PSYCHOLOGY IN PERSPECTIVE

Also by Nicky Hayes

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Psychology in Perspective

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To Chris Lenton

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Sources

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Preface

Science is not value-free. It exists in society, and it reflects society's assumptions. Research funding, scientific publication and the scientific community's decisions about what counts as valid knowledge all reflect the social contexts in which they take place. Psychology is not exempt from these processes. Like the other sciences, psychology exists in a social context, and its concerns are also those of its wider society. Psychology's internal development – its theories, its evidence and its subject matter – all mirror those concerns, as well as contributing to them, both directly and indirectly.

Psychology is a living discipline. It has its own history, its own current concerns, and its own future trends. But looking only at the present is not enough to explain why modern psychology is like it is. If we are going to understand its concerns and conflicts, we also need to understand its history and the social movements which have shaped that history. *Psychology in Perspective* surveys a number of different aspects of psychology's history, looking at both the internal and the external developments which have shaped it.

Psychology in Perspective has a broad scope. Its ten essays encompass philosophical theories, schools of thought, social movements and human potential. In this book I have challenged several of the psychological manifestations of reductionist and repressive ideologies, both on ideological and scientific grounds. At the same time, I have tried to present some of the alternatives: to criticise without presenting alternatives is a sterile exercise, in my view. I have tried to show how patterns of thinking emerged within the psychological discipline, and how they exerted their influences on subsequent generations. I have also tried to show how they were shaped by wider social developments, and in turn contributed to accepted social knowledge – and not always in positive ways. As scientists, we cannot evade our social responsibilities by turning away from some of the less

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palatable truths about our history. Rather, we need to be fully aware of the social implications of what we are doing, and what our predecessors have done.

NICKY HAYES