

What Lies in the Future of Teaching the History of Psychology?

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The Context

Over a decade ago, when we were graduate students, we made a mistake (!) of pondering over the "big picture" of psychology. Before we knew it, we had the bug in our system and we were obsessed with psychology's history, the nature of the discipline, the philosophy of science, Danziger and so on. While we riveted in our obsession, we also suffered. Our fellow graduate students made snide remarks about us, and called us "those theoretical types". Some faculty members also drew humor from our interest. But we survived. Graduate school sure makes you a hardy bunch!

When we got jobs and got to teach the undergraduate history of psychology courses, we felt secure and delighted in the thought that we had finally "arrived". After all, Guru Danziger had assured us of a promising future for the history of psychology. However, beginning around 1994 we witnessed a series of events at two psychology departments which shook us from our security zone. We noticed that the retired history of psychology positions were not being replaced. We noticed that the undergraduate courses on the history of psychology were "cut" or "reduced" or no longer "required". We observed that the value of the history of psychology courses was being discounted. We talked to some esteemed historians of psychology who were retiring and learned about their lost "ideological warfares" within their psychology departments. We began to wonder if these were random happenings or an indication of a gloomy future for the teachers of psychology's history. Are the undergraduate courses on the history of

psychology a case of "here today, gone tomorrow"? It is within this pedagogical context that our paper was inspired.

Keeping within Danziger's (1994) analytical frame for the discipline, our attempt here is to trace the origins, trends, and threats to the undergraduate courses on the history of psychology. Along the path of this exploration, we also compiled some course-related numbers as well as comments of the teachers of the history of psychology from across Canadian universities. Finally, this historical examination allowed for some reflections on the pedagogical status and the future of these courses.

History of Psychology and the Undergraduate Curricula

Danziger (1994) observed that whereas the departments of physics, chemistry, and other natural science disciplines do not offer an undergraduate course on the history of their respective disciplines, psychology departments routinely do. Danziger emphasized that this is largely due to the nature of the discipline and "a lingering belief that the history of psychology has a role within the discipline of psychology" (p. 467). This belief seems to have persevered over many decades now, as psychology departments across the continent not only routinely offer courses on the history of psychology, but often make it a "requirement" for a major (Fuchs & Viney, 2000). We conducted a web-based and e-mail survey of the undergraduate curricula of the history of psychology courses offered at 44 Canadian universities. Our observations supported Danziger's statements (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1
Undergraduate History of Psychology Across Canadian Universities

Total Number of Psychology Departments	44
Total Number of "Regular" Faculty	1313
Number of Faculty Listing History of Psychology as an Area of Research Interest	40 ¹ (3%)
The Number of "History" Faculty at York Psychology (Highest)	15 ² (13%)
Number of Departments with No "History" Interested Faculty	18 ³ (44%)

¹ N = 41 departments. No Web-info was available on faculty research interests for three departments: Trinity Western U, U of Manitoba, U of New Brunswick, Fredericton

² Out of a total of 115 psychology faculty

³ N = 41

Table 2
Undergraduate History of Psychology Across Canadian Universities

Number of Departments Offering at Least one History of Psychology Course	37 ¹ (86%)
Number of Departments where History of Psychology is a "Required" Course for Major and/or Honors	12 ² (60%)

¹ N = 43

² N = 20

Tracing the Pedagogical Origin of the History of Psychology

Interestingly, the earliest books on the history of psychology published were "textbooks" written for didactic purpose (Danziger, 1994). The year 1912 marked these beginnings with three publications: B. Rand's *Classical Psychologists: Selections Illustrating Psychology from Anaxagoras to Wundt*, G. Stanley Hall's *The Founders of Modern*

Psychology and G. S. Brett's first of the three massive volumes *A History of Psychology* (incidentally, Brett was a Canadian philosopher-psychologist). A year later in 1913, J. M. Baldwin published his two small volumes, which are considered to comprise the first American textbook on the history of psychology in the 20th century (Hilgard, Leary, & McGuire, 1991). A discussion of the textbooks of the history of psychology would, of course, remain deficient without the mention of the famous E. G. Boring who wrote the popular *A History of Experimental Psychology* in 1929. In the same year Gardner Murphy published his *Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology*, and Pillsbury published *The History of Psychology*.

Given the publication time frame of these textbooks, and their didactic purpose, it would be reasonable to conclude that psychologists were discussing the history of psychology with their students as early as 1912. What may have triggered this trend? Why did early psychologists take interest in the history of psychology right from its inception in the early 20th century?

Upon examining the larger picture of the discipline at the time - between 1912 and 1929 - when these publications began to emerge, it is interesting to note that this period also marked the dominance of the natural science status of psychology. In fact, Boring's 1929 history textbook has been viewed as an attempt on his part to defend the pure scientific nature of psychology from its "applied" sibling. As Graham Richards (1996) contends, these early books on the history of psychology were written because of the pressure that was experienced by the discipline "to prove its scientific credentials" (p. 2).

Since then, however, the discipline of psychology has undergone many renovations. It has grown and diversified exponentially. As well, it has witnessed many trends, "isms," and fads, raising doubts and debates about its status as a singular discipline (e.g., Bevan, 1982; Matarazzo, 1987; Kimble, 1989; Furedy, Craik, Adair, & Conway, 1991; Conway, 1992; Wand, 1993). Amidst these trends and continual growth of the discipline, the courses on the history of psychology have retained their place within psychology curricula across the continent, and in many parts of the world. APA accreditation, for example, requires that psychology students should get exposed to the historical roots of the discipline (see Table 2).

The Rationale for Teaching Psychology's History

It is worth examining why the history of psychology course gained and retained an esteemed status within the undergraduate course structure. Michael Wertheimer (1980) critically summarized various reasons and justifications provided in the prefaces of various books on psychology's history. His first observation was that authors of psychology's history take the worth of historical works for granted:

None of these writers ... bother to specify in a preface or introduction why they believe study of the history of psychology is worthwhile. There even are prolific contributors of the history of psychology (such as Josef Brozek) who have not bothered to say at length in print why they believe the history of psychology is a topic worth pursuing. By taking its value for granted, these scholars imply that it must be self-evident to any thinking person. Devoting space to justification of the endeavor might even suggest that there might be some doubt about it in the first place! (p. 5)

We also looked at the prefaces of the history of psychology textbooks published in the 1990s and came to a similar conclusion. There were a few books that did list reasons for the study of psychology's history, which can be summarized as i) it helps avoid the past errors and repetitions, ii) it provides a fertile source of new ideas, iii) it may offer resolutions of current problems, iv) it provides a healthy dose of humility and tolerance, v) it improves the general education of psychologists, and vi) "simply because" - everyone enjoys a good story; it is inherently interesting.

In addition, Wertheimer (1980) also examined the value of teaching psychology's history from a disciplinarian perspective and highlighted three:

1. "It has been a tradition" - a legacy of the Titchener era. Wertheimer (1980) calls it a "ritual" akin to an initiation rite that all teachers of psychology must take a course on the history of psychology, and in turn it implies "do unto others as others have done unto us" (p. 6).
2. "Look at our illustrious ancestors" or a "gee-whiz" approach. Wertheimer (1980) calls this a form of self-legitimization, and argues, as we noted earlier, that Boring wrote his history textbook to legitimize the "pure" against the "applied" psychology.

3. It strengthens one's job prospects. Wertheimer (1980) observed that regardless of one's specialization, adding a history of psychology course to one's teaching credentials raises one's marketability, since the course on the history of psychology is an integral part of the undergraduate psychology curriculum.

Nature of the Discipline: Locating the Pedagogical Status of Psychology's History

At a larger perspective, these assorted reasons and justifications may be brought together under one umbrella: the nature of the discipline. Is psychology a natural science or a human science? Is psychology a singular and coherent discipline or is it a house divided? These two issues are of great significance in understanding the status of the history of psychology.

Kuhn (1970) suggested that "consensus," as a defining characteristic of normal science, is lacking in psychology. This lack of a "normal science" status for psychology is also reflected in the ways in which the history of psychology is being taught. Tracing the ancient roots is one of the favored ways of teaching the history of psychology, as these roots are relatively easy to order chronologically. First there was the golden age of the Greek scholarship, then came the Dark Ages, then came the Renaissance and the British empiricists, followed by the German physiologists. The neatly ordered chronology is lost upon entering the 20th century as the field began to diverge. The three major, distinct beginnings of psychology grew simultaneously according to Leahey (1980). Wundt with his voluntaristic psychology of consciousness, Darwin and James with their pragmatic, functional approaches, and Freud with his psychoanalytical psychology of the unconscious were born and raised within the same time frame. Also, fields within fields and specializations within specializations dominated the growth of psychology. Importantly, this growth has not been linear, but rather scattered in varied directions.

The goal of cohesion and consensus within the discipline has thus remained elusive. As a human science, psychology is comprised of "fields that are structured in an agonistic manner, fields which are characterized by deep divisions between alternative schools of thought" (Danziger, 1994, p. 471). Danziger (1994) states that even the historiography of psychology has changed due to cultural critiques (that

have arisen from around the globe) against the "American hegemony in psychology" (p. 476). He also states that "modern psychology is returning to the position from which it began: a polycentric position in which there are diverse but intercommunicating centres of psychological work that reflect a diversity of local conditions and traditions" (p. 477).

