Chapter 1
History of Psychology: What for?

Roger Smith

This chapter lays out for inspection the reasons for engaging with the history of psychology. It is an introduction to this volume of the *Annals of Theoretical Psychology* but also an argument in its own right. It enters a discussion long underway among psychologists. Nevertheless, for me, as a *historian* of science, the field has, or ought to have, a larger significance and a larger audience. Why this is so will, I trust, become clear. I do not want it to be forgotten that there are potentially large audiences elsewhere for the history of psychology: a scholarly one in the humanities and public ones fascinated by human nature and searching for guidance about what it is and what it means.

It is not inappropriate to start with a naïve question: What is psychology and who is a psychologist? The appellations are ubiquitous, yet the contrast between the pursuit of a unified, that is, theoretically grounded, science and a vast range of practical occupations, along with the extended spectrum of activity, with professional researchers at one end and lay, "pop" psychology at the other, make a search for empirical definition almost foolish.[1] Where there is definition, it is normative: it proposes an ideal of what psychology should be. For present purposes, one difference

[1] I comment on the sheer difficulty (perhaps impossibility) of agreeing a description, let alone definition, of psychology. One deep reason (to which Graham Richards, in particular, draws attention—Richards, 1987, 2002, pp. 6–7) is that one word refers both to states people have and to the study of those states, with the implication that history of psychology should encompass both the history of states people have and knowledge of those states. (For further comment, see argument 1.8.) There are no precise general descriptive terms for the (staggeringly) varied occupations called psychology. The once common terms, "applied psychology" and "scientific psychology", will not do, as they imply a separation in principle between scientific and applied domains, which few people now accept; besides, there are marked differences between scientific psychology as a natural science and scientific psychology as a cultural, interpretive, or hermeneutic science and so on.

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S.H. Klempe, R. Smith (eds.), *Centrality of History for Theory Construction in Psychology*, Annals of Theoretical Psychology 14,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-42760-7_1

that matters separates those who study and teach history of psychology as a kind of professional speciality, those who think history has value for what it contributes to psychological science, and those who simply regard history with indifference or contempt. The arguments I present engage with the reasons for these different stances. As for my own position, I put my cards on the table at the outset: I see no more difficulty, in philosophy of knowledge or as a decision about what knowledge to value in contemporary culture, in justifying the pursuit of historical knowledge than in justifying the pursuit of scientific psychology. I readily agree, however, that my underlying position will not cut much ice among potential readers of the *Annals* unless I break it down into specific arguments directed at psychologists. It is, after all, overwhelmingly psychology departments that do teaching in history of psychology, and a large proportion (though certainly not all) of work labelled history of psychology has an audience of Anglo-American psychologists in mind. The journal called simply *History of Psychology* is published by the American Psychological Association.

In my contribution, I characterize briefly the kinds of argument that are available and in use in valuing history. The purpose is not originality but clarity; all the arguments exist in one form and another in the existing literature, but they are scattered and not always clearly focused.[2]

Before making the arguments, it is worth stating and unpacking one blunt position: the history of psychology may be fine, or fun, for those who like that kind of thing, but it makes, and can make, no contribution to the progress of knowledge and/or the improvement of psychological practices. It must be borne in mind that this position may be correct *if*—a large if—particular notions of progress and improvement are exclusively correct. Most academic or professional psychologists work in a narrow speciality of one kind or another. For them, if progress is measured by numbers of research papers contributing to a current sub-specialty of experimental research, say, the fusion of the ocular image, history may indeed be irrelevant. Or, if the criterion of improvement in practice is numbers of clients processed in time available, history may be not just irrelevant but disruptive. It may sound as if I parody; but I think anyone working in contemporary universities or health/welfare delivery will recognize that what counts as a positive contribution is assessed in such ways. *If* assessment is done in such ways, it may well be a waste of time to argue for history.[3]

A number of arguments oppose the dismissal of history. For analytic purposes, I list ten of them (however unsubtle, such a list may at first appear, and however much the different arguments are interrelated) before discussing each in turn:

1. For celebration.
2. The record and identity of the discipline.

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[2] I doubt my list is comprehensive, but it is intended to be focused and systematic and to include the leading types of argument. I draw upon earlier talks and papers, including Smith (2007, 2010), the latter paper followed by commentaries.

[3] All the same, as I argue below, I think it is incontrovertible to say that such research and practices nevertheless tacitly accept a certain version of historical knowledge, though it is so taken for granted that is invisible: the dismissal of history is itself a historically constructed position.

3. The record of scientific progress and advance of humane values.
4. The means to maintain unity in diversity.
5. A resource, or even necessity, for contemporary research or practice.
6. Perspective and critique.
7. The contribution to human self-knowledge and well-being.
8. Psychology's subject matter is historical in nature.
9. Psychological statements have meaning as part of historically formed discourse.
10. History of psychology is an end in itself.

1.1 For Celebration

The uses of history to celebrate, to memorialize, and to sustain individual and collective identity (as I discuss also under Sect. 1.2) need no introduction. Celebratory history poorly informed by historical work is just embarrassing, and it may turn out counter-productive for the celebrants, at least in the longer term. Celebration, however, does not have to be superficial, and, when it is not, it may deploy history of a high standard. It recalls what has been achieved, appropriately remembers fine individuals and institutions, restores to prominence what has been neglected, and may inspire students and policy decisions to emulate what is best.[4] This is so; yet historians of all persuasions believe that something more than celebration is at stake in writing history.

1.2 The Record and Identity of the Discipline

As everyone understands, history is a means to show how psychology (or some part of it) has acquired the knowledge, expertise, and practices that it has. The creation of historical narrative thus has a major part in establishing identity—the identity perceived by people within psychology (or within any of its many divisions) and the identity it is thought to have in society at large. Thus history of psychology has an important place in consolidating and validating collective identity, especially in socializing students but also in shaping celebration and/or critique (see Sect. 1.6). For some, teaching the history of psychology simply has this function. Adrian Brock, in his contribution, particularly notes the role of history in the induction of psychology students into the academic field. But he then goes on to critique this induction for imposing on students a questionable view of psychology's claim, so

[4] A good example is the presentation of the important figurehead of culture in Georgia, the physiologist and researcher of the brain, an opponent of Pavlovian science in the Soviet period, I. S. Beritashvili: Tsagereli and Doty (2009).

often thought necessary to it having the identity of a science, to possess universal as opposed to particular knowledge.

The heavy dependence of notions of collective identity on history is a general feature of culture, obviously not at all special to psychology or any other occupation. There are histories of clinical psychology, brain science, psychoanalysis, and so on, just as there are numerous histories of other disciplines (sociology, anthropology, art history, or whatever). In just the same way, with just the same prominent place for founding myths and founding fathers, there are narratives of the creation and history of nations and ethnic groups. Shifts in the focus of history, because they concern identity, have political meaning. The celebration of the contributions of women and black psychologists to psychology in the United States markedly illustrates this.[5] Because of psychology's range and diversity, disciplinary history in fact, whether intentionally or not, selectively emphasizes and validates one, or some, of many domains or practices at the expense of others. This is seen in the debate about the purposes behind E. G. Boring's famous text, originally published in 1929 (Samelson, 1980). It is disciplinary history that psychologists tend to think interesting and find natural: it gives the background to the kind of knowledge and activity familiar in their own occupation. Such history also dominates textbooks in history of psychology. It has its value to communities, but where it lends itself to nationalist agendas, or vanity, it well deserves the scorn that Aaro Toomela shows for it in his chapter.

