

CHAPTER 8

THE MISSING LINK OF HISTORICAL PSYCHOLOGY

WILLEM VAN HOORN

“Of all the approaches towards man, psychology is the most unlikely”
Roland Barthes

INTRODUCTION

A critical historiography of *scientific* psychology has to deal with the social and *cultural* movements in which the discipline developed as a practical social technology, an intellectual enterprise and as a profession on a par with the medical and engineering professions.

In this essay a plea is made for considering historical psychology as an integral part of the historiography of scientific psychology. The very historicity of emotions, feelings, experiences, cognitions, behaviors and interpersonal relations, has its consequences for writing history of psychology as such. After all we are only talking about *one* century of psychology: 1879–1979. However, what do we mean by ‘historicity’ when it comes to assessing the proper subject matter of psychology? And, what do we mean by ‘historicizing the subject’? That women and men are social and cultural-historical beings through and through is already recognized for some time. Now we have to ascertain in what this historicity precisely consists. One preliminary answer to that basic question could be that a particular kind of *romantic subjectivity*, which emerged around the turn of the nineteenth century, formed a cultural prerequisite for the founding of practical and theoretical psychology in the ‘laboratories’ of Galton and Wundt.

Starting from the distinction between the historiography of scientific psychology and some principles of historical psychology, I will argue that both disciplines have one common root, *viz.* the *life-world* (Husserl; Merleau-Ponty). The life-world is conceived of as the daily world of our lived-through and shared experiences that make up common coordinated actions in which life itself unfolds, develops and dies away in the course of social time. With regard to the life-world we can note that the experiencing self constitutes its nucleus and that the individual's biographical situation forms its cultural historicity. To vary a celebrated quote from John Locke: there is nothing in scientific psychology that was not first in the life-world. But, how does the life-world get into psychology?

Within the self the world is mentally/bodily structured through peculiar patterns of 'near', 'safe', 'familiar smell', 'home ground' and 'far away', 'strange' or 'foreigner's ground'. The self's frames of reference also contain: worries about health and well-being, confidence, 'otherness', mistrust, a sense of one's own body and time perspectives like social past and future that are linked to collective and *autobiographic* memories (Galton, 1879). One of the basic characteristics of the contemporary self is an unprecedented preoccupation with (*secular*) *inner life*. The latter is no doubt a romantic innovation, like so many other legacies of Romanticism that partly transformed into *psychological objects* during the 20th century. Most importantly among these were *Empfindungen* (sensations) and *Gefühle* (feelings), which eventually became objects of psychological inquiry (Danziger, 1997, p. 49). 'Simple feelings' and 'pure sensations' constitute the psychical elements of Wundt's experimental psychology, as will be worked out in greater detail later.

Hence, whatever else the discipline may have been named during that one century of psychology, to me it remains—paradoxically—the science of the individual. However, the individual is not an atom amongst social atoms in an anonymous society, but a person among other human beings to whom one is *interpersonally* related. By linking the social and cultural time-dimensions to the interpersonally determined biographical situation, we enter into *generational transformation*. Nobody in his sound wit will purport to fully understand his own generation. Our parents and grandparents lived different and often difficult lives that we might partly try to grasp. "My parents did not yet know, as nobody knows, at which position they were located in history. And one thing they did not know at all: that their life enrolled between a bygone World War and an emerging one" (Mak, 1999, p. 191; translation WvH). People who lived more than two centuries ago may almost look like strangers to us. Historians who think that they perfectly well understand the lives of medieval people are in need of historiographic therapy (Le Goff, 1977/2001). These reflections bring us to the heart of historical psychology, namely, the elucidation of diachronous discontinuously changing life-worlds in which the vulnerable *sensitivities of the human subject* always play their key role. Without exaggeration we could call the unraveling of the ever-changing Western

subjectivities during this century of psychology, one of the main tasks of the professional historians of the discipline. Psychological *knowledge* is always conceptualized in a specific social-psychological setting, as Danziger has amply made clear. Contemporary personal subjectivity as it took its first unstable shapes during the Romantic period, undoubtedly rises out of new interpersonal relationships. Here we may think primarily of inter-sexual relations, of relationships of capital provider and laborer, of parents and children, of siblings and also of schoolmates. Those new interpersonal relationships are firmly grounded in *material* culture: technics and technology, the built environment, artifacts and artifices, the basics of economics and law and last, not least, the achievements of practical medicine that help cure the sick and prolong life itself on a hitherto unexpected scale.

In this essay historiographical tools such as the notions of *proto-psychology*, of *mindscape*, *synchronism* and *anachronism* in the life-world, the discontinuity of inter-subjectivity and the invisibility of present day psychology, will be successively dealt with.

Barthes' challenging epigram may stimulate us to now find out why the most unlikely approach towards the understanding of people has become one of the commonest ways of dealing with human comings and goings during three quarters of the 20th century.

THE INHERENT RELATIONSHIP OF SCIENTIFIC PSYCHOLOGY AND HISTORICAL PSYCHOLOGY

"... That up till now we have had no historical psychology... Why did the Middle Ages and the Renaissance produce entirely different *types* of men?"