Beyond the divisions, sections, and centres of psychology that are seen across CPA, APA, and elsewhere, the division between natural and human science perspectives has played a major role in academic divorce and separation (Conway, 1992; Danziger, 1990; Leahey, 1991; Staats, 1987; Tonks, 1997; Wand, 1993). The identity crisis of the discipline dates back over 100 or so years when it was first proclaimed scientific. Leahey (2001), for example, points out that American psychology has been fraught with debates and "walkouts" over the appropriate nature of our discipline as a "pure" science or an applied profession. In Canada, this too has been a dominant theme since inception. However, beginning with the 1955 MacLeod Report, more intensive debate has emerged over whether or not we are or should be pure or professional (Conway, 1992; Danziger 1990; Wand, 1993). This controversy over whether psychology is "pure" or "applied," which embroiled Titchener and subsequently his protégé E. G. Boring, is still alive and well with us today.

What is the implication of the lack of disciplinary cohesion and consensus? Danziger (1994) has contended that the very fact that the discipline lacks cohesion and has remained filled with divisions has necessitated the study of the history of psychology within the discipline. It follows that as long as there are "isms" and systems and theories, undergraduate psychology students will need a course on the history of psychology since it is the only course that would put all these "isms" into a larger "scientific" perspective.

Does the lack of cohesion and consensus then ensure the presence of the history of psychology courses at an undergraduate level? Perhaps not, as doubts have been raised by some scholars. For example, upon reflecting on the nature of the discipline today, Leahey (2000), a past president of Division 26 of APA (History of Psychology), observed that in contemporary psychology there seem to be no major "isms" and no "big pictures" for students to know. Leahey has appealed to Division 26 members to ponder over the need to revise course

content in view of the rapidly changing discipline. Citing the changing ethos of psychology from that of the 1950s and 60s when it had a renaissance, he further suggests that the canonical approach to education, where the history of psychology is seen as being essential to the *Bildung* or character development of our students, may no longer be relevant. We need to decide among the alternatives of defending the status quo, changing the content but not the required necessity of it, or changing the requirement, and possibly also the content of it.

The Problem and the Threat to the Teaching of Psychology's History

Consequences of the shift and proliferation of contradictory perspectives on the larger discipline have filtered into the pedagogical domains. As such, there are two major challenges involved in teaching psychology's history today. One is to decide on the direction and the content of the course. The other, a more serious one, is to justify its relevance to one's colleagues and other decision makers in a psychology department. A related issue pertains to the hiring of an expert to teach the course.

The Direction and the Content of the Course

Danziger (1994) suggested that the traditional content of the history of psychology needed to change from a "celebratory" "insider" view to a more critical "outsider" perspective. He points out that the positivist "Whig" approach to history has largely been celebratory, where history merely plays a supportive role for current dogma and ideologies of psychology. Rather, he contends, the history of psychology needs to offer a critical historiography of the discipline, one that more typically arises through a social or human science recognition of the social context of disciplinary activity.

Rappard (1997) responded to Danziger's initial concerns over the future of the history of psychology by suggesting that the "insider" perspective is not so bad after all. He contended that by giving our history away to professional historians (critical outsiders) we are likely to have an irrelevant history, one that would look more like philosophy than psychology (Rappard, 1998). Not necessarily being against critical historiography, Rappard indicated that the question of 'moral distance' also arises as to what the appropriate distance on the 'outside' would be to be

acceptable for the production of critical histories. Danziger (1997) indicates that a critical historiography is essential if psychology is ever to make a significant contribution to the field of human understanding. The essence of the problem is that historical amateurism is abundant in psychology where:

We find histories that are no more than literature reviews extended backward in time, we find story telling substituting for history, we find the cult of 'anticipators' and the awarding of good and bad marks on the basis of some current scientific orthodoxy, we find gross insensitivity to historical context, we find the formulation of 'timeless' problems in the language of the present, we find the construction of spurious lines of ancestry, we find the mythology of progress. What historian of psychology could feel smug in the face of such shortcomings? (Danziger, 1997, p. 108)

Dehue (1998) suggests that this debate between Danziger and Rappard lies in the notions of rigour vs. relevance. She provides an account that conceptualizes both Danziger and Rappard as "community historians" who each have their own contributions to make. Thus she indicates that a "contextualist" approach would serve to bring both views together, enabling each one their own voice. Rappard (1998) rejects this interpretation of Dehue's, where she opposes contextualism with presentism, indicating his acceptance of both. Rather he concludes with Dehue's point that historians are "commissioned" to write histories close to contemporary views as a dangerous caricature of presentism and his "household" view of history. Finally, Danziger (1998) responds by indicating that the "occasional contextualism" that he ascribes to Dehue is not sufficient whereby there is a deep and essential need to recognize the situated nature of the historian and historical studies. He states:

No matter how hard one tries, one cannot step outside history in order to write about it. Every historian occupies a particular place in a historical world and can only describe the historical process as it appears from the perspective afforded by that place. ... That is why history will always be rewritten. (p. 670)

In summary, we see that there is considerable interest over whether or not psychology should include a (canonical) history of the discipline, and if so what that would look like. Danziger (1994)

indicates that there has been a decline in the "insider" histories over the past 40 years, however, recent events suggest that the current trend involves a decline in critical historiography as well.

The Devaluing of the Undergraduate Course on Psychology's History

Danziger (1994) made a very convincing case that the lack of a natural science status for psychology combined with the "isms" and divisions within the discipline would make the study of the history of psychology indispensable. This optimism is comforting, but at the extreme, there seems to be a trend emerging to discount the value of the history of psychology courses altogether. In a less extreme, but equally of crisis fashion, the critical historiographic approach is being challenged and squeezed aside by curricular changes based upon ideological warfare.

We witnessed this ideological warfare at two universities in several forms. Among them were: i) not replacing the retired "history of psychology" faculty, ii) hiring "external" faculty to teach the history of psychology course, iii) scrapping the history of psychology courses as a requirement for major at an undergraduate level, iv) not offering any history of psychology course at the graduate level, and v) shortening the credits assigned to the course.

We briefly present a case study of one university as an illustration:

The Case of Gradual Disappearance

- In the mid-1980s there were five faculty members who taught history of psychology at the undergraduate level. History of psychology courses were offered at the second, third, and fourth year levels.
- During the early 1990s three of these people retired and no new faculty were hired to replace them.
- Also during this time a graduate student who had been trained by two long-standing historians of psychology was hired to teach the history and systems course as well as the honours seminar. This student, who had been influenced by Danziger's (1990) *Constructing the Subject*, introduced it as an essential part of the curriculum. Others soon followed and even the senior member of the department, who had just previously taken on the history of psychology

- (generally from a celebratory perspective), took notice and began his own "conversion" to the critical historiography
- During the mid-1990s a graduate course on the history of psychology was established and filled quickly the first time by those who had great interest in it, but without departmental support the course has not since been offered, due to "a lack of enrollment". (It was not a required course as APA and CPA accreditation insist.)
 - Soon the rumblings began with the goals to remove the honours seminar from being a required course. The fourth year seminar course (which had become the single greatest source of critical psychology in the undergraduate programme) is now no longer required by honours students and has become merely an elective.
 - As for the faculty teaching history of psychology there are currently only two, and soon to be only one as one of them is retiring this year. This tenured professor has been clearly told that his position is not going to be replaced. He has since reported that he has given up the battle to keep history as a canonical set of courses.
 - The former graduate student left to find more suitable employment elsewhere.
 - Currently one "external" faculty member has taken over some of the teaching duties.

Around the same time, a scenario was unfolding at another university mirroring these events. An esteemed historian of psychology nearing his retirement in the 1990s faced a growing antagonism towards his year-long history course. In a personal conversation he conveyed with sadness and some bitterness that the course would stay alive only as long as he was in the department. Indeed, as soon as he retired, his position disappeared. As well, his year-long course was cut into half. A young faculty member with interest in the "cognition" area of psychology was assigned to take over. As well, an "external", a post-doctoral fellow with a doctorate in philosophy, has been now hired to teach psychology's history to undergraduate students.

