BETWEEN MIND AND NATURE

A History of Psychology

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REAKTION BOOKS

Contents

CHAPTER ONE

Early Strands of Mind

> 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.
> Maurice Merleau-Ponty

UNFOLDING A STORY

How and why is psychology a taken-for-granted feature of contemporary life? Over the last 200 years or so in the Occident, the knowledge and desire to help and order people has taken psychological shape. Psychology is intrinsic to modern ways of life that value, seemingly 'naturally', the individual person, self-knowledge and self-control. Psychology is the vessel of very old longings for meaning and the vehicle for very modern self-fashioning.

As there is much reason to reflect, though, psychology has multiple faces. This book describes the multitudinous forms of psychology, as both scientific research and practical activity, in the context of social events and in the light of philosophical questions about the 'being' in being human. It covers the years from the French Revolution and the early industrial revolution to the present, the period of large-scale commercial and urban development. During this age of modernity, many areas of social life and masses of individual people began to look to psychology for orientation and practical help. Professional and ordinary people alike started, indeed, to become psychologists. After 1800, university disciplines came into existence in the natural sciences and humanities in something like their contemporary form, including, mainly in the twentieth century, the psychological and social sciences.

A rich intellectual life, it scarcely needs saying, in which beliefs about human nature and conduct were important, was present long before 1800. It may even appear obvious that some kind of belief about mind has been present in all cultures around the world at all times. But we should be cautious. Any way we characterize people, using terms like human nature, human being, man and woman, race and ethnicity, mind and body, is weighted with meaning with a long history. If you incline, for example, to say that everyone makes assumptions about human nature, you should

bear in mind the existence of cultures which relate human and animal in entirely non-Western ways, indeed which think of animals as humans, not humans as animals. Some will think this curious but marginal, because Western science has simply got it right. If you are interested in how people live, or if you think that natural science is not the answer to every question, however, then the very terms in which different people think about the world has great significance. This book is about psychological terms, even about the possibility of there being specifically psychological ways of thought. In this sense, it is a 'critical' history.

Whether and how far we should describe earlier beliefs and other beliefs as psychology is a large question. There is, of course, a long historical background to the psychologies we have, just as there are ways of thinking from around the world which might well have something to contribute to Western psychology. Nevertheless, I shall stick here to what all would agree is psychology, which is modern and Western – and it is a quite large enough, and diverse enough, field.

History and ethnology alike are routes to understanding what is other, unfamiliar, and hence they are ways to create perspective: an ability to see ourselves as having a historical place. I think of history-writing as balancing two goals. Historians seek to be objective in attending to the record of the past, though they are aware anything said about the past is the achievement of their own thought in the present. This first goal involves not just looking at the archive but studying the context of thought and events, so that it becomes possible to see what happened as others understood it, not just as we understand it. The context is the local world – the world of institutions, people, cultural habits, language, intellectual assumptions, material resources, politics and so on – which makes it meaningful and important to think and do one thing rather than another. Contexts change with time and they vary with place. The second goal is to make sense: we want to know about what happened so that we exclaim, 'Ah! Now I understand!' History is one of the great arts of seeking to make the world intelligible and enjoyable.

Many books about the history of psychology like to begin with Aristotle, making it appear as if modern psychology is naturally heir to ancient wisdom. The rhetorical, indeed ideological, uses of this are obvious: psychology emerges out of the past as truth, not as one among other possible ways of knowing and living. The sense in which there may and may not be historical continuity with distant times is actually very difficult to unravel. I shall not attempt it here but instead discuss relatively recent times when there have been activities actually called 'psychology'. (As I

will explain, the word was in use before the last 200 years, though not commonly in English.) I think there are large differences between attributing human actions to a soul, as Aristotle or Plato did (in different ways), and attributing them to a body, as neuroscientists now do, and I do not want to lump everything together as 'psychology'. In conventional accounts, a story about the rise of science links ancient and modern times: modern knowledge grows on the back of earlier beliefs and supplants them by confronting them with the facts of nature. The story is strikingly imperialist as it makes truth (or the best approximation to it) the possession of modern natural scientists.

I seek an alternative story. This first chapter explains the general thoughts which led to this, and it then sketches the historical background. Two chapters follow that describe the intellectual and social consolidation of scientific psychology in the nineteenth century. Chapter Two describes the major intellectual innovations which tied mind to nature: mental life to the brain and human nature to evolutionary history. The claim that human beings originate in nature, more than any other empirical claim, justified belief in the possibility of a science of human nature and hence a natural science of psychology. A number of people placed high hopes, just as they do now, on the turn to research about the physical world, especially the nervous system, in order to understand mind. But there were also other visions of the subject-matter of psychology. By 1900, as discussed in chapter Three, scientific psychology had a distinctive presence, most emphatically in Germany and the United States and less well delineated and on a smaller scale in France, Italy, Britain, Russia and other European countries.

The discussion of the twentieth century begins with a view of psychology going beyond academic disciplines and scientific research. Chapter Four traces the way people have come to think about managing individual and social problems with psychological knowledge and techniques. Much psychology is practical rather than theoretical or systematic, public rather than specialist. Chapter Five discusses leading ways in which scientists have claimed to make psychology into objective science. There have been a multitude of claims, sometimes varying country by country; it is necessary to make sense of why this happened. Chapter Six turns to the large role of ideas of the unconscious mind, in Freud's psychoanalysis but also in Jung's analytical psychology and in other practices. A century of irrational politics, it would seem, was also a century of attempts to come to terms with the sources of unreason in human nature. Chapter Seven describes social psychology, psychology focused on the relation between the individual,

what the individual thinks, feels and does, and the social worlds of which each and every person is part. People, even solitary individuals, are social beings. A short discussion of Soviet psychology finds a place here because, in theory, the Soviet Union was a pioneering experiment in the truth of the social constitution of each person.

The final chapter describes psychology in the last 60 years or so and tries to link the past with the present. It touches on a huge field, by common consent not amenable to comprehensive overview. I consider a number of important debates, especially about how much human nature is due to biology and how much to culture and about whether mind is a function of brain (and psychology a branch of neuroscience). Everyone will be aware of the rise to prominence of the neurosciences, so I shall try to put this in perspective. Whether the neurosciences or my more sceptical views can create possibilities for a humane and intelligible psychology is an open question. I want readers to be able to see where their own experiences, views about psychology and beliefs about the identity of being human fit into history. This kind of history is like biography: it tells how and why we have become what we are. If we have lost the soul, what have we lost, and gained? If there still is soul, what is it?

If you do not like reflections on knowledge and want to go straight to the history, jump the next section.

WHY HISTORY, WHICH HISTORY?

It appears self-evident: to understand a person, to understand human nature, you must learn some psychology. Nietzsche's declaration that 'psychology is now again the path to the fundamental problems' resonates (though there is a need to ask what he had in mind when he referred to psychology and why he thought it revived earlier insight). Bookshops and the media flaunt guides to the psychology of every human trait; students flock to psychology courses; worldwide, hundreds of thousands of people publicly claim the status of psychologist. It was not always so. Much of what we call psychology is very recent.

'Psychology' is a family name for a bewildering range of beliefs and occupations. There are people who test loss of function after injury and there are those who model face recognition; there are healers of the soul and there are public relations advisers to politicians. Many would think, however, that there is, or should be, a core of knowledge, the basis of a unified science. Indeed, used in the singular, the word 'psychology' flags this ideal. But what is the core subject-matter of psychology: mind, soul,

behaviour, the brain, personality, discourse, mental structure or something else? The candidacy of evolutionary neuroscience, studying mental processes as adaptive functions of brains, currently has enthusiastic support as the unifying approach. By contrast, as the philosopher Gilbert Ryle observed, it may be that '"psychology" can quite conveniently be used to denote a partly fortuitous federation of inquiries and techniques' which 'neither has, nor needs, a logically trim statement of programme'.

