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A history of
PSYCHOLOGY
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D. BRETT KING | WILLIAM DOUGLAS WOODY | WAYNE VINEY
fifth edition

Fifth Edition

A HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY

IDEAS AND CONTEXT

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Dedication

*To Michael Wertheimer—a mentor for the
three of us who has served as a
continuing inspiration*

*To Donald A. Crosby—a consummate
scholar and authority on William James who
has deeply influenced our work*

And to

*Cheri King who has been active in every phase of this
work from the first to the fifth edition*

Lisa Woody for her enthusiasm, support, and encouragement

Finally

In loving memory of Wynona Rose Viney

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PREFACE

A History of Psychology: Ideas and Context, first published by Allyn & Bacon in 1993, was written for all who are interested in psychology and its history. The first four editions included numerous distinctive features preserved and amplified in this fifth edition. However, a number of substantial revisions have been necessary as a means of updating the book to include recent historical scholarship and enhanced pedagogical techniques.

As with previous editions, this text strives for comprehensive examples of psychological thought from ancient Eastern and Western cultures, the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. In the modern world, from about 1600, the focus is on intellectual traditions that contributed to the formal founding of psychology as an independent discipline. These traditions include rational and empirical philosophies, advances in physiology, new quantitative techniques, evolutionary theory, naturalistic approaches to emotional problems, and significant humanitarian reform movements in the nineteenth century. The text provides in-depth coverage of the intellectual trends that followed psychology's formal founding in the late 1870s, based on an analysis of the major systems of thought and key developments in basic and applied psychology. The final chapter focuses on major trends in scientific and professional psychology from the latter half of the twentieth century to the early twenty-first century.

The book opens with a brief chapter on historiography that explores selected philosophical issues pertinent to disciplinary histories: What are the origins of historical consciousness? What is history? Why study history? Is there a pattern in history? Can history be objective? We believe that discussions of such questions result in more critical, appreciative, and informed readers who think not only about historical content, but also about the complex methodological tasks confronting the historian.

Chapter 2 introduces and explains enduring philosophical problems encountered throughout the history of psychology: Do humans have free will? What are the methods by which we make truth claims? What is an explanation? What is science? What is the subject matter of psychology? We have found that the history of psychology is more meaningful to students who have a working knowledge of the classic positions on

fundamental philosophical problems. A careful reading of the materials in Chapter 2 will clarify and lend richness to topics encountered in subsequent chapters.

Like many texts, this book presents examples of psychological thought encountered in documents from ancient cultures. Typically, the Greek and Roman periods are covered, but this book adds two critical features to the section on ancient thought: First, psychological contributions of important early women such as Theana, Myia, Aesara, and Hypatia are included. Second, in addition to reviewing the usual materials from the Greek and Roman periods, this text provides overviews of psychological thought from ancient Chinese, Indian, Babylonian, Persian, Egyptian, and Hebraic cultures. This emphasis on the broad scope of psychological thought is continued in later chapters that include contributions of Arab scholars such as Avicenna and Rhazes, Spanish scholars such as Juan Luis Vives and Juan Huarte, and neglected scholars such as Oliva Sabuco and Héloïse.

The chapter on the Renaissance includes a consideration of medical, economic, and geographic contexts that contributed to intellectual developments in this remarkable period. The plague, geographic discoveries, new inventions such as the telescope, the breakdown of authority, and the rediscovery of Greek classics had enormous influence on the development of thought. The works of important thinkers such as Galileo Galilei, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Michel de Montaigne are highlighted. Montaigne, a neglected figure in the history of psychology, is presented as a pivotal figure because of his powerful influence on subsequent thinkers such as Francis Bacon and René Descartes. The Renaissance period was regressive in some arenas. It was certainly no Renaissance for women! On the contrary, the Inquisition and the witch hunts amounted to a holocaust for women.

This text devotes extensive space to the intellectual contexts that contributed to the development of psychology. Most texts show how psychology grew out of developments in empiricism, rationalism, physiology, and evolutionary theory. We trace these developments in traditional detail and highlight the changing fortunes of curiosity in the works of the empiricists and rationalists. Curiosity, once regarded as a mark of vanity, was increasingly regarded as a virtue. We also include an emphasis on the key roles played by the growth of quantitative techniques, particularly those developed

by Jacques Quételet and elaborated by Francis Galton. Early applications of statistics by Florence Nightingale and Dorothea Dix are highlighted as well. We call attention to the fact that psychology, as a formal discipline, was founded in an age of humanitarian reform movements (e.g., suffrage, abolition of slavery, new prison standards, universal education and education for women, and agitation by reformers for better treatment conditions for people with mental impairments and emotional disorders). We believe that extensive humanitarian reforms created a climate of opinion that helped legitimize the new discipline.

The second half of the text outlines the major classic schools or systems of psychology, emphasizing the basic and applied contributions of each school. A description of the formal founding of psychology begins with nineteenth-century advances in psychophysics and voluntarism, an early school of psychology founded by the German scientist Wilhelm Wundt. Additional consideration is given to scholars who shaped the new discipline of psychology in Europe and the United States, including Edward Bradford Titchener, Franz Brentano, Carl Stumpf, Oswald Külpe, and Hermann Ebbinghaus.

