

PREFACE

This special issue of PSYCHOLOGY summarizes the views and thoughts of a number of colleagues who place the interdisciplinary approach to Science on the top of the agenda for 2000 and beyond.

The rationale for PSYCHOLOGY to have taken this initiative becomes clear if one considers the enormous range of phenomena that psychology takes as its province and the number of sciences that it shares common borders with. However, the nature of the subject matter and scope of psychology is not the only reason this issue is considered to be important at this time. A more important reason is that new knowledge achieved in the neighboring sciences as well as in psychology, provide for new challenges and new horizons to be explored by all, not only as they pertain to scientific knowledge per se but also as to what they mean for the survival and well being of human beings in the private and public domains.

The theme, "The Place of Psychology in the Contemporary Sciences" as well as the topics included in this issue, are ambitious and cannot be covered, much less exhausted, in a few pages. The intention here is not to "cover everything" and it is not to even attempt to "answer everything". The intention is to raise questions in a common language, to the extent that this is possible, and to, at least, attempt to achieve a better understanding of the areas of convergence and divergence among the sciences involved. For, agreements and disagreements put forth in different languages are hardly useful or relevant to science and society.

As the guest editor of this issue, I would like to express deep appreciation to all the colleagues who contributed and made this project possible. I look forward to working with them, and others, in future initiatives of this kind.

I, especially, wish to thank Anastasia Efklides not only for inviting me to be the guest editor for this issue, but also for her hard work, her support and her tolerance of my, at times, extreme tendency to procrastinate.

THEONI P. VELLI
Guest Editor
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PROLOGUE

It is with great pleasure that, as President of the Hellenic Psychological Society, I respond to the invitation of the authors of this volume to write the prologue to "The place of psychology in contemporary sciences". The papers are based on the presentations made at the interdisciplinary meeting, which once again demonstrated the creativity and industriousness of the members of the Department of Psychology of the University of Crete in organizing interesting scientific meetings. The Second Panhellenic Conference on Psychological Research was held in Rethymnon in May, 1990 with considerable success.

This meeting was organized in collaboration with the Hellenic Psychological Society, and the Departments of Psychology of the Universities of Thessaloniki, Athens, and Panteion. The members of the Hellenic Psychological Society (HPS) are university faculty and psychologists in research centers. The HPS is a member of the International Union of Psychological Science. The goals of the society are the promotion of psychology as a science, the dissemination of information in psychology, the

encouragement of research, and as a forum for cooperation and communication. The Hellenic Psychological Society publishes a journal, PSYCHOLOGY. It organized the IV European Congress of Psychology in July, 1996, in cooperation with the Association of Greek Psychologists, which had over 3,000 participants from 71 nations.

The society has organized four Panhellenic Conferences of Psychological Research since 1989. It also organizes seminars on specialized subjects in cooperation with the universities in Greece.

The first autonomous Department of Psychology, whose graduates are psychologists was established at the University of Crete in 1987. I was honored to be a member of the committee for the election of the first members of the Department.

It is surprising that the development of departments of psychology was so delayed in Greece, where psychology as an object of study began 2,500 years ago. Theophilus Voreas, taught psychology in the School of Philosophy of the University of Athens at the end of the 19th century. Voreas was a student of Wilhelm Wundt and received the Ph.D from the University of Leipzig in 1899. He established the first Psychological Laboratory at the University of Athens in 1926. Perhaps it was the traditionally close ties between philosophy and psychology, which delayed the emergence of psychology departments at Greek universities until the 1980s. At the present time, Departments of Psychology, offering degrees in psychology, have also been established at the University of Athens, the University of Thessaloniki, and the Panteion University. At the same time, graduate programs leading to a degree equivalent to the Masters degree are also being established at these universities in areas such as Educational and School Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, and other areas of specialization. In addition, programs leading to the Doctor of Philosophy are awarded at all these universities.

Psychology is also an integral part of the programs in the Departments of Elementary Education and the Departments of Preschool Education, in almost all universities in Greece. In addition, courses in psychology are taught at the Medical Schools, in the Schools of Law, in Schools and Departments of Social Sciences, in Departments of Athletics, in the Schools of Theology, in Departments of Physics and others. Thus, the subject of psychology has been introduced, usually as an introductory course, in almost all the schools and departments of universities throughout Greece.

This interdisciplinary meeting, the *Place of Psychology in Contemporary Science*, was necessary at this time, not only in Greece, but in universities throughout the world. No science, and particularly not the science of *anthropos*, can afford to remain isolated and closed within the monastic walls of its discipline during a century when society is demanding - and will increase its demands in the next century - practical solutions to the complex problems of this planet. These problems require dialogue and cooperation with all the sciences, many of which psychology has, in the past, not been in direct communication. This meeting reflects an important initiative in this direction, and I would like to congratulate the Laboratory of Developmental, Experimental and Cognitive Psychology, and particularly Giannis Kugiumutzakis, Vice president of the Organizing Committee, and Theoni Velli, President of the Organizing and Scientific Committee of the meeting. Giannis Kugiumutzakis is also Treasurer of the Hellenic Psychological Society, and Theoni Velli is a member of the Board of Directors.

JAMES GEORGAS

President, Hellenic Psychological Society

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