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# There Is More to Our History of Giving

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## *The Place of Introductory Textbooks in American Psychology*

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*Despite their continued widespread use in higher education, introductory psychology textbooks have rarely been the subject of historical study. The centennial of the American Psychological Association offers an appropriate moment for considering the disciplinary and cultural functions of introductory texts. Preliminary analysis indicates that this literary genre has contained far more than a compendium of secondhand knowledge; it also has provided a well-used cultural medium for defining social relations and ideals. Textbooks published around the turn of the century are examined to illustrate how these writings both reflect and contribute to shifts in social identities and aspirations. Close reading of introductory textbooks reveals that they are an inextricable part of what it means to give psychology away and are enmeshed in the cultural enterprise of fashioning human welfare.*

In 1904 E. B. Titchener defined psychology as "the science of the mind, neither more or less" (cited in Leys & Evans, 1990, p. 118), and his textbooks and articles entailed a systematic elaboration of that definition. Twenty-four years later, Grace Adams, trained by Titchener, described the erroneous definitions of psychology held by nonpsychologists, especially the "younger generation of college students who, in their high school days, had learned that psychology meant either the personality that helps a salesman sell bonds, or a polite word for smut" (1928, p. 453). In contrast to a Titchenerian definition, Adams (1931) believed Americans

had no desire to make "impersonal observations"; they had no sympathy with the disinterested attitude. They asked for results. They demanded of the psychologist that he teach them how to improve their own minds and how to understand and solve their practical psychic problems. (p. 442)

These contrasting desiderata for psychology could be readily interpreted as a case of the public's misunderstanding of science; they certainly illuminate a central problem associated with the aspiration to "give psychology away" (Miller, 1969, p. 1074).

As we celebrate the centennial of psychology's central professional organization, we might reflect on the ways in which psychology has been given away. That is, in addition to cataloguing the history of psychology's scientific ventures and accomplishments, we also might consider the place of psychology in American culture. Fortunately, new historical scholarship over the last 25 years has made substantial contributions to understanding

the relationship of scientific psychology to the cultural world. These historical studies have shown how psychology has both reflected and directed cultural processes: Psychology has carried the imprints of social visions and in turn has generated ideals with which to guide cultural projects.

However, the contrasting desires for psychology that were depicted by Titchener and Adams have yet to be explored. Few investigators have probed the processes by which psychology was introduced to the populace or how psychologists used cultural conceptions of their subject of inquiry. In an attempt to examine this cultural matrix, specifically to ascertain scientists' representation of their work to nonscientists, I turned to the most common mode of such exchanges: introductory psychology textbooks. At the time of the founding of the American Psychological Association (APA), psychologists had undertaken the task of demarcating the boundaries between their "new science" and "society," between scientific knowledge and common sense. Indeed, the very formation of the APA was part of this boundary marking (Gieryn, 1983). Introductory textbooks can be seen as implements of boundary making, because they have been centrally concerned with defining what was to be given away and how. The textbooks are more than boundary markers, however; they also are textual artifacts that reveal much about psychologists' common discourse about the world. In delimiting the professional and instructional domain on the one hand and psychologists' cultural knowledge on the other, introductory texts contain complex social arrangements. In other words, the giving away of psychology necessarily has entailed a discourse of social arrangements—at least those between psychologist and readers, and between readers and everyone else—that took form in both the classroom and the more private space of reading.

### **A Denigrated Literature**

In contrast to the aforementioned historical perspectives on introductory textbooks is a more common attitude held by students and scientists alike. At best, the information in introductory texts is considered "secondhand"

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or contrived knowledge. Scientists from all disciplines jest about the deceptions and inaccuracies, made for the sake of clarity, simplicity, or profit, contained in introductory texts. The perception of textbooks as bad, indeed, fictional literature is bolstered by the sense, and sometimes the reality, that these works are produced primarily for profit. Thus, regardless of whether giving psychology away is a desirable objective for the science or simply a noble gesture, few if any psychologists seem to see the introductory text as a substantial contribution to the promotion of human welfare.