The seminal works of William James and his American contemporaries figure strongly in the chapter on functionalism. The chapter on behaviorism reviews Russian reflexology, Edward Lee Thorndike's learning theory, and John B. Watson's radical school of behaviorism. The neobehaviorism chapter describes the work of diverse researchers working in the behaviorist tradition and culminates with an overview of B. F. Skinner's experimental analysis of behavior. The next chapter focuses on Gestalt psychology, an innovative school that challenged conventional mechanistic and elementaristic approaches to psychology.

The advent of the psychodynamic school is detailed in the evolution of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory as well as resourceful challenges to his work from Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, and Karen Horney. The philosophical underpinnings of humanistic psychologies are traced in the works of scholars such as Unamuno, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger. These materials are followed by overviews of the works of Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport, Carl Rogers, and Viktor Frankl.

The final chapter has been revised and updated, providing scholarship that better reflects psychology from the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. The chapter explores the cognitive emphasis and major trends in content areas such as clinical

psychology, biopsychology, behavioral genetics, psychopharmacology, psychoneuroimmunology, social psychology, industrial-organizational psychology, and psychology and the law. The chapter closes with a brief discussion of the problem of unity and disunity in the sciences including psychology. Conceptual and methodological pluralism is a major characteristic of many academic disciplines at the outset of the twenty-first century. The quest for unification as well as discussions about the advantages of pluralism will likely continue for some time to come.

More than 450 new references have been included. Study questions and a glossary of terms appear at the end of each chapter. Major sections of the text are introduced with a timeline. Moreover, numerous luminaries are covered in this text that were not included in previous editions.

Some final words are in order regarding some of the historiographic and philosophical biases of the authors. Disciplinary histories, such as those about art, music, philosophy, or psychology, are commonly *internal* histories that focus on historical developments within a discipline. Although emphasis on internal developments may be the primary goal in disciplinary histories, these works are nevertheless richer if attention is also directed to *external* history—that is, to contextual political, economic, religious, philosophical, scientific, and social forces that help shape the flow of events within a discipline. In this spirit, we identify some external forces that helped shape psychology. The complex, multidimensional characteristics of the task, however, guarantee that it cannot be carried out successfully. The historian who may be versed in economic context for a given period of time may not be so well versed, for example, in religious history and context. The complicated rich texture of the past is beyond the grasp of most of us. Nevertheless, an awareness that our discipline did not develop in a vacuum is itself valuable.

Another historiographic bias is illustrated in the organization of this text. We believe that nature and history are filled with real discontinuities, disjunctions, and surprises. Events, especially in the intellectual arena, seldom flow with measured, uniform, unvarying regularity. But even if the flow of events had been linear and logical, it would be impossible to present the story in such a fashion because the historian has little choice but to be selective with respect to the materials to be presented. The past is marked by a burly, robust accumulation of materials, some apparently more relevant and some less relevant to our interests. To present the story in all its thick detail would require more time

than most of us could devote to the subject; hence, we must resort to the thinness of concepts. If the historian could function more as a photographer than as an artist, the product would still be based on many arbitrary decisions. In the main, we attempt to allow chronology to dictate the flow of ideas and we hope, from time to time, to capture some of the rich detail of the past. At other times, we will break with strict chronology to follow a single idea forward in time and then backtrack to follow another idea forward in time. Thus, the interests of coherence sometimes trump the dictates of chronology.

Study aids are provided in each chapter to help students focus on important materials and concepts. Key words in the text are presented in boldface to help the reader focus on major ideas. A phonic pronunciation guide for difficult names (e.g., Xenophanes [*zeh NAH fuh neez*]) is included to assist students in feeling more “at home” with the materials.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

This edition of the text retains all the unique features that appealed to students in previous editions but also includes numerous distinctive additions as follows:

- We have reviewed and incorporated over 450 new references. This text remains as one of the most heavily referenced texts in the field.
- New materials have been included on the nature of historical consciousness to highlight research into an area with important pedagogical and substantive consequences for historical studies in general and the history of science and psychology in particular. Additionally, we have incorporated new scholarship on the historical, present, and future unity and diversity of psychology.
- There is now an outpouring of new work in biological psychology, and our text reflects this explosion. We evaluate possible neurophysiological determinants of intention and implications for free will and determinism, an issue that occupies increasing attention of historians and philosophers of science and psychology. We also address the recent history of these and related research areas such as psychoneuroimmunology, psychopharmacology, and recent technological advances in neuroscience.
- We added a section on the significance of evolution in the development of psychology. There are now growing numbers of new books and courses

on behavioral genetics, evolutionary psychology, and evolutionary interpretations of such topics as the determinants of mate selection and mate guarding.

- Beginning with the first edition, we have focused on the significance of humanitarian reform movements in shaping the development of psychology. That emphasis has been expanded in this edition by reference to the work of Alice Paul in the women’s suffrage movement. We also call attention to likely changes in the historiography of the Inquisition based on the opening of the Vatican archives.
- There are numerous updates in this edition on the philosophy and psychology of William James. The addition of recent scholarship on James complements a section of the text that has been recognized as a strength.

This text is available in a variety of formats—digital and print. To learn more about our programs, pricing options, and customization, visit www.pearsonhighered.com.

