Explaining
and Understanding
International Relations

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Preface

Books which bring together International Relations and philosophy
are rare enough to call for comment. This one has grown out of
joint teaching which began in 1984, and out of many lively
discussions in consequence. We would like to thank all the
students who have taken Martin Hollis's *Philosophy of Social
Science* course in the period, both those also studying international
relations with Steve Smith and those majoring in other areas of
social science or in philosophy. Their keen interest and their
comments, especially those by Tim Dunne, have helped in many
ways, not least by convincing us that issues which are fertile for the
social sciences at large are well exemplified in the discipline of
International Relations.

The book is aimed chiefly at those engaged in reflecting
theoretically on international relations. We hope to show how
many of the central questions in such reflection belong to wider
debates in the theory and philosophy of the social sciences, and
how the discipline can gain from setting them in this wider context.
Very little has been written on this subject, the most notable
exception being Charles Reynolds's 1973 book *Theory and
Explanation in International Politics*.[1] Reynolds's absorbing study
is not undermined by more recent developments in the philosophy
of science, and its contrast between 'scientific' and 'historical'
approaches remains instructive. But whereas his 'historical'
explanations are always particular, we have sought to establish a
dimension of 'understanding' which permits a range of hermeneutic
disputes between individualism and holism. Yet we are not
offering simple answers. Indeed, as we explain in the introduction
and demonstrate in the dialogue of the final chapter, we are not
even offering agreed answers. The theme foreshadowed by our
title is that Explaining and Understanding are alternative ways to
analyse international relations, each persuasive but not readily

[1] Charles Reynolds, *Theory and Explanation in International Politics* (Oxford:
Martin Robertson).

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Explaining and Understanding

We began this book by saying that International Relations is heir to two traditions, the scientific and the hermeneutic. The discipline has not been equally grateful to both. Since the eclipse of Idealism it has been largely dominated by Realism—especially if one includes Behaviouralism and Neo-Realism under that title— and Realism is avowedly scientific in intent. But we have also considered objections to Realism, some of which advance the claims of hermeneutics and suggest that the international world makes sense only if understood from within. The reader no doubt expects us to have a view on the respective merits of the two traditions as guides to unresolved problems in the subject. Indeed, we do have a view and that is why we have written the book. But it is not the same view and we shall end by airing our differences.

Before launching into dialogue, however, we shall take fuller stock of the problems which have emerged so far and of the approaches which might plausibly be taken to them. We shall again use two dimensions. One is marked by the familiar 'level-of-analysis' problem, the other by our theme of 'explaining and understanding'. The former is a summary of some unfinished debates in the discipline, the latter an invitation to an unfinished debate of our own.

The 'level-of-analysis' problem was filled out in Chapter 5 with the aid of David Singer's analogy between theoretical levels and map projections. The levels were those of system and unit, the problem being somehow akin to that of relating different two-dimensional projections of a three-dimensional object. We let the analogy pass at the time, but it is interestingly questionable in a way which, in a moment, will let us set up our debate about understanding and explaining. First, however, we should again stress that the problem itself is not uniquely one of whether the international system or its units (nation states) holds the key to analysis. We noted in Chapter 1 that it is a problem with three

layers and four possible contenders, as Figure 9.1 (replicating Figure 1.2) reminds us. On each layer the debate is about whether analysis is to proceed 'top–down' or 'bottom–up' and, less obviously but no less importantly, whether the aim is to explain or to understand.

In Singer's own posing of the problem 'the system' refers to the entire international system and 'the unit' to the nation state. Here, to proceed 'top–down' is to try to show that the states behave wholly as the system requires and not at all according to their individual peculiarities. To proceed 'bottom–up' is to counter by contending that 'the system' is a fiction except in so far as the term refers to relations and interactions among the units. Here, as with the other layers too, we have a particular case of a general dispute throughout the social sciences between holists and individualists, which tends to be fought to a draw. We wish only to make one general and two specific comments on it.

In general, it is wise to be clear whether the dispute turns on the 'reality' of systems or on the need to feature them in explanations. That they are 'real' is an ontological claim (from the Ancient Greek word for 'existence') raising questions about the relations of wholes to parts and inviting further (epistemological) questions about how knowledge of wholes could be grounded in what, it seems, could only be knowledge of particulars (or units). We have been careful not to pronounce on either kind of question and want only to point out that, with applied social science at present in hard-headed, broadly empiricist mood, the onus is on the holist to

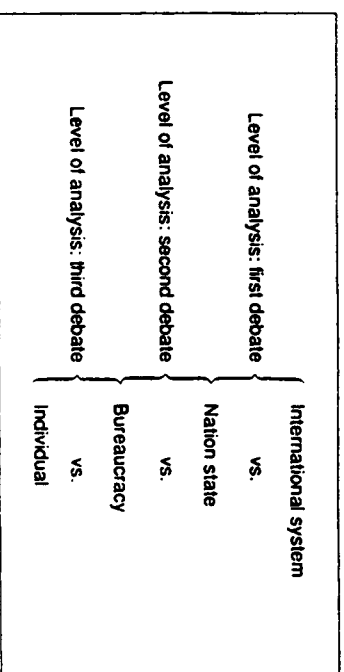| Level of analysis: first debate | International system |
	vs.
	Nation state
Level of analysis: second debate	vs.
	Bureaucracy
Level of analysis: third debate	vs.
	Individual

FIG. 9.1

persuade sceptics both that wholes are more than their parts and that science is capable of establishing such a proposition. On the other hand, to social theorists who are less empirically inclined systemic explanations certainly have their charms, and we gave a good deal of space to Waltz's advocacy of them. Besides, as we have seen, traditional empiricism is in theoretical trouble, both from Quine's attack on the very idea of theory-neutral facts of observation and from Kuhn's case for saying that scientific thought is always governed by paradigms. This means that 'methodological individualism' is by no means an obviously right explanatory strategy. The book has carefully given no conclusive reason to rule out explanations which turn on systematic properties and which present the behaviour of units as functional in a bipolar (or multipolar) system.[1]

In International Relations in particular, however, it seems to us that 'top-down' cannot do all the work on the explaining side. When even Waltz concedes that structures only 'shape and shove', and that their influence can be resisted, then we have also to look at the units. The anarchic character of the international system, which marks out international politics in sharp contrast to domestic politics, strongly suggests that the units affect the shape of relations, however firm the shove. The suggestion is also central to any account of how the system changes its structure. Even if the polarity of the system, bipolar or multipolar, explains something about its normal functioning, it seems to us impossible to account for change from one type of system to another only at the level of the system. Purely functional explanations are bound to be suspect, unless they include a causal contribution from the units. Hence not only change of all sorts but even normal functioning owes something to the character of the units.