Because so little historical appraisal has been done on the topic, it is difficult to assess the function of psychology textbooks. Are they significant artifacts of psychology's place in American culture, or are they the products of ill-conceived educational programs, financial desires, or the discipline's efforts to fit itself into social institutions? Have they made a difference to the discipline or to people's lives, and, if so, in what ways? What makes an introductory text, and how has that literary genre evolved over the last century? These questions guided my historical study of introductory textbooks, a study that progressively raised new questions about this ubiquitous yet mysterious literary form. However, before these questions can be discussed, considerable groundwork must be laid, because a subject that nobody takes very seriously has no history in the sense of a documented past. My sojourn into this realm of deprecated relics necessarily required a mapping of the literary terrain and compilation of a bibliography. What follows, therefore, is not a natural history of introductory textbooks, but a brief exploration of the textual realm of this literary genre that nearly every college-educated American has sampled, yet about which we psychologists know so little.

In their modern variants (those created from the late 1880s up until the onset of World War II), introductory psychology texts served as moral guides, "fact" books, and advice manuals on the self and others. They were, above all, objects to be purchased and used. The appearance of these textual objects must be mapped with a sensitivity to their commercial aspects as well as the cultural conditions that they reflected and perhaps influenced. Once these books have been identified as an intellectual and cultural commodity, we can turn to exploration of their contents or messages. Just as the analysis of their commodity functions can be framed in terms of cultural relations, I suggest that textual analyses of these books might be undertaken in terms of certain relations, that is, between authors and readers. The analyses offered here represent but two possible excursions into this literary world and differ substantially from studies of introductory textbooks as derivative projects, factual compendia, or guides for literacy (Boneau, 1990).

### Commerce and Consumption of Introductory Textbooks

On one level, we have ample evidence of the practical and commercial successes of introductory texts. The number of texts produced, the durability of the genre,

and the long-standing reliance on textbooks in colleges and universities attest to their success. Most surprising is the longevity of the genre: The tradition of survey-style psychology-oriented textbooks intended for colleges and universities was visibly established by the 1850s. The number of first-edition books published during each succeeding decade from 1840 to 1880 averaged between 4 and 5. In the 1880s this number tripled: 16 were published in that decade, and more than 30 were published in the 1890s. By the 1920s and 1930s, the number exceeded 50 and 130, respectively.

As Winston (1988, 1990) has shown in the case of Robert Woodworth's textbooks, successful publications took considerable time to produce, engaged the author's most serious thinking about psychology, and yielded financial benefits. My analyses of textbooks revealed a common structure. Each chapter is dedicated to a psychological process such as sensation, perception, or judgment and is preceded by a general statement on the definition, scope, and methods of psychology.

Whereas the general structure of the introductory text remained consistent, other features changed, with several notable alterations appearing in the late 1880s, the decade during which texts began to proliferate. Texts published before the 1880s frequently included such terms as "rational," "philosophy," and "moral" in their titles, but after 1880 few titles incorporated such terms. Pre-1880 textbooks usually were written by nonpsychologists who were trained in theology or philosophy and who occupied prestigious positions (such as college presidencies). Post-1880 authors were usually trained within psychology. The later authors often were leading scientists and included such notables in the history of psychology as Edward Scripture, William James, James Rowland Angell, E. B. Titchener, Edward Thorndike, and Mary Whiton Calkins.

These features of the texts convey their popularity and seriousness in the American era of the "new" psychology. Given the lack of interest in textbooks and science education among contemporary scientists and historians alike, there is not much additional information available. We know little about how texts were produced; who used them; how seriously they were taken by instructors and students; or why, despite their endurance and plenitude, they often became objects of scorn. However, the history of higher education provides an avenue for understanding the production, reproduction, and consumption of psychology texts.

After the Civil War, American higher education entered a period of expansion. There were 563 colleges and universities in 1870 and 977 in 1900; during the same period, enrollment increased more than fourfold from 52,000 to 238,000. By 1930 there were 1,500 institutions of higher education, in which more than one million students were enrolled. From 1870 to 1900 the number of faculty underwent dramatic increases from 5,553 to 23,868 (Bledstein, 1976). The first PhD was granted in 1863 (in 1870 only one PhD was conferred); by 1904 psychology alone had produced more than 100 PhDs and

ranked fourth among the sciences in the number of such degrees conferred (Boorstin, 1973; Camfield, 1969; Veysey, 1965). Determining the numbers of students who studied psychology proves more difficult to ascertain. Until the widespread adoption of the elective system in the 1890s, students generally were required to take courses in moral philosophy, which included a course or coursework in psychology or mental science. By 1904 at least 623 institutions had three or more psychology courses, and 8 large universities required a psychology course for attainment of the BA degree (Bledstein, 1976; Fay, 1939; Veysey, 1965).