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This test bank is available in computerized format, which allows instructors to easily create and print quizzes and exams. Questions and tests can be authored online, allowing instructors ultimate flexibility and the ability to efficiently manage assessments anytime, anywhere. Instructors can easily access existing questions, edit, create, and store using simple drag and drop Word-like controls. For more information, go to www.PearsonMyTest.com.

PowerPoint Presentation

The PowerPoint Presentation is an exciting interactive tool for use in the classroom. Each chapter pairs key concepts with images from the textbook to reinforce student learning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We express appreciation to the literally thousands of students at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado State University, and the University of Northern Colorado who have studied previous editions of this text and have provided helpful, critical, and appreciative commentary. Their enthusiasm, generosity, and insights have played a major role in shaping this fifth edition.

We also express appreciation to the many scholars who have offered suggestions for each of the editions of this book. A considerable list of reviewers who have helped us over the years include Thomas M. Atkinson, Steve Coleman, Edward Crossman, Robert Dippner, David Edwards, Matthew Fanetti, Laurel Furumoto, Allan M. Hartman, Mary Henle, Howard Markowitz, Michelle Merwin John Mueller, Robert Presbie, Elizabeth Scarborough, David Schneider, Margaret Thomas, Michael Wertheimer, and William Woodward. The intellectual resources of our reviewers have made an immeasurable contribution to this book.

It has been a pleasure to work with the publication and production teams at Pearson through each of the five editions of this book. We are especially grateful to Executive Editor Susan Hartman for her encouragement, strong support, and early suggestion that we begin work on a fifth edition. Program Manager Reena Dalal and Project Manager Alyssa Guarino have been extremely patient and supportive going well beyond the call of duty by conveying an intrinsic interest in the project and

our work. We have been impressed with the competent assistance of Project Vendor Anju Joshi as we worked through our proofreading of the copyedited chapters of this book. The entire team has been admirably personable and professional throughout the entire process.

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We also express our appreciation to our children: philosopher Donald Wayne Viney for his many contributions, especially to the first half of this work; biologist Michael David Viney for helpful and thoughtful discussions on philosophy of science and evolution; and our younger children Brady, Devin, and Tylyn King and Nate and Ian Woody for generously sharing their parents with the very demanding requirements of a project such as this.

Finally, in loving memory of Wynona Rose Viney (1934–2009).

D.B.K., W.D.W., W.V.

PART

1

Historiographic
and
Philosophical Issues

1



Critical Issues in Historical Studies

*If we cling to our ignorance of history, error crushed to earth,
will rise again, and we will have to go on solving the same
old problems again and again.*

—MARY HENLE (1976)

The story of psychology begins in ancient times. As a self-conscious formal discipline, psychology is little more than a century old, but the subject matter captured the human imagination long before psychology became a science. In our journey, we will travel back thousands of years to visit the epic work of philosophers and scientists who wrestled with issues that continue to fascinate modern psychologists. Examining the work of early scholars on topics such as memory, emotions, dreams, perception, brain activity, learning, and mental disorders adds scope and richness to our understanding of psychology.

Our story will be more compelling if we examine problems associated with the study of history. A number of questions come to mind. What is history? Can the historian offer anything more than opinion? Why study history at all? Developing sensitivity to such philosophical questions makes for a more stimulating intellectual journey.

WHY STUDY HISTORY?

The study of history is an important pursuit and numerous arguments have been proposed about why we should investigate it (see Wertheimer, 1980a). Let's take a look at a handful of the more compelling arguments.

History as a Key to Understanding the Future

In his book *The Future of an Illusion*, Sigmund Freud (1927/1961c) observed that “the less [we know] about the past and the present the more insecure must prove [our] judgment of the future” (p. 5). Freud's sentiment reflects an earlier statement by Thomas Jefferson (1782/1904) who argued that

“history, by apprizing [*sic*] [people] of the past, will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations” (p. 207). History offers patterns that, when properly viewed, may prove consequential to our understanding and possible control of the present and the future. In other words, psychologists who appreciate their history may be in a better position to understand the discipline while anticipating future trends.

History as a Way to Enrich the Present

We live in a world of spatial, cultural, and temporal dimensions. We can travel to distant countries. We can study geography and different languages and cultures. We can communicate through the Internet with a friend halfway across the world. In short, we can overcome our spatial and cultural limitations. Unfortunately, we can be just as narrow with respect to our time frame as we are with our knowledge of the physical world and other cultures. Imagine how it would restrict your view of yourself if you only had memories about the last few years of your life. All those early experiences helped shape and define who you are today. It turns out that we can be as “lost” historically as when we cannot find our way in the physical world or when we travel in a culture that is foreign to everything we understand.

In a way, history is memory. Just as there is a freedom that comes with a healthy and functional memory, so there is an intellectual freedom that comes with a broad historical perspective. In a later chapter on humanistic psychology, we’ll explore the value of living in the present moment. But an extreme emphasis on the present would leave us naïve and uninformed in an isolated temporal prison. We live more fully in the here and now if we have a rich knowledge and memory for events that contributed to the present. To neglect the past is to impoverish the present.

