

Historiography of Psychology: A Brief Look into the Past

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1. The Roots

The roots of the "new look" in the study of the history of psychology go back to the 1960s. Seminal was R.I. Watson's paper on "The history of psychology as a neglected area", published in 1960 in the widely-read journal *American Psychologist*.

Elsewhere (Brožek and Evans 1977, p.IX) we noted two other events that took place in 1960 and were important for the institutionalization of the study of the history of psychology. The first of these was the formation of the History of Psychology Interest Group at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, held in St. Louis. Five years later the Group was transformed into APA's Division 26 (History of Psychology).

The second event, also initiated by R.I. Watson, was the establishment of a Newsletter concerned with current activities in the field. The Newsletter was the immediate predecessor of the *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, founded in 1965 and edited by Watson.

In preparation for the first scientific program to be offered by the fledgling Division 26 at the New York (1966) APA Annual Convention, a survey was made of the membership of the Division regarding current and anticipated research in the history of psychology. The results, with some additional information, were published (Brožek 1968). This was the first of a series of reports on "contemporary historiography of psychology around the world" (Brožek 1980); over the years 18 countries were covered, from Austria to Yugoslavia, in 9 communications.

The first doctoral program in the history of psychology was established by Watson at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, in 1967. It served as the primary source of Ph.D.-level specialists in this field. (cf. Watson 1975). A significant role in the development of the study

of the history of psychology was played also by the Summer Institutes for College Teachers of the History of Psychology. The first of these was organized in cooperation with Watson and held in 1968 in Durham, NH (Brožek, Watson, and Ross 1989, 1970). The second Institute, directed by the present writer, was held at Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA. In 1971 (Brožek and Schneider 1973). Financially, both Institutes were supported by the (US) National Science Foundation. The directors and invited historians of science in general and of psychology in particular, each teaching for a week, and occasional guest speakers presenting a single lecture served as the teaching staff. College and university teachers of the history of psychology constituted the bulk of the participants. There were two small but important additional groups: Graduate students and historians of psychology from abroad (Czechoslovakia, Israel, the Netherlands, and Yugoslavia). Many of the individuals constituting these two groups had subsequently successful careers as historians of psychology.

It was at the first Summer Institute that the idea of an International Society for the Study of the Behavioral and Social Sciences was born in our apartment on a hot summer night. Three ingredients were critically involved in this event, in about equal proportions: The fiery presentations of Julian Jaynes, from Princeton University, a speaker-for-a-week; the enthusiasm he kindled that afternoon in his listeners; and a keg of cold beer consumed that evening.

The Society was formally established at a meeting called by John J. Sullivan and held at New York University on 5 October 1968. The acronym ISSHOBS, even after a reduction to ISHOBS, was most unwieldy. The need for a more workable title was quickly recognized and the name CHEIRON – a mythical Greek figure having

something to do with history – was readily accepted. The first scientific meeting took place 9–11 May 1969, with Julian Jaynes as the Organizing Chairman, and Mary Henle and Josef Brožek as program cochairmen (Anonymous 1969).

It was a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to discuss, in 1981, at Cambridge, Mass., with Hans Rappard, the needs for the foundation of a European branch of the Society. The first meeting of CHEIRON-EUROPE took place at the Free University of Amsterdam on 15–17 September 1982, with the proceedings published in 1983 by the Psychologisch Instituut van der Rijksuniversiteit Leiden under the editorship of Sacha Bem, Hans Rappard, and Willem van Hoorn. I wish to express my thanks and admiration to our Dutch colleagues for making available the proceedings of the first 5 meetings of CHEIRON-EUROPE expeditiously and at a reasonable price.

2. An Overview

At the present conference it may be particularly appropriate to note a volume born in 1980 as the fruit of collaborative efforts of North Americana, South American, and European (more specifically, German) historians of psychology. I am referring to the volume *Historiography of Modern Psychology*, prepared in Würzburg in 1979/1980 where I spent a year as a Fulbright Senior Fellow. The volume was edited in collaboration with Prof. L.J. Pongratz and published by the Canadian branch of the C.J. Hogrefe Publishing House. The scope and the intent of the volume was very similar to that of the Hagen Fachtagung. While theoretical considerations were not absent, the work turned out to be shorter on theory than it was planned: The theoretico-philosophical chapter, intended to introduce the section on methods, was not delivered in time to be included. To make matters worse, the anticipated contributions of the Marxist historiographers of psychology did not arrive either, be it from West Berlin or from the Soviet Union.

The subtitle of the volume reads AIMS – RESOURCES – APPROACHES.

