much-interpreted phrase, 'What has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—*forms of life*' (p. 226).[42]

The individualist response to such arguments is exemplified by Colin McGinn's *Wittgenstein on Meaning*. In effect his argument amounts to the reclamation of the idea of a disposition rejected by Kripke, although McGinn does not use that particular term. He speaks instead of the ability to follow a rule as a 'natural capacity' of individuals. McGinn agrees with communitarians that Wittgenstein demonstrated that what allowed the rule-follower to go on could not be a discrete mental content or representation, like an image or a concept, but does not agree that the demonstration necessarily takes us beyond individual capacities. He takes Wittgenstein to be promoting not a social but an 'anti-intellectualist' view of rule-following and language use. Intellectualism arises in the setting up of philosophical puzzles about language use, and Wittgenstein's aim is of course to dissolve these puzzles: 'we need to resist the temptation to dig deeper than the phenomena will allow'.[43] In particular, we should not look for conscious mental states as the explanation of our capacity to follow rules: things that 'come before the mind' while following a rule would themselves have to be 'followed', reproducing the original problem. Wittgenstein, McGinn explains, also ruled out 'unconscious' states, but in the sense of unrecognized physiological or neurological states.[44]

But from the rejection of these explanations it does not follow that nothing more can be said about the capacity in question. McGinn sees Wittgenstein as suggesting that the capacity rests on *technique* and on *custom*: 'To understand a language is to master a technique' (§ 199). McGinn glosses technique as 'practical skill' and 'know-how'.[45] His analysis of custom gives it three implications: 'rule-following takes place in the sphere of actual behaviour and not in the inner recesses of a person's consciousness or mental mechanism'; 'rules can be grasped only if they are actually obeyed repeatedly'; and 'using and reacting to signs is properly seen as habitual and unreflective, not as the upshot of ratiocination'.[46] It is notable, in view of the fact that Wittgenstein's use of terms like 'custom' is a major contribution to the case for the communitarian interpretation, that McGinn's analysis of that very term makes no reference at all to social context. Much of McGinn's gloss simply reasserts Wittgenstein's strictures against 'an overly rationalistic conception' of rule-following. The key positive claim is about the necessity of repetition, which again suggests the notion of a practical skill.

McGinn dismisses the communitarians' key issue of justification: 'we just do not find Wittgenstein fretting over the question whether my present

inclinations to apply a sign really conform with my past meaning . . . [His] attitude towards this kind of question verges on the dismissive.' Rather, 'His view is that what underlies (if that is the word) our practices and customs with signs is our human nature in interaction with our training: this is what explains our unreflectively going on as we do.'[47] David Bloor's communitarian riposte is that McGinn has 'turned Wittgenstein into the very opposite of what he was' by suggesting that knowing how to go on amounts to no more than having 'a natural sense of what is right'.[48] This phrase of McGinn's is 'the philosophical equivalent of putting your hand on your heart and saying: we all know what is right, because we feel it here'.[49] Such 'naive subjectivism' falls foul of Wittgenstein's insistence on the externality of the justification. To his imaginary interlocutor's proposal of a 'subjective justification', Wittgenstein had replied: 'But justification consists in appealing to something independent' (§ 265); my right hand cannot give my left hand money (§ 268), and justifying is like giving, necessarily social. As Bloor puts it, 'Normative standards come from the consensus generated by a number of interacting rule followers, and it is maintained by collectively monitoring, controlling and sanctioning their individual tendencies.'[50]

Yet the individualists have on their side Wittgenstein's clear objection to the explanation of action in terms of things like reasons or conceptions, whether individually or collectively possessed. A reason or a conception can no more make us do anything, on Wittgenstein's argument, than a rule can:

> How can he *know* how he is to continue a pattern by himself—whatever instruction you give him?—Well, how do I know?——If that means 'Have I reasons?' the answer is: my reasons will soon give out. And then I shall act, without reasons. (§ 211)

Does not the community's corrective response to my misuse of a rule itself consist in an instruction, an order, a reason for me to continue in a certain way? But then the original problem recurs: how is it that I am able to follow the order, or make sense of the reason? Even if the entire community bellows the order in my ear, the problem with which Wittgenstein began, of explaining how I follow it, is not resolved. Some basic and perhaps merely bodily capacity of mine seems to be involved. To be sure, I will probably have acquired this through training, a necessarily social process. But what the training creates may nevertheless be an individual capacity. The justification of my action, Wittgenstein makes clear, is necessarily social. But that justification will be a reason, a verbal agreement, in effect a rule. It cannot on its own be the explanation of my action. Thus both normative standard and bodily disposition seem to be involved, but these are not the same thing and neither is reducible to the other.

The problem with the individualist and communitarian interpretations of Wittgenstein is, as Bloor himself has complained, their polarization.[51] Each can find grounds in Wittgenstein's terse remarks both for their own position and for their dismissal of the opposing one. Indeed these opposing grounds

find expression in a single sentence, one of Wittgenstein's most quoted: 'Is what we call "obeying a rule" something that it would be possible for only *one* man to do, and to do only *once* in his life?' (§ 199). Here, the 'one man' supports the communitarian emphasis on society, while the 'do only once' supports the individualist emphasis on repetition.[52] I suggest that we take our cue from this juxtaposition and consider the possibility that *both* of the rival interpretations illuminate aspects of Wittgenstein's position, and that instead of the recurrent attempt of each to demolish (or perhaps devour) the other we might consider the possibility of a degree of cohabitation.

Wittgenstein speaks of our capacity to 'go on' when following a rule as a technique and a custom, the result of behavioural training: something that we should not seek to intellectualize. He also says that the rightness inherent in the idea of following a rule cannot be accounted for only by my feeling that I am proceeding rightly: when that is the only criterion, 'we cannot speak of right'. We can resolve the tension between readings of Wittgenstein that centre on these respective claims by simply accepting both of them. 'Going on' and 'speaking of right' would in this light be regarded as jointly involved in the phenomenon of rule-following, but as nevertheless distinct and mutually irreducible. We can think of Wittgenstein as a theorist who takes seriously *both* our bodily capacity to go on in the practical implementation of a rule, *and* the normativity established by society's response to our practice, *without merging the two*.

It may of course be that Wittgenstein's own position was simply not fully worked out. One hesitates to suspect this of a thinker who struggled so painfully to make his thoughts clear, although the very duration of the struggle, and the fact that Wittgenstein published none of its results in his lifetime, make the suspicion plausible.[53] It is also necessary to keep in mind what Pleasants emphasizes, namely Wittgenstein's primarily critical rather than constructive purpose. Even so, and indeed by doing what Pleasants recommends and taking Wittgenstein at his literal word (thus looking through the fog of the conflict of readings), we discover the assertion both of the irreducible bodily capacity to 'go on' when 'reasons give out', and of the necessarily social character of justification or reason-giving. This suggests a fundamental duality, which I think it is plausible to read as a duality of culture. In Wittgenstein's radical philosophical 'prophylaxis', therefore, is to be found the basis of a new approach to the relationship of intelligibility and causality in cultural explanation.

5.4. POLANYI: TACIT AND ARTICULATE KNOWLEDGE

From Wittgenstein's arguments, we can form an idea of the shape of the theory of culture we are seeking. It is a dualistic theory which recognizes the

distinctness and mutual irreducibility of practical capacity or our ability to 'go on', on the one hand, and justification, giving reasons, and 'speaking of right' on the other. Wittgenstein's key point is that the rule cannot be the cause. We can note that this is a position which simultaneously attacks the philosophical tradition's search for complete certainty and clarity and the common-sense or folk-psychological assumption of the self-transparency of our own action. Wittgenstein's imaginary but everyday examples of rule-following give his philosophy, as I have put it, an empirical character; but it is moreover a variety of psychological empiricism that is mainly invoked.

Still, Wittgenstein operated at some distance from the discipline of psychology, and paid little attention to its findings. The imaginary and simple character of his examples gives them a degree of generality and force, but still leaves his work 'philosophical' in the sense that a considerable amount of work is needed to extract from it direct lessons for the conduct of social science. (I have rejected the claim that his work challenges the very idea of a theoretical social science, or that it supports the interpretive position in the philosophy of social science.) However, Wittgenstein is not the only recent philosopher to have simultaneously challenged the philosophical tradition and common-sense psychology. We will find assistance in moving from philosophy to social science (via, in the next chapter, social psychology) by looking at a less widely read philosopher, Michael Polanyi. Polanyi's own natural-scientific background (he had been a chemist before shifting to economics and then to philosophy) perhaps allowed him access, as well as disposing him more favourably, to relevant scientific findings, and he drew on contemporary work in psychology as well as on various philosophical resources in his work. In consequence, his work has been drawn on by later psychologists, as we will see in the next chapter. Even so, it is less widely known, despite a recent growth of interest,[54] than it deserves to be. For the purpose of this chapter, it serves as a link from Wittgenstein's mainly critical arguments, which provide a pointer towards a dualistic theory of culture, to a more concrete and positive specification of that theory.

Polanyi, despite his lack of sympathy with Wittgenstein, who he seems to have thought remained too preoccupied with language,[55] made anti-positivist arguments in some ways strikingly parallel to Wittgenstein's. His topic was knowledge, and in particular scientific knowledge. The role of science in society, the nature of scientific commitment, and the conception of truth implicit in science are important themes of his philosophy, some of them prefiguring the work of Kuhn, others that of Bhaskar. I will focus instead on the core of Polanyi's philosophy, his treatment of the forms of knowledge (and mostly on his principal philosophical statement, *Personal Knowledge*).[56] His critical target was a position he variously called objectivist, positivist, or 'antimetaphysical', which he took to involve the formalization of scientific discovery and observation, the complete systematization of science, and the

exclusion of the personal contribution of the scientist in favour of a completely disembodied set of procedural and inferential rules.[57] Both the inductivist philosophies of science of which positivism was the inheritor, which saw science as the accumulation and merely convenient systematization of observations (represented for Polanyi by Ernst Mach), and the more prevalent Popperian philosophy of falsification, which accepted the place of hypotheses in motivating empirical investigation but nevertheless pictured the scientist as selflessly applying destructive tests to theories to which he or she had no commitment (commitment being only to a procedural 'logic' of research), were targeted by this critique.[58]

Polanyi's often restated starting point was the observation that 'we can know more than we can tell'.[59] 'We' here is all of us, though Polanyi's interest was in exposing the significance of the claim for the practice of science. It is the claim in its most general form that is of interest in this chapter. The 'tacit knowledge' that Polanyi is referring to is observable in a wide variety of settings, but his core examples are practical skills such as cycling or swimming. In such cases, 'the aim of a skilful performance is achieved by the observance of a set of rules which are not known as such to the person following them'.[60] Rules of art or 'maxims' may be involved, but they are of secondary importance:

> The true maxims of golfing or of poetry increase our insight into golfing or poetry and may even give valuable guidance to golfers and poets; but these maxims would instantly condemn themselves to absurdity if they tried to replace the golfer's skill or the poet's art. Maxims cannot be understood, still less applied by anyone not already possessing a good practical knowledge of the art. (p. 31)

There are moments in Polanyi's account of skilled practice when his formulations seem to run up against Wittgensteinian objections to explanation in terms of rules, as in his mention of 'rules not known to the person following them'. It is, he says, a 'rule of art' that, when cycling, imbalance is corrected by a series of winding curves such that 'for a given angle of unbalance the curvature of each winding is inversely proportional to the square of the speed at which the cyclist is proceeding' (p. 50). But if there is a mistake here it is not in Polanyi's argument but simply in a rather free use of the word 'rule', for Polanyi immediately goes on to say that the rule is invariably supplemented by other factors that are taken into account in practice. These factors, which we know of only tacitly, are best not described as rules at all, rather than thought of as unconscious ones, the formulation to which Wittgenstein makes a powerful objection.[61]

The point is made clearer when the wide application of Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge is understood. In addition to the core example of practical skills, he is much interested in the role of tacit knowledge in perception.[62] He draws (as Kuhn was later to do) on the findings of Gestalt psychology, refers beyond that to phenomenological sources such as Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of*

Perception, and is much interested in the phenomenon of 'subception', now more usually referred to as subliminal perception.[63] All of these sources point to the inadequacy of a model of perception that understands it as the transparent registering on our consciousness of objects and events in the world. The model is questioned either by exposing, as Gestalt psychology and phenomenology did, the unconscious processes of construction that are involved in perception (a view later adopted by mainstream cognitive psychology),[64] or by showing how cues not consciously perceived can nevertheless affect behaviour (the source of a fruitful research programme in social psychology under the heading of *automaticity*, as we will see in the next chapter).

What unites the knowledge we display when exercising a practical skill and the capacity we display in perception when distinguishing figure from ground or recognizing an object as a member of a class is the tacitness of the capacity, that is, its resistance to complete formulation as rules. Putting aside Polanyi's occasional careless formulation of this capacity in terms of 'unconscious rules', we can see here a close parallel with Wittgenstein's arguments, despite their dissimilar target, and indeed Polanyi's detailed arguments about how we employ inductive reasoning are similar in structure to Wittgenstein's about our ability to continue a number series. Both philosophers point compellingly to the limitation of the attempt to explain behaviour in terms of explicit rules, and indeed force us to ask whether any sense attaches to an alternative explanation in terms of implicit rules. For Wittgenstein, 'our reasons give out', and yet we know 'how to go on'; for Polanyi, 'we know more than we can tell': the parallel is evident.

Polanyi indeed offers a resource for the interpretation of Wittgenstein, whose arguments provide a fundamental challenge to prevailing ways of explaining action but are expressed in such terse language that noisy expository controversy has resulted. I sought in section 5.3 to dissolve the controversy by suggesting an implicit dualism, in which 'going on' and 'giving reasons' would be considered as distinct and mutually irreducible activities. Polanyi's concepts of skills and tacit knowledge not only parallel Wittgenstein's arguments, but are developed in considerably more detail, suggesting a way to use Wittgenstein constructively and not merely (useful though this is) as philosophical prophylaxis.

Moreover, the idea of skill contributes directly to the depolarized or dualistic interpretation of Wittgenstein's philosophy I proposed in the preceding section. The acquisition of skills requires repeated action, and results in a new bodily capacity. At the same time, instruction by others, if not essential, is almost always involved, and gives rise to a community standard of correctness. One can 'go on', say, sawing wood on the basis of self-taught skill, but instruction will certainly be of assistance if it is available. If the sawing becomes a two-person job, as in a case discussed by Charles Taylor,[65] normative standards of correctness will become more relevant, and this is the more

true of activities such as dancing, also discussed by Taylor, and paradigmatically so of interpersonal communication using language.

Polanyi draws political implications from his analysis of tacit knowledge. He writes: 'An art which cannot be specified in detail cannot be transmitted by prescription, since no prescription for it exists. It can be passed on only by example from master to apprentice' (p. 53). Polanyi's gendered language gives us pause here as elsewhere,[66] but more generally he does not shrink from drawing a political conclusion: 'A society which wants to preserve a fund of personal knowledge must submit to tradition.'[67] However, tradition needs to be understood in a very wide sense. The acquisition of the ability to perceive, for example, which has one manifestation, discussed by Polanyi at length, in the training of the biologist to recognize a member of a species, has its most fundamental and earliest manifestation in the early stages of infancy, when master and apprentice are parent and child, and the 'tradition' is the tradition of seeing objects. Thus while the conservative political implications Polanyi drew from his philosophy of science are worth investigating, we should not let any aversion to them distract us from the generality of his claims.

These claims are understood in their most general sense when we interpret them in terms of the *bodily* character of the possession of skills. For instance, Polanyi considers the use of a probe to ascertain the shape of a cavity, and similarly the use of a cane by a blind person. Such operations proceed clumsily at first, while the user's attention is fixed on the probe or cane itself: it is the subject of what Polanyi calls 'focal' awareness. As the practice becomes skilled, the user's awareness shifts to the objects touched by the probe or the cane, and awareness of the probe or cane becomes 'subsidiary'. Extremely subtle sensations in the hand holding the tool are actually what allows knowledge of the objects probed, but these sensations are known only tacitly to the user, and effectively the user's body is projected to the end of the probe: it becomes an extended sense organ. 'Our subsidiary awareness of tools and probes can be regarded . . . as the act of making them form a part of our own body . . . We accept them existentially by dwelling in them' (p. 59).

Of course, the skills described by Polanyi are often of a much more intellectual character, subsumed by him under the heading of 'connoisseurship'—the skills of the taxonomist, for example, and of course the skills of the scientific experimenter and theorist, the central case at which his argument aims (pp. 54–5, 60, 64–5). Nevertheless his claim is of a commonality between all these forms of skilful practice, which become instantiated in people's bodily capacities by training (which includes but can never exclusively rely on overt prescription) and by repeated trial and error. Nothing fundamentally different is involved in the correct use of a word or symbol, or the correct identification of an object, than in the correct use of a hammer: all these cases involve the creation of a bodily capacity or disposition. When Polanyi writes, 'Every act of personal assimilation by which we make a thing form an extension of

ourselves through our subsidiary awareness of it, is a commitment of ourselves; a manner of disposing of ourselves' (p. 61), the extension of the word 'thing' over a range from tools we can handle to scientific theories we can deploy needs to be borne in mind.

The use of language adds an articulate or explicit dimension to knowledge, but the use itself remains inarticulate: 'Denotation . . . is an art, and whatever we say about things assumes our endorsement of our own skill in practising this art' (p. 81). Thus 'A *wholly* explicit knowledge is unthinkable' (p. 7). Language massively expands our capacity to know, as a map can enhance our ability to navigate a territory, or a graph can display a relationship between variables. Even so, 'the mere manipulation of symbols does not in itself supply any new information, but is effective only because it assists the inarticulate mental powers exercised by reading off their result' (p. 83). Symbolic manipulations can yield new intellectual tools: Polanyi gives the example of complex numbers, which depend on taking seriously what was at first seen as an absurd extrapolation of mathematical symbolism, the square root of –1. But there is also considerable risk of error in extrapolating from our symbols, as in the long-standing supposition, not abandoned by Kepler despite his contribution to more modern ideas, that the arrangement of planets in the solar system had to do with ratios derived from the sequence of regular polyhedra (pp. 143–4). Symbols and language themselves, despite their enormous utility in expanding knowledge, can never be taken as a complete formulation of knowledge. Both analytic philosophy, with its 'quixotic standards of valid meaning' (p. 88),[68] and the positivist philosophy of science, which seeks to subsume the production of scientific knowledge under a formula (p. 171)—the two being closely related and jointly contributory to the ideal of objective (that is, impersonal) knowledge—make this mistake. It amounts, for Polanyi, to a massive forgetfulness about the actual sources of knowledge and the personal 'commitment' and bodily involvement that these entail.

The distinction between tacit and articulate knowledge established by Polanyi is a key contribution to a dualistic theory of culture. A duality involves a separation, and indeed, Polanyi speaks explicitly of a gap, the 'logical gap' that separates a scientific discovery from prevailing scientific theory, or a new invention from a merely routine improvement of existing techniques (pp. 123, 177): 'discovery is creative, in the sense that it is not to be achieved by the diligent performance of any previously known and specifiable procedure' (p. 143). While he alludes in this connection to the role of 'originality', 'a gift possessed by a small minority' (p. 123), his point is a more general one, addressing the problem posed by Plato of how one can discover what one does not already know, or persuade anyone of what they do not already believe. Polanyi's point is that there must always be a tacit dimension to this achievement. Since explicit knowledge and belief already contains in its 'routine'

development all its implications, the introduction of radical novelty must involve something inexplicit.[69]

While Wittgenstein gestured towards the duality of culture by looking at the phenomenon of following a rule, showing that the rule could not be the explanation of the behaviour which 'followed' it, Polanyi takes us further by looking at our acquisition of explicit knowledge. He wrongly attributed to Wittgenstein an excessive preoccupation with language, for while Wittgenstein did indeed work in the philosophy of language, in his later work his account of that philosophy had broadened considerably compared to its earlier expression in the *Tractatus*. It had become clear to him that the use of language did not derive *from* language: a gap must therefore separate the content of language from its use. He also commented, in Polanyian fashion, that 'one can know something and not be able to say it'.[70] But Wittgenstein only left hints as to the source of our ability to go on, and we have observed the difficulty of deriving a more constructive explanation from these hints. From Polanyi we get suggestions that are considerably more concrete, and even though they were conceived as part of a philosophy of science they have more general implications. They support a dualistic view of knowledge and, I suggest, a dualistic view of culture: a duality, that is, of practice—exemplified by skill—and discourse.

5.5. SEARLE: THE BACKGROUND

By way of concluding my discussion of philosophical interrogations of the relationship between intelligibility and causality in cultural explanation, and their contributions to a dualistic theory of culture, I will look briefly at the arguments of John Searle in his book *Intentionality*.[71] Searle does not add a great deal to Wittgenstein's contribution, and indeed somewhat slights Polanyi's, but his discussion does have the merit of clarity, not least in his selection of a term—the 'Background'—that makes clear the dualistic implications of his philosophy (since a background exists only in relation to a foreground, and vice versa).

Searle observes that forming an intention to act relies on the existence of a network of unexpressed beliefs. A decision to run for president in the United States, for example, rests on a number of beliefs about the American political system. But beyond these innumerable *unexpressed* beliefs, Searle says, lie *inexpressible* mental states that hardly qualify as beliefs at all. I do not, Searle suggests, have a *belief* that the table I am working at has solidity and stability; rather, 'For me, the hardness of tables manifests itself in the fact that I know how to sit at a table, I can write on a table, I put stacks of books on tables, I use a table as a work bench, and so on' (p. 142). In Wittgensteinian language,

Searle writes: 'anyone who tries seriously to follow out the threads in the Network [of beliefs] will eventually reach a bedrock of mental capacities that do not themselves consist in Intentional states (representations), but nonetheless form the preconditions for the functioning of Intentional states' (p. 143). The set of these 'nonrepresentational mental capacities that enable all representing to take place' is what Searle calls the 'Background' (p. 143).[72]

Searle acknowledges that there is no decisive argument for the existence of the Background; indeed that its shadowy and implicit character makes it resistant to any description at all. But in the manner of Wittgenstein he offers examples that point towards it. The sentences 'Tom opened the door' and 'Sally opened her eyes' employ, he suggests, identical meanings of the word 'open', in contrast for example to sentences in which the word has an evidently different meaning, such as 'Bill opened a restaurant'. Despite the identical semantic content, however, we understand 'opening' differently in the first two cases, and in particular, our differential understanding is illustrated by the difference in how we would go about 'opening' in the two cases. We would use our hand in the one, but not the other. The Background provides the 'capacities and social practices' that enable us to *do* opening in the relevant, and numerous other, ways (pp. 145–7).

Searle also discusses physical skill, giving the example of skiing. He notes that explicit representations are usually involved in learning, or rather being taught, to ski, but that 'after a while the skier gets better; he no longer needs to remind himself of the instructions, he just goes out and skis' (p. 150).[73] Searle erroneously suggests that Polanyi's analysis would here require the skier to have unconsciously internalized the instructions. Searle's own analysis is in fact similar to Polanyi's (and Polanyi would certainly be more sympathetic than Wittgenstein to Searle's reference to neuroscience). What Searle proposes is this:

> The rules do not become 'wired in' as unconscious Intentional contents, but the repeated experiences create physical capacities, presumably realized as neural pathways, that make the rules simply irrelevant. 'Practice makes perfect' not because practice results in a perfect memorization of the rules, but because repeated practice enables the body to take over and the rules to recede into the Background. (p. 150)

Searle in effect sides with the individualist interpretation of Wittgenstein by insisting that the Background is essentially mental, rather than social. He agrees that a social setting is likely to be needed for the acquisition of the Background, but argues that it 'is only relevant to the production of the Background because of the effects that it has on me, specifically the effects that it has on my mind-brain'. If I were a 'brain in a vat' I would still require the Background for my imagined activities. The Background, then, is 'simply a set of skills, stances, preintentional assumptions and presuppositions, practices, and habits [which]

as far as we know, are realized in human brains and bodies' (p. 154). But these are not representations or propositions, even though lack of satisfactory language sometimes forces us to use terms which suggest propositionality, like 'assumption'. Searle argues that we are necessarily disabled when talking about the Background by the fact that it constitutes precisely the Background of our being able to talk at all: 'since the only vocabulary we have available is the vocabulary of first-order mental states, when we do reflect on the Background, the temptation is to represent its elements on the model of other mental phenomena, to think that our representations are of representations' (p. 157).

5.6. CONCLUSION

Not only Searle, but also Polanyi and Wittgenstein, are thus in the 'paradoxical position', ascribed to Pascal by his translator, 'of appealing to reason in order to communicate truths which, on his own showing, are outside its province'. I have suggested that the difficulty extends beyond the producer, to the expositor of such anti-philosophical (or as one might also put it, empirical) philosophies, which accounts for the radical divergence in interpretations of Wittgenstein. But I am inclined to agree with Polanyi and Searle, rather than with the sceptical Wittgenstein described by Pleasants, that the paradoxical condition is a stimulus to further philosophical and theoretical thought rather than the necessary end of it.

In particular, the implications of the arguments and demonstrations of these philosophers for the theory of culture are considerable. I have suggested that Wittgenstein, in highlighting both our ability to 'go on' when 'reasons give out' and the necessarily social character of the justification or 'speaking of right' of our actions, points towards a dualistic understanding of culture which distinguishes its practical from its discursive, propositional, or intelligible aspects. Polanyi makes this duality more explicit, as a theory of tacit and articulate knowledge, or subsidiary and focal awareness, and in addition makes it more concrete and empirical by drawing on and leaving room for psychological investigation of the distinction. Searle, although he mistakenly slights Polanyi's contribution, consolidates a distinction between 'Intentional', that is, representational, propositional, or discursive phenomena in the foreground of human activity, and skills, stances, practices, and habits in the background.

It is worth recalling, since my emphasis has been on the matters which these philosophers argue have been left out by the philosophical tradition, that none of them suggest that analysis can dispense with the intelligibilia that the tradition has made its topic. They object only to the exclusivity of that topical focus. Wittgenstein did not suggest that there were no rules or that we do not in fact obey orders. Polanyi was far from imagining the dispensability of

articulate knowledge such as that provided by scientific findings, and Searle's book *Intentionality* is primarily a study of the foreground, not the Background. What these philosophers have sought in various ways to do is to correct a distortion produced by the necessarily linguistic and maximally explicit character of philosophy, which has tended to understand the social world in its own image rather than the other way around. I argued at the start of this chapter that the theory of culture has proceeded in a similar way, in particular by supposing (most explicitly in the case of positivist political culture research) the coincidence of causality and intelligibility in cultural explanation. One reason for this outcome in the theory of culture has been an inheritance from the Western philosophical tradition, and this inheritance is what I have just been putting into question. Another reason is its reliance on certain psychological assumptions, either in the form of a general folk psychology (no less evident in interpretivism than in positivism), or more specifically in a methodological reliance on the attitude survey (unique to positivism). I put these psychological sources of the current understanding of culture into question in the next chapter.

6

The Dualistic Ontology of Culture (II): Psychological Findings

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I tried to identify what was common to positivist and interpretive political culture research despite their interminable mutual hostility. I had already suggested, in Chapter 2, that interpretivism's denial of causality was not a position that it could sustain. This already brings into question the idea, promoted by some interpretivists, that there could be a division of labour between (causal) explainers and (interpretive) describers, one of whose manifestations was the so-called 'reasons versus causes' debate. In fact, interpretivists no less than positivists suppose culture to be some kind of constraint on action. Conversely, positivists suppose, as interpretivists do, that the causes of action will be interpretable, that is intelligible, discursive, propositional, or representational. At bottom, both approaches assume that the sources of human behaviour will lie in something intelligible—that is, propositional, discursive, or representational.

Once that common assumption has been identified, we might think of bringing it into question. It is, however, formidably difficult to do so, not only because of the dominance of the positivism–interpretivism dialectic over our methodological reflections on social science (a difficult enough impediment), but also because the assumption has support both from the philosophical tradition, with its aim to maximize intelligibility and clarity, and from the unexamined common sense of 'folk psychology', which attributes actions to articulable motives, an assumption that, I showed in Chapter 3, also unites political culture research with one of its putative alternatives, rational choice theory. Indeed, the philosophical tradition and folk psychology have a significant point of intersection in the 'rationalist' philosophy of René Descartes, whose project of establishing philosophical certainty by entertaining the most radical possible doubt found a basis for certainty in the indubitable self-awareness he expressed as '*cogito ergo sum*'. Descartes is usually depicted as

a dualist who separated mind from body; in fact, however, his dualism is an incipient monism which gives explanatory priority to the self-aware mind.

Thus one reason for turning now to psychology for resources for questioning the underlying assumptions of political culture research (and much else besides) is that, alongside the philosophical tradition, and sometimes explicitly intertwined with it, psychological assumptions about the self-transparency of mind and the causal efficacy of conscious intention have supported the methodological positions which have competed to control social science. In this respect, the present chapter is a complement to the preceding one. It is also, however, a continuation of the preceding one, in that the philosophical resources I exploited to develop a dualistic ontology of culture were themselves, as I suggested, of a distinctly empirical nature. Perhaps it would be wise not to invest too much effort in outlining in the abstract what an 'empirical' philosophy would be, given that at once one encounters substantive philosophical controversies such as that between Cartesian rationalism and Humean empiricism. Instead, I have simply illustrated this seeming contradiction in terms by investigating the arguments of Wittgenstein, Polanyi, and Searle, which are empirical in the straightforward sense that they invite us to look at everyday examples, such as following a number sequence or using a practical skill, in order to make advances in philosophy. Polanyi, in addition, advances his argument by drawing on the psychology of his time, for instance the psychology of perception. Psychology is certainly a potential source, then, for closer analysis of the capacities these empirical philosophers use as examples.

A final reason for turning to psychology in an attempt to found a new theory of political culture is, of course, that it was in part from resources taken from academic psychology that political culture research was founded in the first place. I looked in Chapter 1 at the use made by the positivist mainstream of political culture research of the method of the attitude survey, whose delivery of data enabled the erection of a nominalist barrier against probing further the question of what political culture actually is. A phase of interdisciplinary outreach was therefore succeeded by one of intradisciplinary development of method, as the attitude survey became established within the instrumentarium of behaviouralist political science. Few political culture researchers have troubled to ask whether any advances have been made in psychology's own understanding of attitudes since the survey data came on-stream.[1]

In a review Charles Taber has defended the relevance of laboratory-based social psychology to field-based political psychology thus: 'I have always believed that critiques of political cognition as too psychological and apolitical miss the basic point of this research, which is to *understand in process terms* the formation of political attitudes and beliefs.'[2] This view of what is missing in survey research echoes a similar critique of nominalism in a remark made

some time ago by Herbert Blumer about opinion polls: 'the findings resulting from an operation, or use of an instrument, are regarded as constituting the object of study instead of being some contributory addition to knowledge of the object of study'.[3] Taber's 'understanding in process terms' represents precisely what I hope to find by looking in particular at experimental findings in psychology that bear on the theory of political culture.

Thus a look at psychology is justified in terms of the project of political culture theory in three ways. It follows up the original involvement of the theory of attitudes and the method of attitude survey research in the inauguration and consolidation of positivist political culture research; it provides (I will show) empirical substantiation of the everyday examples, and occasional cross-disciplinary forays, of the empirically minded philosophers I considered in the previous chapter; and it complements that chapter by exposing to critical scrutiny the folk-psychological assumptions about intentional action that, along with the philosophical tradition, support the assumption of the intelligibility of the causes of human action.

However, disciplinary outreach of this kind encounters hazards, as our previous examples have shown. Wittgenstein's later philosophy, for example, did not come pre-packaged for use in constructing a theory of culture (indeed I had to address an argument that it specifically resisted any such use), or free of ambiguity or expository dispute. All the more is this true of an entire discipline, with its various sub-disciplines, such as cognitive and social psychology, its shifts in approach, from behaviourism to cognitivism, and its differences of method, from experimental to field. I cannot hope to do justice to all of the relevant debates in this chapter. Cross-disciplinary borrowing seems to encounter the choice of either mounting a border raid, bringing back only the materials which suit one's purpose and ignoring the arguments and controversies that surround them in their disciplinary home; or else entering fully into these debates, an engagement from which one is unlikely to return. Of course, my purpose remains the construction of a theory of political culture, and a full immersion in the debates of psychology should therefore be avoided, even if it were possible. But I will not turn a blind eye to debates which appear to represent obstacles to the use of psychological findings that I intend to make.

For this reason I will begin by addressing some dissenting arguments in psychology which, although they echo some arguments within the interpretive alternative in political culture research, threaten to impede rather than advance my own argument. Indeed this cultural psychology, as it is called, threatens to short-circuit my argument in just the same way that the interpretive reading of Wittgenstein would. In particular it brings into question the experimental methods whose results I will be reporting, so that in my venture into psychology for resources for the understanding of culture I will meet

coming in the opposite direction psychologists who are seeking in culture the remedy for what they find deficient in the experimental methods of their discipline. In section 6.2 I will briefly examine the cultural psychological critique, and defend my theoretical project against it.

In section 6.3 I will return to the theory of attitudes which I discussed in Chapter 1 as a contributor to the operationalization of positivist political culture research. I will pay particular attention to a programme of research into 'dual attitudes', which for an obvious reason provides useful empirical substantiation of the dualistic theory of culture which I have derived only philosophically up to now.

In section 6.4 I will broaden the discussion beyond the theory of attitudes and will discuss some findings which are more explicitly in the behaviourist vein. As I showed in Chapter 1, behaviourism was unnecessarily exclusionary in its methods, and somewhat doctrinaire in ruling out the study of mental states on the grounds that introspection was not a scientifically valid method. In the findings I will look at, under the heading of 'automaticity', there is no a priori exclusions of the mental. Yet in some recent laboratory research the causal status of the conscious will has been brought into question not by denial of the possibility of measuring the mental, but to the contrary, by the results of exactly such measurements.

In section 6.5 I will also integrate the findings of the previous chapter, showing how both contribute to a dualistic ontology of culture.

6.2. CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS

Jerome Bruner was one of the founders of the 'cognitive revolution' against behaviourism, but he has expressed disappointment at its outcome, 'cognitive science', which he suggests 'has now been diverted into issues that are marginal to the impulse that brought it into being'.[4] The problem has been its focus on mental 'processing', and the use of computational metaphors to describe it, what Bruner calls a 'pun version of mind'.[5] The result has been not the intended replacement of behaviourism, but only its reform. Lost from view is what Bruner says he and his fellow cognitive revolutionaries proposed: 'an all-out effort to establish meaning as the central concept in psychology', an effort which would reunite psychology with 'anthropology and linguistics, philosophy and history, even . . . law'.[6] As has happened in the interpretive turn of other disciplines, Bruner finds in Clifford Geertz a patron of the needed cultural psychology.

Richard Shweder voices similar criticisms and arrives at the same conclusion:

> The aim of general psychology is to describe [the] central inherent processing mechanism of mental life. Since the central processing mechanism is presumed to be a transcendent, abstract, fixed, and universal property of the human psyche, general psychology has the look, taste, and smell of a Platonic undertaking.[7]

By this Shweder means that 'general psychology' seeks to screen out all of the detail of personal and group life in order 'to isolate the intrinsic central processing mechanism of the mental life and describe the invariant laws of its operation'.[8] As for the laboratory experimentation which is deployed to achieve the goals of general psychology, Shweder says:

> If the stuff brought into the lab (or simulated there) is interesting enough stuff to study, and if one can bring it into the lab (or reproduce it there) without spoiling it (those are big 'ifs'), then one can certainly study it there . . . Whether there is a royal road running through the lab to the land of the central processing mechanism of the mental life is, however, quite another issue.[9]

He advocates the same alternative as Bruner: 'Cultural psychology is an "interpretive" enterprise in Geertz's sense.'[10]

Shweder's sarcastic comments on experimental research put in a strong form the question of 'external' or 'ecological validity',[11] the question of whether such research can tell us anything about mental and social life outside the laboratory, among people other than the student volunteers who normally make up the subjects of laboratory experiments. But it is not in fact 'quite another issue' whether experimental investigation reveals (to put the matter less provocatively) anything of general importance about the workings of the mind: it is the same issue, for that is the only point of bringing psychological 'stuff' into the laboratory in the first place. Michael Cole, in his manifesto for the 'once and future discipline' of cultural psychology, reluctantly quotes L. S. Vygostsky (otherwise one of his major influences) to this effect:

> It might seem that analysis, like the experiment, distorts reality—creates artificial conditions for observation. Hence the demand for closeness to life and naturalness of the experiment. If this idea is carried further than a technical demand—not to scare away that which we are looking for—it leads to the absurd. The strength of analysis is in the abstraction, like the strength of the experiment is in artificiality.[12]

Cultural psychologists have also been at pains to distinguish their programme from what Bruner calls the 'trivialities of cross-cultural psychology',[13] the attempt to locate 'cultural' differences in the exercise of general capacities such as perception and intelligence. In effect, these efforts amount to taking the laboratory into the field, because they apply supposedly decontextualized tests in contexts in which they are in fact inappropriate. Cole argues that cross-cultural psychology's investigations of the mental capacities of distantly located peoples has assumed a 'deficit model of cultural variation' which has

revealed more about the 'cultural beliefs' of the analysts than the mentality of the natives.[14] He suggests that 'the only way to obtain a culture-free test is to construct items that are equally a part of the experience of all cultures . . . [which] would require us to sample the valued adult activities in all cultures'. But 'No one has carried out such a research program.'[15]

For cultural psychologists, therefore, 'culture' is not just a site of generalization-defeating difference, but defeats all efforts to measure the difference, including cross-cultural psychology, which (as Bruner scathingly puts it) only 'provides a few parameters to account for local variations in universal laws of behavior'.[16] Their critique thus follows the pattern of the interpretivist critique of the mainstream of political culture research, a mainstream which has also recognized difference but has still tried to subsume it under generalizations by the use of standardized measurement techniques. As such, the critical arguments of cultural psychology seem to return us, if not to square one, then certainly to square two, that is, Chapter 2 of the present book, ruling out a contribution from the quarter of psychology to the progress we need to make beyond the dialectic of positivism and interpretivism.

