

CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE

We can wind up the polymorphous discursive journey we traveled through four chapters by examining how well the traveler (the author of this study, introduced in Chapter I), his vehicle (the discursive analysis, introduced also in Chapter I), and his toolbox of *bricoleur* (the conceptual framework formulated in Chapter II) have fared on the way: in surveying the suppression of the "scientific" and "practical" discourses of public policy evaluation. The journey has been - expectedly and surprisingly - one of transformations. The "driver's seat" - originally that of a professional public policy evaluator - has been transformed, as intended, into a locus of a critical "anti-subject" - or at least a locus of a designer of strategies for anti-subjects who would dispel the illusory (the "obvious", "apparent" and "reified") from public policy evaluation. On the road the vehicle has been serviced and also provided with new accessories in order to take the traveler finally through the polyphonic discourse of practical policy evaluation in Chapter IV. The toolbox of *bricoleur* and the tools (the classifications of the presuppositions and implications) have remained basically the same but when they were used to tackle the complex, multi-faceted and often surprising phenomena of public policy evaluation they could not always be used universally, as originally intended, but as required by the analyses of the composite parts of the evaluative discourse.

Formally, the journey advanced through its first stage as planned. After the preparation of the vehicle and the toolbox, the social science approaches to public policy evaluation were visited and surveyed in Chapter III, and the reasons for the suppression of their discourse were identified. The main surprise during this visit was the strong impact of "internal politics and administration" on the discourse of

"scientific" public policy evaluation. When the different approaches were examined in the "realistic" context of their applications to public policy evaluation, it was observed that the use of the pre-suppositions and implications became "split" when the discourse gave accounts of different actors, such as decisionmakers and "targets" of evaluation. Consequently, the processes of finalization and the related suppression of discourse became polymorphous - and more difficult to analyze and comprehend.

The following stage of the journey, the survey of the case of practical policy evaluation, i.e., the discourse of the Finnish State Economy Comptrollers' Office, was - as expected - even more complex. The detailed analyses and interpretations of the "pseudo-nature" of this discourse advanced as planned, and three types of audit discourse (compliance auditing, effectiveness auditing and efficiency auditing) were identified. The use of the conceptual framework was, however, still more complicated here than in surveying the social science approaches. The types of the audit discourse were necessarily polyphonic - produced by many "voices" - and one had to analyze the possible orientations of the individual auditors diverging from the overall "average" discourse of the Office. The subsequent processes of finalization and the tendencies to suppress the discourse were consequently much more polymorphous than in the case of the social science approaches, and the potentials of the individual auditors to create genuine critical discourse had to be investigated.

The rest of the journey advanced again as planned: the horizon of the surveyer was expanded by examining the sectorial targets of the different types of audit discourse of the Office, and the emergence of links between the sectorial targets and political, parapolitical and bureaucratic establishments were empirically illustrated. Thus it was possible to suggest in concrete terms what kind of strategies anti-subjects could adopt that contest the suppression of the discourse of practical public policy evaluation.

Although the results of the journey were "surprising" in providing ample evidence of the significance of the "political" and "administrative" in the finalization and related suppression of the discourse of public policy evaluation, they did not divert the survey from its original course. The "political" and "administrative" in the

processes of finalization and the suppression of discourse could be seen more as results, rather than reasons, of finalization and suppression, and the "intellectual suppression" of the discourse remained steadily at the main focus of the survey. It goes without saying that the survey and the subsequent assessment of the audit discourse cannot be used to defend "technocratic" interests which demand that auditing be made more "scientific". The analysis and assessment of the social science approaches in Chapter III showed that the discourse is suppressed probably most insiduously where "science" conceals the "politics".

It is not for the traveler himself to discuss whether his journey was a success. But he may be asked and he can answer whether his journey led him to the same or other direction as some of his expected fellow travelers. One can especially ask, whether his profane inroads into politics and administration, his analyses of the concrete splits, and his conniving of the "political" strategies for anti-subjects have separated his study from the existing traditions of critical social science. In one respect, yes. These traditions usually presuppose a coherent and self-transparent "subject", whether intellectual, political, or both - which in the final analysis is supposed to solve all the problems which may arise. The critical discursive analysis pursued in this study establishes a "double decentering": it questions doubly the sovereignty of "social inquirers", both on the intellectual plane and on the political plane; and it suspects itself as much or more than the other discourses. Only this double decentering and "self-suspicion" can "emancipate" discourse from its suppression. Of course, it goes without saying that the critical discursive approach tries to reach beyond such projects as that of Giddens, whose unintended "positivism" in the analysis of social change decreases the critical power of his otherwise well-placed emphasis on lay actors and their knowledge.

But the analysis of the politics, splits and consequent dispersion (both in the target discourses analyzed and in the "meta-discourse" which analyzes) need not lead to the hopeless pessimism of *les nouvelles philosophes*. One can preserve a working relation with critical social science: our journey suggests that critical interventions of anti-subjects should be "profane pilgrimages", provisional,

without any established status, and "dissoluble" after the critical task has been accomplished. Here the politics and splits are seen as "ruptures" wherein the wedge of critical inquiry can be driven. This may, of course, hurt also the inquirers as the politics and splits may also be politics and splits of the prospective anti-subjects themselves. This pain, however, is the necessary price of achieving the "transgression", i.e., breaking against existing rules without totally dissolving them - for the total dissolution would, of course, eliminate the transgression itself. The fact that critical inquiry can proceed only through the narrow path of transgression, leads to a paradoxical situation: while the politics and splits create possibilities of criticism and contestation by creating new loci, arenas or regions where the criticism and contestation are possible, the politics and splits also appear as Foucaultian combinations of power and knowledge which reside everywhere. The criticism and contestation can therefore at best provide fleeting vantage points where it is possible to see some light between the massive clouds of suppression.

* * *

Our study began from the definition of public policy evaluation as social inquiry. As we have now finished our - admittedly partial - analysis of this variant of social inquiry, we are led to ask if the conceptual framework, as refined in the concrete analyses, can be applied in analyzing also other types of social inquiry. Lindblom's and Cohen's list of types of social inquiry, as cited in Chapter I, suggests that future similar research could have many other topics - censuses, other statistics and statistical systems, policy analyses and consulting services by professionals. Future research could of course also examine topics which come closer to the areas investigated here: planning and planning systems, decision support systems and government budgeting and budgeting systems. In the course of this study we have suggested at least three alternatives to proceed technically in such investigations: historical analyses, case studies, and more comprehensive cross-sectional studies along the lines of this study.

Finally, one can still ask if the critical discursive assessment and such a conceptual framework as ours could be used to study the

suppression of discourse in less trite social science approaches than the approaches to public policy evaluation. Such application might well be possible if the framework is elaborated further; and the analyses need not be much more complicated than the ones we have carried out here - although the politics and splits may be much better concealed and guarded than in public policy evaluation.