Karl Mannheim

More than forty years ago I began to study psychology under Jan Hendrik van den Berg, now 90, the Dutch pioneer in historical psychology, who published his groundbreaking book *Metabletica* as early as 1956. *Metabletica*, or historical psychology, starts from the basic idea that there is no fixed 'human nature'. Or, as Van den Berg has put it, to reject: "... the characteristic of the *eternity value* of 19th C. psychology (...). The whole science of psychology is based on the assumption that man does not change (...) whereas, in traditional psychology, the life of a previous generation is seen as a variation on a known theme, the supposition that man does change leads to the thought that earlier generations lived a different life, and that they were *essentially different*" (1956/1961, pp. 7–8 italics added). We may assume that his contention of the *openness* of human existence has been borrowed from Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In the latter's 1945 brilliant study of human existence we read: "Man is an historical idea and not a natural species" (p. 199, translation WvH). In Merleau's vision *all* psychological knowledge is based on the body's primordial encounters with other people. The

value of life “consists in actively being what we are by accident, to establish a communication with others and ourselves for which our *temporal structure* gives us the chance and of which our freedom is only a sketch” (1966, p. 71 italics added; translation WvH). Thus, it is the ever-changing materiality of the body, its socio-cultural conceptualizations and the lived-through experiences of one’s own body and the bodies of others, which principally defy the construction of long-standing psychological theories. Since there is an inextricable bond between the body and our lived-through experiences, each theory in psychology should be provided with an indication of its expiry date.

In my view, 20th century scientific psychology can only be conceived of as the last stage of historical psychology. As is almost too well known, it was only by the middle of the 19th century that, fully unexpectedly, scientific psychology emerged as the ‘discipline’ that studied the *psychical* contents of human *consciousness*: *Bewusstseinspsychologie*. With the explicitly proclaimed ‘death of God’ by thousands of cultural revolutionaries, the Christian soul had seemingly become obsolete. In its place subjective consciousness, feelings, emotions and the individual psyche became ready to play their grand roles in the theater of body and mind. Immediately, ‘the unconscious’, joined them and this then made the new subject matter of psychology complete: *Tiefenpsychologie*. In this connection we would need to thoroughly deal with the legacy of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) who in his sublime work of 1819 *The World as Will and Representation* clearly summarizes the *transformations* of ‘soul’ into ‘psyche’ and of ‘sex’ into ‘sexuality’, which took place under his very eyes. Writes Schopenhauer: “The sex drive is the final goal of all human strivings. With its accomplishment everything is accomplished . . . (.) As physiological correlate of the *subjective* sex drive we find in the human organism sperm as the secretion of all secretions, the quintessence of all saps. This fact shows us again that the human body is only objectified will, i.e. the will itself viewed through the intellect” (1819, p. 603, my transl.).

We should take breath for a few moments and pause to admire the psychologically interesting aspects of Schopenhauer’s position. First, in the truest of all romantic veins, the philosopher concentrates upon the *experiential* aspects of the sex drive: transformation of ‘soul’ into ‘psyche’. Feelings, emotions and sensuousness are directly related to intercourse and thus, here, sex partly changes into sexuality by giving value to both its psychical and physiological characteristics. The subjective and the objective parts of the drives of all drives, a romantic notion by itself, are theoretically set apart and then concretely united again in the love act of two people.

‘*Behavior*’, conceived of as a collection of bits and pieces of associations of stimulus-response relationships, is a genuine 20th century invention (Danziger, 1997, pp. 85–110). Like parts of ‘sex’ transformed into sexuality and parts of the ‘soul’ transformed into psyche, parts of ‘conduct’ transformed into objectified ‘behavior’. However, we cannot say in honesty that the results of thousands of behaviorist studies have greatly enriched our understanding of what truly drives

women, men and children. For these *matters of the heart* (Alexis de Tocqueville) we have to consult the works of some honest psychoanalytic writers and poets, playwrights and novelists. It is remarkable that Danziger in his recent work on the 'origins' of psychological categories (1997) has not paid much attention to the positive results of the psychoanalytic movement. In comparison to the achievements of 'scientific' psychology there can be little doubt that Freud's legacy has had rather far-reaching 'influences' on cultural, artistic and personal Western life in the 20th century. Or, to put it more interestingly, has secularized, sexualized, individualized and personalized bourgeois life delivered the material for the production of psychoanalytic knowledge? Who knows what an as yet to be written *archeology* of psychoanalytic categories would reveal in this respect? What surprises thus a little is that Danziger has not given a glimpse of the core-concept of *repression*. There can be no serious doubt that Freudian psychoanalysis and its present day therapeutic practices stand or fall with the validity or invalidity of that often-misused notion. Likewise, Danziger has not, as yet, valued the basic tenets of for example phenomenological psychology and Gestalt psychology. Decades before American social constructionism became en vogue, phenomenological psychology has laid down its anthropological foundations of which the very historicity of human existence itself forms the cornerstone (Giorgi, 1970; Delphy & Chaperon, 2002). As Danziger himself admits, one cannot master the whole field of theoretical psychology (1997, p. 20). However, his 'neglects' clearly indicate that he is primarily dealing with what the majority of psychologists would call 'scientific' or simply *American* psychology.

If we apply the foregoing to the historiography of psychology as a whole, then we may distinguish between *universals* and *particulars* with regard to outlining psychology's course and contents from 1800 till 1979:

Universals of social, cultural and economic development:

- The ongoing industrial and post-industrial revolutions
- The autonomization of technology
- Rise and continuing influence of the cultural movements of Romanticism, Realism and Symbolism
- Wars and World Wars as perennial strife
- The rise to world power nr. 1 of the United States from 1900 on
- The domination of the West: colonization/de-colonization and its aftermath
- Secularization/urbanization and the counter-forces of religious fundamentalism and regionalism
- The prolongation of life through preventive and applied medicine

Particulars of Western psychological development:

- The emergence of the romantic inner self: transformation of 'soul' into psyche

- The transformation of ‘sex’ into sexuality
- The increasing importance of sexuality and male and female homosexuality as gender issues
- Emergence and significance of unconscious psychological processes
- The emergence of ‘behavior’ as an objectified part of human conduct
- The split of theoretical psychology and practical psychology
- The almost world-wide dominance of *American* psychology after World War II

One factor should be particularly highlighted: the undetermined status of subjectivity itself. When the age-old passions partly faded away by the end of the 18th century, feelings and emotions gained prominence and modern psychological man and woman were born. The passions had led to the medieval recognition of *types* of man (sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic). Universal passions were partly replaced by singular feelings and emotions (Paris, 2001). The existence and experienced reality of ‘infinite’ emotions and feelings lead to the recognition of the uniqueness of each individual.