The strengths and weaknesses of narrative discipline history have been much aired. The strength is that it has focus and purpose—it speaks to psychologists as psychologists. At its best, it richly enhances a sense of identity and of ideals. Its weaknesses include what has been well called tunnel vision, shutting out from the narrative everything that from a modern perspective does not appear to lead to the present and also projecting a discipline, or occupation, of psychology back into the past when it may not have existed.[6] The result is blindness to the conditions of formation of social structures, like disciplines and occupations, and to the historical constitution of psychology's categories. Traditional narrative histories of psychology show poor understanding of the relations of the field to other disciplines and to daily forms of life, and they incorporate things into the story of the history of psychology that, historically speaking, properly belong under other headings (moral philosophy, for instance).[7] As the historian of science James Secord observes: "Applying categories to the very debates that produced them clearly begs the question" (Secord, 2000, p. 524). History of psychology not concerned with how psychology differentiated as a category presupposes what the history is about rather than inquires into it. History written in this way thus passes into a kind of unreflective celebratory history, in the sense that it makes the present of psychology (or,

[5] Brought into teaching clearly in Pickren and Rutherford (2010).

[6] It was these weaknesses that first led me to venture into this kind of commentary: Smith (1988).

[7] Bruce Alexander and Curtis Shelton even explicitly substitute "psychology" for "moral philosophy" in order to write more clearly for students, thus devaluing history, which is not at all their stated purpose (Alexander & Shelton, 2014, p. 309).

more accurately, the present of some aspect of psychology) appear at one and the same time ancient, wise, and modern, or, in a word, inevitable and therefore true.

There is clear disagreement among writers about how far it is historically accurate to identify "psychology" in the distant past and in different cultures around the world. Thus, I would say, Fernando Vidal's history of the sciences of the soul in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is indeed about the sciences of the soul; it is more about knowledge of the soul in relation to the history of classification of knowledge than the history "of psychology" (Vidal, 2011). "Psychology" in these centuries was just one of many terms in circulation, and there was a great range of teaching and writing (e.g. in rhetoric or jurisprudence) pertinent to the sciences of the soul. But many authors, though not Vidal, take it for granted "psychology" began with Aristotle, while agreeing there was then no such term.

1.3 The Record of Scientific Progress and Advance of Humane Values

An alternative title for this argument might be "historical teleology": truth guides history or, put another way, there is a rational logic to history. If there is truth to be had about phenomena, the underlying argument goes, and if science is the best approximation there is to approaching that truth, then the history of science is the story of humanity's approach to the truth. Understood in this way, the history of psychology grows out of and contributes to the Enlightenment project in modernity. This is a vision with grandeur and appeal, present from the times of Condorcet and of Comte (though he, for special, local reasons, had no place for psychology), inspiring the establishment of the history of science discipline by George Sarton and still having its place in contemporary efforts to maintain ideals of enlightened reason faced by appalling events. It reappears in Aaro Toomela's lively advocacy of history's contribution to science, *all* science, as a condition of it being science and as a condition of it being *progressive* science. He aptly draws on Sarton, who grew up in a secular Comtean culture in Belgium in the period before World War I.[8] Irina Mironenko, in her contribution, describes a quite different vision of the logic of history developed in the work of the Soviet historian of psychology, M. G. Yaroshevsky. One danger of this kind of argument is that it may lead to the epistemic and moral diminution of a capacity to see the present, or some small part of it, as anything other than the inevitable outcome of the past. Jonathan Rée thus comments on the popularity of historical approaches in philosophy that translate all questions into a common currency: "They are a source of satisfaction, indeed of self-satisfaction, since they ensure that (to paraphrase Hegel) even when you appear to be busy with something else, you are really only occupied with yourself" (Rée, 1991, p. 972).

[8] I leave it to Toomela's contribution to deal with the conception of progress in science and the sense in which this conception requires history. Toomela, unlike Sarton, detaches progress in science and humane progress, and his chapter is about progress in science.

The conception of progress of the Enlightenment, and of Comte and Sarton, took the advance of scientific truth also to be moral advance, the progress of humanity. That connection has proved disturbingly vulnerable in the last two centuries. Nevertheless, it is a connection still attractive to many psychologists, just as it was inspirational to those who made possible the large-scale investment in and expansion of the social and psychological sciences in the twentieth century. All this has fostered narrative histories of progress that are essentially teleological, detailing how past searches, including error, have led to the enlightened, and enlightening, present. That present, we must sharply note, in practice in the history of psychology means some one person's or group's position.

1.4 The Means to Maintain Unity in Diversity

No description of psychology is tenable that does not recognize diversity and specialization. The scale of this is bewildering, and as a result there may appear to be theoretical chaos. It is therefore a natural reflective and rhetorical step to turn to history as a means to foster unity, to demonstrate common roots and purposes, and even to ground systematic theory. This recalls the hopes once invested in philosophy, that it would bind the specialized sciences in a common understanding. In English-language academic psychology, the history of psychology has frequently appeared in the curriculum and in textbooks as a partner in the couple "history and theory". Dividing psychology into "schools" and showing how these "schools" originated and diverged from each other have been key means to assert unity in the face of the sheer diversity of activities called psychology.[9] The British psychologist Leslie Hearnshaw wrote a history specifically to counteract what he saw as the dangers of overspecialization (Hearnshaw, 1987). In this volume, Irina Mironenko, writing from within the Soviet and Russian tradition of searching to establish unified science and unified methodology, again makes the point.

This genre of historical writing has largely attended to scientific psychology, allowing all the areas of practical psychology, not to mention everyday popular psychology, to drop out of the picture. This reflects the large ambition, alive in some quarters, that historically informed analysis of theoretical differences between "schools" of psychology will foster development of unifying theory. It is a philosophical judgement, and not self-evident, first, that a field of knowledge ought to have a unifying theory, something conspicuously absent in psychology, and, second, that history will help (as now discussed further under Sect. 1.5).

[9] I place "schools" in scare quotes because of the difference between loose reference to a theoretical orientation and historically and socially precise delineation of a research and teaching institution (whether of associated people or with a specific institutional location).

