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The Concept of Tradition and its Deployment by the
Historian of Political Thought

I begin this thesis by reviewing the use of the concept of tradition in the disciplines of theology and literary criticism. In Chapter II I discuss a number of concepts for which 'tradition' is often used as a synonym. Then, by considering traditions in the arts and sciences, I attempt to produce a model of 'tradition' for which there is no synonym. In that model, innovation is identified as being indispensable, rather than antithetical, to a tradition's vitality.

In Chapter III I consider some influential notions of what constitutes a tradition in the history of political thought. In objecting to the idea that traditions are prescriptive, or paradigmatic, I suggest that political ideologies are traditions of discourse, and, therefore, that it is a mistake to contend that any given ideology can be identified by a simple definition. Location of that identity requires, in my view, an historical narrative of innovation in a tradition of discourse. Such a narrative, I argue in Chapter IV, should not be merely an account of the philosophies, alleged to have influenced political agents, with, perhaps, an account of those agents' policies. It should include a discussion of the vocabulary of ideological debate. In particular, I suggest that the actions of the ideologically committed are symbolic affirmations of their ideological identity, and, therefore, that the intelligibility of accounts of party authority and orthodoxy is enhanced by an appreciation of the vocabulary of ideological commitment.

Finally, I propose an objection to Skinner's view that professed principles can be treated as 'causal' conditions of an agent's actions. My conclusion is that the historian of political ideas should narrate the history of a tradition by recounting the political experiences of an association of political agents in the light of the changing vocabulary in which that experience has been articulated.

THE CONCEPT OF TRADITION AND ITS DEPLOYMENT

BY THE

HISTORIAN OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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CONTENTS

		page
Chapter One	Introduction	1
Chapter Two	Distinguishing Concepts - towards a model of tradition.	24
Chapter Three	Traditions, Paradigms and Politics.	65
Chapter Four	Parties and 'Doctrines'	103
Chapter Five	Conclusion	140
Appendix	The Liberal Mind	157
Notes to Chapter One		160
Notes to Chapter Two		164
Notes to Chapter Three		168
Notes to Chapter Four		174
Notes to Chapter Five		179
Notes to Appendix		180
Bibliography		181

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It is central to my case that the works considered by historians of political thought can, in another - the political - context, be seen as providing inspiration for the ideologically committed. A history of such inspiration can, I believe, be rendered in a narrative informed by the concept of tradition. The majority of this thesis is devoted to an investigation of this concept.

I am not, of course, the first to take 'tradition' as a theme. I would like, therefore, in addition to my acknowledgement of the London and Durham seminars, to include here a special acknowledgement of my debt to the writings of Michael Oakeshott. I have derived much pleasure and profit from them. I owe a great debt, too, to my supervisor Dr. David Manning, for his advice and for the unfailing interest he has shown in this project.

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INTRODUCTION

Michael Oakeshott, in his discussion of a 'tradition of behaviour', in Rationalism in Politics, writes that such a tradition is "a tricky thing to get to know".¹ All the components of the tradition change, but never all at once, or at the same rate. Thereby continuity is preserved. In Oakeshott's words:

"Nothing that ever belonged to it is completely lost: we are always swerving back to recover and make something topical out of even its remotest moments: and nothing for long remains unmodified".²

If, however, we are to try to find an application for these reflections, when we discuss tradition as a concept to be deployed by the historian of political thought, we might well begin by deciding whether or not the parts of the tradition whose differential rates of modification ensure continuity, are elements of vocabulary, "broader concepts", or both, or neither. Is it possible to identify the medium of what Oakeshott calls the "flow of sympathy",³ or must we admit that, in fact, traditions are, as Oakeshott says they appear to be, "essentially unintelligible"?⁴

Further clarification of Oakeshott's ideas about tradition appear in his introduction to Hobbes's Leviathan. Here Oakeshott explains that traditions of writing "tolerate and unite an internal variety",⁵ and that a tradition "has the ability to change without losing its identity".⁶ Traditions of writing, then, are like traditions of behaviour. Writing is, after all, an activity. But the crucial question, 'continuity of what', remains unanswered.



At one point in his introduction, Oakeshott distinguishes traditions of writing from one another, using as a criterion their "Master conceptions" - for example, "Reason" and "Nature".⁷ Elsewhere in that essay, in a section headed "The Tradition of Hobbes", Oakeshott sets out to outline the relationships between Hobbes's themes of Right, Will and Artifice. These concepts Oakeshott identifies as "ruling ideas" which have "dominated the political philosophy of the last three hundred years".⁹ By these concepts Hobbes is "allied to the future".¹⁰

Here, then, we have both a criterion of identification for traditions of writing and a putative explanation of the continuity which is the source of that identity. The analysis of "tradition" is not quite complete however. Oakeshott also writes that this Hobbesian tradition is a tradition of opposition to another tradition, equally old, from which it must be distinguished. How is the distinction to be achieved? Hobbes's work, according to Oakeshott, represents a "break away" from the "Rational-Natural Tradition", which begins from Law and Obligation rather than Right.¹¹ This opposed tradition "cannot tolerate" Hobbes's doctrine.¹² The distinction between traditions at first seems clear. Yet, in the same place, Oakeshott also warns that there has been a failure to detect the tradition to which Hobbes's civil philosophy belongs. Membership of such a tradition must then, I suggest, be more than a matter of the repetition of certain ideas, and the exclusion of others. After all, traditions, according to Oakeshott, "unite an internal variety". Clearly, the notion of "tradition" itself requires further examination.

It is helpful, at this point, to look at some definitions. The definitions of "tradition" in the Oxford English Dictionary deal with the notions of delivery, handing over and transmission, and then with what is transmitted. Two definitions of "tradition" in this latter sense are of interest here. The first (5a) states that a tradition is:

"That which is handed down; a statement, belief or practice transmitted (especially orally) from generation to generation".

The second (5b), preceded by the qualification "more vaguely", refers to:

"A long established and generally accepted custom or method of procedure, having almost the force of law; an immemorial usage; the body (or any one) of the experiences and usages of any branch or school of art or literature handed down by predecessors and generally followed." 13

I shall discuss what I understand by "traditionalism" at greater length later. I suggest, provisionally, that the tradition to whose authority the traditionalist submits is that defined in the first, rather than the last, part of (5b). This last vaguer sense: "the body of experiences and usages ..." does not convey the notion of something liable to exert authority or communal reverence. If this vague sense is the one relevant to the history of political thought, then we return to the question of how, to paraphrase Oakeshott, intimations can be pursued.¹⁵ What is to count as following "experiences and usages"? Any vagueness in the answer to that question would be made more obscure by the fact that the definition is only committed to the statement that these usages are "generally" followed. It also states that such usages are also those belonging to a "branch or school of art or literature". Now, if in true Austinian¹⁶

manner, we next go in search of the relevant definition of "school", it is clear that a tradition of political thought need not always be a school of thought. The Oxford English Dictionary informs us that, amongst other things, a school is:

"The body of persons that are or have been taught by a particular master (in philosophy, science, art, etc); hence in wider sense a body or succession of persons who in some department of speculation or practice are disciples of the same master, or who are united by a general similarity of principles and methods".¹⁷

That the set of relationships which make up a school are not necessarily those typical of a tradition of political writing can be readily illustrated by the case of Liberalism. Liberalism has been called a tradition of discourse,¹⁸ and regardless of the claims of Liberals, such as Herbert Spencer and L.T. Hobhouse, it is easy to show that the criterion for calling a writer a Liberal is not the presence in his work of any Liberal principle, or method, or of reference to a common master. Comparison of the works of T.H. Green, J.S. Mill, and Herbert Spencer, all acknowledged liberals, is all that is required to remind us that Liberalism is not a school of thought. Spencer's account of a putative Liberal principle serves the cause of polemic, not that of good historiography. The historian who takes Spencer's claims about Liberalism seriously, as a guide for his own work, commits an error which I shall attempt to analyse in depth in a later Chapter, (Ch. III).

How then are we to understand the above vague second sense of "tradition"? It is not clear what is "followed" or what constitutes such "following". It seems that the notions of authority, and of the "transmission" of statements,

beliefs, or practices which made up the first part of that definition of "tradition" should be re-examined. Certainly other views of tradition emphasise just these aspects. J.G.A. Pocock, for example, in his essays collected in Politics, Language and Time, attaches importance to authority.¹⁹ He notes Oakeshott's point that traditions are difficult to conceptualize, but adds that such conceptualisations must take place if traditions are to be communicated.²⁰ It is at this point that he introduces his notions of authority. However, before going on to discuss Pocock's main argument, it is worth pausing to note that Pocock, in making the above comments, was writing about traditions of behaviour and about conservative and radical strategies for change within a tradition. Still it is not quite so clear that all the individuals whose works are included in any tradition of political thought envisaged themselves as contributors to that, or any other, tradition. What could Locke have known of the Liberal tradition? Would he have attached any meaning at all to the name "Liberal"?²¹ These questions about the nature of the history of political thought as history rather than hindsight will be raised again shortly. The point I want to make here is as follows. Whereas we can perhaps agree with Pocock that, at all except the simplest levels of human existence and behaviour, traditions must be conceptualized by participants in them; in what have been called traditions of political writing, we must distinguish between active participants in a tradition, and the sources from which the tradition draws.

Let us now return to Pocock's main argument. In the essay, 'On the Non-revolutionary Nature of Paradigms', following the one to which I have already referred, Pocock

agrees that the thinking which he has discussed is that of the inhabitants of pre-modern societies. I have, so far, taken my examples from Liberalism - a tradition of thought in a more or less non-traditionalist society. But even in modern society, Pocock claims, political talk is governed by "paradigms". These "paradigms" are so-called authoritarian linguistic structures in which even the radical must participate if he is to engage in politics (of course, the radical has his own tradition). Here, again then, we have a putative answer to our question about the constituents and continuity of a tradition of political thought. What is required is an investigation of political writing. That Pocock's account of paradigms is inadequate has, however, been convincingly argued by J.D. Rayner. Full exposition of his criticisms will be left until it can take its proper place in an account of political language, (Ch.III). That there is a pressing need for such an account can be shown by brief consideration of two well known historiographical works. They are S.S. Wolin's Politics and Vision²² and W.H. Greenleaf's Order Empiricism and Politics.²³

Wolin claims that there is a Western political tradition. This tradition of political philosophy is the most powerful restraint on the philosopher's "freedom to speculate".²⁴ Comprising a "common political vocabulary" and "core of problems", it sets the terms of the debate.^{25,26} Wolin claims further that there is but this one tradition, allowing no division into separate ideologies - a view from which we are led to believe that if a way of thinking does not belong to the tradition, so defined, then it is not "political".

Greenleaf, on the other hand, identifies more than one tradition. He does not make traditions sound quite so

authoritarian, but does seem to equate them with schools of thought. Traditions are said to comprise a style persisting through time, and participants in them "share at least some ideas, methods, and assumptions".²⁷ Of course, if this were the case, then traditions would be easily identifiable. There would also be little dispute about their scope and membership. Unfortunately, where Greenleaf sees several traditions, Wolin sees one.

We are reminded here of Oakeshott's words that "... though a tradition of behaviour is flimsy and elusive, it is not without identity".²⁸ What is lacking is a criterion of identity for traditions, and for traditions of political thought in particular. Since there seems to be some measure of agreement that traditions of political thought are a matter of, among, other things, language, we would perhaps do well to retain, as a provisional definition of them, one of the definitions found in the OED: "the body (or any one) of the experiences and usages of any branch of art or literature handed down by predecessors and generally followed". Quite what this involves still stands in need of clarification however. I shall say no more here about the alleged authority of "paradigms", or about the alleged effect of traditions as restraints on speculation. I shall turn instead to the study of literary criticism for further clues about the content and continuity of traditions of writing.

In the case of English literature, intuition might lead us to concede, more readily than in the case of political thought, that contributing to a tradition cannot be a matter of literally sharing a method, problems or problem solutions. Literature, after all, does not make obvious use of scientific

method. Nevertheless, F.R. Leavis, in The Great Tradition,²⁹ writes of Jane Austen's work as having a bearing on George Eliot's own problems as a novelist, and of Eliot's work as being "... peculiarly relevant to [(Henry) J.F.] James's interests and problems ...".³⁰ The matter might appear to be explained by Leavis's remark that Portrait of a Lady is A "variation" on part of Daniel Deronda.³¹ That assertion is made in order to argue that there is a "significant relation between the novelists".³² It is just this relationship between members of a tradition that has so far appeared to be so problematic. The expected clarification of that relationship is not forthcoming, however, because Leavis then goes on to write that James develops "an art so unlike George Eliot's".³³ Leavis is, after all, he tells us, concerned not with "indebtedness" but with influence.³⁴ In other words: "It is not derivativeness that is in question but the relation between two individual geniuses".³⁵ Leavis believes that it is "more than a guess" that Eliot had "some part" in James's development.³⁶ The significant relation between them, remains obscure.

We have a tradition, but in it the relationship between individual contributors to the tradition, the sense in which they are one tradition, is not at all clear. Austen, Eliot, James and Conrad are said to be all innovators "in 'form' and method".³⁷ Moreover, Leavis remarks that calling Conrad part of the tradition does not demand the establishment of "particular relations" between Conrad and anyone of the other authors mentioned.³⁸ According to Leavis, all have learned from their predecessors, but without imitation.

Leavis's other explicit remarks about "the Great Tradition" are brief but revealing. The "Great Tradition" is "... the tradition to which what is great in English fiction belongs ..."³⁹ Elsewhere, he remarks that the "great" novelists attain to greatness through an intense interest in life. Is this how we are to identify the members of the "Great Tradition"? Other traditions of English literature are admitted by Leavis too. The minor traditions stem from writers such as Emily Brontë and Walter Scott, and with regard to these more minor figures, Leavis's approach is reminiscent of Wolin's. Wolin writes of the innovators who extend the range of a tradition, rather than of the tradition's lesser figures who work within the same common order of problems. Leavis admits the existence of many so-called "classical" novelists, but he is mainly concerned with the major novelists who "not only change the possibilities of the art for practitioners and readers", but also promote "human awareness".⁴⁰ In some way the works of earlier "great" novelists "make possible" the later novelists' work. That this puzzling "tradition" is, however, at least in part constructed by the critic, rather than reconstructed by him from evidence in the way we expect of a historian, is made clear in Leavis's introduction. Jane Austen, writes Leavis, "creates the tradition we see leading down to her ...", "her work gives meaning to the past."⁴¹ The difference between the historian and the critic is clear here. For an historian, the past must be intelligible in its own terms. This is not the case with Leavis. For him, the past is to be given meaning in the light of the critic's hindsight. Yet, this notion of Leavis's, if it seems eccentric, is not unique. T.S. Eliot, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent", also writes of participation in literary traditions.⁴²

Moreover, he does so in terms of authors learning without imitation to write works which alter the meaning of the past. Eliot writes of tradition as being something obtainable by an author by "great labour".⁴³ It cannot be inherited. Authors who would be "traditional" must acquire a consciousness of the past through the study of European literature. A writer is "traditional" when he has that "historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal, and of the timeless and the temporal together".⁴⁴

In spite of this strange usage of "tradition" as a legacy to be striven for, rather than participated in, the way Eliot uses the notion has much in common with that of Leavis. Eliot does, of course, write that an author must be "set among the dead"⁴⁵ to be appreciated, but, and here we have the similarity with Leavis, he also maintains that a converse relation holds. Eliot believes that the creation of a new work alters all the internal relations of the past, alters all the relative values of past works. In Eliot's words "... what happens when a new work is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it".⁴⁶ Again, just as the members of Leavis's Great Tradition are innovators, and the question of "indebtedness" does not arise, so for Eliot (see After Strange Gods), it is a mis-application of the word "traditional" to use it to denote "attempts to do what has already been done perfectly".⁴⁷ All but the "patently negligible" is original.⁴⁸ Tradition is not a question of standing still. Yet, where a tradition is concerned, Eliot draws our attention to the role of orthodoxy which "supervises" "the perpetual bringing up to date and criticism of tradition".⁴⁹

Now Eliot's After Strange Gods from which the immediately

preceding remarks are taken, is concerned with the ethical aspects of literature rather than the purely literary or aesthetic. He does, however, make some remarks in that essay relevant to what I have said about the notion of a school of writing. He comments that the names "romantic" and "classicist" are not something that authors "bother" about except when they band together under a name in order to help to make themselves better known to a contemporary public.⁵⁰ Writing as a "romantic" or as a "classicist" author is something which Eliot doubts has ever done an author anything but harm.⁵¹

What are we then to make of the labels "classical" and "romantic", and of any other schools or traditions the critics discuss? At one point, Eliot remarks that, where such terms as "romantic" and "classic" are involved, "the opportunities for systematic misunderstanding and for futile controversy are accordingly almost ideal ..."⁵² Before, however, we conclude that the same must be true for all such labels, including perhaps "Liberal" and "Conservative", it is worth noticing the way in which the case of the terms "romantic" and "classical" as naming traditions has been defended.

Mario Praz in The Romantic Agony⁵³ compares the way in which the terms "romantic" and "classical" have been used with the use of "conservative" and "liberal". He concludes that the pairs of terms are alike; their meanings have been extended equally arbitrarily. Praz, nevertheless, defends his use of the word "romantic" against philosophers' objections to such "approximate labels".⁵⁴ It is as "approximate labels" that Praz finds the terms valuable. They cannot give, and we should not demand that they give, "exact and cogent

definition of thought".⁵⁵ The label "romantic" is a "serviceable makeshift" whose "fictitious character can easily be proved".⁵⁶ Its usefulness lies in the way that talk about a specified tradition hinders arbitrary interpretation of a work agreed to belong to that tradition. Complete refusal to assign a literary work to any place amongst other works is simply a block to study. Admittedly, in terms of aesthetic appreciation, as Praz remarks "... the work forms a unique world shut up in itself".⁵⁷ That, however, is a "philosophical truism", which if accepted, "would leave the critic no alternative but a mystical, admiring silence".⁵⁸ Critics, although some might regard silent admiration as a more appropriate channel for their energies, interpret texts; and assignment of authors to a tradition helps them in this activity. Praz gives the following example.⁵⁹ Some of the imagery employed by the poet Alcman bears a superficial resemblance to that of Shelley. Yet it cannot be interpreted in the same way because the "aspirations" we find in Shelley's work are "the property of the Romantics"; and Alcman is not a Romantic.⁶⁰ The obvious question to ask, of course, is "why not". Praz tells us that tags such as "romantic" indicate "where the accent falls".⁶¹ Applied outside their period they become meaningless. If, however, we are to ask, "why are Dryden and Pope not called romantics?" Praz would, no doubt, repeat that the terms are approximate labels with no definite criteria of application. We all know that Dryden and Pope are not romantics, and we do need a label (why not romantic?) for writers such as Byron, Shelley and Coleridge whom we feel do belong together. To give Praz the last word here:

"A knowledge of the tastes and preferences which belong to each period is as a sine qua non of the interpretation of a work of art, and literary history cannot afford to dispense with approximate terms such as these we have been discussing, terms which do not claim to be more than symbols of specific tendencies of sensitivity. They are intended to be empirical categories, and to condemn them as futile abstractions is as great an error as to exalt them into realities of universal import".⁶²

A concept of "tradition" then is part of the critic's apparatus. In the way he uses it, the concept is indeed a vague one. That vagueness has been defended however. I have tried to show how literary critics talk of authors' membership of traditions. Leavis in particular juxtaposes passages by different authors, and claims that we can "see" the influence of one author upon another. Claims like these are the clearest suggestion given of what constitutes the bond between members of a literary tradition. Is the concept used by, or available to, the historian of political thought equally vague? Certainly, according to Quentin Skinner, such ascriptions of influence between writers are also common in writings on the history of political thought.⁶³ Unfortunately, however, Skinner makes this observation as part of the evidence he adduces for his claim that many histories of political thought are methodologically unsound. Is, then, the critic's conception of tradition inappropriate to the history of political thought?

Skinner argues that attribution of influence in a work of political thought must at least demand proof of the repetition in the later work of features of the earlier one which is claimed to have influenced the author of the later work. Moreover, the appearance of these features must be shown

not to be coincidental. Whether or not this is true, or possible, of political thought and writings, in literature, recurrence certainly cannot be the criterion for claiming that one author has influenced another. Eliot's remarks about the original and the negligible, and Leavis's distinction between "influence" and "indebtedness", confirm as much. Skinner, however, makes the further point that if the historian of political thought is to claim that a later work is not so much a case of strict repetition, but rather one of the later work containing "elements" of the earlier, and therefore a case of influence, then the historian must first identify what constitute the re-identifiable "characteristics" of a work. (This is the problem of the identification of continuity of a tradition in another guise).⁶⁴ Could a second author be influenced by an aside, rather than the main argument, or even by a misunderstanding of the argument? Any looser criteria of influence than those criticized by Skinner are simply talk of "a certain ambience"⁶⁵ talk which Skinner dismisses as empty.

Attributions of influence simply become accounts of what the writer finds himself reminded of when he reads a given text. Yet a tighter criterion would be a denial of originality, a criterion of plagiarism rather than of influence. What then is left of our putative literary traditions?

Skinner's arguments were put forward as criticisms of the method employed by historians of political thought. They cannot, I think, be transferred without qualification to the study of literary criticism, and there used as criticism of the way literary critics write of "influence" and, in

writing of "influence", of tradition. Skinner writes of accounts of a would-be historian's own reminiscences accounts of which work reminds the writer of which others - that is all his attributions of influence can be - in a way which makes it clear that he feels that little of lasting value is contained in such accounts. Yet, in the case of literary criticism, is not what we look for in a great critic a kind of connoisseurship, so that the connections he makes are illuminating and (to use a deliberately loose expression in this short excursion into the imprecise realm of aesthetics) somehow right? If the critic's use of the concept of tradition seems ill defined, that vagueness assists the reader in avoiding the blunder of seeking the familiar in an alien argument, the error Skinner calls parochialism.⁶⁶ Putting Shelley's but not Alcman's work in the romantic tradition stops us searching Alcman's writings for the aspirations familiar in Shelley's. The critics who adopt this defence of their use of "tradition" do not however escape as easily from the accusation of having committed another of the blunders identified by Skinner. To fall prey to this error "prolepsis", is to confuse the significance of an author's work with its content.⁶⁷ To repeat an example given by Skinner, the significance of Locke might be that he founded the liberal tradition (Skinner says "school"), but that could never have been his intention.⁶⁸ So is the question of whether or not Shelley is to be called a romantic to be decided by reference to the significance, or to the content, of his work? We return to the problem of criteria of application for Praz's "approximate label". Eliot, it will be remembered, doubted whether any poet has ever benefitted from trying to write as a romantic. Certainly,

the author's intention that a work be a contribution to a tradition does not automatically make it a contribution to that tradition (one need only remember talents as diverse as those of V. van Gogh, and Wm. McGonagall in this connection). I shall also argue later that it cannot be simply the presence of certain "essential" elements in a political text that make it a contribution to the Liberal, Conservative, or any other, tradition of political thought. How are the labels to be applied? The literary critic assigns a work to a tradition in order to highlight its significance, but his unhistorical method of proceeding bars the historian of political thought (if Skinner is correct) from deploying the concept of tradition in the same way.

Can we, in spite of the inapplicability of the critic's conception of tradition to the history of political thought, nevertheless admit the possibility of an aesthetic dimension in some works of political thought, something akin to what Wolin calls vision? Skinner points to a conflict of views between those who would extract a philosophical argument of the greatest possible coherence from a text, and those who would recover its historical meaning. I suggest that, besides looking for the logical aspects of an argument with a proper respect for the historical setting from which it has been inherited, we should allow the possibility of something more akin to an aesthetic appreciation of the appeal of a text. We should consider the vision it presents, and how that vision has been rendered. If it is the achievement of some writers of political texts to present an all-embracing account of their world, then, besides both the philosophical analysis which assumes the coherence of that vision, and the historical narrative of what the author meant by his

words and of what he sought to achieve by them, some organizing concept capable of performing the function of the apparatus employed by the literary critic is required. How else are we to avoid "a mystical admiring silence" (Praz) when we come to appreciate that vision as a self-contained account of the world?

Before making a detailed examination of the way in which historians of political thought have already deployed the concept "tradition", it is worth considering another field of academic enquiry in which that concept has been used. That inquiry is theology, and an examination of some aspects of the study is particularly appropriate at this point for, as one author puts it:

"...the language of theology is metaphor and its truth akin to the truth of poetry".⁶⁹

That writer, Meredith Dewey, characterizes theology as "the science of the living God and of his (sic) work in and for a living world".⁷⁰ Its language is metaphor, and metaphors change. Dewey's remarks in that essay ("The Anglican Tradition in Theology") encapsulate much of the position of the reformed churches in their debate with Rome about the relative importance of scripture and tradition. The nature of this debate, within which the theological concept of tradition has been defined, can best be described inside the framework of an account of the nature of theology. In giving this account I am indebted to the work of Theodore W. Jennings Jr. and of Gerhard Ebeling.^{71,72}

One dictionary definition of tradition, it will be remembered, asserts that a tradition is "a statement, belief or practice transmitted (especially orally) from generation to generation". Now if a tradition is solely one of oral

transmission, there will be no means whereby participants in that tradition could note variations between their own formulations and those of preceding generations. The matter is little different even when that tradition is based upon a set of texts which give an account, metaphorical perhaps, of a past event and its significance as the foundation of the tradition. That text can exist alongside an oral tradition of interpretation. The important thing about the interpreted religious text is that the past it portrays gives significance to the present. Elaboration of that significance, interpretation of the text, is the task of theology. Still, although the truth of religion has been compared to that of poetry, the roles of theologian and literary critic are, nevertheless, not quite analogous. Unlike a poem, scripture is authoritative. Whilst each generation interprets a text anew, each interpretation lays claim to being that authority. Discrepancy between interpretations then becomes a serious business, and discrepancies will be noticed, if successive elaborations of the significance of the divine message to the ever changing present are themselves fixed in writing as a body of text.

Religious communities have had to decide which texts will make up their canon. The question of canonicity is one which has long been the subject of controversy, sometimes bitter, amongst Christians. Besides those texts written under the influence of a religious community's first leaders, the community might also agree to the inclusion, as part of the liturgical canon, of texts from various sources because of their historical importance in this role (Jennings gives the example of the book of Hebrews).⁷³ Also among the collection of texts informing a religious community are those which function as sources of theological guidance.

These texts might comprise, for example, the decisions of councils of bishops which validate the work of theologians, as well as the work of prestigious theologians themselves.

The Christian reformers of the sixteenth century, however, rejected Rome's doctrine of the equality of scripture and tradition which gave nearly equal emphasis to all the components of the above list. If we wish to know the meaning of "tradition" for the Roman Catholic Church, we need not look much further than the proceedings of the Council of Trent. These allow for scripture to be supplemented by the tradition which begins with the apostles and proceeds to the present incumbent of the See of Rome. The Reformers' slogan of "sola scriptura", however, can be variously interpreted: and it has been.

At one extreme, the modernist sees the Bible as a text to be treated "historically". Like any contemporary text, the only force its propositions are allowed to have are those recognizable by reason. Such an approach is a denial of tradition for it overlooks the subsequent history of the community in order to put the text in its original setting. The Bible then becomes simply another ancient text. The pietist, on the other hand, to give an equally crude characterisation of the opposite extreme, substitutes, as he reads the Bible, his own private religious experience for the shared interpretation sanctioned by a community. In doing so, he is condemned to a silence reminiscent of that described by Praz in the case of a critic who refuses to assign a work to a tradition.

