

...with Lynne Segal

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One person who inspired you

From the beginning, and in very different ways, it has been scholars aware of the rootedness of human consciousness in culture and social relations who have inspired me, as I sought out connections and disjunctures between the differing frameworks of psychology; psychoanalysis; philosophy; feminism (Jerome Bruner, Freud, Foucault, Judith Butler, are simply the most prominent of those who have influenced me). Stephen Frosh has been pretty good at suggesting ways of thinking through and across such conflicting frameworks.

One great thing that psychology has achieved

Shown us, by its own multiple mistakes, the folly of dealing only with individual behaviour which is strictly quantifiable. Eysenck is no longer in fashion, and spent the last 20 years of his life pondering the merits of astrology.

One cultural recommendation

I've been enjoying Daniel Miller's *The Comfort of Things*.

One challenge you think psychology faces

It would be useful for psychosocial studies (my area of psychology) to incorporate the biological more successfully. This means finding ways to grapple with the infinitely complex, environmentally triggered, aspects of human biology, which inhabits us intertwined within – not in some way additional to – social and cultural impacts. For instance, we age culturally, quite as significantly as we age biologically.

One book psychologists should read

Muriel Dimen's *Sexuality, Intimacy, Power*, which offers one feminist's journey from dualism to multiplicity, questioning and making more

complex all the accounts we have of how you grow up to become a sexed person.

One thing you would change about psychology

The latest way in which psychology attempts to fortify its scientific credentials through its fascination with technological proficiency, busily recording neurological firings without any equivalent interest in thinking through the shifting cultural frameworks underpinning

embeddedness of science, enabling it to remain open, sceptical and interested in the range and fluidities of human knowledge.

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

There is nothing so weird, perverse and irrational as normal human functioning.

One thing that 'organised psychology' could do better

Question all certainties.

One hope for the future

That modesty returns, and grandiosity lowers.

One more question

How can progressive psychologists help disseminate a more compassionate literacy for our times? It would be one that combats the defensive projection of resentment onto the multitude of asylum seekers forced to flee today's expanding zones of war, one also refusing to overlook the

consciousness and struggles of women and men, of all ages, reduced to precarious bondage

servicing the new economic order. I'm looking out for those cunning linguists, insightful narrators of human lives, eager to join me – whether from the mainstream or the wilder shores of our discipline.

More answers online at www.thepsychologist.org.uk



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what sense we are able to make of biological arousal/activation, whatever its source.

One proud moment

The founding of our School of Psychosocial Studies in August.

One problem psychology should deal with

Understand the cultural

resource

'In my last book, *Making Trouble: Life and Politics*, I use my own and others' reflections on intellectual and political life over the last 40 years to explore the making and breaking of individual identities and collective belongings. I suggest that, critically located within their own temporalities, personal narratives provide crucial resources for keeping cultural memory alive.'

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