The implications of the reduction in courses and disappearance of some of the faculty positions are already being felt. The new PhDs who specialize in the field of history of psychology seem to experience greater challenges and frustration in finding a university job. Katalin Dzinás (1995), for example, in her tribute to Kurt Danziger reflected that Danziger

represents a privileged voice in that he had tenure, and turned to history later in his career, only after achieving full professorship. New PhDs do not see a favorable career future in the history of psychology. As Dzinás (1995) expressed her worries:

We worry whether we will be able to secure a job as historians of psychology... None of us wish to work as closet historians, pretending at all times to be something we are not and doing research on problems in which we are not particularly interested... We worry that we may not be able to secure grant money to fund our research... We might not have the opportunity to supervise students who wish to work in this area. (p. 33)

One senior faculty member teaching history who has advocated the critical approach indicated that he wished to remain "off the record" for fear of reprisal from his colleagues. However he did reveal that he had been told by one of the "backroom architects" of these changes that the main reason for "getting rid" of the courses presenting critical historiography is that they "would not enable him to do the kind of psychology that he would like to do." This is because students had become too critical and he could not convince them that his type of psychology was worth doing. This attitude is reflected in a recent book review from *JHBS* that indicates a weariness with the critical approach where "biographers amplify private faults of a scientist and neglect his or her contributions to the history of ideas" (Rilling, 1998, p. 390)

More interesting than the fact that history has been reduced to fewer courses and faculty is the *rationale behind these changes*. The official story is that such changes will make the department "more competitive" against other programmes nationally and internationally, however, unofficially informants have indicated that it is a positivist backlash against the critical historiography that had emerged through the 1990s. It is also of great interest that not only did the history of psychology courses witness a reduction in their canonical role in undergraduate education, but that other areas (notably statistics and measurement courses) witnessed an increase in their canonical role as required courses.

Dehue (1998) echoes this view when she states "it is my grounded impression that [critical] historians rubbing against psychologists' shoulders are more likely to evoke their irritation than their sympathy" (p. 659). Only time will tell, but Danziger's vision of the future of history of psychology appears to be in

peril, ironically due in part to the success of his own work.

Conclusion

Danziger's conviction, based on his analytical scrutiny and profound insight, has assured us that given the "isms" and sharp divisions within the field, history of psychology will retain its anchoring status. However, this is the critical history or historiography that Danziger has talked about, and it has led to a wave of new scholarship in the field. Yet, we have observed that at the undergraduate level the exciting historiographic research does not make headway. The textbooks seem to ignore these research findings, and the instructors, a large number of whom tend to be either "non-expert" or "external," continue with the "celebratory," whiggish account of psychology's history. Amidst this, the self-acclaimed "hard-core scientists" within psychology departments continually discount the value of undergraduate courses on psychology's history. We have witnessed the backlash against critical history that Dehue (1997) commented on. Several years ago, when our section organized a symposium on "post-positivism", some of our esteemed colleagues sarcastically commented that just because a bunch of the "theoretical types" declare a death, does not mean that positivism is dead. It was further added that they would plan a rejoinder titled "Positivism strikes back!"

It seems to us that the more that historiography has gained, the more it seems to have lost at the pedagogical level. Historiography will likely continue to prosper, but we are not so optimistic about its pedagogical future.

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Comment on Bhatt and Tonks:
Reports of Our Death are Greatly Exaggerated

Adrian Brock

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The authors begin by telling us how as graduate students they made the "mistake (!)" of pondering on the big picture in psychology and then caught some kind of history and philosophy "bug". Following the onset of this unfortunate disease (!), they had to suffer snide remarks and jokes from faculty members and fellow graduate students about their interests. They conclude: "But we survived. Graduate school sure makes you a hardy bunch!"¹ The authors present this experience as if it were some kind of universal phenomenon but it is most certainly not. I too became interested in history and philosophy of psychology as an undergraduate and subsequently spent a total of seven years as a graduate student in Cambridge, Leipzig, and Toronto. I cannot recall one single snide remark or joke being made about my interests in all these years. I am also not aware of any of my own graduate students in Dublin having to cope with snide remarks and jokes. I cannot say with any certainty that my experience in these four universities is any more "typical" than the authors' experience in their one. Only a proper systematic survey would give any indication of that. It does show, however, that the authors' experience is not the universal phenomenon that they imply. It may also suggest that students who develop an interest in history and philosophy of psychology should choose the university where they do their graduate work with care.

The authors then suggest that they were somehow tricked into entering the field: "Guru Danziger had assured us of a promising future for the history of psychology". No reference for the statement is given but it is safe to assume that the authors are referring to "Guru" Danziger's article, "Does the history of psychology have a future" (Danziger, 1994), which seems to have inspired the title of their paper and to which the paper appears to be a response. As might

be expected, Danziger answers his own question in the affirmative. In particular, he sees an audience for critical history among psychologists who wish to challenge the *status quo* in some way. This includes psychologists whose views and interests have been marginalised, psychologists from outside the American "centre" in Europe and the so-called "third world", and feminists. As Danziger astutely points out, all of these groups are "insiders" as far as institutional arrangements are concerned but "outsiders" in terms of their views. While making these points, Danziger openly discusses the a-historical scientism of mainstream American psychology and the negative consequences that it has for historical research. In a later commentary on this work, Dehue (1998) suggests that Danziger's view that most psychologists will only tolerate celebratory history may be too pessimistic. How all this gets translated into "Guru Danziger had assured us of a promising future for the history of psychology" is difficult to understand. Danziger's vision of the future of history of psychology is in terms of its appeal to disaffected and relatively powerless minorities and, of course, he makes no assurances of any kind.

The tale of woe continues with claims of history of psychology courses having been "cut" or "reduced" and no longer "required" since 1994. The authors also tell of the whole area being devalued, retiring historians of psychology not being replaced and lost ideological battles within departments during the same period. They suggest that history of psychology courses may be a matter of "here today, gone tomorrow".

What kind of evidence is offered for this surprising claim? The authors have some statistics but whether these have any relevance to the main thesis of the paper is a different matter entirely. The

authors provide a sketchy and incomplete survey of the status of history of psychology at 44 Canadian universities. The results of this survey suggest that only 3% of the faculty members in psychology departments list history of psychology as a research interest. This is hardly surprising. History of psychology is a small and relatively neglected field. This is equally true of fields such as cross-cultural psychology, community psychology, critical psychology and theoretical or philosophical psychology. Where history of psychology differs from these other small and relatively neglected fields is that it is widely taught in university departments of psychology and the results of the survey bear this out. Out of the 43 university departments for which the authors have information, no less than 37 or 86% offer at least one course on the history of psychology. Furthermore, out of the tiny sample of 20 university departments for which they have information, 12 or 60% have at least one history of psychology course that is compulsory for psychology majors.

So far there are no surprises. These are the results that anyone who has any knowledge of the institutional status of history of psychology would expect (Brock, 1998). What about the suggestion that courses in history of psychology went into decline in 1994 and may eventually disappear? I looked in vain for statistics on how the number of courses that are currently on offer compares to the number of courses that were on offer before 1994 or how the "required/elective" status of these courses has changed over the same period. It would have been possible to collect statistics on both but the authors have curiously neglected to do this. Following a major digression on the origins and the role of history of psychology courses, the authors return to anecdotal evidence for this alleged decline and it seems that anecdotal evidence is all that they can provide. The survey of history of psychology in 44 Canadian universities appears to be nothing more than "window dressing".

What is the anecdotal evidence that the authors provide? They refer to three nameless universities where "ideological warfare" over the history of psychology has allegedly occurred. Without providing further details, they "briefly present a case study of one university as an illustration". Once again, the university is not named. The authors would probably argue that they need to protect the identity of their sources but this anonymity has the disadvantage that none of their information can be

checked. I have no wish to doubt the authors' sincerity in relating these stories; though it should be pointed out that, if they were distorting or even inventing the evidence to support their case, it would not be the first time that this has occurred.² This is, of course, why scholarly standards of evidence exist. One of the central features of these standards is that an author's sources of information should be provided so that they can be checked. Even if the authors are reporting these stories in good faith, we do not know how reliable their information is. As any critical historian knows, oral histories tend to get embroidered and distorted as they are passed on. Although the authors say that they "witnessed" these events, it is not clear if they were physically present when the events are supposed to have occurred. Even if this can be established beyond any doubt, witnesses often make mistakes and interpretations that other witnesses would not make. This is yet another reason why sources of information should be provided.

Even if this so-called "case study" can be shown to be 100% accurate, there is still the problem that it consists of a sample of one. Generalisations based on a sample of one can be, and often are, made with the phenomena of natural science but this is rarely possible where social phenomena are concerned. The paper provides us with no evidence that these alleged events form part of a national or international trend. To illustrate the point, I would like to supplement the authors' "case study" with one of my own. I will present it with bullets in the same way that the authors present theirs:

- Until 1995, all that this particular university department had on the history of psychology was a traditional course that was taught to first year undergraduates. In this year, a full-time specialist historian of psychology was appointed. The first year course continues to be taught but it is now taught from a critical and contextual perspective. No problems whatsoever have resulted from this approach.
- A graduate programme in history and philosophy of psychology was also established at this university in 1995. The programme has already attracted postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers from several countries.
- In response to pressure from the Departmental Chair, the specialist historian of psychology added a historical component to the team-taught methods course in the second year in 1997.

Students are now encouraged to write their final year undergraduate theses on historical topics and several have done so already.

- An advanced seminar on critical history of psychology was introduced in the final year of undergraduate study in 1997. The course is elective but not in response to any institutional pressure. The decision to make it elective was made by the teacher of the course in order to ensure that the students who take it are genuinely interested. The course competes with other elective courses in counselling psychology, forensic psychology and clinical neuropsychology, which are all offered at the same time. Perhaps surprisingly, given the obvious career relevance of the other subjects on offer, the enrolment in the critical history course compares very favourably with the enrolment in every other course.

