PART I

HISTORICAL, THEORETICAL, AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
CHAPTER 1

Women as Subjects, Actors, and Agents in the History of Psychology

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The purpose of this chapter is to provide readers with a brief overview of the history of the psychology of women. This is not as simple as it seems. There are a number of different lenses through which one can examine the history of women and psychology. These include (1) the history of women in psychology (e.g., women as the agents of psychological research), (2) the history of psychology about women (e.g., women as the subjects of theory and research), and (3) the history of organizations concerned with the psychology of women. The definition of the field has also differed, so that even within the English-speaking world (the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States) some organizations have defined themselves as being interested in feminist research rather than the psychology of women. Feminist scholarship is not necessarily conducted by women and often examines both women and men. Feminist psychologies exist in a variety of forms as well. Their focus has changed and developed over time (M. Crawford & Marecek, 1989b; Unger, 1998).

Research by and about women is also influenced by the organizational and intellectual climate of the time. This context influences what questions are asked as well as how they are answered. Different questions were posed when women existed as an isolated and invisible minority within psychology than are asked today. Some questions, moreover, “fit” better into the theoretical and disciplinary structure of psychology at a particular time. Some of the questions that were asked by women psychologists in a previous feminist era were erased by official histories of the field (cf. Bohan, 1992a). Yet, some of these questions appear to be surprisingly modern and are still relevant today.

An important question for those interested in history is: Why are some issues seen as vital and compelling and others ignored? At this point, one may move from the history of psychology to critical psychology, which is concerned with the role of values and politics in the creation of knowledge (see D. Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997; Ibanez & Iniguez, 1997). These are issues that feminist psychologists have been concerned with for a long time (cf. C. Sherif, 1979; Unger, 1983; Wallston, 1981). As outsiders, women psychologists looking at psychology looking at women have had much to offer this emerging field.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN IN EARLY PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Although the study of the psychology of women has been an established subdiscipline within psychology for only 27 years (dating from the establishment of a division of the American Psychological Association devoted to this area in 1973), females have, of course, been studied by psychologists far longer. Most of the early studies were conducted from an individual difference perspective derived from Sir Francis Galton’s work in the 19th century. This work had a weak theoretical framework and can justly be called both sexist and racist (cf. S.A. Shields, 1975a;
S.J. Gould, 1981; Lewin, 1984). For example, Galton concluded that “women tend in all their capacities to be inferior to men” (cited in Lewin & Wild, 1991, p. 582). He also concluded that people of color were inferior to White English men (sic!), and he measured larger psychological “deficiencies” the more his subjects deviated from his Anglo-Saxon norm (S.J. Gould, 1981).

Women were also the “favored” subjects of psychoanalytic work by Freud and his followers. There have been many excellent critiques of Freud’s views of women that I will not repeat here (see Chesler, 1972; Griscom, 1992, Hare-Mustin, 1983; Lakoff, 1990; Lerman, 1986). Most of these critiques focus on Freud’s confusion between biological and sociocultural forces and the power he had to force his definitions of reality on his patients. It is noteworthy, however, that one of his female students, Helene Deutsch, wrote the first book titled *The Psychology of Women*, which was published in 1944. In this book, Deutsch focused on the important role of eroticism and motherhood in the lives of women. But, like her mentor, she saw women as narcissistic and as having more vulnerable psyches than men and stressed the idea that masochism was a major source of problems for women.

**EARLY PIONEERS IN PSYCHOLOGY FOR WOMEN**

It is certainly no accident that critiques of theories of women’s inferiority began to emerge early in the 20th century. This was the period of the first wave of political and social feminism in the United States and Great Britain and focused on the demand for voting rights for women. There were, however, few women psychologists who had been trained to make such critiques.

Laurel Furumoto and Elizabeth Scarborough (1986; Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987) have done a great deal of work toward replacing women in psychology’s history. They have focused on the first generation of women psychologists in the United States. These include such well-known women as Mary Calkins, who became the first woman president of the American Psychological Association in 1905, and Margaret Floy Washburn, who was elected as that organization’s second woman president in 1921. Nevertheless, “They were the only women to serve as president of the APA during its first seventy-nine years. Following Washburn, it was to be fifty years—a full half century—before another woman was elected to that honored office” (Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987, p. 173).