Changes in American education during the late 19th century entailed not only expansion of but also gradual transformations in faculty, students, and curriculum. The function of scientists within universities and colleges was not primarily to conduct of research; most scientists were deeply engaged in teaching (Guralnick, 1979). In 1903 less than one third of the 3,000 American science professors worked in universities. In fact, academic scientists had to justify both the teaching of science and their exoneration from teaching duties in order to pursue research. To do so they played on three different justificatory models: science as serving education and intellectual culture, science as providing utility, and science as serving pure inquiry (Reingold, 1979). Psychologists were no exception. At the turn of the century most of them, including the eminent, spent substantial time in the classroom. In 1917, 272 out of 307 APA members were teaching; this percentage exceeded that of any other science except mathematics (Cattell, 1917).

There is some evidence that time spent teaching was not only an occupational requirement but also a serious undertaking. In terms of general pedagogy, by the late 19th century American educators had adopted the "classroom experience" model, along with an emphasis on "inductive" learning (memorization), which gave increased importance to classroom teaching and to systematic textbooks (Perkinson, 1985). These models appear to have been operative in the teaching of psychology. Psychologists produced frequent empirical assessments of the classroom experiences, the form of syllabi and assignments, and the modes of evaluation (e.g., Dockeray & Valentine, 1935; Kantor, 1922; Peterson, 1927a, 1927b; Rothney, 1935; Tussing, 1938). Unless such studies are read as irony, they indicate that psychologists attached a certain importance to teaching duties. Furthermore, most teaching was located in the classroom and not the laboratory. Undergraduate students of psychology spent very little time in the laboratory. As late as 1938, a survey of 157 introductory courses reported that less than 17% required a corresponding laboratory course (Henry, 1938; O'Donnell, 1985; Peterson, 1927a). Finally, to legitimate their profession, psychologists sought to have psychology incorporated in the curriculum and to recruit new members to their scientific community. The development of manuals, teaching guides, and standardized syllabi—along with textbooks—were logical accompaniments to the educational facet of psychologists' work.

The escalation of educational opportunities in general and of textbooks in particular, however, required consumers of those experiences, and the changes in higher education can only be understood in relation to them. For many Americans at the turn of the century, education became equated with professionalization—the standardization of middle-class work—and thus offered "a formal context for the competitive spirit of individual egos" (Bledstein, 1976, p. 31). Daniel Boorstin (1973) suggested that the American college "was less a place of instruction than a place of worship—worship of the growing individual" (p. 480). These historical depictions of the educational experience of the late 19th century suggest that when David Starr Jordan, then president of Stanford University, epitomized the university movement as "toward reality and practicality" (Veysey, 1965, p. 61), he was speaking of the reality of individual ambitions and the practicality of economic and social mobility. Some psychologists, such as G. Stanley Hall (1894), envisioned psychology as central to these new selves and the education they required. The "half-paralyzed moral and intellectual invalid" (Hall, 1894, p. 720) produced by the old college system with its focus on ethics, logic, theology, and deductive reasoning would be replaced; the teaching of new knowledge such as psychology would ensure "that men shall not become 'institutionalized,' talent be not only detected, but protected from too early factory-work in the mills of examination" (p. 720). According to these sources, the student entering higher education was motivated by interests in self-advancement as well as by the spirit of consumption (Wilson, 1983). Psychology textbooks contributed to the development of these student "selves" in interesting ways, which shall be described later.

Given the rapid expansion of higher education and transformation of its cultural mission, it is hardly surprising that textbooks, especially psychology texts, underwent escalated production with all the competition and refinements associated with the production of other material commodities. The textbook industry grew dramatically after the Civil War, as did the use of textbooks at every level of education (Elson, 1964; Perkinson, 1985). From this perspective, textbooks can be taken as cultural commodities manufactured to fit certain commercial needs and motivated by economic enterprise. Like the telephone, automobile, and personal computer, textbooks can be viewed as meeting consumer demands and generating a new market, one open to innovation and competition. College-level textbooks certainly were such commodities, but to see them through a simple economic worldview would be to underappreciate their place in culture. Michael Apple (1986), a historian of school books, warned against making any simple distinction between lived experience and the products of those experiences (commodities): "This distinction can of course be maintained only on an analytic level, since most of what seem to us to be things—like lightbulbs, cars, records, and . . . books—are really part of a larger social process" (p. 82). Cultural commodities are social relations between people and hence need to be understood in terms

of the sociohistorical dynamics of these relations. For instance, in the case of (lower and high) school textbooks, numerous researchers have documented the ways in which written materials have transformed classroom activities, teachers, and educational objectives and how in turn these transformations called for additional alterations in textbooks (see Apple, 1986, 1989; Elliott & Woodward, 1990; Woodward, 1986).