Our other particular comment concerns the 'individual' involved, while the level-of-analysis problem is pitched at this great height. The unit is the nation state, not the agencies, and still less the individual human decision-makers within it. There is a parallel here with economic theories which treat firms as the units and refuse to enquire into their internal organization. This is not

[1] For a clear and helpful, if intricate, discussion, which separates ontological from methodological issues, see D.-H. Ruben, *The Metaphysics of the Social World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

stupid, provided that 'market forces' see to it that only firms of a profit-maximizing character survive, since, in that case, all successful internal organizations are functionally equivalent. But there are plenty of sceptical economists who believe neither in the analogy between market forces and, say, the laws of gravity nor in the utter dominance of profit-seeking. For them, the variety of internal organizations and goals does matter. Similarly, we have found several reasons to doubt whether 'national interest' is well enough defined to serve as a plausible and compulsive goal for the units of international relations. At the very least, it must be possible to debate the question.

To do so we need to consider the state not as the 'unit' of the dispute on the highest layer but as the 'whole' or 'system' on the next. This is to open the box. The question becomes how much the state's organization matters in analysing its behaviour. An incidental advantage is that it is then easier to discuss whether the state is truly the unit, or the only unit, which matters. Transnational corporations and revolutionary groups are among the rival candidates which seem to be growing in importance and which have no place in the rarefied dispute between system and states. But we shall continue to avoid this topic, on the grounds that some level-of-analysis problem applies, whatever the units deemed significant. Corporations and groups have organizations too. So let us stick to the question as posed for the state and its agencies. Do the agencies simply conform to the functional demands of the state's interests? Or is the state's behaviour the outcome of relations and interactions among the agencies? 'Top-down' proceeds in one direction, 'bottom-up' in the other. The best 'top-down' strategy we have found is to apply the theory of rational choice and Game Theory directly to the state as individual unit, thus using a 'Rational Actor' model. The best counter is a 'Bureaucratic Politics' model to show how interaction within and among bureaucracies sums to the behaviour of the state.

But debate on this layer of the problem cannot proceed without considering the individual men and women who engage in the process of decision. Both sides must find a way to make them unimportant. The Bureaucratic Politics model suppresses them by invoking the proposition that 'where you stand depends on where you sit'. It is inclined to add that bureaucratic learning procedures of selection, training, promotion, and, in periods of decision,

'groupthink' iron out any individuality. The Rational Actor model suppresses them by invoking a situational determinism, rather as economists ensure that individual economic agents do the bidding of their firms. It makes the human actors into maximizing machines which compute their choices entirely predictably, given their situation. If they cannot be suppressed in one way or the other, a further opening of the box is required.

We forced this further opening by objecting strongly to both obvious ways of suppressing the decision-makers, and by rejecting also the obvious compromise, which accepts the Rational Actor mechanism but includes bureaucratic positions in the account of the situational determinants. Our chief objection was that role-play is neither pure calculation within parameters set by the role, nor automatic obedience to definite rules, nor yet a mixture of the two. This objection took us down to the lowest layer, where human individuals are the units, and did so in a way which also opposed Understanding to (at least mechanical) Explanation by suggesting that the actors may make situations and outcomes as they see them. That led us to think further about 'the games nations play', this time with the help of Wittgensteinian ideas of social life as 'games' in a new sense. Crucial to this sort of 'game' is the notion of constitutive rules which give moves in the game a meaning and motive internal to the game. Moreover, the rules are not fully specified in advance of all situations which will arise. So, whether we are thinking of constitutive rules which define the game or of regulative rules which facilitate it, the players are, to some degree, constructing the rules as they go along. Here Understanding starts to compete with Explaining.

We did not draw firm conclusions, because this is where we begin to disagree between ourselves. But, before setting to, we would like to sum up the 'level-of-analysis' problem. It is well enough defined for the opening two rounds. The first is marked by taking the state as the unit, the second by taking the state as the system. Both are conducted within a scientific canon of explanation and a central issue is whether the causal explanations are to proceed 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'. By 'causal' is meant at least the generalizing character of an appeal to laws of nature in the natural sciences and perhaps a reference to productive mechanisms whose presence is inferred as the best explanation of the regularities observed. But this central issue becomes complex if

the individualist side then affirms that the natural 'individuals' of the social world are human beings.

One complication is the old problem of free will, since any moral concern with international relations seems to depend on the actors having a moral responsibility for choices which could have been different. But we can skirt the issue by pointing out that there is a philosophical line which reconciles freedom and determinism. 'Compatibilism' defines free action as action which is performed because the agent preferred its expected consequences. Since a rational agent needs a predictable world, in order to know the likely consequences, freedom presupposes determinism. This, if soundly argued, disposes of the problem. In pointing it out, however, we do not mean to claim that the line is sound. Indeed, one of us thinks it unsound. We mean merely to set aside the problem of free will in its traditional form.

The complication which we have pursued is that human beings have an insider's view of their world. This poses a question for a canon of scientific explanation designed to deal with molecules, molluscs, and mice. It may not be deeply awkward, granted that mice and more complex animals have some sort of inside view too and biology is no less of a science for that. But one reason often given for behaviourism (or Behaviouralism) is that it removes any awkwardness and, since we have firmly refused to endorse behaviourism, we must say something about causal explanation in a world of insiders. Morgenthau's Realism firmly included assumptions about human motivation, and later Realists, especially those applying Game Theory to foreign policy, employ a notion of rational choice. Any focus on small group decision-making also involves perceptions and intentions, language and ideology, far beyond any such concern in biology.

The crux, we suggest, is the interchangeability of actors. If their perceptions are predictable, given the psychology of small groups, and if their intentions are predictable, given the Theory of Games and given knowledge of their preferences, and if any ideological colour in perceptions and preferences is predictable, given the selection procedures which gave them their position, then the complications are merely complications. Although decision-makers are perhaps not completely interchangeable, personality and other changes involved in replacing one actor with another will, in principle, make a predictable difference. If so, a third round of the

level-of-analysis problem can be conducted as before, with the group as the system and its members as the units. 'Top-down' again vies with 'bottom-up' and there is the standard prospect of a compromise or draw.