In sum then, through combining the historical psychology approach with some basic principles of the cultural movements of Romanticism, Realism and Symbolism, we would be able to arrive at a new historiography of psychology. In this essay we will mainly focus upon the inherent relationship between Romanticism and the rise of experimental psychology.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL PSYCHOLOGY

L’histoire ne se répète jamais
Anonymous

THE PRINCIPLE OF PROTO-PSYCHOLOGY

When we look at Danziger’s achievements in the historiography of psychology over the last twenty years, then we can render his position as follows.

Scientific psychology is an intellectual enterprise. Research practices stand in a research tradition. The proper subjects for historical study are psychological objects. Psychological objects are ‘the experimental subject’, ‘intelligence’, ‘memory’, ‘motivation’, ‘personality’, ‘stimulus-response’, ‘behavior’, ‘attitude’, ‘client’ and ‘therapist’. These psychological objects are socially constructed and form no part of the natural world. Intellectual interests that usually coincide with the social interests of a particular time drive the psychological scientist. There is no progress or advancement in psychological knowledge. As far as Kuhnian paradigms are concerned: there is no ‘normal’ science in the science of psychology. All psychological knowledge is in flux; *transition and transformation* are the

normal state of affairs. It is the task of historians of psychology to carefully map, describe, analyze and evaluate this ever-changing terrain of 'psychological reality'.

With this truly Heraclitian conception of scientific psychology before us, we may well ask what the relationship between 'psychological reality' and human reality is. If all psychological knowledge is socially constructed and if there is absolute relativity of this type of knowledge, then the very notion of 'knowledge' is in danger of dissolving in thin air. Obviously, the social-psychological constructionist approach is in some need of epistemological clarification (cf. Stegmüller, 1989; Kusch, 1999).

My answer to the challenging question just posed lies in the application of historical psychology's notion of proto-psychology as it transforms out of the life-world. Danziger's psychological objects, like personality, client and experimental subject, already exist in the life-world before they are transformed into psychological categories through research activities. In between psychological reality and the untransformed aspects of the life-world lie the mediating links of proto-psychological *settings*. Mediating links are socio-cultural practices, which bring to life particular sensitivities that may become objects of psychological inquiry. These proto-psychological settings may vary rather widely as, for example, in the psychological experiment or in psychotherapeutic situations. What we are looking for is synchronous cultural practices, which as *modus operandi* constitute the breeding ground for psychological research. This is, admittedly, a too short answer to the question of how the life-world gets into psychology (cf. Danziger, 2001; Van Hoorn, 1983). But, in general, proto-psychological sensitivities precede scientific psychology and prolong their existence in the scientific realm.

THE DISCONTINUITY OF SUBJECTIVITY

In a historical psychology approach to the understanding of one century of psychology, the principle of the *discontinuity* of emotions, feelings, proper conduct and lived-through experiences should be pivotal. *Our* mental life is not identical to the emotions and experiences of our ancestors, immediate or farther removed in time. In the surrounding life-world, a person in daily life occupies what may be dubbed a 'mental space'. Mental space refers to the sum total of an individual's emotions, cognitions, and inter-subjective experiences. The individual's mental space is closely intertwined with a shared particular *mindscape*, as will be worked out in more detail.

A few examples that could illustrate the discontinuity of contemporary subjectivity itself must suffice here.

My first example is concerned with the reaction of parents to the loss of a young child. When Plutarch (1st century A.D.) and his wife lose their very young daughter Timoxena, he abundantly praises his spouse for her dignified

behavior. He is very happy to see her distancing herself from the mourning *behavior* of the women surrounding her "... the visits of silly women and their cries and lamentations" (in Lopate, 1995, p. 20). Since there is no inner 'psychological' life there are no emotions and no tears are shed.

When Ben Johnson and Joost van den Vondel (17th century) lose their very young sons, they immediately take recourse in print to providence and console themselves by writing that their children from now on will have a very good time in Heaven. Eternal glory precedes their fathers' brief period of grief.

When modern parents lose a child they are advised to go into group therapy. Both their companions in adversity and the group's professional psychologist will see to it that they properly pass through the several stages of mourning, from explicit denial to acceptance and psychological working-through of their irreplaceable loss.

As this too short example indicates, in remote times when there was no inner 'psychic' life, dignified individual behavior was the norm. In our time, with its abundance of inner feelings and emotions, the individual has to share collective mourning to be healed.

However, we need not go back to earlier centuries to find a challenging and convincing example that can convey the reality and meaningfulness of *our* changing subjectivity itself. In the *Three Essays* (1905) Freud states that a young man, who empathetically kisses the lips of a beautiful girl, will most likely use her little toothbrush only with *disgust*.