But a turn to the interpretation of meaning and to a strong contextualism leaves cultural psychology with the problems I identified in Chapter 2. The Geertzian approach to culture does its explanatory work through metaphors like the 'web of significance', which are not self-evidently an improvement on the computer metaphors of cognitive science. Shweder indeed recognizes the problem, asking 'How far can one go with an interpretive framework within which, and in whose terms, nothing is by fundamental or intrinsic nature fixed, universal, transcendent, and abstract? What kind of knowledge can we expect from cultural psychology?' But he puts off giving an answer.[17] For his part, Cole admits that context is 'a devilishly polysemic concept',[18] though the problem is surely not with the concept but with the polysemic character of context itself. As I noted in the Introduction in relation to a similar proposal, the context does not speak for itself, or define its own scope.[19] We come back to the need to understand the relevant causal relationships.

We can in fact learn much from the ethnographic investigations of cultural psychologists. Cole's research on skills is relevant to my discussion of the topic in the next chapter. But, perhaps because of the provocation represented by cognitive psychology's use of cybernetic metaphors, cultural psychology has become involved at a programmatic level in the fruitless methodological dialectic of positivism and interpretivism and in consequence has issued an exaggerated denunciation of laboratory work. How far the language of the 'central processing mechanism' is indeed characteristic of cognitive psychology I am not qualified to say, but it does seem to throw the baby out with the bathwater to deny programmatically that nothing of general importance can be discovered by experimental work. Certainly care is needed in extending the implications of experimental research. But it is one way of taking the closer

look we need to take at political culture and its associated theory of attitudes. Therefore, in order to spare ourselves yet another run round the circuit of positivism and interpretivism, I will put aside the more strident of cultural psychologists' objections to it.[20]

6.3. THE THEORY OF ATTITUDES REVISITED

In Chapter 1 I explored the contribution made by the concept and theory of attitude to the consolidation of positivist political culture research. To recap, the explanatory tasks of political science expanded both topically and spatially, demanding the expansion of explanatory scope that the concept of political culture provided. It yielded such expanded scope, however, thanks to its development within a long series of 'culturalist' reactions against the attempt to explain politics and society scientifically, including in the twentieth century the use of the concept of culture in cultural anthropology. Insulation against these anti-naturalistic implications was essential for the use intended by Almond and the other founders of political culture research. At the same time, they adopted the theoretical framework then dominant in the social sciences, namely the social theory of normative integration developed by Parsons. This theory has already made the crucial move of reformulating the Durkheimian idea that social order was sustained by a 'collective conscience' in light of Weber's insistence on the individual meaningfulness of action, as well as Freud's ideas of unconscious influence and psychological depth. The reformulation thus posited individual 'values' which were 'internalized' in socialization. But while Parsons claimed as the superiority of his theory over Durkheim's that it was empirically concrete and non-'metaphysical', he left to others the task of operationalizing it in measurements.

The outstanding tasks—insulating political culture research from the interpretive connotations of 'culture', and operationalizing the Parsonian concept of values—were simultaneously fulfilled by the introduction of the attitude survey, and the theory of attitudes on which it rested. However, I noted in Chapter 1 a degree of instability in the understanding of the relationship between attitudes and values. Statistical techniques for deriving attitudes from the raw materials of survey responses drove attitudes conceptually and psychologically deeper, towards where values were supposed to reside. On the other hand, values, defined as 'principles' with logical implications for a range of attitudes, were themselves subject to various attempts to find their own underlying structure, via categories such as 'value types'. One reason for the terminological instability is of course that attitudes, values, or value types are not phenomena we directly encounter: they are produced by the application and then the processing of survey questions. The naive view that surveys are

merely measuring instruments that, like microscopes, allow us to perceive what the naked eye cannot is already put into question by the instability I have mentioned: it is as if users of differently branded microscopes were not able to agree on what they were seeing, a condition which would certainly have discredited the 'microscopic method'.

In this section I will look not at the putative 'upstream' causal precursors of the survey response, supposedly attitudes, values, or value types, but at its 'downstream' implication, that it, its relationship to action. Setting aside the problem of the rather uncertain boundary between values and attitudes, an idealized model of the theory of attitudes would be this:

$$\text{values} \rightarrow \text{attitudes} \rightarrow \text{behaviour}$$

This model is of course put into question by the philosophical argument I canvassed in section 6.2, as it is an implementation in academic psychology of the assumption, common to the philosophical tradition and folk psychology, of the identification of intelligibility and causality. But I have not so far tackled this assumption on its most basic ground, the psychological, and my discussion in Chapter 1 left untouched the second of the causal relationships indicated by the arrows in the model. Looking at social-psychological research on this relationship we can discover a further fundamental challenge to survey-based political psychology and political culture research.

The idea that attitude towards an object determines behaviour towards the object is surprisingly open to challenge as an empirical claim. A famous challenge is the finding of Richard LaPiere that responses of hotel proprietors to a question about whether they would accept Chinese guests bore no relation to their actual behaviour when confronted by the guests—their behaviour was far more accommodating.[21] If the response to the question is taken to indicate the attitude, a large disconnect between attitude and behaviour seems to be evident in this finding. Social psychologists made some efforts to avoid this problematic conclusion, for instance by suggesting that a higher level of anti-Chinese feeling was necessary to trigger behavioural exclusion than to trigger a negative questionnaire response.[22] Whatever the validity of such proposals, they have in common the acceptance that a reported attitude will not reveal much about the behaviour it seems to refer to, which carries troubling implications for the attitude survey method, and of course for the Parsonian theory of political culture that it operationalizes.

The implications for the survey method were for a long time, however, mostly met by the expedient of ignoring them: 'Some investigators have sidestepped the problem of validity [whether attitude measures measure anything] by denying that anything exists beyond the verbal expressions . . . Others have adopted the idea that scales or questions test whatever they test, so why worry.'[23] A review of studies by Allan Wicker in 1969, which found 'little evidence to support the postulated existence of stable, underlying

attitudes within the individual which influence both his verbal expression and his actions',[24] galvanized a more concerted effort to overcome the problem. It focused on the attempt to specify more precisely what kinds of attitudes, under what conditions, would predict behaviour. According to George Marcus et al., 'Psychologists have now reached the conclusion that, under certain circumstances, attitudes are strongly related to behavior.' But they add, slightly less confidently, 'At the very least, attitudes reflect a propensity to behave in a certain way.' Less confidently still, the authors acknowledge in a footnote that 'behaviors can predict attitudes . . . and that behaviors can predict behaviors'.[25] At a minimum, the causal relationships involved are not as straightforward as they appear to be.

Attitude survey research has itself exposed a number of difficulties with the presumption of a stable attitude; stable enough, that is, to be reliably measured, which is of course a precondition of its use to explain behaviour. For the most part, these difficulties have been regarded as requiring technical solutions rather than any deeper rethinking of the concept of attitude.[26] Examples are what are known as priming effects, question-order effects, and demand characteristics. Priming refers to the effect on survey responses that is produced by asking a prior question or inserting a prior gloss that encourages a certain way of thinking about the question. The order in which questions are asked can also make a big difference to responses, as can the specific wording of questions. 'Demand characteristics' are the features of the survey situation which have been shown to influence responses without any variation in question wording, priming, or question order. These can include the gender, age, physical attractiveness, or attire of the questioner, or expectation of what the questioner is looking for or will value ('experimenter expectancy').[27] Technical fixes of these problems involve 'controlling' them by keeping them constant, so that, for example, a real change in attitudes can be safely inferred when two surveys conducted in exactly the same manner at different times are compared, or, in the case of experimenter expectancy, by a double blind research design in which the experimenter's perceived expectations are a constant over varying experimental conditions. But such fixes leave unchallenged what the variation produced by changes in priming, question order, or demand characteristics plainly puts in doubt, namely the very idea that a survey response represents a singular fact about the respondent—let alone one with determinate behavioural implications.[28]

Research into the dynamics of attitudes produces further cause for concern. A phenomenon noticed early in the career of the attitude survey, and particularly in the case of polls of voting intentions, is the 'bandwagon effect', by which, for example, there can be large swings in voting intentions (a kind of attitude) when a likely winning side becomes evident from earlier polls. This has usually been analysed as a consequence of social influence, although it has also been suggested that it is an indirect result of weakening of the financial

and other kinds of support for losing parties which in turn weakens their campaigning effectiveness (a theory which, however, would have difficulty accounting for last-minute bandwagons, which have also been observed).[29] The phenomenon again raises a question about the significance attaching to the attitude as measured either before or after the change.

The 'spiral of silence' theory advanced by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann is the most general theory of such other-regarding dynamics.[30] Against what she takes to be the prevailing view that public opinion represents a kind of collective rationality, Noelle-Neumann suggests that it is instead a form of 'social control' which works through the mechanism of a fear of isolation, combined with a 'quasi-statistical sense' which people have (aided by the media) for the movement of prevailing attitudes.[31] If an attitude is sufficiently minoritarian, she suggests, its expression in a survey response will be suppressed. Again, however, we might ask in what sense a 'real' attitude may be said to exist when its expression is modified by continuous monitoring of the attitudes of others. The existence of the real attitude seems in the light of these various findings to be more and more of an assumption, with less and less empirical ground.

Laboratory research has also investigated attitude change. A fertile research paradigm has been the theory of 'cognitive dissonance' originated by Leon Festinger in the 1950s. It developed from the observation that people have a tendency to make attitudes consistent with each other and with behaviour. Thus attitudes could be modified by changing behaviour. In the classic experiment, when a large (cash) incentive is provided to change behaviour, post-behaviour attitudes regarding the desirability of the induced behaviour do not change. Cognitive dissonance theory suggests that in this condition it is easy for the subject to attribute the changed behaviour to the external incentive. However, when the incentive is small, but still induces a change in behaviour, post-behaviour attitudes do change. Researchers hypothesize that the incentive is not seen in retrospect as sufficient justification, and the resulting dissonance between attitude and behaviour is reduced by modifying the attitude.

This finding already casts doubt on the supposition that attitudes are the cause of behaviour. More radical doubt was suggested in a modification of the cognitive dissonance paradigm by Darryl Bem, who from an avowedly behaviourist starting point developed 'self-perception theory'.[32] Bem's twist on Festinger's 'insufficient justification dissonance paradigm' consisted in observing that while reported attitudes changed to match more closely post-manipulation behaviour, it was the behaviour that changed more. He hypothesized that later attitude reports were a result not of pressure towards cognitive assonance but of mere observation by the subject of his or her new behaviour, and inference of the attitude from that. Attitudes were therefore derived from behavioural 'self-perception' rather than introspection.

Richard Nisbett and Timothy Wilson, in a seminal paper, did not follow Bem to the behaviourist conclusion of a denial of mental states. But after reviewing both cognitive dissonance and self-perception literature they concluded that the results 'confound any assumption that conscious, verbal, cognitive processes result in conscious, verbalizable changes in evaluations or motive states which then mediate changed behavior'.[33] Verbal responses, they suggested, were not the expression of stored attitudes but were put together from whatever was cognitively 'available'—itself a function both of prevailing 'cultural' resources and cognitive factors, such as the recency of experience, that facilitate easy mental access.

Wilson has developed a substantial programme of research from this starting point. Of particular interest for the purpose of this chapter are the implications for the conceptualization of attitudes and their measurement in surveys.[34] Wilson and colleagues have conducted experiments that ask subjects to consider reasons for their attitudes. This manipulation has the effect of changing attitudes. It is hypothesized that giving an account of reasons is 'a function of what is accessible, plausible, and easy to verbalize'.[35] But once that account is produced, attitude reports are likely to be based upon it. Thus they are *constructed*, not recalled from storage. Attitudes obtained in this way do not, however, have a close relationship with subsequent behaviour. Moreover, expressly asking for reasons is not essential to this effect. Merely asking for an attitude report can produce a search for accessible reasons that generates a constructed attitude.[36]

Wilson does not maintain that all attitudes are of this constructed type. Rather he suggests that such constructed attitudes co-exist with a prior disposition which is not accessible to conscious recall but which can still influence behaviour. He therefore reaches a dualistic conclusion: 'there are two mental systems: One which mediates behavior (especially unregulated behavior), [which] is largely nonconscious . . . The other . . . is largely conscious and attempts to verbalize, explain, and communicate mental states.'[37] Thus people have 'dual attitudes', attitudes both implicit and explicit, generated by these distinct mental systems.[38] Surveys are likely to evoke the latter, especially though not exclusively when they seek to discover reasons (as is the case, for example, in many surveys of attitudes towards politics and politicians).

More recently, Wilson has produced a readable summary statement and extension of his findings, linking them to other lines of research including that on unconscious mental phenomena.[39] He has identified an 'explosion' of such research in recent cognitive social psychology, which has even extended to sympathetic investigation by some mainstream psychologists of the 'repressive' unconscious posited by Freud, mainly due to an interest in 'recovered memory'.[40] But Wilson argues that his alternative conceptualization, the 'adaptive unconscious', better fits the results generated in this body of research.

The research of Wilson and his colleagues has important implications for the conceptualization of attitude and its operationalization in attitude surveys. The linkage between behavioural readiness or disposition on the one hand and verbally reportable reason or motive on the other was, as Donald Fleming observed (see my discussion in Chapter 1), a key achievement of the conceptual development of 'attitude' in the twentieth century. Wilson's arguments dissolve that link.[41] Survey researchers are fully aware of effects which distort the attitude report, such as priming effects or demand characteristics, and have devoted much methodological effort, with some success, to designing out these effects. But the implication of the theory of dual attitudes is that reported attitudes are not 'distorted' by such phenomena, resulting in mere measurement error, but are rather entirely constituted by them, through the operations of the explicit, conscious, verbal mental system and its reach for whatever is accessible. Meanwhile the inaccessible 'adaptive unconscious' proceeds in its operations largely unaffected by the conscious system, unless sustained practice of the new attitude, like a new skill, succeeds in installing it in the unconscious.[42]

6.4. AUTOMATICITY AND CONSCIOUS WILL

In section 6.1 I referred to Charles Taber's review of the relationship between social and political psychology, and their respective methods of laboratory and field research. In addition to noting that experimental research offered to contribute to the study of attitudes an 'understanding in process terms', Taber also pointed out a 'fox in the henhouse': what he describes as some 'obscure' laboratory findings in social psychology.[43] In their own disciplinary setting, however, the findings are not so obscure, though they are certainly surprising, and they expand and radicalize the findings of Wilson and colleagues just discussed, with similarly disruptive implications for political culture research. They relate to the phenomenon of 'automaticity'.

Useful reviews of research into automaticity have been provided by John Bargh, one of its main practitioners.[44] In his essay 'The Cognitive Monster' Bargh gives an account of the overall trajectory of cognitive social psychology (or 'social cognition' research as Bargh and others call it) since its inception. After an initial emphasis on the 'effortful processing' of meaning, cognitive social psychology developed during the 1970s the theory of the 'cognitive miser', recognizing that conscious and controlled mental processing was a demanding task that need not be, and was in fact usually not, undertaken by agents in the course of action. Agents in most circumstances instead relied for their action on various short-cuts or 'heuristics' that were activated 'mindlessly'. It was a short step from here to the idea of 'automaticity', which has

been discussed largely in connection with social stereotypes. But at this point the cognitive miser threatened to mutate into the cognitive monster, once the implications of consigning, for example, racial prejudice to automatic, uncontrolled processes were appreciated (one implication is that the culpability of the racist would be harder to make out). A series of attempts were then made to contain the monster, but it is the thrust of Bargh's paper to demonstrate that these attempts have failed.

Automaticity is often studied using the method of priming. Priming effects are, as we have seen, well known in survey research and are one of its principal bugbears: preliminary glosses, the order in which questions are asked, or phrasing within questions can produce drastically different patterns of responses to surveys. In the laboratory setting typical of cognitive social psychology, priming is instead done 'subliminally', that is in such a way as to escape the conscious awareness of the subject. One method is to provide verbal cues embedded in a word puzzle. Another is to expose subjects to a stimulus, such as a word displayed on a screen, so briefly that they are not consciously aware of it (an exposure of less than 350 milliseconds achieves this). By such methods, the operation of stereotyping, for example, can be tested by priming the subject with components of a racial stereotype (e.g. the word 'black', a component of the African-American stereotype), and then testing for an effect in terms of activation of other, non-primed components of the stereotype (e.g. the word 'hostile').[45]

The activated behaviour can be purely verbal, as in increased response times to subsequent tests requiring the subject to indicate the 'valence' (good or bad) of presented words. 'Expectancies' (which are essentially conscious primes, such as a warning against stereotypic thinking) can offset such verbal responses. But Bargh points out that verbal behaviour is among the most conscious and controllable kinds of behaviour.[46] Stereotype activation of motor behaviour, his experiments show, cannot be so easily offset by expectancies. This would mean that an explicit warning or determination not to express racially prejudicial behaviour would not necessarily avert it in response to a stereotypic stimulus. A wide range of motor behaviours have been studied as the effect of unconscious activation of stereotypes, including variation in facial expression and eye contact. A much-cited example is a study of subjects who were exposed to 'elderly' stereotypic primes such as 'grey' and 'bingo'. They were videotaped, supposedly after the experiment had concluded, walking more slowly along the corridor outside the laboratory than the control group who had not received the primes, even though 'slow' was not among the priming words.[47] Moreover, as Daniel Wegner's investigations show, the attempt to control responses that might be produced by creating expectancies is prone to 'backfiring', a phenomenon familiar as blurting out what one had been trying hard not to say.[48]

The question of external or ecological validity arises here, given that some of the methods used for priming are specific to the laboratory situation. When subliminal perception (we encountered it earlier as what Polanyi called 'subception') was first noticed it gave rise to widespread anxiety about the possibility of sinister influence, particularly by advertisers.[49] In fact, however, the laboratory conditions required to create it are very specific, and no evidence that subliminal advertising works in the circumstances in which advertisements are normally viewed has been found.[50] This does not mean that we are not subject to influence of which we are unconscious. Wilson et al.'s point in mentioning 'subliminal' persuasion is that while people express anxiety and manifest credulity about the possibility of subliminal manipulation, they remain unaware of and unperturbed about how readily they are influenced by visible messages. In effect these constitute a kind of subliminal influence that is hiding in plain sight, and is not at all confined to the laboratory. Bargh makes another argument in favour of taking laboratory findings seriously: that when laboratory research fails to discover much ability of subjects to control responses unconsciously evoked by stereotypes, the influence of stereotypes in ordinary conditions, where in addition the effects can be reinforced by self-fulfilling expectations, is likely to be all the greater.[51] Thus while immediate translation to the setting of real social life should not be assumed, it cannot be assumed either that laboratory findings are 'obscure' with respect to the concerns of sociology or political science.

In the later essay 'Beyond Behaviorism', Bargh and Ferguson face head on what was only implicit in the earlier essay: the relationship between automaticity and behaviourism.[52] The essay reviews numerous studies of automaticity, involving a wide range of phenomena in addition to stereotyping. The most striking is something that at first sight seems self-contradictory: automatic goal-directed behaviour. 'Automatic' behaviour in the case of 'skills' is already well known: 'The hallmark of these automatic skills is that once they are put into operation by a conscious intention, they then operate autonomously in complex interaction with environmental events.'[53] However, Bargh and Ferguson argue that the starting point itself, the formation of a goal, can become automated: 'if a person consistently chooses to pursue the same goal within a given situation, over time that goal structure becomes strongly paired with the internal representation of that situation . . . Eventually, the goal structure itself becomes active on the perception of the features of that situation' (p. 934). Experiments show that priming of a goal (e.g. with achievement-oriented words embedded in a word puzzle) can activate behaviour consistent with that goal even in the absence of conscious awareness of the goal (pp. 934–8).

Bargh and Ferguson distinguish the automaticity approach in cognitive social psychology from behaviourism by pointing out that 'automatic processes

are not merely habitualized, S-R [stimulus-response] responses to the environment', but rather 'can interact in a flexible manner with ongoing environmental events' (pp. 937–8). The explanatory metaphor is 'skill' rather than conditioned 'Pavlovian' response, thus marking a degree of convergence with Polanyi's philosophical emphasis on skills. But while cognitive social psychology, unlike behaviourism, does not by any means deny the existence of mental processes mediating between stimulus and response, it does take a large step in the behaviourist direction by allowing that these processes are often unconscious.

It is when these investigations start to undermine our conception of free will and responsibility that anxieties begin to arise. Several researchers have, however, adhered to Guy Claxton's position that 'It is only with a stance that is as radically sceptical as we can make it that we can hope to pursue a disinterested inquiry into the phenomenology of free will.'[54] Introspection seems to reveal the operation of the will to us unequivocally, but in fact careful and intense introspection has sometimes yielded a more sceptical conclusion, as in the case of William James's attempt to capture the moment at which he decided to get out of bed on a cold morning, described in his *Principles of Psychology*. He is unable to do so: as Susan Pockett reports, 'His repeated observation is that after a prolonged period of procrastination, the action suddenly just happens.'[55] Observations like this are indeed not at all uncommon: not only the practice of skills, but quite deliberate and apparently controlled behaviour can appear in this light when looked at closely. I am not sure that I can account for the occasions on which I have resumed work on this book after a long period of reading and thinking, perhaps a procrastination not very different from James's. While in retrospect it seems plausible to say that I *decided* at various moments that enough was enough, the actual decision is hard to locate.[56] Pockett introspects similarly about the actual process of writing: 'it is my current experience that the undeniably hard work involved in deciding what words to type . . . is also happening preconsciously'.[57] Indeed only something like this could account for the fact that after a day of writing, the most conscious and explicitly rational work imaginable, one can discover that one has drifted entirely off the course one had intended to take.

A widely discussed psychological experiment sought to identify the precise onset of the sensation of intentional action.[58] Benjamin Libet's work takes as its starting point the discovery in the 1960s of electrical events in the brain, detectable using scalp electrodes, which preceded by a relatively constant period—550 milliseconds—the activation of a muscle. This electrical activity was termed 'readiness potential' or RP. Libet sought to discover whether conscious intention to act coincided with this brain activity. To do this, it was necessary to devise a way for subjects to report the timing of conscious intention extremely accurately. Libet did this by having subjects report the

position reached on a 'clock face' by a rotating dot of light at the moment of exercising their will. As the dot rotated on an oscilloscope screen at about twenty-five times the speed of a second hand, each 'second' on the clock face represented an interval of 43 milliseconds. Testing this method using subjects' responses to stimuli showed that a high level of accuracy could be achieved; subjects reporting the timing of the stimulus using the clock face with a delay of only 50 milliseconds.

Libet asked subjects to voluntarily move their hand or finger whenever they wished to, and to record using the rotating dot the time at which they consciously started to act. The surprising result was that the onset of conscious intention, like RP, occurred at a largely constant time before muscle activation—but *later* than the onset of RP. That is, brain events leading to physical movement started before the subject became aware of an intention to move, typically about 0.4 seconds before. Naturally, Libet's findings provoked much discussion. Libet himself was reluctant to abandon a causal role for the conscious will, suggesting that its function was to step in and abort, or alternatively to allow, unconscious initiatives which 'bubbled up' from the brain. Others have been less inhibited.[59]

Under the provocative title *The Illusion of Conscious Will*, Daniel Wegner has produced a large compendium of findings in support of the radical thesis that 'the experience of consciously willing an action is not a direct indication that the conscious thought has caused the action'.[60] These findings include the work of Libet, Bargh, and Wilson, as well as experiments with brain-damaged subjects and investigations of such controversial, or indeed scientifically disreputable, phenomena as spiritualism, dowsing, facilitated communication, and hypnosis.

Spiritualism and dowsing, for instance, when they are not the result of deliberate trickery, involve actions of which the actors are unconscious. Facilitated communication is the practice of obtaining communications from people with severe disorders like autism or cerebral palsy, which otherwise prevent them from communicating, by holding their hands over the keys of a typewriter and translating their supposed subtle finger movements into typed messages. The facilitators disclaim any role in the production of the messages. Wegner notes the similarity with the case of spiritualist messages from the deceased, and reports studies which reveal the contribution of the facilitator to the production of the messages (e.g. by presenting different questions to facilitator and client through headphones), but his point is not to reveal the duplicity of the facilitators but rather the opposite: taking their professions entirely seriously, the example shows how readily circumstances can be created in which knowledge of one's own actions is absent (pp. 195–7).

Just as situations arise in which people are unaware of a contribution to what must be their own action, it is also not difficult to set up situations in which people claim responsibility when they have not in fact acted. In

mirror-box experiments, the subject looks into a box at what seems to be his or her gloved hand, and is asked to perform actions like drawing a straight line. The box contains a mirror positioned so that a confederate's gloved hand appears in the place where the subject's hand is expected to be. When the confederate's hand veers off the straight line, the subject 'corrects' the motion of his or her own hand, perceiving the error as his or her own (pp. 41–2). Studies of people with damage to the structures that enable communications between the two halves of the brain (as a result of surgery to control acute seizures, which severs the *corpus callosum*) show a combination of acting without conscious intention *and* falsely claiming intention. Language ability is usually located in the left hemisphere of the brain, and when this hemisphere is presented with a visual stimulus (by showing it only to the subject's right eye), both the appropriate response (such as pointing to a related image) and the appropriate verbal explanation of the response can be provided. When stimuli are presented to the right hemisphere, which in these cases can no longer communicate with the language centre of the left hemisphere, again the normal response is produced (e.g. if presented with the instruction 'laugh', the subject will laugh). The subject is however unaware of having received the instruction—yet will nevertheless offer a reasonable explanation for the laughter. It is as if the linguistically capable left brain observes what the right brain is doing, and formulates a plausible explanation for it (pp. 181–4).

Wegner suggests that our attribution of causal power to conscious intention is somewhat like our attribution of the results of a magic trick or the movements of the pointer on a Ouija board to occult forces. It is the result of our not grasping what is really going on: 'the mind can't ever know itself well enough to be able to say what the causes of its actions are' (p. 28). We experience a sufficiently frequent conjunction of the exercise of will with the intended action that an inference of causation can be made, but like all such inferences it could be false—will and action could be both the effects of some further cause, for example. Wegner concludes that the conscious mind is like a compass needle, which indicates the ship's course without determining it: 'the experience of consciously willing action occurs as the result of an interpretive system, a course-sensing mechanism that examines the relations between our thoughts and actions and responds with "I willed this" when the two correspond appropriately' (p. 317).

Recipients of the corpus callosotomy or split-brain procedure are of course uncommon, and the same is true of the other kinds of brain damage whose effects on the experience of conscious will are discussed by Wegner. Mirror boxes are only encountered in the psychology laboratory. Hypnotism and spiritualism are not phenomena one encounters every day. However, taken as a whole, a merit of Wegner's synthesis is the way in which it establishes a continuum between experimental findings and observations which, while not altogether normal, are not peculiar to the laboratory, such as blurting out what

one had been trying to keep secret. Taken together, this continuum of cases exemplifies a variety of disruptions of the relationship between will and action assumed by folk psychology, and gives us reason to question it. It shows that psychological research need not be seen as only a contest between experimentation and ordinary experience, since that experience, when looked at closely, itself does not always match up with the expectations of folk psychology. It would be difficult to accept that the findings have no application except to the university students and brain-damaged patients who happened to be their subjects or to settings other than the laboratories in which they were made.

6.5. CONCLUSION

Implications for the understanding of culture are not perhaps the most obvious of the implications of studies such as those of Wilson, Bargh, Libet, and Wegner and their colleagues. Certainly these studies are not aimed at that target, and when culture is mentioned it is as a background condition far from the centre of psychological attention. In Wilson's case, for example, it is the site and source of the 'available' materials which are compiled into articulated attitudes when these are called for, and he refers the matter of culture to sociologists.[61] In so far as these studies focus doubt on the conscious will and on explicit intentionality, they might indeed be said to represent a far more severe problem for rationalistic than for cultural explanations of human action. But when I addressed rational choice theory in Chapter 3 I pointed out that its distance from political culture theory was not as great as proponents of either side have insisted. Only when the explanatory possibilities are constrained as they are by disciplinary boundaries can the 'contest' between rational choice theory and political culture research, as a statistically decidable competition between two different sets of variables, seem decisive. Even in its own terms, rational choice theory has recognized the distinction between 'thick' and 'thin' rationalistic explanations, the former imputing cultural elements such as a pecuniary motive, the latter putting forward an analytical calculus which is explanatorily inert until empirically discovered 'values' are added to it. But with Barry Hindess we can note not just overlap, but a deeper similarity between culturalist and rationalist explanations, namely their joint reliance on what he calls the 'portfolio model' of the actor. Cultural explanation, at any rate when (as in its positivist form) it admits to being an explanation, supposes something 'attitude-like' as the basis of action, whether it be an attitude itself, or a deeper value, value dimension, or value type. In all cases, the attitude-like cause is something intelligible and thus in principle articulable, which is somehow stored in the actor and subject to recall both in spurring action and in accounting for that action.

The psychological studies we have looked at drive a sharp wedge between spurring action and accounting for action, and do not flinch when that wedge pierces deeply held assumptions about the intentionality of human action. It is quite striking that the division created by the wedge aligns closely with the philosophical arguments I examined in Chapter 5. In an attempt to reconcile the polarized individualist and communitarian interpretations of Wittgenstein's philosophy (which was also a critique of philosophy, though not, I argued, a critique of theory in general), I suggested that his argument sought to illuminate both our ability to 'go on' and our ability to 'speak of right', *without* reducing either one to the other, and thus that it had dualistic implications for the ontology of culture. I looked at Polanyi's explicitly dualistic theory of knowledge, finding substantial echoes of Wittgenstein in his discussion of the inarticulate character of skills. Searle too, more overtly following Wittgenstein, distinguished in his work on 'Intentionality' (i.e. the contentful or representational dimension of thought, of which the 'intentional' in the normal sense is a portion) what is capable of discursive representation, the foreground, from a 'Background' on which it and action in general depends. No more than the psychological studies I have described do Wittgenstein, Polanyi, and Searle put forward a theory of culture. But it is plain that their work yields significant implications for such a theory.

In comparison with the duality that these arguments and findings entail for the nature of culture, the contest between cultural and rational choice explanation becomes a sideshow. In Chapter 5 I also relegated the more fundamental dispute between the alternatives of positivism and interpretivism in political culture research to a secondary position. This was indeed already implied by my conclusion in Chapter 2 that interpretivist political culture research and the Geertzian justification of interpretation on which it depends constitute a 'denial' of theory in the pop-psychological sense of that word: an attempted exclusion of something that is in fact insistently present. For Geertz, by the time of his later work, the attempt to explain something was suspect for its 'megalomania'. The 'elephant in the room' denied by interpretivism is that the statement 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' is itself a causal claim, though an obscure and mystified one.

The attempt by Winch, relying on a questionable reading of Wittgenstein, to leave questions of causation in the exclusive care of positivists, and to keep for the separate business of interpretivism the task of discovering the rules prevailing in a society (which allow us to call, for instance, a particular activity 'voting'), is closely parallel to the arguments of the later Geertz (and to those of Chabal and Daloz), though while it has been much discussed by philosophers of social science it has entered far less than Geertz's work did into the actual practice of social scientists. Winch's reading of Wittgenstein is questionable precisely because it neglects one whole side of his argument, which deals with

the source of action as well as with our ability to name it. We certainly do need to have an accurate description of what is going on in an alien culture, and as such a description will inevitably involve a more or less complex mapping of its activities and categories onto ones with which we are already familiar there are considerable risks of misunderstanding. But unless we deal explicitly with causality we shall discover only *that* the people are doing 'X', not why or how.

There is, however, an equally large elephant in positivism's room, and recognizing and expelling it has been the main theme of this chapter. In embracing both reasons and causes as simultaneously its concern, it has assumed that the intelligibility and causal status of reasons coincide. The situating of reasons at psychological depth, as for instance in the Parsonian theory of values, does not alter this assumption, which is shared also with rational choice theory. To evoke the depth of the psychological components of culture Parsons drew on Freud. In any case, Freud's theory too rests on the idea of the articulability (after therapeutic intervention) of the neurotically concealed attitudinal sources of behaviour. Freudian or otherwise, all such theories presume that the intentional source of behaviour can be exposed, whether by psychotherapy, by latent structure analysis, or simply by putting questions in a survey, and its causal relationship with behaviour thereby understood. Whether positivist or interpretive, political culture research shares this programme of making the cultural grounds and source of behaviour transparent.

The coincidence of intelligibility and causality has its model in the idea of a rule, even if we do not accept the rather quick claim that society for Parsons is like a large bureaucracy. But this coincidence of intelligibility and causality in the phenomenon of rule-following is precisely what it is the main thrust of Wittgenstein's philosophy to put into question. He inserts his wedge right at the crucial point: where the articulable rule supposedly dictates our action. The wedge, as I have said, is only driven in more firmly by Polanyi and Searle, and, though their disciplinary starting point is different, by Wilson, Bargh, and Wegner.[62]

The psychological sources, especially Wilson, also give us critical leverage on the *method* of positivist political culture research, in addition to the folk psychology that it assumes; the method, that is, of the attitude survey. The findings of social psychologists substantiate doubts which might already have been provoked by problems in the measurement of attitudes (and were in some cases), had not the operationalist assumptions of survey research converted them into methodological problems requiring purely technical solutions. A large range of counterintuitive findings shows not only, as Polanyi said, that we can know more than we can tell, but also that despite this limitation on our self-knowledge we nevertheless readily 'tell more than we can know'. The evidence shows that we constantly provide for ourselves and

others—for instance, but of course not only, when they administer an attitude survey—what we take to be explanations of our behaviour that are in fact radically incomplete. Such explanations should not be taken at face value, but that is what political culture research does both in its theoretical model and in its method.

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7

The Inertial Dynamics of Political Culture

7.1. INTRODUCTION

In the first four chapters of this book I demonstrated the deficiencies of the existing theory of political culture, and also showed that our need for such a theory is not obviated by either the materialist displacement of culture in favour of interests or class structure or the discursivist deconstruction of culture as an instrument of political domination. In Chapters 5 and 6 I took the first step in building the needed theory, by using both philosophical and psychological resources to look more closely at culture itself than even the most explicit of current approaches, the positivist operationalization of culture as attitudes, had done.

The philosophical perspectives of Wittgenstein and Polanyi, and the social-psychological findings of Wilson, Bargh, Wegner, and others, show a high degree of convergence (though not in all respects a surprising one, since Polanyi is an explicit inspiration for the theorists of dual attitudes). The implication for the theory of culture is that it has been an error to think of culture as an intelligible—that is, cognizable, interpretable, articulable, discursive, propositional, or representational—key to a pattern of behaviour, whether this key be construed in causal or semiotic terms. There is, to use the terminology of an earlier philosophical controversy, a disjuncture between reasons and causes—but this is not properly regarded as the basis for a division of academic labour between explainers and describers, or between positivism and interpretivism. Instead it is culture itself that is dual, consisting on the one hand of behavioural continuities stemming from practical capacities, and on the other of discursively established normative accounts and justifications of behaviour. Our understanding of intentional action may need to be revised in a similar way, discarding the mentalistic precepts of the (so-called, but actually quite unbalanced) 'dualism' promoted by Descartes, in which the mind, charged with 'clear and distinct ideas', is the driver of the machinery of the body, in favour of a more genuine dualism of practice and discourse about our practice. The conventional or folk-psychological view of the self, the Western philosophical tradition epitomized by Descartes, and

the various approaches to culture and political culture, are all placed in a new light by the dualistic arguments I have been exploring.

