

Parker, I. (1989) *The Crisis in Modern Social Psychology – and how to end it*.
London: Routledge

Part one

‘Crises’

Social psychology is in permanent crisis. Or rather, it may be more accurate to say that it is racked by a number of intersecting *crises*. I will show that the continual crises which have upset social psychologists in the last decade and a half are part of the *structure* of the discipline. Moreover, the crises are not a matter internal to, or peculiar to, social psychology.

Social psychologists have suffered the weight of political struggles around their discipline ever since its inception at the beginning of the century. If we want to find our way out of the tangle of contradictions which return time and time again to destroy the value of each ‘discovery’ we think we have made about social phenomena, we must have some sense of what the struggles *outside* the discipline are. As we will see in this part of the book, social psychology excludes the crucial interconnected issues of ideology, power, and history in two ways; by denying developments in other academic areas, and by repressing its own past.

In these first three chapters I deal in turn with (1) the so-called ‘paradigm shift’ in the discipline, (2) the political background to the conflicts which structure it, and (3) the conceptual debates which run parallel to it in other human sciences. We will then be better armed to deal, in Part two, with the array of ‘responses’ offered us in recent years by both the old ‘paradigm’ tradition and the new loyal opposition. In Part three I will then locate contemporary debates in a cultural context and explore some political options. [end of page 9]