This says nothing to identify the most fertile level for conducting the argument. There are boxes within boxes. Theories favouring 'top-down' open as few as possible; those favouring 'bottom-up' are willing to seek the smallest relevant building blocks. For the purposes of this book the most fertile argument turns out to be between Rational Actor and Bureaucratic Politics models, with individual human decision-makers shuffled uneasily between them on the second layer and giving trouble to both on the third layer. Here the other dimension becomes crucial and our own disagreement breaks out in earnest. So we now turn to our dispute about the scope for *understanding* international relations. For the dialogue which follows it may be as well to bear it in mind that Martin Hollis is a philosopher, who believes that the social sciences are relevantly different from the natural sciences and claims no expertise in International Relations, whereas Steve Smith is an International Relations scholar, who inclines to level-of-analysis compromises which somewhat favour the structural side and claims no expertise in philosophy. Our intellectual concerns therefore intersect but do not coincide.[2]

[2] M. Hollis, *Models of Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), presents a general case for taking 'Autonomous Man', rather than 'Plastic Man' as the focus of social science and argues that 'action' is a concept foreign to the methods of natural science. *The Cunning of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) develops the line of thought by examining the scope and limits of rational choice and Game Theory analyses of social action. Both books contend that instrumental rationality is not the only or even the primary concept of rationality that is of service to the social sciences. Also relevant is Hollis's essay 'The Social Destruction of Reality', in M. Hollis and S. Lukes (eds.), *Rationality and Relativism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982). Steve Smith has mainly been concerned to look at how foreign policy behaviour is the result of structural forces. Commonly, this involves looking at the pressures on individual decision-makers and the impact of processes of implementation on foreign policy behaviour. For discussion of the former see his 'Groupthink and the Hostage Rescue Mission', *British Journal of Political Science*, 1985, 15(1), pp. 117–23, 'Policy Preferences and Bureaucratic Position: The Case of the American Hostage Rescue Mission', *International Affairs*, 1985, 61(1), pp. 9–25, and 'Allison and the Cuban Missile Crisis', *Millennium*, 1981, 9(1), pp. 21–40. See also his essay 'Belief Systems in the Study of International Relations', in R. Little and S. Smith (eds.), *Belief Systems and International Relations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), pp. 11–36. For a discussion of the latter see S. Smith and M. Clarke, 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion' in their

MH Could we start from our remark that David Singer's analogy between the 'level-of-analysis' problem and different map projections of the globe is interestingly questionable? I question it because it seems to me to beg an absolutely central issue. It embodies a Positivist presumption that there is a world awaiting the map-maker. This world is as it is and the alleged snag is only that the map is two-dimensional. Yet, although projections distort, they do so in unpuzzling ways and, despite what Singer says, there is not the slightest difficulty in combining them. Even if use of a third dimension is disallowed, the information given in one projection can readily be translated into information in the other. I firmly reject this Positivist presumption for the social world. International relations are what the rules (such as they are) and the decisions of foreign policy-makers (and others) create. The 'level-of-analysis' problem still arises, but now as one about whether the rules and roles constitute the moves made in the games nations play and, ultimately, the players themselves, or whether understanding should proceed in the opposite direction. But it is a problem about the method of *understanding* and I take the insider view to be fundamental. I wonder whether your doubts about Singer's analogy go as deep as mine and whether you think of 'understanding', in so far as it differs interestingly from 'explaining', as more than a preliminary and heuristic device.

SS There are two issues here. First, the level-of-analysis problem. I, too, reject the Positivist notion that there is a world waiting to be mapped. There may be regularities in human affairs but I do not accept the idea that we can construct a neutral theory, valid across time and space, that allows us to predict in the same way as occurs in the natural sciences. I do not see that as only a matter of complexity, but as a fundamental feature of the social sciences. Our theories are always for some purpose and cannot be presented as in some way neutral and determined in some simple way by the 'facts'. The level-of-analysis debate is a methodological not an ontological debate: it refers to how best to explain and not to how the world really is. Indeed, Singer in framing the level-of-analysis problem thought that there was no way of combining the two levels. This was because the two levels had biases which were

edited volume, *Foreign Policy Implementation* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), pp. 1–10 and 166–80. See also Steve Smith, 'The Hostage Rescue Mission', in ibid. pp. 11–32.

mutually exclusive. His map analogy was meant to show that it was just as impossible to combine theories couched at the two levels as it would be to represent accurately a three-dimensional object on a two-dimensional map. But this suggests that both levels say something about behaviour. Therefore, I accept the possibility of analysing the actor's views; so, to turn to your second issue, I am prepared to consider Understanding as a way of analyzing human action. However, in contrast to you, I do not consider the insider view to be fundamental. I think that the view from the inside makes actors appear to have more freedom of manœuvre than they do, and it ignores the possibility that their perceptions and understandings are themselves caused by factors external to them. Thus, I can see that an account based on Understanding rather than explaining is a contender, but I do not think that it can do as much as you think it can.

MH   Before we argue about how much 'Understanding' can contribute, we had better try to pin down what it involves. Throughout the book we have glossed it as 'rational reconstruction', rather than struggling with the several concepts of meaning which might be the key to discovering what situations and actions 'mean' to the actors. I suggest that we continue to speak of Understanding as reconstruction which proceeds on the assumption that actors are rational, thus applying an ideal-type yardstick and regarding departures from it as irrational (rather than non-rational because beyond the scope of rational assessment). In other words, the approach is to regard foreign policy decisions as the actors' solutions to problems. These solutions apply policies, for which we can also ask the reasons, to situations as the actors themselves understand them. Especially important is the actors' own understanding of what is in the minds of other actors. In the ideal-type case all problems are as rationally solved as is possible. Real-life departures from rational solutions are traced to actors' misunderstandings.

This sketch of the method is non-committal about the sense of 'rationality'. In Chapter 6 it meant the instrumental rationality (*Zweckrationalität*) favoured by economists and Game Theorists. 'The games nations play' were at first played for the sake of their pay-off. But, having explored the Bureaucratic Politics model in Chapter 7, we decided that reasons for action are not only of this instrumental kind. In Chapter 8, Wittgensteinian games were

introduced and found to be both constituted and regulated by rules which furnished at least some reasons for action internal to the game, rather than external because furthering the pursuit of external goals. Understanding here requires reconstructing the rules on the one hand and seeking the actors' intentions, legitimating reasons, and underlying motives on the other.
Is this a fair summary of our idea of Understanding?