I have reached far beyond political science in formulating the dualistic ontology of culture, a procedure I take to be justified both by the inherently interdisciplinary nature of the concept of political culture itself, and by an appreciation of the restrictions imposed on the theoretical development of the concept by its disciplinary confinement. In this and the final chapter I return to political science and to the concerns of political culture research. Deploying the dualistic ontology of culture, I will explore the causal dynamics of political culture, a topic which, as I have shown, has never been satisfactorily addressed, for reasons of marginalization, denial, or displacement. The starting point of the argument is that recognizing the practical and discursive dimensions of political culture enables an understanding, and not merely a juxtaposition, of the 'inertial' and 'fluid' dynamics (as I will term them) that have been observed in political culture. In this chapter, I will explore the predominant use of political culture, which is the explanation of political continuity, while in the next I will look at the role of political culture in explaining political change.

It is of course not unprecedented to pay attention to practice for the purpose of political explanation. Marxism itself has been called a 'philosophy of praxis', a designation which, whatever the circumstantial reasons for its use by Gramsci, in the words of Wolfgang Haug 'condenses precisely into a thesis the Archimedean point of Marxian thinking'.[1] Certainly Marx's starting point of the emergence of culture as a 'direct efflux' of 'material behaviour',[2] not to mention the dualistic implications of well-known components of Marxist theory such as base and superstructure, forces of production and relations of production, and true and false consciousness, suggest at least a morphological parallel with the ontology I have advanced. However, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3, Marxism has struggled to retain its focus on the 'material life process', whose messy details have invariably been substituted by class-structural analysis, even when a sustained attempt is made, as it was for instance by Gramsci and by Thompson, to attend to the real experience of work. Later in this chapter I will look at a further attempt to do this, namely Harry Braverman's 'de-skilling thesis'; but I have said enough in Chapter 3 to show why a turn to practice is not equivalent to a return to Marxism.[3]

A more recent, and also quite influential, turn to practice is the work of Pierre Bourdieu. I will explore this among other 'practice turns' in section 7.2. I will show that Bourdieu's 'theory of practice', and others, are, like Marx's, false starts. They have loaded on to the concept of practice all the causal weight that had previously been borne by culture as a whole, forgetting that practice is but one dimension of culture. Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' is an example of such conceptual overloading. I will investigate a powerful critique of 'practice theory' by Stephen Turner which makes just this argument, but overstates it, thus throwing out what is potentially valuable in the study of practice. All of

this amounts to an attempt to clear the ground for my own account of the way that the causal properties of practice contribute to an understanding of the inertial dynamics of political culture.

In order to narrow the concept of practice down to more manageable proportions, I will follow some strong hints (from Wittgenstein) and clear indications (from Polanyi) in the philosophical sources as well as the psychological supports of the dualistic theory of culture and suggest that we might find a productive analytical paradigm for practice in the phenomenon of *skill*. By an *analytical paradigm* I mean both a prototypical instance and a more well-defined resource for further empirical and theoretical development. Skills appear in Wittgenstein's account of rule-following and are of course central to Polanyi's discussion of tacit and articulate knowledge. But skills are not the unanalysable mysteries which Turner suggests the inertial features of practice are. They are susceptible to both ethnographic and psychological analysis, and of course they have been the focus of empirical work motivated by the Marxist concern with the alienation of labour. These ample resources for a more sustained study of the causal dynamics of practice will be the subject of section 7.3.

In section 7.4 I will apply the account thus derived of the causal dynamics of skills to the existing problems of political culture research, showing what it contributes to an understanding of the phenomenon of political-cultural continuity.

7.2. THE THEORY OF PRACTICE

I noted in Chapter 5 the paradoxical position in which a philosophy that seeks to explore the regions beyond articulate thought must find itself. Pascal 'appeal[ed] to reason in order to communicate truths which, on his own showing, are outside its province'. In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein concluded, 'What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence', while in the *Philosophical Investigations* he said that when asking for the grounds of our capacity to follow a rule, we reach bedrock, and our spade is turned. Yet, of course, Pascal did indeed deploy his reason in investigating the workings of the 'heart', and while Wittgenstein did enter a period of silence after publishing the *Tractatus*, his later work constituted a deep exploration of the zone in which our spade is turned. As I argued in Chapter 5 in relation to the omni-sceptical interpretation of Wittgenstein presented by Nigel Pleasants, it is the spade of *philosophy* that is turned, indeed more precisely the spade of the main tradition of Western philosophy. The zone beyond may nevertheless be investigated with other resources, once the important philosophical step of admitting its existence is taken.

The range of material placed under the label 'practice' by both proponents of 'practice theory' and its critics has been vary large. The broad scope of practice theory has at times threatened to turn it into an alternative theory of culture, when it becomes vulnerable to critique of the kind I have been making, when practices should properly be seen as a component of a dual ontology of culture. In the ever-rotating social sciences, a 'practice turn' has recently been announced,[4] but it was of course preceded by Marx's turn in the same direction, as well as by a substantial programme of research by Pierre Bourdieu, including two theoretical monographs.[5] Bourdieu's work will be my first topic in this section. I will then look briefly at the recent surge of interest in 'practical wisdom', an 'Aristotelian turn' (not the first of those either) in social science under the leadership of Bent Flyvbjerg. Finally, as a counterpoint, I will assess Stephen Turner's forceful and sweeping critique of the 'theory of practices'. What all of these positions have in common, I will argue, is the overloading of the concept of practice. This finding is an incentive to undertaking a more focused examination of the phenomenon I will pick out as an analytical paradigm of practice, namely skills.

Bourdieu's much-lauded work (which one writer has described as 'the only game in town' in the sociology of culture in the late twentieth century, and which includes a study, *Distinction*, which a survey of French sociologists found to be one of the three greatest books in sociology, alongside *Suicide* and *The Protestant Ethic*)[6] begins at a familiar place, with a desire to transcend the contradiction in social science between 'subjectivism' and 'objectivism'. Parsons attempted the same thing, we recall. Bourdieu's understanding of the alternatives is coloured by the Francophone philosophical context, as for him 'objectivism' is represented above all by Lévi-Straussian cultural structuralism, and subjectivism by the phenomenological and existentialist current of thought represented by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. In addition, Bourdieu, like Foucault, was reacting against Marxism—which, in France, had taken a cultural-structuralist turn.

Bourdieu begins his attempt to transcend this dichotomy with a promising move, recognizing, with explicit reference to Wittgenstein, that practice, or practical knowledge, cannot be derived from rules. In language that evokes both Wittgenstein and Polanyi, he writes of the mistake of the anthropologist who

> is condemned to adopt unwittingly for his own use the representation of action which is forced on agents or groups when they lack practical mastery of a highly valued competence and have to provide themselves with an explicit and at least semi-formalized substitute for it in the form of a *repertoire of rules*.[7]

Bourdieu moves immediately to head off the possible 'subjectivist' implication of his critique: that it mandates a focus on the consciousness or 'lived experience' of the sociological or anthropological subject. This 'naive humanism'

fails to 'pose the question of the (theoretical and also social) conditions which make such [practical] knowledge possible'.[8] The subject's point of view fails to recognize these conditions, indeed systematically 'misrecognizes' them, so that any social science built on its foundation must be radically incomplete. It will indeed risk again the substitution of accounts for practices, for the native's accounts are no more able than the observer's to bridge the gap between discourse and practical mastery.

This twin critique of objectivism and subjectivism is encapsulated in Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. The following passage makes clear the use Bourdieu wishes to make of this term:

> The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition), produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.[9]

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu writes:

> The habitus, an objective relationship between two objectivities, enables an intelligible and necessary relation to be established between practices and a situation, the meaning of which is produced by the habitus through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves produced by an observable social condition.[10]

Or, more simply, 'different conditions of existence produce different habitus'.[11]

Habitus, then, encapsulates both an emphasis on practical knowledge which invalidates objectivism, and the derivation of that knowledge from the environment that produces it, which—as the derivation is unknown to the possessors of habitus—must also invalidate subjectivism. This one concept, then, expresses Bourdieu's claim to have transcended the duality between subjectivism and objectivism, and thus captures the distinctiveness of his theory of practice.

As an 'objective relationship between two objectivities' (namely physical activity and the situation in which it takes place), habitus simultaneously does the work both of a Parsonian theory of values and of a Marxist structural theory of class. Where Parsons speaks of introjection, internalization, and socialization, Bourdieu speaks of 'disposition inculcated in the earliest years of life', of 'immanent law . . . laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing'.[12] Of course we lack from Parsons any psychological substantiation of this

mechanism; but the lack is precisely as great in Bourdieu. And where Marx and later Marxists have supposed the true consciousness of the worker to involve a recognition of the reality of class society, Bourdieu is no less confident that class is the ultimate reality: 'The objective homogenizing of group or class habitus which results from the homogeneity of the conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized.' Bourdieu is indeed unembarrassed to invoke, as a gloss on his explanation of the uniformity of class habitus, Leibniz's metaphor of two timepieces which agree in their timekeeping not thanks to constant readjustment but by virtue of the precision of their manufacture.[13]

The theory of habitus thus does not transcend the opposition between, but merely combines, the Parsonian theory of early socialization and Marxist class structuralism,[14] though the combination of course deprives the residual Marxism of its dynamic content, entailing the endless reproduction of class-structured society.[15] The Wittgensteinian starting point of the theory of practice is overloaded by this explanatory burden. Instead of serving as a critique of explanations that invoke rules and the objective dictates of 'conditions', Bourdieu's theory of habitus fully embraces them. Bourdieu has therefore moved a great distance from Wittgenstein's arguments on rule-following and Polanyi's against objectivism.[16] The deviation is the consequence of using a theory of practice to serve the purpose of existing theory, rather than to question it.

A different way of overloading the theory of practice is found in the recent promotion of an 'Aristotelian' mode of political analysis by Bent Flyvbjerg.[17] Flyvbjerg's aim is to make Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* or, as it is usually translated, 'practical wisdom' the basis of political science and political action too, seeing it as a way of overcoming the dichotomy of positivism and interpretivism. He provides a useful elucidation of the concept of skill; my question, however, is how that key concept relates to *phronesis*.

Flyvbjerg reads Aristotle's *phronesis* as a middle term between *episteme* or 'analytical, scientific knowledge' and *techne*, 'technical knowledge or know-how'.[18] Remanding to specialists the question of the accuracy of this reading of Aristotle (who in some places introduces five categories of thought, not three),[19] it is certainly the case that the tripartite analysis of Aristotle's theory of knowledge has become influential. The question then is whether a ternary or instead a binary or dualistic analysis of knowledge, such as Polanyi's distinction of the tacit and articulate dimensions, is most useful for our purposes.

Within a ternary division there are of course two binary divisions. The 'upper' of these in Aristotle's schema, that between scientific knowledge and practical wisdom, has echoes both in Polanyi's discussion of tacit knowledge and subsidiary awareness, and in Wittgenstein's argument for the non-exhaustiveness of rules for the direction of practice. It is however at the

other boundary within the ternary schema that we encounter a difficulty, for the schema distinguishes practical wisdom not only ('upwards') from systematic knowledge, but also ('downwards') from matters we might also call 'practical', namely the employment of skill in making things. Aristotle is explicit here: 'action and production are generically different'.[20] Thus at the same time as he dislodges systematic knowledge from its pedestal in favour of practical wisdom, Aristotle also derogates the literally practical. We might therefore detect in Aristotle's view of practice, as Richard Sennett has done, a 'portent of the artisan's darkening fortunes' in philosophy,[21] a decline in fortunes that was not reversed until Marx, and even then with mixed results.

Wittgenstein's observations on rule-following, and Polanyi's on the necessity of knowledge that remains tacit, in fact provide a case against the substitution of practice by 'practical wisdom', for the latter suggests wisdom in the choice of a course of action rather than wisdom that is inherent *in* action. The concept of *phronesis* dissolves the gap between practice and discourse—between, in Wittgenstein's terms, 'knowing how to go on' and 'giving reasons', or between, in Polanyi's terms, tacit and articulate knowledge. There is therefore some risk that a return to Aristotle will deprive us of the most original parts of the 'practice' philosophies of Wittgenstein and Polanyi. Aristotelianism displaces practice in favour of the exercise of judgement, thus intellectualizing it.

The difficulties that arise from overloading the concept of practice can be illustrated in a contrasting but complementary way by looking at Stephen Turner's critique of what he calls the 'social theory of practices'.[22] Much of the difficulty which Turner identifies in this 'theory' stems in fact from his own drastic overloading of the category, for within it he includes tradition, paradigm, presupposition, *Weltanschauung*, and *mentalité*, as well as culture itself. These members of what he calls the 'practice family' of explanations are all, he suggests, merely 'more contemporary metaphors' than Durkheim's outmoded 'group mind' (p. 115).

Turner's objection to the 'practice family' is that the advocates of its numerous variants 'wish to have a causal notion, because only a causal notion can be an endpoint, a "basis", and they wish for it to be a premiss-like thing, because only if people do not share basic premisses is there relativistic disagreement' (p. 123). There can certainly exist, Turner accepts, practice in the immediate sense of a pattern of behaviour, or regularities in behaviour over time and space. What is objectionable is the suggestion that practice can constitute an explanation. Cultural difference exists, but an error is made when we look for something 'deeper' to explain it.

For Turner, the 'theory of practices' is caught in a contradiction generated by the insistence on both the hiddenness of the cultural background and its commonality: the idea that 'the same thing can be "grasped", on the analogy of a physical thing held in the hands, by various people simultaneously, but . . . is

tacit or in some way not reducible to explicit formulation' (p. 56). The problem is that 'unless the hidden thing can be converted into and out of overt conduct by the transmitter and the receptor, it cannot be conveyed' (p. 45). The putative mechanisms for such transmission, needed to ensure the commonality of the cultural background, are usually explained as some kind of unconscious analogue of conscious processes such as teaching or training. But, Turner suggests, reliance on 'such dubieties as introjection and unconscious imitation' does not get us any further: they are 'inconsistent with everything we know about causal processes in other domains' (pp. 48, 53).

Turner's critique has much in common with the one I made in Chapter 5 of the combination in political culture research of intelligibility and causality. The oddity is that Turner conceives of it as a critique of the theory of *practices*, when it is actually a critique of the explanatory use of *culture*. The study of practice of the sort undertaken by Wittgenstein and Polanyi, I have shown, would precisely *support* his criticism of cultural explanation. His mistake is to take the theory of practice as the entirety of a theory of culture, when it is properly viewed as a part of it. However, his critique does provide a warning against any temptation simply to substitute a theory of practice for a theory of culture, which is just what Bourdieu does. Such an overburdened theory of practice only adds yet another entry in the study of culture to the numerous 'different kinds of scans of the beast, each of which cannot be improved beyond a certain level of fuzziness, and each of which gives somewhat different and inconsistent or difficult-to-integrate pictures' (p. 116).

Turner's conclusion is that we need to scale back our theoretical expectations. We should accept instead a less ambitious view based on what we can actually see of cultural difference and cultural persistence, which Turner analyses in terms of the phenomena of *habit* and *emulation*, or behavioural regularities and observable means of behavioural transmission. We venture into defective analogical reasoning whenever we try to understand their 'inner causal structure' because 'there is no collective causal object to understand'. Theory is therefore strictly limited in its usefulness: 'We deal with the habits we are trying to understand as though through a fog' (p. 113).

This conclusion is unduly sceptical, baulking at the point where the early Wittgenstein did when he said we should 'remain silent'. In fact, with a narrower specification of practice, not inflated so that it embraces the whole of culture but understood as one of the two dimensions which give rise to the duality of culture, we can discover much more than a 'fog'. Indeed, even if we were to follow Turner's own suggestions and look at 'habit' and 'emulation', we would find that these are by no means incapable of further investigation. 'Habit' was the key term in the pragmatic philosophy advanced by John Dewey in *Human Nature and Conduct*, and has been discussed as well by Marcel Mauss.[23] Dewey derived his concept of habit from his experience of the Alexander Technique of postural training, about which he later remarked:

> to find that one is unable to execute directions, including inhibitory ones, in doing such a seemingly simple act as to sit down, when one is using all the mental capacity which one prides oneself upon possessing, is not an experience congenial to one's vanity. But it may be conducive to analytic study of causal conditions, obstructive and positive.[24]

He chose the term 'habit' to describe the capacity involved in correct posture on the grounds that

> we need a word to express that kind of human activity which is influenced by prior activity and in that sense acquired; which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematization of minor elements of action; which is projective, dynamic in quality, ready for overt manifestation; and which is operative in some subdued subordinate form even when not obviously dominating activity.[25]

We are thus by no means enveloped in an analytic fog, or forced to remain silent, when we imagine that behavioural continuities might be explained by habit. But more fruitful as an analytical paradigm is the phenomenon of skill. The relative disadvantage of the concept of habit is that it is easier to think of habits as 'mechanical', turning them into an impediment that needs to be overcome. Dewey indeed made this shift: 'All habit-forming involves the beginning of an intellectual specialization which if unchecked ends in thoughtless action . . . [which] is called absent-mindedness.'[26] In the next section I therefore turn to the phenomenon of skilled practice, and draw on a variety of sources to develop an account of the causal properties and political significance of skills.

7.3. THE DYNAMICS OF SKILLS

One set of resources for the exploration of the analytical paradigm of skills is cognitive and applied psychology. We do not of course find in cognitive and applied psychology a singular approach to the analysis of skills or indeed a single view of what they actually are. A substantial literature exists, and it is a task beyond the scope of the present chapter to explore it exhaustively. Still, some idea of the range and direction of approaches can be given, and pointers extracted for the conceptualization of skills, and their dynamics, in the context of political culture theory. The psychological study of skills is in fact beset by a number of divisions which it would be desirable to overcome, perhaps the most basic of which is that between laboratory and field-based studies. Proponents of the former decry the lack of rigour they find in the latter, while conversely, as I discussed in Chapter 6, the problem of 'external validity' is frequently pointed out by critics of laboratory methods.

A review by Carole Myers and Keith Davids notes that laboratory and field studies have tended to operationalize tacit skills in somewhat different ways, the former emphasizing the informality of skills, that is, their acquisition through experiential learning rather than explicit instruction, while field studies have focused on the question of the inarticulability of skills.[27] These respective emphases obviously make sense in terms of the investigative resources available in each approach, but it is important not to lose sight of the linkage between informality and inarticulability established in the concept of skill itself. Myers and Davids suggest that findings have converged on the claim that experiential learning is often vital in workplace settings and that its possessors are not able to express it clearly. For example, 'Substantial problems have been encountered in attempts to elicit knowledge from experts, as much of what they know appears inarticulable and tacitly understood.'[28]

Another distinction in need of overcoming is that between 'intellectual' and more physical or 'perceptual-motor' skills. This distinction is interesting in view of the effort of Polanyi to extend the reach of analysis in terms of skills into complex intellectual productions such as science.[29] In a review, David Rosenbaum et al. define as intellectual 'a skill whose goal is symbolic' like solving mathematical problems, playing chess, or writing books, and as perceptual-motor 'a skill whose goal is non-symbolic', such as playing the violin or boxing.[30]

Much seems to support the distinction, in terms for example of the respective degree of complexity, the generality or transferability, and the articulability, of the two categories of skills. But Rosenbaum et al. report research which challenges each of these common-sense distinctions. Intellectual skills, such as mathematical ones, are not as easily transferred to seemingly similar problems as is assumed, and conversely perceptual-motor skills can be transferred, such as writing under radically different physical conditions, 'even when the pen is held between one's toes or teeth'.[31] While there may be rules governing intellectual skill such as language use, these are not necessarily the basis of learning, and conversely, perceptual-motor learning is not the acquisition of a simple reflex (Dewey's mechanical habit): subjects can for example 'learn' a mathematical function relating the length of a displayed line to the duration of a button press. Articulability is limited in both kinds of case. 'Learning curves' for intellectual and perceptual-motor skills are parallel, with improvements in performance tailing off over time in a 'remarkably similar' way across the different kinds of skills, even for activities such as writing science fiction novels (few writers are sufficiently prolific for a learning curve to be discernible, but Isaac Asimov provides an example in a much-cited paper by Ohlsson).[32]

Rosenbaum et al.'s survey ends with a warning against the intellectualist bias with which we usually evaluate bodily skills: 'We have verbal intelligence that makes it easier for us to describe verbal intelligence than to describe nonverbal intelligence, but we must be careful not to conclude from this that

perceptual-motor skills are inferior to their intellectual counterparts.'[33] It is a warning that we might read much more widely than the authors intend, for we have seen that an intellectualist bias colours both mainstream positivist and alternative interpretivist usage of political culture, and could be said to characterize the philosophical tradition against which Wittgenstein and Polanyi reacted.

A final distinction of interest to us is that between 'general' or transferable and 'domain-specific' skills. This distinction, if it is valid, represents a potential limit on the dynamic potential of skills. Evidence for it is provided by experiments such as the 'alphabet arithmetic' experiment of Logan and Klapp, in which subjects learned the skill of doing simple arithmetic with letters from the first half of the alphabet having the value A = 1, B = 2, etc. The skill did not readily transfer to a new but similar task, in which letters N, O, P, etc. were used instead. Closer analysis, however, has suggested that even in this narrowly defined task, *some* transfer did take place, and that general and specific skills are not so clearly distinguished.[34]

This result has implications for the larger question of the adequacy of laboratory methods, for it raises the possibility that the theories of skills which psychologists produce are rather narrowly tailored to the specific skilled tasks they invent, perhaps not adequately representing the interaction of skills in the real world. As Craig Speelman and Kim Kirsner have put it in a comprehensive critique of cognitive-psychological analyses of skill, 'It is difficult to avoid the impression that Psychology is a science with as many subareas as there are tasks that can be developed for research participants to perform.'[35] A somewhat 'just so' or circular quality is apparent in many of the resulting theories, which posit various psychic mechanisms to explain the results without explaining how these mechanisms come to exist in the first place.[36] Even so, Speelman and Kirsner are far from advocating the abandonment of laboratory methods on the grounds of their limited external validity.[37] Instead they make the eminently reasonable suggestion that more effort be devoted by cognitive psychologists to integrating their theories of skills, and themselves propose a theory in which skill acquisition and transfer is restored to the central place in psychology which it lost when the baby of learning theory was thrown out with the bathwater of behaviourism.[38]

A study from the opposite side of the methodological divide between laboratory and field studies, indeed from the opposing pole at which cultural psychology is located, converges with Speelman and Kirsner at least in asserting the centrality of the concept of skilled practice for psychology. In a monograph which has given rise to a substantial programme of research, Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger argue against cognitive theories of skills in terms strikingly reminiscent of Polanyi: 'Painting a picture of the person as a primarily "cognitive" entity tends to promote a nonpersonal view of knowledge, skills, tasks, activities and learning.'[39] Such theories (Anderson's ACT

theory would be a good example: see n. 36) propose 'internalized' mental contents as the cause of skilled practice, and in Lave and Wenger's view thereby neglect the fact that skilled practice is situated in 'communities of practice' from which it is acquired in a process they term 'legitimate peripheral participation'.

Like Polanyi, Lave and Wenger turn to the phenomenon of apprenticeship; however they avoid some of the politically conservative implications of doing so (as Polanyi did not)[40] by insisting both on the universality of apprenticeship (against the view that it is a generally outmoded and vanishing form of learning) and on its wide variability, so that it is not 'always and everywhere organized in the same ways as in feudal Europe'.[41] Power relations are still involved in the acquisition of skills, as their term 'legitimate peripheral participation' implies, but not always on the binary model of the master–apprentice relationship. Apprentices, they suggest, learn as often from each other as from masters, so that 'communities of practice may well develop interstitially and informally [even] in coercive workplaces'.[42] Lave and Wenger's largely ethnographic approach (drawing on ethnographies of Mayan midwives, Liberian tailors, US Navy quartermasters, US supermarket butchers, and recovering alcoholics) shows that skill is developed *in* practice: 'It involves a prereflective grasp of complex situations, which might be reported as a propositional description, but is not one itself.'[43]

The attempt by cognitive psychologists to identify a 'schema' or other mental content as the source of skilful practice has something in common with the programme of Artificial Intelligence (AI) research, and it is not surprising that criticism of this programme has also produced emphasis on, and empirical discussion of, skills. While in principle the achievements of AI research only provide a simulation of human capacity, if a good simulation were achieved it would inevitably suggest itself as an account of the human capacity itself. The early years of AI research were characterized by bold prognoses of future success based on relatively simple simulations of human capacity in limited domains. In their critique, Hubert Dreyfus and Stuart Dreyfus insisted on the problem of scaling up these achievements, using a Wittgensteinian argument:

> The sort of rules human beings are able to articulate always contain *ceteris paribus* conditions, that is, the rules are applicable 'everything else being equal'. What 'everything else' and 'equal' mean in any specific situation, however, can never be fully spelled out since one can only give further rules with further *ceteris paribus* conditions.[44]

Thus we are able to go on precisely because we do not rely on fully articulate rules. Because computer programs consist of such rules, an adequate computer simulation of human capacity would be impossible, and the attempt of AI researchers to extract 'the jewels of knowledge out of [experts'] heads

one by one' would be not only a 'critical bottleneck in artificial intelligence', as one of its proponents admitted, but a permanent barrier: when there is skilled practice, these jewels no longer exist.[45]

Dreyfus and Dreyfus's analysis of skill acquisition, which they arrive at inductively (as they put it) by studying 'the skill acquisition process of airplane pilots, chess players, automobile drivers, and adult learners of a second language' (unfortunately no details of these studies are provided), suggests a five-stage process.[46] The 'novice' follows 'context-free' instructions, such as those which determine when to exchange pieces in chess on the basis of a formula equating each piece with a numerical value. The 'advanced beginner' has learned to respond to contextual cues, but is not able to spell out how. 'Competence' arises when sequences of action are integrated into a plan; it requires selectivity among the cues offered by the situation. 'Proficiency' arises when the choice of a plan of action itself becomes automatic: the whole situation is appreciated on the basis of unspecifiable skills. Finally, the 'expert' acts completely fluently, as a martial arts expert reports: 'There is no choosing. It happens unconsciously, automatically, naturally.'[47] The argument is thus the Polanyian one that distinguishes focal from subsidiary awareness and articulate from tacit knowledge.[48]

What might we conclude from the various empirical investigations of skilled practice just sampled? Cognitive psychology has understood the dynamics of skills in terms of the two processes of skill acquisition and skill transfer. Theories of the former have sought to account for the power-law shape of the learning curve, while regarding the latter distinctions as to the transferability of various skills have been suggested. But the laboratory methods of cognitive psychology, as some of its exponents have admitted,[49] have tended to miss the wood for the trees, designing experiments that isolate skills and examine artificial tasks, producing discrete lines of research that fail to coalesce. In this profusion of findings one can lose contact with the duality which first invoked the phenomenon of skilled practice, the Wittgensteinian and Polanyian finding that 'A schema cannot explain its own use, manipulation, or role in future improvisations.'[50] There is a risk of reprising the error identified by Turner, of looking for the hidden mental thing which everyone involved in a practice shares but no one can express. And this would be to replicate in the study of skills what Parsonian social theory did in the study of social action generally, which we saw led to an endless search for what was simultaneously deep and articulable: attitudes, values, value types, and so on.

Skills represent a barrier to that kind of explanation. It is the barrier that constitutes the duality of culture. But we do not have to abandon the project of theory in the face of that barrier. In fact there are clear theoretical implications for political culture of the phenomenon of skilled practice. These may be summarized under the expression *adaptive inertia*.

Firstly we should remind ourselves of the fact that skills are acquired in practice. Emphasis in experimental psychology on the shape of the learning curve, which depicts the tailing off of the rate of improvement of skilled practice towards an asymptote, distracts attention somewhat from the more fundamental fact that acquisition of a skill is a lengthy process, moving through phases of the sort described by Dreyfus and Dreyfus. No short cut to the acquisitions of a skill through the applications of a code, a rule, or a schema exists: by definition, skill is resistant to this mode of learning, or to put the point more fully, such learning itself necessarily involves and rests upon tacit skills.

The acquisition of skill is a modification in the bodily capacity of the possessor. To say this is not of course to deny that skills can be intellectual; that use of language is as much a skill as is the use of a probe to examine a cavity. But this is a distinction of which too much can be made. In both cases, there is in the acquisition of skill an absorption of the initially alien tool into the dispositional capability of the person; in Polanyi's terms, awareness of it shifts from focal to subsidiary, or as Lave and Wenger put it, the 'mediating technology' becomes invisible, like a window which one sees through but fails to see.[51]

Hence skills provide resources for new activity. They are more than mere habit, though they may be acquired through repeated and repetitive practice. To be sure, they may continue 'automatically', but as an aspect of personal capacity they are available for deployment in new tasks. Recalling Rosenbaum et al.'s concluding observation, our articulate treatment of the necessarily inarticulate pushes us either to misrepresent it as articulate, or to marginalize it in favour of something else that is articulate, in which case we may call it habit. Skills are not just matters of simple reflex but are continuous with, and already contain, an element of flexibility and adaptability, which up to limits which vary in detail can be generalized beyond the immediate setting (for instance, expertise in the use of one particular machine) to a broader one (for instance, expertise in the rhythms of a large production process). The 'touch' or 'feel' that the skilled person demonstrates in his or her action already involves constant adaptation to new cases. The employment of skill is not a matter of 'mechanical habit', although we are in danger of disregarding the bodily nature of skill if we understand its adaptive capacity in terms of 'choice'. Skilled practice already includes the capacity for a degree of innovation and improvisation, the extension of old practice to new settings. It is a set of resources—though we may again err if we think of this as a mere 'tool kit' from which practices are consciously selected, for to think this way is to forget that the application of skill is itself a matter of skill.[52]

7.4. SKILLS AND POLITICAL CULTURE: RESISTANCE, PERSISTENCE, AND ADAPTIVE INERTIA

It remains to indicate the relevance and application of the analytical paradigm of skills to the explanatory tasks of political culture. So far as its predominant use in the explanation of restraint and limits on political change is concerned, two aspects of political-cultural statics can be illuminated by looking at the phenomenon of skills: the aspect of resistance and the aspect of persistence. These aspects are of course related, but they are nevertheless separable; in the study of communist states, for example, the question of the degree and nature of resistance to communist rule is related but not identical to the question of the persistence of pre-communist forms of behaviour under communism, or the persistence of communist forms of behaviour under post-communism. I will address the problem of resistance, in subsection 7.4.1, by looking at an already political focus on the phenomenon of skills, namely the discussion of skilled labour by Marxists. In subsection 7.4.2 I will look at political-cultural persistence in terms of the adaptive inertia already derived from the skills paradigm.

7.4.1. Resistance: De-Skilling and the Limits of Control

The inherently political character of the duality of practice and discourse has already been outlined. We can recognize the political character of skills, in particular (and quite easily too), by looking at the attention which Marxists have devoted to the problem of skill in labour. It is true, as Kostas Axelos has pointed out, that Marx is more specific about the alienating effects of capitalism on labour than on the nature of unalienated labour: Marx 'offers only a very brief definition of man; he asserts certain things about his being, posits his essence, and goes on to talk at length about the alienation of man, the ruined manifestations of his being, the betrayals of his essence'.[53] Yet from Marx's 'negativity-structured polemic', as Axelos calls it, we can infer that skilled work is among the conditions that are destroyed by capitalist mechanization and the division of labour: 'the division of labour makes [the worker] more and more one-sided and dependent, introducing competition from machines as well as from men. Since the worker has been reduced to a machine, the machine can confront him as a competitor.'[54]

The process of the degradation of labour so powerfully described by Marx did not remain a central focus of attention for Marxists. Perhaps it was taken for granted; perhaps apparent improvements in the material conditions of labour reduced their rhetorical significance; or perhaps (as I have argued) attention simply shifted to class analysis, which *by definition* placed the workers in a position of subordination, whatever their empirical conditions

of work might be. But the attention of Marxists was powerfully returned to the themes addressed by Marx in his earliest work by Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism*.[55]

The extraction of surplus value from the workers, which was the expression in Marx's mature work (part IV of *Capital* in particular) of what he had called alienation in his earlier work, had a clear implication for Braverman: 'Like a rider who uses reins, bridle, spurs, carrot, whip, and training from birth to impose his will, the capitalist strives, through management, to *control*' (p. 47). Through the 'detailed division of labour', that is, the subdivision of tasks into their most elemental components, and mechanization, capitalism 'systematically destroys all-round skills where they exist, and brings into being skills and occupations that correspond to its needs' (p. 57). The process is one of degradation and dehumanization of the worker, and of the more rigid separation of the design and conception of labour from its execution: 'The production units operate like a hand, watched, corrected, and controlled by a distant brain' (p. 86).

Braverman's main topic is F. W. Taylor's programme of 'scientific management' and later managerial techniques influenced by it. For Braverman, 'It is impossible to overstate the importance of the scientific management movement in the shaping of the modern corporation and indeed all institutions of capitalist society which carry on labor processes'; it may (in the words of Peter Drucker) be 'the most powerful as well as the most lasting contribution America has made to Western thought since the Federalist Papers'; and if we now hear less about Taylorism than in its heyday, this is, Braverman says, because 'it is no longer the property of a faction, since its fundamental teachings have become the bedrock of all work design' (pp. 60–1). Taylorism is distilled by Braverman, on the basis of Taylor's own frank programmatic statements, into three principles: 'the dissociation of the labor process from the skills of the workers'; 'the separation of conception from execution'; and 'the use of [a] monopoly over knowledge to control each step of the labor process and its mode of execution' (pp. 77–83; emphasis removed).

Braverman's thesis of 'de-skilling', as it has become known, had a huge impact in Marxist circles (called 'Bravermania' by some),[56] in part because it seemed to return Marxism to its materialist roots. It is empirically compelling in that there can be few employees (including, as Braverman did, 'white collar' employees—university lecturers for instance) who have not felt the dehumanizing losses Braverman describes under the pressure of their managers to increase productivity. Indeed it is in 'white collar' settings that the closest modern equivalents of Taylorism can now be found: the 'auditing' procedures described by Michael Power as a concomitant of marketization and competition.[57]

It would therefore miss Braverman's point to say that Taylorism is now passé, and that the examples he gives at length of the minute measurement

of 'time and motion' at work now appear somewhat risible. A more valid objection would be that Braverman's denunciation of 'monopoly capitalism' goes well beyond what his evidence from the workplace would support;[58] but this does not touch on his analysis of de-skilling itself. But that analysis, if valid, would present a significant difficulty for the thesis of the duality of culture, and particularly for the selection of skills as an analytical paradigm of practice: for what Braverman describes is a process of the elimination of skills. Conversely, the thesis of the duality of culture, if valid, represents a challenge to the very possibility of de-skilling, in the comprehensive way in which Braverman describes it. The issue thus becomes a crucial one for the argument of this book.

A theoretical pointer to a more dialectical understanding of the problem of skills than Braverman's is offered by Cornelius Castoriadis: 'Capitalism can function only by continually drawing upon the genuinely *human* activity of those subject to it, while at the same time trying to level and dehumanize them as much as possible.'[59] But we will do better to maintain an empirical focus. A partial response to Braverman was made on the basis of ethnographic study by Michael Burawoy. For him, 'The defining essence of the capitalist labor process is the simultaneous obscuring and securing of surplus value.'[60] Managerial coercion, emphasized by Braverman, would fail to obscure its own operation, and workers' acquiescence would become inexplicable. Consent is manufactured, he suggests, in the workplace itself.

It is achieved precisely through the incompleteness of the managers' control of the workers, and the cession to them of a degree of autonomy, the possibility of their producing less than the demanded maximum. This slackness in control allows a zone of agency for the workers, in which 'goldbricking' and other forms of interstitial resistance to management demands could take place. Yet this very resistance is what Burawoy identifies as the source of consent, for such 'game-playing' takes place within a framework set by management. Since 'one cannot both play the game and at the same time question the rules', 'participating in the choices capitalism forces us to make also generates consent to its rules, its norms'.[61]

Burawoy's response remains partial, and not decisive for the question of skills, because it implicitly accepts Braverman's argument that skills could in principle be dispensed with, even though that would be politically inadvisable. A study by Tony Manwaring and Stephen Wood makes a case against both Braverman and Burawoy with explicit reference to Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge.[62] Manwaring and Wood suggest that skills have three 'dimensions'. The first is the performance of 'routine' tasks which involve 'a process of internalizing patterned movements and reduced awareness'. Secondly, in 'unfamiliar situations for which existing routines are inadequate' Manwaring and Wood suggest the role of 'strategic choice', giving the example of '"Tricks of the trade" such as workers using cigarette papers as wedges in machines in

which parts have been worn down'. Thirdly, the integrated nature of the production process requires 'cooperative skills', such as 'friendliness, "mucking in", timekeeping, and obedience'.[63]

The term 'strategic choice' may (as I have already suggested; see n. 52) be misplaced in a theory of skills. For it is, as Manwaring and Wood go on to say, an aspect of skill 'that the operators learn the idiosyncracies [*sic*] of their individual machines';[64] that is, that the unexpected is absorbed into the routine. It is the essence of skill that conscious choice does not have to be made in applying it: when it is, that is the potential *starting* point of skill acquisition (the skill, for instance, of fixing loose joints with cigarette papers). We might recall here Bargh's demonstration of the automaticity even of goal-directed behaviour, discussed in Chapter 6. But this observation aside, Manwaring and Wood's debt to Polanyi is clear, as is the implication of their argument for our understanding of the experience of the workplace. They reject Braverman's notion that a de-skilled workforce is even conceivable, echoing Gramsci's observation that 'Little manufacturing and working secrets . . . practiced by [the] labor force, which in themselves seem insignificant, can, when repeated an infinite number of times, assume immense economic importance.'[65] Skills, they argue, are inherent in all labour, as Polanyi said tacit knowledge is inherent in all knowledge. This provides one way of understanding culture as a 'direct efflux' of material life.

