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## Chapter one

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### The paradigm crisis

[pp. 11-28]

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[11] What is a paradigm? There are many different contradictory definitions, and even radical social psychologists wanting to appeal to Kuhn's (1970) analysis of the structure of scientific revolutions must realize that he used the term 'paradigm' in at least twenty-one ways. More than that, the paradigms Kuhn described were paradigms in the natural sciences, not the *human* sciences. If a paradigm is a framework of assumptions, then we could see traditional social psychology as being governed until the early 1970s by a paradigm which told us that we should understand individual behaviour by accumulating laboratory-experimental data. 'New' social psychology sold itself as a more advanced paradigm which told us to take accounts seriously. But it is not as simple as that.

Social psychology as a human science does not shift inexorably forward as it assimilates 'facts' and accommodates itself to the 'real' world (however much it may pretend to). One of the images at work in the paradigm story is that of *progress*. The other image which guides us through analyses of the problems of everyday life is that of a *perception* which changes, but is supposedly moving towards a closer and closer correspondence to truth. These two ideas would appear, explicitly or implicitly, in any traditional definition of scientific paradigm change. The problem is that social psychology involves neither progress nor perception. On the contrary, because social psychology is about a social reality which changes with culture and history, we would be quite wrong to imagine that 'facts' are the spanners in the works which force through 'paradigm shifts'. Critics of traditional laboratory-experimental social psychology a decade and a half ago actually [12] used the terms 'old paradigm', 'new paradigm', and 'paradigm shift' self-consciously as rhetorical constructions (Harré and Secord 1972). 'New' ethogenic social psychologists and their fellow travellers in the discipline do not claim to describe the 'real' state of an enterprise which pretends to be a science: their descriptions are designed to construct, disrupt, and change that state.

### Placing paradigms

If we consider the fictions which hold together the paradigms of pretend sciences like social psychology, we find that it is impossible to get very far without discussing their cultural and political contexts. The notion of progress, for example, is appealing, but the problem is that it invites us to sketch a blueprint for a future state by using *present* materials and concepts. This would restrict our options. A bigger problem is that the idea of 'progress' itself is a peculiarly modern one which originated in Anglo-American culture in the eighteenth century and gathered steam in the industrial revolutions of the nineteenth. A belief in 'progress', then, promises to release us from modern times while actually shackling us to them. The notion is culturally specific. There is nothing 'true' about it. If it is put under pressure, then the idea of progress collapses into an opposite: relativism.

Now consider the perceptual metaphor of the *gestalt* switch designed to support and sell the idea of 'paradigms' in science. You are often, in this literature, invited to collude in a little experiment which will confirm a particular model of science and even flatter you into

believing that you too are a (naive) scientist: you see a duck which changes magically into a rabbit and back again. In reality, of course, this model of change is too free-flowing and it needs to be supplemented with an account of the constraints which hold interpretations of a figure as duck or rabbit in place; the 'disciplinary matrix' of the paradigm, perhaps, that Kuhn (1970) describes. Ducks are not rabbits, and it would require a theory of enormous power to persuade us that they were. That power would have to be in some sense coercive. In science the paradigms which inform images of the world, and in social psychology the paradigms which inform our views of people, are coercive. There are, as well as perceptions, deceptions organized into a series of interpretations held in place by language. There are [13] always sets of statements in and around science which tell us how we should see things. Under pressure, the innocent perception collapses into an opposite: text.

One lesson of these brief deconstructions of progress and perception, of the hidden tenets of 'scientific' social psychology, is that we must place any discussions of the paradigm shift in a wider frame. That wider frame involves the meanings given to the geographical separation of research traditions. The cultural context of any crisis of paradigms is organized in social psychology by the distribution of economic power in the world, and for most social psychologists that is mediated by the relationship between America and Europe. The criticisms of positivism and individualism and the flight from the laboratory correspond to an increasing interest in European social psychology. While the struggle of partisans of the European approach against the regime of American social psychology is not confined to geographical boundaries, it is important that we appreciate the significance of these sites of tradition and of resistance. I want to explain why American social psychology is often (wrongly) seen as the only problem, with European social psychology (equally mistakenly) offered as the solution.

