

CHAPTER 5

EXPANDING THE TERRAIN OF *CONSTRUCTING THE SUBJECT*

THE RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP IN INTERPERSONAL AREAS OF PSYCHOLOGY

RICHARD WALSH-BOWERS¹

INTRODUCTION

If one adopts Kurt Danziger's (1990, 1997) position that science is a discursive social practice and scientific work is an intrinsically public activity, then scientists' investigative practices and written discourse, that is, their rhetoric of scientific reports as well as "method talk," can be studied systematically. However, psychologists have taken for granted the historically constituted roles and functions of the parties involved in the investigative situation with humans (Danziger, 1990). Furthermore, with some exceptions psychologists have left unexamined the origins and social functions of two dimensions that bear directly on investigative practices: ethical guidelines for the conduct of psychological inquiry and report-writing norms for the production of scientific papers (Walsh-Bowers, 1995). In addressing the disciplinary significance of Kurt Danziger's (1990) *Constructing the subject*, I will connect his critical history of the social origins of psychological investigations with psychologists' conventions for ethical conduct with "human subjects" and for scientific report-writing.

During the 1960s and-70s some psychologists, operating independently from various vantage points, critically examined the quality of "experimenter-subject" relations in contemporary psychological research (Carlson, 1971; Giorgi, 1970;

Kelman, 1972; Kvale, 1973; Riegel, 1975; Schultz, 1969). Not all of these authors concluded that the conventional research relationship was fundamentally exploitive, but they agreed the data obtained under the typical investigative circumstances of controlling experimenters and inert human data sources were of suspect quality because of “subjects’” reactance to the depersonalizing investigative situation. Then critical histories of psychologists’ investigative practices emerged, spanning a century of journal research reports and including the range of behavioral, interpersonal, and applied subdisciplines (Danziger, 1990; Morawski, 1988). This new historical approach showed that, decades ago, proponents of scientific rigor successfully imposed standards of decontextualized detachment for the investigative situation, minimizing the interpersonal context of conducting research to establish universal laws of behavior that transcended time, place, and person.

Paralleling the institutionalization of these investigative norms in the discipline were two significant developments (Walsh-Bowers, 1995). The first was the nearly total neglect of ethical considerations in human research until the 1960s. Until that point few psychologists seemed to care about the fact that, above all, the professional relationship between researchers and “subjects” was a social process of persons who shared a common humanity (Danziger, 1990). The second development in psychologists’ culture that has dulled the sensitivity of generations to this relationship was the emergence of the American Psychological Association’s (2001) *Publication Manual* in the 1950s, which led to the cultivation of “APA style” (Walsh-Bowers, 1999). Now in its 5th edition, the *Manual* has served to enculturate students and faculty in a particular set of standards for the composition of research papers that exclude attention to the relationship between investigators and research participants. These report-writing prescriptions are based on the assumption that genuine psychologists only conduct hierarchically organized and bureaucratically controlled experiments in which non-psychologist citizens only serve as “human subjects.”

In this chapter I will expand Danziger’s conceptual framework for understanding the socially constructed relationship between investigators and their assistants, on the one hand, with humans serving as sources of data, on the other hand. Influenced by feminist perspectives on methodology (e.g., Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1987) and by the concept of relationality, meaning the centrality of relationships in human life (Community Education Team, 1999), I use the term “research relationship” to emphasize the transactional nature of investigator-participant relations. This relationship encompasses three interrelated sets of disciplinary norms for conducting and writing about investigations: investigative roles and functions, standards of research ethics, and prescriptions for composing research papers for scientific journals (Walsh-Bowers, 1995). Historical inquiry in any one of these domains has important implications for the other two.

In expanding Danziger's framework my particular focus is on contemporary constructions of the research relationship in the interpersonal and applied subdisciplines of psychology, I will highlight the findings from archival studies of investigative practices in the interpersonal areas of psychology since 1939. Then I will introduce previously unpublished findings from a parallel study of research relationships in English-language European psychology journals and from my in-depth interviews with contemporary psychologists concerning the research relationship. On the basis of these sources of evidence I develop Danziger's explanatory model of the social systems in which the investigative situation has been embedded. I conclude by discussing the potential for changing the research relationship in psychology.

THREE FACETS OF THE RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

Social Origins

Through his extensive analysis of research published in the first 50 years of psychological journals Danziger (1990) demonstrated that the research relationship has taken several forms historically, associated with particular institutional contexts. (See also van Strien's chapter in this volume.) He based his archival research on the assumption that researchers' journal articles indicate how they actually constructed the relationship between the researcher and participant. Danziger illuminated the various possibilities for the conduct of psychological research in terms of five investigative roles and functions: designing an investigation, administering it, providing data, analyzing data, and writing about the investigation. He observed three distinct historical styles of conducting human research: (1) Wundt's model of shared research roles in laboratory experiments on consciousness, (2) the French medical hierarchical model of physicians' studies of patients, (3) the American large-group testing model patterned after Galton's hierarchical investigative practice. Theoretically, the five research functions can be shared by the parties involved in any particular psychological study. For example, in the Leipzig model the various research roles of designing and administering an investigation, serving as a data source, analyzing the data, and composing a research report were interchangeable among the members of the investigative team. Similarly, the research reports produced by Kurt Lewin and colleagues during his Berlin years were characterized by a descriptive style in which the relationship between investigator and participant was a central feature of the experiment reported. In North American psychology, however, these approaches to scientific composition and investigative conduct were relatively unusual.