The sequence of argument from Braverman to Manwaring and Wood gives us a clear view of the politics of practice and the political-cultural resistance inherent in the phenomenon of skilled work. To be sure, capitalism has led to various forms of degradation of labour, and 'de-skilling' is an aspect of this. The Taylorist programme is a prime illustration, and we can find analogues of it in our present 'post-industrial' capitalist society. One does not need the help of Foucault to recognize the political content, in terms of an aspiration to control, of such programmes. But neither Marx, nor Braverman, nor Foucault give us much help in understanding the limits the programme of de-skilling necessarily faces. It leaves gaps—and not just as a product of clever strategy, allowing managers to 'manufacture consent'—but because limits to control by rules and overt procedures are ontologically ineliminable. When such gaps can be identified—as they have been in even the most coercive of labour environments, namely the 'taut planning' environment of Soviet industrialization under Stalin's five-year plans[66]—the theoretical limits of de-skilling become obvious, as do their political implications.

7.4.2. Persistence: The Distinctiveness of Post-Communism

When they were more numerous than they are now, communist states were, as I noted in Chapter 1, a major site of political-cultural analysis, and indeed a

'test case' for political culture research. The issue in this test case was how far the communist regimes had succeeded in 'remaking' the respective political cultures. A difficulty arose from the impossibility in most cases of undertaking surveys or relying on those carried out by the communist authorities, and for this reason a 'behavioural' definition of political culture was sometimes proposed, as by Robert Tucker who drew for this purpose on the arguments of Clifford Geertz. This 'behavioural' approach, however, had little to do with ethnography, and still less with the close attention to practice which a dualistic theory of culture suggests. It tended towards the synoptic appraisal of a country's whole historical trajectory, and when the question was raised about what political culture should specifically be said to be, other than history itself, it retreated to the mainstream idea that it is the values transmitted from generation to generation.[67]

There were, however, proposals for the study of political culture in communist states which came closer to the approach I am recommending. Ken Jowitt, for instance, defined political culture as 'the set of informal, adaptive postures—behavioral and attitudinal—that emerge in response to and interact with the set of formal definitions . . . that characterize a given level of society'.[68] The definition remains somewhat undifferentiated, but it does point towards a view of political culture that avoids the crude alternatives of totalitarian brainwashing and cultural impenetrability that tended to dominate analysis of communist efforts at political-cultural change. Several writers, though without using the concept of political culture, undertook the ethnographic investigations that this perspective suggests, again suggesting that political culture under communism demonstrated adaptation more than it did either resistance or mindless conformity. Wayne DiFranceisco and Zvi Gitelman, for instance, examined the prevalence of *blat*, 'pull' or 'connections', in Soviet life, while Alexander Zinoviev described the 'negative competition' in which those who sought to get ahead in the Soviet hierarchy were forced to engage, involving denunciation of competitors and sabotage of their work.[69] Nigel Swain has provided a comprehensive account of the ways in which factory managers and other officials coped with the demands of the planned economy in Hungary, for instance by hoarding and misreporting, while János Kenedi has depicted the adaptations necessary to get a house built in the same country with the ironic gaze of the alienated insider.[70] And I alluded at the end of the previous subsection to findings in relation to the 'shopfloor culture' found even in the pressurized environment of rapid industrialization.[71]

Post-communist transitions have been the setting for analytical confrontation between political-cultural and structuralist or rational choice explanations.[72] The confrontation replicates the simplicity of the framing of the original 'test case' by Almond, who saw it as indicating one of only two possibilities, that political culture was either 'stable' or 'labile'.[73] The way in which political culture has been conceived by the positivist mainstream as a

macro-variable, as I argued in Chapter 1, invites this sort of confrontation. Thinking in terms of the adaptive inertia of skills allows a more refined analysis. Continuities would not be expected to be exact, and would be observable in behavioural patterns rather than attitude survey reports. Indeed, since in both the communist and the post-communist periods phenomena such as *blat* were subject to official reprobation and prone to being defined as corruption, their concealment became part of their mode of operation. Alena Ledeneva has studied the Russian 'economy of favours' using interviews, but notes that explicit attitudes towards it are marked by rationalization, denial, and self-exculpation.[74]

The phenomenon of '*nomenklatura* capitalism' involves not just the continuity of the membership of the social strata that were advantaged under the Soviet system (the *nomenklatura* being the set of people marked out for their political reliability by the party apparatus at various levels, and thus eligible for the most senior jobs), but also the continuity of skills. Peter Kneen has explained how the 'coping strategies' of managers, acquired over long experience of the command economy, were already developing in a new direction under the more liberal conditions created by Gorbachev's *perestroika*, which rapidly dismantled the apparatus of party control of enterprise activity, producing a 'covert form of privatisation or, more accurately, "personalisation" of state assets'.[75] The shock therapy of the immediate post-Soviet period liberated these tendencies further. Thus,

> privatisation has provided a conduit through which significant elements of the Soviet industrial and economic *nomenklatura* have been able to relocate in post-Soviet Russia bringing with them the paternalist culture and rent-seeking practices associated with the now defunct planned economy . . . Soviet coping practices, and the culture in which they were embedded, have been transplanted in new and seemingly more fertile soil.[76]

The explanation of the distinctive style of *nomenklatura* capitalism is not of course entirely 'cultural'. The errors made by Soviet and post-Soviet reformers and their Western advisers, and background conditions such as the structure of the Soviet economy, enter into the explanation too. But the 'adaptive inertia' of skilled practice is an essential component of the explanation.

A contrast with the case of China is instructive, both empirically and theoretically. Empirically the contrast is stark. While China also suffers amply from 'corruption', it has experienced a far more successful capitalist transition than Russia, its high growth rates since the early 1990s contrasting with Russia's low or negative rates. There are significant differences in circumstances: the initially greater technological sophistication of the Russian economy, as well as the relatively large size of the natural resources sector, made the Russian economy more centralized, while the Chinese had been decentralized as a matter of policy.[77] The practice dimension of culture enters

into the explanation as well, though, according to a study comparing Russian *blat* with Chinese *guanxi*, or 'relationships'.[78] Carolyn Hsu notes some differences between these cultural practices, in particular differences in the pattern of friendships that each form of interaction involved. Russians tended to construct friendships in a defensive circle that was highly advantageous for well-placed elites during the transition, but not so useful for ordinary people, and less conducive to the development of entrepreneurship thereafter.

But while she insists, in line with the argument I have been making, that *guanxi* is a practice, Hsu still suggests that it is supported by a 'powerful macro-level moral system',[79] enabling its more effective survival, whereas *blat* was never fully legitimated even among its practitioners. The claim that a Confucian 'moral system' is decisive is, however, undermined by her own evidence that the 'moral system' of *guanxi*—that is, the set of normative justifications that support it—has itself changed significantly under changing circumstances; for instance, cutting *guanxi* free from its original setting in the family.[80] A 'Confucian capitalism' explanation, resting on the continuity of traditional values, fails to account for variations in the practice of *guanxi* between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong. The element of practical adaptation is necessary to understand this. Like Kneen (see n. 76), let alone the mainstream of political culture research, Hsu has not entirely escaped the grip of the Parsonian theory that behaviour is driven by values, even though her main argument illustrates the causal significance of the adaptive inertia of practice.

Of course, political culture research of the mainstream form, based on attitude surveys, has also become more feasible in post-communist countries. There has been a 'normalization' of the political culture research of these countries, therefore, as the flow of survey data has increased. Nevertheless, models for political culture research which take seriously the adaptive inertia of skills and practice continue to exist, as they did in the research of the communist period. They have not, however, been formulated as a genuine alternative, and remain vulnerable to being subsumed under the theoretical rubric of positivist political culture research, a rubric whose defects I have set out at length. In this chapter I have tried to show how such research can be made more theoretically self-aware, and pointed to the theory of the duality of culture as the relevant resource. Political culture research need not rest its case on widely criticized notions like 'Confucian values', even though the discourse of Confucian values, and explicit, propositional, representational, and codifiable notions like it are undoubtedly part of the discursive dimension of culture. It is indeed no surprise that they have been deployed by the holders of power to justify their power, most notoriously by the former Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kwan Yew.[81] Discussions of political culture have all too often simply set one discourse against another—'Confucian values' against 'Western modernization', for instance. But the crudity, the

blatantly political character, and the theoretical inadequacy of these arguments should not lead us to abandon the concept of political culture, which on the basis of the theory of the duality of culture can instead be shown to be an indicator of the limits of all such discursive claims.

7.5. CONCLUSION

Proposing an emphasis on practice in the analysis of political culture, I have shown, courts the danger that the concept of practice will simply become the vehicle of all of the explanatory functions previously (though not effectively) fulfilled by the concept of culture and its various equivalents. Stephen Turner has objected convincingly to such re-labelling, and symptoms of it can be seen in some of the uses of 'practice' I have discussed. To avoid them, we need to keep in mind that the emphasis on practice emerges theoretically from a dualistic theory of culture, and thus as the limit of the political reach of discourse. This means that it must also mark the limit of a particular kind of explanation in which discursive, intelligible culture is identified as the cause of distinctive or persistent political behaviour. This is the form that political-cultural explanation has taken, both in its overt positivist form and in its denied interpretive one.

It is, however, a mistake to suppose that beyond this limit lies only an explanatory or scientific fog. By looking in particular at the phenomenon of skilled practice, a potentially rich field of empirical investigation opens up. It is by no means uncontested, and is not a 'plug-in' theory that replaces without further ado what is missing or defective in existing political culture research. Nevertheless the investigations of skills in cognitive and applied psychology, and in anthropology, offer a substantial resource that need not return us yet again to problems we have already met. I have pointed to forms of political culture research which already implicitly touch on the adaptive inertia of practice, indicating some of the potential of this kind of study, and giving an outline of the ethnographic methods involved in pursuing it. But at the same time I have suggested that these attempts have so far lacked a theoretical grounding, and are therefore prone, as the theory of practices has been, to revert to earlier forms of explanation. My arguments in the second half of this book have been an attempt to provide that theoretical grounding.

In the next chapter I turn from the explanation of the statics, or the inertial properties, of political culture to its more kinetic or fluid properties, for the explanation of which the dualistic ontology of culture is equally useful.

8

The Fluid Dynamics of Political Culture

8.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapters 5 and 6 I developed a dualistic ontology of culture on the basis of philosophical arguments and social-psychological findings. This provides the basis of a theory of political culture in that it establishes what political culture actually is, namely a combination of practical and discursive dimensions. The ontological theory posits a genuine duality, in the sense that each component is necessarily separate from and irreducible to the other, and in this respect the theory differs both from the Parsonian basis of positivist political culture research, which suggests that political outcomes are determined by measurable values which people store in their heads, and from the interpretive position (which in any case tends to deny its own causal assumptions), which suggests that the 'meanings' collectively contained in culture give rise to social and political practice.

In Chapter 7 and the present chapter I am developing the second main branch of a theory of political culture, which is to show how political culture works, that is to explain its causal dynamics. I noted in the Introduction that political culture has typically been used to explain persistence and resistance in political life, for instance differences between the politics of countries that cannot be explained by their material endowment, or the political recidivism that is often noted in the aftermath of revolutions. Thus it is the conservative implications of political culture, or its statics, that have usually been stressed.

I noted, however, that some writers have proposed that the contribution of culture to promoting, and not just impeding, political change should also be acknowledged. Indeed the concept of culture, since it was first introduced into political analysis by Herder, has connoted dynamism and creativity as well as the inertia of a 'way of life', and the concept of culture we use in everyday speech, where it refers to the arts, of course pushes the connotation of creativity still further. In political analysis, while political culture has often been understood statically, concepts bearing at least a lexical affinity to it, such as cultural framing and 'culture wars', have also seemed to express a kinetic or

fluid conception of political culture. Even in the field of communist studies, where the stability of political culture was most often noted, it has been suggested that 'social values and expectations, accepted views of what is "normal" and proper, the "social construction of reality", may themselves change—and sometimes quite rapidly—in ways that "delegitimate" a regime that fails to adapt its own performance to these changes'.[1]

I objected in Chapter 1 to the nominalistic claim that as Almond's concept of political culture had been effectively operationalized and had generated usable data, nothing more needed to be said about what political culture really is. In the light of this critique of nominalism, it would hardly be proper to insist that political culture should be understood only in terms of its inertial properties on the grounds that most political scientists have used it that way. On the other hand, simply to add in the idea of the fluidity of political culture to the existing emphasis on its inertia does not in itself assist us in understanding political outcomes; it just confuses. Indeed, such confusion about the extent of the constraint provided by political culture has been endemic. We can see it, for example, in the unresolved juxtaposition of the 'conservative and liberal truths' about culture propounded in the *Culture Matters* Project which I discussed in the Introduction, or in the failure of Jeffrey Goldfarb to get beyond case studies of political culture's potential creativity, despite his insistence that we need 'a clearer analytic understanding of culture'.[2] There is a risk, if only case studies of inertia and fluidity are presented, that the scientific dubiousness of the explanatory pretensions of political culture research will only be further confirmed, as it might seem that there is nothing that the concept does not offer to explain. We will end up with the theory, if it merits that name, that political culture impedes change, except when it promotes it.[3]

I hope that it is by now fairly obvious that my attempt to look more closely at the ontology of political culture, at what it really is, setting aside the nominalist marginalization of theory, the interpretive denial, and the various theoretical displacements discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, has promise for the 'clearer analytic understanding' Goldfarb rightly says we sorely need. In the duality I have expressed in summary terms as the gap between practice and discourse there is, I suggest, an immediate implication of a corresponding duality of causal dynamics. In Chapter 7 I explored the static aspect of the causal dynamics of political culture, focusing on skills as an analytical paradigm, and exploring the adaptive inertia of political culture that this focus helps us to understand. In this final chapter I will explore the kinetics of political culture, which I will derive from the discursive or articulate aspect of the ontological duality.

To undertake the corresponding exploration in the case of the practical dimension of political culture it was necessary, in the previous chapter, to begin by addressing some existing forays into the relevant field. I examined the

established 'theory of practice' put forward by Bourdieu under the conceptual rubric of 'habitus', and the more recent 'Aristotelian' movement in political science resting on the concept of '*phronesis*' or practical wisdom. The situation facing the preliminary theoretical mapping I will undertake in this chapter is somewhat different. Not only is the 'discursive turn' a more massive and long-standing mutation in the theories of the respective social sciences, including political science (where it has been most influential, in proportionate terms, in International Relations), but the preceding 'cultural turn', in which the influence of Geertz expanded into history and psychology among other disciplines, also concerned itself with discourse. Thus a considerable amount of clearance of existing discussions of the dynamics of discourse would seem to be necessary before I can embark on my own.

However, much of the needed ground clearing has already been completed by my critique of interpretivism and discursivism earlier in this book. In section 8.2 I will briefly review these earlier arguments in the light of the dualistic ontology of culture established in Chapters 5 and 6. I will pay particular attention to the discursivist position of Foucault, whose concept of 'discursive practice' threatens to undermine the duality of practice and discourse I have proposed. A converse case is provided by the explicitly dualistic theory of culture advanced by Margaret Archer in terms of 'cultural system' and 'socio-cultural interaction'. Where discursivism tends to collapse the distinction of practice and discourse, Archer's theory hypostasizes it. A discussion of these two alternatives will provide a sharper outline of my own approach.

Section 8.2 will therefore clear a space for the theory of the dynamics of discourse I will advance in section 8.3 as the complement to the theory of the causal dynamics of practice—the adaptive inertia of political culture—presented in the previous chapter. To develop that theory I will return to the philosophical sources, as I did in Chapter 7 by developing Polanyi's arguments and Wittgenstein's hints about skilled practice. I will begin the construction of theory by looking again at Wittgenstein, and in particular at the derivations made by David Bloor from Wittgenstein's discussion of what is involved in 'speaking of right'. Bloor's arguments point towards a radical understanding of meaning which he calls 'meaning finitism', but which I will dub the 'market model of meaning'. This theory has two merits: it enables an understanding of the causal properties of meaning, a question which my treatment of the philosophical tradition has made problematic, and it points towards the fruitfulness of the market as an 'analytical paradigm' (in the sense in which I presented this category in Chapter 7) for the dynamics of meaning. This analytical paradigm is developed in section 8.4. In section 8.5, I will return to some examples of political culture research, showing, as I did in Chapter 7 with regard to the statics of political culture, how some existing approaches to

political-cultural dynamics demonstrate the utility of the theory I am advancing both in what they say and in what they omit.

8.2. THE RELATIONSHIP OF DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

What I have termed discursivism is clearly a force to be reckoned with if one wishes to advance a theory of culture of which discourse is a component: it is not indeed far from exhausting the implications which at the present juncture the idea of discourse might be thought to contain. The challenge can be seen at its most pointed when we notice that 'discursive practice' is one of the key terms of Foucault's later work, for the concept appears to dissolve the distinction between practice and discourse upon which I have insisted. But on the basis of my earlier arguments, the tables can be turned: it is the gap between discourse and practice that reveals the overextension of Foucault's arguments.

Certainly the concept of 'discursive practice' expresses an important development in Foucault's thinking, from the 'theoretical form, or something like a paradigm' (in his own later words) that his earlier organizing concept of '*episteme*' represented, to a far more diverse, and more minutely examined, array of expressions of disciplinary power in the 'discursive practices' of medicine, psychiatry, and penology, among others. But the local, varied, and practical character of the materials studied by Foucault is illusory, as indeed is his claim to have moved beyond 'something like a paradigm'. For, as I showed in Chapter 4, *episteme* was only replaced in the role of the singularity that organizes his investigations by the concept of power. Foucault's assumption that power is a 'system of dispersion' or a 'discontinuous systematicity' renders it hopeless to look for evidence of the existence of such a system. Just where evidence is most lacking, where power is least evident to the participants, and where even its authors are 'without hypocrisy' in failing to notice it, is where Foucault most delights in exposing it. Every counter-instance of the 'system of dispersion' is thereby converted into a supporting instance. It follows that conviction that such a system exists can be generated only by Foucault's own interpretive virtuosity—the very quality which Foucault's followers mocked when they found it in cultural interpreters such as Geertz.

Considered apart from its use by Foucault, the idea of 'discursive practice' does not pose any difficulty for the thesis of the duality of discourse and practice. Discourse can indeed be seen as a practice, as neither Wittgenstein nor Polanyi would have denied (as Polanyi put it, 'denotation is an art'). The thesis of cultural duality rules out, instead, the claim that discourse, which one can readily assimilate to articulate knowledge or to 'speaking of right', does not *determine* practice, which always rests on inarticulable elements. Giving an order or promulgating a rule is of course a practical activity. Our following the

order or the rule is also a practical activity. But the theory of the duality of culture says that the latter is not determined by the former. But what Foucault seeks to express with the concept of 'discursive practice' is, to the contrary, starkly at odds with the thesis of the duality of discourse and practice, for his purpose is to collapse practice into discourse, rendering in turn all discourse subordinate to *his own* discourse, by which he interprets all discourse as a system of dispersion of power.

The great virtue of Foucault is to have stated as strongly as it could be stated that discourse—representation, codification, categorization, prescription, and so on—has a necessarily political character. To return to an example from the previous chapter, it is evident that a discourse such as Taylorism represents an expression of power. The power is discursive in the sense that it operates through analysis and then prescription of the worker's actions. It seeks to convert labour into a set of codifiable procedures, and thus to dehumanize the worker, to make him or her into a machine, a mere tool of the manager. Many will have felt this kind of power in the 'audit society', well beyond the machine-shop settings where Taylorism was first implemented, and the experience seems to call irresistibly for a Foucauldian analysis.

But Foucault overextends examples like Taylorism in two ways. He assimilates all cases of discursive knowledge acquisition to cases in which the operation of power is blatant and unmissable, whereas his own examples show that it is often not evident at all either to its agent or its victim. Secondly and more to the point of my present argument, he assumes the invariable *success* of the project of control through knowledge. Foucault's work is in effect a massively inflated version of Braverman's de-skilling thesis (minus the ruling class); the thesis, that is, that managerial control is an irresistible force that will not rest until the labourer has been converted into a machine. The irony is that it is just the close look at the microscopic settings of power of the kind that Foucault undertakes with such virtuosity that allows us to see the *limits* of the power achieved by a programme such as Taylorism.[4] The close look reveals precisely the limits of power, as we saw in the previous chapter in the ethnographic responses to Braverman. A set of rules or explicit procedures, no matter how detailed, cannot capture or determine the practice of the workplace, and in general terms, discourse represents a reach for power that necessarily exceeds the grasp. It is not then the concept of discursive practice, which is quite unobjectionable provided one does not mistake it for the whole of practice, but rather Foucault's deployment of it which is at odds with the dualistic theory of culture I have advanced.

If discursivism dissolves the distinction between discourse and practice, further guidance to the explanatory potential of a dualistic theory of culture can be gleaned by looking at an analysis of culture that does the opposite, i.e. inflates the practice–discourse distinction to a metaphysical level. Both the discursivist dissolution of the distinction and this, as it has been called, 'cultural objectivist'

hypostasization of it present impediments to understanding the causal properties and potential of discourse.[5] For discursivism, the causal impact of discourse is in effect established by definition; the argument I will now investigate establishes in contrast a distance between its two dimensions that appears to be unbridgeable.

Margaret Archer's theory of culture is expressly dualistic. Following a lead given by David Lockwood,[6] she proposes to consider culture as an analytically separable 'cultural system' and 'socio-cultural interaction'. She posits the 'cultural system' as an order of 'intelligibilia', the set of discursive products existing in a society at a given time. As intelligibilia, these products have among each other logical relationships, not causal ones: they might for instance be more or less consistent with each other, contain more or fewer logical contradictions. The objectivism of Archer's view consists in the claim that these logical relations are timeless facts, irrespective of how they are perceived or whether they are recognized in society. In contrast, in the realm of 'socio-cultural interaction' are found causal relationships between people in their handling of culture. Here variation is not in the degree of objective logical consistency, but in 'the degree of cultural uniformity produced by the imposition of ideas by one set of people on another through the whole gamut of familiar techniques—manipulation, mystification, legitimation, naturalization, persuasion and argument'.[7] It is not implausible, prima facie, to think of Archer's categories of 'cultural system' and 'socio-cultural interaction' as alternatives to the categories of discourse and practice. The question then is whether the account of cultural dynamics which Archer derives from her dualistic theory offers a viable way forward.

The distinctiveness of Archer's analytical dualism is the explanatory significance it attributes to the objective 'logical' relations found in the 'cultural system'. If the cultural system in existence at any given time contains contradictions, Archer suggests, this fact provides independent resources for political action at the level of socio-cultural interaction. The contradictions are really there, objectively, though under some (socio-cultural) circumstances they are visible to people and under others they are not. In an example borrowed from Durkheim, Archer argues that early Christianity was obliged to invoke contradictory claims: in Durkheim's words, 'It had acquired its form and organization in the Roman world, the Latin language was its language, it was thoroughly impregnated with Roman civilization.' The result for the church was 'a contradiction against which it has fought for centuries without ever achieving a resolution'.[8]

The difficulty is to make sense of the independent contribution of the objective logical relations of the cultural system. In the example Archer discusses, we can ask how the contradiction entered into early Christian discourse in the first place. It obviously cannot have been simply a logical entailment of something already accepted, since in the realm of pure logic no proposition can entail its contrary. It must be that the discordant elements were needed to win acceptance for the Christian doctrine in a hostile environment, in which some

contrary claims were already accepted. What goes into the 'cultural system' (Roman propositions alongside biblical ones) thus appears to be entirely governed by the 'manipulation, mystification, legitimation, naturalization, persuasion and argument' that takes place in 'socio-cultural interaction', and not at all by relations of logic. On their own, these are causally inert.

Without a reminder of the 'interface between the two levels', Archer says in a poignant Borgesian remark, we might 'wander aimlessly around the Encyclopedic Library of the deserted planet'.[9] It is an admission that the 'cultural system' is given life only by its deployment in 'socio-cultural interaction'. But it is unclear what that 'interface' could be. Understood in terms of timeless and objective logical relations, the 'cultural system' is indeed ethereally separated from social life: it is only 'socio-cultural interaction' that allows discursive contradictions and other logical relations to have causal impact on society. While Archer's dualism of 'cultural system' and 'socio-cultural interaction' seems on its face to parallel the duality of discourse and practice that I have advocated, the pure logic Archer attributes to the 'cultural system' has no independent significance. The explanatory work in Archer's theory of culture is instead done by the struggle over cultural meanings within 'socio-cultural interaction'. But then Archer's theory converges with the theory of hegemony.

In this section I have sought to find room for my own treatment of the causal properties of discourse, firstly by addressing the main contender in such a role, discursivism. Of course, discursivism shares in the denial of an interest in questions of causation that we find in interpretivism (of which indeed, methodologically speaking, it is only a more politicized variant), but it is surely plain that when Foucault speaks of power he speaks the language of causality. Yet despite the microscopic character of his investigations, and the innumerable others that have discovered assertions of power in discourses of all kinds (though most frequently academic ones, which I doubt are the most egregious even if, for other academics, they are the most tractable), my argument has been that the causal mechanism involved remains unspecified, and is injected into discursivist analysis mainly by a stipulation: that *savoir* equals *pouvoir*. The concept of 'discursive practice', unobjectionable in itself, contributes by making out that looking closely at the practice of the use of language will reveal the massive 'discontinuous systematicity' of a discursive formation and the power it expresses. But practice always marks a limit of discourse, a limit to the control which discourse can exert.

Archer's theory of culture in *Culture and Agency*, although of more limited impact, represents a sophisticated and complex attempt to explore the causal properties of culture; an attempt, moreover, that employs a dualistic framework that has at least a structural parallel with the one I have advanced. My argument has been, however, that it involves an overstated, even metaphysical, distinction between the intelligibilia of the 'cultural system' and the politics of 'socio-cultural interaction'. It inflates the distinction between discourse and

practice, or what people say and what they do, almost to the level of the distinction between the celestial and the worldly, but it raises thereby the question of the relationship between the pristine logical relations that govern the world of propositions and the struggles to persuade and to justify that take place in the mundane world of politics. Between the poles of the dissolution of the distinction between discourse and practice and the hypostasization of that distinction lies the position I have derived from the philosophy of Wittgenstein and Polanyi, and the psychology of dual attitudes and automaticity, and it is there that we must look for an understanding of the causal dynamics of discourse.

8.3. DISCOURSE AND CAUSALITY

I have suggested that a theory of political culture should be able to account for the dynamics of political culture in both its fluid and its inertial aspects. While the principal explanatory focus of political culture research has been on persistence and resistance, that is on the statics of political culture, interest in political change has also often involved reference to culture, as in theories of 'cultural framing' and 'culture wars'.

We do not advance very far, however, simply by acknowledging this need. Indeed in theoretical terms we make a retreat, as we then seem to be faced with a concept with the 'Goldilocks' property of being neither too static nor too dynamic: political culture inhibits change, except when it promotes it. To say, moreover, that the political culture has changed, and that this explains change in political outcomes (e.g. the overthrow of communist regimes) is in itself no less of a 'just so' story than to say that a country lacking a democratic political culture is prone to communist takeover in the first place. A fluid macro-variable is no more explanatorily informative than a static one.

If we look more closely at the causal mechanism assumed by the addition of fluidity to the predominant static usage of political culture we find that it rests on the same basic philosophical and psychological suppositions, namely that attitudes or values (in the positivist mode) or meanings (in the interpretive mode) give rise to political behaviour, with ultimate consequences for regime type and other macro-political outcomes. I have brought to bear both philosophical arguments and psychological findings against these common assumptions. Wittgenstein and Polanyi concur in suggesting that behaviour 'goes on' 'tacitly', and cannot in principle be explained by rules or other articulable propositions. Correspondingly, recent psychological findings cast doubt on the suppositions embedded in our ideas of free will, conscious choice, and self-transparency.

These radical arguments and findings have no less an impact on the putative fluid usage of political culture than on the inertial one. If it is problematic to explain behaviour in terms of a rule that 'governs' it, the problem does not go away when we posit that the rule may change. Thus to say that the duality of political culture allows for political-cultural change just because it counts discourse as part of political culture, and discourse may change, is not yet to add one iota to the theory of political culture.

Indeed it could be argued that the dualistic theory of culture as I have outlined it makes an account of the fluid dynamics of political culture a more, not less, remote prospect. The argument here would be that what both philosophical and psychological contributions to the dualistic theory suggest is the causal epiphenomenality of discourse. It was indeed the argument of Chapter 7 that the inertia of political culture is explained in terms of the duality of discourse and practice by observing that skills have their own dynamics and can never be replaced by a set of discursive instructions. Political culture appears in this argument in its familiar static use, though of course now with a theoretical substantiation, as the adaptive inertia of skills, which it previously lacked. But it is a theory that seems to make discourse itself causally redundant.

Discussions among philosophers of mind and philosophically inclined psychologists of the problem of 'free will' represent the most explicit expressions of the potential problem. Bargh's 'cognitive monster', for example, is the threat that findings of automaticity in human behaviour will reintroduce the consequences for our ordinary ethical reasoning that Skinner embraced as implications of behaviourism in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. Worries about free will have been reactivated by the Libet experiment which found that the experience of will post-dated by about four tenths of a second the initial brain events that led to 'willed' physical movement (see my discussion in Chapter 6). The potential implications of the dualistic theory of culture are even more sweeping: for if discourse, and the articulable attitudes derived from it, is nothing other than retrospective accounting, does it not follow that it has had no causal impact on the course of human history? Is it not epiphenomenal, like the steam vented from a factory that has no causal bearing on what takes place inside (or, as Wegner said about consciousness, like the compass needle that merely records the course of the ship)? Does not the theory in fact imply that the whole of human speech and writing has *never made any difference*?

Clearly, we need to step back from this vertiginous precipice and from the *reductio ad absurdum* of the theory of the duality of political culture that it suggests. But it is no use saying 'discourse must make a difference' if we have good reasons for doubting the conventional account of how it does so. It is however possible to formulate an account of the causal significance of discourse that does not violate the dualistic arguments I derived from Wittgenstein and Polanyi, but rather develops them.

To do this I will return to Wittgenstein, and in particular to the 'communitarian' interpretation of his rule-following argument advanced by David Bloor. I argued against the view that this was an *exhaustive* account of Wittgenstein's argument, but as an account of its treatment of the discursive side of the duality I found to be incipient in Wittgenstein's argument it is very useful, and goes much further than Kripke's or Winch's communitarian interpretations in terms of causal specification. Wittgenstein, to recap briefly, spoke of our ability to 'go on' in conformity with a rule as an unanalysable skill or bodily capacity, but he also insisted on our ability to 'speak of right', that is, on the normative background against which action is evaluated for its correctness. My interpretation of his argument was that it resists the assimilation of these two conditions of action, which is what the philosophical tradition and its empirical manifestations such as (among many other things) political culture research have done.

So far as the normative condition of action is concerned (which he makes the entirety of Wittgenstein's argument), Bloor advances a theory of meaning which he calls 'meaning finitism'. It is contrasted with the prevailing view, which he calls 'meaning determinism', that rules are self-applying, or determine their own application, and more generally that meaning is 'inherent' in expressions. Wittgenstein, of course, showed this view to be wrong, for it could not explain how we manage to apply a rule beyond the finite number of applications we observed when we were taught it. We do nevertheless manage that; we know how to go on; and moreover that going on can be judged right or wrong against a normative background. That background is not simply more rules, as Parsonian social theory and the philosophical tradition in general would have it, for that simply replicates the original problem: 'Normative determinism . . . is . . . no more than meaning determinism expressed in a sociological idiom.'[10] Rather the background is what Bloor, following Wittgenstein (who we saw also speaks of custom or usage in this connection), calls an 'institution'.

An institution is in turn defined by Bloor in terms of the 'uncontroversial' examples of money, property, and marriage. Taking the first,

> We cannot say a coin simply *is* an appropriately shaped and stamped metal disc. Such objects could exist without being coins: they might be ornaments . . . [B]eing a coin . . . is a matter of how the thing is used . . . [M]etal discs *are* coins because they are *called* coins . . . [, which] is shorthand for the entire repertoire of behaviour associated with their being thought of, or regarded as, or treated as, coins.[11]

Bloor rather provocatively offers the name 'idealism' for this account, since it shows that 'reality has a spiritual or mental essence', or at any rate that part of it does. Avoiding that heavily freighted term, we can nevertheless agree with what Bloor wants it to convey, namely that in the case of money 'A group of people have brought something into existence simply by thinking about it and

talking about it.'[12] On the basis of such examples, Bloor defines an institution as 'a collective pattern of self-referring activity'. And on that basis, in turn, he defines a rule as an institution: following it correctly is determined by collective consensus that the continuation of the finite examples by which the actor is taught the rule is correct.[13]

As I have argued, this interpretation of Wittgenstein does not do full justice to what he says about rule-following, which (following McGinn) I suggested involves also the dimension of skilled bodily practice: that which is unanalysable in terms of the rule, or in Polanyian language, in terms of articulate knowledge. Nevertheless the implications of Bloor's interpretation for the understanding of the causal efficacy of discourse are considerable. It parallels the 'social constructionist' arguments of John Searle, and before him Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, with a classic precursor in W. I. Thomas and Dorothy Thomas's sociological 'theorem' that 'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.'[14] As such, it opens up an enormous field of argument, though the caution must at once be issued that what is called 'social constructionism' has overlapped considerably with what I have termed 'discursivism', and this latter position, I have argued, makes no useful advance in understanding the causal dynamics of discourse.[15] I will avoid venturing further into the debates surrounding this large field,[16] but will simply point out the potential it offers for grasping the causal efficacy of discourse in a way that avoids the errors of 'meaning determinism', the prevailing view (both positivist and, in denied form, interpretivist) that discourse has effects on behaviour by virtue of its inherent meaning.

Discourse, then, is capable not only of commenting on and justifying practice, but of constructing new things, new features of the environment, which for the individual are as real and 'objective' as mountains and rivers, even though they depend for their existence on collective discursive agreement. As part of the environment, these socially constructed features have, willy-nilly, to be adapted to. Individuals, and indeed whole societies, have no choice but to adapt to the larger parts of their physical environment, and the same is true of the principal features of their economic environment. If the value of the currency changes, individuals must adapt and have no more choice in the matter than they would if a river changed its course. Both changes can be effected, or prevented, by sufficiently concerted human effort, but for humanity organized at any lesser scale they represent equally inescapable environmental constraints.[17] Bloor's 'meaning finitism' suggests that we understand meanings in the same way. I do not have the option, for instance, of using pre-decimalization British currency in my economic transactions, and similarly I am constrained in how I can use words whose meanings have changed, as the idea of 'political correctness' (a polemical caricature of the normativity of meaning as it may be) makes clear. The constraint may not be as strict in the latter case as in the former, but the difference is only a matter of

degree. Meanings, like coins, are a 'currency', a means of exchange, and one is bound to adapt to them, notwithstanding their discursively produced and thus in a sense 'ideal' character, and the provisionality or finitude of the conformity that creates them.

My suggestion, deriving from Bloor's communitarian interpretation of Wittgenstein, and parallel sources, is then that discourse influences behaviour not directly, in the form of the determination of behaviour by consciously held attitudes, underlying (but still expressible) values, or internalized rules, but indirectly, in a two-stage process. Firstly, discourse constructs or constitutes new things in the world. Secondly, individuals must adapt to these, that is, learn how to 'go on' in relation to them. Adapting to the discursive environment is like adapting to the economic one, and this in turn is in most respects like adapting to the physical environment. One can do it more or less skilfully, and one will generally do it by adapting existing skills: these aspects of the process are governed by the adaptive inertia of practice. But that to which one has to adapt is governed by different causal dynamics: dynamics not dissimilar to those of the market.