Does all this sound like fiction? I can assure you that it is not. The place in question is called "University College Dublin" and I have personally "witnessed" all of these events because it is the place where I work (Brock, 2001). There is also no need to take my words on faith. Having named the institution concerned, all of this information can be checked. Interestingly, these developments have all occurred since 1994 when, according to the authors, history of psychology courses went into decline.

Of course, I refer to these developments as a "case study" with tongue very firmly in cheek. I have no wish to suggest that the easily verifiable events in my own department are typical of psychology departments as a whole, any more than I wish to suggest that the unverifiable events that the authors portray are typical of psychology departments as a whole. The only way to find out what is "typical" of psychology departments would be to do systematic research and the authors have done no such research. I freely admit that I have no statistics to show that the field has not been in decline since 1994 but I have also seen no statistics that would rule out the possibility that it has expanded and grown during this period either. Surely the onus is on the authors to prove their case and not on commentators to prove the opposite.

Another claim that is made as "evidence" of a decline in the field since 1994 is that retiring historians of psychology are not being replaced. Once again, the authors' evidence cannot be checked and, once again, it is based on a sample of one:

An esteemed historian of psychology nearing his retirement in the 1990s faced a growing antagonism towards his year-long history course. In a personal conversation he conveyed his sadness and some bitterness that the course would stay alive only as long as he was in the department. Indeed, as soon as he retired his position disappeared.

Like all the other unverifiable anecdotes that the authors provide, I have no idea if it is true, much less if it is representative of a national or international trend. I can think of plenty of retiring historians of psychology who have been replaced. Many of us who were at York University in the early 1990's were concerned that the history and theory of psychology programme would not survive the retirement of David Bakan and Kurt Danziger. It did with the appointment of Christopher Green and Thomas Teo and, of course, Raymond Fanche continues there as before. Moreover, Alexandra Rutherford has recently been appointed to the area, bringing the number of history and theory positions to four. This represents growth rather than decline. Replacements have also been made in the smaller but much older history and theory of psychology programme at the University of New Hampshire, which was established by Robert Watson in the 1960's. In spite of numerous changes in personnel over the years, the programme continues with William Woodward and Benjamin Harris. The recent appointment of the latter, who is a very senior figure in the field, shows that the department is willing to make appointments in this area at the "full professor" level. This is equally true of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. When the director of its history and theory of psychology programme, Pieter van Strien retired, he was replaced at the "full professor" level by his former student, Trudy Dehue.

In addition to these replacements, new positions have been created and new programmes have been set up. I had the opportunity to do this with like-minded colleagues when I first came to University College Dublin in 1995. The area is known as "history and philosophy of psychology" because it is the result of a collaboration between the psychology and the philosophy departments. It has attracted postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers not only from Ireland but from other European countries as well (Brock, 2001).³

In 1999, Graham Richards and Sandy Lovie established the "Centre for the History of

Psychology" at the University of Staffordshire in England. The centre exists to promote graduate studies and also has one of the best library collections for researchers on the history of psychology anywhere in the world.⁴

Before anyone points out that I am countering an anecdote with more anecdotes, I will draw attention to it myself. I am doing it in the same way that I compared my experience as a graduate student to that of the authors, and in the same way that I compared my "case study" to theirs. I do it partly to show the limitations of inferences based on a sample of one. For every negative "example" that the authors can provide, I can provide several positive ones. Moreover, I am not referring to shadowy nameless figures in nameless institutions but providing information that can be checked. Having said all that, the only way that evidence of a general trend can be established is through systematic research and the authors have done no such research. It is not my role as a commentator to do this research for them. I am personally not interested in doing such research because I am not convinced that a decline in the area has occurred or is likely to occur in the foreseeable future.

Up to this point, the authors have provided unverifiable evidence of history of psychology courses being cut based on a sample of one. They have also provided unverifiable evidence of retiring historians of psychology not being replaced, also based on a sample of one. They now suggest that these alleged developments had far-reaching implications for graduate students in the field:

The implications of the reductions in courses and disappearance of some of the faculty positions were already being felt. The new PhDs who specialize in the field of history of psychology seemed to experience greater challenges and frustration in finding a university job.

This statement is interesting because it is the first and only time in the paper that the authors provide "evidence" of a decline that can be checked. The evidence that they provide is an article by Katalin Dzinás (1995) in which she says that history of psychology students were worried about whether they would get academic positions in the field. As a fellow student of Katalin Dzinás in the history and theory of psychology programme at York University at this time, I can confirm that such worries did exist. This is hardly surprising given the small number of positions that were available. However,

there was no sense in 1995 that the situation was any worse than it had been in the past and there is no suggestion in Dzinás' article to that effect. This is something that the authors themselves have added in order to provide further "evidence" of a decline. In fact, they have no evidence that would suggest that the employment situation for history of psychology PhD's was any better prior to 1994.

Many of our worries over academic positions turned out to be totally unfounded. I was offered a tenure-track position in 1994 before I had even finished my PhD and yet another in 1995 within 24 hours of graduating.⁵ Other graduates of the history and theory programme at York University who are now in tenure-track or tenured positions include Richard Walsh-Bowers, Daniel Burston, James Parker, Ian Nicholson, and Scott Greer. The list may not be exhaustive and it does not include the graduates who hold postdoctoral fellowships or other temporary positions. I do not know the situation in New Hampshire half as well but I am not aware of any problem with "mass unemployment" here. One can be sure that the programme would not continue to exist if there were. I am well aware that not every graduate of these programmes who wanted an academic position has been able to find one. While this can be upsetting for the individuals concerned, it should not come as a surprise. I do not know the percentage of graduate students in psychology, or in other disciplines, who end up in tenured academic positions, much less the percentage of these whose positions are in the same branch of the same discipline that they studied in graduate school, but I strongly suspect that the figures for both are less than 100%. Without any means of comparison, we cannot say with any certainty that the career prospects of students who specialise in history of psychology are any worse than they are in other areas of psychology or in cognate fields like history of science and, if so, how much worse they are. The existence of a few disappointed individuals does not enable us to conclude anything at all.⁶ Of course, I do not have statistics on employment patterns in the field from before or after 1994 but the authors offer no statistics on this subject either. It is surely up to them to provide evidence for their claim that the employment situation for history of psychology PhD's has deteriorated since 1994.

If it requires a huge leap of faith to accept the authors' claims of a decline in the area since 1994, then it requires an even greater leap of faith to accept

that this assumed decline is "due to a positivist backlash against the critical historiography that had emerged throughout the 1990's". On reading these lines, I wondered if the authors are aware that critical history of psychology as a movement emerged in the 1970's. This includes the work of figures like Franz Samelson, Benjamin Harris, and Kurt Danziger (Ash, 1983). If the authors are aware of this early work, they do not explain why the "critical historiography" of the 1990's was different from that of the 1970's and -80's and what it was about the former that was more offensive to "positivists" than the latter. It is Kurt Danziger's *Constructing the Subject* (1990) that the authors seem to be familiar with more than anything else and it is possible that they mistakenly associate the publication of this book with the emergence of this approach. The authors write: "Danziger's vision of the future of history of psychology appears to be in peril, ironically due to the success of his own work." The only evidence that they offer in support of this claim is yet another unverifiable anecdote about a nameless person in a nameless university who is alleged to have offended nameless "backroom architects" by using this book as required reading in a course. The same objections that were made to the author's "case study" apply here as well. We cannot be certain that the authors are telling this story in good faith. We do not know how reliable the source of their information is. We do not know if others who might have witnessed these events would report them in the same way. No part of the story can be checked.

If we take a look at some of the authors' sources of information that can be checked, it can be seen that they interpret these sources in an idiosyncratic way. I have already referred to the authors' tendency to read statements into the articles of Danziger (1994) and Dzinis (1995) that are simply not there. Yet another example of this tendency can be seen with a quotation that the authors attribute to Trudy Dehue: "It is my grounded impression that [critical] historians rubbing against psychologists' shoulders are more likely to evoke their irritation than their sympathy". A less alert reader may not have noticed that the word, "critical" in this quotation is placed in square brackets. This means, of course, that the word is not to be found in the original quotation. The convention of adding a word in square brackets to a quotation indicates that the word is "implied". In this particular case, the word is not implied and this is why it has not been used. Dehue is referring not just

to critical historians like Kurt Danziger but to historians like Hans van Rappard who advocate a very different approach. It is because of this that she uses the word, "historians" and not "critical historians". This is quite literally putting words into someone's mouth. The comment that Dehue makes is purely anecdotal. This has never been my "grounded" impression at all. But since the authors provide only one sentence from her article, with an additional word slipped in, it might be useful to reproduce the entire paragraph:

It is my grounded impression that historians rubbing shoulders with psychologists are more likely to evoke their irritation than their sympathy. The assessment, made by Danziger as well, that psychologists will not accept anything but mollification might well be largely mistaken. Most probably, cogent histories offering new perspectives, whether affirmative or not, are most likely to trigger their objects' interest. There are some reasons to believe (perhaps in hopeful anticipation) that the common tale of scientists tolerating only affirmation is, at least partly, based on misinterpretation. (Dehue, 1998; p. 659)

The authors re-state their view that history of psychology courses are disappearing due to a backlash against critical history and then make the outrageous claim that "Dehue (1998) echoes this view". They also go on to say: "We have witnessed the backlash that Dehue (1998) commented on." In fact, it can be seen from the above quotation that Dehue is offering a more optimistic view of the future of critical history than Danziger has been willing to provide. The authors' account of Dehue's article is questionable to say the least but the important point to be made here is that it can only be questioned because the source of their information has been provided.