1.5 A Resource, or Even Necessity, for Contemporary Research or Practice

The argument now heats up. The editors asked the contributors, most of whom are psychologists in some sense, *to show* history doing work in relation to current psychology. Such work might relate to either general conceptual issues or specific topics. I have on a number of occasions heard psychologists say that if people in their field knew more about the past, they would find surprising, neglected insights, avoid mistakes, or save themselves the trouble of going over ground discovered before. Psychology's ignorance of its past, it is argued, is unhelpful to the productivity of the present. This is a large consideration for a number of authors (Aaro Toomela, Jaan Valsiner and Svend Brinkmann, Irina Mironenko, Andres Kurismaa and Lucia Pavlova, Brady Wagoner, Hroar Klempe) in the present collection of essays. It is a point that is convincing only when demonstrated by actual example. The editors asked contributors to spell out the empirical evidence and the purported relationship of past to present. Andres Kurismaa and Lucia Pavlova bring forward a particularly well-focused and detailed example, referring cognitive scientists to the theoretical and experimental work of the Soviet psychologists or physiologists L. S. Vygotsky, A. A. Ukhtomsky, and A. N. Leontiev. The result is an empirical argument for history at work in science. Aaro Toomela also draws in Vygotsky, among a number of specific examples, for the same purpose. As a further illustration, I would say that it is possible to read Kurt Danziger's outstanding history of memory as a psychological category, *Marking the Mind*, as a long study of the roots of intractable puzzles in modern research (Danziger, 2008). The fact that different conceptions of memory have existed in the past suggests just how problematic any one claim to state the nature of memory, especially by analogy to some kind of material storage, now is. All Danziger's work in the history of psychology, indeed, has had in mind the reform of social psychology to give "the social" its proper, scientific content, as he does for memory in his book.

One large-scale argument for the relevance of history to present psychology returns to the point already made under Sect. 1.4: the claim that history is necessary for construction of unified theory. This search, to make a unified *science* of psychology, inspires a number of psychologists. It raises large philosophical questions to do with the very notion of such a science. The point now, however, is somewhat narrower and concerns theories, not necessarily one unified theory. Elsewhere, Jaan Valsiner writes: "Theoretical psychology needs to take the task of creating new theories seriously, and knowing history makes this possible. […] What would be the forward-oriented role of history of psychology as a tool for development of the discipline?" (Valsiner, 2015, p. 45). Thinking along such lines, there is a strong case for seeing conceptual continuity between nineteenth-century and contemporary arguments in theoretical psychology and hence for saying that attention to the past debates, especially in the German-speaking world, would help psychologists escape many of the philosophical holes they have dug for themselves. A number of our authors think this, though Jaan Valsiner goes further, because, as I discuss further

below (in Sect. 1.8), he passes from the present position onto the claim that theory construction requires understanding of the historical nature of psychology's subject matter.

A number of authors voice the view that as the history of psychology has developed as a separate, professional speciality it has lessened its relevance to psychologists (see Toomela, this volume; Danziger, 1994; Pettit & Davidson, 2014; for an illuminating account of the first stages of this process in the United States, Furumoto, 1989). The same point was debated in the 1970s when historians of science in general adopted the disciplinary standards of history, rather than assuming that their primary purpose was to be relevant to natural scientists. Because so many teachers of the history of psychology work in psychology departments, the point still matters, and hence the importance, for psychologists, of the arguments made in this section about the *necessary* place of history in science.

The dangers with claiming that history serves present research are perhaps twofold. First, it may lead to historical work that extracts from the past only what is thought needed in the present, with the result that it actually detracts from historical knowledge (in the ways described under Sect. 1.2). The purposes of a researcher looking for gold in the past record are very different from the purposes of the historian looking to take account of the full nature of the rock. Those who look only for gold may not be interested in *history* at all. In Irina Mironenko's account of Yaroshevsky's history of psychology, what we find is a logic of history, something that will strike many people brought up in empiricist Anglo-American culture as different from history. These differences are argued out in debate about context and the interpretation of the past. Further, those who do history of psychology as a professional speciality differ in their interest from those who do history of psychology to advance present science (though, as Danziger's many contributions suggest, this may not necessarily be so). Second, if in due course there is progress in the present without recourse to something taken from the past, this justification for history falls flat on its face. This argument for history is contingent on what happens; it is an empirical matter, something to be found out, whether the past does help the present. If it does not, what then? It is my own view, supported by the later arguments in this list, that there are—and for the rational foundation of history of psychology as knowledge (and for historical knowledge in general)—must be theoretical arguments to support history not determined by pragmatic demands derived from present psychological research (or research in any natural science). This argument, however, is not the same as a logic of history.

1.6 Perspective and Critique

Here I approach the reasons—it is my guess—a large number of psychologists, and psychology students, drawn to the history of psychology would place first. Perspective, and hence awareness of positions from which one might understand and perhaps criticize what is otherwise taken for granted, is an obvious value supporting

a place for history in the curriculum and encouraging psychologists, individually and collectively, to be reflective. It is an all too-familiar refrain: the demanding nature of the acquisition of technical expertise, and the sheer amount of knowledge within scientific fields, physics or medicine as much as psychology, leaves little or no time for students or scientists to look to right or to left. The size of specialities, along with career structures, encourages people to become narrowly specialized, ignorant even of fields adjacent to their own, let alone knowledgeable about or sympathetic to other ways of knowing or other occupations. History is an obvious, though not necessarily acknowledged, way to counteract this: "Although it is still little noticed by most professional psychologists, historical analysis and narrative offer perspectives and reflection on the complex and surprising past" (Capshew, 2014, p. 145). Historical knowledge equips psychologists with perspective on what they themselves do on a daily basis. They may travel historically, just as they may travel abroad, in order to see themselves afresh, see something in what they do that they did not see before. Simple social facts reinforce the argument: the majority of psychology students, and the majority of people with some interest in psychology, do not aim to live lives devoted to specialist activity; and even those who do have careers in research are still members of a wider society. Nobody can put anything taken from professional psychology to work without some kind of perspective. Should this be the perspective of one narrow specialty or something broader?

Another understanding of perspective is embedded in the belief that it is not possible to understand the present, even a simple psychological act or statement, without understanding how it has come about: "we cannot understand the present situation without knowing something about how and why it arose" (Richards, 2002, p. 8). Nobody, I guess, will disagree with this as a presumption in daily life and as a motive in all kinds of history. Charles Taylor, ending his analysis of secular society, noted that "the story of how we get here is inextricably bound up with our account of where we are, [… and this] has been a structuring principle of this work throughout" (Taylor, 2007, p. 772). A large amount of historical work relevant to psychology has value because it shows where "we are" (though who exactly "we" denotes requires specification). An example is Rhodri Hayward's history of psychological notions of the self emerging in dialogue between doctors and patients in Britain (Hayward, 2014). In the current volume, Petteri Pietikäinen dissects the state of work psychology in Finland through a historical account of what it has come to be.[10] This is a close and detailed demonstration of identity formation. In a parallel way, in their chapter, Lorraine Radtke and Henderikus Stam review the ongoing arguments about the relations of feminism, the categories sex/gender, and psychologists' concentration on the study of differences. The way this multi-faceted debate develops is patently contextual and historically dependent, and anyone contributing to it is required to be historically informed. The chapter provides just the kind of historically informed overview that is necessary to engage with the debate. Hroar Klempe analogously dissects the problematic position of subjectivity in contemporary science. He shows the relations of a number of historical dimensions, using the

[10] He has done the same for mental illness: Pietikäinen (2007).

writings of Kierkegaard and pointing to the importance of understanding the way Kant was interpreted.