8.4. THE MARKET DYNAMICS OF DISCOURSE

In developing the empirical application of the practical dimension of culture, and in particular finding a concrete starting point for an exploration of its causal dynamics, Chapter 7 homed in on the phenomenon of skills. In skilled practice we find not only the basis of specific examples offered in Polanyi's 'post-critical philosophy' and (more tersely) in Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following and language use, but also a topic which, particularly in the Marxist tradition, has been a focus of anxious political analysis. Empirically, skilled practice offers scope for both laboratory and ethnographic examination. Theoretically, it entails a dynamics of 'adaptive inertia', which I suggested had ready application to the analysis and explanation of the statics of political culture.

In this chapter I propose to identify *the market* as a corresponding focus of empirical attention and source of theoretical implications for the fluid dynamics of political culture. To do so is far more risky than in the case of skills, since in obvious and also less obvious ways the market is already a major focus of interest in political analysis. Lest my proposal be misunderstood as, for instance, a capitulation to rational choice theory or to some other form of materialism, I need to mark out the specific way in which I will be referring to market dynamics, which is primarily by way of *analogy*. Bloor's analogy between the institutionalization of money and the institutionalization of meaning is my starting point, but it seems to me that neither Bloor nor

other social constructionists (such as Searle, who also takes the case of money as paradigmatic)[18] have explored the implications of the analogy for the dynamics of culture. As it happens, current events (if one can use that term to refer to events that have now been unfolding for five years), namely the global financial crisis that began in 2007, encourage a view of the dynamics of the market that is more suited to our purpose than some of the formulations of positive economics and its derivative, rational choice theory.

To invoke the market as a model for the dynamics of discourse does not, then, involve any kind of supposition that 'interests' are the exclusive driver of political outcomes, as they are said to be of economic ones. I have discussed already the nature and validity of the assumptions made in positive economics and rational choice theory, finding them to rely in various ways on cultural posits, so we plainly cannot terminate a discussion of the theory of political culture at that point. Nor need an analogical investigation of market dynamics embrace the more subtle form of materialism that Pierre Bourdieu promotes with his concept of 'capital', which for him generalizes the idea of financial capital to the variable means of competition within a given 'field', producing the ideas of 'cultural capital', 'social capital', and so on.[19] Bourdieu's underlying thesis of competition or 'game' parallels rational choice theory, though with a more general conception (itself quite compatible with 'thin' rational choice theory) of the tokens used in the game.

The market analogy I am advocating, on the basis of Bloor's reading of Wittgenstein, does suggest, along with Bourdieu, that 'culture' (specifically the discursive dimension of culture) is like currency. But I understand currency not as a resource for competition but rather in a more fundamental way as a means of communication. Discursive meanings are the currency of human communication: they are the 'values' that attach to our utterances and writings that enable them to be exchanged and circulated. Certainly some people, as Bourdieu emphasizes, may 'possess' more of this currency than others (e.g. a richer vocabulary, suited to elevated intellectual settings), but it is the exchange and circulation which is fundamental: only because of this feature of currency can any advantage arise from the accumulation of it.

Thus it misses the point to read the market model of meaning as some kind of materialist exposé or deconstruction of discourse, in the fashion of Bourdieu or Foucault. It is simply a recognition that meaning, and thus the discourse that it attaches to, is, like money, a medium of exchange. Like money, it can serve in this role only when it achieves a degree of stability. If the value of money fluctuated rapidly, we could not trade; similarly, if the meanings of discourse fluctuated rapidly, we could not communicate (this is what Laclau and Mouffe were driving at with their—theoretically unsupported—idea of 'nodal points' in discourse). Like money, discourse is necessarily public. Its role is to circulate. Hence Wittgenstein's remark, in his argument against

the possibility of a 'private language', that it is meaningless for my right hand to give money to my left.[20]

How, then, might we develop the market analogy in order to understand the dynamics of discourse? Seemingly, the vast literature of market theory in economics (indeed, one could say that market theory and economics are nearly coterminous) awaits our perusal—in comparison to which the space available in the remainder of this chapter looks comically small. But we might begin the task of 'data reduction' by noting that economic theory has not in fact done a very good job of predicting the behaviour of markets. Since the emergence of neo-classical economics with the 'marginalist revolution' of the late nineteenth century, the central idea, perhaps even the *idée fixe*, of economic theory has been 'competitive equilibrium',[21] the view that there exists a set of prices for all goods which will 'clear' the market, that is, a set of prices such that no trader will be able to gain a marginal improvement in utility by selling or buying at a different price. A consequence of the setting up of equilibrium as the theoretical default of an economy has been relative inattention to deviations from equilibrium, even though these are of course endemic. The term 'market failure' epitomizes this default setting, as it implies that when 'suboptimal' outcomes occur, it is a result of some imperfection in the design of the market. Of course, arguments of this kind have standardly been used to ward off 'interference' in the operation of the market by governments, as well, though perhaps less frequently, as to restrict monopolistic behaviour by capitalist firms.

The centrality of the idea of competitive equilibrium is of course more likely to be challenged in the context of economic difficulties such as those being experienced at present. One major challenge was that of J. M. Keynes, who set out to explain the spiral of declining demand that he witnessed in the Great Depression (1929–1933). His innovation was to take seriously the factor of confidence in the future upon which capitalist economic activity depended, noting that a collapse of confidence could have a self-reinforcing effect, producing an 'equilibrium' condition of progressive economic contraction. Will Hutton argues that 'Keynes shifts economics from the classicists' world of harmonious and natural laws which inexorably exert a "gravitational" pull towards balance to a much more twentieth-century conception of the economy as a dynamic process with instability and uncertainty the rule.' But he also notices that the actual appropriation of Keynes's work as interventionist 'demand management' (whose inefficiencies of course became increasingly apparent, eventuating in the Thatcherite and Reaganite reactions) already set aside his most radical insights.[22]

Keynes's analysis has, not surprisingly, been revived in the context of an economic crisis which, like that of the early 1930s, seems to have become self-perpetuating.[23] Its relevance to problems of economic policy is not however my concern. Of more interest is what Keynes and other dissenting economists

might tell us about the dynamics of the market that the competitive equilibrium orthodoxy cannot. Keynes's interest in the role of calculations of the future in economic outcomes is his main overall theme, but a particular development of it—his famous 'beauty contest' argument—adds an additional dose of fluidity to the dynamics of the market. In chapter 12 of the *General Theory*, Keynes addresses 'the state of long-term expectation' with some suggestive if preliminary arguments. He notes that the liquidity created by stock markets entails that 'certain classes of investment are governed by the average expectation of those who deal on the Stock Exchange as revealed by the prices of shares, rather than by the genuine expectations of the professional entrepreneur'.[24] But

> A conventional valuation which is established as the outcome of the mass psychology of a large number of ignorant individuals is liable to change violently as the result of a sudden fluctuation of opinion due to factors which do not really make much difference to the prospective yield.

The 'ignorance' of investors stems from their concern 'not with making superior long-term forecasts of the probable yield of an investment over its whole life, but with foreseeing changes in the conventional basis of valuation a short time ahead of the general public'.[25]

> Thus, 'professional investment may be likened to those newspaper competitions in which the competitors have to pick out the six prettiest faces from a hundred photographs, the prize being awarded to the competitor whose choice most nearly corresponds to the average preferences of the competitors as a whole'.[26]

This argument (apart from the disfavour into which beauty contests have fallen) has only become more relevant since Keynes made it in 1936, given the rise in the trading of equities and their derivatives as a proportion of economic activity as a whole, and other contributions (such as the relaxation of currency controls) to the increase in liquidity. Our interest in the beauty contest argument, though, is in the implications it has for market dynamics in general. It brings out a fundamental ambiguity in the conception of rationality employed in positive economics, whereby it can be entirely rational to participate in an economic activity (such as the purchase, repackaging, and sale of sub-prime mortgages) that it is probable or even certain will end in disaster. What counts as rational will be determined, when investment is liquid, above all by the aggregate of individual assessments of the aggregate of individual assessments. Such self-referentiality allows for rapid fluctuations in value, which we recognize as stock market bubbles and stampedes.

The 'chaotic' features of markets that result from the self-referential rationality that constitutes them have begun to be explored by economic theorists, including by the father of 'chaos theory' himself, Benoit Mandelbrot.[27] It is possible that large analytical gains will follow from such applications of the mathematics of non-linearity, chaos, and complexity in economics and elsewhere in the social sciences,[28] though it has also been observed that such theories can all too readily be turned into mere 'tawdry analogy' by superficial

application in social science.[29] But whatever the scope for more productive technical and mathematical analysis, considerable gains already follow simply from recognizing that the dynamics of the economic market have implications by analogy for the dynamics of discourse, which is also a self-referential field in which the units of exchange—meanings—have *both* the stability and 'objectivity' necessary to their function as communicative currency *and* (like money) scope for radical instability on the basis that they are self-referentially socially constructed.

The idea that the market, and in particular its self-referential properties, offers an analogy for the dynamics of discourse was already implicit in Wittgenstein's use of the example of the confidence we have in banks. Bloor quotes Wittgenstein asking rhetorically 'What sort of certainty is it that is based on the fact that in general there *won't* actually be a run on the banks by all their customers; though they would break if it did happen?' Bloor provides the reply: 'The certainty, in so far as there is certainty, is a belief in the systematic character of the beliefs of others to the effect that the bank is sound.'[30] These hints were not of course developed by Wittgenstein as a basis of any kind of social science, but it does not follow, as I argued in Chapter 5 against Pleasants, that they cannot be developed for this purpose. Bloor begins the development, but remains within the framework of the exegesis of Wittgenstein.[31] In section 8.5 I will put the market model of meaning to work in explaining the fluid dynamics of political culture.

8.5. DISCURSIVE DYNAMICS AND POLITICAL-CULTURAL CHANGE

In the previous chapter, I developed an account of the dynamics of practice by looking at the paradigm case of skills. Skills represent a 'paradigm' in two respects, theoretically and empirically. In theoretical terms, they form a key part of the philosophical argument that establishes the ontological duality of culture and political culture: explicitly in Polanyi's case; in Wittgenstein's case in suggestive remarks which have been developed by 'individualist' readings, for example by McGinn, which emphasize bodily capacity as the basis of our ability to 'go on' in the following of a rule. As philosophers of an empirical sort, who invite us to 'look and see', they license the use of skills as also an empirical paradigm, whose dynamics can be explored both ethnographically and in laboratory studies. Empirically, skills serve as a paradigm for the further reason that they already give rise to a politics, whether it be a conservative politics such as Polanyi's Burkean embrace of tradition,[32] or the emancipatory politics of Marx and Braverman, which identifies managerial control as dehumanizing

because it is also de-skilling. Skill, then, is a most productive analytical paradigm for understanding the inertial dynamics of political culture.

I have suggested in this chapter that we understand the more fluid dynamics of discourse using an analogous paradigm, that of the market. I have returned to the philosophical sources of the dualistic theory for this purpose, making use of Bloor's theory of 'meaning finitism', which is in effect a market model of meaning. Of course I continue to distinguish, unlike Bloor, our knowledge of how to go on, i.e. the practical dimension of political culture, from our 'speaking of right', our use of discursive resources to justify and rationalize our behaviour. This distinction is the fundamental claim of the dualistic theory of political culture, and needs to be kept in mind when considering what is involved in the dynamics of discourse. In particular, it suggests that discourse dynamics are not to be confused with changes in 'attitudes', for we have seen that the phenomenon of attitude is itself dual, with an unconscious aspect that it causally effective, and a discursive one (which Wilson's dual attitude theory unhelpfully labelled 'cultural')[33] that is deployed when an explanation or justification is sought. Accordingly, I have suggested that discourse has its causal effects not directly, as in the generation of behaviour by attitudes, but indirectly, through the constitution of a social environment by discourse, to which agents have no choice but to adapt.

In this final section, I will indicate the productivity of this view for the understanding of political culture by relating it to existing examinations of political-cultural change, just as in Chapter 7 I showed the relevance of the adaptive inertia of skills to discussions of political-cultural continuity. As a first example, let us recall Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's theory of the 'spiral of silence', which suggests that attitude reports are influenced by the prevailing attitudinal environment: people both 'sense' the 'climate of opinion',[34] and act on the basis of this sense to avoid the anxiety that comes from social isolation.[35] The negative implications of Noelle-Neumann's findings for the theory of attitudes are, I suggested in Chapter 6, at least methodological (that surveys are not a good means of discovering attitudes), and possibly also substantive (that stable attitudes stored in the respondent's mind for expression when asked, as in the 'portfolio model of the actor' criticized by Hindess, do not exist), pointing the way towards the theory of dual attitudes.

At this point we can note somewhat more positively that Noelle-Neumann's findings (by now part of a substantial research programme) sit quite comfortably in the framework of the dynamics of discourse I have developed in this chapter. Indeed, 'bandwagon' voting effects are mentioned by Bloor in the context of his exposition of meaning finitism.[36] Noelle-Neumann depicts individuals recognizing the climate of opinion in a multitude of observations, including those provided by the media (which occasionally, but not usually, diverge from the climate of opinion, producing a 'dual climate of opinion').[37]

Although we are here dealing with possibly transient voting preferences and not with the attitudes and values usually said to constitute political culture, the distinction is rendered somewhat scholastic by the fact that both are measured using surveys. Market-like dynamics are evident, with the implication that the popularity of a political party is somewhat like the high stock market demand for a rising equity: it reflects not 'underlying value' but an estimate of what the other consumers are doing and thinking. Noelle-Neumann's findings contribute also to specifying what Wilson's theory of dual attitudes left vaguely specified as cultural background: this background has the form of a marketplace of meanings.

Probably the most sophisticated account of cultural change provided to date within the positivist framework of political culture research is that of Thomas Rochon, in *Culture Moves*.[38] Like Noelle-Neumann's research, it points beyond the positivist framework, but not in a fully conscious manner, and some difficulty and confusion is caused by Rochon's failure to liberate himself from the positivist assumption of the direct causal properties of attitudes and values. He recognizes that 'cultural change seems to occur at two speeds, slow and fast, with relatively little in between' (p. 10).[39] Again with some similarity to the dualistic view I have developed, he writes, 'Rapid cultural change occurs when the social and political discourse in a subject area is altered. It is not simply a matter of changing opinions about an existing topic, but rather involves an alteration in the basis on which opinion is formed' (p. 20).

However, Rochon does not clearly differentiate an interest in the discursive constitution of the environment of politics from a positivist account of the determination of political behaviour by values. His analysis is indeed largely framed around values, and discourse drops out of view following the introductory remarks I have cited. The result is that the differential dynamics he begins by noting cannot itself be analysed within the framework of his theory. His analysis rests on two phases of political-cultural change, innovation by 'critical communities' and dissemination by social movements. Three kinds of change in values are traced over these two phases: value conversion, value creation, and value connection, and Rochon provides several examples of each. As I have suggested in relation to Goldfarb's recent proposal that attention be paid to the fluid dynamics of political culture as well as to its inertial properties, case studies do not help us much in this area, as they are equipped to provide only a narrative or 'just so' account of the cultural change we wish to explain. Rochon's analysis is more systematic, but it runs into difficulty by virtue of its focus on uncritically understood values and attitudes.

The example of changing attitudes towards race in the United States looms large in Rochon's account, as it does in many discussions of the political change wrought by social movements. There was, he suggests, a 'sea change in support for school integration between the mid 1950s and the late 1970s', 'an instance not only of rapid cultural change, but of rapid change involving

large-scale conversion on a topic that is subject to strongly held convictions' (pp. 64, 66). Rochon notices, however, that attitudes towards interracial marriage, which was not a theme highlighted by the civil rights movement, did not change much in the same period. He observes also that support for government action to promote school integration, in particular 'busing', fell during the 1960s, but, looking more closely, reports that 'Although nearly 90 per cent of whites objected in the abstract to school busing for racial integration, two-thirds of white parents whose children have been bused said that busing has worked out in a "very satisfactory" way.' Rochon's conclusion from this confusing picture is that 'Attitudes and behaviour may not change in perfect harmony, but change has been sizable in both realms' (pp. 67–8). While that is doubtless true, as an explanation it is rather weak, for it leaves obscure the very question in which we are most interested, namely the causal relationship between political-cultural change and political outcomes. The confusing array of attitudes to race that Rochon sketches here cannot but remind us of LaPiere's famous investigation of the related topic of racial hostility towards the Chinese.

It would demand considerable inventiveness to subsume pro-integration and anti-intermarriage views under a single racial 'value', but even on a narrower topic like bussing, the significance of expressed attitudes is hard to discern. Unquestionably, as Rochon demonstrates, the discursive environment surrounding race in the United States has changed radically since the 1950s, and we should certainly count this change as a change in political culture. But it is hard, despite the intuitive appeal of such formulations, to explain it in terms of changes in values and attitudes. We might do better to understand it in terms of a change in what can be said than a change in what people think, and this invites analysis in terms of the market dynamics of discourse.

This important example of change in political culture is given a different analysis, one in part more in keeping with the view I have advanced of the constitutive role of discourse and thus its indirect causal link with behaviour, by law professor Lawrence Lessig. He suggests that the American Civil Rights Act of 1964 changed behaviour by creating ambiguity in the 'social meaning' of the employment of black labour: white employers who previously faced a stigma if they employed blacks could now do so under the cover of the law; 'by creating this important ambiguity, the law would function to reduce the symbolic costs of hiring blacks'. For Lessig, this example 'demonstrates how a government can change social meaning without having control over social meaning';[40] but it also demonstrates how a change in behaviour might occur without any change in attitudes, since the former racial discrimination might, according to Lessig's hypothesis, have been caused by adaptation to the prevailing discourse rather than by racist attitudes.

The theoretical arguments Lessig deploys in support of this analysis are something of a hotchpotch, including both social constructionism and the

class-inflected socialization theory of Bourdieu, and his suggestion that social meanings work by being tacit invites the kind of objection to cultural explanation made by Stephen Turner.[41] Indeed, the civil rights example relies precisely on the *explicit* change to the discursive environment made by the change in the law. Notwithstanding these theoretical deficiencies, this and other examples of Lessig's remain useful. They remind us of the need to consider the state as an important player in the market of meaning (though not as a determiner of attitudes), just as it is in the capitalist market. But the market analogy itself indicates a limit to this role, and again we get a reminder of it from current events: even the most powerful market actors, including the state, are themselves vulnerable to market forces; a run on the bank has a larger parallel in a run on the currency.[42]

A final illustration of existing work on cultural dynamics again comes from American politics: the widely discussed thesis of 'culture war' advanced by James Hunter. Hunter goes further than Rochon in the direction of a dualistic theory of political culture. He makes a distinction between 'public' and 'private culture' that allows him to focus on the former, understood in terms of 'the symbols and meanings that order the life of the community or region or nation as a whole', consisting of legal norms, 'symbols of national identity', and 'the collective myths surrounding [a nation's] history and future promise'.[43]

This distinction is suggestive, but does not in my view adequately capture the duality of culture. It is, in the first place, only a relative distinction in terms of the *scale* of the setting of discourse, for Hunter understands both public and private culture as 'spheres of symbolic activity' whose essence is '"discourse" or conversation'; they are 'similar in constitution' (p. 53). He touches on an identification of private culture with habits and skills, speaking of 'the rules and platitudes that guide ordinary people through the routines of everyday life' (p. 53), but this formulation nevertheless remains within the framework of the explanatory programme so thoroughly discredited by Wittgenstein and Polanyi.

Nevertheless, although Hunter's analysis, like Rochon's, is based on an inadequately theorized duality of culture (Rochon, we recall, posited without theoretically substantiating a 'dual speed' cultural dynamics), it is productive in terms of our present interest in the dynamics of the discursive dimension of political culture. This is because Hunter's empirical focus is exclusively on one side of his duality, 'public culture', which he expressly defines in discursive terms. Critiques of Hunter's thesis, and his responses to them, also help to clarify the points at issue between existing approaches to cultural dynamics and my own.

Hunter describes the culture war as a successor to the long-standing pattern of interdenominational conflict in American political history. Its distinctiveness lies firstly in the novel cleavage across which it contends. On one side

stands an 'orthodox' position which unites fundamentalists and conservatives across religious denominations (even extending beyond Christianity to Judaism and, in some cases, Islam, though it is likely that this last extension has somewhat abated since Hunter wrote in the 1990s). For orthodoxy, 'moral authority arises from a common commitment to transcendence . . . a dynamic reality that is independent of, prior to, and more powerful than human experience' (p. 120). On the other side, 'progressivism', which can be both religious and post-religious, maintains 'the fundamental conviction that moral truth is perpetually unfolding; that moral truth is a human construction and, therefore, is both conditional and relative; and that moral truths should reflect ethical principles that have the human good as their highest end' (p. 124).

Hunter's distinction of orthodoxy and progressivism could be seen as a restatement of the familiar thesis of secularization, though one that pays due attention to the resistances which that process has encountered. More original, and relevant here, is his emphasis on the particular dynamics of the 'public culture', which go much of the way towards explaining the particular stridency of the culture war. He notes the polarization and mutual intolerance of the public debate on culture war topics such as abortion, and attributes this to a competitive escalation coupled with an effect generated by the *media* of public discourse. Polarization, he says, is

> intensified by and institutionalized through the very media through which that discussion takes place . . . [N]ot only do the categories of public rhetoric become detached from the intentions of the speaker, they also overpower the subtleties of perspective and opinion of the vast majority of citizens who position themselves 'somewhere in the middle' of these debates. (p. 160; emphasis removed)

Writing before the advent of the internet, Hunter finds a key culprit to be the medium of direct mail, which is, in the words of one practitioner, 'a medium of passion' in which 'the more extreme the appeal, the more successful the mail campaign will probably be' (p. 166).[44] Plainly, we find market dynamics here in a quite obvious sense, in that the purpose of direct mail is to 'motivate the person to send some money'. But Hunter's argument is a broader one: that in the media marketplace, 'More time, more space, and greater intellectual reflection just do not offer practical economic pay-off' (p. 168). In the face of such discursive dynamics, 'the question of motives may be irrelevant': 'this extremism and superficiality is the only objectification of the debate that really exists, and, like it or not, it is this language and moral reasoning that defines the terms and limits of popular debate' (p. 170).

Much of the critical response to Hunter's thesis has assumed, to the contrary, that the question of motive is indeed relevant, and that the empirically ascertainable distribution of attitudes will be what confirms or refutes the existence of culture wars.[45] Hunter replies by reasserting that

> The form by which the dynamics of faith and culture get played out most sharply in contemporary America are not the subjective attitudes of independent citizens but rather the competing moral visions in public culture that have evolved and crystallized over the past several decades—the institutions and elites that produce them and the structures of rhetoric by which they are framed and articulated.[46]

Hunter's account of these institutions and structures remains quite preliminary, but that there is a large topic needing to be thoroughly explored, and that this exploration will contribute to an understanding of the fluidity of political culture irrespective of what attitude surveys might tell us, is a persuasive suggestion. I suggest that Hunter's empirical analysis of American 'public culture' illustrates the potential of thinking about cultural dynamics in terms of the market-like dynamics of discourse. Conversely, the theory of the duality of political culture provides a justification for thinking this way that is superior to the one provided by Hunter's merely scalar contrast of 'public' and 'private' discourse.[47]

8.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has been a complement to the preceding one, and together they have sought to derive from the ontological duality of culture an account of the dual dynamics of political culture. The discursive dimension of political culture manifests more fluid dynamics, even though the practical dimension is itself not wholly static. The dynamics of practice were described in terms of the paradigm of skills, resulting in an account of adaptive inertia which I showed could be extrapolated to findings of political-cultural continuity. The skills paradigm already suggests a causal dynamics, in view of the extended time needed to learn skills and the consequent incentive to adapt them to new circumstances.

To derive the causal dynamics of discourse required that we first pay attention to existing claims for the causative properties of discourse. These are numerous and varied, ranging from Herder's and Dilthey's focus on cultural 'expressions' to Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the Foucauldian critique I have called discursivism. I looked at Foucault's idea of 'discursive practice' and argued that not just terminologically (where it is harmless enough) but as an explanatory programme it collapses practice into discourse, making the causal properties of discourse present by definition, instead of revealing them by investigation. A converse example of the radical separation of discourse and practice, Archer's theory of the relationship between 'cultural system' and 'socio-cultural interaction', had the opposite defect. The 'cultural system' is understood as a realm of objective logical relations between

propositions. But this just makes wider the gulf between discourse and practice, and more mysterious how discourse could have any causal efficacy.

Instead I suggested an indirect causal pathway for discourse that did not contradict the implications of the duality of culture by supposing that discourse creates effects by virtue of its meaning. Meaning is established in discourse, and is as a result fluid; but the fluidity is not resistant to analysis, and nor is it made analytically tractable by being reduced to externalities such as the ruling class. It is self-generating, like the fluidity of the market. This analogy enables an understanding *both* of the reality-constituting role of discourse, which provides an 'objective', even though humanly produced and sustained, environment to which agents have to adapt, *and* of the combination of stability and fluidity which discourse actually manifests.

I then extended this market paradigm to actual discussions of political-cultural change. I showed first its compatibility with the findings of the 'spiral of silence' theory (which I had previously introduced as a source of problems for the theory of attitudes that provides the methodology of positivist political culture research). I then discussed Rochon's theory of cultural change, which partly prefigures the theory of the duality of culture but remains hampered by the positivistic theory of attitudes, Lessig's examples of change in 'social meanings', and finally Hunter's thesis of culture wars. The last still falls short of embracing the theory of the duality of political culture and its dual dynamics, but more usefully it explores discursive dynamics with an explicit distancing from the theory of attitudes. Predictably, some critics have been unwilling to recognize that its explanatory intention deviated so far from the positivist mainstream.

These examples of the application of the market model of meaning and the fluid dynamics of discourse it implies to some of the issues confronted by political culture research when it seeks to deal with the problem of change and conflict in political culture are, like those I mentioned in Chapter 7, illustrative rather than exhaustive. They are designed to illustrate the potential of the account of political-cultural change I have provided. In the first half of this book I showed the necessity of a theory of political culture. In the second half I have produced an account of the dual dynamics of political culture that can be theoretically derived from an ontology of culture, as opposed to being merely observed in selected instances. The illustrations I have presented in this and the preceding chapter are sufficient, I hope, to demonstrate the fruitfulness of the theory, without by any means representing the whole of its prospective yield.

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Conclusion

Although I have noted some suggestions to the contrary, it is I think quite widely accepted that the concept of political culture is deeply problematic. Much of the problem is the very obviousness of the idea that 'politics' must have a fundamental relationship to the more general 'culture'. Being obvious, this idea invites the attempt to make it more rigorous, whereupon its obviousness begins to look like an impediment. It is difficult, however broadly one construes the requirement, to make the study of political culture 'scientific', and the suspicion grows that it is just the kind of common-sense idea that science or systematic thought must ultimately dispense with. We thus arrive at Judith Shklar's paradox of the simultaneous utility and disrepute of political culture, or Jeffrey Goldfarb's observation, 'can't live with it, can't live without it'.

There is no doubt that political-cultural explanation often takes the form of a 'just so' story, of the form: setting *A* has *x*-type politics because it has an *x*-type political culture, setting *B* has found it hard to adopt *x*-type politics because it has a *y*-type political culture, or, in a more dynamic implementation, the politics of setting *C* has changed from *x*-type to *y*-type because its political culture first made that change. My starting point has been that to recognize the weakness of such explanations does not oblige us to abandon the concept of political culture; it obliges us to improve it. I do not see how such an attempt can amount to anything other than the development of a theory of political culture. What is needed is a better understanding of what political culture actually is, and of how it has the causal efficacy imputed to it.

Embarking on such a project invites objections both to theory per se, and to a theory *in particular* of political culture. Among the former one could count the positivist insistence that once conceptualization, operationalization, and hypothesis-construction have been done, any theoretical remainder could only be metaphysics—which it is the mission of positivism to expunge. Interpretivism opposes positivism, but is even less sympathetic to theory, seeing it as a form of imperialism. And that imperialist tendencies have been identified even in interpretivism itself does not by any means open the door to theory, unless it be the 'theory' that simply insists on that identification, the 'theory' of discursivism.

A theory of political culture seems *particularly* objectionable just because of the generalization-limiting use that political culture has always had. Even before one gets to positivism or interpretivism as explicit methodologies, one seems to be stymied by the apparent requirement to produce a theory of

why there cannot be a theory. This is perhaps the basic reason why political culture has often appeared to be the poor relation among explanatory programmes, allowed, as a 'residual variable', to get the explanatory scraps, but shoved out of the way by more theoretically self-confident competitors like rational choice theory, Marxism, or discursivism when the real meat of explanation is on the table.

In this book I have sought to circumvent these objections. But one cannot simply do this by assertion: it is necessary to show the route of the circumvention. Thus a large part of my effort has been to investigate the ways in which existing treatments of political culture have impeded the development of theory. I use the word 'treatments' in order to encompass both approaches which place political culture at the centre of their attention and those which seek to displace it. Within each of these, we can distinguish between approaches which explicitly advance theory, by seeking to specify causal relationships, and those which deny their own theoretical or explanatory character. Figure 2 illustrates the way in which I addressed the cross-cutting pattern of explicit and denied theory versus centring and displacement of political culture in the first half of this book.

In Chapter 1 I discussed the impediments to a theory of political culture that were put in place by the disciplinary setting in which political culture research was inaugurated and which yielded the mainstream of its uses. Behaviouralism was the methodological implementation of positivism within political science, and the concept of political culture represented the attempt to bring under the aegis of a comparative science of politics what seemed to mark its limit, namely cultural difference. This bold ambition deployed theoretical resources from social theory, and crucially added to these the method of the attitude survey. Positivist nominalism, known in political science as operationalism, provided the methodological support for the new programme of research, enabling the reach into adjacent disciplines which was necessary for its launch then to be quickly curtailed, for once the flow of data began, it could be plausible to insist that the founders 'got the concept exactly right'. Thereafter, the task was simply to accumulate measurements and to use them to test empirical hypotheses, with conceptual enquiry suspended.

Against this view, I drew on the realist claim that to speak of causal relations is necessarily to speak of causal mechanism, so that it is not only possible but

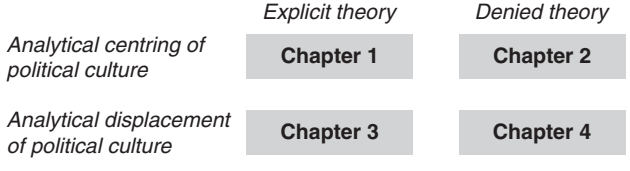


Figure 2. Structure of the argument of Chapters 1–4.

in fact essential to ask what political culture is, beyond its operational measurement, and how it works. I differed, however, from the claim of at least some realists that posing these questions places the questioner in an extra-empirical realm of a priori ontological posits. Instead, I took the realist critique of positivism to be a licence to look not beyond the empirical in general, but beyond political science, and to overcome the barriers that what I called 'disciplinary positivism' had put up.

Positivism did however have the merit of being explicit about its aim to provide causal explanation. In Chapter 2 I discussed a long line of argument that, with differing degrees of radicalism, has taken issue with this aim. Originating with Herder's 'culturalist' objections to the emergence of social science in the Enlightenment, this reaction mutated in response to the consolidation of naturalistic social science and its positivistic methodological justification during the nineteenth century, reaching a high pitch of intellectual intensity at the turn of the twentieth century in the influential work of Dilthey and Weber. Dilthey sought to give the human sciences an objective philosophical foundation, while Weber, reacting against the mystical elements he saw in Dilthey's response, instead attempted a reconciliation of interpretation with causal explanation in history and sociology. Neither solution succeeded. In the twentieth century, the reaction was taken forward in ways that echoed both Dilthey's and Weber's arguments, the latter usually more prominently advertised. It culminated in Geertz's interpretivism, whose impact across the social sciences, and on political culture research, was enormous. His position evolved into a programmatic anti-theoreticism which not only distinguished a positivist 'experimental science in search of law' from 'an interpretive one in search of meaning', but also denounced the former as 'megalomania'. I argued, however, that this anti-theoreticism was a 'denial', and that there is a return of the repressed causal explanation as soon as metaphors like 'webs of significance' in which 'man is suspended' are unpacked. Plainly, though, such metaphors, which amount to a denied theory, are a poor replacement for an explicit theory of political culture.

A second stage in my attempt to remove the barriers to an adequate theory of political culture involved going beyond political culture research itself and considering rival contenders in the field of political explanation. Here again we can distinguish those which explicitly aspire to explanatory or causal theory and those which deny that they have this character. Among the former, I discussed in Chapter 3 two forms of 'materialist' displacement of culture, rational choice theory and Marxism. In methodological terms rational choice theory inherits from positive economics an extreme nominalist form of positivism, manifest in its indifference to the plausibility of its assumptions, though in economics itself this positivism is under strong challenge. I focused attention on the considerable overlap between rational choice and political-cultural explanations, which points towards the necessity of getting beyond

the sterile alternation between them that occurs when the constraints of disciplinary positivism are respected and political culture is compared with material circumstances in a contest of macro-variables. Marxism's theory of culture emerged in a series of stages within a basically materialist outlook. From early on, culture was understood in terms of cultural products manufactured in specialized parts of the means of production, with the consequence that analytical focus was displaced onto the class structure. Efforts, notably by Gramsci, to return attention to a more immediate emergence of culture from material life, which was a resource provided by Marx's earliest formulations, did not escape the constraint presented by structural materialism.

Disaffection with Marxist analysis by those who remained loyal to its radical politics gave rise to the politicized form of interpretivism that in Chapter 4 I termed *discursivism*. Discursivism found Marxism's displacement of culture onto class to be its chief defect, but while rejecting this materialist foundation it sought to save the critical implication of the Marxist critique of ideology. In this effort, the work of Foucault is fundamental, giving rise both to the explicit 'post-Marxism' of Laclau and Mouffe and to a variety of reflexive critiques of cultural interpretation that have convulsed the disciplines, such as area studies and anthropology, which have deployed that approach. Here again we find a derogation of theory, which is exemplified for these critics by Marxist class structuralism. Their methods were interpretive, since their critique of Marxism certainly did not make them the friends of positivism, and like other interpretivists they operated under a rubric of denial. Discursivism represents a double displacement for this reason: it displaces culture (politically) onto its functions, in the process devouring its own interpretive precursors, and it then mystifies these functions by subsuming them under an interpretive grasp that supposedly reveals their totality. An idea like 'system of dispersion', far more indeed than the idea of 'webs of significance', only dramatizes the extent to which one must submit to the interpretive virtuosity of the discursivists in order to participate in their analytical enterprise.

The arguments of Chapters 1–4 therefore establish both the necessity and the possibility of a more adequate theory of political culture. It must improve on the marginalized theory of positivist political culture research while retaining reference to empirical findings for its support; it must take seriously, and not deny explicitly only to readmit implicitly through metaphor, the question of the causal properties and implications of political culture; it must, while accepting the possibility of political uses of culture, avoid displacing the question of how culture has political effects onto structural or material conditions that are supposedly explained without reference to culture, or onto an unspecified 'power' whose unity and causal efficacy is supposedly (but quite mysteriously) established by discourse itself. We lack an adequate understanding of the ontology of political culture, thanks to positivist nominalism coupled with interpretivist contextualism, and in consequence we lack also an adequate

understanding of the causal dynamics of political culture, and it is no use looking to the established alternatives to political culture research to provide such understanding.

How, then, should we go about constructing a theory of political culture? My strategy was to look again at the alternatives *within* and *to* political culture research, to find the commonalities that underlie their noisy and interminable contestation, and by directing critical attention to this fundamental level to find both an explanation of what has gone wrong and resources for doing better. I began in Chapter 5 by identifying an assumption that unites positivist and interpretive political culture research and which is manifest far more widely in the Western philosophical tradition, in 'folk psychology' (i.e. our unquestioned everyday explanations of human behaviour), and, bridging and uniting philosophy and psychology, in the methodology of social science. The assumption concerns the possibility of identifying the sources of behaviour in factors that are *intelligible*. The philosophical tradition manifests this assumption by virtue of its pursuit of clarity and transparency in knowledge, which can be recognized in philosophies as widely different as the idealism of Plato, the rationalism of Descartes, and the verificationism of the logical positivists. Folk psychology manifests it in its reliance on 'intentional explanation', which locates the source of behaviour in attitudes, values, etc., that can be expressed in propositional terms. In order for this to be possible, we have to know ourselves and our motives with at least potentially full clarity, even if we might need the assistance of statistical analysis to discover the underlying values, or psychoanalysis to reveal our neurotically concealed true motives. In the methodology of social science, and particularly in political culture research, these assumptions underlie both the deployment of the attitude survey method by positivists *and* the deployment of semiotic 'reading' of culture by interpretivists.

It is difficult to step back far enough from the assumption of the coincidence of causality and intelligibility (a view of which is also impeded by the interpretive denial of interest in causation, which wrongly suggests a division of labour between causal explainers and semiotic interpreters) to gain critical purchase on it, as it is so deeply and widely embedded in the intellectual heritage we bring to social science and to political culture research. Fortunately, we are assisted in making this difficult step by the work of philosophers and psychologists themselves. An intermittent critique of the philosophical tradition from within its own ranks has pointed to the limits of philosophy and the magnitude of the field of human life that lies beyond these limits. In the twentieth century, a degree of precision was brought to such observations by the dissenting philosophers I discussed in Chapter 5, Wittgenstein and Polanyi, as well as Searle who has developed their insights. Any such critical or anti-philosophical philosophy faces the challenge of even expressing itself, and this in part contributes to the difficulty of understanding what it is saying.