History as a Contribution to Liberal Education

In a real sense, the study of history serves to nourish a liberal and informed perspective. Robert I. Watson (1966), a prominent historian of psychology, once remarked that history helps us

overcome “narrow provincial, class, and regional prejudices” (p. 64). In his view, psychologists, of all people, should seek to avoid “subjugation to influences of which one is unaware” (p. 64). History helps an individual achieve perspective and integration that might not be possible by other means. Particularly given the increasing specialization in psychology, history can serve to provide context and a broader perspective within psychology (Benjamin & Baker, 2009). Knowledge of the history of a discipline accentuates the understanding of influences, developments, and relations and contributes to a more informed and integrated perspective. This achievement alone can be so satisfying that the study of history needs no other justification.

History Teaches Humility

We enjoy an advantage over previous generations because we can build on knowledge and discoveries of the past and avoid unnecessary duplication of earlier mistakes. A perspective from past knowledge is larger and more informed than perspectives from the present alone. When we study history, we are humbled by the genius, the effort, and the creative insight of previous thinkers. Helson (1972) reminds us that in history “student[s] may meet better minds in the literature than any [they] may have contact with in person” (p. 116). We may also encounter minds that have worked through problems that we assumed were fresh or original. History all too often reveals that our innovative idea is a rediscovery of something known long ago. History can teach humility.

History Teaches a Healthy Skepticism

When we have an understanding of history, we are less likely to fall prey to grandiose notions, utopian dreams, and schemes that promise more than they deliver. Psychology has suffered its share of counterfeit ideas, including mesmerism, phrenology, craniometry (the measurement of the skull to determine intelligence and personality), and even some modern therapies. History teaches us to be wary of the big claim, the single method to end all methods, and the one and only

definition. Helson (1972) cautioned against easy acceptance that our future lies with a solitary panacea, such as “computer models of brain function, or that there is only one psychophysical law, or that trend analysis is the last answer to statistical treatments” (p. 116). Historical knowledge counsels against the glib acceptance of the latest fad or inflated idea. Jaynes (1973a) pointed out that history may help us “liberate ourselves from the persuasions of fashions” (p. xi). At the very least, we can hope that historical knowledge will make us less gullible and help us think critically about history and other topics (Goodwin, 2005).

History Influences Human Thought Processes

Henle (1976) pointed out that most of us find it difficult to see our errors or question our assumptions. She argued that human cognition is often resistant to criticism and prone to a degree of inertia or self-preservation. For her, knowledge of history “gives us distance not only from our immediate objective, but from our own thinking” (p. 16). History heightens awareness of the errors of others, but also keeps us thinking straight. As Henle warned in the quotation that opened this chapter, if we are blind to the lessons of history, then we will be doomed to solve the same old problems.

SOME PROBLEMS IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

A number of questions are important here. What makes history? Can history be objective? Does history have a discernable pattern or direction? Such questions form the subject matter of historiography. The term **historiography** has multiple meanings. In a narrow and literal sense, it refers to the writing of history, including techniques and strategies for investigating specific content areas. The term also encompasses philosophical questions about history and historical method (later, we will review some philosophical questions encountered in historical studies). A third meaning of *historiography* refers to the characteristics of a body of historical writings. For

example, historical accounts of psychology have sometimes neglected the contributions of women and other cultural minorities. Fortunately, critical awareness of our biases has led to research that addresses how psychology has profited from the contributions of women (see Bohan, 1992a, 1992b; Gavin, 1987; O’Connell & Russo, 1983, 1988, 1990; Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987), African-American psychologists (see Guthrie, 2003; Phillips, 2000; Sawyer, 2000), and Hispanic psychologists (see Martinez & Mendoza, 1984).

Working on the idea that history can be more meaningful if we address historiographic questions, we will now examine questions and issues about history and historical method. We’ll find that the positions we take can influence our view of the history of psychology or any other history for that matter.

The Development of Historical Consciousness

Gilderhus (1992) suggests that primitive peoples often lacked historical consciousness because immediate survival was their primary concern. Even so, survival depends on memory along with an awareness of time-based events. This temporal awareness has survival value and contributes to the development of historical consciousness. Knowledge of the historical significance of events benefits both individuals and society.

Historical consciousness grows from the belief that important events carry real significance in the pursuit of religion, politics, or science. In Hebraic literature, for example, people are encouraged to remember events associated with their delivery from Egyptian bondage. In more recent history, phrases such as *never again*, *lest we forget, 9/11*, and *united we stand* serve as reminders of the horrors of the Holocaust or the sacrifices of war and terrorism. On certain occasions, political or religious holidays heighten historical consciousness. Christians regard the crucifixion of Jesus as the most central event in history—an event that ushered in a new theological epoch. Indeed, the Christian community measures time itself in terms of this critical incident.

Gilderhus (1992) observed that historical consciousness in Greek times grew out of attempts to separate history from mythology. The legendary Greek historian **Herodotus** (*hi RAH duh tuhs*) (c. 484–c. 425 BCE) became the first to attempt a comprehensive history of the world. Documenting contemporary episodes as well as past events, he traveled widely, made extensive notes, and gained access to eyewitness testimony whenever possible. Herodotus wrote history with an emphasis on natural rather than supernatural causes.

