They also persuaded me to adopt toward contemporary psychology a more conciliatory tone than I was inclined to.

Several publishers to whom I submitted portions of the manuscript suggested that to be in tune with the content of courses in the history of psychology I should drastically reduce, if not eliminate entirely, discussions of philosophical writings on psychology. My reaction was firm and immediate: if there is an imbalance, it is in the standard courses on the history of psychology, not in my book. On the other hand, I received encouragement from the senior editors of several publishing houses: Angela von der Lippe of Harvard University Press, Julia Hough of Cambridge University Press, and senior editors of Oxford University Press and of Basil Blackwood. I am grateful to them for the interest they took in a manuscript that they had no intention of recommending to their houses. In the end it was Harry Stanton of the MIT Press who made me the first firm offer to publish. I accepted immediately. I did so the more readily for the fact that Harry Stanton had published two earlier books of mine, *Names for Things* and *A Border Dispute,* and I had very much enjoyed working with him and his wife, Betty.

All of the material in this book is new in the sense that it is published here for the first time. Portions of the chapter on Hobbes, however, appeared in an article called "Ideals and psychology," published in *Canadian Psychology,* 1990. Portions of the chapter on Brentano appeared in the article "The rejection of Brentano and cognitive psychology," published in *The Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior,* 1993. Portions of the chapter on Freud appeared in a review article of Paul Roazen's *Meeting Freud in His Family* that I wrote for the *Literary Review of Canada,* December 1994. I am grateful to the editors of those periodicals for permission to use the material that had appeared in their pages. Several people read the piece on Freud for me: Richard Koestner, Norman White, David Zuroff, and others. Not everyone who read it was as laudatory of it as I would have wished; I learned a good deal from discussions about what people thought amiss.

Over the years I have had the extraordinary good fortune of having Judi Young as my secretary. She types up the first version of all my manuscripts. She is patient, wise (having to work for several professors all with fair-sized egos), accurate, and able to read my handwriting. As I write

these words, I ask myself if there is anything else that I ought to say about her. Nothing comes to mind, except that she is invariably charming and good humored. Nothing I write seems to say precisely what I would like to say: I can only hope that Judi realizes how much I appreciate her and how grateful I am to her. She made the preparation of this manuscript appear like child's play; she also ensured that it was a pleasure.

Over the time of the preparation of this manuscript I have had the financial support of yearly individual grants from NSERC (National Research Council for Engineering and Science); with Gonzalo E. Reyes, a collaborative research grant from FCAR (the Quebec organization covering, more or less, the same research areas as NSERC); and with Gonzalo E. Reyes, Brendan Gillon, and Michael Makkai, an NSERC interdisciplinary collaborative research grant. This financial support has meant that we could tackle projects that might otherwise have daunted us. It also meant that we had the collaboration of a gifted group of postdocs, notably: Houman Zolfaghari, Richard Squire, and Marie La Palme Reyes. Some of the money was used to support graduate students: Dean Sharpe, David Nicolas, Geert-Jan Boudewijnse, who contributed more to the book than is elsewhere acknowledged. I wish, then, to record my gratitude to these funding bodies.

For some years I have had a close connection with Polish psychologists. When the manuscript was ready, I gave a copy to Prof. Ida Kurcz, professor of cognitive psychology in Warsaw University and in the Polish Academy of Sciences. She liked it and asked if she might send it to Dr. M. Zagrodski with a view to having it translated into Polish. Dr. Zagrodski had previously translated my *Border Dispute* into Polish and seen the translation through the press. I naturally agreed and was delighted to hear in due course that, funds permitting, Dr. Zagrodski would arrange for a translation being made and published. This was encouraging at a time when I still did not have an English publisher. The Polish move also encouraged English publishers to look more carefully at the text, if only to see what had taken the Poles' fancy.

Through the Rearview Mirror

1

Introduction: Three Very General Observations on Psychology and Its History

There is a view, fostered it seems by folklore in departments of psychology, that psychology proper began in 1879 when Wilhelm Wundt opened the first laboratory for psychological experiment. There were forerunners, to be sure, and psychology students generally have some impression about them. If they have taken courses in philosophy, they may know some of them reasonably well. I sometimes sense a certain impatience with these forerunners, however, and some psychologists seem to regard them in much the same way that modern chemists regard alchemists, who are the chemists' forerunners. Chemists demarcate the difference between the marginal forerunners and the serious ones by calling the one alchemists and the other early chemists. I also sense that some psychologists employ the word "philosopher" to speak about Wundt's forerunners with something like the force and flavor that attaches to the word "alchemist." Now Wundt was a philosopher; the only chair he ever held was in philosophy. But then he was a prominent contributor to physiology, and he was a serious experimenter in psychology. Much is forgiven him because he is a transitional figure, from philosophy to psychology, and some latitude must be allowed to those who effect such transitions. After all, the story goes, he is the father of psychology.

This widely held view strikes me as a serious distortion of fact. It is easy to discover this by comparing Aristotle's psychology (in *De anima*) with his physics (in the *Physics*). The *Physics* contains much that is of philosophical interest, but its physics has almost all been scrapped. With good reason, because its theories of space, of time, of the motions of physical bodies, and of their basic constituents is simply wrong. The same cannot be said of his *De anima*. I venture to say that it is still the most

important book for any psychologist to read, not just for its place in the history of ideas but for the relevance of its teachings on perception and cognition to contemporary work in those areas.

A word of warning! Reading Aristotle is like chewing rocks, neither pleasant nor easy. His polished works all perished, and only his lecture notes survive—not a distinguished form of literary composition. Something of the interest of the notes on psychology will emerge, I hope, when we come to Aristotle. I hope to suggest their depth and importance, whether or not in the end you accept them.

For present purposes, though, all we need is the comparison with the *Physics*. It gives the lie to the almost automatic claim that psychology is a new discipline whereas physics is an old one. Psychology as a serious, systematic discipline is almost 2,000 years older than physics. In comparison, modern chemistry is a fledgling, merely 200 years old. Incidentally, the word "psychology" was coined only at the end of the eighteenth century. Earlier generations called the discipline by its object of study: "on the soul," "on the mind," or simply "on human understanding."

One may protest that physics and chemistry have made more spectacular advances than psychology, and while these things are difficult to assess, I would be inclined to agree. If the protest is true, however, it may well indicate a moral. Psychology is not an easy subject. If it were, perhaps the progress over 2,000 years would have been more substantial. It should not surprise us, then, to find that it is as difficult as anything in physics. Even in these historical exercises we should be prepared to use our conceptual powers to their utmost.

Another protest is sure to surface. The psychology of the ancients was not experimental or systematically observational, whereas contemporary psychology is both. This protest too is justified, but it does not mark as deep a divide as one might think. People have been observing psychological phenomena of all sorts since the beginning of human experience: children learning to talk, perceptual illusions, feats of memory and failures of memory, struggles to solve problems, differences in personality, behavior disorders and mental illnesses. Doubtless in all these areas and others, experiment, systematic observation and measurement aided by statistical techniques, can bring increased precision and deepen understanding. At the same time it is possible to reach profoundly interesting positions in