Jennings points out that extreme subjectivism of interpretation can be avoided by appeal to the products of past inquiry, or, as Barth suggests, by appeal to the

community existing through time.⁷⁴ The problem facing all who engage in theological interpretation, but which is faced most acutely by the Pietists is that there is no universally agreed standard of acceptability of theological interpretation. With no test of validity, why should the number of interpretations not multiply until the number of sects becomes equal to the number of believers?

If this argument seems to be decisive against the reformed churches and the doctrine of sola scriptura, it must be noted too that it is equally applicable as a criticism of the notion of Apostolic Tradition upheld by Rome. There too, the final appeal, admittedly on the part of a recognised authority, is to the guidance of Spirit, enjoyment of which is the basis of that authority. However, Barth's hint that participation in a community of theologians limits subjectivism illuminates important aspects of tradition. We should not underestimate the significance either of that suggestion or of another of Barth's claims namely that the history of theology is not only a theological task, but is to be undertaken within the Church; "the only possible sphere" for the enterprise.⁷⁵ A similar point is, I believe, true of political discourse and political parties. I do not suggest that only party-members can write the history of a tradition of political discourse. I suggest, rather, that they provide the key to who is to be considered to be a member of the tradition. That, however, forms part of a later discussion. My concern here is with the theological conception of tradition.

Now, whereas it must be admitted that if the pronouncements comprising a tradition were not committed to writing, their existence would be less well evidenced, and there

would be no evidence at all for the tradition as a series of decisions, the content of these decisions will, nevertheless, be preserved where they concern the last agreed form of ritual or preaching (examples given by Ebeling are auricular confession and infant baptism).⁷⁶ To be reminded of this fact is to be reminded that fundamental aspects of the existence of a religious community are those concerned with proclamation - teaching and imparting a message - and with the ritual into which such proclamation is incorporated. This continuing transmission of what scripture reveals is, according to Ebeling, "a definite element in the Catholic conception of Tradition."⁷⁷ It also leaves us with the following difficulty. If the Church constitutes the tradition as the continuing act of transmission or "traditio" (to use Ebeling's terminology), then, when it makes pronouncements about canonicity, it is also the final arbiter of what is to constitute the "traditum" elaborated in the process of tradition. The distinction between "traditum" and "actus tradendi", between what is to be transmitted and the act of transmission, disappears. To refer again to the dictionary definition, there ceases to be a distinction between the "statement, belief or practice" and the utterance whereby it is transmitted. The concept of tradition, then, in the formula "Scripture and Tradition" appears to be problematic. Ebeling assures us that it is the subject of debate amongst present-day (1968) Catholics.⁷⁸

The discussion of the theological conception of tradition, however, need not be abandoned at this unsatisfactory point. Ebeling puts forward a suggestion which merits careful consideration. The transmitted object of tradition seems elusive. This fact leads Ebeling, as a theologian, to the

conclusion that what is being transmitted is neither a statement of a doctrine nor a law. It is:

"... the very person of Jesus himself as the incarnate word of God, giving its authority to the Gospel and to the event of the authoritative Word of faith: and correspondingly we have the Holy Spirit as God's Presence in the faith-creating World of Preaching".⁷⁹

Elsewhere he says that:

"The Christian tradition is always in danger of becoming a legal tradition, and being false to the transmission of the Gospel. Doing justice to the tradition does not consist in the preserving and handing on of its content and forms, but in its rightful use as ways and means of the Gospel".⁸⁰

This view seems to be in close agreement with that of Meredith Dewey quoted above. Admittedly, in Ebeling's conception the "traditum" appears to be elusive, but a history of the modes and continuing acts of transmission is still perfectly possible. Just such a history is sketched by Norman Sykes, one of Dewey's collaborators in The Anglican Tradition.⁸¹

It's elusive "traditum" notwithstanding then, the theological conception of "tradition" is in some respects more tangible than that employed by the literary critic. It was impossible to specify what one author within a literary tradition could be said to have transmitted to another. What had connected the various participants of a tradition was no more, nor anything less, than the critic's own judgement of their unity. The traditions of theology, by contrast, are more easily identified. A Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge assures us, moreover, that "attention to God" cannot be construed as requiring no church service.⁸²

Those who claim to be able to worship much better "privately

and alone" do not, he declares flatly, worship "the God of the Bible".⁸³ Deliberate participation in a theological tradition must therefore manifest itself as membership of a church denomination (or heresy). It is the church which preaches and bears witness to what is so proclaimed; so the theologian must be a member of a community of believers. His task is to show the significance to the present of the events recounted in scripture. Only as a member of a community can he come to his fullest appreciation of the unity of what he calls "tradition". This last point will be of some importance in later chapters.

Now some authors have (wrongly I believe) equated Churches and political ideologies.⁸⁴ Historians of both talk of tradition. Are they using the same concept? Clearly, the claims made by some historians of political thought that "traditions" inform the subject matter of their studies stand in need of examination given the diversity of the notions of tradition I have discussed. It remains to be seen then whether or not the concept of "tradition" deployed by the historian of political thought should more closely resemble the concept deployed either by the literary critic or by the theologian. This investigation of the concept's deployment will be preceded, however, by some further general clarification of the concept of tradition itself. This I shall attempt by means of a comparison of a group of related (and frequently conflated) concepts. It will then be possible to examine the claims made by a number of historians of political thought with regard to what they have called "traditions". My own suggestions regarding deployment of the concept will, I hope, also become clear during the course of the discussion.

II

DISTINGUISHING CONCEPTS
TOWARDS A MODEL OF TRADITION

In this chapter I shall examine the notions of "custom" and "habit", as a preliminary to the elaboration of a sense of "tradition" in which that word is not merely a synonym for "custom", and denotes a different relationship between past and present. Here, too, I shall examine what we mean by "habit", in order to distinguish it from "custom" and "tradition". This will be a first step towards my own account of the concept of tradition, in which following a tradition is distinguished from traditionalism.

That the above distinction is not always made is immediately apparent to the reader of H.B. Acton's "Tradition and Some Other Forms of Order".¹ In that essay Acton employs the following definition of "tradition as:

"...a belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another and accepted as authoritative, or deferred to without argument".²

By limiting his discussion of traditional processes to the usage by which we talk of "traditional societies", Acton is led to argue that "... role and imitation are characteristics of tradition", and to suppose "... that tradition and custom are closely connected if not identical notions, though we tend perhaps to use the word "tradition" for the more elaborate and civilized forms of custom".³ He goes on to add that, as I propose, "a fuller treatment of them both would lead to the examination of such conceptions as habit and skill".⁴

Acton, then, writes of traditional practices as being characterized by a slow rate of change, and of traditional societies as being societies whose members might engage

in disputes about who is to be king, but not about the value of the institution of kingship.

Similarly, we find an anthropologist writing:

"People usually cite, as the identifying feature of traditional society, the power and authority of tradition, which passes on from generation to generation a way of living and a view of life which do not change time and again in form and content according to the fashion of the period".⁵

That anthropologist concludes, however, that tradition (in this sense) and transformation are not mutually exclusive. The validity of this point and of Acton's remarks about kingship are borne out by the accounts of two traditional societies, which I shall use to illustrate my remarks about tradition and custom. Before doing so, in order to make full use of these illustrations, I shall by way of introduction recall briefly the way in which "custom" has been understood by many political thinkers.

Consider the following two examples. The first is to be found in Hegel's Philosophy of Right, and the second in J.S. Mill's On Liberty.

Hegel gives the following definition of "rectitude":

"...When virtue displays itself solely as the individual's simple conformity with the duties of the station to which he belongs, it is rectitude."⁶

And he adds to it the remark:

"In an ethical community, it is easy to say what a man must do, what are the duties he has to fulfil in order to be virtuous: he has simply to follow the well known and explicit rules of his own situation. Rectitude is the general character which may be demanded of him by law or custom".⁷

Custom, it seems is a matter of rules and the fulfillment of the duties appropriate to one's situation. Mill describes how this can be:

"The effect of custom [Mill writes] in

preventing any misgiving respecting the rules of conduct which mankind impose upon one another, is all the more complete because the subject is one on which it is not generally considered necessary that reasons should be given, either by one person to others or by each to himself".⁸

Is this account of custom reflected in traditional societies? Does station in life in such societies determine the appropriateness and scope of individual behaviour and initiative? That this usage of "custom" is still current is confirmed by C.B. MacPherson's The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism⁹. In that work, MacPherson's model of market society, with its well-known emphasis on individualism and contractual relationships, is defined partly by contrast with what MacPherson calls "status" or "customary society".¹⁰ In taking this illustration as corroboration of what I have to say about custom, however, we should remember that he is dealing in models of society, and his account of customary society should not be expected to conform in every respect, although it does in many, to the actual societies I shall now consider.

My first example of a customary society is that of the Nigerian Kingdom of Nupe until the time of the Second World War. It is described in S.F. Nadel's A Black Byzantium. In that account Nadel uses the term "tradition" frequently, although the society largely conforms to what the above described usage of "custom" and "customary society" leads us to expect. Customs, as we have seen, is a matter of stations and duties. The Nupe had systems of state and village ranks (unlike MacPherson's model, promotion was expected) with accompanying special etiquettes. Village chiefs had a right to tithes, and had exclusive

rights over certain commodities (lion skins, for example). The kings of Nupe once also controlled the kola nut trade as an exclusive monopoly and "an instrument of sharp class prerogative",¹² distributing the nuts as a sign of favour in the highly stratified society. In 1936 Nupe still had 41 royal ranks, and in the days of slavery even slaves were differentiated by rank. Industry was hierarchical in the same way. Heads of Guilds held state ranks whilst the guilds themselves were organised in an order of precedence.

In his description of the King's ceremonial ride from the mosque each Friday, Nadel writes:

"This external arrangement of the Friday ceremonial is indeed a symbol of the whole structure of Nupe Kingdom with its rigid system of etiquette and precedence, its differentiation of status, rank and prerogative and its display of wealth and power".¹³

Nupe seems to epitomise the rule-governed nature of customary society and the way in which rules of etiquette and prerogative are appropriate to ranks not individuals. We might expect, therefore, personal merit to be nearly irrelevant in that society where advancement between ranks is concerned. This was indeed the case. Promotion between ranks in Nupe was frequent, and largely a matter of seniority. Where individual and personal qualities affected promotion, it was largely a case of specific demerit (in state ranks, physical disability of any kind) obstructing the normal process of advancement. Lack of concern for personal qualities, and a corresponding emphasis on rank or status are highlighted by the dealings of the old slave market. Before the abolition of slavery, dealers charged a standard price for male, and another price for female slaves. Purchasers did not strike bargains according to

their perception of the slave's suitability to his needs. A slave's status alone as male or female slave determined valuation.

The conduct of warfare was also influenced by the social structure of Nupe. It too "possessed its etiquette, its conventions, and rules".¹⁴ The royal commander was chosen so that he was of a rank appropriate to the scope of the planned campaign. In the event of victory, only the booty appropriate to the rank of its taker could be retained by him.

Nupe of course was itself the product of aggregation of tribes, and of periodic-conquests. From this cultural mixing stems, besides the other differentiations of rank, class differences related to cultural origin. Food, music and dress, varied between the classes. Yet Nadel emphasises that within each Nupe village a change in village life could only result from a divergence of interests in that community. As Nadel notes, and as we might otherwise expect from the quotation from Hegel specifying station and duty, threats to the "unity of common life" endanger what Nadel calls the "traditional authorities".¹⁵

Here then we are given a hint of the inappropriateness of taking the anthropological sense of "tradition" as the sense of "tradition" in which we talk of political traditions, rather than of traditionalist cultures. For politics is, above all, concerned with the adaptation of the arrangements of a society to changing circumstances. In Nupe, Nadel only allows the possibility of factional politics in cases where the colonial "Native Administration" had excluded groups from participation in the traditional status framework. Indeed, he calls for "a training in political

responsibility to the achievement of which the colonial policy is irrevocably pledged".¹⁶ Nadel equates this "training" with "political education". That this is an error of judgement is obvious to any who look now for examples of the Westminster model of government in Africa. It is a commonplace that the attempt to export the British system failed because Africa was not steeped in the "British tradition". Indeed, conclusions can be drawn from this post-colonial experience about the connection between political education and tradition. The discussion of education, training and tradition, and of related topics, will, however, be postponed until the concept of tradition has been more fully clarified. I shall try to distinguish a notion of "tradition", suitable to politics, from that notion of "tradition", which Acton takes to be synonymous with "custom".

In a traditional society, then, the constituent relationships are those defined between ranks rather than between individuals. In what is seen as an unchanging world, there is no great scope for individual initiative. That this is not simply the case in Nupe alone, can be amply illustrated by any account of life in rural India. Occupations there, for example, are still largely tied to caste. It is striking that modern circumstances have not ended the caste system, (it is said for example to be reasserting itself in the post-imperial Indian Army).¹⁷ Instead, modern circumstances have been the occasion for an adaptation of custom, rather than for any increase in the scope of individual, choice and initiative. Members of traditional societies do not seem to regard their world as one in which innovation is possible, or in which private attempts

at innovation are appropriate. The new is assimilated into the old in the same way that the Fulani conquerors of Nupe, or the Manchu invaders of China, were culturally absorbed by the peoples they conquered. Sudden change is the change of a dynasty, not of the fundamental structure of society. Their cultural world does not change so dramatically. It is a world of struggles over who is to be king, but not usually about the desirability of kingship; it is one of administration but not politics. Even the upheavals hailed as "revolutions" leave much unchanged.

The customary, then, can be equated with the traditional in the sense of "traditionalist". A further equation, that of "custom" and "habit", is sanctioned by the Oxford English Dictionary. But it would be a mistake to believe that the sense of "custom", described above in connection with traditional societies, is the same sense as that in which it might be said to be someone's custom to hum quietly to himself as he studied. It is equally misguided to believe that we use the same sense of "habit" when we talk of a person's habit of licking the tip of his pencil before writing, and when we talk of "the political habits of Englishmen".¹⁸

R.S. Peters describes "habit" as a word we use to say something extra about an action.¹⁹ To say that somebody did something "out of habit" is to deny that the action was done for an extrinsic end or with an intrinsic motivation. It is just the kind of thing that the person tends to do. Here Gilbert Ryle's distinction between habits and "intelligent capacities" is useful.²⁰ Habits are built up "by drill" (or conditioning), and "intelligent capacities" by training.²¹ The first is a matter of simple repetition. The second,

however, involves "stimulation by criticism and example of the pupil's own judgement".²² Drill dispenses with intelligence, but training develops it. Neither, I shall argue, should properly be called education, but that is not what is at issue here. The trainee thinks about what he is doing, thereby making each operation he performs into a lesson in how to perform better. Ryle makes the point too that there is a difference between the drill of a keen, and that of a "merely docile", soldier.²³ There is no clear dividing line between intelligent performances and habits, but of a habit we can only say that it is a mannerism one has picked up. We cannot properly maintain that a particular habit is something that we have learned. What Ryle feels he can say about a person and his habits is:

"... he acts in this way whether or not he is attending to what he is doing; that is he is not exercising care or trying to improve his performance; and that he may after the act be quite unaware that he has done it. Such actions are often given the metaphorical title "automatic". Automatic habits are often inculcated by sheer drill, and only by some counter drill is a formed habit eradicated".²⁴

This is why, when we talk of a "stupid habit" we mean that a person is stupid not to try to lose the habit, not that his performance of the habitual act was, on this or that occasion, stupidly executed. He may not be aware that he has done anything at all.

That a habit is not an intelligent performance explains the consternation felt by generations of philosophers over Aristotle's suggestion about moral virtue coming about as a result of habit (Nichomachean Ethics II 11030a).²⁵ The problem is that if morality is a question of being good out

habit then it cannot be a question of moral choice and decision or of self-conscious conformity to a rule or precept. Yet Aristotle is not alone in his beliefs.

Oakeshott makes a similar point in *The Tower of Babel*.²⁶

Burke too asserts that:

"Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit; and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice his duty becomes part of his nature".²⁷

Nevertheless, duty and habit, or rule following and habit should not be confused. Peter Winch, for example, criticises Oakeshott's argument that there can be such a thing as an habitual morality which can be learned by living with those who habitually behave in a certain way.²⁸ His argument is that the dividing line between rule-governed behaviour and habitual behaviour is not dependent merely upon whether or not any rule is consciously applied. For Winch, the test to identify any performance as an instance of rule-following is simply to ask whether or not it makes sense to distinguish a right and a wrong way of carrying out that performance. Perhaps one does at first learn by imitation, as Aristotle suggests when he says that one becomes just by doing just acts, but one must also learn what counts as being just, if one is to be just in novel situations. Winch goes on to point out that if acquiring a "habit" means acquiring a propensity to go on doing "the same kind of thing", then this is also true of learning a rule. However, there is a difference too. Winch illustrates this difference by the example of a performing dog.²⁹

Imagine a performing animal drilled to commence his trick when a command is uttered. The animal is not following a rule although it "does the same kind of thing" on every

occasion of the utterance of the command. The dog itself has no conception of what counts as a correctly performed trick, or of "doing the same kind of thing". The animal responds to conditioning imposed according to its trainer's conception of what counts as getting the trick right. It has acquired a disposition to act in a certain way in certain circumstances. It cannot follow a rule.

Habits and rule-following can be distinguished then. Custom, as we have seen, is sometimes a matter of station and duty, of ranks and of rules governing behaviour appropriate to each rank. In short, custom can be a matter of rule-following. We cannot, therefore, always equate custom and habit. It follows, then, that the meanings of "habit" and of "tradition" when it is used as a synonym for "custom" also cannot be equated. It would, however, be unsatisfactory to end the scrutiny of concepts with this conclusion. The discussion of tradition, habit, and custom raises further questions about the relationship between education and learning to follow rules. Moreover, my remarks about political education, training, and tradition call for an investigation of the relationship between rule-following and following a tradition. However, unless there is also more to be said about "tradition" itself, there is little point in proceeding. For "custom" seems to be a notion of little use to the historian of political thought.

Before embarking upon further elaboration of issues, I shall try, therefore, to explore the possibility of a recognizable usage of "tradition" which is not synonymous with "custom". Of course, that concept of tradition must involve a notion of the continuity of the past with the present if the definition of "tradition" to be given is

not to be purely stipulative. Yet this notion of continuity is not unique to "custom" or "tradition". Present action also bears the mark of past practice and thought in our rituals, in our conformity to convention, and in our claims to orthodoxy. Continuity in our social life is thereby preserved, and the observation licensed that we are disposed to act in certain ways on certain occasions. Without this continuity, of course, social-life becomes unintelligible; there could, for example, be no talk of practices or rules in such circumstances.

I have noted that, whilst certain actions can be given more than one of the above descriptions as a case of custom, tradition or convention, without solecism, there are groups of actions to which each term is uniquely applicable. I shall try, by concentrating on these distinctive groups of actions, not to stipulate clear distinctions where actual usage blurs them, but rather to analyse the different ways in which the past can be said to survive in the present. My aim is to locate a unique and non-synonymous sense of "tradition".

In the foregoing discussion of "custom" and "habit", I noted that H.B. Acton took "tradition" to mean "a belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another". I have already tried to clarify the relationship between the notions of "custom" and "traditional society", and to distinguish "custom" from "habit". However, as I have said, the work of clarification is not yet finished. Rituals, orthodoxies and conventions also fall under the description of a "belief or practice transmitted from one generation to another". Here I shall try to distinguish ritual as a

practice in order to differentiate it from, and to clarify further, the notions of "custom" and "convention".

A ritual need not be solely of religious significance. It is always a ceremony of significance, a structured part of social life and some argue that it can structure participants' and outlookers' thought about social life. Ritual is ordered and precise. This exact repetition is vital. For what is distinctive about that group of ceremonies to which the term "ritual" is uniquely applicable is that some, or all, of the actions which constitute each ceremony are symbolic acts. Ritual bears a social meaning and a message, but this communication is a complex matter. Rituals have statable purposes. For example, a coronation inaugurates a reign. Yet rituals can allude to, and have, several more "meanings".³⁰ I am, however, only concerned here with the overt symbolism of ritual, rather than with any social "function" which can be ascribed to it.

In rituals, actions or objects used as symbols became "extraordinary themselves"³¹ (to use the terminology of Moore and Myerhof), or they are ordinary objects used in a non-ordinary way to set them apart from mundane use (cf. communion wine). For rituals are acts of communication with the unseen or unseeable, whether it be God or the State.

Convention, by contrast with ritual, has no essential connection with symbolism. Still, conventions are also a part of structured social life. Transmission of them from generation to generation also helps to give continuity to social living. What then is "convention"? It is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as:

"General agreement or consent, deliberate or implicit, as constituting the origin and foundation of any custom, institution,

opinion etc., or as embodied in any accepted usage, standard of behaviour, method of artistic treatment, or the like".

and:

"A rule or practice based upon general consent, or accepted and upheld by society at large; an arbitrary rule or practice recognised as valid in any particular art or study; a conventionalism".

I suggest that, whilst custom can be a matter of station and the duties appropriate to that station, convention has to do not with rank but with deliberate agreement. It is not that it is somehow proper to use the imperial rather than the metric system of measurement for measuring aircraft altitude, in the way that it is proper for certain ranks in Nupe to wear blue turbans rather than any other head-dress or turbans of a different colour. It is simply convenient for those who deal with aircraft to use that system for that purpose, although that there should be a convention about which system to use is a matter of practical necessity. Being an aircraft controller does not, however, entitle one to measure altitudes in feet, in the way in which possession of rank in certain societies entitles one to wear certain clothing. Aircraft controllers have adopted a pre-existing system for measuring distances (itself a convention), and in accordance with that convention they use that system for measuring aircraft altitudes. They do so whether or not they measure other distances in feet.

If, however, we talk of someone logging his altitude "in the orthodox way" (i.e. in feet), then we are guilty of a confusion. Admittedly, the Oxford English Dictionary reports being "orthodox" as being a matter of holding opinions recognised as correct, or in accordance with a

standard, and that the orthodox is the conventional or approved. Nevertheless, I shall try to show that the two terms "conventional" and "orthodox" do not overlap fully, and that each has a distinctive use.

We talk of conventional ways of doing things, but we usually talk of a person being orthodox in his beliefs. The conventional is what is accepted and agreed to. It is not necessarily what is agreed with. A French aircraft controller might regard measurement in metres as preferable to the system that he uses according to convention. It is a contingent matter that what is generally approved is likely to be adopted as a convention. In contrast with this, the claim to be orthodox within a body of opinion implies that one believes what is generally believed, because one holds to be true what others hold to be true. Questions of general practical necessity arise here only for the hypocrite.

Of course, conventions and the conventional - agreed to, but not necessarily agreed with - are a vital source of cohesion in political life in Britain. In a ballot, for example, the minority generally assents to the view of the majority. That they do so is a matter of a decision procedure accepted by convention; and conventions can be ignored. Immediately after losing a ballot, minorities have been known to secede from the ballot-holding institution (Bolsheviks), usurp legitimate power (election of Hernan Siles Zuazo Bolivia 1980), or refuse to relinquish the power they already held (cf. Costa Rica 1948- the government precipitated a civil war by "cancelling" the election in which the government candidate Calderon Guardia was defeated).

An interesting example of the way in which the

conventions of British politics acted as a guide in times of crisis, and thereby helped the politicians of the day to avoid the possible alienation of a significant portion of the electorate, is to be found in accounts of the events following the General election of December 1923. After that General Election, the Conservatives, although the largest party in the House, had no clear majority. The Labour and Liberal parties formed the second and third largest groups respectively. The Labour party had never before formed a government, and was the object of widespread suspicion amongst its opponents. Nevertheless, Asquith, the leader of the Liberals, after the moving of the Labour vote of censure on the Conservatives, asserted during the debate on the King's speech that after a resignation of the Conservative administration:

"... the party which naturally and properly succeeds to the task of Government, if it is minded to undertake it, is the party that is numerically preponderant in the Opposition".³²

He went on to say that:

"Under the present conditions, unexampled as they are ... I think there is no ground for departing from normal usage, and if the Labour party is willing, as I understand it is, to assume the burden of office in such conditions, it has the absolute undoubted right to claim it".³³

However, allowing a Labour government to take office would mean:

"... for the first time, the installation of a Socialist Government in the seats of the mighty".³⁴

Asquith had received many letters in which he was "cajoled, wheedled, almost caressed, taunted, threatened, brow beaten, and all but blackmailed" into becoming the

"saviour of society", by combining with the Conservatives to keep Labour out of office.³⁵

Nevertheless, he rejected these pleas, maintaining that the Labour members were the Conservatives "natural and appropriate successors".³⁶

The Labour party was asked to form the next government, after the announcement by the Conservative party of the resignation of their government on 22 June. In a novel situation, those involved allowed themselves to be guided by convention to a solution which was agreed to by the House, in spite of the fears of some that Socialism would lead to all manner of economic evils. Indeed, those in need of reassurance found it in the way that all parties saw parliamentary convention as compelling, and that no departure from it had occurred. Any "Socialist experiments"³⁷ by the new government would, under the "constitution", be subject to the assent of the House.

Opposed parties then, are bound into one society by conventions, which at the same time lend continuity to social life. The past endures in the present in other ways too. At this point it is useful to compare the above illustrated concept of convention with examples at some length of the other concepts under consideration. I shall begin with an account of a well-known ritual.

Consider the ceremony of coronation, familiar, at least, in all West European monarchies. This way of inaugurating a reign has changed little in form over the centuries. The anointment is possibly a survival from the imperial rites of Rome, and some argue that the robes with which the British monarch is invested are derived from the dress of

Byzantine emperors. The ceremony contains a wealth of symbolic objects and actions. The new monarch is presented with crown, ring, orb, sceptre, and rod, "betokening", the Royal attributes of Glory, Faith, Sovereignty and Mercy. And, in addition to the symbolism of the objects themselves, their presentation by a clergyman has been the basis of the claim that this part of the coronation symbolises the Church's power to unmake Kings. What it has once given, it can also take back. Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself, thereby emphatically denying that the Church had any such power. In British ceremonial, of course, the clergy still appear in the role of God's representative, acting as intermediaries for the Royal and the Divine.³⁸ Shils and Young moreover write of anointment as being the means by which the monarch is "brought in contact with the divine".³⁹ The Queen "shows her submission before the Archbishop as God's agent, kneeling before him while he implores God to bless her".⁴⁰

Coronation is a ritual, it is a ceremony laden with symbolism. To change the ceremony, as Napoleon did, is to alter meanings and to express new relationships. Bearing that in mind, consider now a less clear-cut example of ritual; the Presidential "election" procedure in contemporary Mexico. The ruling P.R.I. (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) party selects candidates who campaign in an 'election' in which the actual votes are never counted. Yet the form and procedure of balloting are rigidly adhered to. The P.R.I. "candidate" always wins.