Danziger found that by the 1920s there was little evidence in U.S. psychology journals of any one practicing the Wundtian model, which only survived in North American psychology in psychophysics. Ever since the early foundations for total investigator control of the research situation were established in the neo-Galtonian model, psychologists generally have assumed that human research should proceed only on the basis of a bureaucratic relationship with “subjects” (Morawski, 1988). Once investigative, ethical, and rhetorical norms for the research relationship were established, they were—and are—difficult to modify. These conventions have become deeply embedded in the ideology, mythology, and workaday practice of psychologists’ scientific culture (Walsh-Bowers, 1995, 1999), even though there is no “scientific” reason, other than socially constructed tradition embedded in a staunch epistemological faith in objectivism, why psychologists should not have emulated the Wundtian and Lewinian models.

Mid-Century Practices

After World War II, with the rapid expansion of abnormal, developmental, and social psychology and the numerous applied subdisciplines in North America, especially clinical psychology, there were ample opportunities for psychologists to conduct research outside of the laboratory and in community settings, such as hospitals and schools, and to pay explicit attention to the quality of research relationships. In these investigative situations one might expect some flexibility of research roles. However, scrutiny of 3001 research papers published from 1939 to 1989 in 10-year intervals in one Canadian and seven U.S. psychology research journals dealing with the interpersonal areas of psychology indicated that the earlier norms of detached rhetoric and an objectified research relationship continued to prevail (Walsh-Bowers, 1995).

The analysis showed that, with few exceptions, investigators employed participants as data sources only. That is, almost invariably the traditional, hierarchical construction of roles prevailed. From start to finish, the researcher held hierarchical power over participants, whose only job was to provide data as the researcher saw fit. Researchers and assistants did everything else: planned, administered, analyzed, and reported psychological research. Furthermore, authors typically did not report consent, debriefing, or feedback; authors generally described participants but not data collectors and investigative settings, heavily used the term “subjects,” and seldom acknowledged participants’ contributions. Overall, depersonalized and decontextualized reporting was the norm. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that the underlying situation has changed since 1989 other than an increase in substituting “participants” for “subjects.”

North American psychologists’ habitual adherence to a research relationship of expert investigator and ignorant “subject” had a marked impact after World

War II on the rapidly expanding field of clinical psychology and ultimately on community psychology. When they adopted the “scientist-practitioner model” in 1949, clinical psychologists hoped to establish the scientific legitimacy of their profession for which identification with the hierarchical laboratory model of experimentation seemed essential. Subsequently, at their 1965 founding conference U.S. community psychologists, who were almost exclusively clinicians, also explicitly committed themselves to natural science psychology (Walsh, 1987). Simultaneously, the founders of this new subdiscipline initially promoted such ideals of scientific and professional practice as citizen participation, later expressed as empowerment. But there is very little evidence that community psychologists constructed research relationships that were essentially different from the detached experimental laboratory situation. Despite the founding value of community participation, community psychology authors gave little evidence, based on the first two decades (1973–1993) of research papers published in the two principal US community psychology journals, of cultivating collaborative research relationships with their participants and composing humanized and contextualized research reports (Walsh-Bowers, 2001). Furthermore, eminent community psychologists identified pervasive and powerful, historical constraints on community psychologists’ actualization of their investigative ideals, including mainstream psychologists’ beliefs about methodology (Walsh, 1987). To gain scientific legitimacy for their subdiscipline and to secure tenure personally community psychologists felt compelled to conform to conventional psychologists’ conceptions of investigative conduct. These disciplinary standards of methodological rigor precluded attention to the research relationship. Moreover, the tradition of ignoring the research relationship that was established from the inception of the community psychology’s journals set the tone for their second decade except for mere cosmetic changes, like using the term “participants” much more frequently than “subjects” (Walsh-Bowers, 2001).

RESEARCH ETHICS

Some social historians of psychologists’ investigative practices take the position that methodological conventions are intertwined with ethical standards and norms for scientific report-writing in the discipline (Danziger, 1990; Morawski, 1988; Walsh-Bowers, 1995). But these other facets of the research relationship did not become explicit in North American psychologists’ discourse until the 1950s. In fact, like other social and health scientists (Hobbs, 1965), U.S. psychologists did not produce full-fledged ethical guidelines for investigative conduct until 1963, over 70 years after they began their science. The fact that human psychological research takes place in a relationship between researchers and participants was subordinate to scientific psychologists’ desire to project to the public an image

of professional responsibility, particularly in the wake of public exposures of scientific scandals attributable to U.S. and German scientists in the 20th century (Pettit, 1992). (See Adair, 2001, for an account of research ethics in Canadian psychology.)

The institutionalization of local ethical review boards by the 1980s reinforced the belief that research psychologists actually adhere to these ethical guidelines in their workaday investigative practice. Nevertheless, very few researcher-authors consider ethical standards important enough to describe or even simply report them in their research articles (Adair, 2001; Danziger, 1990; Morawski, 1988; Walsh-Bowers, 1995). But there are noteworthy reporting differences among the interpersonal subdisciplines. For example, although historically only a minority of authors among clinical and social researchers reported on the conditions of informed consent, social psychologists were even less likely to do so than clinical psychologists; moreover, social psychologists have been far more likely to use the now dubious but formerly *de rigeur* term “subjects” to designate the persons serving as data sources than clinical psychologists (Walsh-Bowers, 1995). Nevertheless, as a whole, psychological research has been characterized by the relative invisibility of ethical principles and guidelines for investigative conduct on the public face of investigative practices, namely, the empirical paper published in scientific journals.

