

THEORY
AND
EVIDENCE

Clark Glymour

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Preface

IF IT IS TRUE that there are but two kinds of people in the world—the logical positivists and the god-damned English professors—then I suppose I am a logical positivist. The logical positivists had an evangelism that I do not share, and I have not written this book with the hope of reforming even my tiny academic corner of the world. I have written it because when I began I thought its main thesis was true and interesting and deserved fuller and more systematic treatment than an essay or series of essays could provide. I do still, though in frankness I think I was a bit carried away with working out the many examples the book now contains. In spite of this disposition I have nonetheless on occasion become indignant at the muddleheaded perversity of those who do not share my views; it may even be that in a few weak moments during the long course of writing I have succumbed to the Ptolemaic illusion that the fate of Western philosophy pivots about my manuscript. I understand that such illusions are not uncommon. Fortunately, I had about me a sure cure for these indulgences. I recall that as a small child I sometimes suspected that my parents were wild beasts transmogrified; my own children suffer from no such fantasies. In my one attempt to illustrate for them the singular importance of my work, I asked them how it was they knew that I, too, had a mind like their own, and was not simply a mindless thing disposed to behave like a person. My illustration, alas, ended the discussion in paroxysms of chortles, giggles, and unending laughter, accompanied, I regret to say, by a considerable amount of finger pointing and exclamations of “That’s what you think about?”. Occasionally I see them gathered with playmates, even nowadays, pointing toward me with whispered gigglings. Their mother, Anita Glymour, a woman of