Perspective slides into critique. Thus, Adrian Brock's turn, in his chapter, to understand the present divide between psychologists sympathetic to and indifferent, or antagonistic, to history takes him to the philosophical debate between universals and particulars and the preoccupation psychologists have with creating a universal science. Aaro Toomela, Jaan Valsiner and Svend Brinkmann, and Brady Wagoner, the last writing specifically on Frederic Bartlett in order to exemplify a cognitively "constructionist" approach in psychology, then take a historical perspective to show why present forms of understanding prevail. They critique dominant methodologies by arguing for different conceptual structures and research programmes. In each case, the background is an ideal of unification. The arguments require distinctions to be drawn between the projects of history of psychology, historical psychology, and cultural psychology.

I am perhaps straining at the obvious: perspective is a purpose of historical writing people simply take for granted. If so, however, they take history of psychology for granted, even if this is implicit not explicit.

The significant question, then, is whether people want, or think it important, "to understand the present situation" or "where we are" in open-minded ways rather than carry on in the present situation leaving current ways unexamined. Having perspective runs seamlessly into being in a position to criticize and seek alternatives. Many scholars would maintain, as I would, that the capacity to critique one's own scholarship, not just a particular claim or piece of research but the concepts presupposed by a claim and the context and purposes of the research, is part of what it means to be scholarly. If the goal is truth or human flourishing, then the goal imposes an epistemic demand that consideration of the nature of truth or flourishing be on the agenda. This understanding is present in the argument Nietzsche spelt out, that science rests on a value, the value of truth, that science itself cannot justify: "Science is not nearly self-reliant to be [… the alternative to faith]; it first requires in every respect an ideal of value, a value-creating power, in the *service* of which it could *believe* in itself " (Nietzsche, 1969, p. 153).[11] This is a philosophical matter, and it is not evaded but tacitly addressed in one way by leaving accepted frameworks unexamined.

The problem from the viewpoint of the busy specialist, one can at once see, is that a turn to examine frameworks may appear a kind of navel-gazing, detracting from productive work. Indeed, no activity can afford all the time to examine its own foundations. But there is a difference between epistemic critique and navel-gazing.[12] A critical perspective suggests that what is held to be "productive work" is productive only for a particular, and often enough limited, frame of reference; the work

[11] I also quoted this decisive passage, in the context of a larger argument for history, in Smith (2007, p. 207).

[12] For reassertion of critique, faced by "the neuro-turn" in history, as in psychology, see Cooter (2014).

may be counter-productive for larger issues. How far one reflects depends on what one wants. This is a political issue for any field.

One particular form of the argument for perspective holds that it encourages psychologists to consider their relations with other disciplines. Perspective is a condition for transdisciplinarity and for a more synthetic or holistic view of the human subject (Klempe, 2014b, pp. 270–272). Transdisciplinarity is something funding bodies regularly say they want; and in this connection Roger Backhouse and Philippe Fontaine claim that the history of historiography of the social sciences (in which they include psychology) takes a step "to go beyond disciplinary boundaries" (Backhouse & Fontaine, 2014, p. 1).

Quite a number of psychologists, I think, would assert that historical critique is a moral and/or political obligation and not only an epistemic requirement. As a member of a community, whether of psychologists or of a social group more generally, a person has obligations both to that community or group and to the individual self that he or she is by virtue of being in that community or group. Such obligations cannot be fulfilled unless there is individual and collective capacity to reflect; and, the argument proceeds, without history, reflection is blind. This is a commonplace of discussion about civil society and professional obligation. Psychologists have taken it up. Jill Morawski argues for the place of what she calls reflexivity, critical reflectiveness, on the part of psychologists (Morawski, 2005). It is not hard to find examples where historical work, the maintenance of collective memory, is fundamental to critique and to imagination for alternatives to the status quo. We certainly know this from politics, where historical reconstruction plays a large part in countering myths about the formation of national identity. In psychology, there have been different historical reconstructions of Milgram's obedience experiments or of Cyril Burt's data on the intelligence of identical twins. Such history has affected the development of formal ethical standards. In her paper in this volume, Irina Mironenko presents a necessary reminder of the historical perspective of those psychologists who do not work at the English-speaking centre of so much professional activity. And in Lorraine Radtke's and Henderikus Stam's contribution, we have an overview, itself historical in nature, of the moral-political-scientific implications of arguments around sex/gender differences. This chapter well shows the multiple ways in which historical knowledge and understanding enter into current debate about where a field is going. All the arguments for feminist critique, for and against, and in all its variety, deploy contextual, historical knowledge—this paper included, as the authors well understand. Moreover, I would want to add, in this paper we can see clearly how artificially, for analytic purposes, I have divided up the reasons for historical work; in ordinary talk they are multiple, overlapping.

Historical critique has a special place in the history of psychoanalysis. As Freud wrote: "The best way of understanding psycho-analysis is still by tracing its origin and development" (Freud, from 1923, quoted in Borch-Jacobsen & Shamdasani, 2012, p. 34). Freud gave such a seminal place to history in his propagation of psychoanalysis that this history became part of the field's purported truth. As a consequence, advocacy or criticism of the content, or practices, of psychoanalysis has, from the beginning, been bound up with what has been said about Freud's creation

of the field in the first place. So much is this so that Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen and Sonu Shamdasani argue that "bringing to light the arbitrariness behind Freud's narrative interprefactions, historical study relativises and delegitimates the theory of psychoanalysis much more effectively than any epistemological critique" (Borch-Jacobsen & Shamdasani, 2012, p. 236).[13]

Critique is most certainly present in the aspiration for unified theory construction. It is central to the arguments of our contributors, particularly Jaan Valsiner and Svend Brinkmann, Hroar Klempe, Irina Mironenko, and Aaro Toomela, that dominant quantitative approaches in experimental psychology rest on theoretical assumptions that cannot, in the long run, advance the science. There must be, they argue, reform at the conceptual level; and, for them, history is necessary in such work. In a number of ways, as they themselves recognize, they return to and reformulate the multi-faceted and historically diverse argument over causal versus interpretive views of psychological knowledge. This debate has (philosophical) foundations in metaphysics and the very understanding of what it is to be a person. Viewed in this way, it goes back to critique of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century (as voiced, e.g. by A. N. Whitehead), understood as the establishment of a metaphysics appropriate for quantitative knowledge of causal relations in physical nature but inappropriate for knowledge of value-asserting human being. It was this view that lay behind the new agenda Robert M. Young envisaged for the history of psychology, beginning in the 1960s (Young, 1966, 1989, 1993, 2000). His agenda was not theory construction for psychology but an organicist metaphysics for the human. There has been considerable historical reassessment of what was once described, without qualification, as the scientific "revolution", and this has included criticism of the historiography that it had at its central subject a change of metaphysics. Yet the link between "the mechanization of the world picture" (in E. J. Dijksterhuis's phrase) in the seventeenth century and the kind of criticism made by Valsiner and Brinkmann of the "variable" or by Toomela of causal mechanistic explanation still holds. Historical understanding of shifts in the nature of scientific explanation is central to critique of the present direction of psychology as science.