Far from regarding this activity as mere cynical

deception on the part of the P.R.I., Vogt and Abel, who also provide a graphic description of a Mexican "polling" day, regard the above process as a ritual of affirmation. Whilst admitting that the "campaign" serves the pragmatic purpose of sounding public opinion, they claim that it also serves the symbolic one of allowing the citizens to confirm that the correct "choice" has been made.⁴¹ The whole procedure is seen as ritual communication with the "magical" and charismatic figure of the presidential "candidate" in whom "the continuity of Mexico's historical and mystical identity resides".⁴²

It is interesting, too, to note that Vogt and Abel surmise that, amongst the Mexican Indians they observed, the procedure was not conceived of as an election at all. Rather, the ballot papers were seen by the Indians as ritual offerings, on behalf of the community to the president, in the way that they offered copal incense as symbolic cigarettes for the gods in expectation of a tangible quid pro quo. The ballot papers are offered for, say, a new bridge, and the "ceremony", although the procedure of "election" is closely followed, thereby acquires a meaning within the culture of the Indians. All this, of course, serves to emphasise the character of ritual as a series of actions which are understood by the community to have a symbolic meaning.

Examples of conventions and the conventional are, as we have seen, less complex. The only point which is not straightforward is that a practice can be conventional by being either, firstly, time honoured, even if of uncertain origin, or secondly, the product of a specific agreement.

An illustration of the first sense of "conventional" is the dress of the city gent. It is often described as his "traditional" garb, but is conventional in the sense of being accepted and upheld by society at large (or at least the affected section). It is generally upheld as the acceptable clothing within a certain group of professions. Such dress, it should be noted, is not a privilege or entitlement pertaining to rank or status. It is also not the product of particular agreement. But this does not make my point here about acting in conformity to an unspoken convention at all analogous to the Lockean notion of "tacit consent". Locke makes the claim that our enjoyment of the protection and benefits bestowed by government amounts to tacit consent to a regime for the duration of that enjoyment. So too, according to Locke:

"... every man that hath any possession, or enjoyment of any part of the dominions of any government, doth thereby give his tacit consent"⁴³

The problem in Locke's work is that the account of tacit consent raises the question of what more is required to constitute the express consent without which, Locke maintains, no one can be a full member of a commonwealth.⁴⁴

The case of the city gentleman is somewhat different. When he wears his pin-stripe and bowler, he is not explicitly exercising any kind of right, and he does not thereby incur any obligation, although his apparel indicates his own estimation of his status. Moreover, by dressing in that manner, he has given his "consent" to nothing other than his own appearance.

The problem of "tacit consent" is the problem of the location of the source of the political obligation

either felt by, or expected of, seventeenth century Englishmen. No such problem arises in the case of conventional dress. Those who actively deny political obligation are in open rebellion against the right of a would-be authority. The unconventionally dressed are usually tolerated as sartorial eccentrics.

An obvious example of a convention in the second sense, in which practices are founded by agreement, are the conventions laying down weights and measures, and their use in appropriate activities. It is, however, worth pausing to note that it is not the convention (agreement) which acts as a standard. Rather, the convention (agreement) lays down the standard to be used, and it is the convention (agreed practice) to use it. My case is illustrated by the following.

In 1783 the French adopted the decimal metric system. As a standard for this system, a platinum rod was marked out in intervals, to be called metres, each equal to one ten-millionth of the earth's polar quadrant according to available determinations of that distance. The new unit of mass - the kilogram - was taken to be the mass of one cubic decimetre of water, and a platinum-iridium cylinder was made as a standard. Later, the determination of the metre as a fraction of the polar quadrant was found to be achievable with a greater accuracy than that embodied in the platinum rod. The definition of the metre was altered accordingly. It simply became the length equal to that marked on the French rod. By 1875 nineteen governments had signed an agreement to maintain and refine standards of measurement. Today, by agreement, the standard metre

is taken to be 1,650,763.73 wavelengths in a vacuum of radiation corresponding to the transition from the $2p_{10}$ to the $5d_5$ energy levels of the krypton 86 atom. Four other basic units of temperature, time, electric current, and luminous intensity have also been agreed, together making up a system of units from which all other units are derived. That the system has standards then, is a matter of a certain piece of alloy, or a multiple of a determinate wavelength being understood to have a particular significance.⁴⁵

To summarize. The units are agreed by convention (agreement), and it is the convention (agreed practice) to use that international System (SI) of units in scientific work (The British government concurred with this agreement in 1967).

That, however, is not all that there is to be said about "convention". For the dictionary definition of "convention" also refers to "a method of artistic treatment" as being a convention. This, I suggest, deserves further consideration.

As an example of the above usage, I shall take a remark by Raymond Watkinson in his account of the Pre-Raphaelites.⁴⁶ He claims that some of those who were to become members of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had a view of themselves as practitioners of a new art which would reject "... as far as possible all the traditional conventions"⁴⁷ By that phrase "traditional conventions", I understand Watkinson to mean what we might call "the conventions prevalent in the Academy of the day".⁴⁸ He means, in other words, the practice transmitted by the

Academy which laid down a number of precepts. If this is the case, then "convention" has been misused. What the Academy set out to convey was not something generally accepted and upheld, something perpetuated in such works as Jonathan Richardson the Elder's "Essay on the Theory of Painting",⁴⁹ in which the different colours to be used for the robes of the various apostles are listed. The Academy had a different objective.

Reynolds, the founding president of the Royal Academy, was the exponent of what was, in so far as it laid down rules, a school of Art. The Academy had a style of its own. Reynolds had views about what was to be painted, and why, and how. According to him, idealised figures and landscapes must appear in warm mellow colours with 'cold' colours relegated to the background.⁵⁰ As we see from their work, the Pre Raphaelites did not share Reynold's views. Moved by their own doctrine of what was meant by "nature" and what constituted its representation, they used the forbidden cold greens and indigos in the foregrounds of their paintings, and paid obsessive attention to detail and textures in a way decried by Reynolds. Still, Reynolds was not simply the advocate (or founder) of a school of art for he did not recommend that any single master be followed. He was not a protagonist of Richardson's time-honoured conventionalism, and he was hardly the advocate of convention in the other sense of agreement embodied in a usage, standard of behaviour, or method of artistic treatment. For none of the works his students were exhorted to study was set up to act as a standard. The artist aims at perfection, not at an agreed formula. There

is no method by which it can be achieved. The student begins by imitation of the perfections of the masters, but only in order to rival and finally surpass them if he can. The more something can be properly called artistic, the less, in my view, it can be called conventional. The sign for an oscilloscope in a circuit diagram is conventional. The paintings by Reynold's pupils are surely not.

The last concept I shall illustrate here is that of orthodoxy. We are all acquainted with disputes about heresy and religious orthodoxy, but the concept is not confined to theology. Examples are also available from the political arena.

In my account of traditional societies and of custom, I argued that those societies have little or no political life. Politics is an activity belonging to a world of change. Nevertheless, political agents can, when faced by new circumstances, claim to be acting upon precepts laid down by acknowledged past masters of the art who are regarded by the agents' colleagues as authorities on what is right or true. They can claim to be orthodox. I shall temporarily overlook questions about justification, political identity, and about the acknowledgement of masters in political thought. My immediate aim is to provide an illustration of what can properly be described as orthodox. Ordinary usage might endorse "conventional" as a synonym for "orthodox", but, as we shall see in the following case, it is possible to provide a typical instance of the orthodox which has little in common with typical cases of the conventional as it has been illustrated in the preceding examples.

The Moscow edition of the "History of the C.P.S.U." describes post-Stalin efforts "to restore Leninist principles".⁵¹ We read of new initiatives which "conformed to the spirit of Leninism", and of Stalinist violations of "Leninist standards of Party life".⁵² Yet if we turn to Stalin's own collected works we find him, in his turn, citing Lenin against Bukharin's alleged "departure from Marxist Leninist theory".⁵³ The Soviet leadership always claims to be "Marxist-Leninist". For example, in the debate about whether the words "something in the nature of a tribute" are appropriate to describe the supertax paid by the peasantry (1929), Stalin claimed that Bukharin objected to the phrase in the belief that the expression was not commonly used in Marxist literature.⁵⁴ He was, in effect then, denying that the phrase was used by the acknowledged authorities. In reply Stalin quotes Lenin's "'Left Wing' Childishness and Petty Bourgeois Mentality (May 1918)" (sic) in which the term "tribute" is used.⁵⁵ He then refers to several other works by Lenin in which the same word occurs. In this way, Bukharin's objection to party policy is portrayed as dissatisfaction with "Leninist" policy. He is thereby alleged to be unorthodox.

Both sides of the argument work within the framework of Marxism and Leninism (which in vol 8 of Stalin's collected works we find defined as a "development of Marxism")⁵⁶ The rest is familiar. Both the kind of fate which later befell Bukharin and the way in which the orthodox find compelling those opinions generally recognized as compelling by the authoritative voices of the faithful are already well-known to readers of Koestler's "Darkness at Noon ..."

Orthodoxy, admittedly, involves shared beliefs rather than practices. Still, the claim to believe must be substantiated by participation in shared practices (see p129) We need only remember that although the difference between "Orthodox" Jews and their fellow Jews is one of belief it is manifested in differences in dress, practices, and observance of the Sabbath. What, after all, are we to surmise of the self-proclaimed Christian who does not pray with his fellow Christians? I have already quoted (p.23) a theologian as saying that such a person might believe in God, but not in the God of the Bible.

The oddity of the term "conventional wisdom" should now be clear too. We cannot simply get together to agree to know something. The orthodox are told what is true by those who claim to be in a position to know. Disputes are conducted within a framework of shared belief. The heretic, such as Galileo, who had criteria of truth which differed from those of the Church, can only be forced to outward conformity.

I have given the above examples in an attempt to distinguish certain concepts, in order to make clear the different ways in which the past can be said to live on in the present. That ordinary usage blurs these distinctions, and can cause confusion, is made clear by the following list of "social rituals" compiled by two anthropologists; "etiquette , the greeting and departures, gestures, manners, and 'social forms'".⁵⁸ As a critic points out in the same volume in which that list appears, to use the term "ritual" for everything on the list does not increase our understanding of any of them.⁵⁹ In fact none are symbolic

acts. It would, therefore, be more helpful to call them "customs", or "conventions", according to the circumstances in which they occur. However, when the Freudians talk of compulsive behaviour as "ritual" rather than habit (e.g. a compulsive hand-washing ritual), doing so draws attention to the fact that such activity is not mere habit. It is, in its way, symbolic. The oddity of the usage arises from the non-social aspect of the activity. Ritual, in less metaphorical usage, is a matter of collective ceremonial and public meaning. Here then, we have the feature which distinguishes habit from custom, ritual, and convention. Habit has no necessary connection with social engagement. It does not govern engagement in a practice. Convention does just this, it is agreement to adopt one of several alternatives. Custom I have already discussed. Orthodoxy differs from the others in being a matter of what is to be believed. "Orthodoxy", "custom", "habit", and "convention", then, are all separately applicable to distinctive sets of circumstances.

This raises again the question about the word "tradition". In my introduction I quoted T.S. Eliot's remark that orthodoxy "supervises" the "perpetual bringing up to date and criticism of tradition". Eliot's use of "tradition" in that observation is a deployment of the word in a sense which is not just a substitution of "tradition" for one or more of the terms I have already discussed. It is a usage denoting something continually adapted. I suggest that it is this sense of the word that should be examined if we are to find a sense of "tradition" appropriate to the ever-changing world of politics and the "traditions", Radical, Liberal, or Conservative whose presence in the world seems to be

generally accepted.⁶⁰

Consider again H.B. Acton's essay "Tradition and some other forms of order".⁶¹ In it he discusses beliefs or practices transmitted from generation to generation, and accepted as authoritative or deferred to without argument. That is what Acton means by "tradition". If we accept his sense of the word, then we are bound to ask how tradition can be in need of supervision or tolerate "perpetual bringing up to date and criticism". Acton's view is clear. He writes that:

"...the pursuit of scientific truth whether for its own sake or for some other end, is bound to be anti-traditional activity, for criticism which is essential to science is the antithesis of tradition".⁶²

Moreover:

"It [science] is apt, also, to be anti-traditional in its effects on society, since changes in beliefs about how things are often lead to changes in the way in which things are done".⁶³

Changes in belief and practices need not always be disruptions of tradition however. Alterations of custom, of ritual, and of convention, and disruptions of orthodoxy, also fall under that description. Indeed, I have mentioned (p.24) that Acton supposes "custom" and "tradition" to be "closely connected if not identical notions". Is there, then, in current usage, a sense of "tradition" which is not merely a synonym for the concepts for which it is often used as a substitute?

Let us consider the discipline taken by Acton to be "anti-traditional", the study of natural science. What I shall suggest is that the practices of the natural scientists furnish examples of a balance between orthodoxy and criticism, in the way proposed by Eliot, (see note 49

to Ch. 1), so that criticism is not the antithesis of tradition, and constant bringing up to date ensures a tradition's vitality.

To claim that tradition informs the work of the scientist is, of course, by no means novel. Michael Polanyi, in his polemical Science, Faith and Society repeatedly associates science and tradition.⁶⁴ The argument in that work is relevant to the subject of this chapter.

Polanyi observes that, because the exhaustive verification of empirical laws is impossible, acceptance or rejection of a falsification resistant theory by scientists is revealed to depend upon what the scientific community accepts to be "beyond reasonable doubt". Scientists, as a community, are the arbiters of what is acceptable to science. For, although one can give rules for good laboratory practice, scientific investigation itself is not solely a matter of following established rules of scientific method. It is clear that much progress in scientific knowledge (a greater comprehensiveness and economy of theory and greater scope of prediction and explanation) has been brought about by the scientist who is prepared to go beyond the prevailing orthodoxy even when there is no clear evidence to decide the matter, and much prejudice in favour of the establishment's view. First, however, each would-be scientist must learn to exercise his skill. He learns by example from existing practice which he must recognize as "authoritative".⁶⁵ He must (at least at first) be convinced that science is fundamentally sound. In Polanyi's words, learning an art in this way is "... to accept an artistic tradition and to

became a representative of it".⁶⁶

And:

"Novices to the scientific profession are trained to share the ground on which their masters stand and to claim this ground for establishing their independence on it. The imitation of their masters teaches them to insist on their own originality which may oppose part of the current teachings of science." 67

Polanyi's comparison of scientific with artistic tradition is apposite. Let us bear in mind here Reynolds's Discourses Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy. In those "Discourses", Reynolds advocated a training in the use of the various media available to the artist, a training analogous to the scientist's training in laboratory technique. He wrote that, whilst students could learn much by study of past masters, the object of the students' imitation of the most admired is to enable them to surpass their "heroes" just as Polanyi's young scientist "shares his master's ground" in order to establish his independence on it".

In accepting Polanyi's view of the professional upbringing of apprentice artists and scientists, I have reservations about his use of the term "trained". Clearly something more than what I have earlier called "training" is involved in the professional upbringing of competent and accomplished scientists and artists. Towards the beginning of this chapter, (p.31) intelligent performances, such as those of the trainee marksman, who learns from each target practice how to shoot better, were contrasted with the habits instilled in the well-drilled performing animal. Here it would be more appropriate, I suggest, to talk of the education, rather than the training,

of young scientists learning to "share" and ultimately establish their independence on their master's ground, or of young artists learning not merely to imitate but to surpass the masters. "Training" is an appropriate term for the learning of accurate marksmanship, laboratory technique, or skilful use of brush and palette.

Polyanyi, however, is talking about initiation into a tradition.

My use of "education" in this restricted way is again an attempt to identify the distinctive use of a word amongst many overlapping usages. "Education" has been used, in this sense, by writers other than myself, and here I shall draw attention to two contributions to a collection of articles entitled Philosophy and Education.⁶⁸ My aim is not to stipulate a definition, but to identify a distinctive usage. Israel Scheffler, the author of the first article I shall consider, has also written about the philosophy of science. The author of the second, Michael Oakeshott, has of course made contributions to (among other things) political philosophy and the history of political thought.

Scheffler distinguishes "teaching" from "propaganda, conditioning, suggestion and indoctrination, which are aimed at modifying the person but strive at all costs to avoid a genuine engagement of his judgement on underlying issues".⁶⁹ He illustrates what he means by "teaching" with a quotation from R.S. Peters. The object of the teacher is "...to try to get others on the inside of a public form of life that he shares and considers worthwhile".⁷⁰

The conclusion of Scheffler's article, a comparison

and critique of various modes of teaching, explicitly relates what he calls "teaching" to a notion of tradition as something continually adapted. He writes that:

"... rationality is embodied in multiple evolving traditions, in which the basic condition holds that issues are resolved with reference to reasons, themselves defined by principles purporting to be impartial and universal".⁷¹

These traditions, he believes, provide an important focus for teaching, but we can talk of teaching a dog a new trick. Obviously, this has nothing to do with traditions of rationality or striving "to get others on the inside of a public form of life". This is why it is important to distinguish terms such as "education", "training", and "drill". Scheffler is writing about what I have called "education", and his use of the word "teaching" is unhelpful. It has no distinctive use. It is applicable not only to education in the above sense, but also to imparting a skill and to drilling an animal to perform a new trick. Now before my account of Scheffler's article also misleads us into thinking that teaching or education is simply a matter of dispensing reasons and principles, I must also record his remark that "... the concrete rules governing inference and procedure in the special sciences" "evolve and grow with the advance of knowledge", to form a "live tradition".⁷²

Here we are reminded of Oakeshott's point that a set of rules has little value unless one is acquainted with the activity of which they are an "abstraction". He says, for example, that:

"... a cookery book presupposes someone who knows how to cook, and its use presupposes someone who already knows how to use it".⁷³

A recipe is of limited use to someone who cannot cook. Such a recipe is not a complete account of, say, the art of making pies. However, if one already knows how to make a pie then a recipe can be a guide to making the kind of pie desired. Still, the complete novice, who follows such a recipe, is more likely to cook something palatable than someone with no instructions about ingredients and their combination. In time - with practice and good advice - the recipe-following novice might become a good cook. For the novice cook here is not unlike the would-be artist who begins by painting by numbers. His application of paint to canvas is directed by the numbered patches which show how the original artist achieved his effect. In this way the novice might learn something about colours and composition. He also produces a visual image at his first attempt. Almost certainly he is in a better position than the beginner who buys canvas, brushes, and paint, and sets to work. Nonetheless, he is not yet an artist, or part of an artistic tradition. It should, then, in my view, be clear why Oakeshott concludes that the object of political education is to impart knowledge of a tradition of political activity in order to transmit to the student not only an understanding but also an invitation to participate in that tradition. Such an objective can only be achieved through enjoyment of a tradition, and from the observation and imitation of elders. The student should engage in historical study of what has happened, and what others have thought about those events in the accepted manner of political thinking. Study of the student's own culture, and of other cultures, should culminate in philosophical reflection upon those traditions.

We can learn, then, to participate in a tradition.

Having participated, we can continue the life of a tradition beyond the demise of those who imparted it.

This continuation of tradition is not a matter of simple repetition or preservation, but of continued innovation. Yet Polanyi believes that scientific inquiry is torn between "discipline" and "originality", and that this model of inquiry can be generalised to "other modes of discovery in literature, in the arts, in politics".^{74,75} I suspect that what Polanyi means here by "discipline" is what I have called orthodoxy; he is unlikely to mean that standards of rigour and honesty are in conflict with originality. I believe that this point is important, because consideration of the tensions between orthodoxy and originality brings to light some of the most interesting features of natural science, and thereby of traditions in the sense in which we can talk of traditions of natural science.

Oakeshott observes that:

"... The truth is that only a man who is a scientist can formulate a scientific hypothesis; that is, an hypothesis is not an independent invention capable of guiding scientific inquiry, but a dependent supposition which arises as an abstraction from within the already existing scientific activity. Moreover, even when the specific hypothesis has in this matter been formulated, it is inoperative as a guide to research without constant reference to the traditions of scientific inquiry from which it was abstracted".⁷⁶

Oakeshott is here, I suspect, more concerned to attack "rationalism in politics" than to write about science as involving tradition, but the point is, I think, still relevant. The individual scientist's work arises out of a tradition of such work. Moreover, is it not also true that the scientist cannot reject or ignore scientific opinion

totally and yet remain a scientist? Where he is in dispute with one or more of them, surely he must ultimately submit to the judgement of his peers. Yet, if his work is found wanting, it might be that his successors, at a later date will have good reason to prefer his conceptions to those of his contemporaries. In other words, his view can, in the light of new circumstances, become tenable within the natural sciences.

Polanyi makes the related point that:

"... the premises of science on which all scientific teaching and research rest are the beliefs held by scientists on the general nature of things."⁷⁷

Those who do not share that understanding have little to contribute to science. A scientist, and a witch-doctor, for example, share no common ground whereupon their systems can be compared. Conversely, scientists can have little to contribute to rival engagements. For one who seeks enlightenment outside the traditions of natural science, say through astrology, an achievement such as Newton's formulation of the equation: $f = \frac{G M_1 M_2}{r^2}$ which defines the forces between planets in terms of their masses and the distances between them is not an achievement of any great significance. To the astrologer, planetary masses, and the distances separating them, are not important facts about the heavenly bodies, and, the 'forces' that interest him are not at all like the forces studied in dynamics, which are defined in terms of mass, space and time. The findings of astrologers are probably of as little serious interest to astronomers. No innovator in the casting of horoscopes is likely, by virtue of his achievement, to gain recognition by the Royal Society. The

scientific community then, is, I suggest, self-evaluating. The inspiration of an Einstein, who modified the Newtonian meanings of "mass" and "energy" in order to side-step contemporary theoretical difficulties, could only be authenticated within the science of physics itself.

Considerations such as these make T.S. Kuhn's "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions"⁷⁸ plausible as a sociology of the scientific community. It was Kuhn who drew attention, in his 1969 postscript to the "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" to the way in which:

"To an extent unparalleled in most other fields they [members of a scientific community] have undergone similar educations and professional initiations, in the process they have absorbed the same technical literature and drawn many of the same lessons from it".⁷⁹

Scientific specialists see themselves as, and are seen as, the people "uniquely responsible for the pursuit of a set of shared goals, including the training of their successors",⁸⁰ That is, practising scientists, as "the producers and validators of scientific knowledge; derive a sense of community from their shared activity."⁸¹ Indeed, sociological research has shown that periodicals, and the publication of papers in them, play a major role in scientists' identification of themselves as members of a specialised community.⁸² If a periodical identifies itself with a certain discipline, a contributor to that periodical will usually identify himself with the same discipline. Acceptance of a paper by a specialist journal which is read by workers in a given field leads to recognition of the author as a contributor to that field, and he tends to identify with it. It has even been suggested (Hagstrom)

that establishment of a journal "devoted to a field with its own distinctive goals and standards" is a precondition of the development of a "self conscious community of specialists".⁸³

This sketch of scientists and innovation in the natural sciences enables the construction of a model of tradition in which "tradition" is not merely synonymous with another concept. That this will not be merely an exercise in stipulative definition is, I hope, already clear from the works of figures such as Eliot and Polanyi. What still remains to be shown, however, is the appropriateness of this concept within the study of political thought.

Earlier discussion has already set certain conditions to be fulfilled by the model.

Firstly, if it is not to be simply a synonym for "custom", then tradition must involve self conscious innovation and change (perhaps with a framework of orthodoxy, as hinted by Eliot). This condition also distinguishes tradition from convention. For conventions, such as those defining the metre, do not change at all. They are merely replaced by new conventions. Here my second condition can be introduced.

Secondly, there must be continuity through change if the tradition is to have any identity at all. The pietists' lack of independent standards of interpretation, after all, brings them face to face with theological isolation.

Thirdly, an account of tradition must provide us with a criterion for deciding whether or not a novel conception is an innovatory contribution to a given tradition.

I shall now attempt to construct the model. My first condition was that traditions must involve change. It will, I think, be agreed that originality and innovation are vital

to the progress of science. Yet, as we have seen, that novelty cannot be said to be a contribution to scientific progress if it is never acknowledged by scientists as an authentic achievement within a particular branch of science. The pietists' theology was a private one lasting only as long as the individual. Traditions encompass both duration and change. Here, then, we can take up Barth's suggestion that an alternative to pietistic subjectivism is afforded by appeal to a community of practitioners. For, by agreeing with Barth, we also avoid the problem arising from Leavis's conception of tradition; that the unity of tradition, the choice of what belongs together, depends upon the aesthetic sense of the critic himself. If this point is generalised to cover all traditions, then we can state that no one practitioner, solely by virtue of his own opinions, and actions, can claim to be an authority or the author of an authentic achievement within a tradition. The justification for generalizing this point should, I have concluded, be clear from my remarks about education and initiation into traditions. The genuineness of any such claim to authenticity can only be established within the relevant tradition. We tend to be sceptical about any claim to have founded a new science, and, indeed, no tradition can be founded upon an Urtyp except in its own popular mythology. It is the tradition that in retrospect licences the claim of that work to be an achievement of the tradition. Isolated, it would simply be the obsession of an eccentric. Such foundation is, as we have seen, a feature, rather, of many conventions. (Of course, where conventions are concerned, any founding act must meet with the agreement of all parties to the convention).

All traditions, I suggest, must exhibit this circularity in matters of authentication. No putative founding event or achievement can, by itself, authenticate a tradition. Whether a scientist chooses to claim as a foundation Newton's Law of Gravity, the devising of relativity theory or Copernicus's or Aristarchus's heliocentric theories, their claim to significance as scientific achievements is set within the discipline of science itself. Each recognized achievement becomes part of the tradition, helping us to identify it. A good scientific training is a sine qua non of the maintenance of the scientific traditions, just as good training must be the basis of the maintenance of any tradition. Its continuation depends ultimately, however, upon the ability of some of its practitioners to produce acceptable innovation. This ability is the product of talent, and education, conceived as the acquisition of an understanding of the recognised achievements of the tradition. If we also accept that an innovator's work is authenticated as an achievement within a tradition by his peers in the tradition, then it should be clear that he must identify with that community and tradition. For the appeal to the community pre-supposes that the innovator can identify his community. In other words, a connection can, I think, be established between traditions, which in many ways are difficult to identify, and associations of persons, which are more easily identifiable.

Traditions must have innovation. There must also be continuity. That continuity is provided by the ongoing community of practising (and innovating) scientists. Without them and their continual innovations, scientific knowledge would simply become what I have called an orthodoxy.

If science is to continue to thrive then scientists should always be found regretting the total success of the reception of their own innovations, in the way that W.J. Sollas complained of a meeting of the International Congress of Anthropologists in Geneva that:

"some views which were admittedly heretical when originally put forward have since ceased to be so and have acquired indeed a dangerously orthodox complexion".⁸⁴

Those of solely orthodox opinion can be a hindrance to innovation. I have written, however, of orthodoxy as "supervising", not preventing, innovation. What is authentication of innovation by fellow practitioners but orthodoxy, accepted belief, supervising innovation? This, I shall try to show in the rest of this thesis, is a vital relationship within traditions of political discourse.

Already my discussion of orthodoxy has displayed one aspect of the relationship. I portrayed Bukharin as accepting Stalin's opinion that his utterances were unorthodox, because Stalin was leader of the party which Bukharin had joined and fought for. Bukharin acquiesced in his fate in 1929 because that fate was decided by the Marxists with whom he identified. He was a Marxist, and accepted the decision of Marxists. One suspects that the response of the members of a real "right opposition" group, who did not find Marxism at all compelling, would have been less tame.

Group identity is, of course, of paramount importance in the political arena: effective action demands cooperation and the rallying of support. Bearing this in mind, I shall argue that it is a mistake to try to give an account of identity and recognition within a tradition of political thought, without careful consideration of the affiliations of the politically active. The task of showing at length

how contributions to political thinking can be said to form a tradition, however, requires a separate discussion. (see Chapters III & IV).