In the first part of the volume Michael Wertheimer considered, at some length, the reason for studying the history of psychology, with emphasis on seeing the developments in historical perspective and being able to integrate what has become a fragmented field. L.J. Pongratz considered the "motors" of the growth of scientific psychology: The intrinsic development of scientific thought in general; the growth of the neighboring fields: physics, physiology, biology, philosophy; the social and cultural conditions; and the role of the creative minds. William R. Woodward entitled his contribution "Toward a Critical Historiography of Psychology", with stress on the word "critical", extending the critical history of science in general to the history of psychology; the essay was directed primarily at the students of the history of psychology.

A large section of the book is devoted to historiography of psychology around the world. Earlier we noted a "progress" report concerning publications on the subject. In the book itself separate chapters are devoted to the historiography of psychology in the German-speaking parts of Europe, Latin America, Soviet Union, and Spain. Barbara Ross's chapter dealt with "Work in Progress" and "Work Planned". In the section on "Archival Resources" three topics are considered: Gestalt psychology, Wilhelm Wundt, and the Archives of the History of American Psychology, in Akron, Ohio. This topic was brought up to date by the founders of the Archives at this meeting. The title of the Akron Archives refers to "American psychology". However, the significance of this institution goes far beyond the United States:

- a) The Archives serve as a model for scholars and administrators around the world, concerned with the safekeeping and research uses of archival documents.
- b) The materials held in the Archives constitute a rich source of information on the professional and personal contacts of American psychologists with their colleagues within the United States as well as abroad. This makes Akron the "Mecca" for students of the history of psychology seen in international context.

- c) The information pertaining to psychologists who immigrated to the United States documents their adaptation (or the lack of it) to the scientific social, and economic environment of what for them was a truly New World.

The body of the book is devoted to "Approaches to Historiography". Altogether five approaches were considered: Biographical (Michael M. Sokal), Descriptive-analytical (L.J. Pongratz), Quantitative (the present writer), Social (Hans Thomae), and Socio-psychological (R.I. Watson). In the Epilogue the pluralism of the historiography of psychology was stressed – a pluralism of approaches as well as a pluralism of topics.

The volume was supplemented by a small monograph on recent institutional and organizational developments (Brožek 1983), entitled "Study of the History of Psychology around the World" and published, in English, in the Valencian *Revista*. When appropriate, information was provided on academic settings, archives, institutions, journals, meetings, museums, and organizations. I regard as particularly valuable the sections on China, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Soviet Union. Since much has happened since the report was written, there is a pressing need to update the information – not an easy task!

3. Selected International Meetings

Three events will be considered.

a) The Passau International Symposium on "G.T. Fechner and psychology"

The symposium was held from 12 to 14 June 1987 and the proceedings, edited in collaboration with Horst Gundlach, were published early in 1988. The papers fall into two categories: The papers dealing with Fechner's involvement in matters psychological, including his contributions to experimental esthetics; and the echoes of Fechner's psychophysics in different countries – Brazil, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, the Western and Eastern Slavic countries, and Yugoslavia. Taken together,

these communications constitute the most comprehensive portrait of Fechner's influence abroad. This information is supplemented by two papers based on citation analyses.

b) Purkiniana

J.E. Purkinje (1787–1869) was a man of many facets and interests. His work is relevant to the history of psychology in general (it appears that he was the first to use the term "objective psychology", Brožek 1988) as well as to the history of the German and the Czech psychology. Psychology was his life-long love. Unfortunately, to the present generation of psychologists Purkinje is known primarily as an "eponym" – as the man who made the Purkinje phenomenon famous. As a matter of fact, he did not. He described the effects of the increasing intensity of the environmental illumination on the emergence and the relative brightness of colors, using the solar system as his laboratory, in a short section of his *New Contributions to the knowledge of Vision* (*Neue Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Sehens in subjektiver Hinsicht*), published in Berlin – not in Prague – in 1825 (Brožek 1989). He did not give any name to the phenomenon he observed, much less his own name!

The width of Purkinje's interests and accomplishments was documented at a conference on "J.E. Purkinje in Science and Culture", organized in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of his birth. In view of the fact that we commemorate mostly the famous men's death, it sounded like a good idea to celebrate an anniversary of Purkinje's birth. And, indeed a good idea it was, as attested by the two volumes of the proceedings of the conference, held in Prague late in August 1987 (Purse 1988).

The papers most directly relevant to the history of psychology were grouped in the section on "Purkinje's Scientific Achievements". They deal with his contributions to such topics as the neuron theory, sensory physiology (with special reference to vision), vertigo, and the study of dreams. Our own paper was entitled "Purkinje – the Unknown" and was focused on Purkinje's notes for lectures on empirical and on physi-

ological psychology, given at the University of Breslau between 1827 and 1842 (Brožek and Hoskovec 1988).