1.7 The Contribution to Human Self-Knowledge and Well-Being

To say that history of psychology may contribute to self-knowledge and human flourishing is, admittedly, to make a distressingly vague, if well-intentioned, claim. Yet it does appear to be the case that the public appeal and use of psychological thought and practices are to a considerable extent related to the expectation, or at least hope, that psychology will address "deep" issues in being human: life and death, absence, joy, anger, sensuality, wisdom, and desire for transcendence. It was

[13] "Interprefactions" is the authors' term for "the transmutation of interpretations and constructions into positive facts" (Borch-Jacobsen & Shamdasani, 2012, p. 144).

Nietzsche, after all, not some promoter of experimental psychology, who foretold "that psychology shall be recognized again as the queen of the sciences […] For psychology is now again the path to the fundamental problems" (Nietzsche, 1966, pp. 31–32 [Sect. 23]). It is hardly necessary to draw attention to the popularity of books with titles like Jung's, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933). Many such books have drawn on a historical thesis about the contrast between modernity and earlier times; or they have argued that earlier wisdom is needed if psychology is to answer its proper calling. Any claim that psychology is the road to answering fundamental questions presupposes a very substantial historical story.

Behind this kind of search for wisdom from psychology lies the assumption that psychology is a category properly attributed to all peoples, past and present. (I have to return to this complex matter in Sect. 1.8.) All the same, what psychology is supposed to be, other than a family name for a host of things in which there may or may not be one comment element, is conveniently left vague. We find, for example, in Graham Parkes's study of Nietzsche's psychology (which is self-evidently not the experimentalist's psychology) that psychology is the science of the psyche; with this definition in hand, the author then describes the many places in which Nietzsche's texts say something about it (Parkes, 1994). It is, we may note, a definition that makes the Ancient Greeks central to psychology.

A particularly instructive instance of this search for wisdom from a vast field labelled psychology is a recent text, for psychology students, by Bruce K. Alexander and Curtis P. Shelton (Alexander & Shelton, 2014). Disabused with the dominant materialist practices of contemporary psychology, and especially wanting to respond to social problems (addiction is the model case), the authors have gone to great trouble to retell, accessibly, a history from Plato, Marcus Aurelius, St Augustine, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume to Darwin and Freud. This history, in their interpretation, lays out an agenda for what psychology should be about in order to fulfil its moral and political tasks in contemporary times. For these authors, psychology is everything, past or present, which they can conceive of as belonging to the science of the psyche and might contribute to well-being. I do not agree with this use of the word "psychology", but the point now is the way the text turns the history of psychology into a humanistic education for psychology students, very much like "Western civilization" courses once did for students in general (and before that, the study of Classics once did for a male elite).[14] In such work, history is both critique of present

[14] The authors are persuaded by a statement at the end of Daniel Robinson's *Intellectual History of Psychology*, "that psychology is the History of Ideas": Alexander and Shelton (2014, p. 458, Note 8); Robinson (1995, p. 366). The core difficulty, I think, is that Alexander and Shelton treat psychology as given, a universal category, even though they do not say what they think it denotes. They therefore treat what psychologists now do, which is broad enough, along with what they think they should do, which is even broader as it extends to both "wisdom" and political participation, as appropriately labelled by one term. They use one term to cover anything in the past that they find "speaks" to the actual or ideal activities of modern psychologists. Their humanistic goals are ones many people share. But scholarly history of psychology will question the unanalysed status of the category, psychology, and in particular will want to know when, where, and why such a category, in terms that historical actors themselves would recognize, came into use. Robinson's

practices and "the civilizing process" (to use Norbert Elias's phrase). Seen from this perspective, the history of psychology can be likened to the medical humanities: they are domains, whatever they in fact contain, the purpose of which is to humanize the fields, respectively, of psychology and medicine.

Perhaps this will indeed be a pragmatic route to secure the place of the history of psychology. I do not know. Meanwhile, one may ask whether the intellectual argument can be made more rigorous. Here, I hope it will be acceptable to put what I want to say in a more personal way. Starting from the premise that psychology as a category itself has a history, from which it follows (I claim) that though ancient wisdom may be highly relevant to modern psychology, in some way to be specified, it is not itself properly called psychology, I tried to provide a historical narrative of the diverse activity called psychology in the modern age (Smith, 1997, 2013). I widened the range and context of what normally appears in history of psychology texts, for example, by discussing the formation of psychological society. Yet, I sensed, if inarticulately, that I had ignored a key dimension. This dimension, it is now clear to me, is the way, for many Western people as well as for many professional psychologists, psychology has indeed been a quest for knowledge and flourishing of both self and others. I well remember hearing a psychologist say it was good to place all the statistical and physiological stuff in the first year of an undergraduate course, because this dissuaded those students who wanted to learn about "people" from signing up. (This was in years when psychology courses were oversubscribed.) The modern receptivity to psychology is surely inseparable from the interest would-be students expressed—in "people"—and the psychologist scorned as not a scientific interest. Thus, when Hroar Klempe writes on Kierkegaard and modern psychology, this is clearly not about psychology as most academic psychologists now understand the term. Yet it is about what many modern educated and reflective people, not to mention students, have thought psychology should be about: subjectivity and self-identity (Klempe, 2014a, and this volume).[15] We can see something of the same issues in discussion about Samuel Taylor Coleridge, often cited for his early nineteenth-century use, in English, of the word "psychological". Describing his mode of reasoning in lectures on Shakespeare, Coleridge analysed Hamlet "psychologically", meaning that he examined Hamlet's subjective state. Readers subsequently have thought that Coleridge thereby examined his own subjectivity. The broader significance of psychological discourse to Coleridge, Neil Vickers suggests, is that it enabled him to discuss feeling and motivation in a relatively neutral moral light, distancing statements of character, to a degree, from a judgmental framework (Vickers, 2011, p. 12). That was, we might say, to be modern and psychological.

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position, as stated in the phrase quoted, would seem to equate human self-understanding with psychology. That appears intellectual imperialism of a high order.

[15] For another good example of what might be involved in writing history of psychology in light of this (though the paper is not written under the heading of history of psychology—why should it be?), see Toews (2004).

If the creation of the modern self is part of the history of psychology, then, clearly, that history has a lot to say to a lot of people in the wider public as well as to those in the humanities and in the humanistic branches of the psychology professions. At the same time, it is necessary to note that the effect is to so enlarge the scope of the history of psychology that it can make no sense to write *the* history or search for *the* origins. Indeed, the scope of the field becomes uncontainable, boundless. The question, first, must be: history for what?