### *America*

For an English-speaking audience the development of theoretical and research traditions is deeply influenced by the relationship between America and Europe, with American cultural assumptions forming the terms of debates. America is both the home of social psychology as an institution, and the scene of its earliest discontents. From Triplett's (1898) first social psychology experiment on the effect of others on cyclists (in which, bizarre though it may sound, he timed children turning fishing reels), to operationalised studies on 'social facilitation' (where cockroaches were timed running races), the social world in this culture has been depicted as sometimes an occasion for, but always a potential risk to, the *individual*. Alongside this thorough-going individualism is a mechanistic framing of human action. Enclosed within this overarching narrative about individual autonomy and the social dangers to it are the little stories etched into the social psychologist's imagination and passed rapidly on to new students. Here are the laboratory vignettes of Asch (1952) on [14] conformity and Milgram (1963) on obedience: others in groups can distort your perceptual judgement, and others in command can destroy your moral judgement. Then there are the re-descriptions of the real world designed to read as if laboratory phenomena had taken on a life of their own: social processes like 'groupthink' or 'bystander apathy'.

In some cases this was hardly surprising. In the McCarthyite cultural climate after the Second World War - when radical psychologists could lose their jobs for excluding themselves from the 'liberal' consensus - proposals for a 'new social psychology' looked beyond the 'armchair' and 'data-collecting' phases to the institutionalization of the discipline. Appeals were made to the interests of the US military: 'when West Point and Annapolis begin to see the importance of a scientific approach to problems of social behaviour, the rest of the country cannot be far behind' (Dennis 1948:12). However, even when there was the

promise of a turn away from the concerns of the state to 'real' problems, social psychologists still reinforced the traditional approaches.

The key demands of psychologists faced with growing unemployment were often simply for more jobs and more research on 'social problems'. It was in this context that the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) was founded at the 1936 American Psychological Association (APA) convention. Activists in the SPSSI did attempt to channel energies in a progressive way by, for example, materially supporting the struggle against fascism in Spain. However, such exceptions to the general preoccupation with defending social psychology were rare (Finison 1977).

The terms of the debate as to the future of psychology were set by the traditional conservative leaders of the APA, with E.G. Boring in the 'restrictivist' camp commending the operation of the law of 'survival of the fittest' to the membership, and groups like the Psychologists' League, speaking for the 'expansionists', demanding jobs (Finison 1976). It was only later that worries were voiced that, without a radical overhaul of methods and conceptions of social behaviour, the treating of social problems would always end up treating the oppressed as 'problems'. Issues such as racism, for example, tended to be addressed from the point of view of the oppressors (which in this case had much to do with the exclusion of black people from psychology). In contrast, when the paradigm [15] crisis erupted in the 1960s and 1970s, in the context of radical social movements outside and inside the universities and colleges, radicals were able to breach the boundaries around social psychology, and raise both interdisciplinary and political issues.

While America is the home of social psychology, it is also the home of the crisis in social psychology. This is due to the close connection between the discipline and the concerns of the economy and state, the character of American society as a free-enterprise capitalism carried to a degree way beyond the dreams of European entrepreneurs, and the consequent heightening of tensions between radical European social theory and the mechanistic individualism embodied in the laboratory experiment. Most of the American crisis literature is simply about such things as the frivolity of experiments, the ethics of deception, or the need to learn from subjects. This, at least, is the literature cited now. There were actually many complaints at the end of the 1960s about the alienating character of American society. There was a widespread disenchantment with psychology and the culture that spawned it. However, as will be seen in Chapter two, this cultural explanation does not colour in the whole picture.