My view of the conventional approach to research ethics in psychology as an active researcher and member of my own academic department’s ethical review committee is that investigators treat ethical standards for the conduct of human research as if they were bureaucratic impositions on investigators’ precious time and energy expended in managing their labor force, “subjects.” The concept of a “research relationship” in which investigators have profound ethical responsibilities to their participants because they are engaged in a professional relationship apparently is meaningless to mainstream investigators. Psychologists seem to adopt a purely pragmatic position of coping with nettlesome ethical regulations to expedite the management of research participation and to ensure that the public views researchers as treating research participants with dignity. In the highly competitive U.S. and Canadian academic environments, few psychologists have adopted the position, which two prominent methodologists, Rosenthal (1994) and Rosnow (1997), have advocated, that sound ethical practices enhance any investigation’s scientific merit.

When psychologists conduct research outside of the academy in applied settings, like a business or a school, they face complex social situations that demand more sophisticated public relations skills than those required for organizing the participation of university students in research on campus. Because of community resistance to psychologists’ traditional investigative mode of “grabbing the data and running,” that is, leaving the host setting with nothing meaningful for its participation, researchers have adapted by explaining to the authority figures in

the setting (e.g., the school principal and staff, and maybe the parents) what the investigators want to do so as to smooth the path for their research. The researchers might promise they will provide a “feedback” report tailored to the setting when they have analyzed and interpreted their findings. The researchers might fulfill their promise and send a report or return later to the setting to explain what they found out and how the findings might benefit the setting. But in this liberal approach, incorporating a glossy veneer of genuine participation for citizens providing data, the researchers do not share power with the employees or teachers and parents, only with the administrators or managers of the setting. The control over the investigative situation remains firmly in the hands of the investigative team just as it does in the intramural context.

Some psychologists place the fact of the research relationship in the center of ethical principles for research and draw from larger ethical values of democratic participation, justice, and compassion in the conduct of their inquiry (e.g., Walsh-Bowers, 1992; Wine, 1989). They stress that research should be a free exchange of resources in a relationship of shared power in which each party has rights and responsibilities, including as much participation in the research as the participants wish as well as development of educational benefits for the participants from the research findings (Rogers, 1997). When working with a group or organization, the democratic process entails the creation of a “research advisory committee” who represent the participants and are actively involved from entry to exit in the planning, doing, analyzing, interpreting, and writing of the research. This unconventional approach means *sharing* professional power and control over the entire research process, which contradicts bureaucratic traditions in the sciences, government, and business of professionals’ paternalistic power over subordinates.

The Social Function of Research Ethics

In my view, the main reason mainstream psychologists support standards of research ethics is that, if investigators adhere to ethical practices that are normative in the discipline, they will facilitate participants’ cooperation, which in turn will enhance high quality experimental research. That is, the willingness of people to serve as participants is connected to psychologists’ projecting an ethically responsible image to the public. Indeed, many authors of writings about research ethics are explicit about how various threats to participants’ privacy, for example, affect participants’ compliance with researchers’ goals (e.g., Stanley, Sieber, & Melton, 1996). That is, the authors argue that resolving these threats will improve the efficiency of the research enterprise. For instance, they advocate that more research on assurances of participants’ privacy in research should be conducted to enhance public cooperation. But typically, mainstream psychologists do not question the suppositions of conventional investigative practice and of the traditional research relationship (e.g., Adair, 2001; Rosenthal, 1994; Rosnow, 1997).

This fact produces major conceptual problems within mainstream psychologists' discourse about methodology in human research. With some exceptions, the underlying contextual issues, such as the political economy of psychological research in terms of the pressures on academic psychologists to publish frequently in consensually-acknowledged superior journals, the power imbalance inherent in the conventional research relationship, and the social history of "constructing the subject," as Danziger (1990) put it, all are absent. In other words, the fact that the conduct of research has a social history is completely ignored. Similarly, psychologists could place the social significance of research ethics in the context of the decades-old literature on the epistemological foundations of psychological methodology, specifically, the problematic nature of objectivity in psychological science and the subject-object relationship (Manicas & Secord, 1983; Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1987). But typically psychologists addressing methodological principles and practices do not question their epistemic base; on the contrary, they celebrate the discipline's modernist foundations in the tenets of realism, determinism, and reductionism (e.g., Madigan, Johnson, & Linton, 1995).

My interpretation of the conventional construction of research ethics is that it exists to legitimize conventional methodological practices. It is true that since the emergence of formal ethical guidelines psychologists have advanced the lofty ethical values of respecting the dignity of each person and promoting human welfare. But I would argue that from their inception ethical standards for research have projected to the public a patina of concern for the welfare of "subjects," while simultaneously strengthening psychologists' administrative control over the investigative situation. Conventional constructions of research ethics enable psychologists to rationalize the passivity and malleability of research participants in the conduct of inquiry; that is, psychologists preserve intact the dominant-subordinate relations intrinsic to their preferred investigative model of "experimenters" and "subjects." In short, codification of research ethics has facilitated scientific psychologists' capacity for effectively managing the impression of ethical practices while conducting investigative business as usual in the production of marketable psychological research. Thus, the specific categories of research ethics (e.g., voluntary informed consent) serve as the public relations grease for the assembly line of the experiment, conducted within an authoritarian relationship between the investigative team and participants. It is in this relationship mode that psychologists easily can rationalize the use of deception (e.g., Adair, 2001; Stanley et al., 1996).