1.8 Psychology's Subject Matter Is Historical in Nature

Many psychologists will be aware of Kenneth Gergen's bold assertion: "social psychological research is primarily the systematic study of contemporary history" (Gergen, 1973, p. 319). His point was that human social relations are always specific and thus a function of time and place. To study human relations is to study historical phenomena. Nearly twenty years later, Kurt Danziger, like Gergen, not by chance also a social psychologist, developed the argument with analytic and historical precision, demonstrating that the subject matter psychologists study, like intelligence and personality, is a subject matter with a history in the creation of psychologists' own research practices, especially in the laboratory (Danziger, 1990). This work has been influential and become well known. What is now called cultural psychology developed arguments in parallel. Jaan Valsiner, contributing to this volume in the same spirit, has written widely to promote it. "Psychology", he declares, "is a basic science that builds on the cultural histories of the many versions of human ways of living as *Homo sapiens* inhabits our planet". Quite how far he wishes to develop this claim into a fully historicist philosophical position is not clear, since he precedes it with the different, and less radical, argument (which I have discussed in Sect. 1.5) that "it is through careful investigation of unsuccessful lines of thought in the past—developed into a new form in the present—that [… psychology] can innovate itself" (Valsiner, 2012, p. 281).[16]

The arguments for cultural psychology have roots in *Völkerpsychologie* (itself with a background in the introduction of the notion of culture into anthropology in the period of the German *Aufklärung*), in historical psychology (as promulgated in particular by the German group publishing the journal *Psychologie und Geschichte*), and in post-Durkheim French socio-psychological and historical work focused on *mentalité*.[17] Some of the scholarship that fed into this is well known to social

[16] Valsiner provides the example of the forgotten past of German post-Hegelian psychology and dialectics. While the psychology of Benecke and others is certainly now little known, to render this a persuasive resource for contemporary psychologists will, I suggest, require unpacking the apparatus of dialectical concepts and demonstration of relevance to specific modern psychological problems or research programmes.

[17] For the earlier history, see Jahoda (2007). *Psychologie und Geschichte* (1989–2002) aimed to connect studies in history of psychology and historical psychology, but this proved hard to sustain.

scientists and historians in general, through such studies as Max Weber's work on the Protestant ethic, Georg Simmel's discussion of the city, and Norbert Elias's on "the civilizing process". Rather than entering into this now, it is more helpful to distinguish weak and strong versions of the underlying claims (while recognizing that a spectrum of views exists).

The weak version is really the fulfilment of the pledge of social psychology to study individuals in their social relations. The psychological life of a person is the outcome of development, in all circumstances a social process, whatever else it may be, and social processes are historically specific and changeable. Thus, it follows, any science of psychological life must include knowledge of how development takes place—historical knowledge. The argument is an established position in the field of social psychology (e.g. Gergen & Gergen, 1984; Harré & Stearns, 1995). People's psychology, individually and as members of gender, ethnic, national, or other groups, is historical in the actual way it develops, and the disciplines that study people must have historical understanding.[18] A broad genre of historical studies, of emotions, the different senses, melancholy and depression, the active will, and so on, indeed flourishes, though more in the humanities than in psychology departments.

There is an interesting corollary. In modern times, in Western societies, people have understood their own psychology in psychological terms. As a result, it would seem that the history of psychology should include the history of ordinary people's beliefs about their psychology, that is, what US psychologists call "folk" psychology (though the phrase sounds disparaging to foreign ears).[19] Mathew Thomson's study of psychology in everyday British culture is an innovative history taking this step (Thomson, 2006). In the present volume, Irina Mironenko, perhaps because she lives in a society, the Russian Federation, that has very rapidly developed a public culture of psychology, also remembers that psychology is a field of public interest.

For many psychologists, history means biology: the "history" that matters in psychological processes took place in the evolutionary past. This tends in terms of the organization of groups of psychologists to pit biological against cultural psychology. This in turn goes some way to explain the great interest, since the 1960s, in Vygotsky's theory of the stages of individual development, separating a biological stage from the language-mediated cultural stage but nevertheless holding them in relation. Vygotsky, it appears to some (including Aaro Toomela, Irina Mironenko, and Andres Kurismaa and Lucia Pavlova, this volume), suggests a way to create a unified science out of the divergences of view.

For an exposition of historical psychology, see Staeuble (1991, 1993). For Francophone work, especially of Ignace Meyerson, see Pizarroso (2013).

[18] For the argument that cultural or historical psychology, through research on the psychological character of people, can play a mediating role between psychologists and historians of psychology, see Pettit and Davidson (2014).

[19] The reasonableness of "folk" psychological understanding is ably defended in Kusch (1997, 1999, Part II).

The strong version of the argument linking psychology and history, put as bluntly as possible, is that psychology *is* history. This is the claim that the subject matter psychologists study, people's psychological being, is historically formed and historically changeable. The historical study of people's psychological development, states and mentality, memory, capacities, perceptual worlds, and so on, is the study of psychology. Obviously, it is the evolutionary psychologists, who believe that selection established a common human nature millions of years ago, who most strongly oppose this stance. (Hence, because of the conflict, the hope that a theory like Vygotsky's might reconcile positions.) The strong argument, as I am calling it, supports belief that human nature may change. How far it in fact has changed in the course of historical time is a matter for empirical research. Many psychologists describe this position as constructivist and associate it with the work of Gergen and John Shotter.

The strong argument has specific expression in a well-established topic of debate in the social sciences and in discussion of technological innovation. I have previously tried to state this as the phenomenon of "reflexivity" (Smith, 2007). I now think that this word has too many usages and may not be helpful. The point, however, is simple enough: what people hold to be true, or the case, about their psychological state influences the psychological state they actually have. Psychological knowledge and psychological states exist in a circle of relations; and this circle, clearly, has a historical nature. The point is familiar, taken for granted, in many settings, notably in psychotherapy, where the expectation is that talk, articulated psychological knowledge, will help bring about a change in psychological life. Psychotherapy presupposes history—"hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences", after all. It is also possible to discuss the way new technologies structure human capacities as a kind of material reflexivity (think, e.g. how reproductive technologies are changing what people once thought "natural" in human life). The philosopher of science Ian Hacking, under the label of "looping", has brought specific cases of psychological reflexivity to the attention of a large audience (Hacking, 1995). Discussing the spread of belief in states like multiple personality and autism, and in events like child abuse, Hacking has described the circle of influences in which talk about a psychological state affects the expression of that state as part of a person's psychology.

Where the argument touches upon such a sensitive subject as child abuse, the suggestion that public statements about child abuse foster claims about the psychological reality of memory of child abuse is, unsurprisingly, controversial. Among many psychologists, the strong claim that psychological states are themselves historical formations, constructed in a circle of relations with, in Foucault's words, a "regime of truth", has a similar scandalous quality. Sometimes the strong claim is read or heard as a statement that denies "the real" character of psychological states. This is to misread or mishear, since it is not such a denial, but an attribution of the states to "real" history. "Nature" has no monopoly of "the real". To support argument down this path, there are now a number of fine historical studies of concepts that have played a large part in psychology: Danziger on the experimental psychological subject and on memory, Goodey on intelligence, Gross and Dixon on emotion, Heller-Roazen on touch, and Jean Starobinski on action and reaction (or stimulus and response) (Danziger, 1990, 2008; Dixon, 2003; Goodey, 2011; Gross, 2006;

Heller-Roazen, 2007; Starobinski, 2003). In historical work more widely, there are many histories relevant to the idea of construction in psychology, such as those on the understanding and experience of childhood (e.g. Shuttleworth, 2010; Steedman, 1987). Little of this is taught as the history of psychology in psychology departments, though reason suggests it should be, since it concerns psychological states.