Why consider this broader reconception of the production and consumption of textbooks? Is it not enough to recognize that psychology textbooks developed as a commodity and were shaped by professional duties (teaching) and plans (boundary making), by financial ambitions, and by changing conditions of higher education? Viewing psychology textbooks only in these terms underestimates their cultural importance and results in a grave misunderstanding of what it means to be involved in the project of giving psychology away. In most analyses of psychology textbooks (and there are dozens of such studies), psychologists view textbooks simply as products to be consumed and examine the errors, biases, omissions, additions, and so forth as a matter of the products' defects or bonuses. The complex relations of producing and consuming go unrecognized because the texts are taken as commodities in the simplest sense. In the end psychology is conceptualized as a marketable commodity, subject to market-like analysis. Historical accounts that explain textbooks through market demand ignore the dynamics of their literary form, along with their unique discursive qualities, narratives, moral themes, multiple rhetorical strategies, and so on. Such literary dynamics provide the means for seeing how psychology textbooks are engaged in conveying certain social relations, along with the negotiation of selves and status in those relations. These discursive and ultimately social qualities of textbooks constitute an important feature in our giving (and not just selling) psychology away.

### Constructing Subjectivities

Historians and other social scientists have documented the shifts in cultural conceptions of self and subjectivity that have occurred over the last century. The aforementioned new emphasis on ego and self-development in educational institutions corresponded to new cultural formations of the self. The mid-19th century essentially marks the beginning of a transformation of the self. The celebration of the self by the Romantics and the rugged individualism of the Victorians succumbed to critical doubts about the authenticity and independence of the self (Baumeister, 1987). This conceptual history, which some might view as a tragedy of the self-concept, parallels social histories that record the tensions, anxieties, and contradictions experienced by individuals who witnessed vast cultural shifts in late 19th century America: urbanization, large-scale immigration, unsteady economic conditions, challenges to traditional religious precepts, and curbs on economic mobility.

How did scientific psychology figure in these philosophical and social configurations of self and, ultimately,

of notions of subjectivity? More specifically, how might these changing configurations have transpired in scientific textbooks? A number of scholars have determined that psychology did not simply reflect cultural construals of self but was engaged in the production of self and subjectivity (Cushman, 1990; Danziger, 1990; Rose, 1989, 1990). In particular, Rose (1990) identified two ways in which psychology produced representations of self and identity: by developing (a) a language to *describe* them and (b) technical devices to *inscribe* them.

One means of ascertaining how textbooks might be implicated in the production of subjectivities would be to examine the constructs and technical operations that were presented as formal knowledge about self and subjectivity. However fruitful this investigation would be, it retains a model of texts as simple transmission devices and fails to get at the textual and relational dynamics of the documents. In keeping with an appreciation of texts as cultural products, it is essential to consider the very textual practices that enable certain forms of subjectivity and curtail others and that establish authority in the author and reader alike (Clifford, 1983). While remaining mindful that the readers of introductory textbooks were primarily White, middle-class young adults situated in a rapidly changing social world and that the authors were professionally trained psychologists with particular scientific visions, occupational duties, and financial aspirations, we then can turn to textbooks as literary accomplishments that have scientific persuasion as their objective. It must also be remembered that these literary ventures incurred a special burden of persuasion: to advocate a (scientific) world that takes subjectivity to be an object with characteristics comparable to the "natural" objects of other sciences. Therefore, authors had to address and engage the very subjects whose own subjective experiences were to be radically reinterpreted by the science. In doing so, authors faced the apparent paradox of denying certain subjectivities (those described in the texts as the objects to be studied by psychologists) while attempting to enlist the readers (who logically could count themselves among the subjectivities being studied) in the project of a scientific psychology.