Another illustrious member of this cohort was Christine Ladd-Franklin, whose name is still associated with an important theory of color vision. Ladd-Franklin was 20 years older than Calkins and Washburn and was the only one of the three women who objected to the exclusion of women from collegial networks, especially from an influential group known as The Experimentalists founded by Titchener in 1904. Women were explicitly banned from this group until 1929, when it was reorganized a few years after Titchener’s death. Almost no important male psychologists objected to the exclusion of women, even those women who had been their doctoral students (see Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987, for the full story of this shameful episode).

This exclusion from what became known as the Society of Experimental Psychology appears to have had an impact on women psychologists for a long period after it officially ended. Few women were elected to membership in the society and the percentage of women psychologists who became experimentalists remained low. Until the 1980s, there were few women experimental psychologists on the faculty of large research institutions. Both Calkins and Washburn continued their careers as faculty members at exclusively female institutions that focused on undergraduate education. Ladd-Franklin was able to teach an occasional graduate course at Columbia University (where her husband was on the faculty) but was awarded only part-time lectureships and occasionally taught without pay (Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987).

Although these careers may seem lackluster for women psychologists today, other women in this cohort have been even more invisible in histories of psychology. Furumoto and Scarborough (1986) found differences in women’s career trajectories to be dependent on whether they had married. Women who married were no longer considered to be professionals and were denied academic appointments of any kind. Women who married other psychologists or men employed in other academic fields were more likely to retain ties to the profession, although they, too, were unlikely to receive university appointments because of nepotism rules. This pattern persisted in later cohorts of women psychologists who were married to prominent men in the field. Such women, many of whom have made impressive contributions to the field, include Leta Hollingworth, Georgene...
Seward, Carolyn Sherif, Janet Spence, Helen Astin, and Jeanne Block. Until recently, their work was often attributed to their more well-known husbands (M.D. Bernstein & Russo, 1974).

**WOMEN AND THE STUDY OF SEX DIFFERENCES**

Because their differences from men were used to exclude them, it is not surprising that those women who continued to conduct experiments were attracted to questions about sex differences. For example, Leta Hollingworth and Helen Montagu examined the hospital weight and length records of 2,000 newborn boys and girls to test the Darwinian hypothesis that males were innately more variable than females. They did not confirm this hypothesis (S.A. Shields, 1975b). Helen Wooley Thompson examined the mental abilities of adult males and females in her doctoral research and repeatedly found more similarities than differences between them (R. Rosenberg, 1982; Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987). These studies remained largely invisible to later generations of researchers. Studies that failed to confirm dominant theories were unlikely to remain part of psychology’s official history (Unger, 1979b).

An interest in sex differences continued to engage successful generations of women psychologists. For example, Georgene Seward, an activist on behalf of women in psychology during the period around World War II, later coauthored a little-known book in this area (J.P. Seward & Seward, 1980). Both Anne Anastasi and Leona Tyler, the third and fourth women presidents of APA, who were elected in the early 1970s, were interested in individual differences, although neither appeared to be concerned with gender equality. Only in 1979 did APA elect a woman president, Florence Denmark, with an explicitly feminist agenda. She provocatively titled her presidential address “Psyche: From Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the Boat” (1980).

Even modern work demonstrating sex similarities rather than differences tends to be altered as it becomes part of psychology’s official record. For example, Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin (1974) found few confirmed sex differences and many sex similarities in their landmark survey of sex differences studies. Although this survey is discussed in virtually every introductory psychology textbook, the few sex differences are much more apt to be mentioned than the much more numerous sex similarities (Unger, 1998). A similar bias in favor of sex differences has also been found in textbook discussions of Gilligan’s studies on the ethic of care (Hurd & Brabeck, 1997).