These arguments for historical or cultural psychology, even in weak versions, raise issues for psychology and the history of psychology, the scale of which is scarcely appreciated. If psychology has as its content psychological subject matter that all people have and have had, and if that subject matter has changed with time and with historical context, then the history of psychology is the history of being human. That is, psychology is everything. It is a reductio ad absurdum. Yet, given the current usage of the word “psychology”, this appears the implication. Drawing back from this, I think it may be necessary to recognize that “the history of psychology” has little intellectual value as a heading under which to work, whatever practical value it may have because it is embedded in institutionalized practices. There has to be more specific, analytically precise statement as to why anyone should study history of the many things that constitute psychology. Danziger is clear about this and recommends the history of psychological objects (Danziger, 2003).

Hence, in the present volume, the editors have encouraged contributors to state what their historical purposes are. To write *the* history of psychology is not possible; to write the history of the modern academic discipline is, to write “the history of experimental psychology” is (Boring accurately stated this as his purpose), to write the history of the early modern sciences of the soul is, to write the history of key categories (e.g. memory) or practices (e.g. clinical psychology) is, and to write on the impact of feminism in psychology is (see Chap. 9). In earlier writing, I tried to bring a number of these purposes together, more than used to be accepted as part of the history of psychology; but I have been slow to see fully how far the history of psychology might change its nature were the implications of historical or cultural psychology to be taken on board. It is not, I emphasize, that anyone could be more comprehensive; it is that there is a range of purposes for which history of psychology is undertaken. The *range* of these purposes may well make it indefensible in reason to keep referring to work as the history of psychology. All the same, within university departments of psychology, it will presumably continue to be necessary to state the purposes of the history of psychology under this heading.

1.9 Psychological Statements Have Meaning as Part of Historically Formed Discourse

Any psychological statement, whether in a scientific paper, or in practice with a person, or in everyday descriptions of people, has meaning by virtue of its place within a discourse. This is a logical condition of a theory of meaning. Commonly, as in ordinary speech, scientific discourse has narrative form (however abstract and

formalized).[20] Historical content is a feature of the very manner in which humans, scientists included, articulate the world: what is said follows from what has been said before. As I have argued elsewhere:

> all statements about being human, including scientific statements, *have meaning because of their position in ways of life which themselves have a history*. The attempt, which logical positivists undertook with exemplary precision, to develop an exclusively empirical theory of meaning, did not work out. What a psychologist or other scientist says about people makes sense in the light of the way of life of which the psychologist or scientist is part. The meaning of knowledge claims is part of an unfolding story or history in which scientists themselves are actors. A psychologist trains in a community of people with a history and as a result knows how to contribute to the science. (Smith, 2010, p. 26)

Thus, Danziger argues, psychological objects are “intelligible only by virtue of their display within a discursive context” (Danziger, 1999, pp. 80–81). Psychologists practise history, whether they know it or not, in their discourse. Formal history—we might say, history “out in the open”—is the *discipline* to make this aspect of what psychologists do conform to scholarly standards. In fact, with this argument we are back with the reason for the commonplace support for the value of perspective (argument 1.6): if we want to know where we are, we have to see how we got here.

Through history, everything finally relates to everything else. The construction of one narrative rather than another involves a social process of selection, establishing relations between things for particular purposes. The choice of which purposes is a matter of ethics and politics or, as Nietzsche said, the will to power. In the daily life of psychologists, purposes, and the forms of narrative suited to them, are embedded in collective, institutionalized customs of work (that is, “*habitus*”, in Marcel Mauss’s term). The narrative, or story, of which any statement is part, does not have to be spelt out. Tacit or shared knowledge is in place as the basis for the assessment of meaning and validity. A whole field of social psychology has devoted itself to this under the heading of “collective representations”. It is one of the activities of being a historian (and I would say that social psychologists, along with sociologists of knowledge, are historians in this respect) to trace and explain the genealogy of statements and forms of power that achieve authority.[21] In this way, Nikolas Rose’s influential contributions to history of psychology have developed the genealogy of the psi-sciences, using “the history of the present” to expose to view relations between the contemporary “regime of truth” and the exercise of power, however diffused through societies and internalized in individuals. Rose has always denied having any interest in history for its own sake; but his notion of genealogy is historical through and through.[22]

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[20] I place a lot of emphasis on narrative as a source of meaning (MacIntyre, 1977; Smith, 2007). There is no agreed view about this, but this is not the place to go into the philosophical issues.

[21] “Genealogy” is Nietzsche’s, and subsequently Foucault’s, term, taken from the study of family relations; see Nehamas (1985, pp. 100–105).

[22] In more recent work, bringing a social science approach to social change linked with the neurosciences, Rose, though hardly interested in history, still finds it necessary to sketch in a lot of historical background (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). I hope my arguments explain why. It is this being “drawn into history”, in spite of an author’s stated purposes, that is of interest now. (A parallel

1.10 History of Psychology Is an End in Itself

History of psychology requires no special defence, no special advocacy, or, at least, no arguments in its defence are needed beyond those in support of the humanities in general. Here, at the end of this list of possible arguments on behalf of history, I reach what I regard as the most basic point of all. Yet, if basic, it is a challenge to articulate it to scientists, many of whom have no sympathy with it or at least do not see that it in any way concerns them.

History of psychology exists as *a field of knowledge* (with a history), like any other. Of course, its particular scope, content, purposes, and intended audience may be contested, but as a branch of the pursuit of knowledge it needs no special intellectual justification. Two aspects of this position may be teased apart. First, it is associated with a venerable understanding of "liberal knowledge", that knowledge is its own end.[23] If this pursuit of knowledge has to be justified within contemporary universities, and particularly within contemporary departments of psychology, this is for the contingent reason that there is a political ideology imposing competitive struggle for resources, time, money, and status, and historians of psychology find it difficult to fulfil the criteria that best suit administrative decision-making processes and win out in the competition. Alan Collins's and Geoff Bunn's chapter describes this in precise and thoughtful terms; the picture they paint is realistic—and bleak. Very much the same situation exists, particularly in Britain and the United States, for general history as a disciplinary field and for the humanities disciplines at large. As a result, there is a burst of writing defending the humanities against politicians, and their servants in the universities, who hold that if something has value, someone, not the government, will pay for it. These defences of the humanities, according to the present argument, include and subsume the defence of the history of psychology.

The second relevant aspect of this argument concerns the existence of "the history of psychology" as a distinct field or specialist discipline in its own right. It is the point of a number of earlier arguments listed in this chapter, arguments supported (I think) by the majority of psychologists who contribute to this volume, that history of psychology has value as a contribution to psychology *a resource* not as a discipline in its own right. I think there is no necessary incompatibility between these justifications, though there are marked differences in practice in what scholars doing history of psychology (as a field or as a resource) do as a result. Thus, analytically and for social analysis, we may need to keep in mind the difference between history of psychology as a field and history of psychology as a resource within the psychological sciences.

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might be made to the way even Rose and many scientists, in spite of antipathy, are "drawn into" philosophy.)

[23] As argued most famously in British culture by John Henry Newman in the 1850s (Newman 1996, Discourse V).