The point about participants in traditions having a sense of identity as members also seems to shed more light on the notion of orthodoxy. It is on the one hand, I have said, a matter of belief. On the other hand, I have also remarked that the orthodox must substantiate their claim to believe by participation in shared practices when action is appropriate. My above observations, and the sociological findings I have used to illustrate them, show how this can be the case. The orthodox display their orthodoxy, whether in their garb and observances on the Sabbath in the case of orthodox Jewry, or in the Jew-baiting of the National Socialists. What is gained by this is the recognition, by the relevant community, which validates the individual's membership, and affirms the sense of identity all have as members of a community of believers. What is shown is a commitment. For, after all, correct recital of a catechism does not alone distinguish the true believer from the imposter.

To summarize: I have argued that self-conscious participants in a tradition of activity recognise one another as such, and thereby have a sense of identity. I have also tried to show that it is not the case that such traditions are resistant to innovation.

We should not, however, conclude from my discussion of natural science, and its mention in passing of the ideas of Thomas Kuhn, that traditions as they are here conceived are a matter of paradigms and the alleged authority of paradigms. It has been pointed out by one writer that in science, we have a "carefully circumscribed investigation

which is the paradigm".⁸⁵ Now, I am seeking to use the term "tradition" to describe a number of practices besides that of natural scientists, in particular, the practices of politics, and making political utterances. The practice of politics is not an investigation; "... the notion of a paradigm gets no grip at all".⁸⁶ Moreover, members of different traditions of political discourse, say, Conservatives and Liberals, do respond to one another in political controversy, but paradigms - notoriously - are incommensurable. The nuclear physicist and the alchemist may rebut but cannot communicate with one another. Traditions of political discourse, I suggest, then, are not paradigms, and are not governed by paradigms.

Here I have attempted to elaborate a notion of tradition which could be applicable to the ever-changing world of politics, a notion of tradition for which there is no synonym. In my view, however, it would be unwise to dismiss without further argument, the claims of those who insist on the usefulness to the historian of political thought of the notion of paradigms, or of "traditions" which, unlike those I have described, are a prescriptive authority.

III

TRADITIONS PARADIGMS AND POLITICS

The authors of a number of articles, in various publications, have asserted that the history of political thought should be an "historical" study. What is usually meant by this is, that, the so-called "Great Texts" should not be studied in isolation from their "historical contexts". This view is not without opponents, however. It has, for example, been argued that the study of the history of political thought is best thought of as a practice¹. Conceived in this way, the study should not, it is argued, be presumed to exclude philosophical analysis, discussion of a text's internal consistency, or indeed anachronistic analogy. The practice has not, after all, developed as an exclusively historical study. For that reason, it has been suggested that the subject's best prospects for further development lie in increased awareness of the past and the present states of the practice, rather than the production of guidelines for writing "history of political thought". Those who seek to prescribe a method for the historian of political thought must, therefore, face not only the criticisms forwarded by the proponents of rival "methods", but also those put forward by objectors to the prescriptive enterprise per se.

Consideration of the work of the methodologists is, nevertheless, instructive. Here I shall examine Professor Pocock's argument that we should study the "means" an author had of "saying anything at all", if we are to "understand what he meant to say".² On this view, what

are important are the so-called paradigms said to govern political speech. In Pocock's words:

"The historian's first problem, then, is to identify the "language" or "vocabulary" with and within which that author operated and to show how it functioned paradigmatically to prescribe what he might say and how he might say it ..." 3

I shall not, however, proceed to discuss at length what Pocock means by paradigms which, he claims, impose limits on what an author can say. For, in the essay where Pocock makes this claim, there reigns confusion which "renders ... elaboration nugatory".⁴ Pocock asserts that "men think by communicating language systems". This cannot be the case. For we communicate by language. Indeed, Pocock's theory of paradigms takes its shape as he confuses "meaning" and "interpretation", "speech" and "language" and "utterances". He also writes of "the varieties of the political functions which languages can perform ..." ⁶ The only meaning I believe he could communicate by this phrase is in the sense: "that can be performed within a given language or languages"; or "which can be 'performed' by making certain utterances". By speaking a language, people engage in various practices. There may be language games, but languages are not the players.

It is, however, a little unfair, in the case of Pocock's account of paradigms, to put such weight on the objection, namely, that a scientific paradigm is an investigation carried out in a particular way (see below), and that politics is not an investigation. It is a practice. This objection is not invalid, and it is also admissible to claim that competing political contentions are understood by rivals in the debating chamber in a way in which rival

paradigms cannot be, but is not clear that Pocock intends "paradigm" to be understood in that way.

Following criticism of his highly ambiguous use of "paradigm" in the 1962 edition of The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,⁷ Kuhn added a postscript⁸ in which he states that he wishes to retain two distinct usages of the term. One sense he rejects, for the purposes of exposition, in favour of the phrase "disciplinary matrix".⁹ This denotes a scientific community's shared commitments, definitions and models. This notion, "disciplinary matrix", seems to be the sense of "paradigm" which allows one to assert that the paradigm prevailing at any given time is the discipline.

Kuhn also wanted to use "paradigm" to mean "shared examples" or "exemplars".¹⁰ Pocock makes it clear¹¹ that he is impressed by this latter usage which highlights the way in which the practitioner learns to see a problem as like one already encountered, and therefore soluble by an adaptation of a previously used formula. For example the definition:

$F = ma$ where $F =$ force $m =$ mass $a =$ acceleration

is applicable to a freely falling body as:

$$mg = \frac{md^2s}{dt^2} \quad g = \text{acceleration due to gravity}$$

$s =$ distance $t =$ time.

and so to a pendulum as:

$$mgsin\theta = - \frac{mld^2\theta}{dt^2} \quad \theta = \text{deflection of bob}$$

$l =$ length of pendulum.

Unfortunately, Pocock does not quite make it clear what the analogy between "verba" and "exempla" is supposed to be. He states only that his "verbal" paradigm is an "historical event or phenomenon to which there can be many responses"¹²

In view of the other criticisms, given above, of his account of language, it does not seem useful to speculate further about how such a paradigm might function.

It is, perhaps, more useful to consider the critique that J.D. Rayner advances in opposition to Pocock's view.¹³ This argument is an examination of ideological perception as a form of utterance. My purpose here is to arrive at what I believe to be a better understanding of that mode of discourse, thereby offering access to an assessment of the merits of Pocock's methodology and of my own account of "tradition".

I have already suggested that Conservatives and Liberals can engage in meaningful debate about a political issue, in a way that the alchemist and the nuclear physicist cannot debate, say, the nature of matter and its transmutation. In what follows, I shall take Conservatism and Liberalism to be ideologies in the sense given to that word in The Form of Ideology. My concern here will be with ideological utterance, in so far as it will be my task to show how contributors to a tradition of discourse can be accepted as authentically contributing to it, and how they, through such recognition, can identify themselves with the tradition.

What I shall first have to attempt to show, then, is that the kind of identification and acceptance that I have associated with contribution to a tradition is possible amongst participants in ideological discourse, and that contributors to a particular ideology, say to Liberal thinking, have a prime claim to be considered as constituting a tradition of political discourse.

When arguing that one of the two senses of "paradigm" distinguished above is inappropriate to politics, I made the point that politics is not an investigation. We should not, then, expect different ideologies to be simply rival descriptions which merely differ in the emphasis that they put on the various aspects of political experience. It is not uncommon for philosophically minded critics to claim that the terminology of political debate gives rise to statements which are not susceptible to falsification.¹⁴ We need not conclude from this, that such statements are negligible. Certainly, in the way they are used by the ideologist, terms such as "alienation", "capitalism" or "liberty" lack a universal rule of application. Yet they are not invariably meaningless. Their sense, in a particular work, can be given by the examples which accompany the use of the term. It is by his use of such terminology, when accompanied by judicious use of metaphor, that the ideologist offers a characterisation of the world.

Consider the following example. In a speech in Siberia in January 1928 Stalin gave his attention to "Grain procurements and the prospects for the development of agriculture".¹⁵ He described as "sabotage"¹⁶ (elsewhere as "machinations")¹⁷ the actions of the wealthier peasants (Kulaks) who were widely believed to be speculating in grain. They were suspected of storing surplus grain after the good harvest and waiting for an upturn in the market. The motivation of such activity is rational in terms of classical economics, but Stalin expresses his disapproval by using the word "speculate" in the way in which others might use the word "profiteer".

In the following April, Stalin declared that forcing up the price of grain would not have been in the interests of -

and indeed would have strained the loyalty of- the poorer peasants. Such peasants could not afford not to sell their crop immediately after the harvest, and so would be forced to sell in a buyer's market, only to buy again at a high price the following seed-time.

He then "explained" that:

"That is why the Party had to retaliate to the blow of the Kulak speculators, aimed at forcing up grain prices, with a counter-blow that would knock out of the Kulaks and speculators all inclination to menace the working-class and our Red Army with hunger." 18

Stalin devoted much attention to the spring grain crisis of 1928 because in his ideological picture its appearance "cannot be considered a matter of chance".¹⁹ It was an "action"²⁰ of the capitalists against the Soviet Government. This, according to Stalin was the "class background"²¹ of the crisis. Elsewhere we read of "the offensive against the Kulaks"²², of "alliance", of "victory"²³ and that the "grain procurement crisis" was "... the fight of the capitalist elements of the countryside against the Soviet Government".²⁴ The recurrent military metaphor gives to the drab events of the farmlands the colours of struggle. That struggle, moreover, is class struggle.

The peasant response to an increase in supply, or at least the response of those peasants with the wherewithal to manipulate the market, is integrated by Stalin into the general view which makes it clear that the history of past societies has been the history of a class struggle to culminate in the victory of the proletariat. We can now see the Kulaks as "...the class whose economic principle is the exploitation of the working class ..."²⁵ Which is to understand them as both dangerous and ultimately doomed.

Their demise is to be hastened by collectivizing farms in order to diminish their control of agriculture. If we do not find that means-end relationship compelling, however, then the conclusion drawn by Stalin can have no force. That conclusion comes at the end of a mass of statistics about collective farms. According to Stalin:

"They show ... that the process of eliminating the Kulaks as a class in our country is going full steam ahead". 26

Neither "class" nor "exploitation" are likely to be referential terms any Kulak would deploy in his market transactions. They are part of the Stalinist account of the "true nature" of Kulak dealings. If we want to understand what, for example, a "class" is here, we must look to instances of the use of the term by Stalin. Clearly we cannot simply define a "class" as:

"A division or order of society according to status; a rank or grade of society".

or, what is "now the leading sense",

"A number of individuals (persons or things) possessing common attributes and grouped together under a general or "class" name, a kind, sort, division". 27

Neither definition tells us about struggle, ultimate victory or the abolition of all "classes", and neither definition helps us to decide whether or not Kulaks exist as a class in the sense of Stalin's speech.

Accounts such as that given by Stalin of the "grain procurement crisis" are not good or bad descriptions. They are depictions of the world. As such, they are susceptible to judgements of appropriateness, but accepting a depiction as appropriate can involve more than passive acknowledgement.

I have tried to show that natural science can be conceived of as a tradition (or set of related traditions) which thrives on criticism and consequent innovation. I have noted, too, the way in which a scientist's identity as a contributor to a tradition depends upon acceptance by fellow practitioners, an acceptance which might involve the publication of his work in the group's journal. I suggest that publication in a shared journal is not merely an endorsement of the contributor's work, as meeting requirements of honesty and accuracy, but also an affirmation that that is the kind of work that members of the group engage in (should engage in). A statistical analysis and correlation of the alignment of planets with say, bird migration paths would be admissible in a journal of zoology whereas any attempts at correlation between the alignments of those planets and say, the characters of statesmen born at the relevant times is unlikely to be published there.

Ideology is not science, however. What is important, in the case of ideology, is not publication in, say, the official Liberal journal, or even an endorsement in the form of a preface written by a leading party member. If an understanding is acceptable to Liberals, that is, if they deem its characterizations to be an appropriate depiction of their circumstances, then they themselves will begin to articulate their experiences and express their aspirations, and dreads, in those terms. If the official Liberal journal publishes articles which self-professed Liberals do not find acceptable in the above way, it will lose its readership (or gain a new one), and cease to be the Liberal journal or the identity of Liberalism will have changed.

A leading Liberal, who appears to endorse an account which fellow Liberals fail to find appropriate, may either have made an error of political judgement, or abandoned his Liberal credentials. Consider the case of the young Mussolini and the Italian Socialists. His office as editor of "Avanti" , put him in a position analogous to that of the leading Liberal given above. His last actions as editor of "Avanti" threatened the newspaper with the same fate as that of my hypothetical Liberal journal.

Cassels describes "Avanti" as "the official voice of Italian Socialism".²⁸ In 1914 its editor, Mussolini, wrote an editorial favouring intervention on the side of the "Entente" states. Immediately afterwards, he was dismissed. In Cassels's words:

"Not content with breaching the principle of international proletarian solidarity, Mussolini flirted with the argument most despised by Socialists - that of national honor ...(sic)"²⁹

Mussolini's crime was to write about the situation in Europe by characterising Italy's neutrality, not in terms of standing aloof from a conflict inevitably involving war of proletarian against proletarian, but in terms of Italy's failure to play a role in a great historical drama. Whilst this kind of talk was anathema to the Partito socialista italiana (P.S.I), it was compatible with the viewpoint then occupied by the syndicalist socialists, who characterised the war as a struggle between the international Right (Germany and the Left (Anglo French)). It is not difficult to see why the P.S.I., who viewed the syndicalists with the disfavour due to a rival, dismissed Mussolini from the editorship of "Avanti" and terminated his party membership.

There was little else the P.S.I. could have done. If Mussolini had been allowed to continue writing editorials in the same vein, "Avanti" would have become the journal of the syndicalists. Either the readership would have changed, as P.S.I. members cancelled subscriptions in disgust or confusion, thereby losing the P.S.I. leadership its means of communication with its members.³⁰ Or (what was no doubt uppermost in the minds of the P.S.I. leadership) the same P.S.I. rank and file readership, now exposed to the syndicalist view in the journal they were accustomed to read might have begun to see that syndicalist view as appropriate to their own situation, and might have forsaken the P.S.I.³¹

Now in my discussion of 'tradition', I argue that the production of acceptable innovation in a tradition can be a result of an education conceived as the acquisition of an understanding of the recognised achievements of that tradition. In those remarks on education, I also wrote of the young scientist or artist being initiated into the tradition in which he had been educated, in the sense that he has become a person the identity of whose activity is informed by it. Here, I think, we can see more clearly the sense in which education in the ways of a tradition of political discourse is an initiation into its currently accepted language and practices. Oakeshott wrote of the way in which the student arrives at an understanding of his political tradition through enjoyment of it, and through the observation and imitation of his masters.³²

An "invitation" to participate in the tradition is, in this way, extended to the student. His learning to deploy the language of the tradition, in appropriate circumstances,

is the student's initiation into it. As an initiate, he is recognized by other participants in the tradition as an authentic voice and contributor.

Now my aim in this discussion has been to distinguish so-called "linguistic paradigms" from traditions of political discourse. I have attempted to indicate the incoherence of Pocock's account. I have also attempted to outline an alternative account of political discourse, an account compatible with the notion of a tradition which can thrive on criticism and innovation. Having criticised Pocock's methodology with regard to paradigms, I have little to say about his well-known essay "Time, Institutions and Action - on Traditions and their Understanding".³³ For in that essay Pocock uses the term "tradition" to refer to what, in an earlier discussion (Ch. 2), I have argued is more properly called "custom". He writes for example that:

" A tradition in its simplest form, may be thought of as an indefinite series of repetitions of an action, which on each occasion is performed on the assumption that it has been performed before; its performance is authorised - though the nature of the authorisation may vary widely - by the knowledge, or ³⁴ the assumption of previous performance".

His comments in the introduction to the collection, in which the above quoted essay appears, are equally revealing. He writes, of the final essay of the collection, that the essay was added:

"... since all the historical material employed and the very concept of paradigm change itself presupposes an inherited or transmitted mental and linguistic structure and a consequent - one might say dependent - willingness to criticise and explain that structure (or tradition)..." ³⁵

There is a suggestion here that paradigms and traditions are identical, or at least that traditions are paradigms. In the

last (and highly metaphorical) essay of the collected volume, however, Pocock writes of "classical man's attitudes towards his paradigms and traditions",³⁶ leaving the reader with the impression that paradigms are the original exemplar or Urtyp upon which tradition is based.

I have argued, of course, that traditions, in the sense in which that concept is applicable to thought about the changing world of politics, cannot be based upon any kind of Urtyp. Moreover, if the above account of the form of ideological language is not mistaken, then we must note that, if paradigms which are 'exemplars' as Kuhn uses the word, are verbal (as Pocock insists in his footnote, but fails to make clear how this could be),³⁷ then the notion of the verbal exemplar has no obvious application to ideological works. My reason for saying this is as follows: Terms like "class" are given substance by examples which help us to understand what is involved in the notion of a class, but successive ideologists, within a tradition, give different illustrations. Their characterisations are depictions of a changed and changing world. In other words, any analogy between, say, the appearance of the words "class" "revolution", and "bourgeoisie" in their various relationships in the works of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and others, and the reformulations in different problem situations of $F = ma$ as given by Kuhn, to illustrate his use of "exemplar", is destroyed when we remember that all the expressions given by Kuhn are mathematical equivalents. That is, they are equivalent in a way that the visions elaborated by Marx and his successors never could be. Those ideologists are part of a tradition, in the way that Galileo, Newton and Einstein are part of a tradition. They do not share a paradigm.

Pocock's arguments have, nevertheless, influenced a number of other accounts of traditions in political writing. One such account, containing a view of tradition with superficial similarities to my own, has been put forward by Andrew Lockyer in an article entitled "'Traditions' as context in the History of Political Theory".³⁸ My account differs from Lockyer's on a number of important points, to which I shall here draw attention.

Lockyer's stated aim is to relate a method for the study of past ideas to a philosophy of history, his object being, "... to develop an idea of 'context' which is founded on an adequate philosophy of history".³⁹

The required unit of context is, he contends, provided by "intellectual traditions".⁴⁰ Lockyer's start is not very promising, however, for he adds in a footnote, without himself remedying the defect, that the term "tradition" "... has not as yet been subject to critical appraisal".⁴¹ He then goes on to cite three articles; one by B.A. Haddock⁴² and two by Professor Pocock.⁴³ Haddock is credited with referring to traditions, and with devoting "some remarks to the use of the concept".⁴⁴ The "fullest discussion of traditions", according to Lockyer,⁴⁵ has appeared in Pocock's writings, especially the two cited. I have already discussed the first of these, "Time, Institution and Action". The second bears the title "The history of political thought—a methodological enquiry".⁴⁶ In this latter essay Pocock writes of the history of political thought as being "established" and "flourishing" on terms which "appear to be conventional and traditional".⁴⁷ I shall not dwell here on the distinction between "convention" and "tradition";

Professor Pocock stipulates what he means by a "traditional form of study"⁴⁸ with the assertion that:

"Simply, there is a body of thinkers to whom we have grown into the habit of paying attention, and a number of viewpoints from which they appear interesting to us".⁴⁹

Tradition is not a matter of habit (or convention); by following Pocock with insufficient scepticism Lockyer seems to have accepted a shaky foundation for his argument about tradition. Nevertheless he criticises writers such as Oakeshott and Acton from whose opinions he feels his own to diverge. Doing so will, he believes, locate his "own position within an intellectual tradition".⁵⁰ Here, at least, is a clue to Lockyer's own notion of tradition. He writes too that:

"An intellectual tradition is usually, though not always a critical tradition; which means it will be embraced with some degree of self-consciousness, and this makes a difference. Although all traditions have a propensity for self-modification, this will be overt and consciously performed in a critical intellectual tradition. It will therefore incorporate conscious innovation, involve partial acceptance and be an unevenly distributed inheritance, it will nevertheless exhibit the features of prescription, continuity and community".⁵¹

Amongst intellectual traditions, we can, according to Lockyer, distinguish "ideological traditions" or ("more neutrally") "traditions of thought" from "traditions of argument or discourse".⁵² The former "embody a shared set of beliefs and values".⁵³ The latter "centre on a related set of questions or common concerns".⁵⁴ "Traditions of thought", he claims, "imply a degree of consensus not shared in traditions of discourse but both crucially involve 'authority', 'continuity' and 'linguistic community'".⁵⁵

Lockyer takes Pocock as his immediate source in arguing that intellectual traditions are "intellectualizing traditions", that is, they are "abstractions" from experience.⁵⁶ These traditions are intended to provide a unit of context for the writing of an intellectual history founded on an allegedly "adequate" philosophy of history (Lockyer subscribes to a philosophy of history influenced by the work of R.G. Collingwood and of Hegel). In other words, Lockyer concludes that traditions of thought and of discourse are "historical subjects". Traditions provide the identity through change which makes the historical narrative possible. This last point I am inclined to agree with, but what is a tradition? In his concluding paragraph Lockyer writes that, in his essay he has:

"...not attempted to define the limits of what is to count as a tradition, nor... stipulated necessary or sufficient conditions for locating an author within a tradition, because these are matters for historical scholarship." 57

Now surely historians can only tell us when the concept "tradition" has been used by past authors, just as it is the case that lexicographers can only tell us how it has been used. It is the role of the philosopher, as methodologist to determine the logic of its deployment in historical investigation. Lockyer's own article commends the concept to historians, but it is not itself born of "historical scholarship". Lockyer should at least have made clear what it is he is recommending. There is something odd about commending to historians the use of the concept "tradition" without attempting to investigate its reference. As it appears in the article quoted, the limited account of "tradition" given by Lockyer seems fragmentary and lacking

in coherence.

Furthermore, it is not clear how much of Pocock's account of paradigms Lockyer finds acceptable. He seems to accept that "paradigms" are "authoritative". So, he says, are traditions. He does not make clear how discussion of Oakeshott and Acton locates him (as he says it does) within an intellectual tradition, and so presumably subjects him to some "authority" (see definitions on page 78). How does his critique of an argument put Lockyer in any such relationship? And with whom? Is the argument therefore vitiated by being governed by some authority?

An author's conclusions might lead the persuaded to accept some authors as authorities. His choice of subjects for his critique does, I think, also provide a significant clue to the tradition he identifies with. Yet, of course, the notion that authority can simply order conviction is absurd. If a pope were to order Roman Catholics to believe the moon to be made of green cheese his own fitness to be a religious authority would be called into question. Belief is prior to authority in so far as it is the understanding that popes are divinely appointed which makes them an authority on religious matters for Roman Catholics.

Lockyer's self-identification with a particular tradition, if it were based on acceptance of an authority, would also leave it open to those of another tradition simply to regard his arguments as either irrelevant or as a fit subject for rebuttal; they would not share his fundamental presuppositions.

Part of the above problem of paradigms and authority arises from the dichotomy made at the beginning of Lockyer's essay between "ideological traditions" and "traditions of argument or discourse". Haddock, who also claims to be inspired

by Collingwood, argues, in the very same article cited by Lockyer, that:

"... if we direct our attention to the concept of political activity we will have established the possibility of an unbroken continuum between the study of political institutions and political philosophy as traditionally conceived".⁵⁸

And that:

"The history of political thought becomes a history of ideas that begins in the closest relationship with political practice and extends on an unbroken continuum at every greater levels of generality until it is identical with political philosophy in the traditional sense".⁵⁹

I shall not rehearse Haddock's arguments here. Lockyer does not mention them. Intuitively, it seems probable, that, although "ideological traditions" "imply a degree of consensus not shared in traditions of discourse" (Lockyer)⁶⁰, if the difference between them (as Haddock claims) is a matter of degree, then the two alleged kinds of tradition are unlikely to be wholly discrete entities with no overlap. Lockyer, no doubt, sees himself as participating in a "tradition of discourse" rather than an "ideological tradition", for he does not always "share beliefs" with Oakeshott. However, it is not consensus that gives even ideological traditions their continuity. That continuity is given by the presence of an ongoing association of practitioners who acknowledge successive contributions as authentic by adopting their various characterisations and views of the world. Moreover, the continuity of traditions, other than ideological traditions, also depends upon the validation of contributions by present practitioners. After all, a Lutheran's opinion on a matter of biblical exegesis would not

automatically become part of the Catholic tradition simply because it involved the same subject matter. Acceptance by leading Catholics is required first. This is what is so odd about Lockyer's belief that arguing against Oakeshott places him in a tradition. We must wait to see whether or not, and by whom, Lockyer's argument is taken up.

Intertwined with the above is, in my view, a separate dichotomy confusion. Political thought, I wish to maintain, is not a matter of "abstraction" from experience. Lockyer criticises Oakeshott's notion of theory as "abridgement" of a tradition of experience, but does not make clear how the notion of abstraction differs from it.⁶¹ He believes, nevertheless, that the fact that "there is always more than one way to abridge a tradition of experience - or that there is more than one intellectual tradition to be found within it" "points to a weakness" in Oakeshott's theory.⁶² However, the works of Engels and Herbert Spencer are witness to the way in which experience of mid-nineteenth century England can provide subject matter for two writers whom few would include in the same tradition. Of course, if all that is required to locate oneself in a tradition, as Lockyer seems to believe, is to argue against a certain set of people rather than against anyone else, then we must place Fitzjames Stephens into the same tradition as J.S. Mill, although one is generally acknowledged to be a Conservative, and the other a Liberal.

What has gone wrong here is that an ideological account is not an abridgement or an abstraction from experience. It is not a partial description; it is not a description at all. Ideological accounts characterise an experience for the hostile and "describe" it for the initiate. No ideological

characterisation can be equally illuminating to everyone in a political society to which controversy is indigenous. Lockyer writes of "Theories" as if they were simply contributions to a continuous rational argument in which all may participate. Some works, of what is usually called political theory, perhaps come near to being "theories" in this sense. But they all, I suggested above, lie on the same continuum as ideological thinking. None attain the character Lockyer ascribes to them. Any work which goes beyond the philosophical task of clarifying the concepts of political discourse in order to indulge in talk about how communities are to be organized must presuppose an account of what is good for mankind. It must have a view about "human nature". It has then ceased to be a theory in the sense of an argument of general validity. For its fundamental premises can be rejected by anyone with a rival view of "human nature". Disputes between the two are conducted, not as arguments, but as mutual rebuttals. And, therefore, the question of who acknowledges the authenticity of such "theories" is vital to their location within a tradition. Talk of a "Western Tradition"⁶³ is less helpful than the investigation of those more clearly identifiable traditions which constitute the diverse experience of European man, whose existence Lockyer also hints at in his conclusion.

The problem of how to identify contributions to a tradition is, then, an important one. It is also a problem which has presented difficulties to other writers than Lockyer. Much of the first part of Lockyer's essay is devoted to a critique of the work of Quentin Skinner. It is not my intention here to add to the large body of literature provoked by Skinner's views on the study of texts and contexts. My

interest centres, rather, on some remarks made about tradition in Skinner's essay "Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action".⁶⁴ These remarks relate to the placing of authors within traditions.