SS   Yes, although it is important to note that the explaining side also claims to be able to account for Understanding. But your outline of Understanding is also mine. We agree on what it is, but disagree as to its importance.

MH   Then may I take you up on your belief that the actors' 'perceptions and understandings are themselves caused by factors external to them'? I agree, of course, that rational actors are guided by how things are, or, where situations are opaque, by how they rationally take them to be. But you seem to have a mechanical picture of their minds and one which, if accepted, will reduce the actors to a throughput between what causes their 'perceptions and understandings' and their output. This picture makes sense to me only if, despite what you say about Singer's map projections, you are assuming a neutral, external, and causal set of facts. Conversely, the reason why the analogy does not hold, in my view, is that the furniture and events of the social world are identifiable only by reference to the rules which constitute and regulate the social world. The actors' understandings are therefore not a link in a causal chain but the stuff of the world which their understandings also reveal to them. That is why an insider view is fundamental.

SS   In the first place, I think that your comment about 'how things are' gives you some problems. That is to say, I do not think that resorting to an argument about forms of life allows you to escape from the problem that there is something going on apart from the actor's own thoughts. Forms of life themselves reveal patterns, and, of course, the Wittgensteinian notion of a game, so central to your conception of understanding, still involves rules. Thus, your charge that there is something causing perceptions applies on the understanding side as well. In fact, these rules which constitute and regulate the social world may be so powerful as to take out the actor as fast as you introduce him or her, thus

becoming functional to an extent. Your actors, after all, are born into a world in which the rules of the game exist, and although they may be able to influence those rules, the rules remain, in a critical sense, external to them. Your main point, though, is about the existence of a causal chain, with Understanding *merely* a link in that chain. I do not see Understanding in this way, as I accept that the actor's own understanding is an area of underdetermination. Actors interpret, filter, and assess; they perceive and misperceive. Their perceptions are not completely determined; but this does not mean that perceptions are not caused. The central point for me is that perceptions are best understood as conditioned to a large extent. Again, this is a methodological, not an ontological, claim. I see actors as inhabiting a world in which their interpretations, filters, and assessments are all largely socially constructed. Focusing on the insider view overemphasizes the realm of choice and underemphasizes the realm of constraint. Even when there seems to be choice, remember that the language and concepts **an actor uses are themselves socially constructed. In essence, then, I believe that reality is a social construct; it is in this sense that I see** perceptions and understandings as largely determined, and why I see Understanding as secondary and not fundamental.

MH　　Games, in the sense of rules and moves within them, are, we agree, socially constructed but no less real for that. I take this as equivalent to saying that they are external to each player but internal to the players collectively (and over time). Each inherits a stock of games, which enable and constrain and can only rarely be changed by one individual. Games can evolve, however, partly because their rules can come into conflict and be modified, especially in unforeseen situations, and partly because groups of players can combine to amend them. Language is one of these games, deeper and external to more players than most, but still mutable, rather in the spirit of what Otto Neurath once said about science, that it is rebuilding a boat while at sea. That is part of an answer to your remark about 'how things are' being a problem for me. It is not a complete answer, I grant, unless one espouses a form of idealism so strong that there is nothing social going on apart from the actors' own thoughts. Perhaps we should return to this.

Meanwhile, if games are socially constructed in this sense, then the natural world certainly is not. You believe that natural and social worlds are all of a piece and call, in the end, for the same

scientific method. So, consistently, you hold that 'reality is a social construct', meaning, I presume, the reality of both natural and social worlds. Really? Could we keep dry in a storm by all agreeing to amend our theories about what is real? Luckily for the umbrella industry, it seems to me that you do not even wish to suggest it. So why assimilate social structures to natural structures, rather than go the other way? Perhaps the crux is who or what constructs the framework of social actions. If it is *actors*, then I shall be quick to invite further concessions. But you may have it in mind that structures generate both structures and actions. At any rate, what notion of structure do you wish to set against my view that social structures are sets of rules and practices (and their—often latent—implications)?

SS　　My conception of structure is that used in the realist (in the philosophy of science, not the International Relations sense) notion of science. This includes the claim that science concerns the explanation of causal mechanisms, which may involve non-observable structures. Positivists dispute the notion of science as including non-observable structures, and your comment about the nature of structures implies a criticism that they do not exist in the social world as they do in the natural world. Yet there is a lengthy debate on this issue within the philosophy of science, with one side claiming that structures exist, and cause behaviour, and are unobservable. Thus, I do not think that I have a particular problem merely because I see structures in the social world and yet cannot prove, in a Positivist sense, their existence. Rather, my notion of structure is that positing their existence gives us the best explanation of social action. To use a phrase familiar in the philosophy of science, we are involved in 'inference to the best explanation'. To be explicit, then, I think that social action can best be explained as behaviour caused by structures. I cannot prove the existence of these structures, but I think that we get the best explanations by inferring their existence. These structures may be as specific as the bureaucratic structure of a state, or as general as the structures of racism, patriarchy, and class. That I cannot take you and show you a hard, solid structure of, say, patriarchy, does not mean that inferring the existence of such a structure is not the best way of explaining the patterns of inequality and dominance between the genders. What is more, I am sure that to many minorities or suppressed groups (such as

women, gays, blacks, and the poor) there are very real structures of dominance at work, including one that determines how they see themselves.

But let me turn to your own view of social action. I have two main worries about it. First, how do you avoid the difficulty of seeing society as only the sum total of what goes on inside the heads of individuals? Do you really want to accept such an idealistic (again, in its philosophical not its International Relations guise) position? At times, it seems to me that you have no way of explaining the material world. The second problem for you is that I want you to say something about your conception of an actor. You make great play with the important difference between each actor and all actors, yet I sense sometimes that your individual actors are very empty vessels. In short, I feel that your view of an active actor applies only to a certain type of person, one relatively free from constraints, and occupying a position of power or influence in society. Does your view of the actor allow us to explain the lives of all individuals or only those on the apex of society?

MH I agree that (philosophical) realists in the philosophy of natural science can maintain that structures and mechanisms are the best explanation of what we observe, and so can be inferred even though they cannot be themselves observed. I do not mean that the realist side wins—only that it has a defensible case and should not be scared off by Positivists or pragmatists. By that token, however, I too can take a realist line on natural and material processes and thus explain the natural world.