I try to make some sense of variety through history. There is also an intrinsic fascination in understanding how people think about themselves, how they see their spiritual and material nature. Knowing how people in the past have thought, like knowing how people in other places think, also enlightens us. The historian Michel de Certeau commented, 'we travel abroad to discover in distant lands something whose presence at home has become unrecognizable.' A history, then, is a way of making sense by telling a story about why we live the way we do, why people shape the world psychologically.

It is common to explain the fact of much of psychology's history being recent in a simple way: psychology became a *science* only in the late nineteenth century. This makes psychology becoming a science the plot of the history of psychology. For much of the twentieth century, psychologists pictured this step as the adoption of the scientific method of objective observation in controlled experiments or testing. Recent decades have often seen the claim that psychology has become a science by becoming the biology of brain and behaviour. If we look more closely, however, we will find it difficult to maintain a historical story with one plot like this.

The history of psychology is inseparable from the argument about the way forward for psychology, the argument about what to expect from psychological knowledge and know-how. Indeed, I think history, if taken seriously and not just exploited for denigration or celebration, is one of the best resources we have for exploring not just the future of psychology but the future of human self-knowledge. History is for open minds. For closed minds, history is merely decorative or, more sinisterly, as with myths of nation formation, an ideological instrument to support one questionable view of the present.

There are a number of reasons why the history of psychology is a complex story and why psychology has many plots. When we study psychology we study ourselves – we are the psychological *subjects* we study as the *objects* of psychological research. How, then, is it possible for people to have objective knowledge of people? It would seem to be much easier to have objective knowledge about the stars or animals than about the subjective

consciousness commonly thought intrinsic to a person and, naturally enough, references to subjectivity in science have negative connotations. In response, much of psychology has taken as its subject-matter not the subjective world of individual thoughts and feelings but something observable from the outside, like animals, or behaviour or brain; and psychologists have examined other people (like the mentally ill, or children or ethnic groups) but have been less at ease in addressing self, consciousness or subjectivity, let alone their own subjectivity. All the same, the large public for psychological ideas has obstinately looked to the field for answers to big questions. Is there an authentic self? Are my subjective feelings like those of other people? How does mind relate to brain? Is our life determined by a god, fate, genes, family conditions, moral personality? Can I exercise self-control? Why love? Why do people, individually and collectively, differ, and does it matter? What about the soul? Such questions bring an almost unmanageable complexity to psychology and its history. But they do make it significant.

Even if we declare the history of psychology to be about the field becoming a science, what kind of science is it? Science is a family of many different practices. In the English-speaking world, a science is (or is modelled on) a natural science; in continental Europe, a science (in German, *Wissenschaft*) is a body of knowledge grounded on rational principles and thought to be true – even theology may be a science. In English, 'science' earlier had this meaning too. In historical actuality, people have claimed to turn psychology into science in different ways. This is very interesting; but it makes it difficult to tell one story about the rise of scientific psychology. Of course, a contemporary psychologist who is quite sure psychology is, say, simply a branch of biology will not have this difficulty. But in fact, lots of people in the past and now think there is more in the picture than biology.

There is no one discipline of psychology. There is a huge variety of activities, some to do with scientific research but many others to do with practical life. Accurately speaking, there are psychologies in the plural and no such thing as psychology in the singular. There have been striking local and national variations.

Two large, linked questions immediately follow. One I have already asked: does psychology have ancient roots and should a history begin with Greek or even earlier wisdom? And, closely related, are there forms of psychology not based on Western science? In part, answers to these questions depend on definition. If by psychology one means any kind of belief (covering soul, spirit, mind, body, behaviour or whatever) about the nature of individual people, then, I suppose, we might think of psychology

as universal. Even then, we must face the fact that different peoples do not so clearly differentiate either the individual or people and animals. Assumptions about what 'all people' feel or think abound in ordinary speech, but they may not be true. Less vague, and I think more correct, usage defines psychology as modern and Western. This usage does not devalue other ways of thought; rather, it allows them to differ – and indeed have value precisely because they are not psychological ways of thought. This is not an idle matter, since there is contemporary concern about the indigenization of psychology, the uptake by Asian, African, ex-Soviet and Latin American countries of the Western (in practice, overwhelmingly American) science and occupation of psychology. Should those who are active locally, those on 'the periphery', seek to acquire expertise from 'the centre' in the U.S.; or should they search in local culture for resources to obtain what they need to respond to local conditions? If they take the former course, their business is to catch up and contribute to a global project. If they take the latter course, will they still be contributing to psychology understood as a universal science of human nature?

There is yet another large reason for seeing complexity in the history of psychology: psychology is part of everyday social life. I want to explain this apparently banal statement – it is far from banal. The most obvious point is that the boundary between so-called scientific psychology and so-called popular psychology has always been very blurred. There is anxiety about the extent to which popular psychology (for example, in self-help guides) threatens to displace science in public esteem; but this is not new. Many of the roots of scientific psychology were in everyday life, growing out of knowledge of such things as temperament, the resemblance of children to parents and the expression of feelings. In the twentieth century it became a commonplace to assert, as an army chaplain, F. R. Barry, wrote in 1923, 'we are all psychologists today'. Psychological ways of thought have, of course, been unevenly distributed. But where we find them, we find what the historian Mathew Thomson has discussed in his book *Psychological Subjects*: people who think about identity and respond to life's challenges in psychological terms. A second point is that psychology has often advanced through application rather than through study for its own sake. Indeed, the pure-applied distinction is of little value in psychology, and it is more helpful, as Jeroen Jansz and Peter van Drunen have suggested, to refer to scientific and practical psychology, pointing to occupational rather than epistemological differences (differences in what people do, as opposed to differences in the grounds for the knowledge they have). The sociologist Nikolas Rose has well shown how much of modern psychology in Britain

and the United States developed in practical settings – in schools, hospitals, prisons and in the institutions of social administration generally. In psychology it has not been the case that science advances and application follows; rather, the search to manage problems has generated science. A third point is that because people are both people who know and people who are the subject of that knowing, the development of knowledge, or new kinds of practice, changes people. There is a reflexive circle in psychology: new knowledge changes the subject-matter of the knowledge. The philosopher of science Ian Hacking described this as 'looping'; Michel Foucault noted that with human beings, the subject does not stand still: 'Whatever [thought] touches it immediately causes to move'. We become, it would seem, what we think we are.

This last point needs more discussion. A familiar model for what I am describing is psychotherapy, in this regard, comparable with moral and spiritual change. Through talk, discipline and ritual (and talk is also discipline and ritual), a person cultivates new thoughts and feelings and thereby tries to become, at least to a degree, a different person. The same kind of 'looping' is at work as belief and action intertwine in understanding phenomena, or difficulties, like depression, child abuse, autism and, earlier, multiple personality disorder. If it is polemical to say that particular ways of life, in some complex manner, create such conditions, there can be no doubt that belief that there are such conditions encourages the appearance of the conditions. These can be thought of as strong and weak versions of the reflexive claim. In either the strong or the weak version, the *history* of what has happened becomes part of what we need to know in order to understand why we have the psychological states we do. At the very least, we know that the expression of states like anger and shyness are historically and culturally variable. But we can go further than this and claim that practical life has generated psychological subjects – people with the kinds of psychological states we study as psychology.