**THE DEPRESSION, WORLD WAR II, AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN PSYCHOLOGY**

Although the percentage of female members of APA rose to 18% by 1923, women continued to be excluded from professional roles similar to those of men. Under the guise of maintaining “quality control,” APA (prompted by E.G. Boring who had been Titchener’s most important doctoral student) instituted a two-tiered membership arrangement in 1926. All the current membership became fellows, but new members became associates who had to be elected to fellow status by the usually all-male council. By the early 1940s, women psychologists recognized that this system had restricted their position within APA. “The statistical evidence was indisputable: while the percentage of women in the society had risen from 18 to 30% between 1923 and 1938, the number of women fellows rose only 1%, from 18 to 19%” (Capshew & Lazlo, 1986, p. 160).

Women psychologists had little opportunity to do the kind of research that was rewarded by their predominantly male professional organization. Few held academic positions. By 1938, 76.3% of the male members of APA held academic positions, compared to only 37.6% of the female members (M.R. Walsh, 1985). Those women who did obtain jobs in academia were concentrated in two areas: educational and child psychology (Rossiter, 1982).

The Great Depression reduced career opportunities for male and female psychologists alike. In fact, one reason for the formation of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) in 1936 was to find ways to deal with the high unemployment among young psychologists (Stagner, 1986). Although this organization had many progressive views about contemporary political and economic issues (cf. B. Harris, Unger, & Stagner, 1986), it also excluded women from positions of leadership. During its first 25 years, only four women served as officers of SPSSI, and
the organization’s first woman president, Marie Jahoda, served from 1955 to 1956—almost 20 years after SPSSI’s founding (Capshew, 1986; Unger, 1986). A second woman president, Marcia Guttentag, was not elected until 1971.

World War II offered many job opportunities to male psychologists, including testing of recruits, training for special duties such as aviation, and the development of user-friendly wartime technology. Women of course, were excluded from these activities. They formed an organization called the National Council of Women Psychologists to explore ways that their training and experience could help the war effort. By 1943, the organization had 261 members: 19% of the qualified women psychologists in the United States (M.R. Walsh, 1985). Although the organization was able to gain representation for women on various wartime committees, it was unable to effect any meaningful social change. By the end of the war, fewer than 40 women psychologists had served in the U.S. Armed Forces compared to more than 1,000 of their male counterparts (Capshew & Lazlo, 1986).

Work in and for the armed forces provided men with collegial networks that proved to be very valuable in their later careers. Wartime professional activities, moreover, produced a shift toward more applied and service activities—previously seen as feminine areas of psychology. Women became marginalized in these areas as well, and the war produced a relative erosion in the status of women psychologists. (See Capshew & Lazlo, 1986, for a detailed analysis of gender politics during and after World War II.)

The autobiographical recollections of women in psychology during these years also attest to their marginalization. Several women were employed, for example, as university teachers during World War II and let go once male psychologists were again available (see O’Connell & Russo, 1983). Like the pioneering cohort, many of these women found permanent employment at women’s colleges.

A few women continued to explore the reasons for women’s low status relative to that of men. Many eminent men in the field agreed that there was indeed a “woman problem,” as shown by the underemployment of women psychologists following World War II, but denied that there was any systematic discrimination against women. They believed that women were biologically and culturally unsuited for high-status careers and blamed women themselves for their lack of progress. During the war, however, E.G. Boring (who considered himself the self-appointed gadfly of the APA) collaborated on a series of articles with Alice Bryan, a psychologist who had been unusually successful in having an impact on wartime decision making (Capshew & Lazlo, 1986; M.R. Walsh, 1985).

This collaboration was problematic because Bryan was a feminist and Boring was a conservative in a variety of areas, including the role of women. He believed, however, that their biases would cancel each other out and produce an objective account of the issues involved (Boring, 1961). But although he was able to water down Bryan’s assertions in their published articles, Boring felt compelled to write his own view of the “woman problem” a few years later (Boring, 1951). In this article, Boring explained the continuing low status of women in the profession as due to their lack of productivity and unwillingness to work long hours in the laboratory. He considered this to be not sexism but “realism.” He recommended that women who sought prestige write books (preferably with general, not specific, themes) and to consider the effect of marriage. Privately, he was more blunt about the impact of marriage: “If married, they have more divided allegiance than the man. If unmarried, they have conflict about being unmarried. Although I did not say that. It seemed too infuriating to say” (Boring, 1951, cited in Capshew & Lazlo, 1986, p. 174). Boring’s article marked the end of the public discussion about the role of women psychologists. Feminist protest did not reappear in organized psychology until the late 1960s, when the social climate was more supportive of efforts for social change.

