

Preface and Acknowledgments

What contributes to the development of the discipline of psychology? Traditional answers suggest that it is new empirical evidence. However, a closer look at the history of psychology over the last two hundred years indicates that the accumulation of facts, problem solutions, induction, and the explanation of anomalies play only supporting roles. Indeed, studies on the social, political, and economic factors that have shaped the discipline have contributed significantly to an understanding of the theoretical and practical dynamics of psychology. With the shift to externalist explanations, problem-oriented historical and theoretical analyses have fallen out of grace. However, if one agrees with Gould's (1996) statement that "science moves forward as much by critiquing the conclusions of others as by making novel discoveries" (p. 25), then an analysis of the history of the critique of psychology becomes central. Thus, the focus in this book is not on socio-historical contexts, but on arguments, more specifically, critical arguments, regarding the problems of mainstream psychology at different stages of its development—a critique that has been combined often, but not always, with a vision for a better psychology and the promise to solve the theoretical, methodological, and practical problems of the discipline. Such a program requires emphasizing the logic, structure, and flow of rhetoric, which takes on an important function in psychology's history and contributes to an understanding of the modifications of the mainstream but also the margins. A focus on arguments does not mean that socio-historical traditions are not important. On the contrary, external dimensions are significant for recognizing changes, but they are not the center of attention in the following reconstructions.

Enough material has been accumulated that allows for a history of the critique of psychology since the second half of the 18th century. Thus, the idea that the critique of psychology is an intellectual movement that emerged only in the last forty years in Europe and in North America, and is based on a postmodern spirit, should be rejected. All selected critiques

of psychology in this book share dissatisfaction with the dominant views of psychology at a certain time, but they have endorsed different, even contradictory epistemologies, ontologies, and ethical-political world-views. The proposed systematic history and theory of the critique of psychology can only provide a brief snapshot of some of those influential and multifaceted critiques and arguments.

A history of the critique of psychology could distinguish between critiques that have been successful from those that have been influential. *Success* might be defined in terms of critiques that have led to a change of the whole discipline, whereas *influential* might mean that discourses have shaped reflections and practices of groups of psychologists. The book covers both dimensions in discussing critiques that have been successful such as Kant's and, even more clearly, the natural-scientific critique of psychology in the 19th century, and in presenting and reflecting on influential critiques such as the human-scientific, Marxist, feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial critiques of psychology, which have inaugurated new research programs in psychology but have never formed the mainstream. This book does not address whether certain critiques should or should not have been influential, or how these critiques should be ranked or evaluated. This is a metatheoretical task left to the reader.

The history and theory of the critique of psychology is intended as a positive project, performed not for the sake of constructing problems, but in order to provide intellectual tools that help to develop the discipline of psychology. Critiques have shaped the field, are changing the discipline, and will continue to be relevant to the future of psychology. Critics have an important role to play when they identify faults in the discipline, and some of them provide ideas how psychology's shortcomings can be overcome. Certainly, it is not beneficial to any discipline to ignore and repress its faults, with the hope that they will take care of themselves. It is an intellectual obligation to point out in an honest and open reflection that psychology may be submerged in problems, even when no solutions are provided, rather than assuming a priori that psychology is doing just fine.

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The book contains arguments and summaries of some of my research over the last few years, literature overviews, new and original research, and, hopefully, innovative perspectives. Some chapters contain summaries and adaptations of previously published material by me. Despite substantial revisions, some ideas presented in Chapter 2 were originally published by me as "Functions of Knowledge in Psychology" in *New Ideas in*

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