In order to argue on behalf of the history of psychology as a branch of the humanities, we can turn to arguments on behalf of the humanities in general. Helen Small, a professor of literature, in her admirably concise and precise book, *The Value of the Humanities* (2013), identifies five types of argument. First, the humanities study human meaning-making practices. For epistemological reasons, therefore, they form part of the background to any claim to knowledge. I have stated this position in connection with the history of psychology in Sect. 1.9. Second, she discusses use and usefulness. Naturally, the first step in making the argument that the humanities have utility is to open up the notion of use, to detach it from direct monetary value. This returns discussion to the long debate about the respective value to education of the study of nature and the study of culture, which is, in reality, a debate about the purposes and value of education as a whole. I think many historians of psychology in psychology departments lean on and contribute to this wider debate when they argue that it ought to be a requirement for students to study history. They find it hard to put the argument in exact terms because they are, in effect, arguing for education in general. Third, Small considers the argument that the humanities promote individual and collective human flourishing. This covers the kind of reasoning that apparently leads so many young people to want to study psychology in the first place: to know about and to work with people. (It thus links to the points I made in Sect. 1.7.) Fourth, there is the argument that the humanities are needed to maintain democratic society and the very notion of citizenship: they are the inherited and ever-changing resources that help build the relationship between individual and society in a civilized, ethical, and sustainable manner. People want more than bread and circuses. Small, however, pulls apart the far too loose slogan, “Democracy Needs Us”, thus incidentally also exemplifying the value of the humanities to critique (Small, 2013, pp. 3, 5–6). (I related critique to the history of psychology in Sect. 1.6.) This argument too, I suspect, has its reflection in the mentality and commitments of those who teach the history of psychology.

Lastly, Small considers the study of the humanities for its own sake. Here the argument is that the notion of knowledge having intrinsic worth is part and parcel of the being that constitutes being human. I can illustrate this. What arguments are needed to justify such work as Daniel Todes’s recent biography of Pavlov (Todes, 2014), a book written to the highest standards of historical scholarship, deeply informed about the relevant science, and eminently readable? The performance is the value. Do we really have to argue for this? No: the argument is about who should pay.

1.11 Conclusion

I do not doubt that many things call for further comment. I limit myself to three. The first is obvious and runs through this chapter and through this volume (though brought out most specifically in Alan Collins’s and Geoff Bunn’s contribution). Rational arguments are all very well, and while they may indeed be valid and widely accepted as arguments, in the actual material and social circumstances of university

and psychology department decision-making, they are ineffective, even beside the point. Work advancing scientific research and professional practice receives grants and has impact (as that is measured). Such work appears *measurably* useful, and the history of psychology does not. The humanities generally are in the same position (with some exceptions, like archaeology, which, partly through the world of museums, has large public following or impact. Psychology museums?). The challenge, therefore, is to find ways in which valid intellectual arguments become effective rhetorical and political tools. People in psychology departments have a wealth of experience about this, though it is enormously demanding. Reading Small's discussion of the humanities, a cynic might observe that her very text, its analytic precision, historical frame of reference, and evaluative sensitivity, at one and the same time exemplifies scholarly virtues and excludes itself from the vulgar decision-making procedures of the business university.

The second comment is philosophical and clearly needs development. If it is accepted, as it has been since the rejection of the programme of the logical positivists, that there is no pure observation language into which to translate all meaningful statements about what exists, then the semantic content of statements presupposes established language. (There is a distinct question about the status of logic and mathematics.) Any particular language is historical through and through, social through and through: history is embedded in language use. (I approached this from another direction in argument 1.9.) Any statement, necessarily, implicates historical knowledge of the conditions in which such a statement has become possible. It is not, therefore, that people need history; it is that to be human is to be in history by the very activity of reasoning and of language. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty observed: "Because we are in the world, we are condemned to meaning, and we cannot do or say anything without its acquiring a name in history" (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. xxii).

This argument is easily recognizable in everyday terms: the stories we tell presuppose it. When historical knowledge is devalued, or when there is a decision not to study it as an explicit discipline, a decision is taken to accept one version of historically created meaning, the version embedded in the languages and practices of some field, speciality, or politics. The advocate who dismisses history remains the advocate of one historical story. The most gung-ho neuropsychologist cannot cease to be a historical actor. If her concern is truth, then she has to understand what this means. If her concern is not truth, then this should be stated (as it is stated, as it logically has to be, in performance). Then the politics is at least out in the open.

Perhaps the point is more accessible with a psychological exemplification. What psychological activity or, if you wish, for the present purpose, mental function of the brain, does not presuppose memory? What is memory, however understood, if not a person's history? Does anyone really think it possible to make claims about memory without presuppositions about history in the very language with which she speaks?

A last comment, relevant to all the arguments listed on behalf of the history of psychology, is to observe that history is a *discipline*. Obviously it is in the institutional sense, but I mean the older sense of it being a practice (indeed, in earlier and in continental European usage, a science) requiring training, objectivity, evidentiary standards, self-consistency, clarity of concepts, rational grounding, and an attempt to

establish truth. When psychologists undertake history, this imposes obligations. (Just as it would were historians to undertake psychology, which, in fact, I think they do, though the psychology they deploy is normally of the everyday, so-called "folk" variety; see Tileagă & Byford, 2014.) When psychologists do something they call history in order to argue about a contemporary psychological topic (as in undertaking to study a neglected but valuable piece of earlier research), or even to argue for a large-scale shift in the occupation, the *discipline* of history may be secondary to the purposes in hand. I think this should be openly acknowledged, so that the rhetorical purposes to which a certain kind of history is being put will be understood. Psychologists should be aware that, frequently enough, what is called history is not history in a disciplined sense. Think, for example, of the endless references to a figure called Descartes in the literature on neuroscience, a literature barely informed by scholarship on a historical man, Descartes. Such usage implicitly devalues disciplinary history, even while an author is writing "history shows that …". Exactly the same reservations hold for critique that uses "undisciplined" history.

After tenfold argument ("the Ten Arguments", though scratched on the clay of everyday life and not carved on stone brought down from the mountain), it is clear enough that there is substantial rational argument to support historical work. The arguments normally overlap. They commonly appear self-evident to those who use them. The real conflict is with the opinion that psychology can get on perfectly well while ignoring history. It is, I conclude, conflict that goes nowhere without attending to the *purposes* for which activities are undertaken. As I have quoted elsewhere: "The criteria that control 'good talk' in science, poetry, history or any other interpretive system depend on it point and its purpose" (Arbib & Hesse, 1986, p. 181; quoted in Smith, 2010, p. 35). For the most part, psychologists' purposes are embedded in institutional practices and thereby have a given, even "natural", character. These purposes may be those of an institutional policy that has negative implications for the history of psychological topics. But other purposes are not just philosophically and scientifically defensible but necessary for philosophy and science. This is not special pleading but a matter of reasoning. As the medical scientist Ludwig Fleck, in 1935, stated: "epistemology without historical and comparative investigations is no more than an empty play on words or an epistemology of the imagination" (Fleck, 1979, p. 21).

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