The naturalistic approach to history was extended in the work of **Thucydides** (*thoo SIHD ih deez*) (c. 460–c. 401 BCE). Remembered for his classic *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides documented the war between Athens and Sparta from 431 to 404 BCE. Thucydides had a passion for accuracy and for naturalistic explanations stripped of theological overtones. Aware of previous attempts to write history in terms of miracles, mysteries, and divine purposes, Thucydides insisted on discovering positive facts and presenting them in a naturalistic context. Faith in the accuracy of historical writings creates respect for written histories and may foster historical consciousness. We turn now to one of the most fundamental and challenging issues in historiography—the problem of defining history.

Historical consciousness is more than knowledge of specific histories such as the history of the American Civil War, the history of a country, or the history of an academic discipline such as psychology. At a minimum, historical consciousness includes a sensitivity to the great range of philosophical problems associated with the writing of history, an endeavor to approach history with both critical and appreciative orientations, awareness of the dynamic ever-changing nature of historical inquiry, and an attempt to approach every subject historically (Viney, 2010). American philosopher and psychologist William James (1911) argued that “we give humanistic value to almost anything when we teach it historically. Geology, economics, [and] mechanics are humanities when taught with reference to the successive achievements of the geniuses to which these sciences owe their being. When not taught in this way, literature

remains grammar, art a catalogue, history a list of dates, and natural science a sheet of formulas and weights and measures” (pp. 312–313).

What Is History?

In popular usage, the term **history** sometimes denotes the chronology of events that provides a raw material for the historian. The term also refers to stories we tell about our past. Dictionary definitions typically emphasize both meanings (i.e., history as a chronology of previous events and history as a narrative or interpretive study of the past). History has both empirical and explanatory components. The *empirical* component includes data such as unpublished letters; newspaper and Internet accounts; audio, video, or digital recordings; and official documents. The *explanatory* component refers to the efforts of historians to make sense of data. Additional perspectives on the nature of history are provided in Table 1.1.

So, how are we to define *history*? Let’s begin with the idea that history has an empirical component. That is, real events that took place in the past can enter our present experiences through records. The empirical component can also include eyewitness accounts or personal experiences for more recent events. For instance, where were you on September 11, 2001? If you remember, chances are the episode is vivid in your memory. Events such as the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center resonate, in part, because they provide a way of aligning ourselves with the yardstick of history.

The task of the historian is to become acquainted with as much data as possible. Data collection may include interviews, traveling to archives to examine unpublished letters and documents, and reading old newspapers. After collecting data, the historian must engage in an interpretive study. Such study includes examining contradictions, discriminating between what is relevant and what is not, and assigning weights to different bits of evidence. In a way, the process is like working a complicated jigsaw puzzle when we know in advance that there will always be missing pieces.

The working definition of *history* suggested here is as follows: History is the interpretive study

Table 1.1 Some Perspectives on the Nature of History*History as Subjective Study*

We read history through our prejudices. —Wendell Phillips

What is history but a fable agreed upon. —Napoleon I (Bonaparte)

History as a Record of the Past

History is not history unless it is the truth. —Abraham Lincoln

History as Cyclical

History repeats itself; that's just one of the things that's wrong with history. —Clarence Darrow

The Importance of History

Who cannot give an account of three thousand years remains in the darkness of inexperience. —Wolfgang Goethe

The less we know of the past, the more unreliable our judgment of the present and future. —Sigmund Freud

The Value of History

If I have seen farther than others, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants. —Isaac Newton

History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity. —Cicero

[W]ithout history there can be no psychology. —Carl Jung

A Presentist View of History

Let the past serve the present. —Mao Tse-tung

A Historicist View of History

We cannot escape history. We...will be remembered in spite of ourselves.... The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the last generation. —Abraham Lincoln

of the events of the human past. The definition assumes empirical and explanatory components in the work of a historian.

Can History Be Objective?

If we agree that history is the interpretive study of the human past, we nevertheless encounter the problem of the faithfulness or truthfulness of our interpretations. Abraham Lincoln (1856/1950) said, “History is not history unless it is the truth” (p. 149). People have a kind of commonsense faith that historical research—whether it deals with religious, political, scientific, or social topics—is an accurate reflection of the landscape of the past. Even the historian embarking on a new project may believe it possible to provide a narrative truer to the chronology of events than did previous works.

The question of objectivity is a critical issue in the philosophy of history. Thousands of pages are devoted to the importance of this problem in historical journals and texts. Historians do not usually make direct observations. Even if they did, we have no guarantee of objectivity. Historians must be selective with respect to available data, sometimes in the absence of well-established criteria for selection. Finally, historians are creatures of the present and, as such, may write history in the light of present personal and cultural perspectives.

We can't easily close the case against objectivity for several reasons. Objectivity is a desirable ideal in any scientific investigation. If we reject objectivity, we run into the assumption that one person's opinion is as good as another's. Finally, objectivity offers the hope that historical narratives can rise above the prevailing climate of opinion. If achieved, history can be used to repudiate, disagree

with, or tell an unpopular story. Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976) believed that history should serve the Communist revolution (Lifton, 1968, p. 144). Such an extreme position fuels the debate over the merits of objectivity because it reveals that history is not necessarily bound to political, religious, or philosophical ideologies.