There is a sense, I want to maintain, in which human beings, being human, have created their history. Reflecting in mind, for which language or a symbol system is a precondition, we have formed who we are. Telling the story of this self-creation will lead to a markedly different history from the story of psychology as the advance towards objective biological knowledge. If there is truth in this reflexive view, then knowledge of the history of how humanity has interpreted itself is knowledge of humanity.

The psychologist and historian of psychology Graham Richards suggested that it would help to think about these issues if we distinguish between Psychology (big P) and psychology (little p). The former is the

science and the occupation: the psychologists, institutions, books and knowledge; the latter is the states, the processes, which the science and occupation studies and works on. There are Psychological studies of anger, while an angry person is in a psychological state. The strong reflexive claim is that as Psychology changes, psychology changes also; and vice versa. Thus, for example, I think it plausible to say that the spread of psychoanalysis caused people to develop identities, a self, built around their notion of unconscious forces. Reciprocally, modern ways of life fostered a turn to psychotherapy as a marketable approach to everyday problems. This, I want to be clear, is to state much more than the simple truism that the surrounding society continuously influences the development of the science (or sciences) of psychology.

It would be easy to be taken further afield with these arguments. I return, however, to my theme: the history of psychology is not and could not be a simple story. There was no one time when psychology began, no hero who started it all and no single line of development. There have been different claims about what a science of psychology is and there have been different psychologies. And psychological knowledge and practice have been factors in creating psychology's subject-matter. As a result, people will tell different stories depending on which kind of psychology they want their audience to know about. A contemporary history of psychology, authored by Wade Pickren and Alexandra Rutherford, gives considerably more space and attention to women and to African American psychologists than was the case earlier.

The existence of different histories, just like the existence of different psychologies, is not 'a problem' but the substance. The history of psychology is not about dull facts but a living debate over what sort of knowledge and practice we want.

DESCARTES' WORLD

The Renaissance, beginning in Italy around 1350, and the early modern period, from about 1550 to 1700, saw huge changes. Paris, London and Naples began to have the character of modern cities; the printed book became common; kings and queens in France, Spain, Austria, England and Sweden, and later Russia, created centralized nation states; European voyages, especially to the Americas and to China, transformed European knowledge of people; the study of astronomy and motion, in the period between the major books of Copernicus (1543) and Newton (1687), replaced old views of the physical world with new science. There was excitement and

amazement. When, for example, Europeans looked at indigenous American people, whom they called Indians, brought back for public exhibition, they saw people who, it appeared, had no clothes, no money, no property and no conception of the Christian God. Did this mean there was one human nature or many? What was the place of people without knowledge of Christ in God's world? Was it some people's natural place to be slaves?

Courts like those of Rudolph II in Prague and Elizabeth I in London, as well as wealthy merchants in towns such as Venice, Amsterdam and Augsburg, patronized an intense intellectual life and artistic culture. There was considerable interest in the practical arts of human affairs: in education, in using rhetoric and knowledge of human nature to command people, in the law and political thought, in medicine, and in new technology like printing, cartography, land surveying and financial accounting. The number of universities increased, especially in the lands of the Holy Roman Empire stretching across central Europe, and there was considerable interchange between them. There were also philosophies shaping novel ways of thinking about what makes a human being, and many later observers think this opened a road to scientific psychology.

No single figure has had more posthumous standing at the beginning of the new age than René Descartes (1596–1650). Even if scholarly work has shown that he had closer connections with late medieval philosophy than either he or his followers acknowledged, his work became, as it continues to be, a reference point for assessing how far new knowledge differs from old. Descartes himself was a characteristic intellectual of the first half of the seventeenth century, disturbed by what he thought a dangerous scepticism. The Protestant Reformation had begun a century earlier, and with it came profoundly divergent claims about the sources of authority and truth. The consequences may sound familiar: in a time of change, people fear uncertainties and search anxiously for absolute truth. It was Descartes' ambition to provide new and solid foundations for everything we can know. Very importantly, his model of certainty in reasoning came from mathematics. But whether certainty of the kind mathematical proof provides can be found in human affairs many people were to doubt, and, indeed, Descartes' own philosophy created new debate rather than a new synthesis of knowledge on being human.

Descartes lived as an independent scholar, much of the time in the Low Countries where there was greater freedom to publish than in his native France. Seeking the basis for certain knowledge, he concluded that we have knowledge of three kinds of being: of God, matter and mind. It illustrates his historically transitional position that he used cognates in

Latin and French for both 'soul' and 'mind': wanting to distance himself from Aristotelian notions of soul, he sometimes used the word 'mind', but he still used the word 'soul', as in his book on *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649; *The Passions of the Soul*), about self-control, to refer to what he thought a real entity. The natural world, including plants and animals, Descartes declared, consists of matter, extended substance in motion. It was an argument which made everything in nature the product of the size and motion of particles and hence subject to measurement and calculation. If nature can be quantified, it can be known precisely – just as Descartes' contemporary, Galileo Galilei, was proving in his new science of motion. In this way, Descartes provided the philosophical underpinning for modern physical science, the project to know the world in terms of causal sequences of moving matter (or, later, transformations of energy). Descartes and the new physical science removed what could not be measured, like soul, form and purpose, from the physical world; reference to such things had, according to the new way of thought, become unscientific.

Descartes framed all his thought in the light of certainty about the Christian God. He also self-consciously asserted his presence in the world, his own thinking, apart from matter. Like Montaigne in his essays, Descartes was fascinated by the authorial self. Knowledge, he presumed, must take into account the activity of knowing as well as what is known. Not able to doubt he was a thinking being, he claimed the world contains mind (or soul) as well as matter, and this mind, he held, is thinking substance, not extended in space, not in motion, not the sort of thing which is quantifiable. He therefore concluded that two kinds of entities exist: matter and mind, which have completely opposed natures, one characterized by mechanistic motion, the other by thought. This is his dualism – Cartesian dualism. In certain respects it was a clear way of thought. It laid out a programme for research in the physical sciences leading to the mathematical analysis of the physical world and to astonishing technology. But it was unbelievable.

Dualism was an unbelievable philosophy because it required belief in one place (at least) in the universe where matter and mind interact, even though they share nothing in common. This place is in each person. According to Descartes, human beings are unique because they are both body and mind. He thought that animals are machines, and he thought that much of human life, including, for example, passion, is caused by physical motions (in passion the blood is much agitated). Yet in humans, physical motions, such as those which take place in the optic nerves after light has fallen on the eyes, also interact with the thinking activity of the soul, and humans thereby have perception and imagination and reasoning. At

once, as he perceived, this creates a conundrum: how do two completely different entities interact?

Over the long term, such thinking bequeathed to psychology a major problem. Descartes himself, we should note, never discussed anything called 'psychology', though he was interested in sensation, affection, memory and so on. When scientists later wanted to create psychological knowledge, they set about it with a mixture of knowledge of matter and knowledge of mind. Many problems of psychology and much of the interest in its history come from this. Wanting to know about themselves, people wanted to know about the place in the world where mind and body interact, precisely the point where Descartes, and much of science with him, was incoherent.

Dualistic thinking took many forms after Descartes. Naturally enough, there tended to be two opposed approaches: one, starting out from knowledge of matter and drawing mind into the material world; the other, starting out from mind, or soul, and making knowledge of matter secondary. As the range of positions was very great, though, it is good to be wary about talking as if there were simply two opposed institutionalized schools or traditions, empiricist and idealist. Further, insofar as there were empiricist and idealist tendencies, one side was *not* for science and against religion and the other side was *not* against science and for religion.