One might ask why more women did not protest their exclusion and why the organizations formed by women psychologists during World War II did not produce meaningful change and ceased to exist shortly afterwards. It seems to me that one of the major problems at this time was the lack of a structural analysis of “the woman problem.” Many of the women involved in psychology at this time had internalized societal norms about women’s roles and were unable to differentiate between their own problems as individuals and those produced by their membership in a socially marginalized group. For example, Ruth Tolman (who, as the wife of a prominent faculty member at
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Berkeley and the sister-in-law of Edward Tolman, was less marginalized than many women psychologists of her time) wrote in a letter to Boring: “I always find it hard to abstract ‘being a woman’ from being a particular woman and tend to hold responsible my particular idiosyncrasies rather than my sex for the particular arrangements of my life” (1946, cited in Capshew & Lazlo, 1986, p. 177). Mary Henle, another prominent psychologist of this era, also made an explicit statement about this kind of confusion in her autobiography when she discussed the sexism and anti-Semitism that were prevalent in psychology during the depression of the 1930s and later: “It is hard to say whether, as a woman, I had special difficulty in finding employment, though I suppose I did. In addition to the scarcity of positions, anti-Semitism was prevalent and often explicit. Thus, if I did not get a job for which I applied, I could not know for sure whether I lacked the qualifications, or whether it was because I was a woman or Jewish” (1983, p. 227).

One of the major differences between the 1940s and the 1960s was the lack of a network of women who could share stories of injustices and recognize them as general rather than particular problems. One of the few women who recognized the structural nature of sexism was Georgene Seward, who wrote a number of articles and books with such titles as *Sex and the Social Order* (1946) and “Race, Sex, and Democratic Living” (G.H. Seward & Clark, 1945). Seward’s understanding of the generic nature of prejudice may have been facilitated by the fact that she had been a student of Leta Hollingworth. However, because few women were involved in graduate training, there was little opportunity for similar “female dynasties” to emerge. There was no one left to inform younger women of this history that had largely been written out of formal histories of the field.

In the United States at least, there have been many efforts to recover women in the history of psychology (see, e.g., Bohan, 1992a; O’Connell & Russo, 1991). Of necessity, this chapter sketches only the general outline of the role of women psychologists in the field as a whole. However, a number of more specialized histories of women in particular subdisciplines of psychology also exist. These include the history of women in social psychology (compare, e.g., Berscheid, 1992, and Lott, 1991b, for nonfeminist and feminist versions of this history), clinical psychology (Marecek & Hare-Mustin, 1991), experimental and cognitive psychology (Morawski & Agronick, 1991), and the history of women doing social issues research (P.A. Katz, 1991).

**The Second Wave of Feminism and the Development of Women’s Networks**

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, women were largely absent from professional psychology. Only about 11% of women psychologists participated in APA’s annual convention in 1956 and the figure had risen to only 14% in 1966 (Mednick, 1978). These numbers only partially convey the isolation of women psychologists both within the university environment and, especially, when we ventured into the “outside world” of conferences and conventions.

One reason for this absence was the persistent sexual harassment reported by women who attended professional meetings during this period: “Women graduate students were courted, ogled in elevators, invited to the bar and to parties, and pursued by the most eminent of men within our discipline. . . . These contacts were sexist and shallow” (Lott, 1995b, p. 315). Similar “war stories” have been told by a number of women who were active conference attendees during this period (cf. Chesler, 1995; M. Crawford, 1997b; Unger, 1998; Weisstein, 1977).