### *Europe*

Those who were outside America were able to link the debates inside social psychology with cultural issues more readily. They had, after all, been sold a vision of social relations which was not just wrong or 'alienating'. When European social psychologists got the approach home it did not work. Hence characterizations in the British crisis literature of the 'American paradigm' and, more to the point, in the French literature (relayed to an English-speaking audience through *The European Journal of Social Psychology*) of the impact of ideology on social science and its attempts to eradicate conflict (Moscovici 1972; Plon 1974)

Although the revolt against the cultural dominance of American laboratory-experimental social psychology in Europe was traced by some writers to the impact of Paris May 1968 events, the concern with 'ideology' as an object of study has deeper roots. European social psychology has historically had a closer relationship with research in sociology and anthropology than the American variety. While recently rehabilitated research on systems of [16] meaning and belief and social conceptions of self (Mead 1934) in America were hived off to sociology and philosophy departments, in France studies of 'social

representations' - shared meanings and self-concepts - were being carried out in social psychology at the end of the 1950s. (I will return to this strand of research in Chapter five.)

The interest in sociological ideas and the experience of the old paradigm as a culturally oppressive form led even some of the more politically cautious critics in Europe to implicate the structure of American society in the crimes of laboratory experimentation (Armistead 1974). Harré, for example, in his outlines of an ethogenic new paradigm, includes sideswipes at 'North American mores' which treat 'conduct as the behavioural output of trained automata' (1983: 5). Social psychology is part of the *problem* and not part of the solution, and this is how many radicals read the following appeal in an influential European contribution to the crisis literature:

The central and exclusive object of social psychology should be the study of all that pertains to *ideology* and to *communication* from the point of view of their structure, their genesis and their function. The proper domain of our discipline is the study of cultural processes which are responsible for the organization of knowledge in a society.

(Moscovici 1972: 55)

This proposal is a good one, but the call for the study of ideology as such is not sufficient to constitute a radical alternative to the American tradition. 'Ideology' can easily be sanitized and recuperated by social psychology. A crucial additional ingredient is a notion of *conflict*. Such a notion is either simply absent, or deliberately excluded, from the picture in the American tradition. Instead, the attainment of consensus was the goal of much of the criticism of deception in the experiment, and the outcome of this was the fruitless debates on the value of role-playing, where experiments continued to be carried out but were now reinforced by liberal doses of 'communication' and 'trust'. Alongside this went the weak suggestion that we could 'advance the cause of human welfare' simply by demanding more 'relevance' (Ring 1967:113).

When there is no notion of conflict, there is little political value in descriptions of psychological knowledge. Where conflict was brought to the fore, however, as in the European social-psychological contributions, we were at least offered an exposé of the way [17] American social psychology constructed a 'false knowledge' of society and labelled resistance to the social order as unnatural (Plon 1974). The advantage of counter-posing the European developments to the American tradition is to throw into question the idea that any particular social order should be considered 'natural' in the first place.

### *Culture*

There are a number of tempting ways to understand the impact of American and European culture on the contours of the crisis in social psychology. The first, obvious, response to the distinction between the two cultures would be that we only have to opt for European social psychology and champion it against bad old American social psychology. This would be a mistake. The new European research contains many unhelpful assumptions of its own. This does not, however, mean that we should simply reject both the American and European variants of the discipline. There are spaces for resistance in both American and European work which are useful and progressive. I will argue below that the new paradigm which emerged from the crisis also contains some useful ideas. A third way which would be more in keeping with the deconstructive approach discussed later on in this book would be to emphasize the European contribution and bring it into sharper conflict with the American research. Out of the conflict will emerge something better (and quite different).