A final example. In dealing with the conceptualization of a gender identity for woman and man, Freud first assigns a *homologous* function and structure to the clitoris of the little girl. The sexual pleasure that derives from infantile masturbation is male in nature for both sexes. During puberty the young woman has to give up her male sexuality as far as the erogenous zones are concerned and to switch to a passive form of being prepared to receive the phallus in the entrance of her sheath. There follows one of the most remarkable metaphors of the experience of female orgasm ever conceived. Adult female orgasm consists of vaginal stimulation that is set to fire by the *accidental* stimulation of the clitoris: "When the clitoris during the act of sex is stimulated she conducts this *irritability* to the neighboring female parts, *just like a bundle of pinewood is used to set the harder woodpile to fire*" (1905, p. 63, italics added). In simple language: Freud thinks that adult women can experience only vaginal orgasms. Modern women purport to know better than Freud that the lived-through orgasm is 'always' clitoral in nature. Freud's standpoint is the more remarkable because he as an experienced professional *neurologist* should have known that the clitoris has thousands of sensory nerves, while the entrance of the vagina is almost deprived of them. One possible conclusion could be that Freud's notably prejudiced 'insights' are determined by scientific and extra-scientific, i.e. socio-cultural notions at the same time. In this case his assertion that libido is masculine in nature belongs to extra-scientific opinions. But the wording of the metaphor betrays his real prejudice: the irritability

of the clitoris has to be transferred to the entrance of the vagina, to facilitate the penetration of the penis. Sex, obviously, is a male matter; women come second or not at all.

SYNCHRONICITY IN THE LIFE-WORLD: THE CONCEPT OF MINDSCAPE

Cultural and social history, which form the backbone of historical psychology, are complex matters. The history of psychology deals with the diachronous developments of practical and theoretical psychology, from approximately the end of the 19th century onwards. However, among all diachrony and discontinuity there is synchrony and in synchrony we may discover the existence of particular *mindscapes* that entail specific subjectivities.

Let us take European Romanticism as a prime example, because here we find the breeding ground of the contemporary inner self that has become the stuff of which the greater part of popular psychology was made in the 20th century. In Romanticism we discover particular mindscapes that at the level of the life-world are characterized by a set of common characteristics. Here the synchronicity in the life-world points to the importance of dreams and unconscious psychological processes, the supernatural and transcendent, the longing for the infinite, sexuality and death, multiple personality and a new conception of the body. Together these ingredients make up a certain *Lebensgefühl* that was so dear to all true romantics. The kernel of this romantic mindscape, is the overall emphasis on the importance of individual feelings and emotions. In 1808 Faust announced the program for the contents of both Wundt's experimental psychology and the pop psychology of the 20th century: "Feeling is everything". Passions as *stylized* motions of the soul that are closely intertwined with the notion of the four bodily temperaments, lasted till far into the 19th century. The newly risen emotions became a subject of study from mid-19th century on. In between lies High Romanticism in which individual feelings became the new gospel of the age. After centuries of emphasis put on rational *man*, the romantics, following Rousseau, placed feelings and emotions at the center of human existence. In thus doing they gave form and content to *das Psychische*, which had already sprung from the hearts and minds of their fellow human beings a few decades earlier. Here, at the *crossroads* of late Enlightenment and early Romanticism we should look for the appearance of proto-psychological settings (Eckardt et al., 2001). For the first time in social history women were also endowed with reason and men were partly gifted with emotions and feelings. A sharper differentiation of the sexes sets in and thus the issue of *gender* becomes a key point. From here on the *feminization* of cultural practices significantly increases. In a nutshell I take it that emotions on their way to transformation into proto-psychological settings first joined the scientific realm via Darwin's pioneering work and then made a comfortable landing in psychoanalysis in which they became prime suspects for repression in traumatic (wounding) situations. Emotions presuppose

the existence of an *inner space*; passions—as their etymology indicates—befall people and are not necessarily linked to inner space (cf. Montagu, 1994; Paris, 2001). Kant had categorically maintained that psychology could never become a natural science. Quantitative measurement cannot be applied to the phenomena of the inner sense, he proclaimed. Apparently so, and especially in comparison to Wundt's pioneering work, it all comes down to our valuation of *immediate experience* (Van Rappard, this volume). Kant, as a good Cartesian, thought that psychology was about mediated experiences (introspection = retrospection of the inner sense). Kant did not perceive that under his very eyes parts of the eternal and immutable soul gave way to the temporalization of psychical processes, that is to say to the birth of the modern self (Verhave & Van Hoorn, 1984). Wundt tried hard to counter Kant's intellectualistic conception of 'psychology'. Through precisely using the very tools of natural science, he hoped to show that psychology is about *immediate* experience. *Seemingly* simple reaction-time measurements marked the birth of experimental psychology. But, unsolved question, did we eventually get a science of feelings and emotions?

Romantic mindscapes form the heart and hinge of a world-view. We may well wonder whether in cultural history this romantic world-view was the first encompassing outlook on people's comings and goings. This *holistic* world-view *materializes* in literature, philosophy, painting, architecture, music and sculpture. For this very reason its diverse tangible manifestations are properly called a *mindscape* in analogy to landscape, seascape, beachscape and cityscape, which are material parts of the life-world as shaped by the continuous activities of the creative mind, in which memories always play their salient roles.

Last, not least, a notable romantic *mindscape* materialized in Wundt's experimental psychology. It is Goethe's simile of *psychical chemistry* as it was reshaped in Wundt's principle of *creative synthesis* to which we now turn.

In chemistry we deal with earth and minerals, with salts and acids. These natural elements seek and modify each other and together they form new entities. The same holds for human relations. Simple feelings and emotions, once stirred up, may form new connections and so may the persons who experience them. A chemical simile is fully appropriate here, because "... there is only one Nature", as Goethe remarked. Wundt also works with psychical elements. These consist of elementary psychical parts, the so-called pure sensations and simple feelings. Through systematic experimentation Wundt opened up the possibility of a literally endless multiplication of total feelings. As Boring already concluded: "Wundt (was) free to employ the newly created feelings for many purposes" (Boring, 1957, p. 330). The fundamental characteristic of the psychical events is '... that the product of whatever number of elements is more than the mere sum of the elements; it is a new simply incomparable creation' (paraphrased and translated from Wundt, 1911, p. 755). This, in a nutshell, comprises Wundt's principle of *creative synthesis*. And what could already be read in Goethe? "You have to see

these elements actively working before your eyes . . . how they seek each other, and then, reappear in a new, unexpected Gestalt” (1809, p. 396; see Van Hoorn, 2000).