But I have argued that it does not mandate the silence which Wittgenstein's early work advised as to matters beyond the grasp of philosophy—after all, Wittgenstein himself only remained silent for a while.

To the contrary, the work of these dissenting philosophers points not just towards an ontological specification of culture, in terms of a duality of discourse and practice, but also, by virtue of the critical philosophy's own empirical character, typified by its use of homely examples, towards a large field of potentially fruitful empirical research. The devastating critique mounted by Wittgenstein and Polanyi of the conventional assumptions that our capacity to follow a rule is generated by our understanding of what the rule means, and that the prosecution of scientific research is enabled by adherence to methodological rules, does not leave the relevant capacities shrouded in an impenetrable 'fog', as one of our sources suggested. We can look to psychology for both empirical substantiation of the dualistic theory of culture and for resources with which to investigate it empirically. Chapter 6 looked at psychological findings that echo the dissenting philosophers' doubts about our ability to know ourselves, and at the same time bear directly and critically on some of the methodological implications of the assumption that we have that ability, specifically the attitude survey. The theory of 'dual attitudes' suggests that while we can report attitudes as justification of our actions, these are not typically the cause of action, which we do not usually know. Furthermore the assumption of the self-transparency of the intentional agent may be brought into question not, as it was by behaviourism, by programmatic insistence that such matters cannot be investigated scientifically, but in quite the opposite way, by scientific investigation itself, for instance the study of subliminal priming effects or the detailed measurement of the onset of intentions to act.

The dualistic ontology thus defines culture in terms of the dimensions of practice and discourse (what Polanyi termed the tacit and articulate dimensions of knowledge) and insists on the mutual irreducibility of these dimensions. In Chapters 7 and 8 I showed that the utility of this analysis for the development of a theory of political culture was its contribution of an account of the causal dynamics of political culture. The frequent observation that political culture has both static and kinetic aspects has hitherto lacked a theoretical basis, and the evident contradiction between the role of political culture in producing resistance or persistence in political life, on the one hand, and dynamic political shifts, on the other, has not been resolved. On the basis of the dualistic ontology of culture, I argued, we can for the first time make sense of the dual dynamics of political culture.

The dimension of practice yields the inertial dynamics of political culture. In Chapter 7 I analysed this dimension in terms of the analytical paradigm of skills which could be derived from some of the arguments of Wittgenstein and Searle but received a more thorough discussion in the work of Polanyi. I dealt first with some existing treatments of practice, or practical wisdom, which

have not sufficiently discriminated practice from culture as a whole. I then applied the paradigm of skills to the problems of resistance and persistence dealt with by existing political culture research. Skills are characterized by an *adaptive inertia*, which can be studied in laboratory as well as field settings. Such study offers insight into the limits of discursive control and the ways in which practices extend into new settings, accounting for instance for the peculiarities and variations of post-communist capitalism. With the concept of adaptive inertia yielded by the analytic paradigm of skills, we can therefore gain a fuller understanding of the resistance and persistence addressed by the concept of political culture, improving on the merely descriptive accounts that have hitherto been provided.

The causal dynamics of the discursive dimension of political culture were my topic in Chapter 8. Here the discussion had to contend with the existing (though a denied) causal theory of discursivism, which says that discourse has political effects *ipso facto*. My dualistic argument as to the limits of discourse entails rejecting that claim, since it forces us to distinguish the political reach from the effective political grasp of discourse. But the dualistic argument then threatens to eliminate the causal efficacy of discourse altogether, by rendering discourse epiphenomenal. I looked at an attempt to capture the causal efficacy of discourse in terms of its logical properties, but in the analysis of objective cultural logic the gap between discourse and practice threatens to become unbridgeable. I returned instead, again, to the philosophical sources, and drew on an interpretation of Wittgenstein that located the normativity of discourse in the discursive creation of new objective facts, on the model of the objective means of economic communication represented by money. These new facts, the established meanings with which we are obliged to communicate, constrain behaviour indirectly: we have to adapt to them (of course using our inarticulable skills). The 'market model of meaning' is analytically fruitful, as it yields an understanding of the fluid dynamics of discourse—once, that is, the static implications of the market analogy (which the economic orthodoxy of competitive equilibrium has generated) are cleared away. Current economic circumstances (I refer to the global financial crisis that began in 2007 and continues apace) have perhaps one benefit, in that they enable an appreciation of chaotic market dynamics to come to the fore. These provide a model for the dynamics of discourse.

The structure of the latter four chapters is summarized in Figure 3.

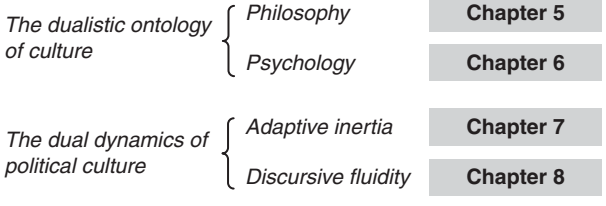


Figure 3. Structure of the argument of Chapters 5–8.

Political culture research has been underway for nearly sixty years, without, I have demonstrated (and many have suspected) the benefit of an adequate theory, though of course it could not have come into existence at all without some theoretical fragments, such as the 'legacy theory' of normative functionalism that the positivist mainstream borrowed from sociology, or the unacknowledged theory that allows interpretivists to know what part of the potentially limitless context they must examine in order to read a culture. Patent contradictions in the explanatory use of political culture have compounded the suspicion that, scientifically, it does not tell us more than common sense does. Indeed, that suspicion is not misplaced. But I have suggested that when one looks more closely, unimpeded by nominalism or theoretical denial, one can find resources for getting well past what common sense tells us about the nature and dynamics of political culture and its causal implications.

To think about political culture in terms of the dimensions of practice and discourse, whose relationship is indeed already inherently political, is to put aside the assumption that political culture is primarily a matter of what people think, which explains everything else, and to promote instead the suggestion that it is a matter of what people do and what they say, and that in these realms of practice and discourse one can find causal mechanisms that better explain the dynamics of political culture: its inertial and fluid properties, and its relationship to resistance and persistence as well as to conflict and change. Of course, the empirical field opened up by my proposal of the study of skills as a paradigm of practice, and market dynamics as a paradigm of the dynamics of discourse, remains to be fully explored in political culture research. Thus the theory of political culture I have presented is intended not as the last word on political culture, but as the foundation for a new phase of its development as an unambiguously central and indispensable concept of political science.

I will conclude by suggesting some wider implications of the foregoing argument. These concern the condition of *disciplinarity*. It has been a subtext of my argument that disciplinary divisions have been more cost than benefit to political culture research and the project of political culture theory. Under the label 'disciplinarity' one must also of course include sub-disciplines, schools of thought, and 'research programmes', the fissiparous multiplication of which provides decreasing incentive and opportunity for mutual communication. All the incentives, it seems to me, point towards greater specialization and the deterrence of genuinely interdisciplinary work, notwithstanding the lip-service that is often paid to it. With interdisciplinary work one leaves a comfort zone, and seeks to make progress without the unthinking self-confidence provided by disciplinary training, or the security of a network of supporters and promoters. Influential too for the condition of disciplinarity is a conception of the 'cumulation' of knowledge that, although it is programmatically associated with positivist social science, is no less evident in the ever

more self-contained specialization of the followers of various discursivist philosophers. Often, I suspect (though who really has the time or capacity to find out?), what thus accumulates is mere repetition.

I have ventured outside the comfort zone of disciplinarity while researching and writing the present book, and from positions inside the zone its parts may well deserve criticism on the grounds of their incompleteness. I would only ask that the whole should be judged. I certainly value not only the comforts but also the manifold achievements of the well-defended encampments that I have visited in the course of my argument. But it has seemed to me that a theory of political culture, particularly, could not be produced in any other than this peripatetic manner. And more generally I have wished to issue, by demonstration, a plea for a more ecumenical and open-minded style of work, which does not however descend into mere juxtaposition or 'triangulation'. I leave it to the reader to judge the force of the demonstration.

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Notes

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Mehran Kamrava, *Understanding Comparative Politics: A Framework for Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 58.
2. George Steinmetz, 'Introduction: Culture and the State', in George Steinmetz (ed.), *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 1–49, p. 19.
3. Quoted in Harry Eckstein, 'Culture as a Foundation Concept for the Social Sciences', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 8, 4 (October 1996), 471–97, p. 473.
4. Judith N. Shklar, *Montesquieu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 106, 125.
5. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, abridged edn (Newbury Park, CA and London: Sage, 1989); Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba (eds), *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965). For a comparison of these classic works see Ruth Lane, 'Political Culture: Residual Category or General Theory?' *Comparative Political Studies*, 25, 3 (October 1992), 362–87.
6. For example Brian M. Barry, *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy*, new edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 75–98 and Carole Pateman, 'Political Culture, Political Structure and Political Change', *British Journal of Political Science*, 1, 3 (July 1971), 291–305.
7. See for example Archie Brown and Jack Gray (eds), *Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States* (London: Macmillan, 1977); Robert C. Tucker, 'Culture, Political Culture, and Communist Society', *Political Science Quarterly*, 88, 2 (June 1973), 173–90; Stephen White, *Political Culture and Soviet Politics* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979); and Archie Brown (ed.), *Political Culture and Communist Studies* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1984).
8. Methodology, in my usage, is not a fancy synonym for method, but is a branch of philosophy that deals with the justification of methods. However, 'methodical' has a use that precludes the easy extension of this distinction to cognate words.
9. See for instance William H. Reisinger, 'The Renaissance of a Rubric: Political Culture as Concept and Theory', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 7, 4 (Winter 1995), 328–52; Robert W. Jackman and Ross A. Miller, 'A Renaissance of Political Culture?' *American Journal of Political Science*, 40, 3 (August 1996), 632–59; and Robert W. Jackman and Ross A. Miller, 'The Poverty of Political Culture', *American Journal of Political Science*, 40, 3 (August 1996), 697–716.
10. See for instance Lane, 'Political Culture', Ronald Inglehart, 'The Renaissance of Political Culture', *American Political Science Review*, 82, 4 (December 1988), 1203–30; Edward N. Muller and Mitchell A. Seligson, 'Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationships', *American Political Science Review*, 89, 3 (September 1994), 635–52; Lisa Wedeen, 'Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities

for Political Science', *American Political Science Review*, 96, 4 (December 2002), 713–28; Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); and Lawrence E. Harrison, *The Central Liberal Truth: How Politics Can Change a Culture and Save It from Itself* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

11. See Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990) and Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), as well as for instance Milton Rokeach (ed.), *Understanding Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 1979) and Shalom H. Schwartz, 'Are There Universal Aspects in the Structure and Contents of Human Values?' *Journal of Social Issues*, 50, 4 (1994), 19–45.
12. Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p. 19, emphasis added; Barbara Misztal, *Trust in Modern Societies: The Search for the Bases of Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996); and Mark E. Warren (ed.), *Democracy and Trust* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
13. That is not to mention a variety of less mainstream ideas, such as 'public philosophy' or 'social imaginary', which at least in part offer to refurbish the concept of political culture, usually without any connection being noticed. 'Social imaginary significations', for example, have been defined as 'the dimension of instituted meaning that infuses and holds every society together', which recalls the Parsonian theory on which much of political culture research has been based, while giving it brand differentiation with a new name. Ingerid S. Straume, 'The Political Imaginary of Global Capitalism', in Ingerid Straume and J. F. Humphrey (eds), *Depoliticization: The Political Imaginary of Global Capitalism* (Malmö: NSU Press, 2011), p. 27.
14. Jeffrey C. Goldfarb, *Reinventing Political Culture: The Power of Culture* versus *the Culture of Power* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012), p. 39; emphasis removed.
15. In addition to several of the sources already mentioned, see for example Richard W. Wilson, *Compliance Ideologies: Rethinking Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Margaret R. Somers, 'What's Political or Cultural about Political Culture and the Public Sphere? Towards an Historical Sociology of Concept Formation', *Sociological Theory*, 13, 2 (July 1995), 113–44; Margaret R. Somers, 'Narrating and Naturalizing Civil Society and Citizenship Theory: The Place of Political Culture and the Public Sphere', *Sociological Theory*, 13, 3 (November 1995), 228–74; Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning* (London: Hurst, 2006); and Stephen Welch, *The Concept of Political Culture* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1993). The self-styled 'cultural theory' launched by Aaron Wildavsky on the basis of anthropologist Mary Douglas's thesis that only four basic types of culture exist, defined by two orthogonal dimensions, has probably been the most empirically fertile of these theoretical proposals. See for example Aaron Wildavsky, 'Choosing Preferences by Constructing Institutions: A Cultural Theory of Preference Formation', *American*

Political Science Review, 81, 1 (March 1987), 3–21; Michael Thompson et al., *Cultural Theory* (Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview, 1990); Richard J. Ellis, *American Political Cultures* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Richard Ellis and Michael Thompson, *Culture Matters: Essays in Honor of Aaron Wildavsky* (Boulder, CO and Oxford: Westview, 1997); and more recently the symposium 'A Cultural Theory of Politics', edited by Brendan Swedlow, in *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 44, 4 (October 2011), 703–48. I criticized its typological analysis of culture and its account of cultural dynamics in my previous book (pp. 141–7), I still think quite adequately. To summarize, the four-place typology of culture is at best descriptive (often indeed *re*descriptive) rather than explanatory, while its account of change in 'cultural biases' as a result of 'cultural surprises', experiences which do not fit the expectations of the cultural type, leaves little scope for explaining how culture could constrain action, or indeed survive for long the destructive contact with 'experience' that this theory of cultural change implies. For a summary statement of these features of 'cultural theory' see Brendan Swedlow, 'Editor's Introduction: Cultural Theory's Contribution to Political Science', *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 44, 4 (October 2011), 703–10, p. 704.

16. While interest in the question may not extend far beyond the autobiographical, I will venture a comment on the relationship of that book to the present one. In *The Concept of Political Culture* and earlier work I drew on the sociological phenomenology of Alfred Schutz for my account of political culture. Understanding phenomenology as the attempt to look closely and intensively at what is normally taken for granted, my present argument still follows the phenomenological imperative. Moreover, the germ of the dualistic theory of political culture I will advance already appeared in the earlier book, in the chapter on national identity (ch. 7), though its distinction between 'nominal' and 'phenomenological' national identity used terminology that I now think is misleading. However, certain responses to the book, as well as further reading, have led me to think that the phenomenological label carries too much risk of being assimilated to the interpretive or hermeneutic. To put it more positively, I have found that the phenomenological imperative is served in a more empirically productive way by the philosophers on whom I will principally rely, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Michael Polanyi (who, however, himself draws on phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty).
17. See for instance Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans (eds), *Social Movements and Culture* (London: UCL Press, 1995) and Doug McAdam et al. (eds), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), part III.
18. See for instance James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).
19. See, among other outputs of this project, Harrison and Huntington, *Culture Matters*, and Harrison, *Central Liberal Truth*.
20. Harrison, *Central Liberal Truth*, p. xvi.

21. Beatrice Whiting, 'The Problem of the Packaged Variable', in Klaus F. Riegel and John A. Meacham (eds), *The Developing Individual in a Changing World, Volume I: Historical and Cultural Issues* (Chicago, IL: Aldine; The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1976), 303–9.
22. Harrison, *Central Liberal Truth*, p. 193; emphasis removed.
23. The kitchen-table conversations of certain dissidents in Poland in the 1970s, to take Goldfarb's example, certainly 'prefigured' in some ways the eventual democratic transition of 1989. But we can assume that at any given time a myriad of 'dissenting' conversations are happening around a myriad of kitchen tables, in any regime short of the perfect totalitarian one imagined by George Orwell. The question for political culture research then becomes: what makes some of these conversations, and not numerous others, important; how do they bring about effects?
24. It involves derogating precursors of their position within political culture research itself, about whom Chabal and Daloz write: 'Their reference to the interpretativist approach, and even more to Geertz, is often gratuitous, token or even incoherent, since their notion of political "science" is one he always denounced.' Chabal and Daloz, *Culture Troubles*, p. 91.
25. A brief discussion by Bernard Yack of 'contextualism' in the field of political thought offers the relevant observation that '*The* context of a political discourse is, of course, something which non-omniscient creatures can only approximate', and that 'imaginative reconstructions [of the 'full context'] depend on the previous construction of explanatory contexts for the meanings that they attempt to integrate'. Bernard Yack, *The Longing for Total Revolution: Philosophic Sources of Social Discontent from Rousseau to Marx and Nietzsche* (Berkeley, CA and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), p. xxi. In other words, the context cannot define itself.
26. For an overview see Peter T. Manicas, *A Realist Philosophy of Social Science: Explanation and Understanding* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
27. See for instance Mario Bunge, 'How Does It Work? The Search for Explanatory Mechanisms', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 34, 2 (June 2004), 182–210.
28. Colin Hay, *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 12–13, 92.
29. Emily Hauptmann, 'Political Science/Political Theory: Defining "Theory" in Postwar Political Science', in George Steinmetz (ed.), *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and Its Epistemological Others* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 207–32.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, new edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 383.
2. Auguste Comte, 'The Positive Philosophy and the Study of Society', in Patrick Gardiner (ed.), *Theories of History: Readings from Classical and Contemporary Sources* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959), 75–9, p. 75.

3. David Hume, *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 73–7 (§§ 58–60).
4. Leszek Kolakowski, *Positivist Philosophy: From Hume to the Vienna Circle* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 11–19.
5. Kolakowski, *Positivist Philosophy*, p. 15.
6. A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp. 142–4.
7. Carl G. Hempel, 'The Function of General Laws in History', *Journal of Philosophy*, 39, 2 (January 1942), 35–48, reprinted in Gardiner, *Theories of History*, 344–56.
8. See Gardiner, *Theories of History* for the initial set of responses, and for a discussion Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, 3 vols, vol. 1 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 111–20.
9. Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
10. See for example Popper, *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, p. 29.
11. Thomas S. Kuhn, 'Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research?' in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (eds), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1–23.
12. Hans Reichenbach, *Experience and Prediction: An Analysis of the Foundation and the Structure of Knowledge* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 6–7.
13. Russell Keat and John Urry, *Social Theory as Science*, 2nd edn (London and Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 27–30. See also Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, 3rd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); Mario Bunge, 'How Does It Work? The Search for Explanatory Mechanisms', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 34, 2 (June 2004), 182–210; Peter Halfpenny, 'Laws, Causality and Statistics: Positivism, Interpretivism and Realism', *Sociological Theory*, 5, 1 (Spring 1987), 33–6; Colin Hay, *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002); and Peter T. Manicas, *A Realist Philosophy of Social Science: Explanation and Understanding* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
14. Kolakowski, *Positivist Philosophy*, p. 12.
15. Rupert Read and Kenneth Richman (eds), *The New Hume Debate*, revised edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).
16. Stephen Kemp and John Holmwood, 'Realism, Regularity and Social Explanation', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 33, 2 (June 2003), 165–87; Wendy Olson and Jamie Morgan, 'A Critical Epistemology of Analytical Statistics: Addressing the Sceptical Realist', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 35, 3 (September 2005), 255–84. See my comments in the Introduction (p. 6) on the realist proposal of Colin Hay that we need to begin with ontological posits before empirical research can get underway.
17. Arthur Fine, *The Shaky Game: Einstein, Realism and the Quantum Theory*, 2nd edn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

18. Thomas L. Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority*, 2nd edn (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).
19. Gabriel Almond, 'The Intellectual History of the Civic Culture Concept', in Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba (eds), *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Newbury Park, CA and London: Sage, 1989), 1–36; see also Gabriel A. Almond, *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science* (Newbury Park, CA and London: Sage, 1990). The 'whiggish' teleology of Almond's retrospect is epitomized by his observation that 'a few diagrams with causal arrows would turn Aristotle's theory of constitutional government, and its cultural components, into a model that would meet the contemporary standards of the *American Political Science Review*'. Almond, 'Intellectual History', p. 4. On the 'whig interpretation' which makes history into a progressive march towards the present, see Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1968).
20. David M. Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science: Politics, Scholarship, and Democracy* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 64.
21. Robert A. Dahl, 'The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest', *American Political Science Review*, 55, 4 (December 1961), 763–72.
22. Quoted in Dahl, 'Behavioral Approach', p. 763; emphasis removed.
23. Dahl, 'Behavioral Approach', p. 767.
24. Dahl, 'Behavioral Approach', p. 765.
25. Dennis Kavanagh, *Political Science and Political Behaviour* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), pp. 3–4.
26. Gabriel A. Almond, 'Comparative Political Systems', *Journal of Politics*, 18, 3 (August 1956), 391–409, p. 396.
27. Bernard Crick, *The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1964).
28. The average rate of increase in the number of independent states in the four decades up to 1939 was 5.5 per decade. In the 1940s and 1950s it was 12.5 per decade. Moreover the inevitability of virtually complete decolonization was evident, making foreseeable the dramatic increase of forty-three states in the decade to follow. Data derived from J. Denis Derbyshire and Ian Derbyshire, *Political Systems of the World*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Helicon, 1996), pp. 5–6.
29. Dahl, 'Behavioral Approach', p. 769.
30. Almond, 'Comparative Political Systems', pp. 393–6. I will discuss shortly the place of Weber in Parsons's social theory, and in Chapter 2 Weber's contribution to the interpretive alternative in political culture research. For now it is sufficient to note that Weber was initially received in American social science largely through the interpretation of him by Parsons. See Jere Cohen et al., 'De-Parsonizing Weber: A Critique of Parsons' Interpretation of Weber's Sociology', *American Sociological Review*, 40, 2 (April 1975), 229–41.
31. For an early report on the critical appreciation of Parsons see Jonathan H. Turner and Leonard Beeghley, 'Current Folklore in the Criticism of Parsonian Action Theory', *Sociological Inquiry*, 44, 1 (Winter 1974), 47–63. Parsons's own claim that his programme was about the reconciliation of what he called 'positivist' and

'idealist' theories of society is emphasized in John Holmwood, *Founding Sociology? Talcott Parsons and the Idea of General Theory* (London and New York: Longman, 1996) and by Alan Dawe, 'Theories of Social Action', in Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet (eds), *A History of Sociological Analysis* (New York: Basic Books; London: Heinemann, 1979), 362–417. Holmwood maintains that the project was doomed from the outset, while others have suggested that it was subverted as his work evolved (John Finley Scott, 'The Changing Foundations of the Parsonian Action Scheme', *American Sociological Review*, 28, 5 (October 1963), 716–35; see also Turner and Beeghley, 'Current Folklore'). For recent re-evaluations see Bryan S. Turner and Roland Robertson (eds), *Talcott Parsons: Theorist of Modernity* (London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1991).

32. 'The difficulty with the term *process* is that it means any patterning of action through time. In contrast to *process*, the concept of *system* implies a *totality* of relevant units, an interdependence between the interactions of units, and a certain stability in the interaction of these units (perhaps best described as a changing equilibrium).' Almond, 'Comparative Political Systems', p. 393. For critiques of Parsons's concepts of system and equilibrium see Alexander Gerschenkron, 'Figures of Speech in Social Sciences', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 118, 5 (October 1974), 431–48, pp. 443–7 and Walter Buckley, *Sociology and Modern Systems Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 8–16.
33. Quoted in Helmut R. Wagner, 'Displacement of Scope: A Problem of the Relationship between Small-Scale and Large-Scale Sociological Theories', *American Journal of Sociology*, 69, 6 (May 1964), 571–84, p. 557 and Margaret A. Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 34.
34. Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers*, 2 vols, vol. 1 (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1968).
35. Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, trans. W. D. Halls (Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: Free Press, 1984), pp. 38–9.
36. Durkheim's position is encapsulated in his theory of suicide, which denies that personal motives for suicide have any role in the explanation of the social fact of *rates* of suicide: these must be explained by other social facts, in this case the normative condition of *anomie*. Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, ed. George Simpson, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (New York and London: Free Press, 1961).
37. Francesca M. Cancian, *What Are Norms? A Study of Beliefs and Action in a Maya Community* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 5.
38. A possible source of confusion is Parsons's own understanding of positivism. For him it meant not only a naturalistic mode of explanation, but one which located the explanation of human behaviour in facts external to human minds. He sees Weber as anti-positivist, therefore, not because of his methodological interpretivism (which I will discuss in the next chapter), but because of his 'idealist' emphasis on internal motives as causes. In terms of the methodological conception of positivism I adopted earlier in this chapter, the translation of Parsonian social theory into political culture research could be positivist without contradicting

anything in Parsons other than his terminology. On Parsons's idea of positivism see Holmwood, *Founding Sociology*, pp. 35–40.

39. See in particular Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959).
40. David Lockwood, 'Some Remarks on "The Social System"', *British Journal of Sociology*, 7, 2 (June 1956), 134–46, p. 137.
41. Dennis Wrong points out in a famous article that Parsons failed to acknowledge that the psychic categories posited by Freud were essentially conflictual, and therefore not an appropriate place to site the source of social order, even allowing what many psychologists would not, that Freud's categories actually have empirical referents. Dennis H. Wrong, 'The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology', *American Sociological Review*, 26, 2 (April 1961), 183–93, p. 187.
42. The difference in spelling has not always been consistently recognized, especially in earlier usage, but for the sake of clarity I will adhere to it strictly.
43. B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 24.
44. B. F. Skinner, 'Selection by Consequences', *Science*, 213, 4507 (31 July 1981), 501–4, p. 502.
45. For many psychologists the behaviourist programme foundered on the attempt to analyse language use. The capacity for novel production that is implicit in language was among the important factors that, according to an influential review by Noam Chomsky of B. F. Skinner's book *Verbal Behavior* (*Language* 35, 1 (January–March 1959), 26–58), the behaviourist account left out. However, even apparently much simpler psychological processes such as perception were being shown at around the same time to be incapable of analysis using the 'stimulus-response' paradigm of behaviourism: see Jerome S. Bruner, 'On Perceptual Readiness', *Psychological Review*, 64, 2 (March 1957), 123–52.
46. In this vein, the common supposition that behaviourism was a manifestation of the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle, positivism's most radical and ambitious philosophical expression, is challenged by Laurence Smith, who argues that 'only after both movements were well underway was there any significant interaction between them'. Laurence D. Smith, *Behaviorism and Logical Positivism: A Reassessment of the Alliance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 5.
47. Quoted in Gordon W. Allport, 'Attitudes in the History of Social Psychology', in Neil Warren and Marie Jahoda (eds), *Attitudes*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 19–25, p. 23.
48. Donald Fleming, 'Attitude: The History of a Concept', *Perspectives in American History*, 1 (1967), 287–365, p. 337.
49. Fleming, 'Attitude', p. 340.
50. David O. Sears et al., 'The Psychologies Underlying Political Psychology', and Charles S. Taber, 'Information Processing and Public Opinion', in David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3–16 and 433–76, quotation at p. 433.

51. See for example Carl I. Hovland, 'Reconciling Conflicting Results Derived from Experimental and Survey Studies of Attitude Change', in Neil Warren and Marie Jahoda (eds), *Attitudes: Selected Readings*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin, 1973), 345–63. James Kuklinski advocates paying attention to process rather than correlation, and more laboratory research: James H. Kuklinski et al., 'Where's the Schema? Going beyond the "S" Word in Political Psychology', *American Political Science Review*, 85, 4 (December 1991), 1341–56. I will be exploring some of these points of tension in Chapter 6, where I will suggest that behaviourist doubts about the concept of attitude, while programmatically exaggerated, contributed productively to laboratory investigations of the nature of attitudes.
52. On the continuing positivism of cognitive psychology see Alan Costall, '"Graceful Degradation": Cognitivism and the Metaphors of the Computer', in Arthur Still and Alan Costall (eds), *Against Cognitivism: Alternative Foundations for Cognitive Psychology* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 151–69 and Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 1–11.
53. Fleming, 'Attitude', pp. 358–62.
54. Fleming, 'Attitude', p. 349.
55. Fleming, 'Attitude', p. 365.
56. Robin M. Williams, Jr, 'The Concept of Values', in David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 18 vols, vol. 16 (New York: Crowell Collier & Macmillan, 1968), 283–7, p. 284.
57. Milton Rokeach, 'From Individual to Institutional Values: With Special Reference to the Values of Science', in Milton Rokeach (ed.), *Understanding Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 47–70, p. 49.
58. Gregory R. Maio and James M. Olson, 'Values as Truisms: Evidence and Implications', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 2 (February 1998), 294–311, p. 300.
59. Shalom H. Schwartz, 'Are There Universal Aspects in the Structure and Contents of Human Values?' *Journal of Social Issues*, 50, 4 (1994), 19–45, p. 20.
60. Robin M. Williams, Jr, 'Change and Stability in Values and Value Systems: A Sociological Perspective', in Milton Rokeach (ed.), *Understanding Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 15–46, p. 16.
61. I refer to the 'expectancy-value model' of Ajzen and Fishbein (see Icek Ajzen, 'Nature and Operation of Attitudes', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52 (2001), 27–58, pp. 30–2), whereby attitudes are a composite of beliefs and evaluations. For a discussion of the relative priority of the two components see Shelly Chaiken and Charles Stangor, 'Attitudes and Attitude Change', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 38 (1987), 575–630, pp. 577–9.
62. Schwartz, for example, undertakes a comparison of his findings with those of other researchers, but his claim that they are convergent is unconvincing. There are parallels between some of Schwartz's categories and those of some other researchers. But in other cases, slices have to be taken out of Schwartz's segments (he arranges his value types as segments of a circle) in order to match up the categories, and some of Schwartz's types are not matched at all. Schwartz rejects

Rokeach's claim of the orthogonality of equality and freedom, but does not point to any methodological defect that could explain this error in Rokeach's voluminous findings. Schwartz, 'Universal Aspects', pp. 36–7.

63. Almond, 'Intellectual History', p. 26.
64. Gabriel A. Almond, 'Communism and Political Culture Theory', *Comparative Politics*, 15, 2 (January 1983), 127–38. Almond's reading of the political culture research of communist states, which was a lively field in the 1970s, was somewhat selective, favouring the work of Archie Brown, who employed a definition in line with Almond's, over work that drew on anthropological and area-studies approaches. For analysis of the definitional debate see Stephen Welch, 'Issues in the Study of Political Culture: The Example of Communist Party States' (Review Article), *British Journal of Political Science*, 17, 4 (October 1987), 479–500; Stephen Welch, 'Culture, Ideology and Personality: Robert C. Tucker's Analysis of Stalinism and Soviet Politics', *Journal of Communist Studies*, 12, 1 (March 1996), 1–37; and Stephen Welch, 'Political Culture, Post-Communism and Disciplinary Normalisation: Towards Theoretical Reconstruction', in Stephen Whitefield (ed.), *Political Culture and Post-Communism* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2005), 105–24 and other chapters in that volume.
65. Harry Eckstein, 'Culture as a Foundation Concept for the Social Sciences', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 8, 4 (October 1996), 471–97, p. 473.
66. An example is work influenced by the 'conflict theory' response to Parsons, which I mentioned at nn. 39 and 40, for instance Frank Parkin, *Class Inequality and Political Order: Social Stratification in Capitalist and Communist Societies* (London: Paladin, 1972) and Bob Jessop, *Traditionalism, Conservatism and British Political Culture* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974). But since conflict theory largely aimed to consider the 'factual order' of power *alongside* the Parsonian 'normative order', the assumptions of the latter were not fundamentally challenged (see Lockwood, 'Some Remarks' and Ralf Dahrendorf, 'Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis', *American Journal of Sociology*, 64, 2 (September 1958), 115–27). The Marxism on which conflict theory drew for its conception of a 'factual order', on the other hand, did pose a fundamental challenge, and I will consider it in Chapter 3.
67. Almond, 'Comparative Political Systems', p. 396.
68. On the connections between area studies and the political conjuncture see for instance Donal Cruise O'Brien, 'Modernization, Order, and the Erosion of a Democratic Ideal: American Political Science 1960–70', *Journal of Development Studies*, 8, 4 (July 1972), 351–78; Eric Wakin, *Anthropology Goes to War: Professional Ethics and Counterinsurgency in Thailand* (Madison, WI: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Wisconsin, 1992); and Bruce Cumings, 'Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies During and After the Cold War', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 29, 1 (January–March 1997), 6–26.
69. Lucian W. Pye, 'Introduction: Political Culture and Political Development', in Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba (eds), *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 3–26, p. 7.

70. Lucian W. Pye, 'Culture and Political Science: Problems in the Evaluation of the Concept of Political Culture', in Louis Schneider and Charles M. Bonjean (eds), *The Idea of Culture in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 65–76, p. 72.
71. Ruth Lane has been unusual among commentators on political culture research in drawing attention to the contrasting usage of the concept of political culture in these two classic early studies. She does not, however, provide an explanation of it. Ruth Lane, 'Political Culture: Residual Category or General Theory?' *Comparative Political Studies*, 25, 3 (October 1992), 362–87, pp. 363–4.
72. Sidney Verba, 'Conclusion: Comparative Political Culture', in Pye and Verba, *Political Culture and Political Development*, 512–60, p. 518.
73. Smith, *Behaviorism and Logical Positivism*.
74. Ian Shapiro, 'Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It', *Political Theory*, 30, 4, Special Issue: 'What Is Political Theory?' (August 2002), 596–619, p. 598.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Mark Bevir and R. A. W. Rhodes, *Interpreting British Governance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 18–19.
2. Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning* (London: Hurst, 2006), pp. 88–93.
3. It would, that is, leave positivist political culture research to its own devices, and indeed Chabal and Daloz criticize behavioural political science only when it is extended beyond the West (Chabal and Daloz, *Culture Troubles*, pp. 15, 105–6). An earlier acceptance of Almond's patent by an interpretivist is Charles Taylor, 'Interpretation and the Sciences of Man', in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 15–57, p. 31. In any case, the concept of 'culture', too, has been criticized by some as being too closely linked with the nation-state paradigm. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture as Praxis*, 2nd edn (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), p. 34.
4. Another key development of the twentieth century was the promotion, first by Martin Heidegger and then by his pupil Hans-Georg Gadamer, of 'philosophical hermeneutics' in place of interpretive method. I will briefly consider this development, and justify the brevity of the consideration, at the end of section 2.3.
5. See for example Lester G. Crocker, 'Interpreting the Enlightenment: A Political Approach', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46, 2 (April–June 1985), 211–30. The idea of the counter-Enlightenment in Anglophone history of political thought owes much to Isaiah Berlin, whose work on the subject, mainly in the form of essays and lectures, is collected in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Pimlico, 1997); *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Pimlico, 2000); and *The Roots of Romanticism*, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999). A useful collection of critiques is Joseph Mali and Robert Wokler (eds), *Isaiah Berlin's Counter-Enlightenment* (Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society, 2003).

6. F. M. Barnard, 'Culture and Political Development: Herder's Suggestive Insights', *American Political Science Review*, 63, 2 (June 1969), 379–97; F. M. Barnard (ed.), *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, trans. F. M. Barnard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).
7. Raymond Williams, *Culture* (London: Fontana, 1981), pp. 11–12.
8. Robert Wokler, 'Isaiah Berlin's Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment', in Mali and Wokler, *Berlin's Counter-Enlightenment*, 13–31, p. 19.
9. Wokler, 'Berlin's Enlightenment', p. 20.
10. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. Anne Cohler, Basia Miller, and Harold Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), part 3, book 14, esp. chs 1, 2; quotation from p. 231.
11. Quoted in Barnard, 'Culture and Political Development', p. 382.
12. J. G. Herder, 'Dissertation on the Reciprocal Influence of Government and the Sciences', in Barnard, *J. G. Herder*, 227–52, p. 227.
13. J. G. Herder, 'Yet Another Philosophy of History for the Enlightenment of Mankind', in Barnard, *J. G. Herder*, 181–223, p. 217.
14. J. G. Herder, 'Essay on the Origin of Language', in Barnard, *J. G. Herder*, 117–77, p. 174. See also Wulf Koepke, *Johann Gottfried Herder* (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1987), p. 9.
15. Berlin, 'Herder and the Enlightenment', in *Three Critics of the Enlightenment*, 168–242, p. 199, n. 3.
16. Berlin, *Roots of Romanticism*, p. 63.
17. Quoted in Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study of the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1961), p. 278.
18. Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), p. 42.
19. Vicki Spencer, 'Herder and Nationalism: Reclaiming the Principle of Cultural Respect', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 43, 1 (1997), 1–13, p. 9; F. M. Barnard, 'Introduction', in Barnard, *J. G. Herder*, 3–60, pp. 53–7.
20. See Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck, 'The Meaning of "Historicism"', *American Historical Review*, 59, 3 (April 1954), 568–77; Georg G. Iggers, 'Historicism: The History and Meaning of the Term', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56, 1 (1995), 129–52; Calvin G. Rand, 'Two Meanings of Historicism in the Writings of Dilthey, Troeltsch, and Meinecke', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 24, 4 (October–December 1964), 503–18. Some already turbid waters were muddied further by Karl Popper's representation of historicism as the dogmatic extrapolation of historical patterns into the future, which made out the writings of Marx and Hegel to be paradigm cases. See Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), pp. 3, 45–9. Georg Iggers makes the point that Popper followed then prevailing usage in translating the German *historismus* as 'historism', which would mean that his diatribe against 'historicism' thus largely bypasses our present topic. See Iggers, 'Historicism', pp. 136–7.
21. The term *Geisteswissenschaft* is closely associated with Dilthey and is often thought to be a hard-to-translate German profundity, though ironically it entered

German as a translation of Mill's term 'moral science'. See Charles R. Bambach, *Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Crisis of Historicism* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 128, n. 2 and Rudolf A. Makkreel, *Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 35–7.