Before proceeding, we should explore possible meanings of **objectivity in history**. The term *objective* could refer to a correspondence between a historical narrative and the events of the past it describes. If objectivity refers to such a correspondence, then the work of the historian would be judged as deficient. For one thing, a historical narrative can never recapture the fullness of lived experience. Objectivity then, as correspondence, is suspect. Perhaps historians are more like painters than photographers. Even if they were like photographers, historical events would always offer another angle for a shot, a different way to frame it, a new magnification, or different films with varying sensitivity to color.

Another meaning of *objectivity* involves the attempt to portray all sides of an issue in a fair manner, even if something disagrees with the author's perspective. Objectivity, viewed in this way, is an attitude, one we may expect of a historian. In this context, the historian is reminded to be aware of ulterior motives and to hold them in check.

Before leaving the question of objectivity, let's return to Abraham Lincoln's contention that "history is not history unless it is the truth." Most historians might agree if we could add that, for any event, there is more than one possible true history. For example, the Civil War can be regarded not as one war but as many wars. It was a different war for the South than for the North. The two sides could not even agree on the causes of the war. It was also a different war for each of the various states. From this line of reasoning, there can be multiple "true" histories of the American Civil War, each disagreeing on countless details.

The Tyranny of the Present

Historians are creatures of the present, but can they free themselves from natural biases imposed by their world view? Historians, like

psychotherapists, must have a well-developed empathy for their subject. If such empathy is possible, then historians may be capable of suspending or neutralizing present biases; that is, they may literally "feel" their way back into the past so that deep and authentic understandings become a possibility. In short, we follow a commitment of "understanding the past for its own sake" (Stocking, 1965, p. 212). Stocking adds that a past-minded approach places emphasis on *understanding* the past rather than *judging* it; this perspective also avoids the temptation to use the past to glorify the present. As noted earlier, an adequate history can tell an unpopular story that is damaging to present interests. But is this ideal of past-mindedness possible? Can a historian suspend the present frame of reference with its possible distortions and prejudices? Put another way, can the historian capture an earlier era or frame of mind in all its intricacy, richness, and context? As noted, the problem resembles a common issue debated among clinical psychologists. Can we empathically "crawl into the mind" of another person or do individual differences prohibit genuine congruence of thought and feeling?

Related to this idea, **presentism** emphasizes the difficulty in divorcing historical facts from current perspectives. The presentist questions whether the historian can recapture the past with true objectivity. Buss (1977) wrote, "There is no such thing as hard-core, indubitable facts that are invariant across different theoretical explanations" (p. 254). The presentist is tuned to the effects of inevitable selective, judgmental, and contextual forces in historical scholarship. Scholars with a more past-minded orientation might counter that *because* we are aware of such forces, we can neutralize their effects.

Issues surrounding presentism and past-mindedness have stimulated discussion in the historiography of the behavioral sciences (see Ash & Woodward, 1987, pp. 1–11, 295–309; Dewsbury, 1990; Furumoto, 1989; Harrison, 1987; Henle, 1989; Young, 1966). As with most issues, extremes of past-mindedness and presentism create difficulties. William James (1890/1981) once referred to absolutism as "the great disease of philosophic thought" (p. 334).

Sounding a similar theme, Dewsbury (1990) raised doubts about the superiority of either approach and argued for a moderate and tolerant approach to historiography with room for past-minded and presentist orientations. Such an approach would be sensitive to the role of present beliefs in our understanding and writing of history but also insist that authentic history will often challenge and shape our present beliefs.

Is There a Pattern or Direction in History?

To ask whether history has a pattern or direction is to ask something about the meaning of history. Patterns offer information and the discovery of a pattern can be useful. We'll take a look at a few hypotheses about the direction of history that are applicable to the history of psychology.

CYCLICAL HYPOTHESIS As the name suggests, the **cyclical hypothesis** claims that history repeats itself. We find an ebb and flow to events marked by endless repetition. Kingdoms rise and fall, only to rise again; freedom is gained and lost, only to be regained once more. Cycles of poverty and plenty play out along with war and peace, discovery and intellectual stagnation, innocence and corruption, and revolution and stability. Even our ways of understanding, according to this view, are cyclical. A rational and scientific era may arise in one era before falling to arbitrary political or religious authority, only to see the rational-scientific method return to prominence at a later time.

Cycles exist in every science, and psychology has seen its share. For example, neuroscientists in the twentieth century wondered if the right and left hemispheres of the brain mediate different emotional and intellectual processes, or do the hemispheres function in a more integrated fashion? Interest in lateralization of function in the cerebral hemispheres is not new. Long before modern neuroscience took an interest, Brown-Sequard (1890) wrote an article titled "Have We Two Brains or One?" The article is only one of many from that period to struggle with the problem of the lateralization of function. Another

example from the history of psychology came in the early emphasis on conscious and experiential processes, only to face later rejection with the advent of behaviorism before an interest in consciousness and experience reemerged in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

LINEAR-PROGRESSIVE HYPOTHESIS A linear hypothesis can be either progressive or regressive, but let us assume optimism and consider only a linear-progressive view. According to the **linear-progressive hypothesis**, each generation builds upon discoveries from previous generations. Each new generation works up from a stronger base, giving rise to growth and progress in human knowledge and among human institutions. Brief regressions and setbacks may ensue, but the overall victory belongs to progress and growth. The German mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was the best-known modern champion of progress theory. His theory of history was born in an age of optimism about the promise of scientific discovery. The theory achieved widespread popularity, inspiring some supporters to promote progress as a law of nature (Gawronski, 1975). In this tradition, Karl Marx advanced one of the better-known progress theories.