Wundt’s psychical elements and the always-new Gestalten they bring forth is a very interesting case of psychological thinking that is closely related to a particular romantic mindscape. In Goethe we have its inter-subjective literary form; in Wundt we see its scientific elaboration. Through the introduction and use of scientific apparatus—the famous brass instruments—the subjectivity of once ordinary collaborators transformed into proto-psychological sensitivities that provided the materials for objectified scientific inquiry (cf. Danziger, 1990, Ch. 10). The brass instruments, like Hipp’s chronoscope, which measures time-intervals in *thousandths* of a second (sic!) could be conceived of as extensions of the human sense organs. The ‘measured’ psychical reaction time is an artifact resulting from the interaction of sensory-motor perceptions and the relentlessness of the instrument.

THE SYNCHRONICITY OF UNCONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC MOVEMENTS

The principle of the simultaneous existence of uncontemporary cultural movements forms the counter-principle of synchronicity in the life-world. Old life forms and new life forms in cultural history always exist simultaneously. In historical psychology we have breaks, interruptions, discontinuities and dialectical processes going on forever. In times of cultural crises (1770–1805; 1880–1900 and 1965–1975) old life forms and the emerging new ones heavily collide (Praz, 1933/1979; Clark, 1999). The clash of the old and the new life forms fuels the engine of the course of cultural history.

In psychology, psychoanalysis, Gestalt psychology, behaviorism and phenomenological psychology all existed side by side. Since the late sixties cognitive psychology (man-machine mindscape) and evolutionary psychology (adapting animal mindscape) develop almost independently. Each of these movements has its own mindscape, but the mindscapes as such are at odds with each other.

As an invitation to further study and elaboration I would like to call attention to the fact that both Wundt’s *Elements der Völkerpsychologie* and Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* appeared in 1912. Even a superficial comparison of the contents of both works shows a considerable overlap in topics. Both scholars, the one in his early eighties, the other 56, are primarily interested in ‘the life of the mind of primitive peoples’. Theoretical differences, however, could not be wider apart. Wundt conceives of his endeavor as ‘developmental psychology’, while Freud in creating the myth of the killing of the *Urvater* takes recourse to the assumption of *unconscious collective memories* to ‘explain’ present day forms of neurotic behavior (Freud, 1913, pp. 157–58). In foresight we can conclude that Wundt’s summary of his life’s work marks the end of a psychological era, while Freud’s daring generalizations

open up a new field of psycho-anthropological study (Muensterberger, 1969). As this example should make clear, the co-existence of uncontemporary scientific movements is rather the norm than the exception.

THE INVISIBILITY OF PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

When we now pause to ponder the 'present' status of scientific psychology and try to further delineate the outlines of the emerging field of historical psychology, one of the basic questions remains: what could be the course and *direction* of human history? We already have definitive answers from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Marxist and 'progressive' eschatologies. Suffice it to sadly remark that these answers and their translations into inhumane actions have cost the lives of billions of men, women and children. And the killing goes on.

From the little that we now know about the historical psychology of the 19th and 20th centuries, we have to conclude that the present has always been invisible and hence that the future is *unpredictable*. Contrary to the grandiose stage schemes of Hegel, Marx, Comte and Freud, it must be unequivocally stated that there are no fixed historic laws. In following Karl Popper, I am talking about open societies and their fundamentalist enemies (Popper, 1966). It lies in the course of historic processes that extrapolations, which are based upon the present state of affairs, always fail because *historic events* are by their very nature unpredictable (e.g. 14th July 1789; 7th December 1941; fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989 and the 11th September 2001).

Since the present is invisible, the present status and meaning of psychology as a whole is also invisible and thus its future course is unpredictable. The cardinal vice of historians of science is to start from *some* rather arbitrary present situation in the field and then to write history backwards. Difficult as it may be, history of psychology should be written forwards with no specific idea about 'future' developments in mind. This holds for cultural history in general and it also holds for the historiography of science. It even holds for the work of one scientist-scholar. Any comparison of the work of the 'young' Wundt to the work of the later Wundt must lead to almost meaningless generalizations because young Wundt could not know what mature Wundt would come up with. No scientist working at 'psychology-in-the-making' knows at what place in social time he or she is located. The two subtitles of Danziger's major works point to a certain presentistic bias: 'Historical *origins* of psychological research' (1990), and: 'How *psychology* found its language' (1997). Obviously, the author of these outstanding contributions already knows to some extent what recent *American psychology* pertains to and from this vantagepoint he searches the past for 'origins' and 'first emerging' of psychological categories. Thus, the as yet unknown historical *zigzag* course of the 'discipline' and all the *partial* developments we have lost on the way, can hardly come into sight (for the notion of 'zigzag' history, see Husserl, 1936/1954).

I think it here almost unnecessary to reiterate that both Claude Lévi-Strauss and Michel Foucault time and again have pointed to the pitfalls in the search for 'origins'. The greater part of the published history of psychology so far has been inspired by a *quasi-evolutionary historiography* that smacks more of Lamarck than of Darwin's position. Necessarily this mutes the actual developments, which have taken place and it suggests a unity of scientific practices that never has been the case (Levi-Strauss, 1958/1967 Foucault, 1972). Admirable as a work like *Constructing the Subject* may be, to write an archeology of psychological knowledge, is a rather different matter (cf. Louw & Danziger, 2000; Foucault, 1977).