Another indicator of the scarcity of women at these meetings is the small number involved in APA convention programming during this period. In 1965, for example, 12 women chaired symposia or delivered invited addresses at APA. Presumably, somewhat more women appeared in symposia or gave papers, but these figures are minuscule when one considers that over 1,700 participants were listed in the program. Only two presentations were on the psychology of women: a symposium chaired by Jessie Bernard (a sociologist) on low-income family patterns and a presentation on need achievement in women (Unger, 1998).

In 1966, there were two symposia on the psychology of women, none in 1967, and two again in 1968. The number of convention presentations was growing during this period, but only 14 women chaired symposia or made invited presentations in 1966, 17 did so in 1967, and 23 in 1968. Nineteen women appeared in featured positions in the 1969 APA program, but this program contained the first harbinger of change—a symposium chaired by JoAnn Evans Gardner with what
must be the longest title in APA history: “What Can the Behavioral Sciences Do to Modify the World So That Women Who Want to Participate Meaningfully Are Not Regarded as and Are Not in Fact Deviant?”

The APA convention in 1970 was strikingly different in terms of the presence of feminism in its program. Eleven symposia were presented that included such titles as “Women Psychologists: Psychologists? Militants?”; “A Monkey on the Psychologist’s Back: The Evolution of Women”; “The Fall and Rise of Feminism”; and “Social Psychology and Women’s Liberation.” Names that would become familiar to those interested in the psychology of women began to appear on the program. These included Martha Mednick, Sandra Tangri, Matina Horner (all of whom knew each other at the University of Michigan), Judith Long Laws and Naomi Weisstein (who were involved in feminist activist politics in Chicago), and Nancy Henley, another founding member of the Association for Women in Psychology (AWP).

The surge of feminism could not have been predicted from earlier APA programs. In fact, the women who had been active in the earlier APA conventions were not the women who sponsored these feminist symposia. Instead, feminist activity within APA was provoked by AWP, whose behind-the-scenes activities during this period have been recounted by Leonore Tiefer (1991).

Most of these programs were sponsored by Division 9 of APA (also known as SPSSI), although several other APA divisions had a greater number of women members. There was no connection between the proportion of women members, or even women’s contributions to the programs of particular divisions, and feminist programming. For example, although Divisions 12 and 16 (Clinical and School Psychology) had 54 female symposia chairs or invited speakers during the years 1965 to 1973, they sponsored only four symposia on the psychology of women. In contrast, SPSSI had 40 female chairs or speakers but sponsored 20 feminist symposia during these years.

SPSSI’s support in this area was due to the organizational involvement of AWP activists such as JoAnn Gardner (who was a member of SPSSI’s executive committee during this period) as well as more mainstream feminists. The latter were part of APA’s ad hoc Task Force on the Status of Women, which was responsible for the formation of Division 35. This task force was chaired first by Helen Astin and later by Martha Mednick (Women’s Program Office, 1993).

By 1971, the task force was cosponsoring APA symposia such as one entitled “Clinical Psychology and Theories of Feminine Personality.” In 1971, there were 8 symposia on the psychology of women, 17 in 1972, and 14 in 1973. By 1974, a division on the psychology of women (Division 35) had been formed and its programs became an official part of APA. The division sponsored 11 symposia in its first year (Unger, 1998).

What does this history tell us? Programs on the psychology of women did not ignite spontaneously under the influence of the burgeoning feminist movement. Organizational activism both inside and outside of APA was necessary for networks to develop, programmatic themes to coalesce, sympathetic divisions to be identified, and symposia to be proposed. These things are not easily done in ignorance. The women who were involved in the early feminist programs had also been involved in other APA programs over time. (Their involvement can be documented in programs from 1965 through 1970—not always on topics related to women, but almost always with some social issues theme.) Once the new division was formed, however, new names also began to appear in these programs (Unger, 1998).

THE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY OF THE FIELD

Continuing sexism, both personal and professional, led to renewed attempts at organization on behalf of women. Details about the climate of the times may be found in Leonore Tiefer’s (1991) history of the founding of AWP. For example, book titles were unabashedly sexist and heterosexist, positions were advertised for men only, and if women were interviewed for positions, they were routinely asked about their marital and childbearing plans.