The textual construction of subjectivities—authors, readers, and textual objects—illustrates the cultural relations of textbook production. Analysis of textbooks published during the beginnings of the "new" psychology between 1890 and 1915 reveals that writers used at least three textual strategies to convince readers of the superiority of psychology's description of subjectivity and to handle the multiple selves in the texts along with the aforementioned paradox accompanying this persuasive task.

### New Authors

It is commonly held that the author of scientific writing is irrelevant to or not present in the written document. Studies of scientific writing have demonstrated otherwise: Not only is the author present in scientific literature, but his or her presence, through multiple appearances, is cru-

cial to the authenticity and believability of the writing (Bazerman, 1988; Latour, 1987). The authors of the "old" and "new" psychology textbooks, the pre- and post-1890 publications, differed in their textual presence. The authors of the earlier texts presented themselves as either reformers, caretakers, or humble transmitters of knowledge. In their deference to Kant or gentle correction of Locke, they positioned themselves within eternal conversations among "men of wisdom." Although they saw themselves as writers of "science," they rarely hid their personal standpoint and freely illustrated their claims by reference to experience. Self as author with scientific authority and self as author with personal experiences were compatible, if not isomorphic, identities. As Hamilton (1883) noted in his textbook, he wrote foremost for himself and then to furnish "a scientific book such as every American gentleman should have for reading and for reference" (p. iii).

In contrast, the authors presented in the later texts had at once a specific professional identity marked by reference to membership in the scientific community and a fleeting, less significant self. Authorial voice was altered so that the personal self either disappeared (usually through omission of all personal experience) or was identified within a restricted social role (usually of teacher and teaching experiences). (Use of the teacher role to digress from the expected scientific voice continues in contemporary texts; Stringer, 1990.) These social markers, however, typically did not include the author's identity as an income producer. Some writers noted the existence of other introductory books with the acknowledgment that these books were not in competition with one another (for a market) but filled a "real demand" (Buell, 1898).

With these alterations in voice, the author no longer interpreted scientific theories or experiments but rather accurately described them. However, the description created by these authors did not take the reader to be a "virtual witness" of the events being reported, as was done in some early reports of scientific experimentation (Shapin, 1984a), or invite readers to experience the event as the author first experienced it, as was done in traditional ethnographic writing (Stocking, 1983). Rather the description was selective, and the reader was often reminded of the fact that he or she was not receiving, or was not capable of receiving, the full story. (Here the suspicious reader—how many contemporary psychology students are suspicious?—can find grounds to doubt the account being provided.) Thus, through certain marks of social identity, a reticent personal presence, and the authority of objective (albeit selective) reporting, the author's voice was made dominant in the "new psychology" textbooks. As shall be discussed later, authors occasionally indulged in momentary self-revelation, but even these moments served the construal of a masterful subjectivity.

### Readers

Readers of the earlier generation of textbooks were portrayed as privileged, gentle, and receptive to guidance. Their social identity as passive recipients showed little

evidence of any active agency, and it gained form through a classical learner-teacher relation. Thus, for example, Mark Hopkins (1878) did not entertain questions from the class during his lectures that were ultimately compiled in a textbook. Other features of the readers' social identity, notably their social and economic status, generally went unmentioned.

In contrast, readers of the "new" textbooks had more precisely marked identities. They were explicitly described as teachers or teachers in training, students at some particular level of education, potential lawyers, managers, or "ordinary" readers. In addition, readers were endowed with a specific set of aspirations that, on the one hand, placed them in a subordinate position vis à vis the author and, on the other, conferred them with an exceptional status. First, readers were taken to be individuals of action, willing participants in the labor of examining real life more deeply and mastering its fullest complexity. To E. A. Kirkpatrick (1894), the reader had no interest in the "thoroughly dried specimens" of the older mental science and its laws that the student could not observe and verify. Obtaining "real knowledge and power" required that the pupil "observe and analyze the actual processes of his own mind and those of others instead of taking what the author tells him about imaginary mental processes" (Kirkpatrick, 1894, pp. 3–4). The readers' ambitions, whether to pursue careers in psychology or elsewhere, were signified by the edict "A man's reach should exceed his grasp" (Buell, 1898, p. iv).