22. Bambach, *Heidegger*, p. 141.
23. Makkreel, *Dilthey*, p. 53 (Makkreel's gloss).
24. Makkreel, *Dilthey*, pp. 7–8; Jacob Owensby, *Dilthey and the Narrative of History* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 25–6; Bambach, *Heidegger*, pp. 169–70, 176–8.
25. Quoted in Owensby, *Dilthey*, p. 22.
26. Makkreel insists that Dilthey very seldom uses the term *einfühlen* (empathy) with which his position has often been identified. Makkreel, *Dilthey*, p. 6, n. 5. Yet terms that he does use such as *Nacherleben* (re-experiencing) and *Hineinversetzen* (placing oneself within) do not escape the same objection. See for example Wilhelm Dilthey, 'The Understanding of Other Persons and Their Life-Expressions', in Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (ed.), *The Hermeneutics Reader* (New York: Continuum, 1985), 152–64, esp. p. 159 and p. 164, n. 4.
27. Wilhelm Dilthey, 'The Rise of Hermeneutics', in Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (eds), *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 101–14, p. 101.
28. Dilthey, 'Rise of Hermeneutics', p. 103; emphasis removed.
29. Dilthey, 'Understanding of Other Persons', p. 161.
30. Dilthey, 'Rise of Hermeneutics', p. 114.
31. Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, '*The Hermeneutics*: Outline of the 1819 Lectures', in Ormiston and Schrift, *Hermeneutic Tradition*, 85–100, pp. 86–7. For Dilthey's gloss, see 'Rise of Hermeneutics', p. 113.
32. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 174.
33. For Heidegger, human life is made foundational to ontology, and historicality is seen as a fundamental condition of human life. Developing these ideas, Gadamer speaks of '*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*', variously translated as 'effective-historical consciousness' or 'historically effected consciousness', but in fact combining both 'affected by history' and 'effecting history'; a concept which thus emphasizes the locatedness of human life in history, its necessary participation in tradition, and the inescapability—but also the productive character—of 'prejudice'. Gadamer's main work, *Truth and Method*, is, as many commentators have pointed out, an argument against the use of 'method' to attain truth—Dilthey's very project. Its main target is the overextension of the scientific method:

> In a time when science penetrates further and further into social practice, science can fulfil its social function only when it acknowledges its own limits and the conditions placed on its freedom to maneuver. Philosophy must make this clear to an age credulous about science to the point of superstition. On just this depends the fact that the tension between truth and method has an inescapable currency. (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald S. Marshall, 2nd edn (New York: Crossroad, 1992), p. 552)

Gadamer is therefore an ally of the interpretivist critique of positivism, but by no means (if he is taken at his word) a source of guidance for the elaboration of an alternative. With him, hermeneutics inflates into a philosophy, in fact a moral philosophy: its relevance to interpretivism, beyond its critical implications, becomes indirect at best. For discussion of the differences between philosophical and methodological hermeneutics (i.e. interpretivism) see Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969); Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique* (London and Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); and Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

34. Paul Ricoeur, 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text', in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 197–221.
35. Recall for example Almond's situating of positivist political culture research within the 'Weber-Parsons tradition' in social theory. The interpretive nature of Weber's sociology is in contrast stressed by Ralph Schroeder, *Max Weber and the Sociology of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).
36. Two recent attempts are Sven Eliaeson, *Max Weber's Methodologies: Interpretation and Critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002) and Fritz Ringer, *Max Weber's Methodology: The Unification of the Cultural and Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1997). The plural in Eliaeson's title places him closer to the analysis I will be advancing.
37. Weber's most important methodological essay is 'Critical Studies in the Logic of the Cultural Sciences: A Critique of Eduard Meyer's Methodological Views', in Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, ed. and trans. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: Free Press, 1949), 113–88. See also Max Weber, *Roscher and Knies: The Logical Problems of Historical Economics*, trans. Guy Oakes (New York: Free Press, 1975) and Max Weber, *Critique of Stammler*, trans. Guy Oakes (New York: Free Press, 1977).
38. An example is his response to the deployment by Ostwald of the laws of thermodynamics in social analysis, which represented human progress as the increasingly efficient conversion of energy resources into useful work. See Max Weber, '"Energetic" Theories of Culture', *Mid-American Review of Sociology [Max Weber Studies]*, 9, 2 (1984), 37–58; and for discussion Robert John, 'Max Weber's Epistemology of the Cultural Sciences: Presupposition of "Interpretive Sociology"', *Social Science Journal*, 21, 3 (July 1984), 91–109.
39. Wilhelm Windelband, 'History and Natural Science' (trans. Guy Oakes), *History and Theory*, 19, 2 (1980), 165–85, pp. 174–5.
40. Guy Oakes, *Weber and Rickert: Concept Formation in the Cultural Sciences* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1988), p. 54.
41. Oakes, *Weber and Rickert*, p. 57.
42. Oakes, *Weber and Rickert*, p. 74.
43. Oakes, *Weber and Rickert*, pp. 128–33.

44. See Rogers Brubaker, *The Limits of Rationality: An Essay on the Social and Moral Thought of Max Weber* (London and Boston, MA: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 98 and Eliaeson, *Max Weber's Methodologies*, pp. 26–7.
45. Ringer, *Max Weber's Methodology*, ch. 3; Fritz Ringer, 'Max Weber on Causal Analysis, Interpretation, and Comparison', *History and Theory*, 41, 2 (May 2002), 163–78; Susan J. Hekman, 'Weber's Concept of Causality and the Modern Critique', *Sociological Inquiry*, 49, 4 (October 1979), 67–76.
46. Weber, 'Critical Studies', p. 174.
47. Indeed his comparative sociology of religion is hard to distinguish from Mill's methods of similarity and difference, a similarity which Eliaeson suggests Weber was merely *politically* deterred from acknowledging. See Eliaeson, *Max Weber's Methodologies*, p. 149, n. 38.
48. Guy Oakes, 'The Verstehen Thesis and the Foundations of Max Weber's Methodology', *History and Theory*, 16, 1 (February 1977), 11–29.
49. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 2 vols (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA and London: University of California Press, 1978), vol. 1, p. 4.
50. Eliaeson, *Max Weber's Methodologies*, p. 43.
51. Max Weber, '"Objectivity" in Social Science', in *Methodology of the Social Sciences*, 49–112, p. 90.
52. Weber, 'Critical Studies', p. 159.
53. Weber, 'Critical Studies', p. 160.
54. Earlier positivist readings of Weber indeed simplified matters by putting aside the issue of value-relevance and treating Weber as a straightforward defender of value-free social science. It is a more recent position to acknowledge evaluative and interpretive elements as precursors, while still preserving objectivity in the succeeding stage of a scientific investigation.
55. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 35–9.
56. Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, p. 97.
57. For example Gordon Marshall, *In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism: An Essay on Max Weber's Protestant Ethic Thesis* (London: Hutchinson, 1982).
58. David Zaret, 'From Weber to Parsons and Schutz: The Eclipse of History in Modern Social Theory', *American Journal of Sociology*, 85, 5 (March 1980), 1180–201, p. 1181.
59. Zaret, 'From Weber to Parsons', p. 1198.
60. Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).
61. For a use closely related to political culture research see Michael E. Urban and John McClure, 'The Folklore of State Socialism: Semiotics and the Study of the Soviet State', *Soviet Studies*, 35, 4 (October 1983), 471–86.
62. Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 55.
63. This position is also often called 'structuralism'. Where necessary, I will distinguish the two structuralisms by referring to cultural structuralism or social structuralism. Sahlins's term for social structuralism, 'practical reason', is rather misleading in that practice as such is not his theme.

64. I will discuss Marx and Marxism's treatment of culture in Chapter 3.
65. Sahlins's focus on consumer culture brings him close in topic to Roland Barthes, also an exponent of structuralist interpretation, though in a more critical vein that is less distant from Marxism. See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, ed. and trans. Annette Lavers (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972).
66. See the discussion in Stephen Welch, *The Concept of Political Culture* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 136–41.
67. Clifford Geertz, 'The Cerebral Savage', in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), p. 355.
68. Geertz, 'The Politics of Meaning', in *Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 404.
69. Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (London: Fontana Press, 1993). I looked at one example of this anti-theoretical influence—Chabal and Daloz's *Culture Troubles*—in the Introduction. On Geertz's influence more generally, see Sherry B. Ortner (ed.), *The Fate of 'Culture': Geertz and Beyond* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1999).
70. Geertz, 'The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man' (first published in 1966), in *Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 44 (another use of the 'program' analogy is in 'Ideology as a Cultural System', p. 216). Just prior to this (pp. 43–4), Geertz criticizes Benedict for her 'historicism' and 'cultural relativism', and for 'giving [her]self over rather too completely to what Marc Bloch called "the thrill of learning singular things"'.
71. Geertz, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in *Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 11. For another critique of the 'program' analogy, see 'After the Revolution: The Fate of Nationalism in the New States', p. 250.
72. Modernization appears in several essays in its socio-economic form, as a source of disruptions in the social fabric, and also in the cultural form of Weber's thesis of rationalization, including his category of rationalized religion. For the latter see especially 'Religion as a Cultural System' and 'Ideology as a Cultural System'.
73. Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System', p. 125.
74. Geertz, 'Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols', p. 141.
75. To my mind this is an apt description of Geertz's own brilliant style. An example is his discussion of the 'expressive nature' of the Balinese state:

> It was a theatre-state in which the kings and princes were the impresarios, the priests the directors, the peasantry the supporting cast, stage crew, and audience. The stupendous cremations, teeth-filings, temple dedications, the pilgrimages and blood sacrifices, mobilizing hundreds, even thousands of people and great quantities of wealth, were not means to political ends, they were ends themselves, they were what the state was for. Court ceremonialism was the driving force of court politics. Mass ritual was not a device to shore up the state; the state was a device for the enactment of mass ritual. To govern was not so much to choose as to perform. Ceremony was not form but substance. Power served pomp, not pomp power. ('Person, Time, and Conduct', p. 335)

76. Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, p. 4.
77. Geertz, 'The Politics of Meaning', in *Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 311.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. It could of course be argued that the inception of political culture research itself was merely an act of unnecessary conceptual rebranding, the new brand being launched into the space already occupied by concepts like 'national character', 'legitimacy', or 'political myth'. Yet the very features of the new concept which I have shown in Chapters 1 and 2 to be problematic simultaneously give it an enduring importance. Even if the term itself were to fade from view, the issues it raises could not.
2. Examples are William H. Reisinger, 'The Renaissance of a Rubric: Political Culture as Concept and Theory', *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 7, 4 (Winter 1995), 328–52 and Robert W. Jackman and Ross A. Miller, 'A Renaissance of Political Culture?' *American Journal of Political Science*, 40, 3 (August 1996), 632–59.
3. Examples are Harry Eckstein, 'Culture as a Foundation Concept for the Social Sciences', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 8, 4 (October 1996), 471–97 and Jim Granato et al., 'Cultural Values, Stable Democracy, and Economic Development: A Reply', *American Journal of Political Science*, 40, 3 (August 1996), 680–96.
4. Ruth Lane, 'Political Culture: Residual Category or General Theory?' *Comparative Political Studies*, 25, 3 (October 1992), 362–87; Aaron Wildavsky, 'Choosing Preferences by Constructing Institutions: A Cultural Theory of Preference Formation', *American Political Science Review*, 81, 1 (March 1987), 3–21.
5. For an example of the former view see Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning* (London: Hurst, 2006), p. 126, and for instances of the latter see John Ferejohn, 'Rationality and Interpretation: Parliamentary Elections in Early Stuart England', in Kristen Renwick Monroe (ed.), *The Economic Approach to Politics: A Critical Reassessment of the Theory of Rational Action* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 279–305.
6. Jacob Oser and William C. Blanchfield, *The Evolution of Economic Thought*, 3rd edn (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975).
7. See n. 38 of Chapter 1 and Milan Zafirovski, 'Extending the Rational Choice Model from the Economy to Society', *Economy and Society*, 29, 2 (May 2000), 181–206, pp. 182–4.
8. Herbert A. Simon, 'Rational Decision-Making in Business Organizations', *American Economic Review*, 69, 4 (September 1979), 493–513, p. 496.
9. Milton Friedman, 'The Methodology of Positive Economics', in *Essays in Positive Economics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1953), 3–43.
10. Simon, 'Rational Decision-Making', pp. 495, 501.
11. See for instance Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, 'Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases', *Science* 185, 4157 (27 September 1974), 1124–31 and George A. Quattrone and Amos Tversky, 'Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice', *American Political Science Review*, 82, 3 (September 1988), 719–36.
12. See <http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economics/laureates/2002/press.html> (accessed on 6 August 2011).
13. Ferejohn, 'Rationality and Interpretation', p. 282.

14. Russell J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, 2nd edn (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1996). Numerous additional examples of the substantive or thick character of the motivational assumptions of rational choice theorists are given by Mark P. Petracca, 'The Rational Actor Approach to Politics: Science, Self-Interest, and Normative Democratic Theory', in Monroe, *Economic Approach to Politics*, 171–203, pp. 178–80.
15. See Josh Whitford, 'Pragmatism and the Untenable Dualism of Means and Ends: Why Rational Choice Theory Does Not Deserve Paradigmatic Privilege', *Theory and Society*, 31, 3 (June 2002), 325–63, p. 328.
16. Neil J. Smelser, 'Culture: Coherent or Incoherent', in Richard Münch and Neil J. Smelser (eds), *Theory of Culture* (Berkeley, CA and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 3–28, p. 23.
17. Barry Hindess, *Choice, Rationality, and Social Theory* (London and Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 48–9.
18. I am not suggesting that the 'portfolio model of the actor' (or for that matter Hindess's alternative to it) is correct; indeed in Chapter 5 I will argue that it is not. My present point is to oppose the claim that rational choice theory and political culture research are fundamentally antithetical.
19. Mancur Olson, Jr, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).
20. Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), ch. 4.
21. See for example Jack L. Walker, Jr, *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions, and Social Movements* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1991) and Alessandro Pizzorno, 'Some Other Kinds of Otherness: A Critique of "Rational Choice" Theories', in Alejandro Foxley, Michael S. McPherson, and Guillermo O'Donnell (eds), *Development, Democracy, and the Art of Trespassing: Essays in Honor of Albert O. Hirschman* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 355–73.
22. Brian M. Barry, *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 23, 31.
23. Quoted by Petracca, 'Rational Actor Approach', p. 190, n. 9.
24. Tony Lawson, 'A Realist Perspective on Contemporary "Economic Theory"', *Journal of Economic Issues*, 29, 1 (March 1995), 1–32.
25. Marxism's migration during the twentieth century from the barricades to the seminar room (though of course it did not begin at the barricades, but rather in the seminars of Berlin University and in the reading room of the British Museum) has changed the nature, but not the extent, of its propensity to internecine conflict and fissiparous reproduction. See for example John Patrick Diggins, *The Rise and Fall of the American Left* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1992).
26. Karl Marx, 'The Poverty of Philosophy', in David McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 2nd edn (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 212–33, pp. 219–20.

27. 'Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it.' Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. C. J. Arthur (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), 121–3, 11th thesis.
28. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, pp. 46–7.
29. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, p. 47.
30. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, p. 52.
31. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, p. 64.
32. Nicholas Abercrombie and Bryan S. Turner, 'The Dominant Ideology Thesis', *British Journal of Sociology*, 29, 2 (June 1978), 149–70.
33. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, p. 93.
34. It is therefore irrelevant that, as recent writers have emphasized (Michèle Barratt, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 5), Marx himself never used the term 'false consciousness'. The concept is implicit in the initial separation between immediate and structural materialism, which is already quite plain in *The German Ideology* and other early writings.
35. Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, 3rd thesis.
36. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 13.
37. V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, ed. and trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p. 98.
38. Robert C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 681.
39. For approval of this alleged 'rupture', see Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1969), pp. 227–31. For an appreciation of the 'early' Marx, see Robert C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).
40. Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth, and Dissolution. Volume III: The Breakdown*, ed. and trans. P. S. Falla (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 228.
41. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism, vol. III*, p. 226. Biographical background is provided in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, 'General Introduction', in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), xvii–xcvi, and in Paul Ransome, *Antonio Gramsci: A New Introduction* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992).
42. Antonio Gramsci, 'The Revolution against *Capital*', in *Pre-Prison Writings*, ed. Richard Bellamy, trans. Virginia Cox (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39–42, p. 39.
43. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 342.
44. *Pace* Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism, vol. III*, p. 247.
45. Some representative formulations in the *Prison Notebooks* are: 'the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways: as "domination" and as "intellectual and moral leadership"' (p. 57); 'groups have the function [in certain revolutionary situations] of "domination" without that of "leadership": dictatorship without hegemony' (p. 106); 'the State (in its integral meaning: dictatorship + hegemony)'

(p. 239); 'State = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion' (p. 263).

46. See Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 275, n. 81. Dworkin writes about Thompson's political activity more generally that he 'unknowingly advocated what Gramsci would have called a "war of position", and he outlined a "national-popular" politics challenging bourgeois hegemony' (p. 72).
47. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 12.
48. Joan W. Scott, '"Experience"', in Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (eds), *Feminists Theorize the Political* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 22–40, p. 25.
49. Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Rethinking Chartism', in *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832–1982* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 90–178, p. 101. See also David Mayfield and Susan Thorne, 'Social History and Its Discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the Politics of Language', *Social History*, 17, 2 (May 1992), 165–88.
50. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p. 213.
51. On the ambiguity of these implications see for example Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Culture: England, 1918–1951* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), summary at p. 162.
52. Margaret R. Somers, 'What's Political or Cultural about Political Culture and the Public Sphere? Towards an Historical Sociology of Concept Formation', *Sociological Theory*, 13, 2 (July 1995), 113–44, pp. 127–31.
53. Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism*, p. 172. I will consider Foucault in the next chapter. The most important contribution of Althusser to cultural studies was the specific role he assigned to ideology, namely of creating 'subject positions', a process he called 'interpellation'. See Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)', in *Essays on Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, 1984), 1–60, pp. 44–51. The evident determinism of this view makes its reconciliation with Gramsci's humanistic emphasis on contingency a formidable task: cultural studies never did more than juxtapose them.
54. John Clarke et al., 'Subcultures, Cultures and Class', in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (eds), *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1976), 9–74, p. 10.
55. Clarke et al., 'Subcultures', p. 38.
56. Clarke et al., 'Subcultures', p. 39.
57. Clarke et al., 'Subcultures', pp. 40–1.
58. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 14.
59. Hebdige, *Subculture*, p. 19.
60. Hebdige, *Subculture*, pp. 18, 107.
61. Paul E. Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993); for a discussion, see George E. Marcus, 'Contemporary Problems of Ethnography in the Modern World System', in James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of*

Ethnography (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1986), 165–93, pp. 173–88.

62. For the theoretical elaboration of these terms see Stuart Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding', in Stuart Hall et al. (eds), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1980), 128–38.
63. David Morley, *The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding* (London: British Film Institute, 1980) and David Morley, *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure* (London: Comedia, 1986).
64. Stuart Hall, 'The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism among the Theorists', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 35–57, p. 56.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. John Holmwood, *Founding Sociology? Talcott Parsons and the Idea of General Theory* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), pp. 22–5.
2. Somers's 'new political culture project' might be mentioned again (see p. 80). Intending a gloss on cultural studies and cultural history, Somers defines culture as 'a form of structure in its own right, constituted autonomously [i.e. in abstraction from economics and social structure] through series of relationships among cultural elements . . . [in which] meanings are conceived of as *relational* meanings' (Margaret R. Somers, 'What's Political or Cultural about Political Culture and the Public Sphere? Toward an Historical Sociology of Concept Formation', *Sociological Theory*, 13, 2 (July 1995), 113–44, pp. 131–2). But this is a more apt account of discursivism (or indeed of cultural structuralism) than of cultural studies, which approaches this position without reaching it.
3. For examples see note 50 to this chapter.
4. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London and New York: Verso, 1985), chs 1 and 2.
5. Michèle Barratt, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 75–6.
6. The word's derogatory reference to homosexuality so far prevailed that earlier uses in the sense of 'peculiar' now read oddly; yet this derogatory meaning has itself been subverted and in some quarters radically altered, producing 'queer theory', 'queer studies', and the self-application of the label 'queer', though in other quarters the derogatory connotations also continue in use. See Judith Butler, 'Merely Cultural', *New Left Review*, no. I/227 (January/February 1998), 33–44.
7. On the 'negativity' of Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxism see Barratt, *Politics of Truth*, p. 79.
8. Barratt, *Politics of Truth*, p. 63.
9. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 118.
10. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 29.
11. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 30–1.

12. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London and New York: Routledge, 1970), p. xxii.
13. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 40–1.
14. Michel Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', in Robert Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. and trans. Ian McLeod (Boston, MA and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 48–78, p. 69.
15. Foucault, 'Order of Discourse', p. 67.
16. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 113.
17. Foucault specifies the content of this 'thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble' as 'discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions' (p. 194).
18. On the 'analytics of power' versus the 'theory of power' see Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (London and New York: Penguin, 1998), p. 82.
19. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 99.
20. Foucault, *Will to Knowledge*, p. 95.
21. An exception is Timothy W. Luke, 'Political Science and the Discourses of Power: Developing a Genealogy of the Political Culture Concept', *History of Political Thought*, 10, 1 (Spring 1989), 125–49.
22. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, new edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995).
23. I will try to achieve clarity in the face of this change of sense under the influence of Said's critique by capitalizing 'Orientalism' when it denotes the scholarly discourse, but using lower case for the error he diagnosed. Said of course makes no such distinction: it is his view that Orientalism *ipso facto* commits the error of orientalism. But that is itself a claim and needs to be made visible as such. I will also avoid, as Said does, a profusion of quotation marks around words like 'Oriental', even though his critique has made authorial distancing from words like this nowadays almost mandatory.
24. Said traces the transition from Orientalism to area studies, which occurred when its centre of gravity shifted to the United States. The new name represents 'the most current transformation overtaking Orientalism: its conversion from a fundamentally philological discipline and a vaguely general apprehension of the Orient into a social science specialty' (p. 290). But in terms of Said's main argument of the intertwining of state interests with the study of the Orient, the change in idiom is not a significant shift. It was present in Orientalism proper and remains present in area studies. For more narrowly focused critiques of area studies see the writings mentioned in n. 68 to Chapter 1.
25. Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 253–4 (a discussion of lectures given in 1924 by journalist Valentine Chirol on the 'deepest lines of cleavage' between the West and the Islamic Orient), 348.
26. For the response of Said's *bête noir* see Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2002).

27. Edward W. Said, 'The Problem of Textuality: Two Exemplary Positions', *Critical Inquiry*, 4, 4 (Summer 1978), 673–714, pp. 710–11.
28. Respectively James Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Authority', *Representations*, no. 2 (Spring 1983), 118–46, pp. 120, 139 and James Clifford, 'Introduction: Partial Truths', in James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1986), 1–26, p. 3.
29. Geertz is described as an 'unrepresentative' figure in cultural anthropology by Paul Rabinow, who nevertheless admits that questioning his work was 'one of the recurrent themes' of the seminar that led to the *Writing Culture* volume—as it is indeed in the book itself. Rabinow notes also the cross-disciplinary time lag represented by Geertz's enthusiastic reception in historiography at the moment of his critical interrogation within anthropology. That he should have been discovered yet again in political science twenty years later (see my discussion in the Introduction) is an even more pronounced manifestation of the tendency of cross-disciplinary borrowing to be highly selective. Paul Rabinow, 'Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology', in Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, 234–61, pp. 241–2.
30. Clifford, 'Ethnographic Authority', pp. 124–5.
31. Clifford Geertz, 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight', in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), 412–53, pp. 414–17; Clifford, 'Ethnographic Authority', p. 132; Vincent Crapanzano, 'Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description', in Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, 51–76, p. 71.
32. Clifford, 'Ethnographic Authority', p. 127.
33. Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, trans. Norbert Guterman, 2nd edn (Stanford: Stanford University Press; London: Athlone Press, 1989), p. 148.
34. Edmund Leach, *Social Anthropology* (London: Fontana, 1982).
35. James Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', in Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, 98–121, p. 101.
36. Clifford, 'Ethnographic Authority', p. 132.
37. Geertz, 'Deep Play', p. 448.
38. Clifford, 'Ethnographic Authority', p. 132.
39. Crapanzano, 'Hermes' Dilemma', pp. 53, 75–6.
40. Crapanzano, 'Hermes' Dilemma', pp. 70, 74.
41. Rabinow, 'Representations', pp. 245–7.
42. Clifford, 'Introduction', p. 24. Clifford takes the existence of these studies as evidence that their authors could not have espoused the view that 'one cultural account is as good as any other', a 'trivial and self-refuting relativism'. This is not entirely persuasive: the existence of Geertz's ethnography does not, after all, prove that it is not in error.
43. Clifford, 'Introduction', pp. 24–5.
44. Lila Abu-Lughod, 'Writing against Culture', in Richard G. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1991), 137–62.

45. Abu-Lughod calls such people 'halfies', a name which has not caught on; but under more high-toned labels such as 'hybridity' or 'diaspora' the phenomenon has been much discussed of late. See for instance Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).
46. The 'ethnography of the particular' demonstrates the variation in scope that the call for attention to be paid to 'context' can have. See my discussion of Chabal and Daloz's contextualism in the Introduction (for them, 'sub-Saharan Africa' is a sufficiently precise context).
47. Lila Abu-Lughod, 'The Interpretation of Culture(s) after Television', *Representations*, no. 59, Special Issue: 'The Fate of "Culture": Geertz and Beyond' (Summer 1997), 109–34, p. 110.
48. Abu-Lughod does acknowledge that media and cultural studies have addressed these issues, but says 'ethnographic' approaches have not very often appeared, and when they have, it is 'a notion of ethnography that little resembles the anthropological ideal' (p. 112). She does not however offer any specific criticisms, and one might wonder whether it is the protection of a disciplinary boundary that is mainly at issue.
49. Quoted in Abu-Lughod, 'Writing against Culture', p. 151.
50. I might have investigated a number of disciplines in which a discursivist and reflexive turn has occurred, for instance linguistics and psychology. For linguistics, see Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, 2nd edn (Harlow: Longman, 2010). For psychology, see Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* (London and Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1987); Derek Edwards and Jonathan Potter, *Discursive Psychology* (London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992); and Ian Parker (ed.), *Social Constructionism, Discourse and Realism* (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998). A more substantial impact, in terms of the critique's relative prominence within the discipline, has been in International Relations (where it is generally known as 'constructivism'), not surprisingly in view of the fact that both Said's critique of area studies and anthropology's turn towards the conditions of its own intellectual production have had a fundamental concern with the particular 'international relation' of colonialism. Works like David Campbell's *Writing Security*, as its title indicates, have followed in the footsteps of the post-culturalist critique, in this case interrogating a concept—security—that was as central for the mainstream of IR as culture was for ethnography (David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, revised edn (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998)). Despite the proximity of the topical concerns of IR to the study of political culture, I have focused my investigation of discursivism somewhat further 'upstream', in terms of intellectual genealogy, closer that is to the source of political-cultural, and before it cultural, analysis.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963); Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, revised edn (London: Fontana Press, 1988), p. 87.
2. Clifford Geertz, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), 3–30, p. 5.
3. Robert C. Tucker, 'Culture, Political Culture, and Communist Society', *Political Science Quarterly*, 88, 2 (June 1973), 173–90, p. 179.
4. See for example Alasdair MacIntyre, 'A Mistake about Causality in the Social Sciences', in Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman (eds), *Philosophy, Politics and Society (Second Series)* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), 48–70 and Jürgen Habermas, *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson and Jerry A. Stark (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), pp. 175–80.
5. I aim to speak here of the intellectual heritage of the West, already of course a large generalization, though I will shortly be mentioning some important exceptions to it in the field of philosophy, while in Chapter 6 I will discuss the question of the universality of psychology.
6. Alexander Rosenberg, *Philosophy of Social Science* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 15.
7. My term 'philosophical tradition' betrays an influence from Heidegger, who is indeed another of the radical critics of the kind I will be discussing (see Richard Rorty, 'Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey', *Review of Metaphysics*, 30, 2 (December 1976), 280–305). On the whole, however, I find Heidegger's arguments less usable for the purposes of political culture research, a judgement at which I doubt he would have taken offence. He, like Gadamer after him, is concerned above all with the ethical implications of his critique of the philosophical tradition, and these, as I indicated in Chapter 2, are not my concern.
8. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, revised edn (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 4.112.
9. Of course, 'counter-Enlightenment' thought could at its extreme take issue with the philosophical tradition as a whole. This could certainly be said of J. G. Hamann, the mystical 'magus of the north', who Berlin says 'struck the most violent blow against the Enligtenment' and whom he likens to Bergson, to be discussed below. Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 40, 42.
10. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer, revised edn (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 127, 192 (fragments no. 277 and 76 of the standard edition).
11. A. J. Krailsheimer, 'Introduction', in Pascal, *Pensées*, ix–xxx, p. xxiv.
12. F. C. T. Moore, *Bergson: Thinking Backwards* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 1.
13. H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Thought 1890–1930* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 33.
14. Hughes, *Consciousness and Society*, p. 19. Freud certainly challenged the idea of the self-transparent sovereign will. But Freudianism's philosophical radicalism is limited. Its embrace of the unconscious still represents an attempt to explain behaviour in terms of articulable mental contents, articulable in principle (indeed

that is the aim of therapy) even by the analysand. Hence the ease with which Parsons was able to draw on Freudian categories in his account of the 'introjection' of norms, as well as the possibility of political culture research in the Freudian interpretive vein such as Richard H. Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971).

15. Hughes, *Consciousness and Society*, p. 37.
16. It does not of course follow that Hughes's synthesis is in error; I am not merely exception-mongering. But a different category serves my current purpose: the elusive one of which Bergson and Pascal are exemplars.
17. Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 28–9.
18. Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, pp. 40–1.
19. See for example John Horton, 'Relativism, Reality and Philosophy', *History of the Human Sciences*, 13, 1 (February 2000), 19–36, pp. 26–7.
20. Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action* (London: Duckworth, 1972), pp. 232, 252–8.
21. Bryan Magee argues for the view that the early Wittgenstein differs fundamentally from the logical positivists: 'the view of total reality presented by the *Tractatus* is such that significant discourse in language is possible in two comparatively unimportant areas [science and logic], but impossible throughout the rest' (Bryan Magee, *Confessions of a Philosopher* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1997), p. 115). Thus the famous last proposition, 'What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence' (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 7) should not be seen, as the positivists assumed, as a nominalist prohibition, but as a gesture towards mysticism. In any case, the later Wittgenstein radically revised his account of what could be known of the 'unimportant areas', and how it could be known.
22. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), § 116. Of his earlier work Wittgenstein now writes, 'A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably' (§ 114). As is conventional, I will cite Part I of *Philosophical Investigations* using section numbers, and Part II using page numbers.
23. Indeed there is a connection between these two implementations of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, as Geertz's 'thick description' originated in the ordinary language philosophy of Gilbert Ryle.
24. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action*, pp. 260–78, quotation from p. 268.
25. Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 51.
26. Nigel Pleasants, *Wittgenstein and the Idea of a Critical Social Theory: A Critique of Giddens, Habermas and Bhaskar* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 41.
27. Anthony King, *The Structure of Social Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 56–7.
28. Pleasants, *Wittgenstein*, p. 2.
29. Pleasants, *Wittgenstein*, pp. 2, 14.

30. Of Pleasants's targets, Bhaskar most deserves the label 'ontological theorist'. His arguments are expressly 'transcendental', and he advocates a 'stratified' view of reality whose components are the empirical, the actual, and the real. Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Verso, 2008), p. 13. To recall my comments in the Introduction (p. 6), my view is that 'ontology' need not entail anything extra-empirical, so that neither it nor 'theory' are excluded by Wittgenstein's arguments, whatever they might imply for Bhaskar's critical realism.
31. David Bloor, *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 133. It is true that Wittgenstein made some sweeping objections to psychology, diagnosing for instance its combination of 'experimental methods and *conceptual confusion*' (*Philosophical Investigations*, p. 232). I would say in parallel that positivist political culture research combines statistical methods and conceptual confusion. But neither criticism rules out the possibility of rectifying the problem. See also David Bloor, 'Wittgenstein's Behaviorism', in William O'Donohue and Richard Kitchener (eds), *Handbook of Behaviorism* (San Diego, CA and London: Academic Press, 1999), 329–60.
32. Clifford D. Shearing and Richard V. Ericson, 'Culture as Figurative Action', *British Journal of Sociology*, 42, 4 (December 1991), 481–506, p. 481; Richard A. Hilbert, *The Classical Roots of Ethnomethodology: Durkheim, Weber, and Garfinkel* (Chapel Hill, NC and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), p. 166.
33. See especially Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 7–21. Other expositions may be found in Winch, *Idea of a Social Science*, pp. 24–33; Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, pp. 59–73; and Hilbert, *Classical Roots of Ethnomethodology*, pp. 35–7.
34. The common supposition that the idea of a plurality of 'language games' represents a ban on generalization must be wrong if, as I think is obvious, these examples all demonstrate the same thing.
35. Harold Garfinkel's 'breaching experiments', which he understood in Wittgensteinian fashion as 'demonstrations'; 'aids to a sluggish imagination' (p. 38), included getting his students to request potentially endless clarifications of simple utterances, showing that each one only multiplied the matters still in need of clarification, even though no one had any difficulty with the first formulation. See Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), pp. 24–31, 42–7.
36. Hilbert, *Classical Roots of Ethnomethodology*, pp. 156–60.
37. For the individualist interpretation see for example Colin McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning: An Interpretation and Evaluation* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1984). For the communitarian interpretation see for example Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules*; Norman Malcolm, 'Wittgenstein on Language and Rules', *Philosophy*, 64, 247 (January 1989), 5–28; Bloor, *Wittgenstein*; and King, *Structure of Social Theory*.
38. Winch, *Idea of a Social Science*, p. 32.
39. Winch, *Idea of a Social Science*, p. 33.

40. Winch arrives at his hermeneutic reading by an explicit extension of Wittgenstein's project of 'elucidating the nature of language' in order to 'shed light on other forms of human interaction beyond speech' (Winch, *Idea of a Social Science*, p. 45). These other forms are addressed through Weber's conception of meaningful action as action undertaken for a reason, and the hermeneutical principle then follows that the observer must understand the 'conceptions' of a community in order to be able to describe what it is doing; for instance, that it is voting (Winch, *Idea of a Social Science*, pp. 45–51). But then Winch is recommending a search for the community's implicit rules, and not, as Wittgenstein did, questioning the very idea of rule-following. Wittgenstein's argument has been turned into its opposite.
41. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules*, pp. 22–4.
42. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules*, pp. 96–8.
43. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, p. 29.
44. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, pp. 3–13.
45. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, p. 30.
46. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, pp. 36–9.
47. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, pp. 84–5.
48. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, p. 88.
49. Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, p. 86.
50. Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, p. 17.
51. Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, p. 101. Bloor, however, would prefer the polarization to be resolved by the complete surrender of the opposition.
52. Wittgenstein's expression of this key thought in *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* if anything conveys more clearly the dual emphasis I have highlighted: 'But what about this consensus—doesn't it mean that *one* human being by himself could not calculate? Well, *one* human being could at any rate not calculate just *once* in his life.' Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, ed. G. H von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, 3rd edn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 193.
53. On the struggle, see Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (London: Vintage, 1991).
54. See for instance Jerry H. Gill, *The Tacit Mode: Michael Polanyi's Postmodern Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000); Mark T. Mitchell, *Michael Polanyi: The Art of Knowing* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006); Charles Thorpe, 'Science against Modernism: The Relevance of the Social Theory of Michael Polanyi', *British Journal of Sociology*, 52, 1 (March 2001), 19–35.
55. This is Amartya Sen's suggestion in the Foreword to Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. xiv–xv.
56. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1998).
57. 'The antimetaphysical analysis of science assumes that the logical foundation of empirical knowledge must be capable of definition by explicit rules.' Michael Polanyi, 'Tacit Knowing: Its Bearing on Some Problems of Philosophy', *Reviews of Modern Physics*, 34, 4 (October 1962), 601–16, p. 612.