Leaving aside the whole issue of the accuracy of these claims, we are still left with the problem that they are based on a sample of one. Even if it does turn out to be the case that Danziger's work has upset some nameless "backroom architect" in a nameless university, it provides no indication of a general trend. Once again, I can counter the authors' "case study" with my own. I often use Kurt Danziger's work as essential or recommended reading in my courses. The students in my critical history seminar are reading, "Does the history of psychology have a future?" as I write. No problems have ever resulted from this. When Kurt Danziger was a visiting speaker

in my department last year, the room was packed with faculty members and students from a wide range of specialities and his lecture was enthusiastically received. There were no signs of a backlash - or even "irritation" - to be found. Once again, I will make the point that I call this a "case study" with tongue very firmly in cheek. Neither the unverifiable events at the nameless university that the authors describe or the easily verifiable events that I describe at my own provide us with information about general trends.

I am beginning to sound repetitive and so this might be an appropriate place to stop. The authors have provided no serious evidence of a decline in history of psychology since 1994 and I do not believe that such a decline has taken place. Indeed, I have seen no evidence that would rule out the possibility that the area has expanded and grown during the same period. My own subjective - and admittedly "unscientific" - impression is that the latter is the more likely scenario of the two. Given that I do not accept that a decline has taken place, I cannot accept that critical history is responsible for this alleged decline. I have seen no serious evidence that a general problem with critical history exists. As Dehue (1998) points out, we will never convince our fellow psychologists that historical studies can make a serious contribution to the intellectual life of the discipline if we only tell them what we think they might want to hear.

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Endnotes

¹ I have not been able to cite page numbers for quotations (both here and elsewhere) since I was given only a "pre-print" of the paper in order to write this comment.

² See for example my discussion of Karl Popper's treatment of Hegel (Brock, 1992).

³ See also the web page for the area: www.ucd.ie/~psydept/pg_hist_phil.html

⁴ For further information on "chop" (as Graham Richards likes to call it), see its website: www.staffs.ac.uk/sciences/psychology/chop/chop.html

⁵ The first position was in "general psychology" at a liberal arts university in the USA. The second position was the one in Ireland that I currently hold which is in "history and theory of psychology".

⁶ I am, of course, referring to logical inferences here and not to whether or not one has any sympathy for the individuals concerned. That is a very different matter.

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Comment on Bhatt and Tonks: **Back to the Classroom...and Beyond**

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In "What lies in the future of teaching the history of psychology?" Gira Bhatt and Randal Tonks present a brief survey of the current status of the history of psychology course in the Canadian university undergraduate curriculum. They interpret these data, along with some of their first-hand experiences, to suggest that the future of teaching the history of psychology is indeed a grim one. They also propose, somewhat provocatively, that critical history - although it was the approach that attracted them to the field as graduate students - may now be responsible for what they see as the de-valuing of the history course by fellow faculty members and the administrative "powers that be", labeling this the "positivist backlash against the critical historiography that had emerged through the 1990s" (Bhatt & Tonks, p. 7, this issue).

As a new faculty member in the History and Theory of Psychology graduate program at York University, I share many of Bhatt and Tonks' concerns about the future of the history of psychology course. On a strictly personal level, it is easy to become discouraged by the lack of enthusiasm of fellow faculty members toward the history of psychology. It is somewhat frustrating to be called upon not only to teach, publish, and serve, but also to defend the fundamental value of these activities when the subject matter is historical, not quantitative, and the method critical, not experimental. I have certainly encountered these challenges in my first year as a faculty member at York; I was unexpectedly faced with making a case for the continuation of the undergraduate history of psychology course soon after I arrived. Because of budgetary concerns and the low course enrollment (the course is now an elective in the undergraduate curriculum), it seemed as though the future of York's

history of psychology course might be in jeopardy. However, in the spirit of the maxim "the best defense is a strong offence" let me offer some proactive thoughts on these issues.

Why teach the history of psychology?

As Bhatt and Tonks point out, the answers to this question have been discussed before, with typical justifications including those used to support the value of historical inquiry generally (avoid past errors, source of new ideas, etc.), and the [celebratory] history of psychology specifically (it has been a tradition, serves to self-legitimize, etc.). They also highlight Danziger's position that the [critical] history of psychology will be indispensable to the field because the internal tensions and subsequent fractionation of the discipline require contextual, historical, and critical interpretations to help provide the "big picture." I happen to agree with all of these points, but realize they may not resonate strongly with non-historian colleagues who may be just as eager to see the history of psychology (celebratory, critical, or otherwise) unceremoniously exported to other departments or programs. Given, however, that my colleagues do not occupy the seats in my classroom, I was eager to hear from my students why they wanted to *learn* about the history of psychology.

As I neared the end of my first term of teaching at York, highly conscious of decreasing course enrollments in history and looming budgetary constraints, I asked the students in my history of psychology class to fill out an informal survey in addition to the requisite course evaluations. I asked them, "What was your original reason for taking this course?". After the top-ranked "I needed a course to

fit my schedule," the most frequent reasons could be summarized as follows:

- to get an overview of the field
- to put the field in historical perspective
- to get a background/foundation for other psychology courses
- to learn about the social and historical context of the field
- to understand why we view psychology as we do today

These seemed to me like important and compelling motivations that at least superficially reflect a "big picture" justification for the course, despite Leahey's recent suggestion that psychology has become too fractionated even to be considered a single discipline. Admittedly, this assessment of students' motivation was gathered at the end of a class that emphasized a contextual, relativist, and critical approach. Students' responses to this question may have been unconsciously influenced by what they got, as opposed to what they were hoping for. However, the positive nature of almost all of the feedback about the course suggested that this was a satisfying and useful approach for most students.

Although one cannot read too much into such a small-scale endeavor, I tend to disagree with Bhatt and Tonks that critical historiography sounds a death knell for pedagogy. I believe there is a place for critical history and that this place can be carved out despite what Bhatt and Tonks identify as rumblings about "those theoretical types" among fellow faculty members. From a purely pragmatic perspective, course evaluations and enrollments speak for themselves. Teachers of the history of psychology must create a demand for their product from students, even if *they* feel that the value of learning history is self-evident. Many seasoned teachers have offered ideas for how to attract and keep students interested in history (see, for example, Bohan, 1990; Dagenbach, 1999; Furomoto, 1985). I am not suggesting that offering a stimulating course is a panacea for a problem that, as Bhatt and Tonks accurately point out, is historically complex and politically loaded. However, even they identify decreasing enrollment – whether real or imagined by those with no allegiance to the course – as a primary weapon in the armamentaria of the aforementioned "powers that be".

At a political level, historians of psychology must also be even-handed and diplomatic in their approach to their subject. Even for the critical historian there is room for celebration in the history of psychology, and imparting the message that positivist psychology is bad is not only tendentious (and not good history), but is inimical to the methodological and theoretical pluralism urged by postmodern critiques.

A good time slot also helps.

Final thoughts and lingering concerns

History of psychology will probably never be a course that students take because of its obvious or immediate practical or tactical payoffs. However, assuming that learning how to think critically, deeply, and with the benefit of historical perspective is still a goal of post-secondary education – and a goal for psychologists – a course in critical history may have important systemic payoffs both for individual students and for the discipline. Although we cannot impose this "long view" (to borrow and modify a phrase from Murray) on our colleagues or administrators, we can, in the short term, impress them with high enrollments and enthusiastic evaluations. I believe this goal is achievable at the undergraduate level, and that critical history is up to the task.

The force of my concerns at the present time bears on graduate-level training and beyond. Dzinis (1995) has highlighted the anxiety of PhDs in the area who see their future job prospects as particularly unfavorable. Indeed, it is one of the area's greatest liabilities that it has not created a job market for its PhDs. Faced with unfavorable prospects, many who would consider study in the area choose other fields where the career outcome is more certain. In turn, administrators and colleagues interpret low application numbers as a sign of, at best, low demand, and at worst, the inherent valuelessness of history/theory.

This problem may best be addressed by both top-down and bottom-up approaches. Getting undergraduates excited about the history of psychology and advertising opportunities to pursue graduate work in the field are certainly necessary. However, what is also required is the active effort of established historians to ensure that their positions will continue, that new positions will be created, and

that the value of critical historical inquiry and understanding is on prominent display before their colleagues. To be sure, this is a daunting task. One extremely visible and respected historian recently remarked that for all his work promoting the history of psychology, his colleagues will probably not think twice about replacing him with a non-historian (Benjamin, 2002, personal communication).