That leaves it unclear where the boundaries between natural and social and between ideal and material fall. For instance, the spread of AIDS is a natural and material fact, if one thinks about human physiology, and a social and ideal fact, if one thinks about the apocalyptic images which spread with it. But the two boundaries do not always fall neatly in the same place. The power of group over group is a social fact and depends on what people have in their heads. But it depends also on threats and fears being materially enforceable—an aspect which is both 'social' and 'material'. That is awkward for me but also, I think, awkward for you. Domination does not work through physical force alone. Patriarchs have an authority, legitimated rather than legitimate no doubt, without which they could not function as patriarchs.

So we both need to be very clear about 'structure'. I hope that you are not thinking in literal terms, as if institutional structure were literally like the hidden structure of a building. Institutional structure is a metaphor which needs cashing in. I am happy to cash it in (partly) in terms of 'power', defined as the ability to bring about a desired outcome and traced to the enablements and constraints which institutional rules create. This gives a sense of structure suited to, indeed calling for, a method of Understanding.

It is an ability which suitably placed actors have, but only in so far as they have the skill to use it. Here we start to disagree in earnest, I fancy. *All* actors are enabled as well as constrained by institutional rules, in my view. Although they may vary in endowments, all can learn the skills which often enable them to ease the constraints. This is a general proposition about humans as social beings. But, of course, power varies with context and not everyone is equally placed. People who have some power in their domestic lives may be largely at the receiving end in their public and workplace lives. In the context of bureaucracy, the power of those who work for, say, a Foreign Office waxes and wanes depending on what is going on at home and abroad. But I see nothing odd in holding that, in general, rules always enable and constrain and that, for the particular case of international relations, most decisions depend on a few actors as members of élite groups thanks to their official positions.

Crucially, my actors are not interchangeable. Enablements and constraints are initially like a hand of cards one is dealt. But in social life not all the enablements or constraints are fully specified in advance of play. How the game turns out depends on how well one plays the hand. That is one reason why International Relations cannot abolish history in the name of a timeless science, and why therefore Understanding is not a species of Explaining.

To put it in my terms, you seem to think that situations, being structured, always have outcomes which were fully determined in advance, rather as if the actors were speaking lines from a fully scripted drama. Do you really think this? It seems to me a metaphor gone mad.

SS I do not believe that actors have fully scripted lines, nor do I think that outcomes are fully determined. However, I want to make a couple of comments about your own assumptions. The first is about your notion of social life as a hand of cards that each is

dealt. That analogy can be read in two ways. Your way is that the way one plays the hand determines, in part, the outcome. My worry is that another reading of the analogy seems far more relevant to social life. This other reading is simply that an awful lot of people get dealt very poor cards, hands so bad that no matter what their skill they cannot do much to improve their lot. As soon as they pick up the hand they begin to lose heart, especially if they live in a society that worships the high cards and treats a poor hand as in some way the fault of its holder. My view of society (both domestic and international) sees actors as having little ability to change their lot. Talking about skill seems to me to place responsibility on individuals for changing their lot, whereas, in reality, they cannot do so. What sense is there to say that the downtrodden and dominated have an ability to play their hands skilfully? Surely to the battered economically dependent woman, to the unskilled unemployed black in Harlem, or to the economically poorest nation states, such an analysis of social life as yours seems irrelevant. You risk portraying society as the sum total of individual activity, and opposing structures because you can think of them only as fully determining. More saliently, your view of actors is such an individualist one that I have to note the comments of many Critical Theorists that knowledge is a reflection of its social and political context.

So, I do not think that because I believe in the existence of structures as providing the best explanation of social life I am committed to seeing them as 'fully determining' or as 'timeless'. Now, of course, a tempting compromise is for both of us to accept that individuals have some room for manoeuvre but are also constrained, and that we differ 'only' about the degree of latitude individuals have. That is to say, we accept that individuals are subject to external influences but can still use skill and judgement to make actual choices. This is tempting, but I do not think that either of us can accept this compromise; and I think it is important that we make it clear to the reader why we cannot. At the end of the day I think we have two very different views of social action: mine fits broadly within the 'Explaining' mode, yours within the 'Understanding'. These different views entail fundamentally distinct (and mutually exclusive) views of the individual and of the social world. These views cannot simply be combined because one sees Understanding as the key to analysis, and debates whether that

should be analysed 'top-down' or 'bottom-up', while the other sees no need to resort to Understanding as a necessary constituent of analysis, preferring instead to analyse by Explaining, with, again, the debate being whether to go 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'.

The implication of this is that in all discussions of social life there are *always* and *inevitably* two stories to be told, one concentrating on Understanding, the other focusing on Explaining. My view fits on the 'Explaining' side, seeing structures as operating to cause vast areas of social action. I am reminded of a quotation from Louis Althusser who, writing from an even more deterministic position than myself, wrote:

The structure of the relations of production determines the places and functions occupied and adopted by the agents of production, who are never anything more than the occupants of these places, insofar as they are the supports (*Träger*) of these functions. The true 'subjects' (in the sense of constitutive subjects of the process) are therefore not these occupants or functionaries, are not, despite all appearances, the 'obvious-ness' of the 'given' of naive anthropology, 'concrete individuals', 'real men'—but the definition and distribution of these places and functions.[3]

Thus, contrary to 'commonsense' and the 'obviousness' of our existence, the intentional subject (whose desires, beliefs, and natures are seen as the explanation of social events) is not the starting point for analysis.

Turning to international relations, I believe that you and I agree that there are always two stories to be told, in each of the three layers of the level-of-analysis debate discussed earlier. To restate, the typical disputes are: (a) the international system versus its units (states); (b) the monolithic state versus its constituent bureaucracies; (c) the bureaucracy versus its individual members. Each of these disputes occurs within each method of analysis, so that you can use 'Explaining' and 'Understanding' at each level. In fact, of course, even when it comes to the individual we still disagree, and the reason why we actually see a different individual. My individuals come in as members of bureaucracies, dominated by their role and with little freedom for manoeuvre. This puts me firmly on the 'Explaining' side at each of the three layers of the

3 L. Althusser and F. Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London: New Left Books, 1970), p. 180.

level-of-analysis debate. Specifically, I explain international relations primarily in terms of the impact of the system and the bureaucracies on the state: that is to say, I see the foreign policy of states as resulting from two sets of structural causes, the system and the bureaucracies. At the first level I see systemic pressures considerably affecting the context for foreign policy-making; at the second level I see policy as the result of bureaucratic bargaining; and at the third level I see bureaucracies largely determining the actions and beliefs of individual role-players. More generally, I see such structural accounts as the most productive in the analysis of social life. You prefer Understanding as the best way of analysing social life. How, precisely, do you use such an approach to analyse international relations?