Each variant of social psychology not only describes social phenomena but also, as

part of a culture, *creates* and re-produces the social phenomena it studies. The social reality which American and European social psychology participates in is, in part, defined by way of its opposition to the other culture. (We will see the political effects of this in the next chapter, and the consequences for other cultures in Chapter eight.) For the moment, we have to be aware of the way language, as the cartilage of culture, produces, through its own distinct metaphors of social mechanisms, ways not only of understanding the world, but also ways of ‘understanding’ other ways of understanding the world. This work of language in accounting for action, and becoming part of the action itself, brings us to the alternatives to laboratory experimentation advocated by the ethogenic new paradigm. [18]

### **Experimentation and ethogenics**

In 1976 Middlemist *et al.* published the results of an experiment in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* which continued a long-running tradition of research in America, that of ‘social facilitation’. Is the presence of others arousing? Too arousing? To their credit Middlemist and his co-workers moved out of the laboratory. The paper is called ‘Personal space invasions in the lavatory: suggestive evidence for arousal’. It reported the effects of proximity (independent variable) on males ‘coactively engaged in private elimination’ (dependent variable). If the presence of another person increased arousal in the lavatory you would expect two things to happen: muscles at the exit from the bladder would tense and so the delay before the onset of urination would be longer, and the delay and the tension would cause the urine stream to be faster and therefore to persist for a shorter time.

In one situation (control condition) the unwitting subject used the only urinal not closed for cleaning; in another (first experimental condition) one of the experimenters stood at the next urinal; and in another (second experimental condition) the experimenter stood one urinal away. In a pilot study one of the researchers hid inside the toilet cubicle next to the urinal with a tape-recorder, but the background noise was too loud to get usable data. So, in the actual study, the person in the cubicle had a little periscope balanced on some books under the door directed upward so that the subject’s urinal was visible. They were then able to observe and measure the delay and persistence of urination accurately.

### *Significance*

The results were ‘significant’, that is, you can take them with a pinch of salt. The *experiment* is significant for a number of reasons. It is an ‘ideal type’ (a caricature and exemplar) of the research the new paradigm in social psychology is trying to displace. I will draw out five main points which highlight the problem with this type of old paradigm social psychology, and which lead on to the alternative approaches advocated by those in and around the ethogenic new paradigm.

The first point is that the experiment is American, published in an American journal. The issues that cluster around this point are [19] partly to do with the sheer number of journals available to reproduce the discipline in America and exhaust the (few) good ideas that do crop up from time to time with useless empirical studies, and with the pressure on American academics to churn out studies which are designed for *curricula vitae* more than anything else. Journals do not usually, in addition, publish *non-significant* results, and most journals do not have a blind refereeing procedure to decide which papers should be accepted (though this in itself would not guarantee anonymity or neutral adjudication on the quality of articles). This is not to say that trivial experiments do not appear in European journals, or that there is not a manic drive there to publish, but American social psychology is particularly badly affected.

The second point is that although the research moved out of the laboratory, the study still, to all intents and purposes, was a laboratory-experimental one. An entirely artificial schema was designed by the researcher in which different variables could be predicted and controlled. This schema was then bolted onto the 'real' world so that no unexpected meanings would intrude. An interpretive frame was constructed around an aspect of the 'real' world such that it becomes understood *as if* it were a tightly controlled experimental setting. (This is not merely a result of the physical characteristics of the research space.) The experiment also required deception.

The third point is to do with the methodological approach which gives rise to the pseudo-scientific description of 'private elimination'. A quantitative approach deliberately screens out the meanings of being in a public lavatory and substitutes measurement of the urine stream. It is just such a delusion of understanding human social experience through the accumulation of measurements and divined causal relations that defines *positivism* in social science.

The fourth point concerns the essential *individualism* which pervades social psychology. Leaving aside for the moment the moral evaluation of the social which informs social-psychological theory and research generally, the framework of 'social facilitation' is built on the effects of individual others on one individual's performance (cycling, writing, micturating). This, we are invited to believe, is social behaviour. More sophisticated theoretical frameworks dealing with 'attitudes', 'attributions', or 'stereotypes' still locate the appropriate machinery inside the head of an individual. [20] Fifth, and last, is the question of history and culture. The sometimes hidden, sometimes explicit agenda of laboratory-experimental social psychology is to absorb the positivistically viewed causal laws obtained from the data of an individual's behaviour into a theory about human beings which is universally applicable. In the present case, the 'theory' of 'social facilitation' loses its power when we ask questions about the historical specificity of 'private elimination'. The defensiveness experienced in public lavatories is just one aspect of the transgression of what we now, in modern times, take to be our sacred individual privacy. To be 'coactively engaged in private elimination' is to be participating in a culturally distinct practice with particular meanings. An additional issue here is that although the traditional focus on white psychology undergraduates is not so overt in the study, we are drawn once again into the world of *male* social activity and conned into extrapolating to 'social facilitation' throughout the whole of humankind.