Historians of psychology, by and large, have had little to say about religion, mainly, one suspects, because of a tacit assumption that scientific psychology and religious belief are mutually exclusive, and the latter is therefore simply of no interest to a story about the rise of scientific psychology. For a number of reasons, this cannot be right. A priori, nothing sensible can be said about a conflict in general between 'science' and 'religion', since both words denote a huge cluster of activities rather than any one thing. The complex interplay of both empiricist and idealist tendencies in thought about science and religion illustrates this. Then there is the historical evidence for the large-scale involvement of religion in psychology – evidence for the general Judaeo-Christian background to thought on soul and mind and the improvement of 'man's estate', and evidence for specific influences, some of which I shall mention. When there were sharp differences, as of course there sometimes were, we can identify specific reasons.

In the eighteenth century, in contexts where knowledge, so to speak, ran in the direction from matter to mind, there were medical and experimental studies of the functions of the different parts of the body, including the brain and nervous system. By the end of the century, writers were linking reflex actions to the spinal cord and conscious sensation to the brain. The French physician, J. O. de La Mettrie (1709–1751), published a

scandalous polemic, *L'Homme machine* (1747; *Man a Machine*), which denied the soul, and Denis Diderot (1713–1784), in witty and risqué essays, wrote about the play body and sex make with human life. The influence of theories of matter was also strong in British culture, and this had consequences for the shaping of nineteenth-century psychology. Locke and those who followed him, in order to understand the mind, supposed we should start with the sensations which originate in the physical world and which give us experience. This was to become the belief that the key to psychological knowledge is knowledge of sensation and subsequent learning, memory, behaviour and adaptation. We can follow the belief from the time of Kepler's work on the eye in the early seventeenth century, through nineteenth-century claims for the reflex basis of psychological events in the brain, to the U.S. behaviourist psychologists, to Pavlov and to modern cognitive scientists who construct computer models of mind. Psychology, from this viewpoint, studies the way a person responds to the world in which she or he is literally, physically, embedded. It is the point of view of the contemporary psychologist who thinks in biological, evolutionary terms.

Some histories of psychology have been written as if this were the only possible story. The reason is clear. The story vindicates belief that psychology is a rigorous science with the same kind of objective and systematic knowledge as the physical sciences. Given the success of the physical sciences in understanding and controlling nature, and the high status they have in universities and in society, this is extremely attractive to psychologists. It confirms the capacity of psychology, using scientific method, to make progress. Moreover, aligning psychology with the natural sciences holds out the prospect of the unification of knowledge, including knowledge of people, into one great scheme of knowledge of the natural world. This would seem to leave just the one 'hard problem' – the problem of consciousness – and the race is on to solve it following the way of thought which has proved so successful.

I shall, however, also attend to the contrasting approach, the approach to knowledge which, so to speak, has run in the direction from mind to matter. The symbolic birth of this tendency in argument, at least in modern times, is Descartes' famous claim that whatever he might doubt, he could not doubt that he had the capacity to doubt; in other words, he could not doubt that there is a mind thinking. Similar claims led numerous philosophers to start with the analysis of reason, rather than sensation, when they tried to say how it is possible to have knowledge. We can follow the arguments from the time of G. W. Leibniz (1646–1716), in the generation after Descartes, through Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), to Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) –

the founder of phenomenology – and his followers in the twentieth century. These arguments greatly influenced psychology, putting forward mental content, mental acts, language and the phenomenal world of consciousness (the world as it appears in subjective awareness) as the subject-matter of the field. The arguments are alive and well, if taking new forms, in psychologies which, in certain ways, have affinities with the humanities rather than the natural sciences. These psychologies do not generate causal knowledge of the kind found in the natural sciences, but their proponents would say that they nevertheless generate disciplined understanding, and hence, adopting continental European usage, also contribute to science.

The idealist tendency has often appealed to people who think that a human being is not a machine. Some writers, like Descartes himself, wanted to keep a place for a religious notion of the soul as a distinct entity, essential to being human. This remains the position of the Orthodox and Catholic faiths. Other writers, however, like the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, were concerned with a science of psychology based on knowledge of what the mind, or in once common words, the human spirit, has achieved in language and culture; that is, they took the base of psychological knowledge to be the individual's historically specific activity. Arguing in this way did not necessarily presuppose the existence of the soul as a distinct entity but rather started out from the value-creating activity of humans in history. Yet others, following Husserl, like the Dutch psychologist F.J.J. Buytendijk, sought the basis of psychological knowledge in the immediate conscious world, in the feel and sense of significance in lived experience. Yet others turned to language (and this continues in the contemporary discursive psychology of Rom Harré), or to the archetypes of a collective unconscious (C. G. Jung), or to a constructive self (Carl Rogers) and so on. When modern neuroscientists, having identified the self with the brain, jump up and down and declare that they have disproved the soul, they skip over much of what matters in these questions. But this takes me to the conclusion, not the starting point, of the book.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PSYCHOLOGY

When Descartes wrote his philosophical books, the Latin word *psych - ologia* was already in use. This has directed historians, in recent studies, to a new understanding of the domains of knowledge relevant to psychology in the early modern period. 'Psychology', though, had no fixed referent in Descartes' age, and it certainly did not denote an institutionalized discipline. All the same, a number of teachers had begun to use the word to describe

the study of the soul connected to the body, and in this we might see the beginnings of psychology understood as a natural science. I have already suggested, however, that we should not think of psychology as one thing with a specific origin.

The background is the late medieval and Renaissance study of Aristotle's text, *On the Soul* (*De anima*), and of commentaries on it, especially the theologically heretical commentary, from a Christian viewpoint, of Ibn Rushd (Averroes). This study spread as part of the preparation of students for higher levels of learning in law, medicine and especially theology. In the sixteenth century at the university in Marburg, influenced by the great Protestant reformer, the academic Philipp Melanchthon, and in Leiden, some teachers began to discuss the soul as part of the curriculum of *physica*, separating knowledge of the soul in relation to the body, which they discussed, from knowledge of the immortal soul, which they left to theologians. In this context there was reference to *psychologia*. To a degree, these teachers broke with the Aristotelian way of discussing the soul as the principle of life and, rather, adopting the model of Galenic medicine which related physiological functions to the body, treated mental activity as a function of the body. (Galen was the Roman physician of the first century in the Christian era whose writings formed the core of medicine for centuries.) In addition, the popular genre of texts on controlling the passions particularly emphasized the dependency of soul on body. Descartes took these trends further, separating rational mind, which he sometimes called 'mind' not 'soul', and the physiological activity of the soul tied to the body. During the seventeenth century, though *De anima* continued to be studied, many scholars' views became increasingly un-Aristotelian. There was a turn to empirical claims about human nature as part of a field called *anthropologia*. Sometimes a writer would refer to psychology as a branch of anthropology or even physiology; but there was also reference to *pneumatologia*, the study of spiritual entities (souls, angels), which could include psychology – here the name for the study of the rational soul (not connected to the body) and its immortality. Thus, if we wish to trace psychology in this period, it requires a broad view, a history of thought about human nature in general rather than an attempt to find something specifically like modern psychology.