In the belief that his "attempt to focus on the conventions of political argument tends to culminate in a study of genres and traditions of discourse ... " Skinner points out that his approach avoids a "weakness" which is "endemic" where "languages" or "traditions" are the historian of political thought's unit of study.⁶⁵ This weakness seems to comprise two difficulties. The first is that:

"... if we merely focus on the relations between the vocabulary used by a given writer and the traditions to which he may appear connected by his use of this vocabulary, we may become insensitive to instances of irony, obliquity, and other cases in which the writer may seem to be saying something other than what he means".⁶⁶

This, however, is only the "obvious danger".⁶⁷ The chief danger is the second one, namely that:

"... if we merely concentrate on the language of a given writer, we may run the risk of assimilating him to a completely alien intellectual tradition, and thus of misunderstanding the whole aim of his political works".⁶⁸

Now, the meaning of "tradition" here is, I suggest, that given in Greenleaf's Order, Empiricism and Politics (Skinner's reference is to an article in which Greenleaf barely mentions tradition) and is more akin to a notion of style (see my p. 103). Greenleaf's use of tradition in this sense is criticised by Lockyer as presenting only "static and ossified abstractions".⁶⁹ If this is the case, such a tradition cannot provide the continuity through change required if it is to qualify as a subject of historical narrative. My object here, however, is not to discuss Greenleaf's conception

of tradition (see Ch. IV), but rather to investigate whether or not my own conception is prone to the double weakness portrayed by Skinner.

Clearly, because the conception of tradition for which I argue involves authentication of a contribution by being taken up by acknowledged participants in that tradition, my criterion of a work's being part of the literature of a tradition is not simply the presence of a specialised vocabulary. Therefore the objection that employing the notion of "tradition" as a unit of study leads, by its concentration on language, to insensitivity to irony and obliquity, misses its mark here. No such defence is, of course, available for Pocock's "linguistic paradigms".

Skinner's second objection is more interesting, however, because it can be turned back against his own understanding if it is construed as an objection to the conception of tradition advocated in this thesis. The risk of assimilating an author to an alien tradition is, I believe, much reduced by employing the notion of tradition I advocate. Skinner's remedy, however, is that the historian should:

"... not merely ... indicate the traditions of discourse to which a writer may be appealing, but also ask what he may be doing when he appeals to the language of those particular traditions".⁷⁰

For him, what is important is not languages or traditions, but rather "the range of things which can in principle be done with them (and to them) at any given time".⁷¹ The problem here, of course, is that there was nothing in the "range of things" available for John Locke to say which could have made him a Liberal author. The term Liberal was not used for a political grouping before its adoption in the Spanish Cortes in 1810/11.⁷² Now, Skinner's concern is with the correct

location of authors within traditions, and Locke belongs firmly to the Liberal tradition. This much Skinner must concede, since he writes of Locke as "the founder of the Liberal School".⁷³ At least, according to Skinner, this is Locke's "significance". He does, of course, say that the historians, however, cannot write of Locke as founding a "Liberal school" because clearly it is nothing Locke himself could have intended, just as Petrarch cannot have intended to inaugurate the Renaissance. Nonetheless, Locke still belongs to the Liberal tradition. He belongs because Liberals (admittedly long after publication) have found inspiration in his works, and they have seen fit to articulate their experience in terms derived from his writings. They have also acknowledged their source.⁷⁴ My model of tradition allows for the possibility of an author being claimed as founder of a tradition, that is an author, who could never have intended to contribute to a tradition, can be associated with it. Unfortunately for Skinner's argument, however, there is nothing that an examination of the languages or "traditions" available to Locke in the seventeenth century could tell us about his later acceptability to Liberals. In other words, Skinner's method does not give us any clue about the tradition to which Locke belongs. The past is unalterable, even by a methodologist.

The history of the reception of Locke's work is instructive here. The Two Treatises were largely ignored by critics for some time. They only became "the principle text of the Whigs in the very different circumstances of mid-eighteenth century politics".⁷⁵ Algernon Sydney's arguments, in fact, attracted a greater contemporary fame than Locke's. His fame has since waned. Locke not Sydney wins the credit

for allegedly founding the Liberal 'school'. It is acknowledgement by participants in a tradition rather than any special use of language, or indeed what an author said, which should be the criterion for adjudging an author to be part of a tradition.

So far, in writing about traditions and the grounds upon which an author can be said to be a contributor to a tradition, I have tried to make the point that the concept of tradition enables us to conceive the necessary continuity through change which makes political ideas a suitable subject for the historical narrative. Of course, where the historian's subject matter comprises a series of individual contributions to what he calls political thought, the historian must still identify the continuity which informs a coherent narrative. The identification of such a continuity, and the location of an author's work within it, is the historian's principle task. Historians, however, have rarely performed it.

I have already attempted to show that the conceptions of "tradition" offered by the methodologists Skinner and Lockyer are not wholly free from objection. To that conclusion I shall now add a critique of a procedure adopted by some historians of political thought who have sought to find coherence in, and so write a narrative about, a sequence of related political texts. The particular approach I shall call "essentialism". I shall argue that it is a mistaken approach. I am not the first to take this view, but not all writers on the subject have understood the word in the way I do.

The word "essentialism" is employed by a number of writers to identify an error or misconception (but not always the same error or misconception) underlying some accounts of

ideologies. Noel O'Sullivan, for example, hopes that the method employed in his volume Conservatism will not require him to "... identify an 'essence' or 'hard core' of conservative ideology, by fixing on the writings of one particular conservative thinker, or upon some one strain in conservative thought..."⁷⁶ He insists on this on the grounds that such attempts to identify "essences" will lead to the arbitrary exclusion of acknowledged "conservative" thinkers. In a companion volume to that by O'Sullivan, R.N. Berki, writing about "Socialism", uses the term "essentialist" in a similar way to denote a "... departure which fastens on one or other socialist ideal declaring it alone to be the 'essence' of socialism".⁷⁷

The best known reference to essentialism is, however, that to be found in volume two of Popper's The Open Society and its Enemies.⁷⁸ There he contrasts the approach of the scientist with that of the Aristotelian essentialist. On the one hand, the scientist, according to Popper, takes a description and asks what shorthand symbol or name can be given to it. The essentialist, on the other hand, gives a definition which:

"... may at one time answer two very closely related questions. The one is 'What is it?' for example, 'What is a puppy?': it asks what the essence is which is denoted by the defined term. The other is 'What does it mean?', for example, 'What does "puppy" mean?'; it asks for the meaning of a term (namely of the term that denotes the essence)".⁷⁹

Popper regards both of these questions as misconceived, and the distinction between them as unimportant, but I shall return to the subject of definition when I discuss in detail some examples of essentialism. First, for the sake of clarity, it is desirable to spell out why the authors quoted condemn the essentialist approach.

As I have suggested, O'Sullivan argues against giving an essentialist account of "conservatism". His reason is:

"There is the difficulty presented by the fact that not every conservative thinker will be found to subscribe to all the ideas found on the list of "canons of conservative thought"; and there is the further difficulty that not all who do subscribe to them would invariably be described as conservative." 80

Berki's (obscure) objection is that the essentialist approach which declares a single "ideal" to be the essence of "socialism":

"... quite apart from ignoring the vast variety of socialist literature, commits the error of inflating the definition of its supposedly 'essential' value, subsuming all else under it." 81

Both Berki and O'Sullivan, then, condemn essentialism as an inhibition in historical writing. However, Popper's point is more fundamental. He objects to the constant demand for definitions on the grounds that such an approach is non-scientific. Moreover, the continual demand that we define our terms threatens infinite regress. Scientists, we are told, make statements which "never depend on the meaning of our terms".⁸² Admittedly Popper's self-identification with science - a discipline distinguished by its apparent progress - seems to serve the same end as his characterisation of societies as either "open" or "closed" rather than as say "rule constituted" or "goal directed". Nevertheless, his view cannot be ignored in a discussion such as this. He claims, after all, that disciplines which have used Aristotelian definitions have "... remained arrested in a state of empty verbiage and barren scholasticism".⁸³ Popper's belief is that the progress of the sciences has been dependent upon the degree to which they have discarded the essentialist method.

In particular, he hints darkly that, because of essentialism, much of social science still belongs in the "Middle Ages". (This term, like "dark ages", exposes his Liberal identity).

Here then are two objections to essentialism as an approach to writing about political discourse. The third, Popper's objection, is a more general objection to essentialism as a contribution to knowledge. In what follows I shall attempt to outline a further objection to essentialism. I shall not be concerned with the elaboration of a general objection to Aristotelianism, or with simply the identification of any possible incompleteness in an essentialist account of a tradition of political discourse. My own objection is that the essentialist has misunderstood the form of ideology and the way in which contributions to an ideology are part of an ongoing tradition of discourse. In other words, I believe essentialism in the history of political thought to have a greater underlying complexity than is apparent from the objections posed above. O'Sullivan, for example, as we have seen, rejects essentialism as concentrating on one strain of thought. Now, I have already argued that it is a mistake to regard traditions and internal ideological debates as being founded upon an Urtyp. Furthermore, the conception of tradition advocated in this thesis enables us to see that contributing to political discourse calls for an innovation that can be acknowledged by that author's fellow practitioners. This acknowledgement is conditioned by their judgement of prevailing circumstances. There can, therefore, be no "strain" to be identified by the academic in say, Conservative thinking, in addition to the "strains" Conservatives themselves have presented. Any such "strains" could not, therefore, be mistaken for the

whole tradition (the mistake O'Sullivan warns us against) by the author of any serious historical narrative without destroying the coherence of his narrative.

In other words, my opposition to essentialism stems neither from any general objection to Aristotelianism, nor from the suspicion of incompleteness in essentialist accounts of ideologies. Its basis is the conviction that the essentialist gravely misrepresents the nature of the historical understanding of political discourse.

"Essentialism" will be used here to denote the attempt to define, say, Conservative or Liberal thought as being each the repeated elaboration of an enduring set of principles in the face of new challenges in the political arena. My grounds for asserting that essentialism is an error is now, I hope, apparent. Liberalism, Conservatism, and other ideologies, I have argued, can be regarded as traditions of thought or discourse. I have tried to show that a major feature of traditions in this sense is originality. Political viewpoints are both modified and "revolutionized" by changed circumstances.⁸⁵ Continuity through that change is present in the association of adherents who together adopt successive characterisations of their world in expression of their hopes and aspirations. A tradition involving elaboration of such characterisations cannot therefore simply be subsumed under a definition of what say, "socialism is" (as Berki rightly pointed out, but with little explanation) without the would-be definer himself adding a voice to a possible debate within socialism. He, of course, may be ignored. After all, it is political argument that establishes the boundaries of the orthodox. The academic simply maps them.

Essentialism is a failing to which many academic writers

are prone. Instances of it abound. One political scientist mistakes traditions for broad categories by means of which similarities are "emphasised".⁸⁶ he concludes that:

"Thus "liberalism" has become widely accepted as the correct category for Mill's thought, which is thereby oversimplified by neglect of the conservative aspects of his fear of mass-society and of his later socialism".⁸⁷

Is this fear of "mass society" something articulated only by all Conservatives? Is it exclusively their property?⁸⁸ It might be the case that Mill expressed ideas which have since been professed by Socialists. But have Socialists used the vocabulary of Mill? Is his so called "socialism" their Socialism? Hobhouse acknowledges Mill's exposition of Socialism in the Autobiography as "perhaps the best summary statement of Liberal Socialism that we possess."⁸⁹

Before going on to discuss further examples of this sort, it is worth noting that what is simply an error in the writings of an academic is a valuable tool to the ideologist, whose objective is persuasion not proof. This is further evidence, if evidence is still needed, for the fact that regardless of the academic trappings of some ideological works the criteria of success of, and, therefore, the forms of, the two kinds of writing are different. Consider Spencer's The Man versus the State, directed at the "reforming" Liberals of the day.⁹⁰

The opening chapter of Spencer's book bears the title "The New Toryism". In it Spencer aims to "justify" the "paradox" that essentially "most of those who pass as Liberals are Tories of a new type".⁹¹ He reminds his readers of the "intrinsic natures of Toryism and Liberalism, properly so called", pointing out that:

"... these two are definable as the system of compulsory cooperation and the system of voluntary cooperation".⁹²

and that:

"... in the one party there was a desire to resist and decrease the coercive power of the ruler over the subject, and in the other party to maintain or increase his coercive power".⁹³

By a display of "Whig" history⁹⁴ Spencer also seeks "to remind everybody what Liberalism was in the past, that they may perceive its unlikeness to the so-called Liberalism of the present".⁹⁵

For:

"They have lost sight of the truth that in past times Liberalism habitually stood for individual freedom versus state coercion".⁹⁶

Spencer's claim is that "Liberal Statesman and Liberal voters" had become confused about "the aim of Liberalism".⁹⁷ They had assumed that this aim was "welfare", because what Liberals had in the past aimed at had, in fact, promoted the "popular good".⁹⁸ Thus Spencer alleges:

"... that popular good has come to be sought by Liberals, not as an end to be indirectly gained by relaxation of restraints, but as the end directly to be gained".⁹⁹

By characterising Liberalism as having had an "aim", from which those calling themselves "Liberals" had deviated, Spencer directs an appeal towards those who would be "true" Liberals rather than Tories-by-another-name. Of course, the whole construction collapses if we do not accept Spencer's claim to be able to identify the intrinsic natures of Liberalism and Toryism, or if we do not accept that being Tory or Liberal is a matter of imposing or resisting coercion. There is no Liberalism apart from that "so-called Liberalism" of the

"Liberal Statesman and Liberal voters". Indeed, Spencer's work can be contrasted with that of another acknowledged Liberal, L.T. Hobhouse. In his book Liberalism Hobhouse also tries to outline the principles of Liberalism, as a call to arms. He does so in terms Spencer would, no doubt, have regarded as symptomatic of the new-Toryism. Both Spencer and Hobhouse are, nevertheless, acknowledged as members of the Liberal tradition by subsequent Liberal writers.¹⁰⁰

Essentialism, then, can lend a spurious clarity to the ideologist's case. In an academic account, however, essentialism has no place. By indulging in it, the academic is unable to recount the varied commitments of adherents whose beliefs and practices change with time. In their determination to find one solid set of compatible contributions to what I have claimed is a tradition, essentialists ignore the liquidity of ideological conviction. What is sired is alone called, say, Liberalism or Conservatism. Of course, it is much easier to recommend, or criticise, what are alleged to be a group's essential doctrines or beliefs, than to engage in detailed analysis of a tradition in all its variety and complexity. The works of Spencer and Hobhouse are clearly partisan. Other essentialist writings are less easily identified. Let us look again at O'Sullivan's Conservatism.

O'Sullivan, it will be remembered, attempted to define essentialism. The essentialist was said to fix upon one thinker or one "strain" of thought. And O'Sullivan claims to avoid that misconceived approach. Instead, he offers a "simple definition".¹⁰¹ Conservatism is:

"... a philosophy of imperfection, committed to the idea of limits, and directed towards the defence of a limited style of politics".¹⁰²

This definition, O'Sullivan believes:

"... avoids both difficulties [of what he calls essentialism; see my p 89] since it is broad enough to fit all thinkers who have considered themselves conservatives or are generally regarded as such, whilst at the same time directing attention towards the idea upon which all conservative thought depends; the idea that is, of imperfection".¹⁰³

Now O'Sullivan seems not to have noticed that, in writing of those who considered themselves to be "conservative" and are generally regarded to be such, he has hit upon a criterion of identification which renders his definition otiose. He claims for his definition that it "... provides the means for distinguishing conservative ideology not only from liberalism, but also from the radical ideologies which lie to its left and to its radical right".¹⁰⁴

It may be unnecessary to point out here that Conservatives quite easily distinguish themselves from adherents of other ideologies, without recourse to any single criterion. I shall endeavour to show that, for all his protestations, O'Sullivan's work is essentialist, in the sense I have given, in that it disregards evidence of identity. Still, the unsound historiography of essentialist work, far from being of no further use to the historian can, I suggest, be of considerable interest. What is an error in such a work from an academic point of view is also an aid to the ideologist in the presentation of his vision.

On the face of it, O'Sullivan's Conservatism looks like a purely academic work. Yet in his preface he informs his readers that he is attempting "neither an exhaustive examination of conservative political practice, nor a comprehensive study of conservative thought at large".¹⁰⁵ The work is rather:

"... an examination and critique of the internal coherence and stability of each of the three principle kinds of argument against radical change derived by conservative thinkers from different conceptions of human imperfection".¹⁰⁶

To this end he has selected "the most coherent and systematic formulations of each position".¹⁰⁷ This selection has, he admits, "occasionally been influenced by a desire to draw attention to conservative philosophers whose writings deserve more attention ..."¹⁰⁸ In other words, it seems that O'Sullivan wants to emphasize particular aspects of Conservative thought. Certain writers "deserve more attention". Indeed they may, but the historian is only concerned with the attention they received. In short, if O'Sullivan wants to claim this attention for a thinker because he was regarded as influential in his own day, then he would have to write a history. This he does not do. O'Sullivan's criterion of "conservatism" is his own stipulated identity and his criteria of significance are coherence and system, not past acknowledgement. His enterprise is that of presenting a viewpoint as forcefully as possible.

O'Sullivan seeks to avoid fixing "upon some one strain of conservative thought". For this is what he calls "essentialism". I have defined essentialism slightly differently, as the attempt to "fix" the content of a tradition of thinking. That attempt denies that traditions are adaptable or allow innovation. I have also suggested that essentialism is often a feature of ideological writing. O'Sullivan's work appears to me to be partisan. Is he also then an essentialist?

One of O'Sullivan's objections to essentialism is that the approach can lead to the inclusion amongst "conservative"

thinkers of those who "would not invariably be regarded as conservative".¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, he writes of Benjamin Constant and Alexis de Tocqueville both that they are "conventionally" "classed as liberals" and that:

"... their deep scepticism about the future of democracy and the absence from their thought of the characteristic liberal idea of progress makes their inclusion as conservative thinkers entirely appropriate".¹¹⁰

It is the definition of "conservatism" as a "philosophy of imperfection"¹¹¹ that warrants this conclusion. Yet, in the same work, we find O'Sullivan writing of "the contempt for the idea of imperfection and of a limited style of politics found in the German conservative tradition".¹¹²

O'Sullivan's definition had led him to be caught in the very traps that he lists as being those the essentialist is prey to. His confusion is again clear when he cites that:

"where Stephen and Mill differed ... [it] was about the most efficient political methods for promoting the spread of virtue in the world".¹¹³

Now Fitzjames Stephen is said to be a "conservative" which means, according to O'Sullivan's definition, that he believed humanity to be imperfectible. Yet he sought to promote virtue? What makes J.S. Mill a Liberal and Stephen not? O'Sullivan maintains that:

"What seems at first sight to be a direct clash between a 'hard' version of conservative ideology and the liberal creed turns out, on closer inspection, to be much more a clash of temperaments than of philosophies".¹¹⁴

I find this an impossible escape. Are Conservatism and Liberalism nomore than moods? I conclude that O'Sullivan's exercise in definition needs to be reconsidered. I would now like to indicate the inappropriateness of his strategy.

The first chapter of Conservatism begins with the Concise Oxford Dictionary definition of "conservatism". This definition is an example of what Richard Robinson, in his book Definition, calls a lexical definition.¹¹⁵ It is the reporting form of "nominal definition", reporting or establishing the meaning of a symbol. However, the definition: "being disposed to maintain existing institutions",¹¹⁶ is a description of an attitude which could be attributed equally well to many cavemen as to, say, Burke. What O'Sullivan calls "conservatism" is an ideology dating, he maintains, from the time of the French Revolution. Of this "conservatism" he writes:

"It was defined (as it has continued to be defined) in opposition to a very novel and quite specific idea".¹¹⁷

Already O'Sullivan has moved away from nominal definition, from the definition of the word "conservatism". The question has become not "how have we used the word "conservatism" " but the very different question "what is conservatism " O'Sullivan goes on to write that:

"Conservatism as an ideology, then, is characterized, in the first instance, by opposition to the idea of total or radical change ..." 118

Immediately afterwards he reopens his discussion of the symbol "conservatism" and asserts that opposition to radical change explains why the name "conservative" was chosen. This sleight of hand is effected by avoidance of the use of a capital letter for the name of the Conservative Party. Now, by attempting the misconceived task of giving a real definition of "Conservatism", of defining the thing, not the word, O'Sullivan presents himself, as I shall attempt to show, as a target for the charge that he only succeeds in stipulating a

definition of the word "conservatism", that is, of stipulating how the symbol should be used, and to whom the adjective "conservative" should be applied. To do so is, of course, to engage in ideological debate.

O'Sullivan's ill-starred attempt at definition seems to be a multiple confusion. It is, at one and at the same time, an attempt to analyse "the" Conservative "idea" (although elsewhere (p.30) he admits that no ideology is "homogenous"); or a search for identical meaning in all uses of the name "conservative"; or a search for a key to explain an historical phenomenon. That last activity, the search for a definition from which a greater body of knowledge can be inferred, is usually, according to Robinson effected by a stipulative re-definition of the definiens in this case "conservatism". At this point, it is, I suggest, worth noting Robinson's remark, reminiscent of the comments of Mario Praz on the same subject quoted earlier (p.12) namely, that:

"... the meaning of some words is primarily denotative and only secondarily connotative, and for them examples are the best method of definition. In these words the denotation determines the connotation rather than what logicians often declare, the connotation determines the denotation. That the word is applied to these particulars is a more central and abiding element in its usage than that it connotes a certain character. What is romanticism (in the literary context)? It is Shelley Wordsworth, Keats, Scott, in contrast with Austen, Dryden, Pope. Such examples as these are the most permanent and widespread element in the meaning of the word "romanticism". They remain, while each writer's attempt to reach the connotation is discarded in turn ... " 119

O'Sullivan's putative connotation for "conservatism" can, in my view, be discarded on the grounds that the

connotation he supplies is not normally coextensive with the denotation of "conservative". He calls recognised Liberals "conservative". He appears therefore, to be prone to the consequences of essentialism as he himself states them. O'Sullivan's error seems not to be simply a failure to define. He seeks to impose a coherence on Conservative thinking that no traditions, as I have conceived them, will bear. If my argument is correct, we just cannot give a definition of "Conservatism" (or of "Liberalism" or "Socialism"). We can only say that it is the ideology of the Conservative party and its supporters. To this extent, I have argued, "Conservatism" is unlike Praz's "Romanticism". To overlook this difference is to commit the error of the political scientist quoted earlier (p.92). "Conservatism" unlike "Romanticism" is not simply a broad category. It is the name of an ideology whose varied characterisations are continually changing in a changing world. I do, of course, insist that such changes are not arbitrary.

There is, however, a broad category, "conservatism", but the term begins with a lower case letter. That could be the basis on which to distinguish the two terms, but unfortunately an aversion to the use of capital letters is not uncommon in essentialist works. Of course, it is not always present. Spencer, for example, as we have seen, uses capitals, and Hobhouse takes the pun no further than to contrast "Liberal Socialism" with "Socialism that is illiberal". Still, the capital letter of "Liberal" does little to prevent confusion when, throughout his account of Liberalism, that word has so clearly been linked with "liberty". It is interesting to note in passing that no

ambiguity occurs when the capital letter is omitted from "Socialist" (the difficulty would have occurred, however, if the party had been called the "Social" party). Nevertheless, essentialist accounts of Socialism or Marxism are, I suggest, still to be expected from any author who accepts the claim that those ideologies are sciences whose theorists extend their scope and application from generation to generation. Furthermore, if accounts of Marxism are unaffected by the affliction to which accounts of other ideologies are prone in the matter of capital letters, those other ideologies are not immune to being defined, like Marxism, in terms of developments from a basic foundation. Let us look at another example.

The following adjectival uses of "liberal" all occur within the space of four pages in C.B. Macpherson's The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism; "liberal institutions", "the liberal state", "constitutional liberal state", "liberal democracies" and "liberal theory".¹¹² Use of a capital 'L' in "liberal theory" might have cleared some confusion. But Macpherson seems happy to exclude the possibility that anything in the "liberal democracies" could be anything but "liberal". He wants to tell us about the dilemma of modern "liberal democratic theory". This, of course, is much easier to do if we claim, as Macpherson does, that "liberalism" is indeed a "theory":

"... Locke completed an edifice that rested on Hobbes's sure foundations. Locke's other contribution, his attaching to this structure a facade of traditional natural law, was by comparison unimportant. It made the structure more attractive to the taste of his contemporaries. But when tastes changed, as they did in the eighteenth century, the facade of natural law could be removed, by Hume



and Bentham, without damage to the strong and well-built utilitarian structure that lay within. Hobbes, as amended by Locke in the matter of the self-perpetuating sovereign, thus provided the main structure of English liberal theory". 122

This is what I have called "essentialism". Admittedly Macpherson bases his case on epiphenomenalist claims about "the market society". He also writes of "liberalism", rather than "Liberalism", as a theory. However, he mentions only those writers from whom Liberals have drawn inspiration. That Liberalism is not an academic theory. It is an ideology. By failing to distinguish "Liberal" and "liberal" Macpherson transfers his attack from a Liberalism, that he perceives to be out of touch with economic reality, to the "liberal institutions" and "liberal democracies" which he feels lack "moral justification".

The essentialist, then, by claiming to have identified fixed and unchanging features in what I have called a tradition, simply misrepresents the identity of that discourse. He also fails to make clear what it is that makes any work a contribution to one tradition rather than another. Consequently, by over-looking the way that, in the changing world of politics, adherents of various ideologies have "taken up" works, which they have felt to be appropriate in the circumstances they have conceived themselves to be in, the essentialist cannot, in the final analysis, present an account which is not partial, in one, or both, senses of that word.

CHAPTER FOUR
PARTIES AND 'DOCTRINES'

In the previous chapter I attempted to describe the way in which the essentialist mistakes the nature of ideological discourse, and, consequently, fails to give an undistorted account of what I have called a tradition of discourse. I have advanced the argument that, whilst essentialism is presented as a real solution to the would-be historian's problem of identifying a continuity through time, the appearance of continuity displayed is achieved at the expense of a successful account of change. Essences, after all, are immutable, and, hence, they are incapable of transmutation.

A number of critics (including some I have already mentioned) are also liable to seize upon, either the applicability of a designation such as "nationalist", or upon what they take to be the recurrence of a "theme", as indicating an identity capable of historical exposition. In what follows I shall seek to illustrate some of the ways in which such projects can come to grief.

Consider first Order, Empiricism and Politics.¹ Its author, Professor Greenleaf, claims that a tradition of writing exists wherever a style is common to a number of writers and persists through time. If that style is not long-lived it can, he claims, be properly called a school of writing. Those who adopt a tradition of communication are said to write with a common purpose, and to argue by one method from the same basic assumptions.² (Elsewhere this condition is weakened to "a sufficient measure of agreement to be distinctive").³ It is, moreover, Greenleaf's

belief that "... those who take the same side will share at least some ideas, methods and assumptions".⁴ These constitute some sort of "common ideological denominator"⁵ which is what he would "set forth"⁶ as their identifying characteristic. Order, Empiricism and Politics, he maintains, is about two groups of writers, each one with a method and a set of basic assumptions. Greenleaf claims in other words to deal with two "traditions", one of which, he asserts, gained predominance over the other, largely due to the undisclosed fact that the political reality of England changed during this period under the pressures of civil war and monarchic exile, from an absolute state to a constitutional one.