### *Signification*

But did they speak, these subjects? Imagine one of them turning to leave and accidentally stumbling over the books and periscope. He looks to the experimenter at the next urinal who feels compelled to head off a potentially awkward scene. Well, this is exactly what it is, a 'scene' in which two of the actors must engage in a plausible presentation of a 'social-psychologist' persona, and the third must attempt not to appear foolish. Up to now each action contained meanings carefully screened out by the experimenters in their report of the study. They were tacitly aware of this when they blocked off all urinals but two in the first experimental condition in order to exclude possible embarrassing interpretations of the situation on the subject's part when one experimenter stood next to him. Now the experimental frame has been disrupted, the meaning emerges in language as they account for their actions by saying 'this is a social psychology experiment'. How they could account, with shared meanings, is the subject matter of the ethogenic new paradigm social psychology.

Ethogenic alternatives which emerged out of the crisis incorporate a number of ideas from analytic philosophy (Austin 1956) and microsociology (Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1971;

Mead 1934). The broad approach is not simply a theory and method for [21] studying social interaction, for its proposals entail a view of society which has moral and political consequences. A brief summary of the ethogenic approach can be hung on three points: the idea of an expressive order, a description of that order as drama, and an understanding of social rules.

The first point is one which calls upon a crucial and fruitful distinction we should make between the *practical* and the *expressive* orders (Harré 1979). Sleeping, eating, and excreting are activities which must be performed by human beings as biological organisms in order to survive. Such practical matters could be carried out by a Robinson Crusoe, but many others are needed to reproduce wider-reaching material structures: hunting and cooking food, tilling the land, building factories, or information technology hardware, are all part of the practical order. We can broaden this notion of a practical order to include the different physical locations of bodies in different economic systems and the laws of those economies (trade cycles, 'long waves', and the suchlike) which organize, and occasionally disrupt, human life.

Even a basic biological function like going to the loo, however, is organized in the expressive context of a culture. The unwitting subject in the Middlemist *et al.* experiment could have publicly wet his trousers (to protest against the length of a lecture) or peed against a tree (to show off to the lads). In the lavatory he could have chatted amiably to the stranger next to him or huddled silently over the urinal. Such expressive activities warrant and explain practical activities, and, of course, the system of explanations we use in the expressive order then rebounds on the way we materially structure the practical order. Think of the effects of Lysenko's genetics as an account designed to express a view of the world and *impress* those who held power in the bureaucracy on the practice and products of Soviet agriculture. Ethogenics has been concerned with the way that the expressive order dominates and shapes the practical order. We are told that 'only in exceptional circumstances does the practical dominate social life' (Harré 1979: 35). (We will return to consider what 'exceptional circumstances' may be in Chapter eight.)

The second point of the ethogenic position is to do with how people organize themselves in the expressive sphere to impress others. An ethogenic principle is that life should be viewed as a *drama*. The 'social worlds' of seminars, families, or revolutionary [22] cells are occasions for many dramas to be played out, and each script calls for a different appropriate persona. Many social personas cluster around a single biological organism. Two further issues are involved here. On the one hand, individual agency is primarily directed to the attainment of honour and the avoidance of shame. This is important, for hidden in the common-sense view of people that ethogenists appeal to with the slogan 'for scientific purposes treat people as if they were human beings' (Harré and Secord 1972: 84) is a model (actor, accounter, rhetorician) of what human beings are like. We could use this to pick out 'respect/contempt' hierarchies in each scene. However, this order and meaning is *shared*, and so is potentially transparent to all social actors. The re-presentation and re-interpretation of behaviour is a precarious business, but one in which everyone can engage equally.