An archeology of psychological knowledge has, as a minimum, to start from the following viewpoints. The contents of the published research results have to be related to their *deep structure*. This deep structure is content-wise set in cultural movements such as Romanticism (Wundt) or Symbolism (Freud). The meta-psychological *overarching* factors in the creation of psychological knowledge are positioned in ontological, ethical and epistemological systems like idealism and voluntarism (Wundt) or materialism and determinism (Freud). *Transformation schemata* of one life-style into another, of one concept into a new conceptualization, of one accepted research strategy into a new approach, emergence of new methodologies and the disappearance of once accepted scientific view-points and life-forms, should be our historiographical objectives (Foucault, 1972, p. 131; Piaget, 1970).

THE REVERSAL OF CHRONOLOGICAL TIME

When educated Greeks talked about the future, they would say: 'What do we yet have *behind* us'? This challenging and interesting experience of time's course is still of value to the founding of historical psychology. Since the future of scientific psychology from 1879 on is invisible *at any point in time*, it should be unknown to the historians of psychology who analyze the course of 20th century psychology. From this it follows that the future of scientific psychology should always be regarded as lying *behind* us, whereas its past, as embedded in proto-psychological settings, is known and therefore stretches out *before* our investigating minds and eyes.

Let us take an example from Danziger to make clear which historiographical consequences could be drawn here. Early in his career as a historian of psychology Danziger published a now famous article entitled "The positivist repudiation of Wundt" (1979; see also Danziger, 1990, Ch. 3). The main argument of this paper is that some of Wundt's pupils and his immediate successors turned 'positivistic' under the influence of Mach's philosophy of science. This positivistic turn in theoretical psychology is one of the main reasons for the demise of the Wundtian system at the beginning of the 20th century.

What Danziger has accomplished here is the result of a comparison of Wundt's system with *later* developments in theoretical psychology, namely, the systematic

experimental study of higher thought processes in the so-called Würzburg School (Kusch, 1999). However, Wundt could not know what turns theoretical psychology would take just after 1900. And we historians writing about Wundt, are well advised to better take the same position. We must fear then that we have, as yet, not got a full picture of Wundt's position in this crucial matter.

If we turn our attention to the past of Wundt's holistic system, then it is possible to show that it comprises the last stage of a psychological, anthropological and philosophical position that for the greater part is over and done with before 1900! The 'positivist turn' of some of his pupils could be just one example of this, but it is, internalistically seen, no sufficient explanation for the 'system's' demise. What could have been done then, is to carefully study the psychological procedures in Helmholtz's, Donders's and Fechner's experimental approaches and thus to make clear what Wundt's true contributions and arising 'failures' have been.

Yet, the main reason for the dissolution of Wundt's type of theoretical psychology lies in the outside world. It is the rapid emergence of the fields of psychological practice that has truly prevented the construction of *one* unified theoretical psychology as envisaged by Wundt.

However, there probably survives more of Wundt's systematic thinking in e.g. Gestalt psychology than its hard-nosed parishioners would ever like to admit. As Brock has put it in a daring formulation: "The fundamental theoretical issues that occupied Wundt (...) have never been resolved and are still of contemporary relevance" (Brock, 2000, p. 6; Van Rappard, this volume).

THE NECESSITY OF PERIODIZATION AND COMPARATIVE STUDY

Over and again Danziger has stressed the relativity of all psychological knowledge. I have added the idea that all psychological knowledge is embedded in proto-psychological settings. Here we are in danger to become so relativistic that we would overlook the *typical* developments of 20th century psychology.

In his excellent chapter "On the threshold of the new psychology: Situating Wundt and James" (1980), Danziger maintains that the psychological systems of these two 'founding fathers' of scientific psychology should be seen as *transitional periods*. This is a challenging thought and it is worthwhile to follow up on its historiographical and epistemological consequences. Wundt and James are positioned between the 'old' psychology (unscientific) and the 'new' psychology that is distinctly 'scientific'; hence: 'threshold'.

Let us shortly take a look at the Wundtian System to find out whether this position can be fully upheld.

The *contents* of Wundt's experimental psychology stem from the last phase of German Romanticism: feelings and emotions. The *methodology* fits into the 'positivism' of the natural sciences: *physiological* psychology. The overarching *metaphysiology* is intrinsically linked to German idealism: voluntarism and values as the key ingredients. In the light of the principle of the reversal of chronological

time I would like to suggest now considering the Wundtian holistic system as the last stage of German idealism that was clearly over and done with by 1900. And thus, what is the status of Wundt's type of psychological knowledge? Here we have to combine the problematic of the archeology of psychological knowledge and the necessity of periodization. The actual experiments in Wundt's laboratory are related to the deep and overarching structures of romanticism, positivism and Idealism. Both romanticism and idealism had had their days by 1900. And thus, paradoxically, it should have been positivism that would have paved the way for Wundt's triumphal march into 20th century psychology. It did not, as Danziger has amply made clear. The deep structure and the overarching value system have definitely hindered the continuation of Wundt's type of experimental psychology. To come to that conclusion there is no real need for a comparison to later systematic positions in theoretical psychology.

As an invitation to further discussion I would like to suggest constructing a periodization of the history of scientific psychology. Let us consider Wundt's system as belonging to Period 1. Here is some solid psychological knowledge available. Especially when we also take the monumental *Völkerpsychologie* into consideration, then there is still a lot of interesting work to be done. To the same period pertain the emergence of functional psychology (James), of depth psychology and psychoanalysis and of phenomenological psychology in Brentano and Husserl. Instead of thinking that only positivism will lead the way—the scientific fallacy, the use of the principle of the synchronicity of untemporaneous scientific movements here shows us again that scientific psychology has been polymorphous from the very start and has stayed so during the 20th century.