Even when direct references to readers were absent, indirect ones beckoned readers to acquire the psychologist's standpoint, that is, to acquire the ability to know with certainty the "real" of life experiences. Sometimes this standpoint was offered as an immediate possibility in the form of experiments that readers could perform on their own. More often the standpoint was posed as the motive for reading, and the psychologist's clear vision was but pages away: "With a clean, well-trained eye and the mind's 'retinal field' cleared of all floating specks, the student of Psychology must ever seek the truth, and the truth alone, if he would not be handicapped" (Krohn, 1894, p. 20). From the psychologist's standpoint, "face-to-face experience of actual life is essential" (Ladd, 1894, p. 7). The trained student shared interests with the trained psychologist, who

desires to convert the state of consciousness which it signifies into an object of (indirect but verifiable) knowledge for himself. . . . it is not arrogant to claim that the trained psychologist *understands* not only the child, the idiot, the madman, and the hypnotic subject, but also the artist, the scientist, the statesman, and the thinker, as psychical beings, far better than any of these classes understand each other, or even themselves. (Ladd, 1894, p. 21)

Once the trained mental faculties of scientific psychologists were presented as a gateway to the most veridical means of knowing others, they were then held before the readers as a desired and attainable end.

Although readers were sometimes actually invited

to become psychologists, more frequently they were identified as members of a special social class of "educated men" who sought knowledge about reality. Granted special status, they stood apart from the class of "lazy readers" (William James, cited in Thorndike, 1905). Elevating readers' identities to make them members of an elite audience is a common rhetorical device for persuasion (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969). However, the elite audience portrayed in the "new" psychology textbooks differed from the elite audience portrayed in the "old" textbooks. In the "new" books the common person, the motivated person, could, by self-transformation, be included within a knowledgeable elite.

Although not always explicit in the texts, readers were assumed to be seeking both self-improvement and mastery over others. They were presumed to want to become the organizers of experience and the detecting eye—the managers and the surveyors. Self-knowledge was an obvious ambition; in a 1898 textbook by Buell, "self-control" was "the great end of all education" (p. 4). In a 1911 textbook by Yerkes, the ability to observe psychological processes was something "we owe to ourselves as educated members of civilized races" (p. 13).

Below this image of readers as ambitious, independent, and aspiring to certain skills, however, lay opposing textual messages that insisted on passive readers. Questions scattered in the text, study problems, and experiments to be tried—all of which were innovations purposed to befit the truly enthusiastic reader—actually circumscribed action and precluded the possibility of cognitive independence. The answers to most study questions in the books required no more than rote learning, and the experiments usually had a single correct outcome; authors occasionally claimed to be using simplified language or omitting complex information. We shall return to this contradictory underside of the ambitious new reader later.

The new authors and readers present in the post-1890 textbooks prepared the way for new understandings—or a new reality—of psychological phenomena. Images of these new actors at once relied on and fashioned particular rationalities and subjectivities; they pointed to certain experiences and social possibilities and limited or denied other possibilities. Students were invited simultaneously to be consumers of the new psychology and potential producers; they were offered roles that promised action over other individuals, unique experiences of self, and a veridical grasp of reality. What these new roles enabled, in fact, was a different reality, one that specified certain relations (a) between perceiving individuals, (b) between individuals and what comes to be taken as reality, and (c) within the individual. The rhetorical contrivances of readership (and authorship) played on culturally salient desires, ambitions, and order to entice the individual reader. Once that was accomplished, the reader encountered various textual strategies that pointed the way to a reality of human subjectivity that was open only to those possessing certain (scientific) methods. But the subjectivity that was to be examined through these methodological

practices differed from the subjectivity of readers described in texts: The subject of psychological scrutiny often was irrational, unknowing, and burdened by emotional swings. Psychology's success in undermining commonsense knowledge and in surveying a fragile and wanting subjectivity depended on the reader's dissociating him- or herself from that subjectivity of the "ordinary" subject of psychological research.

### ***Subjectivities: One and the Other***

Numerous historical studies have identified the subjectivity prescribed by modern psychological science as one that is self-contained or highly individuated, self-monitoring, asocial, mechanistic, trait bearing (manifesting certain distinct and measurable qualities), and structured, yet is ill equipped to produce rational and logical cognitions (Baumeister, 1987; Burnham, 1968; Cushman, 1990; Danziger, 1990; Morawski, 1986; Sampson, 1977; Venn, 1984). At first glance, this needy if independent subjectivity contrasts with the ambitious, competent, and potentially masterful subjectivity attributed to readers of "new psychology" textbooks. Some assurance or diversion was needed to persuade an audience that the new psychology, which slighted personal experience and identified numerous imperfections in human nature, nevertheless was accurate knowledge. The reader and author, as members of an elite community, were set apart from "others," especially in those texts in which the reader was invited to be like, if not actually become, a psychologist. Those who did not acquire appropriate skills were "poverty stricken," and thus, wrote Robert Yerkes in his 1911 textbook, "Millions of human beings—unfortunate but all unconscious of what they are missing—go through life blind to the psychological world" (p. 13). Counterposing the readers and the mass of others reduced the visibility of the intratextual contradictions concerning subjectivity.