The dramatic social worlds of the expressive order, then, are wrought out of the meanings of behaviour. These meanings emerge as behaviour, or movements become understood as actions designed to accomplish certain acts. To crouch with your head bent over a hollow tube inscribing marks on paper is a series of *movements*. To look down a periscope and to record observations is an *action*. To be performing a social psychology experiment is an *act*. In order to glue their actions into a common understanding of the act that the puzzled subject can participate in, the revealed experimenters would have to rule out definitions of the situation which saw the actions contributing to, say, the meaning of the act as a stake-out or as a seduction. An ethogenic researcher would attempt to gather accounts from the participants in such a social world. Such accounts simultaneously warrant and re-

create actions and acts.

The third point of the ethogenic approach is that the social worlds are conceived *as if* they were held together by 'rules'. Some social episodes (weddings, examinations, initiation rituals) are explicitly scripted with the rules written down. A person subjected to social skills training, for example, will be instructed how to speak, when, and to whom. In this case the correlates of a system of social rules, the 'roles' of speaker and listener which should be adopted, are clearly defined. Most social episodes, however, are enigmatic, structured by implicit rules which it is the job of the researcher to elicit.

Our poor subject, however, must be initiated from scratch into [23] the social world of the social psychology experiment, and that process of initiation raises many issues about the status of the rules. One suggestion is that the rules are, in some sense, 'real'. Social psychology could in this way become a 'realist' science. Instead of the non-existent causal laws sought by positivist social psychologists, the ethogenist aims to uncover underlying patterns which have 'powers' by virtue of their employment by human agents. The notion of a rule in itself is only a 'metaphorical device' which refers to those underlying patterns. This line of argument is given a different emphasis on different occasions: sometimes the rules are seen as wholly collective, more often they are imagined to be present within individuals as 'cognitive templates' (Harré 1979).

In contrast to this, an ostensibly more radical ethogenic perspective would focus on the new senses of the situation constructed through initiation into it. The subject is not being implanted with templates but interpreting the scene jointly with the experimenters. In this view, the rules would be understood as an artefact built for the convenience of the researcher and the 'reality' of the situation would be more 'mundane' (Shotter 1984). While Harré would attempt to 'explain' social behaviour using a realist approach akin to structuralism, Shotter attempts to 'understand' what is going on by interpreting action in a manner similar to hermeneutics. Structuralism is an approach characterized by the search for underlying rules which organize meaning regardless of the speaker's intention, while hermeneutics aims to discover the personal sense given by individuals. With these differences, of course, we are opening out into some of the contradictions, limitations, and problems of the new paradigm.

### **Problems: ideology and power**

Contradictions riddle the new paradigm, in part, because it is impossible to construct one watertight systematic theory to account for human behaviour and experience. However, the particular limitations and contradictions of the new social psychology also result from its failure to incorporate key issues which were addressed by radical critics inside the discipline at the height of the crisis and before ethogenics became the new loyal opposition. The key issues are ideology and power. Problems of culture, which are discussed by new social psychology, can be re-cast and re-solved [24] only when the work of ideology and power in social relations is understood.

#### *Language and ideology*

The role of language in shaping thought is, of course, often stressed in social science, but it has been given a new lease of life by the descriptions of 'paradigm shifts' Kuhn (1970) offers in science. However, the radical dynamic of this work goes far beyond liberal psychological assertions that we each do, or could, see things differently. Scientific debates and differences do not hinge on perceptions of ducks and rabbits, but on bigger, politically-charged questions about the nature of the world and of human relationships - and paradigm changes here are a good deal nastier, messier, and more machiavellian.

