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Psychological Review Across the Century

This issue of the *Psychological Review* is the first issue of the first century of the new millennium. It is also the first issue of the *Review*'s 107th volume.

If one were actually to sit down and read through the past 106 volumes of the *Psychological Review*, one would be rewarded with a unique perspective on the growth, problems, pitfalls, and progress that have characterized the science of psychology. Documented in the pages of the *Review* are the issues that motivated—and sometimes divided—the gifted and formidable individuals who shaped and nurtured psychology as a scientific discipline in this country and in other countries around the world. The aspirations and functions of the American Psychological Association, which was founded in 1892, only 2 years before the first volume of the *Psychological Review* was published, are also documented in the *Review*'s early volumes. And, most important, the ideas, debates, findings, and issues that have motivated and defined the field of psychology across essentially its entire history as an empirical science are documented in—and frequently first appeared in—the pages of the *Psychological Review*.

The first issue of the *Psychological Review* appeared in January 1894, and the first article in that issue was a reprint of George Trumbull Ladd's presidential address at the 1893 meeting of the American Psychological Association, held at Columbia College in New York. Ladd began his address by saying,

> GENTLEMEN OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION: The time and manner of the organization of this Association seem to me significant of certain important truths which concern the science in whose behalf the organization has been effected. Without undue modesty we should perhaps speak of ourselves as the youngest—the most nearly embryonic—of all similar scientific bodies; and it is, of course, well known that many workmen in other lines of scientific endeavor, and even some of the most notable and helpful of ourselves, still deny that psychology is entitled to be called a "science." On the other hand, it is not unbecoming pride which leads us to maintain that no similar organization is more hopeful, more disposed to be creditably aggressive, than are we. For few, if any, of the most firmly established and highly accredited scientific associations can rely upon a more devoted and well-trained membership, or upon more interest—both popular and permanent—in the results of their researches and speculations, than can those formed for the cultivation, in the use of modern methods, of the science of psychology. (p. 1)

The pages of the first decade of volumes of the *Psychological Review* provide a provocative and instructive portrayal of the intellectual and cultural context within which the young science of psychology sought to define its questions, its methods, and its relationships to other, more mature, sciences and disciplines. It is not my purpose here, however, to characterize how the science of psychology developed and grew from its embryonic stage at the time of the founding of the *Psychological Review* 106 years ago. Any reader who has an interest in the history of the *Psychological Review* and the critical role it has played in the development of the science of psychology should consult the Special Centennial Issue of the *Review* that appeared in April 1994. Walter Kintsch and John Cacioppo (1994), in an introduction to that issue, provided a thoughtful and interesting description of the founding of the *Review* and of key trends and developments across the journal's history. They also, for that issue, selected and reprinted eight classic articles from the first 60 years or so of the *Review*, with invited commentary on each of those articles by distinguished scholars and scientists, and they reprinted Herbert S. Langfeld's 1943 article entitled "Jubilee of the *Psychological Review*: Fifty Volumes of the *Psychological Review*" in its entirety. Langfeld's article, as Kintsch and Cacioppo mentioned, is not only lively reading but also a truly valuable historical document. Articles in the *Review* by Joseph Jastrow in 1917 and Gardner Murphy in 1942—occasioned by the 25th and 50th anniversaries, respectively, of the American Psychological Association—are also instructive.

Perhaps the most rewarding activity, however, is to spend some time with the actual early volumes of the *Psychological Review* in one's hands. Examining the tables of contents across those volumes and reading selected articles provide a sense of that early era that is difficult for any retrospective article to capture. Beyond the empirical, theoretical, and methodological content in

those volumes, which Langfeld (1943) documented concisely and well, several other aspects of those volumes are striking.

1. From today's perspective, the selection of the editors and "cooperating" editors for the newly created *Psychological Review*—however that selection process was carried out—resulted in a remarkably distinguished group. James McKeen Cattell and J. Mark Baldwin were the journal's first editors, and the board of cooperating editors consisted of Alfred Binet, John Dewey, H. H. Donaldson, G. S. Fullerton, William James, George Trumbull Ladd, Hugo Munsterberg, M. Allen Starr, Carl Stumpf, and James Sully. Even after 106 years, all of these individuals are known to any student of the history of psychology, and some (e.g., Binet, Cattell, Dewey, and James) are truly major figures, not only in the field of psychology but also in the broader intellectual, societal, and scientific context of the past century.