Systematic reference to psychology as a domain of knowledge appears to have come after the writings of Christian Wolff (1679–1754), as least as far as the German-language world is concerned. Wolff, ranging across the whole of philosophical learning, laid out the relations of empirical and rational study of soul or mind as an academic field with a degree

of independence from religious requirements. This further encouraged the study of anthropology, the study of Man as a natural being. (All eighteenth-century writers in English, indeed, virtually all writers till the 1970s, used 'Man' as the common generic term for human beings, and the capital letter was the norm before the last century.) Kant, for instance, lectured in anthropology for three decades at the university in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad, Russia), where he talked about all sorts of topics of interest to a general audience, like the nature of feeling for beauty and personal and national character, as well as cognition. The great *Encyclopédie*, edited by Diderot and d'Alembert (which began to appear in 1751), took up Wolff's treatment of the rational soul under the heading of 'psychology', and the heading thus entered French culture. Strikingly, the second, Swiss edition of the *Encyclopédie* (1770–76), treated psychology as a more substantial topic in its own right, and it cited the authority for this of Étienne Bonnot, abbé de Condillac (1714–1780) and the *genevois* Charles Bonnet (1720–1793). Bonnet wrote at length on *psychologie* and traced knowledge to sensory experience mediated by nerve fibres, supposing each fibre to have a predisposition to convey a particular sensation (as the strings of a musical instrument are tuned to different pitches). This might appear to have brought to a conclusion the potential of sixteenth-century thought to associate soul with brain not immortality, but in fact Bonnet was a Christian writer who, while relating what we can know empirically about the mind to nerve fibres, upheld belief in the immortal soul, even if we cannot have empirical knowledge of it. To understand Condillac, it is first necessary to turn to Locke.

John Locke (1632–1704) has a stellar position in histories of psychology, though he never used the word 'psychology', nor imagined he was contributing to a discipline separate from logic. His fame is that he wrote the canonical text displaying knowledge of mind beginning with sensory experience, and for those psychologists who identify themselves as natural scientists, *this* is the foundation of their field as objective research. Locke's own concern, however, was with how to distinguish secure knowledge from speculation, mere belief and enthusiasm, and his method was rational – analytic and attentive to language – rather than based on disciplined observation. Having, when young, experienced England torn by civil war, he ardently desired to know what distinguishes knowledge from enthusiasm, grounds for right action from grounds insecurely laid.

Descartes died in 1650, and in the following decades there was intense debate about his work. Isaac Newton published *Philosophiæ naturalis principia mathematica* (1687; *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*), and, as people came to realize – few people could read the book itself – this

demonstrated a new level of knowledge of the universe. Aristotelian thought about nature appeared completely inadequate in comparison. Locke, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), which was begun many years earlier, undertook to explain how in theory it is possible to have the kind of knowledge which Newton had shown in practice we can have about nature. Locke concluded that there is only one route to reliable knowledge, through experience, just as Newton maintained that he had built on experience to reveal the laws underlying natural motions. Locke went on to describe in detail how sensation, and reflection on sensation, builds up complex mental life with thought and language. In addition, he promoted a hugely influential line of thinking, which treated the feelings as varieties of pleasure and pain, treated pleasure and pain as species of sensation and then explained our conduct or behaviour as a response to the pleasures and pains of sensory experience. He proposed the pleasure–pain principle: a principle which states that experience determines motives, and motives cause action, all in regular ways. The large consequence of this was the belief that experience determines character and conduct or, in modern terms, personality and behaviour.

Locke elaborated a theory of knowledge in which he used the metaphor of 'the blank slate', an image of the mind as empty before sensation inscribes something on it. He would have regretted using this image, if he could have foreseen the polemical use others were to make of it. Locke himself clearly attributed pre-sensory powers to the mind: the power to have sensations and the power to reflect, that is, the mind's capacity to judge about the ideas which experience provides; the mind also has the capacity of feeling. His image misled. Locke's theory of experience can look quite modern; but he did not question Christian faith, only distinguishing the kind of knowledge which faith provides from the kind of knowledge which experience provides – the type of argument which was to be a mainstay of modern attempts to assign religion and science to separate spheres.

The *Essay* was long and philosophical in manner. It nevertheless conveyed a striking and accessible picture of each person starting life as a young child with almost no mental life, and then, through experience and growing up, becoming an adult with complex thoughts and feelings. Locke tied what a person knows and does – who she or he is – to the experience which she has, the social world in which she grows up: a person's character is made not born. He thus assigned to knowledge of experience the most profound practical as well as philosophical importance. Over a century later, writers in English were to call this knowledge 'psychology'; for much of the eighteenth century, though, they usually wrote about knowledge of

human nature. If we know human nature, they declared, we will learn how to educate people to build a better world. If we control experience, we will control action. This was 'Enlightenment', the word, as used by later historians, which gave a name to the age after Locke, the age of the *Encyclopédie* and the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1768–71). Locke himself wrote a much read short guide to education, progressive for its time, in which he suggested ways to arouse a child's interest in experience and learning rather than crudely and cruelly beating knowledge into a child's memory. The new world, he and others anticipated, would be enlightened: once free of ignorance and religious prejudice, free from the vanity and greed of kings and tsars, people would use knowledge to control both physical nature and human nature, to reduce suffering and increase happiness. Abbé Gabriel Bonnot de Mably wrote: 'Let us study man as he is, in order to teach him to become what he should be.' It was the finest hope.

Locke used 'consciousness' in a way which made it central to English-language accounts of mind. It related to the Latin '*conscientia*' and the French Descartes used, '*conscience*', which is still current in French psychology; these words denoted conscientious thought, thought framed to conform to the moral value of truth. The Cambridge theologian Ralph Cudworth, however, not long before Locke published, had introduced 'consciousness' in order to characterize reflection on thinking as a *cognitive* ability rather than a *moral* act. 'Consciousness' and 'conscience', in English, came to parcel out cognitive and moral faculties; by contrast, the distinction between them did not come naturally in other languages. It may sound an esoteric story, but it paved the way for the kind of discussion which now takes place on the nature and origin of consciousness. For many modern scientists, consciousness is simply an empirical phenomenon, however puzzling, a fact, waiting to be explained. But the notion that consciousness is a fact is modern and questionable; it can be argued it is not a fact but a concept central to modern thought about humans as reflective agents. Moreover, the concept is linguistically variable. Thus consciousness is a modern concept, not a natural category, and there are other ways of discussing mind which do not pose consciousness as 'the hard problem' but an empirical problem, of scientific psychology in the manner in which modern neuroscientists understand it. Psychological puzzles come into existence in ways we can trace historically. If English language separates a normative (rule-directed) conscience from the phenomenal fact of consciousness, this is a historical and cultural achievement, part of a wider discourse separating normative, moral definitions of being human (to be human is to act according to certain standards) from factual claims about what is empirically the case in being human.

Going further into what he thought we can know, Locke discussed the self in a manner which shocked his contemporaries. Asking the question, 'What constitutes the We or I?', he answered that it is the continuity of consciousness over time. This was in marked contrast to the usual Christian attribution of the self to the unified soul. It is, Locke thought, the succession of our ideas and feelings, the continuity of consciousness, which gives people a self-identity. This suggested that if there is a break in continuity – even in sleep, as his critics immediately pointed out – the self is broken. Is a person then merely the sum of sensations and ideas which get replaced in new circumstances? Locke appears to anticipate the modern self, an aggregate of interior, changing particulars, a consciousness without conscience, open to the winds of change. In the eighteenth century, Laurence Sterne, in *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67), was to play gloriously with such thoughts. By then, it was indeed the novel which had become the vehicle for representations of human identity. The novel, as the medium par excellence for portraying the nature and causes of individual feeling and action, acquired a position of inestimable importance in forming a public attuned to psychological thought. Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740–41), a sensation in educated Europe, was an extended drama of the subjective, and hence we might say psychological, struggles of the heroine to preserve her virginity, her self. The novel was *public*, integrating individual subjectivity in a collective psychological world. Locke, however, had already implied that identity might be unmade as well as made, vulnerable to circumstance as well as a creative force.