Progress theory may have a persuasive influence on those who study the living conditions of the past. In a book entitled *The Good Old Days—They Were Terrible*, Bettmann (1974) recounts the hardships of American life from the end of the Civil War to the early 1900s. It was an era made almost unbearable with filth and pollution in major cities from factories, coal-fired steam engines, city streets teeming with horse manure, insects, and poor sewage. In a time before air-conditioning, poorly ventilated houses and apartments claimed many lives during summer and winter months. Crime flourished, often beyond control, in major cities and on the frontier. "Dominating the record was, of course, the West, where the gun-happy barbarity was damned by observers both foreign and native for producing a 'great dismal swamp of civilization' " (Bettmann, 1974, p. 87). Education for women was little more than a faint hope, and school conditions remained

deplorable for all but wealthy men. In the absence of refrigeration, food was spoiled, and diets were lean and inadequate. Epidemics of yellow fever, tuberculosis, smallpox, whooping cough, and measles raged throughout the country. Child labor laws had not yet been enacted, and unsafe factories took an enormous toll in injuries and death, with little recourse for victims or their families. The problems, of course, intensified for Southern slaves. Given the adversity, most today would probably rather not return to the “good old days.”

CHAOS HYPOTHESIS The coming of the nuclear age dampened earlier optimism about the inevitability of human progress. It became clear that the entire structure of human achievement could be brought to ruin by a chance technological accident or by the design of political systems deficient in world perspective. The Nazi genocide of European Jews during the Holocaust tested the hypothesis that progress is inevitable.

According to the **chaos hypothesis**, history itself has no overall identifiable and universal meaning. History is, as noted by Fisher (1936), simply “the play of the contingent and the unforeseen” (p. v). The meanings found in history are the meanings we impose, not meanings that inhere in history itself. This idea was captured in a letter from Jean-Paul Sartre to Albert Camus. Sartre (1965) observed, “History, apart from the man who makes it, is only an abstract and static concept, of which it can neither be said that it has an objective, nor that it has not.... The problem is not to *know* its objective, but to *give* it one” (p. 103). In the same spirit, Becker (1932) regarded human beings as “little more than a chance deposit on the surface of the world, carelessly thrown up between two ice ages by the same forces that rust iron and ripen corn” (p. 14).

For some, psychology is the product of a chaotic history. In an article titled “Psychology Cannot Be a Coherent Science,” Koch (1969) charged that a century’s worth of research in psychology generated a wealth of pseudoknowledge and trivial thinking. Koch argued that psychology’s history is “a succession of changing doctrines about what to emulate in the natural sciences—especially

physics” (p. 64). In his mind, psychology failed to discover an adequate methodology and never reached the standard of a cumulative and progressive science.

Critics maintain that chaos theory discourages any attempt to take responsibility for our future. If what happens in the future is independent of individual human belief and action, what incentive exists to shape our future?

In addition to the theories outlined earlier, providential theories claim that a deity plays a role in shaping history. Others embrace a more pluralistic approach, suggesting that many histories exist rather than one absolute history. A pluralistic approach counsels suspicion of any sweeping attempt to characterize all history as fitting one convenient hypothesis.

What Makes History?

We turn now to an issue of controversy among historians, one that holds special relevance for students of psychology. The central question here asks whether history is fashioned through the bold actions of exceptional people or the “spirit of the times” in which they live. The **great-person theory** suggests that uncommon individuals transcend the conditions of their day and shape history through their courage or wisdom or some other virtue. In contrast, the German terms **Zeitgeist** (spirit of a time) and **Ortgeist** (spirit of a place) argue that prevailing conditions, not individuals, forge historical events. The idea is that no person is greater than his or her time.

American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson’s optimistic work titled *Self-Reliance* makes a compelling case for the great-person theory. For Emerson (1841/1981), history “resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons” (p. 138). He tells us that with Caesar, we have a Roman Empire; with Luther, the Reformation; with Fox, Quakerism; and with Wesley, Methodism. Following his lead, it is with Wundt that we have the formal discipline of psychology; with Freud, psychoanalysis; with Rorschach, the inkblot test; and so on. The great-person theory emphasizes the causal role of

particular persons in particular circumstances and the ability of the individual to control or to change the direction of events.

Critics argue that the great-person theory results from an unsophisticated view of forces at work in the world; late in his life, E. G. Boring (1966) noted that the sudden insights of great people may serve as memory aids for students rather than accurate depictions of history (Rosenzweig, 1987). Causation in history is complex, so we must be tuned to multiple forces that create an idea, event, or institution. Seldom can a critical occurrence or invention be credited to the labor of a single individual. As an example, powered flight could never have developed from individual effort prior to invention of the internal combustion engine. A relevant background of invention, material, culture, education, and social support must be present to nurture a significant historical happening. In addition to promoting hero worship, the idea that one person alone is responsible for any substantial contribution ignores the complexities of life and history. The place (*Ortgeist*) and time (*Zeitgeist*) must be conducive before advances can be made.