In conclusion, psychologists cannot have meaningful conversations about research ethics without explicitly discussing the implications for research methods, whether qualitative or statistical. There are alternatives, however, to the conventional mode of conducting research. Like some other psychologists, I would argue for a moral imperative for reconstructing the research relationship. A democratized research relationship, in which ethics and methodology would be interconnected with humanized, contextualized report-writing, is a constructive alternative to mainstream psychology's tradition. In a democratized, bilateral relationship

the parties can engage in a truly processual, participatory ethics in which consent becomes an open process of on-going communication (see also Holzkamp, 1985/1991). In community psychology and feminist psychology such an integration has already emerged to some extent. It remains to be seen whether conventional psychologists become cognizant of this trend and then respond to the challenge of reconstructing the research relationship in word and deed.

SCIENTIFIC REPORT-WRITING IN PSYCHOLOGY

Rhetoric in Science

According to scholars of scientific writing, making scientific knowledge begins and ends with persuasion (e.g., Gross, 1990; Taylor, 1996). That is, scientists persuade themselves of a particular position with private language, they empirically investigate this notion with private and public language, and then they attempt publically to convince their scientific peers that their claim to knowledge is valuable. Thus, the core of science involves multiple interpersonal uses of language to persuade others. The art of persuasion, of course, is rhetoric. The fact that a scientific paper seems to be free from emotional appeal does not mean that the paper is “neutral” in reality (Bazerman, 1988). Apparent neutrality is the author’s pose of scientific detachment to enhance credibility within her or his scientific community as a detached observer.

By the 20th century conventional report-writing in science consisted of adherence to the rhetorical values of precision, logic, order, and clarity. However, stereotypical scientific writing can be poor writing from the point of view of good English. For example, the common phrase, “It was found that,” illustrates four points of bad writing: needless words, pomposity, vagueness, and passive voice. Moreover, authors of contemporary manuals of scientific writing tend to ignore the realities of rhetoric and to pretend that the scientific writer should be completely objective and merely hold a mirror up to nature (e.g., Thaiss & Sanford, 2000). The common belief is that scientists write objectively, that is, their use of language in their formal journal articles only reflects dispassionate detachment. But the reality is that scientists try to *appear* rational, when in fact they rely heavily and often unconsciously on rhetorical devices in their writing to persuade their readers that their work is better than their competitors. Moreover, many scientists will privately admit that they experience strong social pressure to be on top in their field and to create the illusion in their writing that they are (Gross, 1990).

APA Style

The public face of psychological inquiry is most apparent in empirical journal papers, which authors construct according to taken-for-granted disciplinary traditions (Danziger, 1990). Psychologists have practiced a particular type of scientific

rhetoric at least since the 1920s that complemented the discipline's behaviorist orientation (Bazerman, 1988). By this point in the North American discipline's history the canonical research paper became one in which the author was invisible, the research participants were objectified, and the data and generalizable conclusions were salient within a standard format of Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion. Rooted in the laboratory reports of the 19th century physical sciences, the format for the experimental paper requires that authors provide brief coverage of previous research, then the psychological theory and hypotheses; followed by the details of the investigative procedure and the statistical results; then interpretations of the research findings and speculations about theory and possible future research. In contrast, the experimental papers produced by Wilhelm Wundt and his associates employed a more fluid scientific rhetoric, which reflected the much more flexible relationship between data administrators and data sources practiced in the Leipzig model (Danziger, 1990). But by the 1930s psychologists standardized an objectified type of scientific rhetoric (Bazerman, 1988) and consciously prescribed explicit disciplinary codes for the composition of research papers, which were subsequently formalized in the first edition of the American Psychological Association's *Publication Manual* in 1952. These codes are known as "APA style," although they pertain to both the form of research papers as well as the writing style (Walsh-Bowers, 1999). Since 1952 and its later editions of 1974, 1983, 1994, and 2001 the *Manual* has contained specific guidelines for the composition of research reports for just one kind of research method, namely, the quantitative laboratory experiment.

Psychologists have been deeply committed to the APA tradition of depersonalized, decontextualized journal articles, because, as its defenders asserted (Madigan et al., 1995), "APA style" matches disciplinary intentions to establish universal laws of behavior that transcend specific persons and social historical contexts. The rhetoric of behaviorism has shaped conventions of scientific report-writing in psychology to such an extent that psychologists and their undergraduate and graduate students assume that this form of composition and style is the only way to compose research papers for journals.

Scrutiny of the *Manual's* prescriptions reveals that writers should refrain from acknowledging the interpersonal nature of human research (i.e., the research relationship) and that the writing style should be as objectively detached as possible (Walsh-Bowers, 1999). The authors of the *Manual* direct readers to employ an impersonal, detached, objective, and rational writing style. Personal information and feelings should be absent, as research psychologists believe the subjective is appropriate for literature, not for science. Authors of manuals on psychological report-writing echo the *Manual* in directing students to compose the research paper as if they were solving a cognitive problem, connecting problem-solution to evaluation of the outcome (e.g., Thaiss & Sanford, 2000). But completely ignored in this standardized formulation is the scientist-author solving the investigative problem.