Along with the novel, letter writing, diaries and memoirs flourished, all contributing to forms of understanding in terms of individual, subjective and, as we would say, psychological identity. Other cultural movements also contributed, like the fashion for cutting silhouettes in black paper, making a profile of a person's appearance and thus outlining psychological character. Psychology thus originated in changes in ways of life and commonplace sensibility, not only in difficult texts.

Condillac in France and David Hartley (1705–1757) in England turned Locke's account of experience into detailed analyses of the way, as they thought, sensations combine to produce complex knowledge and conduct. (Language referred to 'conduct', a word with moral connotations, rather than to 'behaviour', a term characteristic of the modern attempt to separate fact from judgment, by observing only the outward form of the doing, about what a person does.) Condillac reused the model of the statue, which from a state of inert existence gradually acquires sensation through

one sense after another. Taken up with one sensation, the statue exhibits attention; given a second sensation, the statue's awareness of the two gives memory of the first and comparison of sensations, the beginnings of thought; and so on. In spite of appearances, this picture of being human was not such a passive one, since Condillac imagined his statue in possession of desire or wants; it has an innate vitality to seek out sensation and to respond to it according to its pleasurable or painful qualities. As for human desires or wants, he linked their particular character to culture and circumstance. He formulated a whole, systematic course of instruction on his principles. Hartley, for his part, emphasized the association of ideas, the regular ways memory, thought and action, he claimed, depend on the juxtaposition of sensations in time and place and on their similarity and difference. Out of this the British utilitarian social philosophers, influenced by Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), developed a political programme to create a world where the pleasures and pains of experience would lead people, naturally and inevitably, to act in ways which increase human happiness. James Mill (1773–1836), a follower of Bentham, in 1829 published his *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, in which he analysed – in an unflagging dry style – the different sensations, their combination, the accompanying feelings of pleasure and pain and the resulting conduct which, necessarily, pursues pleasure and avoids pain. The goal was a calculus of human conduct, the basis for a social and legal order which would make people seek the happiness of all. A contemporary young woman, Helen Bevington, with Bentham in mind, put her finger on the weakness of all this:

> They say he cherished men,
> Their happiness, and then
> Calmly assumed one could
> Devise cures for their good,
> Believing all men the same,
> And happiness their aim.
>
> He reckoned right and wrong
> By felicity – lifelong –
> And by such artless measure
> As the quantity of pleasure.
> For pain he had a plan,
> Absurd old gentleman.

We cannot, she supposed, measure happiness or virtue. Yet much modern policy, taking knowledge of individual human nature to be the basis for the good society, has these intellectual roots.

If we may question the empirical authority and practicality of utilitarian thought about the mind, we cannot doubt that it moved away from traditional Christian belief about the soul. Such thought did not cause the French Revolution, but the Enlightenment philosophers, the utilitarian social reformers and the actual revolutionaries all believed that it is possible for people to remake the human world. This depends, they understood, on human reason not, or at least not directly, on God. The constitution of the new republic of the United States of America found a voice for this belief that free men can take the future into their own hands. Yet even the United States excluded slaves and women from political society.

THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF PSYCHOLOGY

Opposed to all this new thought were the conservative political powers of old Europe. Rulers from Madrid to St Petersburg maintained that social order depends on God-given hierarchy, absolute control from the top downwards and unconditional faith. Man is essentially fallen, conservative writers argued, and only Christ will redeem – not in this world but in the next. East of the Rhine, enlightened thought had little hold or took effect later. Medieval forms of social organization, in which the great mass of people remained illiterate, endured. In German, Austrian and Italian lands in the eighteenth century, and then in Russia in the nineteenth century, though, a stratum of people with education but without political representation emerged, and they longed for an enlightened future. In these conditions, psychological thought, focusing on subjective states, was an attractive means to assert individuality and freedom. Even in Britain and in the United States and France after their revolutions, where there was a turn towards economic and political emancipation, people countered social constraints by emphasizing psychological individuality. In German lands, an intense cultural life grew up around the many small courts, each with its associated university. The court of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach was, in the late eighteenth century, home to J. W. von Goethe (1749–1832), who became a symbol of the ideals of German culture, and it directed the university of Jena, the town where, in the 1790s, the poet and playwright Friedrich Schiller, the philosopher J. G. Fichte, the Schlegel brothers and later the philosophers Schelling and Hegel, launched romanticism in literature and idealism in philosophy.

Whereas English, Scottish and French eighteenth-century thought, influenced by Locke, attended to the creation of mental life through sensation, German-language thought, influenced by Leibniz, stressed the activity of reason. By the second half of the century, there was a large literature on the different mental powers, which writers tended to group as faculties of reasoning, feeling and willing (the cognitive, affective and conative powers). This was the basis for two significant developments, and if one was abstract and at the margins of intelligibility, the other was concrete and at the heart of how ordinary, though modern, people pictured themselves.

Kant's critical philosophy examined what it is possible to know and the logical (not factual) conditions which make science possible. According to Kant, we necessarily reason about the world in a manner shaped by the logical structure of reason. Whatever the argument in philosophy, people found in Kant's writing support for something very much like a psychological argument: the mind works by actively creating frameworks, or structures, which shape experience, and certain structures may be innate. The general issues were exemplified in debate about vision: does the mind passively receive impressions from the eyes and in this way acquire knowledge about the spatially extended external world, or do innate mental structures shape what we see? (In addition, there was much interest in the role in vision of touch, including sensations of movement.) Many German-language writers concluded that psychological life is active, not a passive response to the world around: our world is indeed our world, since we have had a part in shaping what we know, feel and do. For many, it was a more realistic and attractive picture of the mind at work than the picture which they found in Locke and his followers and which derived everything from sensations – and treated feelings like sensations rather than transformations of self. Kant was himself much interested in such questions, though in his formal critiques he argued that a rigorous, quantifiable science of mind, comparable to mechanics, is not possible. He certainly wanted to advance psychological knowledge, which he discussed as a branch of anthropology, but he thought of such knowledge as closer to the practical knowledge of everyday life than to deductive science. The search for mental structures, which Kant did so much to foster, was to have a long history.

The second development was new enthusiasm for a culture of the self in psychological terms; for characterizing individual people in terms of subjective qualities and especially qualities 'of the heart', of feeling. The arts flourished as natural mediums for expressing this. The *Bildungsroman*, the novel of an individual character finding her or his place and purpose in the world, about the self acquiring shape and direction, came into its own.

Madame de Staël, in *Corinne; ou, l'Italie* (1807; *Corinne; or, Italy*), explored, with palpitating excitement, the extraordinary career and love of an ideal woman, both intellectually brilliant and sensitive to feeling and beauty, and linked this to ideals of nationhood. The expectation spread that there should be a science of the subjective self, a science of what really drives people from within. Romantic writers created an image of subjective identity founded on hidden and powerful feelings, and, at times, this pulled interest in the mind away from reason and away from a psychology modelled on natural science. Here are roots for much of the modern popular notion of psych - ology as the science of subjectivity. Here are roots of Freud's extraordinary influence as a psychologist in the twentieth century. In the early nineteenth century, however, it was more often literary writers, like Goethe or Stendhal, than people who called themselves psychologists, who introduced a large public to this way of thought. This was certainly the case, for example, in Russia, where the characters imagined by Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol' provided lasting models of subjective life.