MH I wholly agree that millions of people are dealt very poor cards. This is all too plain where life is drudgery or starvation. It is also true often enough even for the domestic life, where romantics like to fancy that the poor and dispossessed are enabled to live at least as happily as the rich. But the other side of this thought is that other people are dealt good cards. You seem to suggest that poor cards anywhere are a reason for structural explanation everywhere. That seems to me a manifest *non sequitur* and wholly implausible for international relations in particular.

But it does usefully bring out a point about the notion of 'Understanding' as used in this book. It has been a modest notion, addressed to decision-making and its context, not to the hidden dynamics of history. Its source has been Weber, rather than the hermeneutics favoured by Absolute Idealism in the nineteenth century or by Critical Theorists today. A serious attempt to understand the distribution of power and the persistence of oppression, and to use that understanding in search of emancipation, needs to be more ambitious. I am not sure attempts can succeed before collapsing in their own fog; but that is a topic for another day. For the purposes of this book, we have taken a modest but clear notion of rational action and worked with a proposal that international relations can be understood as the sum of actions in an institutional context and their (often unforeseen) consequences. To compare the games of Game Theory with Wittgensteinian games is only a modest exercise, although one which seems to me useful for thinking about method in International Relations.

At any rate, I am clear as to what I want to say about

Understanding and the level-of-analysis problem. On the highest layer, Understanding can proceed 'top-down' only if one defines the system in ambitious terms like 'international interests' rather than the more modest 'international society'. The latter refers to something too fragile and too plainly in the tentative process of construction to give 'top-down' a chance. This is, I confess, how I see it myself, thus siding with 'bottom-up' in the first dispute and understanding international relations through the actions of the units.

In the second dispute (nation states vs. bureaucracies), I find the state important too. This may be because I am more impressed than you are by the legal enablements and constraints which arise because the state has supreme coercive *authority* in its own domain of domestic politics. I think of bureaucracies as players in the state's game (not vice versa), more as lesser authorities under licence than as confederated baronies. But, unlike you, I regard it as crucial that the actual players are bureaucrats, not bureaucracies. That prevents the advantage of the state in the second dispute being the whole answer to the problem.

The third dispute, which we classified as bureaucracy vs. individual, is the most subtle. It turns on what one is to think about role-players. I will not try to repeat what was said about creative latitude in earlier chapters, but you see where it tends. Micro-economic 'individuals' seem to me a misleading abstraction from men and women as social beings, who can shape their own identity in their relations with others. How bureaucracies, within the enablements and constraints set by the state, act is a matter of how role-players combine to decide that they act, given that they interact with members of other bureaucracies (and other organizations) similarly propelled. The role-players, as institutional selves, hold the final trumps.

I thus favour an Understanding which gives most of the bureaucratic game to its players, where you favour an Explanation which largely subordinates the players to the demands of the bureaucratic structure. In broader summary, the theoretical weight, which you place on the international system and bureaucracy, I place on the nation state and the role-playing bureaucrats.

So we have a lively disagreement about the level-of-analysis problem. But it is not a simple collision, since you believe finally in Explaining and I in Understanding. As you rightly say, there are

always two stories to tell and they cannot be merely added together. Nor, by the same token, does an umpire have any easy perch from which to decide on their relative merits. We cannot hope to settle our disagreement on the spot and I do not think that we should try. We would both rather leave it to readers to make up their own minds.

CONCLUSION (BY BOTH AUTHORS)

Our unfinished debate threatens to ramify into areas where we earlier spoke with a single voice. Yet the stories do not always conflict—otherwise we could not have written the earlier chapters—and we shall end by charting some common ground. It is easier to find, if one appreciates that the debate is not between the disparate disciplines of international relations and philosophy but between disparate views within each discipline. Someone who inclines to a Structuralist view in International Relations will be best suited by some kind of realism in a unified philosophy of science and hence by taking the main task to be one of *explaining* international relations. Someone who inclines to a hermeneutic view in philosophy will be best suited by an International Relations theory which works from the inside and tries to *understand* international relations in terms of rules, actions, and their (often unforeseen) results. Although neither of us advocates what would best suit the other, each sees how it could be done.

To chart the common ground, we need to abstract from the three layers of the level-of-analysis problem. In place of three layers involving respectively international, national bureaucratic, and human elements we shall be content with two poles, the holist and the individualist. Crossed with 'Explaining' and 'Understanding', they give Figure 9.2 and a 2 × 2 matrix (as in Figure 1.1). With the help of the intervening chapters we can now characterize the leading idea in each of the four cells. The circle in the middle, which represents the core of our debate, should be thought of not as a position of four-way compromise but as a movable counter to be manœuvred to whatever place on the chart the reader finds most satisfactory.

In summary, then, Singer's level-of-analysis problem is classically one of whether to *explain* top-down or bottom-up, whatever quite
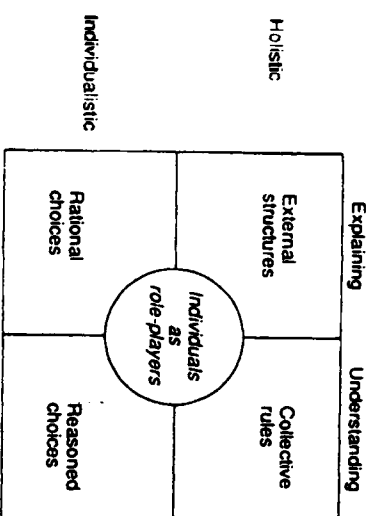
FIG. 9.2.

one identifies for the purpose as 'system' and as 'unit'. To give it an uncompromising answer is to affirm or deny the legitimacy of inferences to external social factors or forces. The holist affirms it, as Waltz did until he made concessions. The individualist denies it and, we suggest, does best to uphold the claims of rational choice theory and Game Theory to account for social institutions as well as for interactions. There is, however, also a level-of-analysis problem in the 'Understanding' column. Here an uncompromising answer affirms or denies that to understand the rules governing action is to understand action. To affirm it is to hold that rules (or institutions) make the actors; to deny it is to hold that actors make the rules. In both columns there are compromises to consider, whose effect would be to move the 'Individuals as role-players' counter on to the dividing line, or close to it, on one side or the other. In our dialogue Hollis tried to manœuvre it to just below the line in the 'Understanding' column. Smith to just above the line in the 'Explaining' column.