58. For the critique of Mach's operationalism, see Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 144–5, 168–71. Popper is usually criticized more indirectly, e.g. when Polanyi speaks of 'an idealization . . . current today, which deems the scientist not only indifferent to the outcome of his surmises, but actually seeking their refutation'—a view 'not only contrary to experience, but logically inconceivable'. Polanyi, *Tacit Dimension*, pp. 78–9.
59. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, p. 88; Polanyi, 'Tacit Knowing', p. 601; Polanyi, *Tacit Dimension*, p. 4.
60. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, p. 49.
61. Thorpe discusses Polanyi's use of 'rule' in connection with the arguments of Stephen Turner, which I will address in Chapter 7. Thorpe, 'Science against Modernism', p. 24.
62. Michael Polanyi, 'The Logic of Tacit Inference', *Philosophy*, 41, 155 (January 1966), 1–18, p. 1.
63. Polanyi, 'Tacit Knowing', pp. 602–3, 605; Polanyi, 'Logic of Tacit Inference', pp. 5, 10.
64. Jerome S. Bruner, 'On Perceptual Readiness', *Psychological Review*, 64, 2 (March 1957), 123–52.
65. Charles Taylor, 'To Follow a Rule . . . ', in Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone (eds), *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 45–60, pp. 51–2.
66. Thorpe, 'Science against Modernism', p. 34, n. 3. Thorpe assimilates Polanyi's view of scientific commitment to Weber's, and notes the 'highly gendered imagery intrinsic to their images of the scientist as an exemplar of ascetic virtues, conceived of as masculine'. But that we do not nowadays readily accept the implied metaphorical complex does not detract from the substance of the respective arguments.
67. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, p. 53.
68. Polanyi is here expressly referring to the early Wittgenstein.
69. Polanyi here prefigures Kuhn's distinction between paradigm shifts and normal science, but unlike Kuhn he places emphasis on what must be going on, tacitly, for a paradigm shift to occur. Kuhn's own reference to 'Gestalt switch' in this connection offers a comparable but far more meagre clue to this process. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd edn (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1970), p. 85.
70. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 78.
71. John R. Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
72. 'Intentional' is capitalized in order to differentiate the philosophical concept of reference or representation—'being about' something—from the more familiar psychological concept of conscious initiation of action. The latter is contained in the former, and as both are relevant to our topic of the relationship between the intelligibility and the cause of action we need not worry too much about the distinction. It would have been helpful, though, if philosophers had chosen a less confusing word for their concept (and if they had not made matters worse by using 'intension' to distinguish sense from reference). Searle's book faces the inconvenience of addressing all three concepts.

73. In my one experience of skiing, over the course of a week's holiday, I found that after three days of discomfort and mild humiliation something clicked that had very little to do with what I had been told by way of instruction; a particular way of swinging the body in a turn. It is indeed unlikely that verbal instruction is *essential* to learning to ski; otherwise the activity could hardly have got underway at all, as at one time no ski instructors existed.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. A rare example of a second look at social psychology by a political culture researcher is Archie Brown, 'Conclusion', in Archie Brown (ed.), *Political Culture and Communist Studies* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1984), 149–204, pp. 154–74. Brown however did not find anything to disturb his positivist approach to political culture. For further commentary, and a preliminary expression of some of the arguments of this chapter, see Stephen Welch, 'Political Culture, Post-Communism and Disciplinary Normalisation: Towards Theoretical Reconstruction', in Stephen Whitefield (ed.), *Political Culture and Post-Communism* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2005), 105–24.
2. Charles S. Taber, 'Information Processing and Public Opinion', in David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 433–76, p. 465, n. 18 (emphasis added).
3. Herbert Blumer, 'Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling', in *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1986), 195–208, p. 197.
4. Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 1.
5. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, p. 7.
6. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, pp. 2–3.
7. Richard A. Shweder, 'Cultural Psychology: What Is It?' in James W. Stigler, Richard A. Shweder, and Gilbert H. Herdt (eds), *Cultural Psychology: Essays on Comparative Human Development* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1–43, p. 4.
8. Shweder, 'Cultural Psychology', p. 5.
9. Shweder, 'Cultural Psychology', p. 8.
10. Shweder, 'Cultural Psychology', p. 32.
11. See also Michael Cole, *Cultural Psychology: A Once and Future Discipline* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 222–7.
12. Quoted in Cole, *Cultural Psychology*, p. 339.
13. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, p. 20.
14. Cole, *Cultural Psychology*, pp. 73, 47.
15. Cole, *Cultural Psychology*, p. 56.
16. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, p. 20.
17. Shweder, 'Cultural Psychology', p. 31.
18. Cole, *Cultural Psychology*, p. 338.
19. See Introduction, n. 25.

20. For a similar reason I will not venture deeply into the territory of 'discursive psychology', which I mentioned at the end of Chapter 4 (n. 50) as one of the disciplinary sites of the extension of discursivism. Briefly, discursive psychology questions the mainstream of psychology by approaching 'discourse and social texts . . . in *their own right* and not as a secondary route to things beyond the text like attitudes, events or cognitive processes'. But it implicitly *does* move to questions beyond the text, asking not only 'how is discourse put together', but also crucially 'what is gained by this construction', a question which evokes (without entirely admitting it) a *cui bono* explanation of the construction of discourse (Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* (London and Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1987), p. 160). Thus lying behind discourse, as it did for Foucault, is an unspecified power, whose presence is screened by the insistence that all reality is created by discourse.
21. Richard T. LaPiere, 'Attitudes vs Actions', *Social Forces*, 13, 2 (December 1934), 230–7.
22. Allan W. Wicker, 'Attitudes *v.* Actions: The Relationship of Verbal and Overt Responses to Attitude Objects', in Neil Warren and Marie Jahoda (eds), *Attitudes: Selected Readings*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin, 1973), 167–94, pp. 169–70.
23. Q. McNemar, quoted in Wicker, 'Attitudes *v.* Actions', p. 171.
24. Wicker, 'Attitudes *v.* Actions', p. 190.
25. George E. Marcus et al. (eds), *With Malice toward Some: How People Make Civil Liberties Judgments* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 185 and p. 266, n. 1.
26. Timothy D. Wilson et al., 'The Validity and Consequences of Verbal Reports about Attitudes', in Norbert Schwartz and Seymour Sudman (eds), *Answering Questions: Methodology for Determining Cognitive and Communicative Processes in Survey Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 91–114, p. 32.
27. Martin T. Orne, 'On the Social Psychology of the Psychological Experiment: With Particular Reference to Demand Characteristics and Their Implications', *American Psychologist*, 17, 11 (November 1962), 776–83. See also Burns W. Roper, 'Some Things that Concern Me', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 47, 3 (Autumn 1983), 303–9.
28. We might recall here, from the discussion in Chapter 3, Barry Hindess's criticism of rational choice theory on the grounds of its adherence to the 'portfolio model of the actor', which 'treats action as resulting for the most part from intentions that are themselves the product of a portfolio of beliefs and desires which the actor carries round from one situation to another'. Barry Hindess, *Choice, Rationality, and Social Theory* (London and Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 48–9. I indicated in my discussion of this critique that it had wider application than Hindess was suggesting.
29. Richard L. Henshel and William Johnston, 'The Emergence of Bandwagon Effects: A Theory', *Sociological Quarterly*, 28, 4 (1987), 493–511. Henshel and Johnson's sampling of laboratory and field studies (though it does not claim to be exhaustive) interestingly shows that the former entirely fail to show bandwagon effects,

whereas the latter always do. But of course there are ample laboratory studies of social influence, most famously Stanley Milgram's experiment in which subjects obeyed experimenter's instructions to administer what they thought were severe electric shocks to supposed victims in an adjacent room. What appears to distinguish laboratory findings from field findings is the extent of anonymity: when the subject's anonymity is guaranteed, social influence on attitudes seems not to be effective, so that 'opinion polls do not in themselves change people's private attitudes' (Herbert L. Tyson, Jr and Stan A. Kaplowitz, 'Attitudinal Conformity and Anonymity', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 41, 2 (Summer 1977), 226–34, p. 234). Yet it is admitted that polls might change the readiness to express attitudes, and 'This change in the amount that each view is expressed may serve to change private attitudes.' The defence of the concept of 'private attitudes' provided by anonymity therefore seems to be a weak one at best. Again, the question not asked is how far we remain entitled to suppose that 'private attitudes' of the required (stable) form really exist.

30. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion—Our Social Skin*, 2nd edn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
31. Noelle-Neumann, *Spiral of Silence*, pp. 214–16.
32. Daryl J. Bem, 'Self-Perception Theory', in Leonard Berkowitz (ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 6 (New York and London: Academic Press, 1972), 1–62.
33. Richard E. Nisbett and Timothy DeCamp Wilson, 'Telling More Than We Can Know: Verbal Reports on Mental Processes', *Psychological Review*, 84, 3 (May 1977), 231–59, p. 235. Note that the title of this article is an ironic twist on Polanyi's slogan, 'we can know more than we can tell', pointing out that our lack of articulable knowledge about our motives does not actually stop us from speaking; it simply means that we are likely not to know what we are talking about. Nisbett and Wilson's review of literature was updated, with the same results, in Timothy D. Wilson, 'Strangers to Ourselves: The Origins and Accuracy of Beliefs about One's Own Mental States', in John G Harvey and Gifford Weary (eds), *Attribution: Basic Issues and Applications* (New York: Academic Press, 1985), 9–36, p. 14.
34. Wilson et al., 'Validity and Consequences'.
35. Wilson et al., 'Validity and Consequences', p. 98.
36. Wilson et al., 'Validity and Consequences', p. 108.
37. Wilson, 'Strangers to Ourselves', p. 16.
38. Timothy D. Wilson et al., 'A Model of Dual Attitudes', *Psychological Review*, 107, 1 (January 2000), 101–26.
39. Timothy D. Wilson, *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2002).
40. Timothy D. Wilson and Elizabeth W. Dunn, 'Self-Knowledge: Its Limits, Value, and Potential for Improvement', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55 (2004), 493–518.
41. Wilson and Dunn, 'Self-Knowledge', p. 121.
42. Wilson et al., 'Dual Attitudes', p. 115.
43. Taber, 'Information Processing', pp. 461–2.

44. John A. Bargh, 'The Cognitive Monster: The Case against the Controllability of Automatic Stereotype Effects', in Shelly Chaiken and Yaacov Trope (eds), *Dual-Process Theories in Social Psychology* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 361–82; John A. Bargh and Melissa J. Ferguson, 'Beyond Behaviorism: On the Automaticity of Higher Mental Processes', *Psychological Bulletin*, 126, 6 (November 2000), 925–45.
45. Bargh, 'Cognitive Monster', p. 365.
46. Bargh, 'Cognitive Monster', p. 372.
47. Bargh, 'Cognitive Monster', p. 373.
48. Daniel M. Wegner, 'Ironic Processes of Mental Control', *Psychological Review*, 101 (1994), 34–52, p. 34.
49. Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders*, first published in 1957 (New York: D. McKay), which mentioned subliminal advertising as among the means of 'hidden persuasion', became a best-seller.
50. Timothy D. Wilson et al., 'Choose Your Poison: Effects of Lay Beliefs about Mental Processes on Attitude Change', *Social Cognition*, 16, 1 (Spring 1998), 114–32, p. 115.
51. Bargh, 'Cognitive Monster', p. 371.
52. For instance, concerns over the implications for the legal process of automaticity in prejudicial behaviour evoke the provocative arguments of B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).
53. Bargh and Ferguson, 'Beyond Behaviorism', p. 933.
54. Guy Claxton, 'Whodunnit? Unpicking the "Seems" of Free Will', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6, 8–9 (1999), 99–113, p. 101.
55. Susan Pockett, 'Does Consciousness Cause Behaviour?' *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 11, 2 (2004), 23–40, p. 30.
56. Other results of such sceptical introspection are discussed in Claxton, 'Whodunnit?', pp. 105–7.
57. Pockett, 'Consciousness', p. 31.
58. Benjamin Libet, 'Do We Have Free Will?' *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6, 8–9 (1999), 47–57.
59. Pockett, 'Consciousness'.
60. Daniel M. Wegner, *The Illusion of Conscious Will* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2002), p. 2.
61. Wilson cites in particular the work of Arlie Hochschild on 'feeling rules'. Hochschild's argument is that 'we feel in ways appropriate to the situation as much as we do . . . because we actively try to manage what we feel in accordance with latent rules' (Arlie Russell Hochschild, 'Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure', *American Journal of Sociology*, 85, 3 (November 1979), 551–75, p. 571). But in the light of arguments in Chapter 5, the concept of a 'feeling rule' must itself be shorthand for a more complicated causal relationship, and cannot simply be assumed for the purposes of psychological explanation. Just as students of culture have taken attitudes for granted, so students of attitudes take culture for granted; an ownership of concepts by disciplines which, I have been arguing, is particularly pernicious when one wants to understand a concept like political culture.

62. A strong argument against folk psychology has been made, although later repudiated, by philosopher of mind Stephen Stich, who draws on findings such as those of Nisbett and Wilson discussed in this chapter. But one does not need to go to the extreme of denying the existence of belief to agree that findings of the kind I have been discussing must call into question folk psychological assumptions about the relation of belief, and other articulable mental states, to behaviour. That must in turn bear on our understanding of how political culture works. See Stephen P. Stich, *From Folk Psychology to Cognitive Science: The Case against Belief* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1983). Bruner comments that 'no book published during the heyday of behaviorism could match [Stich's] antimentalist zeal' (Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, p. 8), and seeks instead to make folk psychology the topic of cultural psychology. I have already indicated the undesirability of looping back once again to the hermeneutics of the 'system by which people organize their experience in, knowledge about, and transactions with, the social world' (p. 35): it neglects and thus assumes an answer to the question of the causal efficacy of this system.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, 'From Marx to Gramsci, from Gramsci to Marx: Historical Materialism and the Philosophy of Praxis', *Rethinking Marxism*, 13, 1 (2001), 69–82, p. 69.
2. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. C. J. Arthur (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), p. 47.
3. An attempt to extract from Marxism the elements that are compatible with a Wittgensteinian theory of practice is made in an interesting book by David Rubinstein, *Marx and Wittgenstein: Social Praxis and Social Explanation* (London and Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981). My view is that what has to be removed from Marxism to expose this praxeological core is not only much of the substance it has acquired since Marx wrote, but much of his own contribution too. One can proceed more efficiently by addressing practice directly.
4. See for example Theodore R. Schatzki, *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Theodore R. Schatzki et al. (eds), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); and Andreas Reckwitz, 'Towards a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5, 2 (2002), 243–63.
5. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, ed. and trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).
6. Scott Lash, 'Pierre Bourdieu: Cultural Economy and Social Change', in Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone (eds), *Bourdieu: Critical Debates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 193–211, p. 193; Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'The Reality of Reduction: The Failed Synthesis of Pierre Bourdieu', in *Fin de Siècle Social Theory: Relativism, Reduction, and the Problem of Reason* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 128–217, p. 203, n. 1.

7. Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 2; see also p. 37.
8. Bourdieu, *Outline*, pp. 3–4.
9. Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 72.
10. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 101.
11. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 170.
12. Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 81.
13. Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 80.
14. Hence the fact that Bourdieu has been criticized both for recapitulating Parsons and for merely refurbishing Marxism—even if it was a Marxism whose 'primary strategy was to confuse its own identity'. See for the first criticism Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), and for the second Alexander, 'Reality of Reduction' and Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, 'French Marxism', *Society*, 27, 5 (July 1990), 75–82, quotation at p. 78.
15. Nicholas Garnham, 'Bourdieu, the Cultural Arbitrary, and Television', in Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone (eds), *Bourdieu: Critical Debates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 178–92, p. 179.
16. Hence we can agree with Anthony King's suggestion that Bourdieu may be used against himself: Anthony King, 'Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A "Practical" Critique of the Habitus', *Sociological Theory*, 18, 3 (November 2000), 417–33.
17. Bent Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For previous turns to Aristotle see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981) and Leo Strauss, 'What Is Political Philosophy?' *Journal of Politics*, 19, 3 (August 1957), 343–68. Aristotle's *phronesis* has also been put forward as a means of overcoming the division of the social sciences by Richard Bernstein, drawing on Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics: Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).
18. Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*, p. 2.
19. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. and trans. Roger Crisp (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 105 (bk VI, ch. 3; p. 1139b of the standard pagination).
20. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 107 (VI, 5; 1140b).
21. Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), p. 23, where Sennett quotes Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* thus: 'We consider that the architects in every profession are more estimable and know more and are wiser than the artisans, for they know the reasons of the things which are done.'
22. Stephen Turner, *The Social Theory of Practices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
23. See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983); Marcel Mauss, 'Techniques of the Body', *Economy and Society*, 2, 1 (1973), 70–88; and Don Mixon, 'The Place of Habit in the Control of Action', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 10, 3 (October 1980), 167–86.
24. Quoted in Mixon, 'Place of Habit', p. 176.

25. Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 31.
26. Dewey, *Human Nature*, p. 121.
27. Carole Myers and Keith Davids, 'Tacit Skill and Performance at Work', *Applied Psychology*, 42, 2 (April 1993), 117–37, p. 123.
28. Myers and Davids, 'Tacit Skill', p. 126.
29. We find the distinction also in Aristotle, between a more intellectual practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and a less intellectual skill (*techne*), which is a weak point, I suggested earlier, in current aspirations to an Aristotelian or 'phronetic' social science.
30. David A. Rosenbaum et al., 'Acquisition of Intellectual and Perceptual-Motor Skills', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1 (2001), 453–70, pp. 454, 461.
31. Rosenbaum et al., 'Intellectual and Perceptual-Motor Skills', p. 457.
32. Rosenbaum et al., 'Intellectual and Perceptual-Motor Skills', pp. 456–61; quotations at pp. 457, 461; Stellan Ohlsson, 'The Learning Curve for Writing Books: Evidence from Professor Asimov', *Psychological Science*, 3, 6 (November 1992), 380–2.
33. Rosenbaum et al., 'Intellectual and Perceptual-Motor Skills', p. 466.
34. Craig P. Speelman and Kim Kirsner, *Beyond the Learning Curve: The Construction of Mind* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 68–71.
35. Speelman and Kirsner, *Beyond the Learning Curve*, p. 245.
36. For instance, it has been widely, though not universally, agreed by cognitive psychologists that skill acquisition follows a learning curve which is described mathematically by a power law. A prominent example of a theory of skill acquisition is the so-called ACT theory of J. R. Anderson. It accounts for the shape of the learning curve by positing that mental 'productions' which give rise to skilled practice are 'strengthened' by repetition, and the strengthening itself 'increases as a power function of the number of executions' (Speelman and Kirsner, *Beyond the Learning Curve*, pp. 47, 49). This amounts, as Speelman and Kirsner observe (p. 65), not to an explanation but merely to a redescription of the phenomenon of the learning curve.
37. Speelman and Kirsner, *Beyond the Learning Curve*, p. 246.
38. Speelman and Kirsner, *Beyond the Learning Curve*, p. 2.
39. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 52.
40. Polanyi wrote: 'The learner, like the discoverer, must believe before he can know. But . . . the intimations followed by the learner are based predominantly on his confidence in others; and this is an acceptance of authority.' Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, corrected edn (London: Routledge, 1962), p. 208. Indeed Polanyi's political conservatism and anti-communism was a product in part of his desire to protect the conditions of science, as understood in this 'master–apprentice' model. See for example Mark T. Mitchell, *Michael Polanyi: The Art of Knowing* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006), pp. 13–14 and (though here the case is somewhat overstated) Philip Mirowski, 'On Playing the Economics Trump Card in the Philosophy of Science: Why It Did Not Work for Michael Polanyi', *Philosophy of Science*, 64, Supplement (December 1997), S127–38.

41. Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*, pp. 62–3.
42. Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*, p. 64.
43. William F. Hanks, 'Foreword', in Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*, 13–24, p. 20.
44. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (New York: Free Press, 1986), p. 80.
45. Dreyfus and Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine*, p. 106, quoting Edward Feigenbaum.
46. Dreyfus and Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine*, pp. 21–35, quotation at p. 20.
47. Dreyfus and Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine*, p. 32.
48. However, Dreyfus and Dreyfus's only reference to Polanyi is the unconvincing claim, reminiscent of Searle's, that he insisted that skills involve a tacit *theory*; Dreyfus and Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine*, p. 152.
49. Speelman and Kirsner, *Beyond the Learning Curve*, p. 245.
50. Hanks, 'Foreword', p. 20.
51. Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*, p. 103.
52. That it places an excessive emphasis on choice is one objection to Ann Swidler's widely cited proposal that culture should be seen as a 'tool kit' of resources for action (Ann Swidler, 'Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies', *American Sociological Review*, 51, 2 (April 1986), 273–86, p. 277). Swidler mounts an apt critique of the Parsonian theory of culture on the basis that culture 'is more like a style or a set of skills and habits than a set of preferences or wants', and that 'what endures is *the way action is organized*, not its ends' (Swidler, 'Culture in Action', pp. 275–6). But she fails to distinguish adequately between the articulate and inarticulate dimensions of culture in her definition of it (p. 273) as 'symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life' (a definition that also suffers from the infirmity of including 'cultural' in the *definiens* of culture). Various confusions and contradictions result, including the identification of culture with ideology ('explicit culture', p. 278, or 'contested culture', p. 279, n. 14), something that certainly *does* contain preferences or wants. In later work (Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001)), Swidler turns more consistently towards the articulate or discursive dimension of culture, but never makes explicit the relationship between practice and discourse which is the crux of the dualistic theory I am advancing.
53. Kostas Axelos, *Alienation, Praxis, and Technē in the Thought of Karl Marx*, trans. Ronald Bruzina (Austin, TX and London: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 135.
54. Karl Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (London: Penguin, 1992), 279–400, p. 286.
55. Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, 25th Anniversary edn (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998). On the muting of interest in the conditions of labour after Marx see pp. 7–8.
56. Craig R. Littler and Graeme Salaman, 'Bravermania and Beyond: Recent Theories of the Labour Process', *Sociology*, 16, 2 (May 1982), 251–69.

57. Michael Power, *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
58. 'The universal market is widely celebrated as a bountiful "service economy", and praised for its "convenience", "cultural opportunities", "modern facilities for care of the handicapped", etc. We need not emphasize how badly this urban civilization works and how much misery it embraces.' Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism*, p. 195. This is hardly a sufficient retort to the defenders of capitalist society, who might also not agree that its cars are 'increasingly degraded' and its bread always rubbery (pp. 141, 143n).
59. Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, ed. and trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), p. 16.
60. Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labour Process under Monopoly Capitalism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 30.
61. Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent*, pp. 81, 93.
62. Tony Manwaring and Stephen Wood, 'The Ghost in the Machine: Tacit Skills in the Labor Process', *Socialist Review*, 14, 2 (1984), 55–83 & 94.
63. Manwaring and Wood, 'Ghost in the Machine', pp. 56–7.
64. Manwaring and Wood, 'Ghost in the Machine', p. 62, quoting Ken Kusterer.
65. Quoted in Manwaring and Wood, 'Ghost in the Machine', p. 64n.
66. Vladimir Andrle, *Workers in Stalin's Russia: Industrialization and Social Change in a Planned Economy* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester-Wheatsheaf; New York: St Martin's Press, 1988); for a discussion see Stephen Welch, *The Concept of Political Culture* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 92–3.
67. Stephen White, 'Soviet Political Culture Reassessed', in Archie Brown (ed.), *Political Culture and Communist Studies* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), 62–99, p. 83.
68. Ken Jowitt, 'Political Culture in Leninist Regimes', in *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1992), 50–87, p. 55.
69. Wayne DiFranceisco and Zvi Gitelman, 'Soviet Political Culture and "Covert Participation" in Policy Implementation', *American Political Science Review*, 78, 3 (September 1984), 603–21; Alexander Zinoviev, *The Reality of Communism*, ed. and trans. Charles Janson (London: Paladin, 1985).
70. Nigel Swain, *Hungary: The Rise and Fall of Feasible Socialism* (London and New York: Verso, 1992); János Kenedi, *Do It Yourself: Hungary's Hidden Economy* (London: Pluto Press, 1981).
71. Andrle, *Workers in Stalin's Russia*.
72. For example, Stephen Whitefield and Geoffrey Evans, 'Political Culture versus Rational Choice: Explaining Responses to Transition in the Czech Republic and Slovakia', *British Journal of Political Science*, 29, 1 (January 1999), 129–54.
73. Gabriel A. Almond, 'Communism and Political Culture Theory', *Comparative Politics*, 15, 2 (January 1983), 127–38.

74. Alena V. Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 59–72.
75. Peter Kneen, 'Political Corruption in Russia and the Soviet Legacy', *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 34, 4 (2000), 349–68, p. 353.
76. Kneen, 'Political Corruption in Russia', pp. 355, 358. I would differ from this formulation only in questioning that 'coping practices' need a culture in which to be 'embedded': they are instead themselves a dimension of culture.
77. Tomas Larsson, 'Reform, Corruption, and Growth: Why Corruption Is More Devastating in Russia Than in China', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39, 2 (June 2006), 265–81.
78. Carolyn L. Hsu, 'Capitalism without Contracts versus Capitalists without Capitalism: Comparing the Influence of Chinese *Guanxi* and Russian *Blat* on Marketization', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 38, 3 (September 2005), 309–27.
79. Hsu, 'Capitalism without Contracts', p. 320.
80. Hsu, 'Capitalism without Contracts', pp. 313–14.
81. Richard Robison writes: 'the substantive claims . . . that "Asian values" are the immutable ideologies of whole civilizations or cultures have perhaps been taken too seriously as intellectual propositions . . . What is critical is the political nature of this ideology.' Richard Robison, 'The Politics of "Asian Values"', *Pacific Review*, 9, 3 (1996), 309–27, p. 322.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. T. H. Rigby and Ferenc Fehér (eds), *Political Legitimation in Communist States* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 17–18.
2. Jeffrey C. Goldfarb, *Reinventing Political Culture: The Power of Culture* versus *the Culture of Power* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012), p. 33.
3. The Douglas–Wildavsky 'cultural theory' (see n. 15 in the Introduction) claims to have an account of cultural change, but it is in fact the encounter between 'cultural bias' and experience that drives change on this account, so in fact cultural biases themselves are depicted as entirely static.
4. Michel de Certeau attacks Foucault on this very ground, i.e. on the microscopic look that Foucault claimed to make his own. Against Foucault, he makes a distinction between the 'strategy' of power-holders and the 'tactics' of the subjects of power. While the former are the producers of goods as well as culture, the latter have room for manoeuvre and resistance in the 'tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, [which] lend a political dimension to everyday practices' (Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, ed. and trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1984), p. xvii).
5. Eric Rambo and Elaine Chan, 'Text, Structure, and Action in Cultural Sociology: A Commentary on "Positive Objectivity" in Wuthnow and Archer', *Theory and Society*, 19, 5 (October 1990), 635–48. The case of Robert Wuthnow is somewhat different, as he does not invest the objective logical relationships between the

elements of discourse with the importance that Archer does. Even so, his examples of culture as he understands it, 'religious discourse, sermons, theological writings, instruction in the ways of worshiping, literature, plays, newspapers, philosophical treatises, political tracts, party platforms, and propaganda' make it clear that for him, culture is 'explicitly produced rather than simply being implicitly embedded in, or constitutive of, social arrangements'. Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 15. In terms of the theory of culture I have advanced, this is a one-sided and incomplete analysis, leaving it unclear how cultural products have effects. All these materials, as articulate discourse, fail to implement themselves in behaviour without supplementation by practice.

6. David Lockwood, 'Social Integration and System Integration', in George K. Zollschan and Walter Hirsch (eds), *Explorations in Social Change* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 244–57. For a discussion of the impact and significance of Lockwood's distinction see José Maurício Domingues, 'Social Integration, System Integration and Collective Subjectivity', *Sociology*, 34, 2 (May 2000), 225–41.
7. Margaret A. Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. xvi. Sorokin's distinction between 'logico-meaningful' and 'causal-functional' relations, cited with approval by the early Geertz (see Chapter 2, p. 56), is along the same lines.
8. Quoted in Archer, *Culture and Agency*, p. 150.
9. Archer, *Culture and Agency*, p. 144.
10. David Bloor, *Wittgenstein, Rules and Institutions* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 6.
11. Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, p. 29.
12. Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, p. 29.
13. Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, p. 33.
14. John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin, 1996); Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967); Peter L. Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973); Peter Berger and Stanley Pullberg, 'Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness', *New Left Review*, no. I/35 (January–February 1966), 56–71; Robert K. Merton, 'The Thomas Theorem and the Matthew Effect', *Social Forces*, 74, 2 (September 1995), 379–422, p. 380. For discussion of Berger and Luckmann as the basis of a phenomenological theory of political culture see Stephen Welch, *The Concept of Political Culture* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 108–10.
15. 'Constructionism' in psychology, for instance, has largely been discursivist in nature, and I alluded in Chapter 4 to the 'constructivist' position that has been highly visible in International Relations; it too is much influenced by Foucault, directly and (via Said or Clifford and Marcus) indirectly. For a recognition of the overlap between the constructionist and discursivist positions see Vivien Burr,

Social Constructionism, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 1, 16–18, though Burr finds the overlap more productive than I do.

16. I find fruitful the approach taken to it by Ian Hacking, for whom social construction is an empirical matter, to be addressed by investigating the process of construction itself, and not, as in much discursivist (or 'deconstructive') analysis, simply by asserting that something (or everything) is a social construction. Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1999).
17. Hanna Pitkin indeed suggested that the term 'reification', as applied to social constructions, understates their immutability, as mountains and rivers are at the present stage of technology more movable than basic economic conditions. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, 'Rethinking Reification', *Theory and Society*, 16, 2 (March 1987), 263–93, p. 281.
18. Searle, *Construction of Social Reality*, pp. 37–43.
19. Bourdieu writes:

    > in a particular field, the properties, internalized in dispositions or objectified in economic or cultural goods, which are attached to agents are not all simultaneously operative; the specific logic of the field determines those which are valid in this market, which are pertinent and active in the game in question, and which, in the relationship within this field, function as specific capital—and consequently, as a factor explaining practices.

    Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 113.
20. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), § 268.
21. Paul Ormerod, *The Death of Economics* (London and Boston, MA: Faber and Faber, 1994), pp. 46–50.
22. Will Hutton, *The Revolution That Never Was: An Assessment of Keynesian Economics*, 2nd edn (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 117–18.
23. Robert Skidelsky, *Keynes: The Return of the Master* (London: Allen Lane, 2009).
24. John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, new edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 151.
25. Keynes, *General Theory*, p. 154.
26. Keynes, *General Theory*, pp. 156.
27. Benoit Mandelbrot and Richard L. Hudson, *The (Mis)behaviour of Markets* (London: Profile Books, 2008); Paul Ormerod, *Butterfly Economics: A New General Theory of Social and Economic Behavior* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).
28. See for example David Byrne, *Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); Michael Reed and David L. Harvey, 'The New Science and the Old: Complexity and Realism in the Social Sciences', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 22, 4 (December 1992), 353–80; and Nigel Thrift, 'The Place of Complexity', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16, 3 (June 1999), 31–69.
29. Thrift, 'Place of Complexity', pp. 54–5. Thrift is more tolerant of the 'metaphors of complexity' deployed by French social theorists than the speculations of practising natural scientists. I am not sure that as explanations they are any less 'tawdry', though they are admittedly more poetic.

30. Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, p. 35.
31. The same is true of Anthony King, who develops a critique of critical realist social theory on the basis of what he calls a hermeneutic position derived from Wittgenstein. It would be more accurately labelled a constructionist one, particularly as King, like Pleasants, notes Wittgenstein's objection to the idea that a rule has its effects through an *interpretation* of it (which would simply be another rule). King's position, like Bloor's, is a useful starting point for an investigation of the discursive dimension of political culture. See Anthony King, *The Structure of Social Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004) and his critique of Margaret Archer, Anthony King, 'Against Structure: A Critique of Morphogenetic Social Theory', *Sociological Review*, 47, 2 (May 1999), 199–227.
32. Alasdair MacIntyre described Polanyi as 'the Burke of the philosophy of science' (quoted in Mark T. Mitchell, *Michael Polanyi: The Art of Knowing* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006), p. 155). Polanyi's aversion to Marxism has much in common with Burke's critique of the 'politicians of metaphysics' who led the French Revolution (Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 190). Burke's retort to the revolutionaries that 'the constitution of a state, and the due distribution of its powers, [is] a matter of the most delicate and complicated skill' (p. 51) could indeed be seen as revealing Burke as the Polanyi of political thought.
33. See for example Timothy D. Wilson, *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 107–9, where Wilson speaks of 'shared cultural theories' as a source for the production of explanations of one's own behaviour. It is not clear what the word 'cultural' is adding here. See also n. 61 to Chapter 6.
34. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion—Our Social Skin*, 2nd edn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 9–16.
35. Noelle-Neumann, *Spiral of Silence*, pp. 37–41.
36. Bloor, *Wittgenstein*, p. 33.
37. Noelle-Neumann, *Spiral of Silence*, p. 168.
38. Thomas R. Rochon, *Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism, and Changing Values* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).
39. Rochon does not use the term 'political culture' much, but he does not invest the distinction between culture and political culture with any importance. As a student of social movements, he shares with that literature (for instance in its study of 'cultural framing', which it does not tend to qualify as 'political-cultural framing') the taking of the political focus of cultural analysis as read.
40. Lawrence Lessig, 'The Regulation of Social Meaning', *University of Chicago Law Review*, 62, 3 (Summer 1995), 943–1045, pp. 965–7.
41. Lessig, 'The Regulation of Social Meaning', pp. 959–60; on Turner's critique of tacit norms as explanations see pp. 163–4 in Chapter 7.

42. I have in mind the mutation of the current economic crisis into a 'sovereign debt crisis': the speculative bubble which burst in 2007 was, it has transpired, so large that doubt is now cast on the creditworthiness of some states as lenders of last resort.
43. James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), pp. 53–5.
44. For example, a solicitation from Senator Jesse Helms warned: 'Your tax dollars are being used to pay for grade school education that teaches our children [that] CANNIBALISM, WIFE-SWAPPING, and the MURDER of infants and the elderly are acceptable behavior.' Hunter, *Culture Wars*, p. 167.
45. See Nancy J. Davis and Robert V. Robinson, 'Are the Rumors of War Exaggerated? Religious Orthodoxy and Moral Progressivism in America', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 102, 3 (November 1996), 756–87; Rhys H. Williams, *Cultural Wars in American Politics: Critical Reviews of a Popular Myth* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1997); and, with survey findings more compatible with Hunter's thesis, Geoffrey C. Layman and Edward G. Carmines, 'Cultural Conflict in American Politics: Religious Traditionalism, Postmaterialism, and U.S. Political Behavior', *Journal of Politics*, 59, 3 (August 1997), 751–77.
46. James Davison Hunter, 'Response to Davis and Robinson: Remembering Durkheim', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 35, 3 (1996), 246–8, p. 246. Hunter invokes Durkheim in support of his suggestion of 'an "objective" and "coercive" reality irreducible to collective psychology' (Hunter, 'Response', p. 248), without however going to the trouble of substantiating this support with any references (there are none to Durkheim in *Culture Wars* or 'Response' and a single fleeting one in Hunter's later book *Before the Shooting Begins: Searching for Democracy in America's Culture War* (New York: Basic Books, 1994)). It is perhaps the later Durkheim of *Elementary Forms* that Hunter is referring to, not the earlier theorist of collective conscience found wanting by Parsons (Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, ed. and trans. Karen E. Fields (New York and London: Free Press, 1995)). Space is not available for a proper investigation of Durkheim's argument in *Elementary Forms*, but for a discussion of its account of the discursive construction of social reality see Anne Warfield Rawls, *Epistemology and Practice: Durkheim's The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
47. Small-scale 'private' discursive environments can equally exhibit 'reality-defining' features, even without the direct contribution of the mass media, as is shown by Nina Eliasoph's account of the political discourse of the various suburban mid-American bars and clubhouses of which she made an ethnographic study (Nina Eliasoph, *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998)). These settings provide a constraint on ways of talking, principally mandating professions of cynicism and indifference towards politics ('political evaporation'), which Eliasoph contrasts with the expressions of political concern she elicited from her interlocutors in 'backstage' settings. Of course, it follows that even backstage, the

idea of a 'true attitude' involves something of a reification, since a conversation with a visiting ethnographer is itself a discursive environment with its own peculiar properties. See also Nina Eliasoph, 'Political Culture and the Presentation of a Political Self: A Study of the Public Sphere in the Spirit of Erving Goffman', *Theory and Society*, 19, 4 (August 1990), 465–94.

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