By general agreement, the period of 1880–1910 is called 'La belle époque'. That is our Period 1 for the history of scientific psychology. Unlimited hopes were expressed for the future century of psychology. Period 2 comprises the significance of World War I for the definitive establishment of the fields of psychological practice, both in Europe and in America. Period 3 pertains to the rise of the grand systems and the significance of World War II for the emergence of the field of clinical psychology. Fourth and last is the period up till the mid 'seventies, during which practical and theoretical psychology split up into an unrecognizable number of highly specialized sub-disciplines. Modesty befits the historian of psychology. Even if one finds 'the invisibility of the present' a too far-fetched conception, then the utterly complex present situation in practical and theoretical psychology is a sufficient reason to banish presentism forever.

DANZIGER'S CRITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY

Somewhat earlier we have described Danziger's views on the historiography of psychology in a nutshell. One of the main conclusions was that the proper subjects for historical study are the 'psychological objects'. We may infer that

he considers himself to be a *critical* historian of psychology. This is to say that, among other things, he wants the history of psychology to serve as admonisher with regard to current work in theoretical psychology.

Right from the start, Danziger has rejected all forms of naturalism, objectivism, scientism, essentialism and progressivism. He *problematically* contends that scientific psychology does not find its objects and experimental subjects in 'the natural world'. However, since the findings of quantum mechanics have become common knowledge, we do not assume that there is such a thing as 'the natural world'. "We do not study nature as such, but the problematized parts of nature" (Heisenberg, 1955/2000). Neither physicists nor psychologists find their objects in the natural world, but both belief in hard matter and real people. In a sense, all sciences are human sciences.

Danziger's position is, as already described earlier, that psychological objects like 'intelligence', 'attitudes', 'memory' or 'personality' are the products of peculiar forms of social-psychological construction, which could not have existed before 1850. Danziger even maintains that notions like 'depression', 'the self' and 'emotion' are of recent origin, "often being younger than the discipline itself". Somewhat rhetorically, Richards writes: "... nobody prior to Freud had an Oedipus complex, nobody before Pavlov and Watson was ever 'conditioned' and nobody before *c.* 1914 had a high IQ" (Richards, 1996, p. 7). I think that these statements are rather problematic. Without sound argumentation they do not make much sense. For brevity's sake, let me comment as follows.

Whatever constructs scientific psychologists make up, as a rule their 'origins' are situated in proto-psychological settings and the life-world, and otherwise they have no resonance. It is precisely here where scientific psychology and historical psychology meet and can be seen as complementary parts of the proper study of human comings and goings

From an overall point of view I take it that Danziger means to purport that already existing characteristics of human beings were *partly* transformed into *psychological objects* during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, concomitant to the establishment of psychology as a science. My position would fit into Danziger's view of the historically determined *emergence* of the psychological objects themselves as the products of changing human relationships. In short, the historicity of human subjectivity—which exists partly within and partly outside scientific endeavors and which is connected to both of them via the life-world—should be taken for granted. Danziger's type of social constructionism falls largely within the framework of recent intellectual history with a social bent. It is mainly intellectual interests that coincide with the social interests of a particular time period that drive the psychological scientist.

I have little reservation to propound that proto-psychological subjectivities as such only exist from the end of the 19th century on. Here the historical order of the issues at stake is as follows. The linguistic subject-predicate structure is as old as the classical languages. In Descartes' anthropology we get the

very sharp distinction between mind and matter. 'Subjective' in the sense of belonging to the conscious mind, dates from the beginning of the 18th century. *Subjectivity*, as might be expected, has as its dates the 1820s, that is to say the heydays of Romanticism. From then on subjectivity means individuality and personality. This order of things shows that the self, individuality and personality already existed quite sometime *before* scientific psychology partly turned them into psychological objects through making use of specific proto-psychological settings.

As far as the *structure* of psychological knowledge is concerned, Danziger focuses on the problem-solving context in which research takes place. Then he distinguishes between the problems to be solved and the *problematic* underlying them, to proceed to the notion of the *collective subject*. With respect to research this can take the form of active participation in an intellectual tradition or in a social grouping like a laboratory situation. The latter is embedded in a wider social context, the life-world, in which knowledge-constituting interests (Habermas, 1972) are always at stake. Danziger has not thoroughly explored this neo-Marxist stance, because that would inevitably have led to the conclusion that a critical history of psychology is not *primarily* about the history of psychological objects or of the fads and foibles of the psychological experiment, subjects that are Danziger's strong research issues. 20th century psychology is mainly about the development of the fields of psychological practice. When we focus upon the psychology of labor, education, health and individual differences (testing), e.g., then the knowledge-constituting interests become almost all too obvious (cf. Van Hoorn & Verhave, 1977; Danziger, 1990, Ch. 7). Danziger's contention that the intellectual interests of the scientific psychologists usually coincide with the social interests of a particular time period, is too general. It ignores the conflict-ridden nature of social history. If we take conflicting social interests into account, then we would have to describe and ethically value how much of 20th century psychology is *Herrschaftswissen* (power knowledge) and how much of it belongs to *Bildungswissen* (educational knowledge, according to Max Scheler). Here we hit upon the Achilles heel of Danziger's work so far. To recognize that all psychological knowledge is constructed in a *social-psychological* context is one thing. However, this *context of discovery* situation does tell us almost nothing about the *natures* of psychological *knowledge*. The development of 20th century psychology cannot fully be understood only by walking social-psychological avenues. Reference points that are situated outside psychology itself have to be brought to the stage. As Huizinga has put it so succinctly: "History is the way in which a culture *accounts* for its past" (Huizinga, 1929/1950, p. 100, italics in original, translation WvH). In the same vein a critical historiography of psychology has to provide tools for the accounting of psychology's past. The notion of culture as coordinated action, as we have already indicated, has a decisive role to play here. As far as the *primacy* of the fields of practice is concerned, the very notion of praxis/practice itself still deserves further analysis (Louw & Danziger, 2000).

HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY AS A WAY TO SELF-UNDERSTANDING

“And then I start thinking about myself, and what good can that bring?”

Helen Hunt in *As good as it gets*

Danziger has eloquently set forth that his non-critical (non-discerning?) adversaries mainly use history as self-serving, celebratory, self-congratulating and as a legitimization of the present ‘progressive’ state of the art. I gladly share this position.

Somewhat to my surprise, Danziger also thinks that the results of historical study can improve the present status in theoretical psychology. “A study of the origins and backgrounds of basic psychological categories can help first of all, to question one’s questions and, secondly, lead to *better* questions” (Brock, 1995, p. 16; italics added). Let me comment as follows. First, as long as we take each other seriously, any good scholar-scientist has asked good questions. Helmholtz and Wundt had their good questions and so had Freud and Skinner.

Second, when we deal with past human experiences and behavior, we are confronted with differences and resemblances. The social past can only be understood through analogies. I can partly understand what people in the past were feeling and experiencing and partly they will forever remain strangers to me. The same holds for myself and my past, which stretch out before my eyes. Partly I know myself, but parts of myself look strange to me (I am not saying that parts of myself are unknown to me, as Freud loves to maintain, because I cannot know what I know not).

In this connection I again suggest to let the history of theoretical psychology proper deal with its development from Period 1 on. All the work, which Danziger has done on Wundt, for example, belongs to this time frame and should be considered as such. The dangers of anachronism are always with us. Wundt’s weighty volumes on logic, ethics and experimental psychology tell us much more about the newly arisen *sensitivities* of the psychological subject as conceived of by one great psychologist-cum-philosopher, than that they would really help us to better formulate questions for 21st century, theoretical psychology. To read Wundt or Durkheim widely and deeply on social or cultural anthropology will improve my self-understanding, not my present psychological endeavors. This is to say that in dealing with Wundt’s works I need to be as critical and discerning as possible. The fruit of my historical efforts will be the discovery of the *true differences* of his psychology and mine. All historical study furthers self-knowledge (Van Rappard, 1979). A serious study of the past must lead to a better understanding of my own life. There is a discontinuous relationship between past and *recent* scientific and practical activities. The world of the historian of psychology is not the world of

the scientific psychologist. Without much substantiation it should be clear that mainstream psychologists are not in the least interested in applying the 'great findings of the past' to their present endeavors. Maybe they are more right in taking this position than would appear at first sight. Since the history of psychology is polymorphous and discontinuous through and through, how could they fruitfully make use of the bygone 'findings' of the past? Here Danziger's self-imposed task seems Sisyphus labor to me.

Another reason why Danziger's cleansing approach towards the development of a more purified theoretical psychology has no firm ground to stand on is that the 'subjectivity of the subject' itself will again already have changed *or disappeared (!)* by the time he and his followers have finished their methodological mopping-up job. Here the social-constructionist approach will necessarily bite into its own tail.

Social life itself is always decades ahead of psychologists who study life after the facts. This phenomenon we might call the *Nacheilungsparadox* (the paradox of the lagging behind of theoretical psychology with regard to the speed of social history). After WW II theoretical psychology looks more and more like a ticker-tape factory. No serious historian of psychology can pretend to even possess a bird's eye overview of what actually is going on. Endless specialization defies the very idea of a unified theoretical and practical psychology. This viewpoint nicely fits into the characteristic of the fourth period of the history of scientific psychology, that is to say the disappearance of the grand systems and the ongoing proliferation of the fields of practice. 'The psychology of health' forms only one example of the abyss that separates well-proven behavior modification techniques and desirable ways of living on which there is no consensus at all.

Although recent psychology is truly invisible and hence the future of the science of the subject is unpredictable, my best guess is that one day people will wake up and will discover to their own amazement that they do not need a science like psychology. Then Barthes' epigram will have reached full fruition.

HISTORICIZING THE SUBJECT

"There is no other reality than the one that we carry in our memory. In between us and nothingness strands our power of recollection, a problematic and fragile refuge"

Klaus Mann

A critical writing of the history of 20th century psychology must rest upon a well thought-out historiography of the discipline as a practical-applied and theoretical enterprise. The major works of Kurt Danziger in the theoretical field stand as solid reference beacons. Danziger has amply made clear that psychological knowledge is closely knit to specific social-psychological situations. The most salient example of this is the psychological experiment, in which subjects and

experimenter share common proto-psychological sensitivities that are rooted in the life-world. This world of unrecorded and untransformed experiences is part of a social-cultural situation. Thus, the history of psychology as such has to be intertwined with the emerging discipline of historic (cultural) psychology. Cultural history itself is a succession of the coordinated actions of specific generations and of particular aesthetic movements without improvement or progress. What we can hope for is universal democracy and universal emancipation, that is a freeing from mental and bodily slavery. If scientific psychology can contribute to the approaching of that utopian goal then its coming into existence has not been in vain.

The history of the human sciences is a succession of social practices and theoretical endeavors without advancement or accumulation. Only if we widen the accepted social construction of psychological *knowledge* to the ever-changing *cultural actualities* in which emotions, cognitions and feelings are *experienced* as coordinated actions in the shared life-world, the very subjectivity of the human subject will appear as a genuine recent, i.e. a *modern* phenomenon.

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