Brought up in conservative society and with religions suspicious of personal feelings, a romantic generation broke loose. It looked to the subjective self, to the psychological world of individual feelings, for the way to live truly, authentically and well. The artist, the person who finds in her or his own inner world the source of vivid expression for this reality, became a heroine or hero, a model for others about how best to live. As some historians have concluded, this, more than any development in science, may have drawn people away from traditional Christian faith, faith which turned to God rather than to the self for hope. Moreover, while an expression of emancipation for many individuals, romantic art was personally and politically ambivalent in its effects. If it focused on individual hope, it also emphasized individual despair. Romanticism expressed human problems as problems of individuals and their spirit, not problems of social structure and power, and, when it did inform social thought, it often fostered mythical beliefs about particular groups or nations, linking and dividing people by feeling and imagined ancestry, race and nationality.

The culture of the new psychology of the self was a public culture not a university culture. Some universities, indeed, like Oxford and Cambridge, were glorified men's clubs rather than hotbeds of learning, though in Scotland, by contrast, the universities were central to intellectual life. The universities changed in the nineteenth century and turned themselves into institutions committed to both teaching and research and established modern disciplines of scholarship in the natural sciences and what English writers call the 'humanities' – disciplines like philology, philosophy, history

and the study of art and literature. Psychology, as also social science, had no position as a separate university discipline in the nineteenth century. Physiology, however, did establish itself as an experimental natural science, and in the first half of the nineteenth century there was considerable research on the nervous system, firmly consolidating knowledge that the brain is the organ of mind and reflex action the elementary unit of nervous function.

Writing about a subject which authors themselves called 'psychology' became more usual after about 1750, though this was common only later, not until the second quarter of the nineteenth century in the English-language world. The writing covered a very diverse field. There were studies of mental powers or faculties, analyses of sensation in general, experiments on colour vision, diaries about child development, discourses on individual moral character and accounts of feeling and the inner life. There was much awareness of people as social beings and of society as not just something which people happen to organize but fundamental to being human. For example, Adam Smith (1723–1790), then as now celebrated as the author of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow, gave the central place in his account of human nature to sympathy, the individual capacity to feel what others feel. This, Smith thought, as well as being the cement of society, makes people intrinsically social beings. As Smith observed, other people are a kind of mirror to ourselves, and indeed he referred to the way we see and judge ourselves as involving our perception of an ideal 'impartial spectator'. The bridge between the so-called inner and outer worlds, many writers understood, is not unmediated sensation, and does not involve an isolated self seeing a physical world, but depends on experience mediated by *language* in a social world. We see and know by virtue of the linguistic culture in which we are a 'we'.

The study of language attracted a huge following. A discipline of philology, the background to modern linguistics, consolidated in the late eighteenth century, and there was much argument about what the history of language says about how people become the sort of people they are. It became common to believe that each person acquires a character and identity, just as each person acquires a language, as a result of living at a particular time and in a particular place. In the writings of J. G. Herder (1744–1803), Goethe's colleague in Weimar, this pointed towards social relations and cultural life, rather than individual minds, as the way to understand what people are and do. It encouraged research on the history of language, the rise and fall of civilizations and differences between groups of people

– groups increasingly linked during the course of the nineteenth century to political nations and to races.

In the eighteenth century, the fascination with human nature, whether focused on the association (a social metaphor) of ideas, sympathy or language, took this nature to be social. It is perhaps not too much to say that the roots of psychology lay in social psychology. Of course, 'social psychology', as a label for an area of psychological research, appeared only in the late nineteenth century. But it was studies of the situation of individuals in their social worlds, engaged in rational economic activity, exhibiting a moral sense, displaying national character or simply expressing sympathy in the family, which laid the foundations. Psychology was not always the study of individual capacities, conceived as prior to and independent of social life, which it was so often to become.

French writers, from early in the eighteenth century, divided the study of individual and collective actions, habits and customs, *le moral*, from the physical dimensions of human life, *la physique*. Examining *le moral*, Montesquieu wrote one of the most influential books of the century, *De l'esprit des lois* (1748; *The Spirit of the Laws*), in which he tried systematically to explain the different social, legal and political organization of different countries. Exemplary of the study of *la physique* was *L'Histoire naturelle de l'homme* (1749; *The Natural History of Man*) by George-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, the introductory essay to many volumes of natural history which, among other things, compared different human types and the apes (the chimpanzee and orang-utan, since the gorilla was unknown in Europe until a century later). What we might think of as topics in psychology crossed the boundary between the moral and physical sides of human nature. When there was specific reference to *psychologie* (as in the *Encyclopédie* and Bonnet's writing), this focused on sensation. Then, in the 1790s, an intellectually influential movement known as *idéologie* attempted a unification of the moral and physical dimensions of human nature, showing how bodily life, sensory experience and social customs all interact to make people what they are. The term '*idéologie*' signalled a debt to Condillac's theory of knowledge or ideas. The aim of the *idéologues* was to provide a complete rational basis for social organization and, while the political realities of Napoleon's rule, followed by the royal Restoration in 1815, certainly excluded this, they had an impact, particularly through re-organizing medicine as a profession and lever of change in the social conditions of life. The physician P.-J.-G. Cabanis (1757–1808) drew the analysis of ideas into connection with knowledge of bodily processes, tying *le moral* to *la physique*, pointing towards an integrated medical and social science of the embodied person. Another physician influenced

by *idéologie*, J.-M.-G. Itard (1774–1838), carried out one of the most famous of all experiments on human nature. The story is worth telling both for its own sake and because Itard tried to solve one of the main intellectual and practical problems subsequently to preoccupy psychologists and to shape their relationship with society: the problem of what a person owes to birth and what to upbringing.

During the cold winter of 1799–1800, local people saw a naked boy trying to steal food in a country area of southern France. Captured, it became clear that he had lived wild for some years, surviving by himself in nature. Here was a boy, the educated world thought, who was natural, without social training. He had no language, no cleanliness and liked to run on four legs. In Paris, Itard, who was involved in training deaf and dumb children, decided to demonstrate the effect of society on the development of the mind by showing the boy could learn to use language and behave like other people. Thus he began the experiment with the boy, who he called Victor, the wild boy of Aveyron. The boy proved a difficult pupil. After some years of intense teaching, Itard had to concede that, though Victor took baths and wore clothes, if reluctantly, he had not really mastered language. Itard's critics dismissed Victor as simply an idiot from birth. More thoughtfully, other observers wondered whether Victor had missed out on social contact at the point in a child's development when language learning would normally take place, and whether his incapacity showed that learning could not take place later. This experiment retains its intellectual interest and emotional impact – Victor was characterized in François Truffaut's beautiful film, *L'Enfant sauvage* (1970; *The Wild Child*) – and a number of stories about so-called wild children still circulate. What is it that makes a person a person and not an animal? What is natural if language and feelings require a certain kind of social development in order to exist? Much of later psychology set out to answer such questions; they proved far more complex than first thought.

At the same time as Itard was trying to educate Victor, Maine de Biran (1766–1824) began (he often did not complete) a series of essays which markedly deepened the philosophical and emotional sensitivity of *idéologie*. Revealing his links to romantic thought, his most extended and, in the long run, famous writing was his diary – a record of subjectivity. Maine de Biran re-examined sensation and found, underlying and preceding all experience, a feeling of active self, which he called *l'effort voulu* (willed effort). The unmediated, irreducible experience of the will of a distinct subjective self, he argued, must be the starting point for knowledge of mind. In the twentieth century, in the francophone world, this appeared

to be the foundation stone for a conception of psychology based on the actual, existential subjective being of what we call a person: an intrinsically desiring and responsible being. It contributed a distinctive strand of argument sensitive to the will, to desire and to individual freedom in French philosophical psychology.