These materials were totally unknown. They were transcribed – though not with ease – and published (Brožek and Hoskovec 1987). The volume is introduced by a chapter on Purkinje's involvement in psychology and closes with an overview of the tasks facing historians of psychology before any responsible attempt to provide a comprehensive account of Purkinje's contributions to psychology can be made, together with an informed evaluation of their significance. A related task involves making his writings accessible to today's psychologists and historians of psychology.

c) History of Psychology in Latin America

A seminar on the subject, held in Rio de Janeiro in mid-April 1988, was organized by Antonio Gomes penna, prominent Brazilian historian of psychology and director of the post-graduate program of the Institute for Advanced Psychosocial Studies, operating in the framework of the Getulio Vargas Foundation. The Foundation served as one of the sponsoring agencies, together with the Brazilian Association of Psychology and the Brazilian Psychology of Applied Psychology. The seminar was focused on individuals who played important roles in the development of psychology in this part of the world.

The present writer opened the seminar by an account of the writings on the history of psychology in Latin America (for Brazil, cf. Brožek and León 1988). Rubén Ardila (Bogotá, Columbia) presented an overview of the development of Latinamerican psychology. Ulfried Geuter (West Berlin) and Ramon León (Peru) examined the impact of some of the European immigrants on Latinamerican psychology. Helio Carpinero (Valencia, Spain) covered the Spanish phase of the life of Emilio Mira y López. Jose Töpf (Buenos Aires) spoke on the development of psychology in Argentina and the impact of psychoanalysis.

Most of the speakers were Brazilian and dealt with various aspects of psychology in Brazil, including the psychology of

human work; the contributions of Nilton Campos (1898–1963), neuropsychiatrist and psychologist; Lourenço Filho's work in developmental psychology; the contributions of Emilio Mira y López who had to leave Spain at the end of the civil war; history of psychology in the state of Sao Paulo; and the history of psychoanalysis in Brazil (for details see Geuter and Brožek 1989).

Brazil's economy finds itself in a deep crisis and it is uncertain whether it will be possible to publish the proceedings of the seminar in book form. There is, however, hope that some of the papers presented at Rio de Janeiro may appear in print as journal articles.

Addenda

The volume on Psychology Moving East (Blowers and Turtle 1987) will be an eye-opener for individuals interested in the development and the present status of scientific psychology in Asia and Oceania. The editors, Geoffrey H. Blowers and Alison M. Turtle, are associated with the Departments of Psychology at the University of Hong Kong and the University of Sydney, respectively. The volume consists of 5 parts which deal with South Asia (Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh), Mainland Southeast Asia (Thailand, Vietnam, and Burma), East Asia (P.R. China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, and Macau), Insular Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines), and Oceania (Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji).

Those of us who have been unable to attend the first professional meeting of the Fachgruppe für Geschichte der Psychologie, held at the Catholic University in Eichstätt on 22–24 April 1988, are looking forward to the publication of the proceedings.

The 8th conference of CHEIRON EUROPE, organized by Ingemar Nilsson, was held in Göteborg, Sweden, on 30 August–3 September 1989, just prior to the Hagen Fachtagung.

In Spain, a Group (*grupo de trabajo*) for the History of Psychology was established

on 9 January 1987 and made important decisions: To publish a Newsletter (*Boletín informativo*); to seek transformation into the Spanish Society for History of psychology (*Sociedad Española de Historia de la Psicología*); and to organize The First Symposium of the History of Psychology, to be held on 8 and 9 January 1988 at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. The proceedings of the meeting appeared in print with a remarkable speed (Rosa, Quintana, and Lafuente 1988). Five papers report on studies of the history of psychology outside Spain (Great Britain, Argentina, Soviet Union, Cuba – 2 papers) but the "center of gravity" of the volume is in its 14 papers on the development of psychology in Spain. Three papers are concerned with "methodological perspectives". While he is doing so with hesitation, perhaps the present writer will be permitted to refer to a festschrift brought out in connection with his 70th birthday (Carpintero and Peiró 1984). The overwhelming majority of the contributions are in English. The introductory words, in Spanish and in English, are mercifully brief. The autobiography, factual in approach, is buttressed by 10 tables, and the contribution of Valencian colleagues dealing with "visibility" is based on citation analysis. The body of the volume may serve not only as a sort of directory of international historiography of psychology but as an effective mirror of current thought and research in the field. The contributions originated in the United States (14), Spain (6), West Germany (4), Czechoslovakia and Holland (2 each), Latin-America (Colombia, Peru), as well as Australia, Canada, P.R. China, East Germany, England, Japan, Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.

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