Greenleaf calls one of the competing views "The political theory of order", claiming that its "metaphysical foundation" lay in the "philosophy of order".⁷ This latter philosophy, was "a particularly widespread and influential conception of the universe" which "prevailed" during "the medieval and early modern periods".⁸ It was superseded by the "political theory of empiricism", which Greenleaf ascribes to members of the second "tradition".⁹

In this context, the appropriateness of the word "tradition" seems questionable. I shall devote the greater part of this section of my thesis to the attempt to construct an argument to the effect that the notion of a common purpose said to be shared by various political writers can be misleading. I believe that this point is important, because having a common purpose is part of what Greenleaf means by participating in a tradition, and, what I understand by the latter involves persons actually

associated in a party.

In my view such notions of a common purpose, can only lead to a confusion of the historical mind. Interestingly, the attempt to identify a common philosophy is not unique to Greenleaf. It is, for example, to be found in a volume entitled Nationalism.¹⁰

Its author, Elie Kedourie, also of the London School of Economics, seeks to identify an attitude "expressed and propagated in the teachings of a philosopher [Kant]".¹¹ He attempts to recount how a "new political temper" was "made popular".¹² In particular, Kedourie wishes to give an exposition of a philosophical argument which he identifies as being about "self-determination".¹³ His claim is that such a philosophy gave rise to "habits and attitudes" which "helped to make self-determination a dynamic doctrine".¹⁴ Yet how can a "habit" arise from a philosophy? Indeed, out of its context in a philosopher's argument, what meaning does "self-determination" have here? The case is analogous to that of Greenleaf's talk of "defence of Royal power".¹⁵ We must ask the questions "which monarch" and "self-determination for whom".

Both Kedourie and Greenleaf acknowledge a debt to Lovejoy, the exponent of the notion of "unit ideas"¹⁶, but Nationalism differs from Order, Empiricism and Politics, in so far as the latter is solely what is usually called an intellectual history, whereas the former adds to its intellectual history two sections entitled "Nationalism and Politics".¹⁷ These sections comprise accounts of a series of outrages committed, and dilemmas faced, by selected agents in the arena of politics. The suggestion seems to be that "nationalism" is unworkable in practice.

It is a form of "rationalism in politics".¹⁸

What I believe has happened here is that Kedourie's emphasis on "doctrine" has led him to neglect the actual course of political events. We are given, at best, a set of cautionary tales, and cautionary tales are not history. The historian cannot allow himself the luxury of attacking politicians or the "doctrines" to which they allegedly adhere. His task is restricted to reconstructing a narrative from the relevant evidence. If Kedourie had confined himself to this it would, I believe, have become clear that there are no grounds for the assertion that "nationalism" is one "doctrine" or that its essence is that "the will of the individual should merge in the will of the nation".¹⁹ A nationalist is a Polish nationalist, a Macedonian nationalist, a Hungarian nationalist or a Serbian one. The leaders of the movements to which they belong have not acknowledged one another as being part of one and the same "Nationalist Party", even if it is correct English to describe all of them as being "nationalist" in outlook. That "nationalist" movements differ in their aims is illustrated in Nationalism itself. In it Kedourie describes how "nationalist" separatist movements in the Austro-Hungarian Empire were not united in a common cause. We are, for example, presented with the spectacle of Kossuth championing Magyar territorial claims at the expense of those of the Serbs.²⁰ Indeed, part of Kedourie's case is that nationalist claims almost invariably conflict. Yet "nationalism" is said to be one "doctrine".

Kedourie's notion of "nationalism" leads him to forge connections between certain events and the ideas expressed

in disparate publications. In fabricating these connections he claims for "nationalism" a dramatic beginning, a duration and a catastrophic end. His first chapter begins: "Nationalism is a doctrine invented at the beginning of the nineteenth century." The appearance of unity achieved by such talk can, in my view, be misleading. Just how misleading I believe it to be, I shall try to show presently. My immediate objective is to compare Kedourie's Nationalism with an account of many of the same events by the eminent historian Johan Huizinga. Whilst it is true that many compatible histories can be reconstructed from the same collection of evidence, the difference between the two accounts is nonetheless significant.

Huizinga's "Patriotism and Nationalism in European History" narrates the changes undergone by two groups of concepts.²¹ The first group is that familiar from the terms "fatherland" and "patria" and from the text of the "Marseillaise". The second group is that denoted by "nation" in its medieval and later uses. Huizinga's account, of course, differs from Kedourie's by covering a much larger period, but the vital difference between the two accounts is that Huizinga attempts to recount the career of what might be called a consciousness of nationality. Kedourie, in contrast to this, lists the sources of what he takes to be elements of nationalist doctrine. It is not the case, however, that the professional historian relies upon hindsight to locate the "origins" of "enduring ideas". He is, I suggest, much more concerned with the reconstruction of the way people actually thought at any particular time. This thinking is reflected in their language. Conceptual

schemes can be studied in their own right rather than as forerunners of later schemes of thought. Huizinga's references to Herder and to the Brothers Grimm, for example, do not, therefore, appear simply as parts of a description of the midwives and wet-nurses who attend the birth of a new "doctrine". Moreover, whilst Huizinga, like Kedourie, discusses the French Revolution, Huizinga's approach can clearly be seen to differ from the latter's when he makes the observation that by the middle of the nineteenth century:

".... the word liberty had lost none of its fervent, sweeping note since the days of the French Revolution; but the ideal of freedom had taken on more positive, and in a certain sense more restricted forms. The content of the aspiration to freedom varied in each specific case." 22

Awareness of just this variety is part of what distinguishes what I hold to be the historian's understanding from the constructions of Lovejoy and Kedourie.

Huizinga notes, too, that the Dutch language has phrases equivalent to "national consciousness", "sense of nationality", and "national awareness", as well as to what they call "nationalism". English speakers, however, use "nationalism" in a way which blurs these nuances of meaning. The attempt to treat all aspects of nationalism as the subject of a single historical study is therefore unlikely to prove satisfactory if the scope of such a study is only restricted by the ordinary English usage of the word "nationalism". The attempt has been made (see below) and the result resembles nothing so much as a Baconian natural history. If an author works without any clear limit to his subject matter, beyond the demand that anything included be capable of being described as "nationalism", then he includes all

or any phenomena to which that word can be applied. This approach has led to a failure to distinguish, for example, the sense in which Churchill is called a fervent nationalist"²³ (along with Mussolini and Stalin) from the sense of the word in say, "the Nationalist Welsh Party".²⁴ Churchill, on the one hand, was a Conservative politician who asserted the national interest of the British people against the conflicting national interests of other nations. What L.L. Snyder calls the NWP, on the other hand, is a party which at the present time bases its claim to independence on a belief in the right of natives of part of a state to self-rule because of, among other things, the cultural differences between themselves and the remainder of the population of the same state. In this case, any N.W.P. measure, be it one of self-assertion "on behalf of the Welsh", or a concession to those who deny any N.W.P. claim, is a "nationalist" measure. It is what the self-proclaimed Nationalists have assessed as a Welsh act. Only if we are deceived into believing that all who call themselves "Nationalists", as self-identified members of various putative nations, joining parties holding the same body of beliefs, are essentially nationalist will we find an element of paradox in what L.L. Snyder, following Morgenthau, calls the "A.B.C. paradox".²⁵ What Snyder finds paradoxical and a "self-contradiction" occurs when the leader of:

"... nation B invokes the principles of nationalism against nation A and denies them to nation C..."²⁶

This apparent self-contradiction signals that something is wrong with the notion that there can be universal principles of nationalism, and with the notion that the views of

"nationalists" are everywhere the same. Snyder's use of what, on his own admission, "is not a neat fixed concept" can lead to confusion.²⁷ Yet he and other authors write of nationalism as if it were, in character, the same identifiable phenomenon as say, Socialism. They write as if each, be it "nationalism", Socialism or National Socialism, were a definable cluster of beliefs or propositions. I have already tried to show that to write of Conservatism, Liberalism or other traditions of discourse in this way is to commit the error I have called "essentialism". To talk of nationalism in the same vein is, for the reasons given above, to compound the error. To give an essentialist account of Socialism or Liberalism is, I suggest, to misrepresent the views of an identifiable association of political agents. This, of course, also leads to a misidentification of some of the sources of their ideological inspiration. The accounts of "nationalism" described above then do not only commit the essentialist's error. They purport to be accounts of the views of the "nationalists", when no single such grouping exists. Now, one of the things I have attempted to show is that, to identify a set of political beliefs of this kind, at anyone time, we must answer the question "who holds these views": since there are no universal "nationalists" only Scottish Nationalists or Welsh Nationalists etc. In other words we cannot identify a set of beliefs as being those of "nationalists"; even less can we identify an enduring "nationalist" view (that would be aggravated essentialism). The attempt then to give an account of what nationalists have always said in "the nationalist doctrine" is, from the point of view of this thesis, doubly mistaken.²⁸

What I believe to be the weaknesses of Greenleaf's

claim that traditions are a matter of a persisting style, and of common ideas and methods, should now be clear. My case is that talk of "monarchists", "order theorists" or "empiricists" is prone to the very same objections which beset talk of "nationalists". The important thing omitted in such cases is the identification of an ongoing association of people, who articulated their views in the language of the texts assembled as either "the political theory of order" or "the doctrine of nationalism". If no such historical association can be identified, then what good reason can be given for grouping a particular set of texts together in this way? That the arguments seem similar to the collector (or that each text seems to be the earliest example of an idea believed to be a component of some generalised "nationalism"), surely cannot be adequate justification. Yet in Order, Empiricism and Politics the "political theory of order" is claimed to have the one "philosophy of order" as its metaphysical foundation; a foundation which is "at once a philosophy, a political theory, an explanation of social structure and a guide to practical policy".²⁹ There is, however, an obvious distinction to be drawn between philosophy, as an academic discipline, and what we call a "person's philosophy".³⁰ This distinction seems to have been obscured here. The "philosophy" in question is said to be an explanation and a guide. But the question how can such an explanation be a guide to action is ignored. Where Kedourie entertains a connection between "Nationalism and Politics", Greenleaf avoids the possibility entirely. For him what is important is a style of writing, not an organisation of persons for political action. This preoccupation with "style" leads him, in my view, to mistake

the inference of the texts he discusses. He takes them to be contributions to "theory". By "theory" I understand the conceptual framework that determines the form of an understanding of an experience. Such frameworks are judged by standards of internal coherence. My objections to regarding ideological works as contributions to a theory have already been outlined in my discussion of essentialism (Ch. 3). Here, I am concerned only with the organizing principles of Greenleaf's text. He thinks it is important to discuss what he calls two styles of argument, by which he seems to mean two commitments based on different presuppositions. Occasionally, however, he notes that the empiricists show what he regards as traces of order theory in their works.

The problem is particularly acute in the case of Edmund Burke. An extensive use of order theory seems to be joined to his other beliefs. Nonetheless, Greenleaf claims Burke as belonging to the "less extreme empirical tradition".³¹ His constitutional views are said to be those of a Whig. Here one is inclined to ask whether "empiricist" beliefs have been given more weight in this assessment of Burke simply because of Greenleaf's belief that the "general cogency" of order theory had "declined" by Burke's day.³² Certainly, the example of an apparently hybrid view like Burke's is a problem in a discussion of two competing "styles" of argument. At last, in an attempt to put flesh on his account, Greenleaf discusses, not styles of writing, or ideas alone, but political activity.

He claims at the beginning of the conclusion to his book that "the political theory of order by no means died out with the royalist débâcle of the 1640's."³³ Greenleaf

then talks of the component ideas which furnished "strands in the development" of "modern conservatism".³⁴ Could it not, however, rather be the case that the royalists, with their distinctive talk, became acceptable to, and absorbed into, the association which became the modern Conservative party? Greenleaf's putative explanation of what he sees as a mixture of styles in Burke's writing is as follows:

"... as the general cogency of the philosophy and political theory of order declined, those who may be called natural royalists or authoritarian conservatives were, temporarily, without an acceptable and persuasive ideology. But, being temperamentally disposed to accept the status quo, as time went by they came to be reconciled to the mixed constitutional system. They came to invest it with all the sanctity previously attributed to absolute monarchy and demanded that it should not be altered or overturned. Thereby, they found themselves allied with a point of view they would previously have rejected". 35

Greenleaf seems to have found that he cannot support his analysis of Burke solely by reference to the persistence of a style of writing. He is obliged to refer to political agents. But, rather than show a concern for their beliefs and projects, he writes of their temperament. Should we not look instead to the political problems faced by the political groups who displayed their acceptance of "order theory" in their vocabulary, so that we can discover why that vocabulary came to be deemed by them to be inappropriate?

In Kedourie's Nationalism, mentioned earlier, another collection of similar ideas is taken to be a unity capable of coherent exposition. That account of a "doctrine" and "attitude" was seen, in the light of Huizinga's narrative, to be inadequate. Nevertheless, Kedourie's book is, with regard to my present concern, superior to Greenleaf's in so far as Kedourie puts some emphasis upon the actions of

specific agents and policies of specific movements.³⁶

I cannot agree with Kedourie, however, when he quotes with approval Heine's comment that as a revolutionary Kant puts Robespierre in the shade.³⁷ Philosophy is an academic discipline. Political ideology and philosophical politics are not. Kedourie himself notes that a philosopher cannot be held responsible for the "implications" which others draw from his work. What is important, then, is not just what Kant wrote. Of at least equal importance, I believe, are those very "implications", however "fantastic, far fetched or negligible" Kedourie thinks they would have seemed to Kant.³⁸ It is the specific convictions, in the name of which a particular agent claimed to have acted, which demand attention, not the various sources which allegedly supplied them. Emphasis on the writings of Kant, Fichte, Herder and Rousseau merely creates the illusion that there is one nationalist doctrine subscribed to by all nationalists everywhere. Kedourie writes of academics becoming "the acknowledged founders of powerful political movements".³⁹ Marx's alleged remark about not being a Marxist is all that is required to remind us that being the founder of a "doctrine" is a matter of acclaim and acknowledgement by later adherents. Moreover, is it not a mistake to attempt to recount a history of "nationalism" as a doctrine taking life half a century before the foundation of any party calling itself "nationalist"? It surely is as much of an anachronism as to write of "nationalism" in the middle ages if no one at the time had the concept "nationalism".⁴⁰ The evidence to decide the matter is furnished by what remains of the language of the time. (Huizinga puts its appearance no earlier than the nineteenth century)⁴¹ It seems implausible too,

when writing of the twentieth century, to assert that Hitler's annexation of the Sudetenland, or any other of his policies, was an achievement of "nationalists". It was a National Socialist one.⁴² The important thing is to discover how the actors in question conceived what they were doing. My claim is that there can be no actions motivated by "nationalist" "doctrine" much before the advent of any particular Nationalist party (according to Huizinga this took place in the late nineteenth century).⁴³ Even if Liberals rather than "nationalists", or as well as "nationalists", were impressed by Kant or Herder, their doings are still Liberal deeds. Of course, if self-proclaimed Nationalists somewhere were to claim Kant as their inspiration, then I agree that Kant's work has a place in that tradition. Still, the conclusions of a philosophical analysis are just as abstract as the arguments from which they follow.

Discussion of the concept of "self-determination" is not the same as making a political decision in the name of self-determination. Governments decide upon and enact regulations, not about natural rights or equality, but about bilingual road-signs and graduated income tax. Parties out of office make decisions about alliances, ballots or bombings required to gain power. The decisions are made with regard to circumstances thought to prevail. When boundaries are redrawn with talk of "the freest opportunity of autonomous development",⁴⁴ the actual decisions that are enforced concern specific villages and the advantages and disadvantages of including one village rather than another within a border. Admittedly the location of a village within a border might be given a favourable characterisation by a Nationalist party, but I cannot see how this can justify the claim that an eighteenth century

philosopher specified in advance of their existence the practices of the Nationalists.

There are no "nationalists" who in some way apply the work of Kant and Rousseau to political life. Kedourie is, of course, right to doubt the value of academic philosophy to the business of ruling. What I cannot believe is that the "nationalists" of whom the writes operate "in a hazy region midway between fable and reality".⁴⁵ They act in the real world. It is to like-minded members of that world that they offer their justifications. Such groups, rather than what intellectual historians have claimed to be the provenance of their views, are, if what I have said is correct, of paramount importance to any historian of politics and political discourse. Nevertheless, to recount the historical identity which can be conceived by means of the concept of tradition which I advocate, the historian must do more than pay close attention to the actions of a party's members. Sometimes we are presented with a narrative which attempts no more than that. Here an example is instructive:

Keith Webb, in his The Growth of nationalism in Scotland⁴⁶, gives a brief narrative of Scottish history, with an account of early independence movements and strivings for autonomy. He goes on to discuss the fortunes of various more recent organisations from which he judges the S.N.P. to have grown. Then he concentrates on that party, its failures and successes. The last third of the work comprises a comparison and criticism of various academic accounts of the party's growth and appeal, and an attempt to assess its future. Taken as a whole, the account seems a little

bloodless in comparison with Nigel Tranter's partisan foreword.

Tranter writes:

"... this work is not basically for the politicians, however much they may need it, but for the ordinary folk of Scotland, all who have any interest at all in the state and future of their land. And, with the Scots, as has been indicated, that means us all. Also, to be sure, it is for our good friends and neighbours south of the Border, most of whom probably are only a little less bewildered than their paid representatives". 47

Little or nothing of this talk appears in the pages written by Webb. Whilst Greenleaf concentrated on literature and rejected the political arena, The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland tends to the opposite extreme. Unlike Kedourie in Nationalism, Webb gives a detailed narrative of what he considers to be one country's Nationalist movement, but where Kedourie gives us alleged philosophical sources rather than politicians' justifications, Webb gives us nothing. He tells us that "four positions can be discerned on the independence issue".⁴⁸ They are those of the devolutionists, federalists, those claiming dominion status, and those claiming independence. His terse account of the compromises, defeats and agreements culminating in the present position of the S.N.P. tends, in my view, to deprive us of the insight to be gained from a reconstruction of the terms and characterisations employed in the debate in which Scottish Nationalists have engaged. Webb devotes little more than three pages to his discussion of "Morality, Justification and Desirability".⁴⁹ In them we are given an inkling of Scottish nationalist imagery, the official Scottish Nationalist history of Scotland, and the vision of a future Scotland. He notes elsewhere, too, that certain

measures are characterised as representative of an alternative "Scottish Way".⁵⁰ Unfortunately, without a fuller narrative incorporating Scottish Nationalist talk, the full resonance of that characterisation is lost.

My conclusion here, then, is this. When giving an account of a tradition of political writing, it is insufficient simply to list, with synopses of their arguments, the philosophers with whom responsibility for an ideology might ultimately be thought to lie. An account of a tradition, that is, a narrative of a historical unity, must involve substantial mention of those without whose acknowledgement no work could be part of that tradition. Their existence as an ongoing political association provides the continuity of identity which informs the historian's narrative. To write of essential aims or enduring theories is, I have tried to argue, to ignore the changing world of politics, and the ideological form in which it is characterised. I have suggested too that there is a difference between an ideological work and an academic one. Here we need only remember how Greenleaf treats the authors he considers as in some way writing works of theory. In seeking a common denominator for these works, he looks no further than the questions posed and the answers given. He ignores their aspect as ideology, and the role of ideology in political life. Kedourie, in contrast to this, gives an exposition of the work of a number of philosophers, and accuses ideological adherents of a misunderstanding. For Kedourie that misunderstanding does not lie in the mistake of trying to do the impossible by trying to translate philosophy into action. His objection, rather, is that "nationalists" succeed in doing just that, and so engage

in some sort of misconceived politics. Huizinga's work however, casts doubt on whether the evidence even supports Kedourie's belief that "nationalism" is one "doctrine". Simply to recount (as L.L. Snyder has done) all the available information about phenomena which, for one reason or another, could be called "nationalism" is, I believe, of little help to anyone. If an account is to be coherent, one must first identify a continuity. That identity is, I suggest, to be found by the historian of political thought when he has a clear conception of a tradition of discourse. Identification of such a tradition can often begin with the location of the association of people who find inspiration in a number of works in turn, and give a tradition its continuity, but as we can see from Webb's account of Scottish nationalism, it is not enough to recount the agreements through which a party came about. The addition of a synopsis of the practical demands emerging from the policy debates does not remedy the defect. Furthermore expositions of philosophers' works, such as Kedourie's treatment of Kant in Nationalism, only appear to resolve the inadequacy. These expositions can only be an aid to understanding the possible or probable sources of ideological characterisations of the world. It is an account of the ideologists' work as ideology, rather than as "theory", that is required if the distinctive vocabulary of a party's policy debates is to be understood. This last element is vital for our understanding of traditions of discourse. Changing circumstances affect the acceptability of that discourse to its potential participants, as policy is adapted to meet new ends. Without an account of that discourse the history of a party becomes nothing more than a narrative

about men taking practical decisions on more-or-less pragmatic grounds. The history of political thought would then become just a series of synopses of texts lacking any real justification for the inclusion of any of its components.

In outlining a conception of tradition usefully deployed by the historian of political thought I have tried to show that an appreciation of the part played by innovatory contributions to a tradition is essential to that historian's narrative. It is part of my case that an ideology inevitably changes as it continues to play a part in a changing world, and so the historian's organizing concepts must enable him to construct a narrative in which such innovation informs his account of change. I suggested above that the historian of a tradition of discourse ignores at his peril the instability and mutability displayed by party policies, political disputes, and the vocabulary of debate. That the vocabulary of politics must change, if it is to remain the medium of communication in a world of changing political reality, seems to me to be beyond doubt. Yet political identities endure. How is this possible? In what sense is there an authentic Liberal, Conservative, or Socialist voice to be heard at any time, in the political arena of a state? Who decides what it is to have any one of these identities, and how is this arbiter identified? In order to attempt to answer these questions, I shall propose an account of the role of ideology in political life, which, as I have already hinted, will not be an account of a theory / practice relationship.

The ideologist offers to his readers, not straightforward descriptions, but characterisations. His account does not consist solely of empirically testable statements. Rather, his readers can come to see what he presents as wisdom about their world to be an illuminating portrayal of their experience in that world. We might, in a comparable way, expect a work of fiction to present us with insights into the human condition. The difference between the two is this. A characterisation can be conceived to have application in the world. It provides a motive. Unlike the reader or hearer of a description, the adherent of an ideology cannot be in possession of a well-formed intention to act by virtue of his acknowledgement of the authenticity of a characterisation. Characterisations differ from descriptions in that there are no fixed rules of application for a characterisation which would enable one to judge the success of an attempt to act in that character. The ideologist's characterisations specify conceptual rather than causal or contingent relationships. Ideologists have, for example, characterised the relationship between "bourgeois" and "proletarian" and between "monarch" and "subject". This achievement should not be underestimated. Such conceptual relationships, although they cannot be engineered into existence, can be constituted by verbal exchange and affirmed in symbolic action.

How can an action be symbolic? Consider S.C. Brown's example of a commander handing over his sword as an act of surrender.⁵¹ Brown points out that the act is not a natural act of submission in the way that an untrained dog's exposure of its throat to an aggressor can be an act of submission. Still, the commander's act is not merely

conventional either. It is a way, according to Brown:

"... of acknowledging and thereby confirming a situation which already exists. The general who ceremonially hands over his sword is acknowledging defeat but is already beaten." 52

A relationship can, I suggest, be affirmed symbolically, but the above example deals with a defeat, with a more or less verifiable state of affairs. Its symbolic content is small. Let us turn then to a more complex instance.

Brown takes from D.Z. Phillips's Death and Humility the example of a dirge which exhorts the dead to "come home".⁵³ Brown points out that such a song would, if "addressed" to an absent, long over-due, but still presumed living person, have a different character. The living person is "set apart" from the singer by being absent. But:

"That is not the way in which the dead are 'set apart'. They are set apart by the way in which they are continually present to those from whom death has separated them". 54

The sense of that presence finds expression in the ritual. Brown is, of course, aware of an air of paradox surrounding what he says. His defence is that:

"... the ritual is not rendered pointless by the problems of articulating what someone who engages in it might offer as his belief. On the contrary, the practice provides a measure of the adequacy of such articulations." 55

In the above ritual, the continual "presence" of the dead is expressed. A relationship is affirmed. It is, of course, a relationship which cannot be tested empirically, as is the case with the ideologist's characterisations of a political relationship. Indeed, it is part of my case that aspects

of symbolisation can also be found in political life. The particular kind of act I have in mind is exemplified by Stalin's persecution of the so-called "Kulaks".

What, first of all, is a kulak? R.E.F. Smith writes that:

"The Bolshevik use of the word 'kulak' is really rather a distortion of its original meaning. Originally, at peasant level, it meant not so much the tight-clenched fist as the cupped hand in which smaller men are held. They may be held in oppressive grip or they may be held protectively; there is an ambiguity about the term in its original meaning. The Bolsheviks came to use it simply to mean the oppressive and threatening fist of emergent capitalism in the countryside." 56

The term "kulak", then, is a characterisation, not a description. It has no fixed rule of application.

Calling any given peasant a "kulak" was a matter of judgements of appropriateness rather than strict empirical evidence. Confusion, therefore, reigns amongst those who have tried to achieve a non-arbitrary definition of "kulak" in the light of what we know about "de-kulakization".⁵⁷

It has been pointed out that the "dekulakization" itself was embarked upon without a clear definition of who counted as a kulak. Of course, in view of the nature of the term, we should no longer be surprised that "kulak" lacks rules of application.⁵⁸

In fact, local administration, and party and village meetings, simply decided for themselves. It was not a matter for "special political authorities with particular professional ethics".⁵⁹ Rather the authorities stirred up emotions. They did not describe the action in terms of "juridical" or "police" measures, but instead characterized it as class war. Use was made of "powerful

and emotionally highly coloured pejorative invectives" such as "vampire" and "bloodsucker".⁶⁰ In other words:

"The function of definition changes from a mainly normative one to a basically emotional and highly charged political stimulant". 61

By characterising the Kulaks as a class of emerging capitalists, then killing them, the Bolsheviks sought to establish that they (the Bolsheviks) were indeed the "vanguard of the proletariat", the party of the class destined for ultimate victory in the history of class struggle. Their programme of "dekulakisation" falls into the category of symbolic rather than purely instrumental action because the identity of the Kulaks is conferred rather than possessed. Just as there are no Revolutions, only illegal seizures of power, so there were no Kulaks; only peasants with one or two cows, or a threshing machine, or a hired hand. To identify such a peasant as a "Kulak" or Lenin's act of treason as a revolution, is to fit the farmer or the insurrection into a frame of reference in which the Kulak is portrayed as a "capitalist", and the insurrection as the "Revolution".

For those who could see themselves as proletarians (or as allies of the proletariat) "kulaks were to be eliminated, and the "Revolution" furthered in the countryside. Thus their identity was affirmed for the Marxist/Leninist. The presence of blood-sucking "kulaks" in the Soviet Union was "established" by the party acting in the name of the "proletariat". The Bolsheviks, who were thereby acknowledged by their supporters to be the "vanguard of the proletariat" became in their eyes, the legitimate government of the Soviet Union.

What if some Bolsheviks disagree with this policy?

Such disagreement cannot be tolerated because it must split the party and damage its claim to legitimacy. Must we conclude, then, that not only obedience, but also orthodoxy, is demanded by party loyalty? Certainly, obedience (much less orthodoxy) cannot be induced by the production of compelling evidence that a particular policy, say, utilises the best available means for "destroying the Kulaks as a class". No such proof can exist. The only evidence available concerns the success or failure of the methods actually used for the expropriation, deportation or execution of selected peasants. The party, however, has a leadership which is the source of authoritative decisions on policy matters. A party leader is to a greater or lesser extent a successful politician in a particular tradition of political activity. His claim to be in authority is clear to all who acknowledge the authenticity of that practice and party procedure. Now, in an attempt to forestall the objection that I am guilty here of confusing being in authority (in the party) with being an authority (on ideological issues). I would like to draw attention to the following points.