Maine de Biran influenced intellectuals in the nineteenth century but could hardly be said to have had a public impact. By contrast, Victor Cousin (1792–1867) and other teachers created an institutional identity, as the route to philosophy, for *psychologie* understood as the rational analysis of *la conscience*. This drew on Maine de Biran as well as a range of earlier writers, and though it hence earned the title of *éclectisme*, it established a notion of psychology as a specific field in France and taught this notion to generations of future teachers. Cousin initially occupied a somewhat liberal stance in French politics but, as conditions changed, his psychology looked more and more like a conservative Christian defence of the soul as the basis of all other thought. Opposition to it was to give rise to the notion of a 'new psychology' around 1880.

Though the opening decades of the nineteenth century were marked by idealism in philosophy in the German-speaking world, this was not incompatible with the empirical examination of consciousness – of what is in the mind – as a field with its own distinct questions and procedures. Kant's successor in Königsberg, J. F. Herbart (1776–1841), claimed to argue from the first, logical principles of philosophy to an account, confirmed by experience, of how the mind works. In *Psychologie als Wissenschaft* (1825; *Psychology as Science*), he described sensations and ideas as active forces competing with each other, the result of which constitutes conscious awareness under the shaping activity of the individual ego. Starting out from the logical principle of the unity of the soul, a principle he shared with the idealists, Herbart thought it possible to construct a quantified science of mental forces, a science analogous to mechanics. This science would, in its turn, he proposed, be the basis for *Staatswissenschaft*, the science of the state, and the basis for rational education. This made psychology a distinct field of knowledge and, like French *éclectisme*, made it a practical field central to the organization of education. A number of writers, like F. E. Beneke (1798–1854), followed Herbart, and though they are now little remembered, they did create an audience outside universities for a domain called psychology. Even earlier, F. A. Carus (1770–1807), professor of philosophy in Leipzig, had written the first history, *Geschichte der Psychologie* (1808; *History of Psychology*), in itself a significant influence in fostering the idea of a discipline of psychology.

All the while, first in Britain, then in France and Belgium, followed by the United States and Germany, the social world began the major transformation we know as the industrial revolution. This had its roots in population growth, the enlargement of commercial enterprise, the creation of new consumer markets and technological innovation. A science, political economy, with antecedents in government and military interest in the causes of a country's wealth and hence power, developed. The early theorists of political economy, including Smith, were preoccupied by the links between wealth creation, social organization and the character of people. Smith, who held the rather conservative view that natural sympathy is the cement of society as it has actually developed, along with the followers of Bentham, who wanted to reform conditions and hence reform people – a more radical politics – thought individual human nature the basis for thinking about social and political life. These writers did not refer to 'psychology', but they held beliefs about individual capacities, like sympathy and the motivation which results from pleasure and pain, which linked ideas, feeling and action. People in the educated classes, many of whom – like the Darwin and Wedgwood families in the English Midlands – acquired much wealth, took for granted the dependency of social progress on the cultivation of individual character. Thus both romantic sensibility and commercial society pointed to the importance of 'mental science' (a common nineteenth-century term), the science of the individual mind, for social progress. The coming of industrial modernity established individual mental character as both the drive and the moral purpose of progress, and romantic sensibility added moral and aesthetic value. This created a culture in which psychology flourished. The Scottish moralist Thomas Carlyle likened Bentham's and James Mill's theory of human nature to the machinery of the industrial revolution, calling the theory a mechanism to grind out human happiness. Influenced by German romanticism, he turned to genius as a model for the mind, thinking of genius as the capacity *to shape* the world in art or science or in politics or military conquest. Carlyle and the utilitarians alike, though, looked to the formation of individual character, to processes which became the subject-matter of psychology, as the basis for progress.

Whether under the label of psychology, anthropology, the science of man, mental science or moral philosophy, writers in the early nineteenth century studied mind and conduct in multiple ways. Many people, those with at least some education, sought new opportunities for themselves, their families and their communities, and they turned to literature and moral practices focused on learning, character, feeling and social relations.

Among intellectuals, some, like Maine de Biran and Cousin, advocated knowledge of the mind in order to understand subjectivity or matters of Christian faith. Others, like Bentham, demanded a science of human nature in order to control material and economic circumstances. There were real differences with social and political consequences, as John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), James Mill's son, discerned when he famously drew a contrast, in essays in 1838 and 1840, between the utilitarian reformer Bentham and the conservative poet Coleridge. Amidst all this argument, psychology, thus commonly named in English from about 1830, came to be a field for debating what it is to be human and for shaping the social world to make the truly human possible.

READING

As many psychology students take a history of psychology course, there are numerous textbooks – which this book is not. Among these, T. H. Leahey, *A History of Psychology: Main Currents in Psychological Thought*, 6th edn (Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2003) covers the ground well in a traditional way, while J. Jansz and P. van Drunen, eds, *A Social History of Psychology* (Malden, MA, 2004) and W. E. Pickren and A. Rutherford, *A History of Modern Psychology in Context* (Hoboken, NJ, 2010) focus on the social relations of psychology, the latter with much institutional detail for the U.S. and a guide to reading. A different book for students, centred on key topics, critical, stimulating and historically informed, is G. Richards, *Putting Psychology in Its Place*, 3rd edn (London and New York, 2010). I include no illustrations; for this, see Jansz and van Drunen, and especially W. G. Bringmann, H. E. Lück, R. Miller and C. E. Early, eds, *A Pictorial History of Psychology* (Carol Stream, IL, 1997). I took a wide view, relating psychology to theories of human nature generally, bringing in more about the pre-1800 period and about the social sciences, in R. Smith, *The Fontana History of the Human Sciences* (London, 1997), also *The Norton History of the Human Sciences* (New York, 1997), which includes a large bibliography but of course no reference to more recent work. I put this history in the context of philosophical argument about understanding people in *Being Human: Historical Knowledge and the Creation of Human Nature* (Manchester and New York, 2007).

The new view of the early modern period is elaborated, with differences, in G. Hatfield, 'Remaking the Science of Mind: Psychology as Natural Science', in *Inventing Human Science: Eighteenth-Century Domains*, ed. C. Fox, R. Porter and R. Wokler (Berkeley, CA, 1995), pp. 184–231; P. Mengal, *La Naissance de la psychologie* (Paris, 2005); and F. Vidal, *The Sciences of the*

Soul: The Early Modern Origins of Psychology, trans. S. Brown (Chicago, 2011). For romantic sensibility and the self, C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989), and J. Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 2005). I adapt my comments on 'consciousness' from papers by B. Hennig, 'Science, Conscience, Consciousness', and B. Carter, 'Ralph Cudworth and the Theological Origins of Consciousness', in special issue, 'History of the Science of Consciousness', *History of the Human Sciences*, XXXIII/3 (2010), pp. 15–28 and 29–47. Also see J. P. Wright and P. Potter, eds, *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind–Body Problem from Antiquity to Enlightenment* (Oxford, 2000). C. F. Goodey, *A History of Intelligence and 'Intellectual Disability': The Shaping of Psychology in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT, 2011) is extremely challenging and its arguments yet to be assimilated. *Inventing Human Science* is a useful collection on the eighteenth century, while G. Richards, *Mental Machinery: The Origins and Consequences of Psychological Ideas, Part 1: 1600–1850* (London, 1992) contains much not easily found elsewhere. M. Billig, in *The Hidden Roots of Critical Psychology: Understanding the Impact of Locke, Shaftesbury and Reid* (London, 2008) shows in an original and accessible way that history can speak to the present.

Three English-language academic journals are especially relevant: *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* (founded 1965); *History of the Human Sciences* (founded 1988); *History of Psychology* (founded 1996).