A textbook published in the late 1890s illustrates how these contradictory subjectivities were managed. Using rhetorical textual strategies, the reader's subjectivity, already defined as in some ways being exceptional, was rendered mecurial; that is, the reader (like the author) could take on different subjectivities. E. W. Scripture's (1897) *The New Psychology* assumed an audience of socially advantaged students; it thus represented a "higher" form of the textbook genre. Particularly in the introductory pages, the subjectivity forming the object of the new psychology was described as the "vagaries of the human mind" (p. 3). The basic untrustworthiness of this subjectivity was said to be caused by prejudice and unconscious alterations: "Our passions, our prejudices, and the dominant opinion of the day are abundant sources of dangerous illusion" (p. 3). Scripture extended this conceptualization to himself, citing everyday examples of his untrustworthy self. However, it was this very precarious subjectivity that made possible its opposite, the masterful observer, and this identity switch was made initially through a faithful confession of unfaithful mental processes.



Prefatory comments about "uncultivated observers" and their primitive mindsets prepared the stage for an elaboration of characters (Scripture, 1897, p. 3). It will suffice here to describe two strategies through which this elaboration was accomplished. First, Scripture used the existing social structure to define the "other" subjectivity, that configuration of complex mental processes with limited cognitive and emotional powers of self-control that constituted the object of modern psychology. This was the subjectivity of "uncultivated observers" who remembered favorable events but forgot unfavorable ones, who associated changes in the weather with changes in the moon, and who were duped by a "whole race of prophets and quacks" (p. 3). These subjects, upon visiting Berlin, noticed the shop windows in the Kaisergalerie but remained "unconscious of the watchful policeman around the corner" (p. 6), who, Scripture (as masterful subjectivity) reminded readers, was actually more characteristic of Berlin than the shops. In defining psychology's object, then, Scripture relied on caricatures of the common "man."

This reliance on common social knowledge occurred even in discussions of laboratory experiments. For example, Scripture's (1897) account of experimental work on "time of sensation" (reaction time in visual identification) drew on cultural understandings. In these descriptions, the "observer" (subject in the experiment) acted like the "uncultivated": "He attempted to name the letter even when he had seen only part of it. Hereby he often named it correctly when he had seen only a little of it, and, on the other hand, he often thought he had recognized a letter clearly which was not present at all" (p. 103). The description of this experimental activity evoked commonsense knowledge of untrustworthiness and ignorance while it affirmed that the object of psychology was a subjectivity unlike the reader's (who, after all, was reading correctly). Scripture then recounted other experimental studies in which securing the observer's *correct* recognition was "a hopeless case" (p. 108). He suggested several ways to make reading more accurate but parenthetically quoted another experimentalist's opinion that such innovations would undoubtedly create new confusions and shock public taste (p. 107). In these examples, experimentation, or the reporting of it, captured and reenacted cultural forms of ignorance and cognitive shortcomings but enabled readers to dissociate their own subjectivity.

In his textbook, Scripture (1897) also enlisted common cultural understandings to demonstrate differences in subjectivities. Through this rhetorical strategy he differentiated a masterful subjectivity from the "other" one by assuming a Western male reader. For instance, the positive influence of mental effort on volition was exemplified by comparing "intelligent Europeans" with Africans and "intelligent mechanics" with "common labourers." Using the same textual strategy, he illustrated the incremental effect of intellectual excitement on physical power by descriptions of cases in which the "lecturer actually becomes a stronger man as he steps on the platform," and the mother bear successfully protects her

young "when in a state of fear" (pp. 219–220). "Intellectual excitement," along with productive and reproductive activities, was marked by race and gender; the author and reader shared a hierarchical categorization of subjectivities. Thus, when a female subject attained the highest score in a mental test of finger tapping, her performance was discounted due to her extraexperimental pastimes (playing baseball in one case and playing the violin in another; pp. 129–130). Subjectivities were differentiated in these passages, and the readers were persuaded not only because the differentiation was foregrounded with their cultural understandings but also because their subjectivity could, at almost any time in the text, be identified as not being a member of the class of "uncultivated observers."