As to the other party to the research relationship, the participants, the *Manual* authors direct writers of experimental papers to report sufficient, relevant demographic characteristics of the participants to ensure that the claim to universality of the reported findings is robust. Consequently, psychology research articles usually contain only sketchy information about participants and their context; for instance, authors of 28% of the empirical papers published as recently as 1989 in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* did not even indicate the gender of the participants (Walsh-Bowers, 1995). In addition, authors typically do not provide information about the conditions of informed consent for participation or any feedback on the findings. Furthermore, information about the researchers' characteristics generally is absent, as if the investigation had been conducted by an automaton. Psychologists' empiricist assumption is that the data simply should speak for themselves.

Alternative approaches to this uniformity of depersonalized and decontextualized report-writing are relatively rare in psychology, although there always have been a few authors in the interpersonal areas who composed their research reports in such a way as to incorporate information about the nature of the relationship between investigator and participant (Walsh-Bowers, 1995). Moreover, some intentional change in subdisciplinary preferences has emerged in feminist psychology and community psychology. For example, for over a decade three community psychology journals (the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, and the *Journal of Community Psychology*) have stipulated in their instructions to contributors that authors should describe the research relationship directly in their articles.

Because it contains only one research report for emulation—the quantitative laboratory experiment—the *Manual's* prescribed structure also shapes the content of the psychological knowledge reported (Bazerman, 1988). But the required format and style arguably are ill-suited to reporting human psychological research derived from real-life contexts, particularly when the investigations are based on methods other than the experiment. For example, despite the fact that they are increasingly popular in such areas as counseling, community, developmental, and personality psychology, qualitative research methods, which lend themselves to innovative compositional forms and styles (Richardson, 1994), remain invisible in the most recent edition of the *Manual*. "Case studies," for instance, merit only cursory coverage in the opening chapter.

Scientific Rhetoric

In my opinion, there is a kind of scientific fundamentalism at work in the simplistic obedience to "APA style" that psychologists cultivate throughout the social systems of the discipline, but most evident in the preparation and review of papers intended for journal publication. In effect, the *Manual* has functioned

as a quasi-Bible for authors as well as for journal editors and reviewers (Walsh-Bowers, 1999). The *Manual's* prescriptions became unquestioned Holy Writ and "APA style" is assumed to be the only legitimate way of composing research papers. No alternative rhetorical norms are presumed to exist. The core doctrine in psychologists' "Bible" is that no description of the interpersonal nature of human research (i.e., the research relationship) is necessary in an acceptable research paper and that the writing style should be as objectively detached as possible. Moreover, the codification of "APA style" is overtly linked to the maintenance of the orthodox research relationship of psychologists' hierarchical power and to the enculturation of psychology students in these compositional and investigative traditions (Madigan et al., 1995).

The meta-message of the discipline is clear: "The *Manual* reflects our firm beliefs about what constitutes proper methodology. If you do not adhere to our Bible, you will lose your soul to unobjective writing that begets unscientific knowledge, and we will not publish your work." But rather than unreflective conformity with fundamentalist codes of purportedly correct writing, psychologists need rhetorical flexibility so that how they compose their empirical papers, whether reporting experiments or qualitative methods, corresponds to the complexity and inherently relational nature of socially contextualized psychological phenomena.

Yet in every edition the *Manual* has minimized attention to the nature of the research relationship. This fact, I would argue, has profound implications for standards of methodology, inasmuch as the quality of the research relationship is crucial to the quality of the data obtained in any given investigation of human psychological phenomena. This relationship is particularly important in the interpersonal areas of psychological research, such as abnormal, developmental, social, and personality, not to mention the applied subdisciplines like clinical, community, and educational psychology, in which issues of method and research ethics are intertwined with authors' reportage. Thus, even some mainstream psychologists have argued that authors should welcome the opportunity to implement ethical standards of research and to report, for example, the conditions of informed consent, so as to facilitate replication by other investigators (e.g., Adair, 2001; Blanck, Bellack, Rosnow, Rotheram-Borus, & Schooler, 1992; Rosnow, 1997).

COLONIZATION OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EUROPEAN PSYCHOLOGY

To what extent have authors of empirical reports published in English-language European journals of psychology adopted the conventions of the *Manual* for actual methodological conduct and for writing style? Has "APA style" predominated in these journals? As is evident below, the North American model of research relationships definitely has influenced investigative practices in English-language European psychology at least in the interpersonal areas of the discipline.

I reviewed all ($N = 446$) research reports published over 10-year intervals from 1966 to 1996 in five English-language European journals of psychology, primarily dealing with the interpersonal areas of psychology (e.g., clinical, developmental, and social psychology). The clear majority of first authors identified their affiliation as European, although a minority were affiliated with US or Canadian institutions.

The findings were as follows:

1. There was no evidence of researchers sharing research roles with participants, who played only one role, data source, with one minor exception.
2. Most authors did not report even the scantiest information about participants' voluntary, informed consent, although there were differences among the journals.
3. No authors indicated providing feedback to their participants on the findings of their investigations, but some authors in social psychology journals did report that they debriefed their participants.
4. Authors were much more likely to specify the gender of their participants than of the persons administering the data collection, and authors typically rendered the data collectors invisible.
5. Authors relied on the term "subjects" with or without other terms (e.g., "students," "participants," "parents"), although usage varied substantially by year and journal sampled.