Firstly, a strong claim to leadership can be made by one who is accepted to be an authority in the relevant sphere (or has the support of such an authority). We need only remember here Hitler's "inspiration" and Stalin's academic pretension. The party leader, I have said, is a successful politician. Yet, if a leader's success is measured by his contribution to the revitalization of the Aryan race or the construction of socialism, then "being successful" cannot be divorced from skill in the

elaboration of the ideological significance of his actions or policies. The aspiration to orthodoxy is, therefore, vital to the retention of leadership.

Secondly, whilst it is true that belief as a depiction of the world itself entails no obligation to accept anyone's authority, it does make membership of the relevant party an intelligent step. The party is the association of people who claim to, say, engage in class or national struggle. They are more effectively able to affirm their identity in their actions since that identity is a class or national, rather than an individual, one. Party membership and participation is the affirmation of identity for the adherent, and forming a party does entail an obligation to follow its leader. We do, after all, feel that someone who claims to be an adherent of an ideology, but neither joins the relevant party nor acknowledges the authority of its leader in the political arena, but merely asserts his adherence, is either the victim of a misunderstanding, or guilty of bad faith. The case is analogous to that of someone who fails to react to an insult to a person he claims is a close friend. He is likely to be asked if the friendship has ceased. In both cases the performance of certain appropriate actions is lacking.

In support of the above two points about authority and party membership it is worth bearing in mind Alexander MacIntyre's distinction between a practice and a institution.⁶² Institutions sustain practices, and are "structured in terms of power and status".⁶³ There are goods "external" to the practice as contrasted with the practice's "internal goods". These "internal" goods "are indeed the outcome of competition to excel, "but" their achievement is a good for the whole

community who participate in the practice."⁶⁴

In MacIntyre's example, the practice of portrait painting, the internal good to be achieved is excellence in showing "how the face at any age may be revealed as the face that the subject of a portrait deserves."⁶⁵ In pursuing that excellence, the artist finds that other "internal" good; that of living part of one's life as a painter. Judgement concerning either of these goods, in MacIntyre's words:

"... requires at the very least the kind of competence that is only to be acquired either as a painter or as someone willing to learn systematically what the portrait painter has to teach." ⁶⁶

I suggest that judgement of the "internal" success of Lenin or Stalin, for example, is only to be acquired as an adherent of the C.P.S.U. (Bolshevik), or as someone willing to study systematically what the ideologist has to say (their "external" success is, I think, plain). It has been part of the case of this chapter that this is the understanding to be acquired by the study of the tradition of a practice. I have also suggested that a party leader is, besides being an ideologist, one of the party's more successful politicians. One aspect of that success must be that he increases or consolidates the power or advantage of his party in the political arena. By doing so, he advances his candidature as the continuing authority. At the same time, having been chosen according to the party rules he is entitled to continue being in authority. To view a party leader's success in these terms only is, however, to view that success from the stand-point of an uninitiated observer. It is, to adopt

MacIntyre's terminology again, to view the politician's achievement in its "external" aspects. There is also the "internal" aspect mentioned above, assessment of which requires an appreciation of the language of adherence. The successful politician must always be able to depict his actions in appropriate ideological terms to show them to be appropriate to his party. On the one hand, then, should a leader be unable to justify an action (even one regarded by neutral observers as being to the party's advantage) in terms acceptable to his own followers all is likely to be lost in internal controversy. On the other hand, control over the party machine - Stalin, for example, became powerful as general secretary - enables the possessor to interrupt the careers of those who question the appropriateness of a favoured politician's utterances.

MacIntyre's distinction between goods internal and external to a practice can also help to clarify matters of leadership and party conformity when we turn to questions of adherence and party membership. MacIntyre remarks that "every practice requires a certain kind of relationship between those who participate in it".⁶⁷ He gives the example of a person A who lies to C about some matter, whilst telling the truth to B. A difference in the relationships of B and C to A arises out of the lie. MacIntyre accounts for that difference by arguing that "their allegiance to each other in pursuit of common goods has been put in question".⁶⁸ Much the same account applies, I suggest, to the case of someone who claims adherence to an ideology yet fails to join the relevant party - the institution which, to use MacIntyre's term, "sustains" the practice.⁶⁹ Adherence to an ideology seems to demand

party membership. On certain occasions particular kinds of actions are required to substantiate one's claim to be party to a particular relationship. I have attempted to show that party policy can be understood as the affirmation of an identity by a symbolic action which affirms a relationship. Such a relationship cannot, however, be affirmed unless one participates in the action of the party which, through its official spokesmen, authoritatively elaborates the significance of its policy as the act of a party standing in the relationship specified. Stalin, say, could claim to be "furthering the revolution".

The adherent becomes a party-member because the party is the organisation of those engaged in the continuing elaboration of the ideology, and the institution which sustains the relevant practice. A new member, if he is to be more than a fellow-traveller, must, in my view, acquire a command of the vocabulary used by its members when they communicate the support they give to its policies. If he does not he remains no more than a fellow-traveller. A party is the tangible organisation sustaining a tradition of discourse. For the reasons suggested above, the party leadership tries to maintain the monopoly of decision over what is an acceptable contribution (one illustration of such a monopoly was given in my account of Mussolini and "Avanti" (Ch. III).)

It might be argued against my account of orthodoxy and party loyalty that a party, say the Liberal party, is not the sole arbiter of what is an appropriate policy. The example of Herbert Spencer can be used to illustrate the point. He simply denied that most of the members of the contemporary party were real Liberals. If Spencer

could be convinced that he was a Liberal whilst the majority of the Liberal party were merely "Tories of a new type" (see Chapter III) why should the historian of political thought, writing about Liberalism, concern himself with parties at all? I propose the following two points in reply to this objection.

Firstly, Spencer's work only counts as a contribution to the Liberal tradition to the extent that he was accepted by other Liberals. This acceptance need not be explicit. All that is required is that Liberals take up the characterisations he uses to depict the world. Failing this, the label "Liberal" is of course entirely inappropriate, (in fact Spencer was asked to become a Liberal candidate for Leicester in 1884), and a label such as "Social Darwinist" would be more apposite.

Secondly, we must remember that the ability to communicate is a necessary ability for individuals who are to form an association for any joint action. It is through the common belief in a depiction of the world that symbolic action of the kind described above is possible. The party leader decides upon the action to be pursued by the loyal party members. What is to count as the authentic action of an adherent is thereby specified. Disagreements about policy can, therefore, become disputes about who is a "true" Liberal. The loser conforms, or ceases to be regarded as a true adherent. Orthodoxy, of course, remains a matter of belief, and belief cannot be compelled. Nevertheless, full acceptance of a policy as correct does imply orthodoxy because of the symbolic nature of ideological action.

Consider again Stalin's dispute with Bukharin, used as an illustration of my discussion of orthodoxy in chapter two. It was largely a disagreement about policy. The Bolshevik policy in the countryside in 1924 can, if my argument is correct, be seen to be an affirmation by the Bolsheviks of their identity as destroyers of "capitalism". The policy is conceived as one of proletarian action in a world of classes and class enemies. Now Stalin alleged that the source of one of Bukharin's "groups" disagreements with the party-line was a failure to note the conditions which made the policy appropriate. Stalin claimed that the time was approaching for a new revolutionary upsurge and that therefore the Comintern should be purged of "Right elements" as part of the battle against Social Democracy, in preparation for the new revolutionary period.⁷⁰ Bukharin, according to Stalin, contended that "capitalism" was stable and in a period of "reconstruction" and that a purge was, therefore, inappropriate.⁷¹ How was the matter resolved? Stalin did not support his position by the presentation of evidence, such as say, economic data. That, after all, can only tell us about industry, not about a means of production antagonistic to the proletariat. Instead he asserted that to adopt Bukharin's view was to adopt the view of Hilferding "a point of view which communists cannot adopt".⁷²

To accept Bukharin's view would have been to accept a view acknowledged to be unorthodox. This is not the only occasion on which this charge is levelled at Bukharin. Elsewhere in his attack, Stalin accuses him of believing that he had corrected Lenin. The accusation was made in such a way as to suggest that this would be an absurd thing to attempt.

Deciding the right or wrong way to "abolish a class" is a matter of orthodoxy, not facts. In that understanding of the world:

"To refuse to fight the right deviation is to betray the working class, to betray the revolution". 73

Orthodoxy, then, is implied by unreserved support for a policy. Yet orthodoxy can only prevail as long as champions are available to elaborate it unopposed. As Eliot remarked, orthodoxy "supervises" "the perpetual bringing up to date and criticism" of tradition. It does not prevent it. When innovation ceases, the tradition is dead.

In the first part of this chapter, I considered authority in party relationships, and the business of the execution of policy as an affirmation of a member's identity. I attempted to distinguish participation in a tradition of discourse from the institutions of the party which sustain the associated practice. The formal party institutions, so to speak, administer the practice, and the party as a whole is indistinguishable from that practice, gaining its identity from it. It is implicit in the above account that a belief inspired by a distinctive depiction of the world is vital to the existence of a political association in a way that formal party institutions are not. A sense of ideological identity, a sense of standing as a body in a relationship specified in the ideologist's characterisations, is affirmed in the action which can only be effected by an association. Still, the nature of that action is not something to be discovered by a careful reading of the ideologist's work. It is planned within the association, and recounted by the historian.

To accept these conclusions is, of course, to take up a position in the debate between Lewis Namier's supporters and

critics about the relevance of expressions of "principle" to the explanation of political action.

Namier, in the work I shall now discuss, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III⁷⁴, was writing about the period shortly after 1760, a period before the foundation of parties as we now know them. But this does not place Namier's work beyond the scope of my argument, for political discourse, as I have described it, does not pre-suppose the existence of a highly-formalised party organisation. It is rather the discourse of those engaged in common political action. If this were not the case we could not easily make intelligible a situation in which the common objective is the bringing into question the authority of the formal party leadership. My earlier example of Mussolini's dismissal from the editorship of "Avanti" is a reminder that party cohesion can be threatened by a party's own rank and file when that membership comes to see certain characterisations (which are not endorsed by the leadership) as being more appropriate to their own situation than the leadership's own elaborations. My account of political agents, then, who articulate their political experiences and aspirations in a vocabulary derived from an ideologist's depiction of the world, and acquire a sense of identity in the process, stands opposed to Namier's portrayal of a House of Commons which was entirely venal in its motivation.

Namier maintained that:

"As the exhilarating Parliamentary game between party teams was not played in 1761, and men do not go into politics for health, clearly some other rational aim had to be provided..." 75

That "aim", according to Namier, was profit. "Party labels" were hardly relevant. In his own words, "the only people

under no such obligation to profit" were the country gentlemen.⁷⁶ Their motive in seeking election was affirmation of their prominence in their own "country". It is not surprising therefore that Namier paid little attention to debates and professed policies in his history. What is odd is that he should go on to remark that eloquence and debating power were important in the House. Does this not contradict his assessment of political talk as "cant", and of politicians as men to be bought rather than swayed?⁷⁷ According to Namier, after all:

"Eighteenth century Administrations, not being able to control individual members through a party machine and a party electorate, had to bind their following by honours, places of profit, contracts and pensions ..." 78

I am not in a position to quarrel with Namier's description of the eighteenth century electoral system as not being conducive to the electorate's selection of M.P.'s for their beliefs. However, it does not seem to follow from what Namier writes of the electoral process that M.P.'s did not act in the light of their beliefs once elected. What Namier has ruled out from the beginning is the presence of what I outlined in the preceding section; a relationship between group discipline and belief. I have attempted to argue that, although in practice the two are usually inseparable, it is not the party machinery but the belief and the vocabulary by which it is articulated which are the source of commitment. The institution sustains the practice, that is, the practice has (logical) priority. From this point of view, then, it is the cohesiveness of the various factions in the absence of conviction, not cohesion in the absence of formal party institutions, which stands in need of explanation. This account of conviction

is precisely what is lacking in Namier's work; he seems to have regarded evidence of expression of commitment as irrelevant to his work.

The emphasis in Namier's work on what would now be termed "corruption", and the corresponding lack of any account of "principles" has been noted by several authors. Herbert Butterfield, for example, in the course of a plea for narrative history, as well as "structural analysis", notes Namier's contradictory recognition of the importance of independent members, and concludes that:

"...over and above the structure of politics, we must have a political history that is set out in narrative form - an account of adult human beings, taking a hand in their fates and fortunes, pulling at the story in the direction they want to carry it, and making decisions of their own". 79

Is such a history possible if we ignore the evidence of deliberation and motivation provided by agents' own professions of belief? As I have remarked, Butterfield makes an appeal for a narrative history of the reign of George III. Yet the writing of narrative history will not alone correct Namier's distorted perspective if Skinner is right in his assertion that the "Namierite argument" is not (as his critics have tried to show) untrue, but invalid.⁸⁰ Both Namier and his critics are said to fall victim to the same fallacy. I shall dwell on Skinner's point at some length, attempting both to show how it differs from my own view to which it bears a superficial resemblance, and to defend those historians such as Butterfield whose views more readily coincide with my own.

The Namierite interpretation with which Skinner takes issue concerns Bolingbroke's opposition to Walpole. The

Namierite claim (according to Skinner) is that Bolingbroke was moved solely by a lust for power. His professions of principle were merely "ex post facto rationalisations"⁸¹. Against that claim, historians of the Butterfield school, Skinner maintains, protest that some political agents are sincere in their professions. The latter assumption has the "greater explanatory power" because it enables the explanation of a specific course of action.⁸² The Namierites, he argues, are always faced with the problem of explaining why an entirely venal agent selected one set of rationalisations for his actions rather than another. The anti-Namierites, however, are in a position to produce accounts (admittedly not identical accounts) of why Bolingbroke professed the principles he did. This advantage, Skinner contends, is outweighed by the loss of plausibility engendered by the anti-Namierites' naive supposition of Bolingbroke's "unwavering sincerity".⁸³ Yet Skinner does not attempt to falsify these accounts. Rather, he attacks "a shared and mistaken assumption underlying both this and the Namierite view of the connections between professed political principles and actual political behaviour".⁸⁴ This assumption is that:

"...it is only if we can show that a given political principle genuinely acted as a motive for engaging in a given course of political action that one can hope to establish the need to refer to the principle in order to explain the action".⁸⁵

Skinner takes the position that the above supposition is invalid. His preferred premise is that:

"...the motives of Bolingbroke and his party were entirely unprincipled and self-interested".⁸⁶

He maintains, nevertheless, that it does not follow that no weight should therefore be put on the professed principles

of those persons when trying to account for their behaviour. He points out that "Bolingbroke and his party" always claim to act from "the principle of patriotism".⁸⁷ Indeed:

"... the essence of Bolingbroke's coup lay in matching this principle to his party's practice in just such a way as to be able to imply to the Whigs, with maximum plausibility, that their own Ministry was pursuing at least two policies known to every good Whig to be peculiarly liable to endanger English political liberties. This made it possible to leave the correspondingly strong impression that to oppose these precise policies was, in the circumstances, to be concerned above all with the idea of preserving English political liberties. But to be concerned with the preservation of English political liberties was what was meant at the time by being a true patriot. This in turn enabled Bolingbroke and his party to claim with maximum plausibility that they were genuinely motivated by the spirit of patriotism. And this provided them with the element of justification which ... was essential if they were to be able to continue with the successful pursuit of their otherwise unconstitutional policy of conducting a "formed opposition" to the King's chosen Ministry". 88

Skinner believes that he has shown here why "Bolingbroke and his party" considered what they did to be rational. In fact, he believes that he has shown that what they did was rational in the circumstances. Bolingbroke is presumed not to have been sincere. The "range of actions" open to "Bolingbroke and his party" in their opposition to Walpole was nevertheless limited to "the range of actions for which they could hope to supply recognizable justifications".⁸⁹ Thus Bolingbroke's and his followers' choice of justifying principle for their behaviour made it rational for them to act "in certain highly specific ways".⁹⁰

I endorse Skinner's view that it is essential not optional, for any political historian to be an historian of

political ideas. What I feel unable to agree with is the way he goes about that task in his account of Bolingbroke's motivation. My reasons are as follows.

Let us first consider the assumptions made about Bolingbroke's "true" motives. If it is naive to assume that he was totally sincere, it is surely misanthropic to begin with the premise that he was totally disingenuous. Whatever the drawbacks of the first assumption, it does at least satisfy Ockham's razor principle. But Skinner seems to share Namier's presupposition that the pursuit of power is solely a matter of self-interest. I do not accept that assumption. I suggest that the power of office can be sought for the way in which it affords greater scope to those engaged in the enactment of symbolic deeds in affirmation of an identity specified by an ideology. (of course, as far as the adherent is concerned, he just is carrying out 'the revolution'). Such pursuit of power cannot be said to be wholly motivated by self-interest without the risk being run of embracing the vacuous assertion that all action is governed by self-interest.

My main objection, however, is to what Skinner has to say about political ideas and talk. He writes of a "Whig canon"⁹¹ or "a Whig tradition",⁹² and claims that Bolingbroke used "the immensely strong resonances of this tradition of thought to further his own cynical and self interested political ends".⁹³ Yet, without an analysis of why a selection of writings can be called a Whig "canon" or "tradition", that is, without saying why some authors are "accredited theorists" of the Whigs⁹⁴, he cannot justify the claim, without further evidence, that Bolingbroke merely cynically used the tradition.

Why not regard Bolingbroke as attempting to contribute to the tradition instead? An adequate account of tradition would surely neither leave Bolingbroke's status as contributor or exploiter open to doubt, nor would it allow that status to be assumed rather than discovered.

It is Skinner's contention that Bolingbroke deliberately spoke the language of the Whigs in order to disrupt their confidence in Walpole's ministry. Certainly that is a possible enterprise for an individual to undertake. The peculiarity of Skinner's claim lies in the way in which expressions of principle are ignored totally as possible sources of "party" cohesion. If Bolingbroke and his followers professed Whig principles to mislead the Whigs, then one is entitled to ask quite how they justified their policy to one another. If what Skinner claims about the profession of principles being a political decoy is true, then yet another (so far undiscovered) set of principles must surely have been current within Bolingbroke's faction if we are to allow them to have talked of their action amongst themselves. It would be an odd political grouping which had no such "principles". They would be little more than a gang of conspirators talking of personal profit, perhaps in an atmosphere of mutual distrust. Could such a band endure as long as Bolingbroke's opposition? Of course, it is possible that Bolingbroke's followers were merely dupes taken in by Bolingbroke's rhetoric. But this is not what Skinner is arguing.

Skinner's object, we must remember, was to show the relationship between professed principle and political action. In my view, this attempt to show that, even where an agent

is being disingenuous, his professed principles accord with his actions would, if it could be convincingly formulated, prove too much. After all, Skinner concludes that "an agent's professed principles invariably need to be treated as causal conditions of his actions" because only a limited range of action will appear to fit the rationalizations judged to be acceptable by his peers.⁹⁵ This conclusion effectively deprives us of any real notion of bad faith. By stipulating this connection between principles and actions, Skinner is left in a position where he can only guess real intentions. His method makes explanation stop at professed principle and action without accepting those professions as evidence for belief, motive or intention. The latter are thus left inaccessible and so a matter of presupposition.

What I feel should be called into question here is Skinner's approach to historiography. He uses a kind of explanatory history to illustrate his ideas regarding the writing of the history of political thought. For such purposes of illustration, this kind of historiography has distinct disadvantages in comparison with a more narrative style of history writing. Skinner is forced to accept the work of other historians as authoritative sources before he can begin his exercise in explanation.⁹⁶ The explanations so produced are then given in support of the ideas concerning the right approach to writing history. I have already quoted Butterfield's plea for narrative history. In support of that cause I would like to draw attention here to a reply made to some of Skinner's methodological articles by Mulligan, Richards and Graham.⁹⁷

In one of the articles which they analyse, Skinner writes that:

"... even if the emergence of capitalism predated the emergence of its ideology, and even if the professed ideology never provided the capitalists with any of their real motives, it is still essential to refer to the ideology in order to be able to explain how and why the system developed". 98

The above named critics argue that, in the case of emergent capitalism, the words that Skinner claims were transformed by the protagonists of nascent capitalism in order to give their behaviour a favourable "description" did, in fact, carry that favourable evaluation before the time of which Skinner writes. They conclude, therefore, that their article "... has demonstrated that the wrong actors, the wrong time and the wrong justifications have been produced by Skinner to explain an historical phenomenon".⁹⁹

Now Skinner writes of the "paradox" of Bolingbroke, the "arch-enemy of the Whigs", providing "the clearest and most stylish survey of a number of key Whig political beliefs",¹⁰⁰ we can, however, question whether Skinner is quite clear what the "paradox" is. The clarity I have in mind is that which could be achieved in a narrative setting out how that state of affairs came about. In fact, Skinner seems simply to assume that Bolingbroke wrote in the context of a system which comprised the Whigs and their opponents. The danger of making such assumptions is revealed by the appearance, since Skinner wrote that article, of a narrative of a much more complex political scene in which Bolingbroke's contribution appears as intelligible rather than paradoxical.¹⁰¹ Where Skinner's approach rests on assumptions about historical "fact" how can it be secure?

If his examples can be shown not to work, what of the claims about the relationship between action and principles? Skinner argues that there is a need to refer to principles, even if insincerely held, because these principles can be used to justify only a very limited range of actions. His examples seem to me to fail to make the point convincingly. We are to understand Bolingbroke as picking his justifications so that he could act in a particular way, whilst the range of plausible justifications available to Bolingbroke acted as a limit on his actions. In Skinner's words, these "principles" were "causal conditions of his actions".¹⁰² Must we accept that Bolingbroke was quite so cynical? I think not.

Let me now contrast my view with that of Skinner. It is as follows. Ideologists create characterisations of the world. Almost any action can be justified to fellow adherents in terms of the accepted ideologist's characterisations, for by acting together in the name of those characterisations, they affirm their possession of a particular identity specified in the work of that ideologist. All involved must admit their action to be appropriate, but the range of available justifications does not limit the scope of action. This is because ideological justifications are not merely picked to justify a chosen course of action. Ideologies are not instruments grasped to attain non ideologically conceived objectives. The ideology and its characterisations are believed in, not selected according to policy. As I have tried to show, where a policy chosen according to practical considerations seems to sit uneasily with an accepted view

of the world¹⁰³, we should expect the characterisations of a new depiction of the world to come to be taken up in the speech of adherents. It is precisely such speech that is overlooked in Skinner's talk of the subversion of language. A common vocabulary promotes cohesion in a political association by offering the means whereby a collective identity can be articulated.

Certainly the political historian must be a historian of political ideas. In my view that entails that he must attempt to narrate the history of a tradition. He must look to a group of agents in order to see what they did, and how they spoke about their actions. This is not because ideologists are out to hoodwink non-adherents by subverting their evaluative language in order to legitimate the action of their (undeceived) adherents. It is not because, as Skinner proposes, the range of evaluative terms available sets a limit to what the rational agent can achieve whilst retaining the plausibility of his rhetoric. Rather, the narrative which encompasses both actions and professions of belief can give an account of the practical demands faced by political agents, of the action they took, and the language in which that policy was debated. Is that not, after all, the information we would need in order to make sense of the doings of a politician we could actually observe?

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have tried to give an account of political writing of the kind which usually forms the subject matter of histories of political thought. I have presented this writing as a depiction of the world - an accumulation of characterisations discernable in the political discourse of various associations of persons. Such utterances constitute the means by which common and distinct identities are affirmed, for which reason I concluded my last chapter with the argument that the historian of political activity must also be an historian of political ideas. To attain historical understanding the historian has to be the historian of a tradition or traditions. Political ideas and political actions cannot, in my view, be divorced from one another, and recounted in separate narratives, without an impairment of intelligibility. The historian of political thought must also narrate the history of a distinct style of conduct. He must give an account both of the ideological understanding of the politically related, and the politics of that relationship. Without an exploration of the continuity of both belief and practice, the attempt to write a history of ideas becomes the familiar series of synopses of well-known texts. The pretensions of such a work to being a history are defeated by its incoherence.¹ It gives neither an account of persistence nor one of novelty. It lacks the vital feature of the historical narrative; continuity in the phenomenon that it seeks to render intelligible. This is the aspect I have called tradition. Let us review

some of the features of this concept.

If the concept of tradition were to preclude the notion of innovation it would be of little relevance to an attempt to recount the shifting commitments of those engaged in political activity. This is one of the themes I have tried to stress. At the same time, the continuity that allows a series of novel contributions to be an historical subject is provided by the ongoing presence of an association of political agents. Such an association is, of course, constantly gaining and losing members. But that is no ground for denying its persistent identity. This identity is sustained by acknowledged contributions to the ideological understanding of its membership. It is the positive response of that membership in the vocabulary of a conviction that authenticates any innovation within their tradition.

Of course, questions of orthodoxy arise in all such associations, and formal institutions exist to resolve such matters when political debate reaches an impasse, although there are impasses of such proportions that these arrangements have to be abandoned. The apparent problem, which has caused great difficulty for many historians of political thought, that of distinguishing contributions to a tradition from what seem to be similar works, simply disappears. What is to be recognised as a contribution to a tradition is decided by the participants in the tradition. It should be remembered, however, that official histories of "doctrine" can only constitute evidence to be considered by the historian of political thought. They cannot supplant parts of his narrative. For it is in the writing of party histories that the essentialist comes into his own, and,

as we have seen, his work is a misrepresentation of the tradition of discourse about which he writes. He seeks an essence in the wholly mutable, leaving all to hang upon a supposed definition. The essentialist cannot be said to be a bad historian. Rather he is no historian at all. "Definierbar ist nur das, was keine Geschichte hat"²

Nevertheless the work of the essentialist cannot be dismissed. He is not merely an academic who has failed to reflect upon the nature of his subject matter. He can be a person attempting to identify the basic tenets of his, or another's, beliefs because he feels that there is something to be done or refrained from in the political arena. He is not then concerned, that is, with the past as past, but as a guide in present engagement. Although not an historian, he is an historical phenomenon - an agent of change.

He becomes such an agent when the alleged essentials of principles he elaborates come to be considered in the light of present crisis and the concomitant need to act, to be lacking in some vital respect. In that case, "revision" might be called for. However, proposals are often made more acceptable when, as the essentialist would say, they can be shown to follow from already accepted beliefs. In my view, these accepted beliefs do no more than dramatically illuminate the recitation of the essentialist's proposals. Such a "demonstration", even if it can be effected to the satisfaction of the intended audience, is of course, not a history. It is ruled by the present concern of forging group cohesion and providing motivation for the achievement of some political end. This cohesion, I suggest, is in part

achieved by the way that significance is conferred upon favoured policies in ideological talk.