Which column is the more promising? That is a hard question even to summarize. For, although placings on the vertical axis are perhaps a matter of degree, we have emphatically said that the horizontal dimension spans two irreconcilable stories. Yet some kind of dispute among holists is possible about whether, for instance, economic relations of production owe more to productive forces or to legal, political, and ethical relations. Some kind of dispute is possible among individualists about the relative import-ance of instrumental and expressive rationality in analysing action,

interaction, and institutions. Indeed, our dialogue offers some compromises, as when Hollis admitted that social facts are not all or wholly ideal and Smith granted that it makes some difference what bureaucrats believe that other bureaucrats have in mind. But there is a limit to how much of a fair summary of the riddles of social life and its analysis can be given with a simple 2 × 2 matrix. Let us merely say that we think the counter impossibly placed in the exact centre and leave it to the reader to decide whether it can be stably positioned elsewhere on the dividing lines and how close to the centre itself.

We hope to have shown that both traditions, the scientific and the hermeneutic, offer much to think about. Idealism in International Relations has been undervalued by treating it as starry-eyed and woolly-minded moral optimism. Its implications for *understanding action* remain fertile and in instructive contrast to the claims of Realism to *explain behaviour*. Realists may have the stronger case in the end; or, then again, they may not. We have no final word on that. But we do suggest that the electrifying issues in International Relations repay tracing throughout the social sciences and that, in the present state of intellectual upheaval, to say nothing of the upheavals in Eastern Europe, philosophy is both an aid and an element in the exercise.

Guide to Further Reading

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Many of the major works in the subject of International Relations have been mentioned already in the survey of the subject which we undertook in Chapter 2. Having said that, anyone wanting to read a general overview of the theory of the subject could look at J. Dougherty and R. Pfaltzgraff, *Contending Theories of International Relations*, 2nd edn. (New York: Harper and Row, 1980). This has chapters on the main areas of theory. An alternative introduction to the theory of the subject is P. Viotti and M. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory* (New York: Macmillan, 1987). There are a host of general introductions to the subject, both empirical and theoretical, the most popular of which are, in the US, K. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, 5th edn. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988), and in the UK, P. Reynolds, *An Introduction to International Relations*, 2nd edn. (London: Longman, 1980).

We have divided the subject into three main phases: Idealism, Realism (including Neo-Realism), and Behaviouralism. For good brief discussions of the history of the subject see H. Bull, 'The Theory of International Politics, 1919–1969' and W. Olson, 'The Growth of a Discipline', both in B. Porter (ed.), *The Aberystwyth Papers: International Politics 1919–1969* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 30–35 and 3–29 respectively. The latter paper has been updated and published as W. Olson and N. Onuf, 'The Growth of a Discipline: Reviewed', in S. Smith (ed.), *International Relations: British and American Perspectives* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), pp. 1–28. The development of theory in the subject is also summarized in S. Smith, 'The Development of International Relations as a Social Science', *Millennium*, 1987, 16(2), pp. 189–206, and M. Banks, 'The Evolution of International Relations Theory', in M. Banks (ed.), *Conflict in World Society* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1984), pp. 3–21.

The best example of Idealist writing is Sir A. Zimmern, *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law* (London: Macmillan, 1939). The main attack on Idealism is by E. H. Carr in *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939* (London: Macmillan, 1939). The classic Realist text remains H. Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 1st edn. (New York: Knopf, 1948),

and its five subsequent editions. But, of course, Idealism and Realism are rich in their diversity and the reader is referred to the general surveys listed above for detailed references to other writers. The debate between the traditionalists and the Behaviouralists is contained in the collection of essays edited by K. Knorr and J. Rosenau (eds.), *Contending Approaches to International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); see especially the essays by Bull, pp. 20-38, Kaplan, pp. 39-61, Singer, pp. 62-86, and Levy, pp. 87-109.

We characterized the current state of the discipline as being divided into three main theoretical approaches: Realism, Pluralism, and Structuralism. For a collection of readings that is similarly divided, see M. Smith, R. Little, and M. Shackleton (eds.), *Perspectives on World Politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1981). This division is also used by Michael Banks in his excellent summary of the current scene, 'The Inter-Paradigm Debate', in M. Light and J. Groom (eds.), *International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory* (London: Pinter, 1985), pp. 7-26. This is a most useful little book, since it contains summaries of the state of all the main sub-fields in the discipline, as well as excellent bibliographies. It is very difficult indeed to nominate a single representative for each of these current approaches, because they are quite diverse. The literature on Neo-Realism is focused on the one book that we discussed in depth in Chapter 5, Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979). Also important are R. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), S. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and US Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), and R. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discard in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

Pluralism is best represented by the works of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye; see, for example, their edited volume, *Transnational Relations and World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), and their *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977). Also important are S. Brown, *New Forces in World Politics* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1974), and E. Morse, *Modernization and the Transformation of International Relations* (New York: Free Press, 1976). A very good collection of essays dealing with the main claims of the Pluralists is R. Maghroori and B. Ramberg (eds.), *Globalism versus Realism: International Relations' Third Debate* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1982).

Structuralism is the most difficult of the three to deal with. Its roots being in Marxism, there are many different versions of it. Good examples are J. Galtung, 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', *Journal of Peace Research*, 1971, 8(1), pp. 81-117; T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); I. Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); and S. Brucan, *The Dialectics of World Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

In the last few years several alternative approaches have begun to attack the dominance of these three. The three that the reader should be aware of are Soviet theory, Critical Theory, and feminist theory. Each poses a challenge to the orthodoxy, which, we should remind readers, is still dominated by Realism and Neo-Realism. Soviet theory is well covered in two books: A. Lynch, *The Soviet Study of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and M. Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1988). Critical Theory's contribution is summarized in Mark Hoffman's very good article, 'Critical Theory and the Inter-Paradigm Debate', *Millennium*, 1987, 16(2), pp. 231-50. See also A. Linklater, 'Realism, Marxism and Critical International Theory', *Review of International Studies*, 1986, 12(4), pp. 301-12. Feminist views of international relations theory are discussed in a special number of the journal *Millennium, Women and International Relations*, 1988, 17(3); see especially, the articles by Halliday, Brown, and Tickner, pp. 419-28, 461-76, and 429-40 respectively. See also J. B. Eishtain, *Women and War* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

Finally, readers might like to follow up on the discussions of the methodology of the subject. The links between the study of international relations and the study of history are dealt with in Chris Hill's excellent essay, 'History and International Relations', in S. Smith (ed.), *International Relations: British and American Perspectives* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), pp. 126-45. See also the explicitly methodological essays in P. Lauren (ed.), *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979). For a view that attacks the scientific pretensions of International Relations, preferring instead a more historical method, see C. Reynolds, *Theory and Explanation in International Politics* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1973).