The solution to this challenge is not clear, and it may be that history will be the best indicator of the future of the history of psychology. Danziger (1994) and others have pointed out that psychologists have been interested in their own history from the very inception of the discipline, and perhaps for good reason. As Dilthey has written: "The totality of human nature is only to be found in history" (Dilthey, 1976, p. 176). This is one of the messages I will bring to my students next fall, when I teach undergraduate history of psychology at York for another year. I am hoping to help students become excited about critical history – and to fill a few more seats. Perhaps there will be a future historian in the crowd...

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Comment on Bhatt and Tonks:
An Insider on the Outside Looking In:
On the Future of the History of Psychology

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After reading Bhatt and Tonks (2002), "What Lies in the Future of Teaching the History of Psychology," it was clear to me that the study of the history of psychology - by both researcher and student alike - is not only an area under some contention, but that the entire field is somehow deeply and wonderfully paradoxical.

As historians, the questions we ask and the perspectives we take concerning psychology's past, as an area for both pedagogy and research, are obviously crucial. However, I would argue that it is not just the history of psychology that is at stake here, but also the future of psychology itself. As a popular and often required undergraduate course, future research will be conducted by scholars who have learned important lessons from the history of psychology, which is one of the main reasons why history is so powerful and so very important. In some vitally meaningful ways, the study of psychology's history is not just about its past, but also about its present. The present forms the horizon of our understanding, the rationale for the questions we ask, and the context within which we interpret our past and possible futures. Moreover, history is where we can engage our students and ourselves in the critical and reflexive process of re-thinking and revising our methods and questions in psychological inquiry. It is only through our sense of history that we and our field can change and evolve.

While Danziger (1994) notes that the "history of psychology" undergraduate course brings some much sought-after cohesion to the field, some have argued that "history is dead" (Fukiyama, 1993). I would argue that the "isms" that have characterized its history are neither being generated nor being utilized as consistently and widely as they once were. Instead, most research today is based on various "mini-theories" that have appeared over the past 25 years - most of which are driven from an empirical (i.e., a-theoretical) perspective. The grand theories embracing "isms" seem to have been replaced by a more problem-centered, solution-oriented approach to research. These pragmatic mini-theories can be seen throughout the area of cognitive psychology, for instance, which since its inception has evolved less as an "ism," and more as a set of diverse areas of applied research that investigate the relationships among cognition, behavior, and the environment. If psychology's history can largely be defined as the evolution of the "isms," then the "history" of psychology may be dead as well.

In any event, Bhatt and Tonks (2002) are surely correct in noting that the historiography of psychology has recently flourished as an area of research, while "the future of teaching the history of psychology" appears uncertain. They observed that while research in the area has blossomed over the past 10 years, improving in both quality and quantity,

those same writers are often *not* the ones hired to teach the university and college "history of psychology" courses. As Bhatt and Tonks (2002) illustrate with their examples, the job market that looked so promising for history and theory of psychology graduates now appears somewhat more bleak. As they succinctly conclude,

It seems to us that the more that historiography has gained, the more seems to have been lost at the pedagogical level. Historiography will likely continue to prosper, but we are not so optimistic about its pedagogical future (Bhatt and Tonks, 2002, p. 8).

Thus, these apparent paradoxes reveal the history of psychology to be both vibrant and dead (or dying), as more analytical of psychology's past yet more relevant to its future, and as expanding in areas of scholarship and research but apparently shrinking as a faculty/teaching position. How does one make sense out of this situation?

Although my crystal ball is frustratingly cloudy on this point, I would like to suggest one possible avenue of thought: in what ways has the *perception* of the history of psychology changed in the field? Just what do non-historians in psychology take the history of psychology to be, since historians of psychology make up an extremely small portion of psychology faculty (a mere 3% as estimated by Bhatt and Tonks, 2002). We must remember that it is the non-historians' ideas on the history of psychology that are crucial here, for they are the ones often making decisions about the future of the "history of psychology" course. This of course applies to potential job positions for history/theory specialists as well. Perhaps we should consider the evolution of the "history of psychology" course and history of psychology research - and indeed the very creation of the "new historian" of psychology.

What we can see rather clearly, thanks to Bhatt and Tonks (2002), is that the history of psychology undergraduate course has traditionally played an important role in the North American psychology curriculum, and even around the world. As Bhatt and Tonks (2002) point out, 37 out of 43 (86%) Canadian psychology departments offer at least one history of psychology course, 12 out of 20 (60%) programmes require this course for a Major and/or Honours degree, and APA accreditation depends on having such a course offered to students. This clearly

testifies to the importance of the history of psychology as a part of the undergraduate curriculum. Yet, what is and has been the understanding concerning the role of the history of psychology course, and why have so many psychologists (as well as APA) regarded it as not only important to but essential to many programs?

Bhatt and Tonks (2002) note that this is a question that has not been asked very often nor answered very well. They do hint at some answers in their survey of history of psychology textbooks, listing the two main reasons as "it has been a tradition" within psychology since before the field even had a history, and the course provides "a look at our illustrious ancestors" (p. 4). The rationale for the history of psychology is thus far from clear. However, if we ask the question a slightly different way, namely, what is the function of this course in the discipline and as a staple in the undergraduate curriculum, I believe we can reach some conclusions. For starters, I believe the answers given to this question by a non-historian and by a trained historian would be vastly different.

Which history of psychology?

Until very recently, the history of psychology was not regarded as a specific sub-discipline with its own specialists. However, in the past 20 years that has changed dramatically. There are now graduate programmes devoted to historical and theoretical psychology, interdisciplinary programmes and conferences on the history and philosophy of science, as well as an increasing number of researchers who share interdisciplinary and historical interests. And it is this population that has been largely responsible for the burgeoning history of psychology literature. Yet, we must remember that the history of psychology course became an integral part of the curriculum for many programs *before* both these institutional developments and the emergence of history of psychology specialists. Moreover, the "history of psychology" that has become the current disciplinary fixture was from the point of view of the *non-specialist*: those who understood this course to represent psychology's past accomplishments and how it became what it is today. According to this perspective, history was "a look at our illustrious ancestors" and "a tradition" within the field. These

history of psychology courses were often taught by senior faculty who took this opportunity to reflect on the scientific developments in the field (Bhatt and Tonks, 2002). As Bhatt and Tonks (2002) describe, this was more of an honor roll of the great thinkers, ideas, and experiments, or what historians today would call a presentist view of history: history told as the story of cumulative scientific progress, where the present is a better or more improved version of the past, and that this progress, although not without mistakes and false starts, is based on a realist, discovery-oriented notion of truth. There are no pressing concerns over the epistemological or ontological status of the field that emerge from such an approach, nor is there any trace of the critical perspectives we find today from writers in sociology of knowledge, feminist theories, and social constructionist and constructivist research. According to this "old history" view, history may contain "errors" in terms of the validity and reliability of historical data, but it is not problematic in terms of the meanings it brings to bear on our current state of knowledge and methods. This history of psychology functioned to consolidate and solidify disciplinary identity.

These were the years prior to the 1980s; for it was only after psychology's "Century of Science" (cf. Koch and Leary, 1985), when a small group of scholars emerged (e.g., Blumenthal, 1975, 1980; Danziger, 1979, 1980; Rieber, 1980) having reflected on Wundt and psychology's origins, that the "new history" of psychology was born. These researchers problematised the taken for granted "traditional" history of the field, asking questions that struck at the very heart of the field's professional identity. My point is not that these courses in "old history" were bad or that they contained wrong information, although I believe one benefit of specialization is a more accurate and thorough historical account. The key development here is the emergence of a new group of specially trained professionals:

The existence of the new, increasingly well-organized professional group provides the ground on which particular ideas, methods, and systems are projected as figures whose appearance unmistakably depends on the figure-ground relationship. (Danziger, 1979, p. 27)

It is fitting and perhaps more than a little ironic that Danziger (1979) should describe the emergence of

"psychology" in such a way, when just 20 years later the new historians of psychology have created a similar niche. In describing the disciplinary practices that created and sustain psychology, Danziger (1979) writes, "To be taken seriously, psychological ideas must now pass through the prism formed by the normative and institutional framework of the community of recognized specialists" (p. 28). If we substitute the word "historical" for "psychological" in the previous quotation, we find that our story of the history of the "history of psychology" has one final ironic twist: in creating a recognizable body of research and knowledge about psychology's origins and development, the new historian has recapitulated the story of psychology itself. This new area of expertise has become institutionally organized in universities and colleges, socially and professionally established in journals and research media, and methodologically codified; in short, it has become disciplined. And this disciplinarity, as Danziger (1979) himself points out, depends on the creating and meeting of some specialized need in the larger discipline, institution, or society:

The rise of new disciplines, like psychology, ...depends on the invention of a new role, that of the professional practitioner of the new science. Such new roles are frequently invented by individuals as an opportunity for improving their career chances (p. 29).

(Is it just me, or does this have a sort of eerie ring to it?)