In a discipline which studies human relationships it is impossible to evade those issues. Even so, the crucial move to a conception of ideology and the reproduction of illusion has been firmly blocked in both old *and* new social psychology. Influential ways of blocking a serious study of the role of ideology have included treating it as if it were simply a 'belief system', and pretending that ideology is no longer relevant in a 'post-industrial' society. Both of these (deeply ideological) positions are rooted in American social science, but, as we shall see in future chapters, they have powerful echoes in European theory.

If we take up one of the European social psychological proposals -to turn social psychology to study 'everything that pertains to *ideology* and to *communication*' (Moscovici 1972: 55) - we should take care that we do not simply treat language, ideology, and communication as if they were the same thing. For example, one way of describing the discourse of experimental psychology is to treat it as a set of statements about imaginary cognitive paraphernalia which is parasitic on everyday language. We need to go further than this, however, if we want to follow the radical crisis literature and show how this set of statements presents itself as eternal truth, which 'de-humanizes' its subjects, and 'depoliticizes' social science. Then we must include in our description of ideology what the set of statements *does* and what institutional functions the statements serve. Here, the notion of 'discourse' as a system of statements is particularly useful. Such systems of statements [25] construct 'objects' (like 'stereotypes' or 'attributions'). They call these objects into being, and people then talk about them as if they really did exist. This is how psychological and social-psychological phenomena are created as individual 'things' (Parker 1987a). These matters would have to be integrated into an adequate account of ideology. (You will be in a better position to understand ideology as the combined effects of power relations in discourses and texts when I have considered developments in post-structuralism outside social psychology in Chapter three.)

The overall project of the new paradigm has been to rescue and re-humanize the poor subjects and their essentially good 'common sense' or their 'ordinary language'. The few comments on ideology to be found in ethogenic literature logically extend this preoccupation with the supposed harmony of shared social meaning and have been concerned with re-describing 'false consciousness' as a person's lack of the full accounting repertoire of the expressive order in a community (Harré 1977). A related point here is the way new social psychology conceives of the 'rules' which hold a social world together. Although these rules are not universal, as an ethologist would suspect, they are all too often unquestioned. Ethogenists such as Harré (1980) and Shotter (1975) often place themselves in the 'ordinary language' tradition of British analytical philosophy and implicitly endorse the conservative view propounded in British analytical philosophy, that 'our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connections they have found worth marking' (Austin 1956: 46).

It may well be that the 'common stock of words' gives *that* author all the distinctions he finds worth drawing, but this could be something to do with the fact that he is, among other things, a man. Women would probably want to draw other distinctions which identify the sexist organization of the English language and the way speakers who refer to 'men' conceptually screen out the existence of women. The ideological aspect of ethogeny flows from its inability to take seriously the *conflicts* within the shared community of social meanings that they look to, and sympathetically research, in alternatives to the asocial meaningless laboratory experiment. In contrast, a theme of this book is that at every point where ideology is discussed, the notion of conflict must be ready to hand. At best, the ethogenic new paradigm ignores the sexist, racist, and class-based character of 'ordinary language'. At [26] worst, it produces those oppressive social relations in a theory of consensual meaning. In addition, there is hardly ever an acknowledgement of the debt the

'new' methodology owes to feminist work in social science (Stanley and Wise 1983). If, on the other hand, we want to move beyond this to understand how ideology binds a community together in a coercive way, we also need an account of power.

### *'Powers' and power*

Just as the system of ideas in a scientific paradigm binds a community together expressively, so a system of social relationships in an institution binds people together *practically*. One of the significant points about social psychology is that, unlike the natural sciences it mistakenly believes it models itself on, it enmeshes those who are outside the 'scientific' community in its operations. Not only are social psychologists bound into the system of social relationships which make up the discipline, but the discipline also reaches out and, through the laboratory experiment, subjects others.