In sum, the vast majority of empirical papers published in the interpersonal areas of psychology in English-language European psychology journals from 1966 to 1996 showed the predominance of "APA style." That is, they contained objectified rhetoric like that prescribed by successive editions of the *Manual*, which minimizes attention to the research relationship between investigators and participants. Thus, although no simple, cause-and-effect relationship is identifiable, the findings suggest that a kind of U.S. hegemony over investigative conduct and report-writing has been at work, at least indirectly, in research reports authored by European psychologists who publish in English. Even though the English-language European journals sampled had explicit, unique compositional criteria for their authors, implicitly the journals adopted the prescriptions of the *Manual* for objectivistic format, content, and rhetoric, rationalized as essential for the discipline's epistemology (Madigan et al., 1995), with no major exceptions. This general trend mirrors the conventional configurations of hierarchical research relationships and depersonalized, decontextualized scientific rhetoric across nearly a century of North American psychology (Danziger, 1990; Morawski, 1988; Walsh-Bowers, 1995, 1999).

Ironically, "APA style" might have been appropriate, because there was not much particularly European, or socially contextualized, about these reports. Rather,

the authors seemed to have pursued the path of producing generalizable findings to demonstrate universal laws of human behavior that transcend social location and the particular human relationships within the investigative situation that produced the findings. This conclusion should not be surprising, given that scientific psychology became universalized U.S. psychology by the 1930s (Danziger, 1997), as exemplified by Dutch psychology post-World War II (van Strien, 1997). Thus, a kind of U.S. colonization of English-language European psychology occurred.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

INTERVIEWS OF RESEARCHERS

What is the contemporary status of these disciplinary codes of investigative conduct that permeate the production of publishable papers for research journals, undergraduate and graduate curricula, and thesis supervision? A valuable perspective on the present and future status of the research relationship in psychology is investigators' experience as researchers, authors, teachers, research supervisors, and students. Researchers' accounts can illuminate the link between the immediate social situation of investigator and participant, on the one hand, with the complex, layered dimensions of institutionalized scientific psychology that envelop the research relationship, on the other hand. In addition to methodological, ethical, and reporting norms, the structures, mores and ideologies of scientific psychology as a social institution also mould workaday investigative practices (Danziger, 1990). These ideological and structural systems, which typically function as covert features of the research landscape, include the historical place of the research relationship in scientific psychology; epistemological assumptions about making scientific knowledge; the enculturation of students in investigative customs, mediated by course instructors and research supervisors; the function of research productivity within the academic reward system and the effects of the socioeconomic reward system for faculty on sensitivity to research relationships; methodological criteria promoted by funding sources, journal editors, and grant and journal reviewers; psychologists' beliefs, feelings and wishes about what constitutes rigorous methodology; and the potential for changes in the discipline that could legitimize fostering research relationships.

To better understand these systemic influences on socially constructing psychological knowledge I interviewed 36 active researchers (11 graduate and 3 postdoctoral students and 22 faculty) from diverse subdisciplines in Canadian psychology on the past, present, and future of the research relationship. The 14 (9 women and 5 men) students came from 5 Canadian universities. Their research interests spanned the clinical, cognitive, community, cultural, developmental, health, historical-theoretical, personality, and social areas of psychology. The

22 faculty members (15 men and 7 women) represent 7 Canadian universities. Their research areas encompassed clinical, cognitive, community, counseling, developmental, educational, historical-theoretical, industrial-organizational, personality, and social. The faculty are active contributors to the literature in their respective subdisciplines, they supervise undergraduate and graduate students' research, and most had served as journal and grant reviewers; furthermore, 3 of them had been department chairpersons and 6 had served as journal editors. A slight majority of the faculty and student participants practiced alternative research methods.

Using a semi-structured format in conversational interviews that varied from 45 to 120 minutes, I asked the interviewees how they learned to relate with participants, to apply ethical standards, and to write scientific papers. Then I asked them to comment on the applicability of investigative norms for their particular research areas and on the future of the research relationship.

FINDINGS

The interviews showed that the intertwined social systems within which psychology students and faculty practice their research might be taken for granted and be rarely investigated, but they are nonetheless just as constitutive of the investigative situation as the immediate relationship between investigators and research participants. Many participants reported their experiences with conventional methodological standards applied by editors and reviewers of research journals in psychology, resulting in opposition to publishing papers in which authors describe their research relationships. Participants also referred to the premium placed by peers on tenure and promotion committees on experimental papers published in peer-reviewed journals considered to be top-rank.

Diverse participants made it clear that the academic reward system as traditionally constructed in psychology militates against faculty and student attending to the quality of research relationships. The socioeconomic contingencies for faculty are linked to conformity with the *Manual's* prescriptions for quantitative experimental report-writing in that, as one postdoctoral student observed, receiving tenure, promotion, and grants partly depends upon publishing conventional research with the conventional format and style in conventional journals. Several interviewees stated that psychological research typically is heavily reliant on implementation of sophisticated statistical techniques, motivated by researchers who feel pressured to produce marketable empirical papers so as to ensure tenurability and promotion.

Publication pressures adversely affect the quality of research relationships, particularly in the interpersonal and applied areas, as the findings from a study of eminent community psychologists indicated (Walsh, 1987). Mainstream investigators feel as compelled to "grab the data and run" when conducting studies in non-academic locations as they do in managing masses of undergraduate "subjects"

through the production-line of university-based investigations. Graduate students rapidly learn both the mores and the social systemic contingencies enveloping investigative practices. A clinical student, for example, doing a cognitive dissertation, observed that experimentation within pre-existing narrow theoretical domains facilitates the production of publishable papers, which research funding and the training subsystem for supporting graduate students reinforces.