The emergence of this new person, this historian of psychology, has brought a new identity into the fold; one that, along some fundamental lines, is opposite to the former "old historian" or "historian as chronicler." History is no longer a glowing look backwards, or a respectful perusal of accolades and accomplishments; it is no longer just for the curious who want to know how psychology became what it is: history has become dangerous and even subversive.

A key point, to which I would like to return, addresses the idea that while the "history of psychology" (as an area of research) has evolved tremendously in the past 20 to 25 years, the perception of the history of psychology among many psychologists and its relevance to pedagogy may have changed relatively little. I believe that some programmes are only just now finding out about this

new and revised history of psychology, and I do not believe most will like it (which is hardly surprising). As Bhatt and Tonks (2002) note in their illustrative example, they firmly believe the underlying reason for reductions in history courses and faculty is a "positivist backlash" against the critical historiography represented by recent historians (p. 8). I admit I am forced to agree, but how then can the new historian survive? How can there be a future for the history of psychology? Perhaps my own story can be of some help.

History of Psychology at UPEI

My own story is much more positive and optimistic than the one told by Bhatt and Tonks (2002), although I would certainly not argue that it in any way contradicts their report. I graduated from York University in 1999 from the History and Theory Option, and was quite simply terrified at the prospect of not finding a job. I also did not particularly enjoy knowing that on those rare occasions when there was a job posting with a history of psychology component, I would be competing against my fellow York graduates. I knew that specializing in the history and theory of psychology was hardly very practical or marketable, and that my post-structuralist and post-positivist leanings made me even less so (I have disavowed "social constructionist" and "postmodernist," since I find that these have become so overused as to be next to meaningless). I had been wisely advised at York (as had all History students) to specialize in a secondary area. For some, this meant developing or at least participating in an empirical research programme. I spent a year as a research assistant for Dr. Malcolm Westcott, from whom I learned about qualitative research, especially phenomenological approaches. Again, this was hardly a practical move, but it was (most importantly) one I could live with. Moreover, it was a decision to apply what I had learned from the study of the history of psychology.

I had always loved teaching, and had built up a fair amount of teaching experience when I graduated in 1999. This experience, rather than my historical or qualitative training, landed me my first full-time "assistant professor" position at Concordia University. It was not a tenure-stream position, but was a 3 year "limited term appointment." After just

one year at Concordia, I was fortunate enough to find and obtain a tenure-stream position at the University of Prince Edward Island.

To make a long story short, the faculty at UPEI were somewhat uncertain as to whether the "history of psychology" warranted a tenure-track position. After some deliberation over "history" versus "health psychology" candidates, I was hired in July 2001 with the full support of the department. Naturally, I was gratified and quite impressed by the department's recognition of the importance of the history of psychology, and as an undergraduate programme, it is regarded as a central part of the curriculum. After I calmed down (!), I began to suggest revisions to the curriculum that I believed would improve the history of psychology course and increase students' awareness of historical and theoretical issues in the field. These included:

- making the current half-year history course into two sequential (fall-winter) half-courses (or a full year course with two different titles). These half courses would be called (respectively): *"Psychology" from the Ancient to the Modern World* and *The Emergence of Modern Psychology*.
- creating a seminar-style course called "Critical Issues for Systems of Psychology," for fourth-year students that would review the main systems of psychology, and present various "critical issues" for discussion. These would even serve as topics for class debates (e.g., gender, the self, neuroscience, postmodernism, etc.). The department had previously used the history of psychology course as such a review (for students about to take the GRE, for instance). I was able to argue successfully that this course would serve this purpose much better. (Again, one is left with the impression that the history of psychology course had been seen as a kind of "honor roll" of great names, ideas, and experiments.)
- creating a "special topics" course on *Psychobiography*, which I am currently completing. The chair also informed me that such suggestions were always welcome, and that I should see this as an opportunity to develop new courses. I am already in the early stages of planning for a course on "Narrative Psychology and Qualitative Methods."

In short, my reception at UPEI has been little short of remarkable. The entire faculty has been very receptive to my suggestions, and I feel that, despite my critical historical perspective, I can sit down and chat with anyone in the department. However, my "success story" does not end there.

Shortly before I arrived, a student contacted me regarding the possibility of her completing an honours thesis under my supervision. I discovered that Julian Jaynes, the late Princeton professor of psychology and author of the controversial *The Origin of Consciousness and the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, had a summer home on the island which he shared with his family, had connections to the university, and had bequeathed his entire library to the psychology department. He also had left his home to the university along with an extremely generous endowment for scholarships, symposia, lectures, etc. This seemed almost too good to be true! As a result, I have been supervising the cataloguing of Jaynes' library and an honours thesis which investigates the possible sources of his unusual "bicameral hypothesis." Jaynes' collection of books and articles is extremely unique, and entirely characteristic of this diverse and interdisciplinary thinker. Ultimately, the department would like to see some of Jaynes' texts combined with works by or from other retired or esteemed colleagues in a "reading room," which would be used by faculty and students. For this purpose, I was fortunate enough to receive some modest but extremely helpful start-up grants to be applied toward hiring research assistants and purchasing materials. I also have been receiving departmental funding for my research assistant.

Furthermore, I have been given a research space that I am currently using to store and catalogue the Jaynes collection. However, in what I affectionately have entitled my "unlab," I also plan on conducting a qualitative study of so-called "self-esteem." Guided principally by the phenomenological and narrative research traditions, I will be supervising another honours student in 2002-03 on this project. An ambitious undertaking to be sure, but the point I am coming to is this: I am, even within the sub-discipline of the history of psychology, rather critical and even radical in my approach to psychology, but I have so far found a way to blend with the department. I believe this is based on two vital points: mutual respect and a willingness and ability to be flexible

and useful. I am not an "outsider" in this department, nor did they want such a person. And I believe most psychology departments do not want to hire an "outsider" to teach history (or anything else for that matter). Even though I see myself as an outsider, I am really an "insider" on the outside looking in. Somehow, in this disciplinary odd state of affairs, I am attempting to maintain a balance between critic and colleague, historian and psychologist, and insider and outsider.

So, what I would suggest, if my situation can be applied at all, is not to let the "historian of psychology" appear above or apart from one's colleagues—we are after all in no privileged position ourselves. Perhaps we can extend the critical and reflexive dialogues generated within the history of psychology in such a way as to encourage others to do the same in their own areas.

If change is to happen in psychology and in psychology departments, it will certainly only happen from within. In other words, if we define the role of the history of psychology as a separate critical field, with hard or rigid disciplinary boundaries, then we have objectified our subject matter to such an extent that we, ourselves, are guilty of the very same act that so many historians have criticized psychology for committing. I do not understand how the new historian can justify a detached position from contemporary practice, although it has been my perception that many historians of psychology feel this way. If we endeavour to be good historians, to accurately and meaningfully interpret the past, does that not *demand* a more active and participatory role in the present? A fair share of recent historiography involves critically and reflexively questioning the seemingly natural categories of our discourse by placing it within a social and historical context—should not this have an impact or consequence on practices today? What good is a conscience without a stinger?

Disciplining the History of Psychology

This critical turn in the history of the "history of psychology" signals the emergence of a new sub-discipline with its own research traditions and forms of knowing and knowledge. As noted earlier, witness the rise of graduate programmes in history of psychology (e.g., York University, University of

New Hampshire) and the emergence of more interdisciplinary programmes devoted to history of science in both North America and Europe. The non-specialist has been identified as not doing history properly, and a set of practices that represent knowledge as such have emerged. This active and growing group of specialists are quite tied to the teaching aspect of the field as well; indeed, we have seen that the ability to teach a history of psychology course is often regarded as an "opportunity for improving ...career chances" (Danziger, 1979, p. 29). I do not mean this analysis in any derogatory way, but the activity in the history of psychology has a remarkable analogue in the very subject matter we historians have studied—and, again, I think that it is incumbent upon us as researchers who study history, who are aware of the problems in historiography, to look reflexively at ourselves as part of the game, not as detached observers on the sidelines. This is precisely where the earlier analogy between the disciplinary practices in the historical emergence of psychology and the "history of psychology" (as a sub-discipline) breaks down (or *should* break down).

The founding of psychology in North America carried the assumption that this would be an experimental science, in the tradition of the natural sciences. All forms of psychological knowledge would thus conform and be evaluated according to the North American notion of science; there was no need for a "critical" or reflexive process to be added. Science, through rigorous, systematic, and precise observation, carries its own form of "critical" thinking. In fact, "critical thinking" is today widely presented in introductory psychology texts as a "show me" type of practice, where the act of observation is the determining factor. However, recent scholarship from a wide variety of writers (feminist theories, gay/lesbian research, sociology of knowledge, history of science, etc.) have critiqued this notion, and argued that "observation," by itself, is far from unproblematic. In short, it is the ready-to-hand, taken-for-granted assumptions, the ones that often are the building blocks for our present knowledge, that we must scrutinize most carefully. This extends not only to the practices of other areas, but also to our own highly prized, valued, and fought for discipline, the history of psychology. Teo's (1999) distinction among SCIENTIA, CULTURA, and CRITICA as subsystems of knowledge is extremely germane to

this point. We can understand the history of psychology as part of CRITICA, which Teo (1999) describes as having,

a monitoring and controlling function over SCIENTIA, CULTURA, and even over itself[;] by being self-critical CRITICA's status is different from the other knowledge functions, as its level of research is mostly meta-psychological—implying that it maintains a distance from the other subsystems of psychology for evaluation—and its subject matter is the critical study of psychology or psychological topics. (p. 3)

We historians, we are the conscience of psychology. And we must be a *conscious* conscience; one that not only critiques at "arm's length," but is ready to criticize and even revise itself as well. This "meta-psychological" level is, thus, the real difference between psychology's history and the "history of psychology." This reflexive capacity is what separates our future from psychology's past, and our promise from psychology's fate; it will be this decisive difference in the way knowledge is disciplined that will prevent historians from making the same mistakes as their constructed subjects.