2. In the history of American science, if not the history of science worldwide, the American Psychological Association is actually an old scientific organization, and the *Psychological Review* is a venerable scientific journal. George Trumbull Ladd, in his 1893 presidential address, said, rightly, "It cannot, indeed, be truthfully claimed that psychology has at present the same settled and accepted principles of method as those which belong—for example—to the modern sciences of physics and chemistry" (pp. 1–2). (He also said, a few sentences later, "On the other hand, I am bold enough . . . to predict that some of the most widely accepted of these physical formulas are destined to be thoroughly shaken up, in the not far away future" [p. 2], which proved to be a remarkably prescient prediction.) It is interesting, however, that the American Physical Society was not formed until 1899, which was 7 years after the American Psychological Association was formed.

3. The early era of psychological science was dominated by men—to the degree that George Trumbull Ladd could begin his 1893 presidential address with "Gentlemen of the Psychological Association." Individual women, such as Mary Whiton Calkins and M. T. (Margaret) Washburn—each of whom, in 1905 and 1921, respectively, served as president of the American Psychological Association—were pioneers and major contributors, but the attitudes and impediments that deterred women from being researchers and theorists were overcome only very slowly across the century. The changes, however, even if agonizingly slow, were eventually profound.

4. Across the first decade of the *Psychological Review*, the journal served the functions that are now served by a number of publications of the American Psychological Association, including, but not limited to, the *Psychological Bulletin*, the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *Contemporary Psychology*, and, of course, the *Psychological Review*. The *Review* also served many of the professional association functions now served by the *American Psychologist* and the *APA Monitor*. The fact that one journal of a single psychological association could serve those multiple functions for scientific psychology provides, by itself, an interesting commentary on the expansion of the field across the intervening century.

5. The *Psychological Bulletin* and the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, both of which have played such a major role in the science of psychology, each sprouted from the *Psychological Review*. The *Psychological Bulletin* split off in 1904, and the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* split off in 1916 (with J. B. Watson as its first editor). After 1916, as Langfeld (1943) summarized, articles that "were predominantly experimental appeared with decreasing frequency until the present policy of accepting only theoretical articles, or at least those with theory as the main theme, became firmly established" (p. 146). For about the past 84 years, therefore, as the field has expanded and the dominant themes in psychological research have evolved and changed, sometimes markedly, the *Psychological Review* has remained essentially unchanged in format and function. It has faced and survived multiple pressures and challenges across its remarkable history, and it remains the flagship journal for important theoretical contributions to *any* area of scientific psychology.

A central tenet of the Decade of Behavior Initiative, cosponsored by a broad range of behavioral science organizations, including the American Psychological Association, is that the behavioral sciences are uniquely relevant to the problems and opportunities that confront society as we enter a new century. The notion that basic and applied research in the behavioral sciences is a crucial societal resource is not a new idea. Gardner Murphy (1942), writing in the context of the horrors of World War II, began his article entitled "Psychology and the Post-War World" by pointing to the

crucial need for the special skills of psychologists in the war effort: "The problem is not to 'sell' psychology to Washington, but to supply Washington promptly and efficiently with what it wants. Psychology is in urgent demand in a hundred specialized services" (p. 298). He went on, however, to argue that the need for behavioral research in the postwar world might be greater yet: "The bitter experience of the last few decades has shown ever more clearly that reconstruction on an economic and military basis alone is *not* practical, that a reconstruction based on a very much deeper study of human needs, the basis of human interrelations, is the only thing that is practical at all" (p. 318). And George Miller, in his famous 1969 presidential address to the American Psychological Association, made an eloquent case for "giving psychology away."

What seems unique to this period, however, as we enter a new century, is the complexity of the individual and societal problems we must confront and the richness of the opportunities we must not fail to seize. Our science has also reached the point, as illustrated by the cumulative contents of the *Psychological Review* across its 106-year history, where we have much more to give away than ever before.——Robert A. Bjork, Editor

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