These textual practices smoothed apparent contradictions between the motivated and knowing subjectivities attributed to readers and the confused and inefficient subjectivities that constituted the object of psychological science. The two forms of subjectivity not only served as a rhetorical device to engage and persuade readers (the would-be consumers of modern psychology) but functioned in relation to one another. The needy subjectivity of the ordinary actor enabled a believable construal of the masterful subjectivity of the expert observer. The recurrent reliance on cultural markers, which repeatedly signaled difference and hierarchy among subjectivities, further verified a world of dichotomous subjectivities while drawing an ambiguous and permeable line between them (Morawski & Steele, 1991).

Examinations of introductory psychology textbooks as a cultural commodity and as a set of discursive practices are but two ways of rethinking the place of these works in our science's heritage. Although the present investigation was restricted to texts of a particular era, one removed from the present in various respects, and although substantive historical work remains to be done, it is not difficult to identify numerous threads connecting those texts and our current production patterns and textual strategies (see Lopes, 1991).

### Texts, Culture, and Promoting the Readers' Welfare

To take introductory psychology textbooks seriously is to invite new ways of understanding our history over the last century. Once we cease viewing textbooks as lower forms of writing, or as mere transmission devices for conveying "facts" to naive readers, then we can begin not only to reanalyze these written documents but to develop new models for conceptualizing the place of our science in culture. At the outset of this article, I suggested that introductory textbooks are relevant to Miller's (1969) classic plea that we envision psychology "as a means of promoting human welfare" (p. 1064). In an important sense the present analysis concurs with Miller's account of how psychology renders its major influence on society not through specific "technological products" placed "in the hands of powerful men," but "through a new different public conception of what is humanly possible and what

is humanly desirable" (p. 1066). Although Miller wrote of this influence as a "revolutionary potential" (p. 1065) that has yet to be marshalled, an examination of psychologists' past activities—in this case the construction and use of textbooks—suggests that we have long been engaged in the project of shaping what is humanly possible and desirable.

By examining psychologists' work, such as textbooks, we can see more closely the macro- and micropolitics of transforming human welfare. William James articulated these levels of political work in his introduction to Thorndike's 1905 textbook. James, a successful textbook author himself, condemned the educational practice of routinized learning to which the textbook had become indispensable, describing the "textbook" Moloch, in whose belly living children's minds are turned to ashes and whose ritual lies in text-books in which the science is pre-digested for the teacher by every expository artifice and by the pupil comminuted into" gimmicks of design and presentation (Thorndike, 1905 p. vi). James's indictment extends beyond the commercial qualities that had marked textbooks to the very social relations being produced through textbook learning. Introductory psychology textbooks inform us about the larger cultural mission of education and remind us that psychologists are implicated in that mission both as instructors in the classroom and as producers of culturally constructed knowledge.

James's criticism also extends beyond the micropolitics of education and knowledge dissemination in that he commented on the micropolitical world of reading. To him, the organizational and rhetorical devices found in psychology textbooks ultimately contributed to "frustrating the natural movement of the mind when reading, and preventing that irresolvable rumination of the material in one's own way which is the soul of culture" (James in Thorndike, 1905, p. vi). Without committing ourselves to James's construal of the "natural" mind, we can find that in these textbooks what are taken as "natural" and as personal subjectivities are constructed through discursive strategies.

To acknowledge the micropolitics of the textbooks is not to subscribe to radical deconstruction that denies the existence of subjectivities with specific historically conditioned interests or takes texts to be freely constructing in the "real." Rather, analytic and historically guided interpretations of scientific texts alert us to the complex social relations that mediate the writing and reading of those texts and ultimately structure one practice in the enterprise we call psychology. These interpretations show how psychology is produced in specific places and is replete with tentativeness, instabilities, and tensions. (Similar interpretive approaches are discussed by Kohlstedt, 1990; Newton, 1990; Shapin, 1982; 1984b; Woolgar, 1986.) The social relations of reading and writing introductory textbooks are, as James put it, an enactment of the "soul of culture." They constitute one of the places where human desires and possibilities materialize, and they are all about giving psychology away.

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