In addition to the pressures of the academic reward system, psychologists' investigative practices are formed by an ideological vision of objectively detached investigative conduct in which research relationships are irrelevant. Those students and faculty who pursued mainstream psychological research took the modernist epistemological foundations of the field at face value. They seemed to unreflectively reproduce disciplinary standards for objectivistic knowledge-making, for which bureaucratized relationships with "human subjects" are essential. In reporting how they carefully prepared their "subjects" (the term they most often used) for limited participation, the unquestioned *modus operandi* of mainstream faculty and student researchers was hierarchical data-extraction usually in quantitative experiments. The interviews clearly indicated that traditional researchers have taken for granted conventional investigative roles and functions, ethical guidelines, and report-writing. In fact, the very notion of a "research relationship" seemed to baffle many of them. The interview participants' anticipations of the future for investigator-participant relations were similarly myopic. For example, postmodernist and feminist principles of intersubjectivity and investigator reflexivity, with possibilities for shared research roles, only surfaced among those faculty and students who identified with alternative research positions and qualitative methods, like discourse analysis, grounded theory, or narrative analysis.

Regarding sensitizing students to the research relationship, faculty have focused undergraduate and graduate education on socialization in the quantitative laboratory experiment, and faculty research supervisors who foster research relationships are rare. This situation is arguably the most formidable obstacle to raising students' awareness of the range of possibilities for investigative roles and functions, research ethics, and report-writing. Students require role models of scholars who demonstrate sensitivity to research relationships in investigative practice and in print whom students can emulate.

The interview findings suggest that the potential for fundamental change in psychologists' consciousness about research relationships is dubious. As one senior researcher who is committed to fostering research relationships and to alternative research methods observed, "It's like turning a supertanker around." Similarly inclined faculty and most of the students indicated that for disciplinary legitimization of research relationships to occur systemic changes are necessary in journal policies and practices, the *Manual*, and psychology curricula and research mentoring. However, as many participants noted, there are major sources of ideological resistance to these institutional changes among many mainstream psychologists,

as sensitivity to research relationships threatens their foundational conceptions of psychological science. Consequently, the efforts of some psychologists to expand traditional boundaries in conducting and writing about their investigations and to broaden the education of undergraduate and graduate students in psychological research practices are inhibited by the powerful undertow of resistance to change in the discipline. On the other hand, there was some evidence for generational change in that the postgraduate fellows and graduate students as a group seemed relatively open to learning about research relationship issues, even those whose undergraduate and graduate education in psychology had not covered this concept nor alternative methodologies.

CONCLUSIONS

If these findings have any transferability to other North American psychologists, it appears that typical mainstream psychologists, as well as graduate students absorbing the norms of investigative conduct, only conceive of research as data-extraction from relatively inert “subjects.” Consequently, extant ethical and report-writing prescriptions suit the production of marketable psychological research quite well. These disciplinary codes serve to protect “business as usual,” that is, investigator power and control of the research relationship in all its aspects and functions. Moreover, in journal papers for public consumption and in workaday relations with “human subjects,” investigator domination is likely to prevail in the future, assuming these researchers’ practices mirror the discipline’s scientific vision. Overall, their interview accounts directly reflected Danziger’s (1990) point that, “It is precisely the social aspects of scientific practice that are systematically excluded from practitioners’ discussions about methodology” (p. 13). That is, conventional psychologists take for granted the conventional construction of research roles, ethical guidelines, and report-writing.

SUSTAINING CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP

THE RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

The interviews and various archival studies described above permit the development of a critical theoretical framework for the research relationship. Danziger (1990) placed the immediate social situation of a psychological investigation at the core of multi-layered systems, specifically, the research community with its norms for acceptable knowledge. This latter system in turn is embedded in a professional environment of research institutions, funding sources, scientific-professional bodies, and societal consumers of research. In addition, he situated research reports on the boundary between the immediate research relationship of the two parties

and the scientific audience of editors and reviewers, readers, and textbook writers. Danziger also referred to a fourth, all-inclusive system—the socio-political—that impinges upon investigators' constructions of the subject.

In revising this conceptual framework to encompass a continuum of possible investigative social arrangements in contemporary psychology, including those in applied settings, I stress the dialectical nature of the observer-observed relationship and the social historical contexts of both parties to that relationship. To illustrate, the immediate context of researcher and participant occurs within communities of knowledge-seeking, that is, participants seek information about themselves as psychological beings or as constituents of community settings, and both parties in the research relationship function within institutional and community environments. These layers, in turn, are embedded within a macro, socio-political context that includes ideological formations and legitimized social practices pertaining to usually implicit notions of authority relations endemic in society (e.g., between managers and workers) and ethical values (e.g., an orientation to social justice vs. cost-benefit analyses of social relations). Here is where tacit assumptions about professional identity as a scientist and the expertise of researchers operate. Psychology students, for example, quickly learn that their future professional identity is bound up with investigator power and control over the investigative situation.

The second distinguishing feature of a dialectical framework for the research relationship is the notion of a continuum of relationships, depending upon the institutional setting. The typical, micro-investigative context has been the university in which unorganized individual students serve as "subjects." A similar relationship exists regarding captive populations, such as mental patients. A second type of research relationship occurs in community agencies and institutions, such as day care centers, and in businesses. Managers and professional authorities in these settings serve as intermediaries for researchers seeking access to "subjects;" for example, investigators must negotiate with school principals, teachers, and parents to study children's behavior. Another type of relationship can occur between researchers and an entire organization in business or the community, in which both parties acknowledge mutuality of interests and plan applications of the research to the organization itself.

