

Chapter One: The Relevance of the Past for the Present

PSY 495

History and Systems of Psychology

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The Development of Modern Psychology

- Oldest and newest scholarly discipline
 - Always fascinated by our own behavior
 - Modern Psychology begun in 1879
 - Difference between the two
- Relevance of the past for the present
 - Psychology is unique in that it offers a History of Psychology course
 - Fascinating story
 - Controversies in Psychology

Data of History

- Different than that used by scientists
- Problems with historical data
 - Lost or suppressed data
 - Distorted data
 - Self-serving data
- Conclusions?

Contextual Forces in Psychology

- Psychology does not develop in a vacuum
 - Culture
 - Economic opportunities
 - War
 - Prejudice

Theories of Scientific History

- Personalistic Theory
 - Focuses on achievements and contributions of specific individuals
- Naturalistic Theory
 - Times make it possible to recognize what specific individuals have to say

Schools of Thought and the Evolution of Psychology

- In the beginning
 - There was Wundt
- Then controversy
 - Different schools of thought came into being
- The history of psychology is characterized by the rise and fall of various schools of thought

Stages of Change in Science

- **Kuhn (1970)**
 - **History of psychology reflects two activities:**
 - **Normal Science**
 - ◻ Relatively calm periods during which scientists work to “broaden and deepen the explanatory scope of a theoretical account based on a single set of fundamental beliefs. For the most part these beliefs are not questioned.”
 - **Revolutionary Science**
 - ◻ “brief periods of chaos when the fundamental beliefs that previously supported normal science” are replaced

Stages of Change in Science

- **Normal science is characterized by holding a paradigm**
 - **Paradigm:**
 - ◻ “Unique combinations of ontology, epistemology, and methodology” which are “so fundamental that they are immune from empirical testing”
 - **Ontology**
 - ◻ The fundamental entities of the world/universe
 - **Epistemology**
 - ◻ The questions that can be asked about the entities of the world
 - **Methodology**
 - ◻ How the questions are asked and answered

Stages of Change in Science

- **It is impossible to demonstrate the superiority of one paradigm over another**
 - Using two different sets of rules
- **Change comes about through social consensus**
- **Because paradigms rule how scientists make sense of the world, changing paradigms is a cataclysmic event; hence the term revolution**

Stages of Scientific Progress

- **Preparadigmatic Stage**
 - No agreement on underlying assumptions
 - Many different schools of thought
 - Failure to build a body of knowledge
- **Paradigmatic**
 - Normal science
 - Consensus on a paradigm
 - Assumptions of paradigm not questioned
 - Body of knowledge builds

Stages of Scientific Progress

- **Revolution**
 - Anomalies grow to a point that a large number of scientists question current paradigm
 - Paradigm is replaced with a competing school of thought

Where is Psychology?

- **Field remains fragmented**
 - Each group clings to its own ontology, epistemology, and methodology
 - Has its own specialized jargon, journals, etc.
- **Each theoretical orientation began as a protest against the prevailing system**
 - Pointed out the weaknesses and offered new definitions, conceptualizations, etc.
- **Many different schools of thought have rose to prominence in Psychology**

So, Where is Psychology?

- While some older schools of thought may not be around their influence remains.
- Psychology remains in the preparadigmatic stage

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