English philosopher Herbert Spencer (1873) believed in the possibility of a “science of history” where context played a central role in historical causation. Likewise, the Canadian naturalist Grant Allen (1878a, 1878b) argued that the great intellectual achievements in ancient Greece were due to geography and other external forces and had nothing to do with specific individuals. Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick* captures this philosophy of history when a crewmember advises Captain Ahab to call off the chase for the albino whale. Ahab replies, “This whole act’s immutably decreed. ‘Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. Fool! I am the Fates’ lieutenant; I act under orders” (Melville, 1851/1976, pp. 548–549). Such fatalism may, of course, have its origin in a theological or naturalistic context. We should note that an extreme emphasis on environmental context may overlook the importance of individual actions in the stream of historical causation.

William James (1880) provides a different approach to the problem of historical causality.

He argued that historical development is a causal interplay between people and their environment. He agreed that our environment sets boundaries, but added that human effort changes our world. According to James, any account of history that neglects the individual dissolves into vagary and incoherence (see Viney, 2001). James proposes a balanced approach where an individual’s idea cannot achieve fruition without social and material support. On the other hand, some ideas might never make an historical impact if not borne in the mind of a unique and creative individual.

Disagreements over the forces that make history continue as a topic in historical scholarship. In an article titled “Genius without the ‘Great Man,’” Ball (2012) suggests ways to engage with eminent figures without resorting to *hagiography* (a term originally meaning the worshipful and celebratory descriptions of the lives of saints). In this context, hagiography refers to a tendency to pedestalize individuals by giving them excessive credit for new historical developments. Continuing efforts to explore more comprehensive understandings of historical causation can be found in the ways psychology has been understood in a variety of countries (see Pickren, 2012). Let’s consider another historiographic issue that is the subject of current debate in both the history of science and the history of psychology.

The New History or the Old?

In the late 1980s, a bold movement challenged the way disciplinary histories (e.g., history of science, history of philosophy, history of psychology) had been written. The claim was that older disciplinary histories amounted to little more than celebrations of the succession of achievements of “great men” (women and minorities were often ignored). A related claim was that older histories were *internalist*, meaning that ideas and developments were presented within each discipline while ignoring important cultural, social, economical, philosophical, and religious contexts that shape ideas. The older histories were also

accused of being presentist and “whiggish.” A whiggish interpretation of science, according to Harrison (1987), is a way of selecting and organizing historical materials so that they converge with and glorify the current worldview. The resulting historical account is too clean or even naïve as it ignores the messy false leads, blind alleys, cul-de-sacs, and missteps that characterize day-to-day science. The claim was made that older histories had relied too much on secondary sources, leading to a perpetuation of inaccuracies or outright mistakes. The new history promised a corrective for the superficial scholarship of the old history through greater use of archival sources and original works.

Still another difference between the old history and the new is that the former has been written by practicing scientists with an interest in the history of their disciplines. The new history more often comes from professional historians trained in history of science programs. An emphasis on educational differences between old and new historians may be problematic for the simple reason that some scientists have advanced historical training while some professional historians have a considerable background in science. We should counsel caution about placing too much emphasis on the relationship between scholarly degrees and one’s area of personal competence. Still, we can find value in studying the lives of prominent scientific figures. Sokal (2006) observed that

an individual’s character and temperament, and the specific circumstances of his or her early life and upbringing, can help shape (and perhaps determine) the course of that person’s career and, quite possibly, even the content of his or her scientific ideas. To be sure, some philosophically aware historians of science argue that such claims derive from a focus on the “accidentals” of the past and that they downplay the real significance of an individual’s scientific work. But biographers and psychologists interested in life histories know better. (p. 19)

In a pivotal article, Furumoto (1989) stimulated a strong interest in problems of historiography and promoted discussion among psychologists about how the history of the field should be written. Subsequent attempts to write histories are responsive to values of the new history. At the same time, Lovett (2006) believes the new history has been accepted uncritically despite few actual differences between works from the two camps. Indeed, Lovett cited works from scholars who embrace the new histories as little more than accounts of a succession of achievements of past luminaries. Further, he demonstrated that some older histories draw heavily from primary sources and archival materials. Based on Lovett’s analysis, any catalog of differences between the new and old histories, in many cases, is a distinction without a distinction. Arguably, intellectual history is better served with multiple vantage points rather than conformity to any dominant ideological, educational, or methodological prescriptive structure.

What Is the History of Psychology, the History Of?

In a thoughtful article on the ideological roots of modern science, Dear (2005) asks the interesting question “What is the history of science, the history of?” The question can be expanded beyond the scope of Dear’s paper and applied to any disciplinary history including the history of psychology. Some early histories of psychology were histories of experimental psychology (Boring, 1950). Other histories focused on great systems of psychology such as behaviorism, psychoanalysis, and functionalism (Heidbreder, 1933). Other texts outlined major theories or systems along with historical developments in specific areas such as emotion, learning, and motivation (Chaplin & Krawiec, 1979). With the exponential growth of applied psychology, some scholars have argued for the inclusion of major historical developments in fields such as clinical psychology, industrial-organizational psychology, and psychology and the law.

A related question has to do with what counts as psychology. As we will see in future