What makes it possible for the adherents of an ideology to support a policy as the authentic action of persons with the identity they claim to have and seek to affirm need not be a work specifically written to effect such understanding. Rather, an already known and published piece could be taken up by the perplexed who find in it a depiction of what they take to be their present predicament. Not all contributions to a tradition therefore are deliberate attempts to influence the reflections of the particular group(s) who find inspiration in those works. What is historically important then is not solely what an author actually intended, but also what others have made of his work. This is something which is overlooked by writers, such as Quentin Skinner, who undertake to present an understanding of a text in a particular context. This is a valuable contribution to the history of political thought but, as I have noted, the oddity of Skinner's account of Bolingbroke's career and his motives suggests that the latter account arose, in part, from a weakness in Skinner's historiography. My main point was that he ignores the possibility that professed principles, as he calls them, can be indigenous to the practice of a group, and that such 'principles' cannot simply be imposed even by its accepted leaders. In such matters a balance must be struck between what a leadership recommends and what the membership is prepared to accept. I think it is plain that those in authority cannot in their pronouncements go far beyond what is intelligible to their followers, without putting their title to leadership at risk. The existence of a

common vocabulary is vital to the unity of the association, and that vocabulary is never fixed. The way in which depictions of the world can be said to be "taken up", whether by party members spontaneously or at the recommendation of the party leadership, is something to which the historian must always return because the adherent has the ideological identity in question. The presence and identifiability of those adherents are the keys to the notion of tradition I recommend here for his consideration.

Let us look again then at the various notions of tradition, identified at the beginning of this thesis, in the light of what I have attempted, in the course of my argument, to say about traditions of discourse.

The literary conception of tradition embodied in the work of Leavis raised the question of the unity of traditions. Identification of the component parts of the 'Great Tradition' depended upon the critic's aesthetic sense. Earlier authors judged to belong to the tradition are considered by Leavis to have had a part in the development of subsequent contributors to the tradition. Yet the connection between those authors remained mysterious. It is not a notion of tradition that can be usefully deployed by any historian, for the work of later novelists is conceived to be made possible by the work of their predecessors who thereby gained a-historical significance. In other words they became "historically" significant through the medium of the critic's hindsight, and hindsight is not something which has a place in the historical understanding.

T.S. Eliot, too, conceived of the literary past as endowed with meaning by the art of the present. Both

Eliot and Leavis argued that tradition is not a matter of repetition or elaboration of past achievement. That, after all, is plagiarism. But Eliot's notion of tradition is more complex than Leavis's in two vital respects. Firstly, Eliot contends that orthodoxy regulates innovation in a tradition of conduct, and, secondly, that innovatory authors have learned from preceding writers without imitation. I have taken up both of these notions and elaborated them to produce an account of education as initiation into a tradition. In my account, education is to be understood as learning, perhaps by imitation at first (but only at first), to go beyond the work of one's acknowledged masters. The initiate's work is novel, not merely derivative. What links him with the tradition, to which he has introduced innovation, is not "influence" but authenticity acceptable to other respected practitioners. In this sense, I believe, we can talk of traditions in art and literature. Eliot, however, doubted that terms such as 'romantic' and 'classical' are of much interest to authors themselves. Still if their value to the author is doubted then Mario Praz's defence of their usefulness to the critic as approximate labels should not be overlooked. It would, nevertheless, be a mistake to conclude that, because the critic has a use for such vague labels, the names, 'Conservative' or 'Liberal' can be used with the same ease by the historian of political thought. Words such as 'Liberal', 'Socialist', 'Conservative', 'Fascist' and 'National-Socialist' (the list is not exhaustive) are not indefinable because of any vagueness in meaning, but because the Liberals, like the Socialists and the others, do

not always draw inspiration from the same source. Of course, we can say what Liberals now generally profess, or have professed at a stated time in the past, but this is no certain guide to their future professions. Yet, Praz was not completely wide of the mark when he found the pairs of terms 'Conservative' and 'Liberal' and 'Romantic' and 'Classical' comparable, for, just as by 'Romantic' we mean Byron and Shelley but not Alcman or Pope, so when we think of Liberals, J.S. Mill or Asquith might spring to mind, but Margaret Thatcher should not, for the same reason that Alcman cannot be a Romantic. Indeed, although ideological labels are unlike the critic's categories, with respect to their vagueness, what I take to be one more similarity between them appeared in my discussion of definition (pp. 66 - 68). Both sets of terms are of the type in which denotation determines connotation rather than one which is more often the rule where the denotation is determined by the connotation. A failure to observe this peculiarity is, I believe, one of the essentialist's more common faults. Essentialism, however, has already been discussed. Here my objective is to review the various notions of tradition with which I began my account of the concept of tradition and its relevance to the historian of political thought. Some contrasts and comparisons between them and the concept of tradition I subsequently attempted to elaborate should now be clear. One more academic use of the concept 'tradition', referred to in the introduction remains to be discussed. That is the theological one. The other common usage which is frequently found in the works of

social anthropologists; is, I argued in my second chapter, synonymous with 'custom' in the way that 'traditional' is sometimes substituted for 'conventional'. The theological use of 'tradition' however is, I believe, of interest in its own right, and the controversy aroused by it within the Christian community has played a part in my deliberations on tradition and the history of political thought.

The Protestants, it is generally accepted, have rejected the Roman Catholic teachings on tradition, in favour of a doctrine of sola scriptura, and, having rejected the authority of the pronouncements of past theologians, the Protestant can, without inconsistency, reject that of present ones too, and thereafter rely solely on individual revelation. But the price of such consistency is vulnerability to accusations of subjectivism. The charge is not inescapable however. Barth, for example, suggests that fruitful appeal can be made to the community of believers. I find that suggestion illuminating because, in my view, whether or not we argue that such a community has a part to play in matters relating to personal salvation, in politics such an appeal could inform a political identity. Effective action, in the modern political arena, demands the exertions of a cohesive and committed group. In advocating the concept of tradition elaborated in this thesis I have attempted to place what I take to be the correct emphasis on such associations.

In writing of the controversy surrounding theological tradition I noted that the 'traditum' of the Roman Catholic conception of tradition proved to be elusive. Nevertheless, it is possible to

write a history of the traditio, or series of acts of transmission. This notion of tradition does then have some claim to recognition as an historical subject. What, in my view, makes the concept of a tradition of discourse clearly an historical subject is that it allows for the continuity through change which can be narrated by the historian. The enduring association of practitioners provides that continuity whilst the vocabulary of adherence changes in the face of political reality. Continuity, then, does not depend upon the identification of a traditum, the elusive object of theological surmise that has led one theologian to suggest that the transmitted object of christian tradition is "the very person of Jesus himself as the incarnate word of God". Fortunately, only the essentialist need postulate an enduring traditum, and I have argued that his work cannot be considered to be a history of political thought.

Whilst my object in this thesis has been to elaborate a conception of tradition which has a place in the writing of histories of political thought, as we have seen, not all of the conceptions of tradition discussed have been suited to the historian's purpose. They are all, however, in rough accord with the dictionary definitions with which my discussion began. Those definitions of tradition were:

"a statement, belief or practice transmitted (especially orally) from generation to generation."

And

"...the body (or any one) of the experiences and usages of any branch or school of art or literature handed down by predecessors and generally followed."

I suggest that the concept of tradition which I recommended to the historian of political thought falls no more awkwardly within the scope of the above definitions than the other notions I have considered. At the same time, it is important to remember that the body of usages and experiences transmitted in such a tradition, the very vocabulary of adherence, is always subject to change. No less is true, however, of the body of theories and postulates we call scientific knowledge, and science, too, has been described as a tradition.

My argument then, is that there is a conception of tradition deployable by the historian of political thought. Denial of the concept's claim to the name 'tradition' would in my view, be erroneous. The concept has much in common with other conceptions of tradition. Yet it is distinguishable from them, and is not merely synonymous with another concept such as that which identifies it with custom. The historian, who uses it to inform his narrative, is in a position to take account of the way that the world of politics remains in constant flux as the arrangements of society are adjusted with the emergence of, or demand for, new confrontations and conciliations.

What I have attempted to do, during the course of this thesis, then, is to seek out one concept amongst the various overlapping usages by which we talk in a complex, but not unlimited, language of a greatly more variable world. That concept (for which I have claimed the name 'tradition') is, I have argued, vital to the historian's understanding of his subject matter. In so arguing I have objected to the claims,

perhaps coloured by recollections of what we mean when we speak of 'traditionalism' (see Ch. II), that traditions are in some sense authoritarian. The notions of prescriptive paradigms, in the way that is has been used by some historians of science, and writers on scientific method, can, I have argued, have no place in the history of political thought. Science is an investigation. The practice of politics is not. Nevertheless, the fact that we can talk sensibly of a party member following 'the party line' should make us reluctant to jettison, without more ado, all accounts of authority from a discussion of political talk and adherence to ideology. Often, of course, we talk of the 'orthodox membership' or the 'party faithful'. But I have tried to take care to distinguish orthodoxy, which is a matter of belief, from acceptance of authority, which does not even always demand suspension of disbelief. Belief, after all, cannot be ordered.

In objecting to some of the claims that have been made about authority and tradition I have employed Alasdair MacIntyre's distinction between what is internal and external to a practice. Institutions were said by him to 'sustain' practices. Clearly, office holders of institutions have authority (de jure at least) by virtue of their office. Yet, if the claim to an office is made on the basis of policies, advocated or executed, it can only be made by elaboration of the significance of those policies in terms of the political vision from which party members gain inspiration. From the point of view of the ordinary party member, acceptance of a policy implies orthodoxy, because it implies acceptance of the significance of the

proposed action. "Fellow-travellers" need not be considered here. There can be no serious adherents who are not party members. I argued this point in Chapter IV, in which I discussed what constitutes the claim to be in a particular relationship. According to the view put forward in that Chapter, ideologies specify relationships between identities, which are affirmed in political action.

The argument given above, in shortened form, is the basis for much of my criticism of a number of accounts and histories of parties. The ones I have in mind are those which describe at length all the institutional changes and major policy decisions of a party's existence without giving the reader some insight into the debates which gave those actions their meaning for the agents of them. What is, I believe, lacking most in such accounts is an appreciation of the language of adherence. The opportunity arises here for the historian of political theory to display something akin to the aesthetic appreciation of the adherent's vision, which was mentioned in my first discussions of the literary critics. Some writers, however, in seeking to reconstruct that vision, have confused ideological writing with academic philosophy. The history of a tradition of discourse is, by them, taken to be that of the further elaboration of a theory. This essentialist error has been compounded by some writers who have failed to take proper notice of the political groupings of which they claim to write. The result is an account of a phantom political association concocted from all the actual political groupings which are thought to subscribe to elements of the philosophical 'doctrine'. I illustrated my objections to this kind of writing with the case of

nationalism. My argument was as follows.

There is no "paradox of nationalism" in the case where a 'nationalist' party both fights against a regime identified as an oppressor of the nation, and, at the same time denies the 'nationalist' aspirations of another 'nationalist' party. Any inconsistency in the first party's 'nationalism' is only present if it is believed that, 'nationalism' is one 'doctrine'. But my argument has been that to identify such a movement one must look to an association of adherents of the putative 'doctrine'. Who is to count as a member of that party is a matter of acknowledgement by the membership of the party itself. That is, for the historian it is a question of evidence, not an opportunity for a philosophical analysis of utterances.

My proposal is this. The location of bodies of practitioners, of the kind described, whether in the fine arts, the sciences or politics, is a necessary condition for the identification of traditions of such pursuits. Some works are 'taken up' by those practitioners, so becoming contributions to the tradition, and it is the character of these contributions, as innovations rather than imitations or repetitions of past practice, which allows us to talk of traditions in this sense in political discourse at all. I believe that, to paraphrase the words of Michael Oakeshott: if traditions have been tricky things to get to know, they are indeed not without identity.

APPENDIX

'The Liberal Mind'

Just as some authors have tried to consolidate all "nationalists" into a single movement informed by a single doctrine, 'nationalism', so common use of the word "liberal" can mislead the unwary into seeking to give an account of that diffuse "liberalism" which is not the preserve of any one Liberal party. K. Minogue is one such author, and his The Liberal Mind¹ is one such account.

In the preface to that book, Minogue informs us that his "aim" is to "analyse the long tradition of liberalism".² On page one we are told that:

"Liberalism is a political theory closely linked these days with such democratic machinery as checks and balances in government, an uncontrolled press, responsible opposition parties, and a population which does not live in fear of arbitrary arrest by the government." 3

Minogue then goes on (in one sentence) to define a "liberal state" and adds that:

"A liberal political philosophy is a description of this kind of state, combined with the attempt to work out the general principles which can best rationalize it". 4

Now all this is less obviously an essentialist account of Liberalism than that given by say Macpherson, Hobhouse or Spencer. It seems more like an account of what we mean by "liberal" when we say that Khrushchev was more liberal than Stalin. In a brief inquiry entitled "Is Liberalism an Ideology", towards the end of the introduction to The Liberal Mind, Minogue remarks that:

"In discussing liberalism, we must at least initially assume that it

is a simple entity. This is not to suggest that there is a pure essence of liberalism, nor need it impel us towards the fruitless pastime of seeking to isolate 'true liberalism' from a collection of counterparts". 5

But after discussing some of the possible divisions in "liberalism", he concludes that:

"The unity which allows us to discuss liberalism over the last few centuries as a single and continuing entity is intellectual: we are confronted with a single tradition of thought..." 6

Such a "tradition" is claimed to be an "abstraction", however. No one is a "liberal pure and simple".⁸ Here the difficulties come to the fore. What Minogue has to say makes sense, perhaps, of his "liberalism" but not of the ideology, Liberalism. Yet the two are not distinguished. Note the ambiguity in the following sentence:

"Liberal intellectuals draw upon other traditions; and liberal politicians, simply because they are politicians, cannot be consistently liberal". 9

No one would deny that Liberals might not be consistently liberal. But to say that Liberals cannot be consistently Liberal is hardly to state the self-evident. If a Liberal leader always has the backing of his party, who is to say that he is not a Liberal and that his policies are not Liberal policies? Losing the backing of the party that acknowledges him as a Liberal, that is, ceasing to be a Liberal (or perhaps being inconsistently Liberal), does not make him more of a politician (this is what we might expect from Minogue's remark above). Conversely, we do not deny someone the title of politician because he has not had the career of a Gladstone. So, perhaps, "liberals"

cannot be consistently "liberal". Yet Minogue claims that his "liberalism" is an "ideology" and a "movement" and that J.S. Mill would be a guide to what a "liberal pure and simple" would be like if such a creature were possible. A reader of Minogue's book might, then, be forgiven for thinking that if Minogue is writing about anyone at all then he is writing about Liberals. Perhaps it is possible to write an account of "liberalism" as an abstraction. To write an account of a tradition like that of Liberalism one must write its history. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that "liberals" seem to Minogue to have ceased to have "fixed identities", or that "liberalism" seems to be the creed of all but "a few palpable eccentrics". He cannot identify his "liberals" because he has misidentified what gives a tradition its identity.

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31. Presumably it was to achieve a similar effect that Action Française bought the Catholic newspaper 'L'Univers' when they already had a party organ. I am reminded here of Graham Wallas's remark: "It is therefore rightly held that a capitalist who buys a paper for the sake of using its old influence to strengthen a new movement is doing something to be judged by other moral standards than those which apply to the purchase of so much printing machinery and paper".
Graham Wallas, Human Nature in Politics, (London: Constable, 1919). The historian, of course, is not concerned with moral judgements, but he should, in my view, be aware that such a purchase has a significance beyond that of buying paper and equipment.
32. Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics, (London: Methuen 1962), p. 129.
33. Pocock, op.cit., pp. 233-272
34. Pocock, op.cit., p. 237
35. Pocock, op.cit., p. 41
36. Pocock, op.cit., p. 275
37. Pocock, op.cit., 14n
38. Andrew Lockyer, "'Traditions' as Context in the History of Political Theory", Political Studies, 27, 1979 pp 201- 217
39. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 201

40. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 201
41. Lockyer, op.cit., 201n
42. B.A. Haddock, 'The History of Ideas and the Study of Politics', Political Theory II, 1974, no. 4, pp. 420-431
43. John G.A. Pocock, 'The History of Political Thought a Methodological Enquiry', in P. Laslett & W.G. Runciman (eds), Philosophy Politics and Society, series 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), pp 183-202
- Idem, 'Time, Institutions and Action' in Politics Language and Time, (London: Methuen, 1972), pp. 233-272
44. Lockyer, op.cit., 201 n
45. Lockyer, op.cit., 201 n
46. Pocock, 'The History of Political Thought: A Methodological Enquiry'
47. Pocock, op.cit., p. 183
48. Pocock, op.cit., p. 183
49. Pocock, op.cit., p. 184, "... Form of Study", however, suggests, to me, an approach to a subject, not its content.
50. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 202
51. Lockyer, op.cit., (his emphasis), p. 202
52. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 202
53. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 202
54. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 202
55. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 210
56. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 203
57. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 217
58. B.A. Haddock, op.cit., p. 423
59. B.A. Haddock, op.cit., p. 429
60. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 210
61. Abstraction, like abridgement, is, after all, a literary exercise (in modern usage). In my view its use in relation to experience is, therefore, purely metaphorical.

62. Lockyer, op.cit.; p. 203
63. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 216
64. Quentin Skinner, 'Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action', Political Theory II, 1974, pp 277-301
65. Skinner, op.cit., p. 287
66. Skinner, op.cit., p. 288
67. Skinner, op.cit., p. 288
68. Skinner, op.cit., p. 288
69. Lockyer, op.cit., p. 205
70. Skinner, op.cit., (his emphasis), p. 288
71. Skinner, op.cit., p. 289
72. David J. Manning, Liberalism, (London: Dent, 1976), p.9
73. Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', History and Theory, 8, 1969, pp 3-53
74. See Leonard T. Hobhouse, Liberalism, (New York: O.U.P., 1964), pp 32-3.
For the way that Locke has been claimed by American thinkers see Everett D. Martin, Liberty, (London; Routledge, 1930), pp 200-201
75. Martyn P. Thompson, 'The Reception of Locke's Two Treatises of Government', Political Studies XXIV 1976, pp 184-191
76. Noel O'Sullivan, Conservatism, (London: Dent, 1976) p.13
77. Robert N. Berki, Socialism, (London, Dent, 1975), p.11
78. Karl R. Popper, The Open Society and its Enemies 5th Ed. Vol II, (London R.K.P., 1966).
79. Popper, op.cit., p.13
80. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 14
81. Berki, op.cit., p. 11
82. Popper, op.cit. (his emphasis), p. 19
83. Popper, op.cit., p. 9
84. Popper, op.cit., p. 9
85. Compare, for example, the works of J.S. Mill and L.T. Hobhouse.

86. M. Levin, 'What Makes a Classic in Political Theory?'
Political Science Quarterly, 1973, vol 88,
pp 462-476, p. 472
87. Levin, op.cit., p. 473. Of course, categorization has
its place in science, not history.
88. But see e.g.. Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man
(Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1964).
This is hardly a work by an acknowledged
Conservative. It is, I suggest, significant
that Levin gives no reference to any use by
Mill of the term 'mass-society'.
89. Hobhouse, op.cit., p. 62
90. Herbert Spencer, The Man versus the State, (London:
Watts & Co., 1940)
91. Spencer, op.cit., p. 1
92. Spencer, op.cit., p. 1
93. Spencer, op.cit., p. 3
94. See Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of
History, (London: Bell, 1931).
95. Spencer, op.cit., p. 5
96. Spencer, op.cit., p. 5
97. Spencer, op.cit., p. 8
98. Spencer, op.cit., p.8
99. Spencer, op.cit., p. 8
100. See for example, Alan Beith, The Case for the Liberal
Party and the Alliance, (London: Longman, 1983), p25-8
Benjamin Kidd, Principles of Western Civilisation
(London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 120
101. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 13
102. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 12
103. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 14
104. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 14
105. O'Sullivan, op.cit., preface
106. O'Sullivan, op.cit., preface
107. O'Sullivan, op.cit., preface
108. O'Sullivan, op.cit., preface

109. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 14
110. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 43
111. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 12
112. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 80
113. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 113
114. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 113
115. Richard G.F. Robinson, Definition, (Oxford: OUP 1954)
 Definition is divided by Robinson into
 'nominal definition' and 'real definition'.
 A nominal definition establishes or reports the
 meaning of a word or symbol. A word can be
 correlated to a thing, or a word can be correlated
 to another word as having the same meaning.
 Correlation of a word to a thing can be 'lexical
 definition' which reports usage, or 'stipulative
 definition' which prescribes how a word should
 be used. 'Real definition', however, if it is
 a kind of definition at all, is regarded by
 Robinson as being a confusion of at least twelve
 activities.
116. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 9
117. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 9
- Ignored, here, of course, are thinkers such as
 Bolingbroke, Halifax and Hume, reference to whose
 works do appear in accounts of Conservatism. See
 for example, Ian Gilmour, Inside Right, (London
 Hutchinson, 1977), part II. Anthony Quinton,
The Politics of Imperfection, (London, Faber &
 Faber, 1978).
118. O'Sullivan, op.cit., p. 9
119. Robinson, op.cit., pp 113-114
120. Hobhouse, op.cit., p. 87
121. Crawford Brough MacPherson, The Political Theory
 of Possessive Individualism, (London, OUP, 1962)
 pp 270-274.
122. Macpherson, op.cit., p. 270
123. Macpherson, op.cit., p. 274

CHAPTER IV

1. William H. Greenleaf, Order Empiricism and Politics, (London: OUP, 1964).
2. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 2
3. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 170
4. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 10
5. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 10
6. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 10
7. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 56
8. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 14
9. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 9
10. Elie Kedourie, Nationalism 3rd ed. (London: Hutchinson, 1966)
11. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 30
12. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 30
13. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 31
14. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 31
15. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 56
16. Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1942)
17. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 92-140
18. Michael J. Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics, (London: Methuen, 1962)
19. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 110
20. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 127
21. Johan Huizinga, 'Patriotism and Nationalism in European History', Men & ideas, (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1960)
22. Huizinga, op.cit., p. 145
23. See Louis L Snyder, The New Nationalism (Ithaca N.Y: Cornell Univeristy Press, 1968), p. 35
24. Snyder, op.cit., p. 363
25. Snyder, op.cit., p. 17

26. Snyder, op.cit., p. 17
27. Snyder, op.cit., p. 2
28. See Appendix , The Liberal Mind, for a discussion of a similarly confused account of Liberalism.
29. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 78
30. See Lawrence G. Graham, On the Nature of Ideological Argument, (unpublished thesis, University of Durham 1975), Ch. 1.
31. Greenleaf op.cit., p. 266
32. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 267
33. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 262
34. Greenleaf, op.cit. p. 263
35. Greenleaf, op.cit., p. 267
36. He dwells, however, on the violent aspects of that action. Such violence can be part of the political style of a movement. It is a style common to many so-called nationalist movements, which lends plausibility to the claim that "nationalism" is one movement. The claim that Fascism is a single movement which spread across Europe in the 1930's rather than an Italian movement, in part imitated by Hitler and Franco, has, I suggest, much the same basis. The head of the British Union of Fascists, of course, is on record denying any such unity. (The Times 13/12/83, p. 10.
37. Kedourie, op.cit., pp 24-25
38. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 27
39. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 50
40. Carlton J.H. Hayes, Nationalism - A Religion, (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 28
41. Huizinga, op.cit., p. 99
42. Hayes, op.cit., p. 142
43. Huizinga, op.cit., p. 150
44. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 130
45. Kedourie, op.cit., p. 71
46. Keith Webb, The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland, (Glasgow: Molendinar press, 1977)
47. Webb, op.cit., p. viii

48. Webb, op.cit., p. 48
49. Webb, op.cit., pp. 114-117
50. Webb, op.cit., p. 110
51. Stuart C. Brown, 'Religion & the Limits of Language'
Reason & Religion, Stuart C. Brown (ed) (Ithaca:
Cornell University Press, 1977)
52. Brown, op.cit., p. 249
53. Brown, op.cit., p. 250
54. Brown, op.cit., p. 251
55. Brown, op.cit., p. 251
56. R.E.F. Smith in Robert W. Davies (ed), The Soviet
Union, pp. 134-147 (London: George Allen &
Unwin, 1978), p. 138
57. See for example, M. Lewin, 'Who was the Soviet
Kulak?', Soviet Studies, 18, 1967, pp. 189-212
58. R. Beerman, 'Comment on "who was the Soviet Kulak?"'
Soviet Studies, 18 1967, pp 371-375
59. Beerman, op.cit., p. 373
60. Beerman, op.cit. p. 373
61. Beerman, op.cit. p. 374
62. Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (London: Duckworth,
1981):
63. MacIntyre, op.cit., p. 181
64. MacIntyre, op.cit., p. 178
65. MacIntyre, op.cit., p. 176
66. MacIntyre, op.cit., p. 177
67. MacIntyre, op.cit., p. 178
68. MacIntyre, op.cit., p. 179
69. MacIntyre, op.cit., p. 181
70. Joseph V. Stalin, Works Vol XII, (Moscow: Foreign
Languages Publishing House, 1955) p. 17
71. Stalin, op.cit., Vol XII, p. 22
72. Stalin, op.cit., Vol XII, p. 22

73. Stalin, op.cit., Vol XII, p. 111
74. Sir Lewis Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1957)
75. Namier, op.cit., p. 4
76. Namier, op.cit., p. 4
77. Namier, op.cit., p. X
78. Namier, op.cit., p. 213
79. Herbert Butterfield, George III and the Historians, (London: Collins, 1957), p. 206
80. Quentin Skinner, 'The Principles and Practice of Opposition', Historical Perspectives, Neil McKendrick (ed), (London: Europa 1974), pp.93-128
81. Skinner, op.cit., p. 100
82. Skinner, op.cit., p. 106
83. Skinner, op.cit., p. 107
84. Skinner, op.cit., p. 107
85. Skinner, op.cit., p. 107
86. Skinner, op.cit., p. 108
87. Skinner, op.cit., p. 126
88. Skinner, op.cit., pp 126-127
89. Skinner, op.cit., p. 127
90. Skinner, op.cit., p. 128
91. Skinner, op.cit., p.114, p116
92. Skinner, op.cit., p118, p121
93. Skinner, op.cit., p. 126
94. Skinner, op.cit., p. 126
95. Skinner, op.cit., p. 128
96. Mulligan et al (see note 97), make the broader point that in his non-historical examples Skinner is also dependent on expert opinion.
97. Lotte Mulligan, Judith Richards, John Graham, 'Intentions and Conventions', Political Studies XVII, No. 1., pp 84-98.
98. Quentin Skinner, 'Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action',

Political Theory II, 1974, p. 301

99. Mulligan et al. op.cit., p. 94
100. Quentin Skinner 'The Principles and Practice of Opposition', Historical Perspectives, Neil McKendrick (ed), pp 93-128, p. 126
101. Harry T. Dickinson, Liberty and Property, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1977)
102. Skinner, op.cit., p. 128
103. Herbert Butterfield (op.cit, p. 230) remarks that Bolingbroke was, in a sense, writing for posterity, rather than as a 'political propagandist'. Ideologies depict the world.

CONCLUSION

1. See Michael J. Oakeshott, On History, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983)
2. Friedrich Nietzsche quoted in Kurt Klaxen, Vorlesungen zur Geschichtstheorie I, (Schoeningen: Paderborn, 1974), p. 160

APPENDIXThe Liberal Mind

1. Kenneth R. Minogue, The Liberal Mind, (London: Methuen, 1963)
2. Minogue, op.cit., p. vii
3. Minogue, op.cit., p. 1
4. Minogue, op.cit., p. 1
5. Minogue, op.cit., p. 13
6. Minogue, op.cit., p. 14
7. Minogue, op.cit., p. 14
8. Minogue, op.cit., p. 15
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