As for literature dealing specifically with the issue that has been the concern of this book, namely, the link between International Relations and the philosophy of social science, there is a useful guide by Michael Nicholson. 'Methodology', in M. Light and

J. Groom (eds.), *International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory* (London: Pinter, 1985), pp. 90–9. For Nicholson's own view of the linkage, see his *The Scientific Analysis of Social Behaviour: A Defence of Empiricism in Social Science* (London: Pinter, 1983). Within the subject of International Relations, there have been many debates about methods, as one would expect from a subject dominated by quantitative approaches; but there have been very few attempts to discuss the philosophy of social science questions underlying the discipline. The most interesting of these has been the debate on the value of quantitative analysis between Young and Russett; see O. Young, 'Professor Russett: Industrious Tailor to a Naked Emperor', *World Politics*, 1969, 21(3), pp. 586–611 and B. Russett, 'The Young Science of International Politics', *World Politics*, 1969, 22(1), pp. 87–94. For two interesting, and rare, essays on the philosophy of social science, see R. Spegele, 'Deconstructing Methodological Falsification in International Relations', *American Political Science Review*, 1980, 74(1), pp. 104–22 and R. Gorman, 'On the Inadequacies of a Non-Philosophical Political Science: A Critical Analysis of Decision-Making Theory', *International Studies Quarterly*, 1970, 14(4), pp. 395–411. See also the essays dealing with philosophy of social science questions in Part II of J. Rosenau (ed.), *In Search of Global Patterns* (New York: Free Press, 1976). But, of course, this very dearth of material is what has led us to write this book.

PHILOSOPHY

Readers unfamiliar with philosophy may find it best to start with the philosophy of natural science. A. F. Chalmers, *What is this Thing called Science?*, 2nd edn. (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1982) is an excellent guide. Its main focus is on issues made central by Popper, Kuhn, and Lakatos but it is also helpful more generally, for instance about realism and instrumentalism. R. Harré, *The Philosophies of Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) is clear and lively. For the story at first hand, begin with Logical Positivism as conveyed by R. B. Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953) and, if brave, follow up the references to Carnap, Nagel, and Hempel which we gave in the footnotes to Chapter 3. A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971 and several other editions) was first published in 1936 and brought the broad message of Logical Positivism to English readers with panache.

Karl Popper's most commanding essay is 'Conjectures and Refutations', in the collection of his essays published under that title (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969). Also classic is his *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Hutchinson, 1958). His views start to shift interestingly with *Objective Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972). For Quine see 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', in W. v. O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961)—it is marvellously clever and subversive. T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd edn. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) has become a landmark. Recent discussion has been stimulated especially by Imré Lakatos's idea about research programmes in his *Collected Papers*, Volume I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), by P. K. Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London: New Left Books, 1975), and by R. Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (Brighton: Harvester, 1978). Ian Hacking's edited collection, *Scientific Revolutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) is well chosen.

A guide to these themes which also offers a transition to the philosophy of the social sciences is R. Keat and J. Urry, *Social Theory as Science* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975). A simpler, if more Positivist, introduction is A. Ryan, *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (London: Macmillan, 1970). Two evergreen attempts to apply science to social life are definitely still to be read. They are T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (first published 1651) and D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (first published 1739), both available in many editions. J. S. Mill, *A System of Logic*, Book VI, ed. A. J. Ayer (London: Duckworth, 1988) was first published in 1843 and remains a clear and robust statement of scientific method applied to this purpose.

On the other hand, the social sciences may have a special character which calls for a philosophy of Understanding rather than of Scientific Explanation. An introduction which explores this line is L. Doyal and R. Harris, *Empiricism, Explanation and Rationality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986). The case (or rather a Wittgensteinian version of it) was stoutly made by Peter Winch in *The Idea of a Social Science* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), as we noted in earlier chapters. For Max Weber's (ambivalent) views of meaning and rationality see the start of *Economy and Society* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968; first published in 1922). The opening pages have often been reprinted. One useful source is G. Runciman (ed.), *Weber: Selections in Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978). Another is F. Dallmayr and T. McCarthy (eds.),

Understanding and Social Enquiry (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), which includes, among other useful readings, Charles Taylor's essay 'Interpretation and the Sciences of Man', originally published in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 1971, 25 and also reprinted in his fertile *Collected Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Those drawn to Critical Theory might begin with R. Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For Habermas himself there are English translations of *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971) and *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975). T. Adorno *et al.*, *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* (New York: Harper, 1976) is an instructive confrontation between the Positivist and German hermeneutic traditions. In so far as issues of social realism (in one of its philosophical senses) are involved, readers might like to grapple with R. Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Brighton: Harvester, 1979).

The waters run much clearer for topics in rational choice and Game Theory. Jon Elster has contributed much lucid and ingenious philosophical discussion, notably *Logic and Society* (New York: Wiley, 1976), *Explaining Technical Change* (1983), *Sour Grapes* (1981), *Ulysses and the Sirens* (1983), and *The Cement of Society* (1989) all published by Cambridge University Press. *Explaining Technical Change* opens with a helpful sketch of three basic approaches to social analysis. For a reflective review of this area see S. Hargreaves-Heap, M. Hollis, B. Lyons, R. Sugden and A. Weale, *Choice: A Critical Guide* (Oxford: Blackwell, forthcoming).

Finally, there may be merit in recommending a few general works. For those unacquainted with philosophy we venture to suggest Martin Hollis, *Invitation to Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), if only to show where the wind in this book has been blowing from. Similarly, his *The Cunning of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) contains deeper reasons for the philosophical lines in this book. For the theory of knowledge, B. Aune, *Rationalism, Empiricism and Pragmatism* (New York: Random House, 1970) is a good general starter. For the philosophy of mind and action, so is L. H. Davies, *Theory of Action* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979). By now, however, the whole landscape of philosophy is coming into view and this is not the place to map it out further.

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