Many of the early criticisms of the laboratory-experiment method - on problems of 'demand characteristics' and 'experimenter effects' - also cry out for some account of the power of the experimenter as 'scientist'. The Milgram electric shock study of obedience, for example, which was able to recast the 'dispositional cement that binds men [sic] to systems of authority' (Milgram 1963: 371) inside the laboratory was a clear demonstration of American scientists' ability to manipulate and coerce an unwitting public. If such authoritarian power relations are so ubiquitous in old social-psychological research, why have they not become a topic of inquiry in new social psychology? In part, this absence is a result of the conception of power which has endured throughout the crisis, and which continues into ethogenic views of the person.

The traditional model of power in social psychology is concerned with the activities of a 'power-holder', and the way in which this person can draw on resources to give reward, punishment, and so on to exercise power over the 'power-subject'. Experimental studies sometimes take into account the power-subject's perceptions and wants, but the overall guiding definition of power is still that it is held and wielded to produce 'intended effects' (Schopler 1965). [27] This is, of course, an individualistic model of power. It always traces power to a single person. Similarly, when ethogenics talks of the human agent, it is concerned with the 'powers' of individuals and the way those 'powers' may be recognized and investigated. Here more is at stake than a moral claim, for ethogenics demands some account of underlying structures and gives descriptions of the activities of beings attributed with sovereign 'powers'.

This individualist view of power is reinforced by the dramaturgical metaphor which new social psychology uses to understand social life. While one tactic of traditional social psychology was to study individuals who were particularly 'machievellian', new social psychology took the position that we are all negotiating our way through the impression-management games and 'moral careers' which make up the social order. Some microsociological descriptions had signalled a debt to Machiavelli and emphasized the importance of power, but new social psychology has stressed instead the positive natural desire for 'respect' within the expressive sphere which drives the person to get one up on others. Once this position is adopted, there are risks that the desire to take *all* accounts in good faith would have dangerous political consequences (Billig 1977).

Unfortunately, the assertion that the expressive sphere dominates the practical order eventually leads new social psychology to bizarre claims that there is, really, no such thing as power at all; it can be glossed as a mere 'accounting resource' (Harré 1979: 233). Not only do these claims exclude power from the picture (except as an 'accounting device'), but the accounts of *resistance* also disappear from the new social psychological research. Were we to re-introduce such accounts we would also be led to analyse the ideological processes which

inhibit or empower them. If we want to develop an adequate understanding of power we have to link any definition of it to a notion of resistance. Power reproduces particular relations between people in such a way that resistance is suppressed. The supporting argument for this definition also requires an account of historical and cultural contexts of action.

### *Culture and history*

When paradigms change it is often the case that views of the 'self' also change. Experiences of the relations between the self and the [28] world and between the self and others alter dramatically. The discovery that the Earth moved round the Sun, for example, displaced the human being from the 'centre' of the universe. Changes in cultural organization involve transformations in subjectivity. We have to attend to the transformations and the differences in subjectivity at different times and in different places, and not to simply slip into a sentimental (and ethnocentric) humanist position. One of the advantages of an ethogenic 'anthropological' perspective on modern life is that it does take other anthropological work on the self seriously (Heelas and Lock 1981), and recognizes that social psychological phenomena are historically transient (Gergen 1973). The problem is that without an understanding of ideology and power this does not go far enough. It can also easily fold back into humanist variants of traditional American psychology.

One of the characteristics of American psychology has been the influence of the humanist opposition to mechanistic, 'dehumanizing', experimentation. As we will see in future chapters, this 'alternative' *complements* what it is against. A humanist position blocks an understanding of ideology and power. A study of ideology and power in social psychology would also have to turn around to examine the place of 'new' variants of these phenomena. These are issues which require some appraisal of how the practical interacts with the expressive sphere, how conceptions of 'honour' change, and how we might mark our own critical distance from what new social psychology describes. What is the relationship between ideological conflict and resistance to power in the transformation of one research paradigm to another, and what are the social conditions which support and enjoy such debates? There are exceptional circumstances in which the expressive sphere is disrupted by the practical order of society, and many of these have affected social psychology. A first step to an investigation of the relationship between culture and subjectivity in the discipline must be a critical history of the conditions of its birth. [end of page 28]