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Comment on Bhatt and Tonks:

Teaching the History of Psychology: A Personal View

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What lies in the future of teaching the history of psychology? This is a difficult question to confront for as Bhatt & Tonks (this issue) have noted, the history of psychology is in full retreat as a pedagogical entity. The course is no longer viewed as an essential component of an undergraduate education in psychology, and it is rarely taught by faculty who have any specialized knowledge of the field. As depressing as these findings are, the outlook for the future is just as gloomy. Many of the faculty members who spearheaded the professionalization of history within psychology are now retiring and in most cases they are not being replaced by fellow historians. With no new faculty to promote its interests, the history of psychology is in danger of becoming a psychology version of Latin - a field of study that is supposed to be good for you, but one that is generally ignored.

Such a pessimistic prognosis demands further scrutiny. How can such an intellectually vital field as the history of psychology have such dismal prospects? How can the younger members of the field sustain their morale in the face of such an inescapably bleak future? As an historian of psychology and relatively new faculty member, I have had occasion to consider both of these questions at some length. Indeed, I can't think of a time when I wasn't contemplating the future of the history of psychology. What follows is a personal commentary on the future of teaching the history of psychology and on the viability of history as an area of specialization for graduate students. I write as one of the "new generation" of historians of psychology -

someone who began his professional life in the field and who has established a career as a full time historian within a psychology department.

I made the decision early on to specialize in the history of psychology, and thanks to the innovative programs at Carleton and York I was able to take both post-graduate degrees in the field. I was and remain fascinated by the history of psychology, but I was also made aware, at an early stage, of the off-beat nature of the topic. This was not "mainstream" psychology and I could not help but question its viability away from Carleton, York, New Hampshire and a handful of other outposts of psychological enlightenment. Like Bhatt & Tonks (this issue), I took some comfort in Danziger's (1994) well argued vision of the history of psychology as a source of intellectual innovation and critical awareness. It felt good to think of myself as part of an intellectually vibrant community, and there was something almost romantic in the image of the intellectual outsider challenging the positivist establishment! However, no amount of iconoclastic posturing could alter the fact that every issue of the *APA Monitor* featured page after page of job listings for clinicians and experimentalists and almost nothing for historians of psychology. I thought of abandoning the field on more than one occasion, but my interest in the topic was such that I eventually decided to stay and take a chance in the face of some long odds.

My first professional venture beyond the intellectually comforting confines of York confirmed my worst fears about my field of study. I went on a fellowship to a large, research intensive university in

the American mid-west. Within days, I came to realize the full meaning of the term "dust-bowl empiricism." The majority of the psychology faculty talked in a monotonous idiom of laboratories and data and one graduate student had the phrase "advancing science" taped to the top of his computer monitor. Students and faculty alike viewed my historical interests in the same way that they perceived my Canadian citizenship - not with interest or irritation, but utter incomprehension. Most had never heard of history as a topic of specialized research and they were totally unfamiliar with any of its leading publications or intellectual stars. Self-consciously scientific, and in the shadow of a large and well funded medical school, they could not imagine history serving in anything other than a ceremonial capacity. I had of course encountered these attitudes before. What was new to me was the marked indifference to any type of conversation that was not embedded in a narrow, quantitative format. Students and faculty were simply not interested in discussing the theoretical and philosophical issues involved in their research. They were too busy writing grants, collecting data, analyzing the results and doing anything else that might bolster their status *vis-à-vis* the medical school.

This venture into the empiricist heartland was unsettling, but it also prompted me to rethink my own commitments as an historian of psychology. I had been schooled on the idea that the history of psychology was important and that distinctions between history and theory and between different types of history - critical, celebratory, internal, external, etc - really mattered. I was convinced that critical history was somehow 'threatening' to the established positivist order and I thought that mainstream psychologists were actually listening to what we had to say. After spending a year in what I imagine was a fairly typical, research-oriented American psychology department I realized that my analysis of the role and significance of the history of psychology was based on a fundamental conceit. I had assumed that the field was important when in fact it was not even on the radar screen of most mainstream psychologists. The indifference to history and the paucity of jobs for professional historians of psychology had nothing to do with the intellectual content of the field - social constructionist, presentist, celebratory or otherwise. What was impeding the

growth of the history of psychology was the perception (reality?) that the field was irrelevant or at least not essential to the main business of psychology: data collection, quantitative analysis, and fund raising.

Although obvious in retrospect, this insight into the priorities of mainstream psychology was not easily attained. While I always knew that history would be a tough sell in psychology, I clung tenaciously to the belief that the advances made by the history of psychology as a scholarly field (new journals, specialized conferences, special issues of *American Psychologist*, etc.) would somehow be mirrored by advances in the number of faculty positions and course offerings. It was very disturbing to realize that this might not be the case. I eventually concluded that any chance I had of getting an academic job would depend not on my skills as "critical" historian but on my ability to market myself as a "generalist" who could handle a wide range of undergraduate offerings. This led me to shift my attention away from specialized, research intensive institutions and toward smaller, undergraduate universities where the institutional priorities were more teaching centered.

To my surprise, I discovered that there was a willingness in some undergraduate institutions to at least consider hiring someone with a history background. However this consideration seemed to depend more on the idiosyncratic dynamics of particular institutions rather than a deeply ingrained intellectual commitment to history as a "core" area of psychology. The pattern that emerged from my experience involved the retirement of a beloved senior faculty member from a relatively small department. The retiring faculty member taught the history of psychology course for years and had successfully promoted history as the "capstone" course for senior undergraduates. In these situations, many faculty were convinced that history was somehow "good" for the students. However, the apparent value of history was not in and of itself enough to spur the entire department to get behind the idea of hiring an historian of psychology. Many faculty were also motivated by a degree of self-interest. They were wary of upsetting the departmental equilibrium by introducing new specialities that might threaten and/or strengthen one of their colleagues. Strange though it may seem,

history in these institutions was constructed as a way of maintaining the departmental status quo. Confronted by these political realities, my old pose of "subversive" historian seemed quite absurd.

I had the good fortune of obtaining a tenure-track position, and since joining the Department my view of the history of psychology - as a course and as a field of scholarship - has continued to evolve. As an undergraduate course, I think history can play a variety of different roles for students and I do not feel obliged to limit myself to one particular 'goal.' I use the course for the 'ceremonial' purpose of establishing psychology as a distinct field of study and providing a brief introduction to some of the research traditions within the field. I also think the course helps link psychology to the tradition of a liberal arts education by providing psychology students with an introduction to basic philosophical concepts that they might not otherwise encounter. Finally, I think of history as a way of fostering a critical perspective - a big picture - to an otherwise fragmented undergraduate psychology experience. I realize, as Bhatt & Tonks point out, that some historians have suggested that psychology is no longer dominated by "schools of thought" and that students therefore do not need a course that puts these schools into perspective. However, "schools of thought" are not the only frame of reference for constructing a 'big picture.' The history of psychology can be organized conceptually around socially important themes such as gender, race, social control, religion, children, etc. - all of which help students locate psychology in a larger political, intellectual, and social context.

As a scholarly field, I still believe that history is important, but I don't expect the history of psychology to have any appreciable impact on the methodological practices, categories, or professional

priorities of mainstream psychology. I appreciate the political importance of articulating a discipline-wide rationale for the history of psychology, but after more than one hundred years of devaluing historical and philosophical thinking I do not believe that mainstream psychology will suddenly take an historical turn. Although this may sound rather despairing, I do not experience this lack of influence as a concern. My scholarly ambition now is not to influence the discipline as a whole, but to help sustain that minority of psychologists and students who have grown bored or disaffected by positivist fundamentalism.

This ambition - modest though it may be - is threatened when history of psychology positions and courses disappear. I share Bhatt & Tonks concerns for the future but I do derive some small measure of consolation from the history of the history of psychology. The institutional infrastructure of the history of psychology - Cheiron, APA & CPA History divisions, *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* - grew out of a positivist desert. These organizations and journals were all established by scholars who were trained as empirical psychologists and who gravitated toward history later in their careers. Although the current generation of psychology faculty are facing a different scholarly landscape, I am hopeful that the spirit of discontent and curiosity that helped launch the history of psychology as a specialized field of study will eventually reassert itself, giving rise to a new generation of psychologist - historians.

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