The third feature of this revised model is the function of journal research reports. Research papers represent consensual notions of "good" science to the community of knowledge-seekers, mirroring socially acceptable roles for researchers and participants. But research reports serve other social purposes. Besides conforming with institutionalized rhetorical norms, authors strive to impress journal editors and reviewers and then a larger audience of potential consumers of their research. Moreover, psychologists use their reports as commodities in their workaday marketplace to advance their careers. At the broadest systemic level, psychologists' scientific papers reflect both typical authority relations in the culture, enacted by bureaucratized research relationships, and the special status of psychologists

in the public's eyes. Thus, standardized research reports enculturate researchers themselves, their peers, student and professional consumers, and the public.

THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

Conceptions of the conduct of psychological inquiry seem to be shifting, thanks to the efforts of advocates of alternative investigative practices. Already editors of a few journals are consciously inviting and publishing qualitative research papers. Moreover, in North American journals there have always been some exceptional instances of humanized reporting and even relatively non-hierarchical investigative practice (Walsh-Bowers, 1995). In other words, researchers have had more freedom than they realize to employ alternative research relationships and to create socially contextualized psychological knowledge in their journal articles. On the other hand, there have always been systemic limits to such practices. In this section I specify recommendations for changing the research relationship in investigative practice and in print, but then I identify sources of resistance to these changes that threaten the institution of scientific psychology and the professional identity of scientific psychologists.

Recommendations

Some psychologists advocate greater formal attention to the research relationship in research papers to heighten researchers' sensitivity to important matters of research ethics and to improve the quality of future research (e.g., Walsh-Bowers, 1995, 1999). Accordingly, psychologists could take innovative steps and integrate method and ethics in their research reports by adopting the concept of the research relationship. When journal editors, their reviewers, and formal instructions to contributors to a journal join in by supporting authors' innovations, conducting research relationally and writing about it humanely gain disciplinary legitimacy. Journal editorial boards in their "instructions to contributors" could advise authors making submissions to provide fuller information about the research relationship in their manuscripts than is prescribed by the *Manual*, and editors and reviewers could ensure that authors do so. Correspondingly, the authors of the *Manual's* next edition could incorporate qualitative methods as well as the flexibility of report-writing and attention to research relationships that alternative methods demand.

Alternative guidelines for writing research articles, in fact, have emerged that serve to integrate considerations of method and ethics within a humanized and contextualized approach to scientific rhetoric. As reported previously, one Canadian and two U.S. community psychology journals instruct contributors to describe in their empirical papers the nature of the research relationship established with the participants, including conditions of consent and feedback on findings, and to specify the participants' and settings' characteristics. A consciously participatory

mode of investigative roles and functions, for instance, readily lends itself to relational reporting. In concert with these systemic changes a shift in undergraduate and graduate curricula would be necessary to ensure that students' enculturation in investigative mores includes sensitivity to research relationships in practice and in print. As the student-participants in the above-mentioned interviews made clear, they received no education in research relationships unless they were exposed to alternative research practices, such as qualitative methods. Relating and writing humanely should have pride of place in the education of future psychologists, and undergraduate and graduate students need positive role models to emulate so that subsequent generations of investigators can foster the research relationship.

Inhibitions

The historical record strongly suggests that the investigative, ethical, and compositional traditions established early in the journals are likely to persist, unless psychologists become conscious of their taken-for-granted practices and decide to change them. Furthermore, there are powerful cultural and institutional forces in our discipline that inhibit any recommended systems-level changes. In attempting to transform the research relationship psychologists have to address both its spirituality (i.e., its myths and internalized ideology) as well as its socially constructed, historically contingent external forms. Deeply internalized modernist norms are powerfully present among psychologists concerning what constitutes "rigorous research," which are difficult to transcend. Such inhibitory factors include psychologists' intense, unflagging desire to emulate the so-called "hard" sciences, which is sustained by the pervasive influence of the *Manual* (Walsh-Bowers, 1999). Psychologists' fundamentalist faith in the prescriptions of scientific "APA style" militates against substantive change to guidelines for writing empirical reports. It remains to be seen whether psychologists will have the courage to acknowledge the socially constructed nature of conducting research and composing empirical papers and then to permit if not support those peers who are so inclined to embrace unconventional forms of investigative and compositional practice.

The central issue is not whether the predominance of "APA style" as an ideology for investigative practices is an instrument of hegemonic U.S. psychology. It is tempting to think so, because U.S. psychology serves as the colonizing, reference culture for the globe's psychologists and the colonized submit to its language and methods (van Strien, 1997). For example, psychologists have relegated the shaping of research relationships to the *APA Publication Manual*, among other tools, to maintain a universalized psychology modeled on modernist natural science. Rather, the issue is the nature of the rationales and supporting disciplinary practices and codes that psychologists have constructed historically in relation to the investigative situation. Cultivating a critical discourse on the research relationship is both theoretically and practically valuable, because the quality of this relationship

affects the quality of the data derived from it, which cuts to the very heart of our knowledge-claims as psychological scientists. Psychologists could intentionally develop emancipatory alternatives that dethrone scientists' privileged location and create equality of voice in attempting to understand socially contextualized human experience (Holzkamp, 1985/1991; Sampson, 1991; Wine, 1989). Psychologists could transform the conventional research relationship of domination into a liberatory relationship in all three aspects: investigative roles and functions, the ethics of investigative conduct, and norms for composing empirical papers.

NOTE

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