AWP began from informal conversations at meetings of graduate students and younger academic women who had been influenced by popular feminism (the National Organization for Women [NOW] was founded in 1966). It was an enormous relief to share experiences with other women who were having difficulty getting positions, were underemployed, and, somewhat later,
were encountering difficulties obtaining tenure. The women also shared stories about the difficulties of finding mentors, juggling roles, sexual harassment, and the alienation we felt from being in a virtually all-male environment (Unger, 1998).

This younger cadre of conference attendees were the foremothers of AWP. AWP virtually hijacked the official business meeting at the APA convention in 1969, demanding that APA make restitution for its contributions to the devaluation of women (Tiefer, 1991). Their demands and “unladylike behavior” forced APA to appoint an ad hoc Task Force on the Status of Women in 1970 (Mednick, 1978). This task force became the Committee on Women in Psychology (CWP) in 1972 (Russo & Dumont, 1997).

Unlike AWP, CWP was formed to work from within rather than outside the organizational structure of the APA. As one might expect, CWP was initially less radical and activist than AWP; it comprised more established academic women as well. CWP decided that an important step in legitimizing women in psychology would be to create a division of APA on the psychology of women. Accordingly, they engaged in a petition campaign within the APA membership and acquired enough signatures and commitments to induce the APA Council of Representatives to accept the division (Mednick & Urbanski, 1991).

The goals of the division, as first stated, were not particularly activist in nature: “To promote the research and study of women, including both biological and socio-cultural determinants of behavior. To encourage the integration of this information about women with the current psychological knowledge and beliefs in order to apply the gained knowledge to the society and its institutions” (excerpted from Article 1.2, Division 35 By-Laws). Instead, the organizers stressed the scientific value of scholarship on women. Of course, this was partly a strategy to obtain legitimacy from the male establishment, but it also reflected the professional commitments of many of the senior women who organized the campaign.

Most, if not all, of these women were unaware of the existence of AWP, a group mostly comprising graduate students, new Ph.D.s, and clinicians who had no academic affiliation. AWP, in turn, was not involved in the efforts of CWP in organizing a division on the psychology of women because most of its members were either not members of APA or uninterested in or hostile to the formal professional organization.

In spite of a rather contentious beginning (see Unger, 1998), the division quickly became a force within APA. Over 350 people applied for membership applications during its first year. The early membership was, as it remains, 93% female. During the 1970s, a majority of the membership held academic positions, although this has changed (as has APA) in the direction of a larger percentage of clinicians in private practice. The membership came from virtually every subdiscipline of psychology, though primarily from clinical and counseling psychology, with a surprisingly small 8% from social and an even smaller percentage from experimental psychology (Unger, O’Leary, & Fabian, 1977). Of course, no one was trained in the psychology of women. We had the joys and the challenge of helping to develop the field.

Since 1973, the division has grown enormously in size and influence (see Russo & Dumont, 1997). For example, it established the journal the Psychology of Women Quarterly, whose first issue appeared in 1976. It sponsored an increasing number of convention programs at the annual convention of the APA (reaching a high of 51 hours in 1996). It sponsors a number of research awards, both for senior scholars and for graduate students in various subfields of the psychology of women, such as clinical psychology and research on women of color. It sponsors workshops on developing curricula in the field as well as on the development of feminist approaches to clinical training, theory, and practice. One of the division’s most recent activities is a book series on specific issues in the area. The first book in this series, Bringing Cultural Diversity to Feminist Psychology, was edited by Hope Landrine and published in 1995.

Division 35 has also played an important role in the political life of its parent organization, APA. It sends several representatives to the governing council of that organization, was instrumental in organizing a women’s caucus, and has been a champion of minority rights issues throughout its existence (Russo & Dumont, 1997). Two presidents of the division have subsequently been elected president of APA: Florence Denmark and Norine Johnson. Several other female presidents of APA have been active members of the division.
SOME COMPARISONS AMONG FEMINIST PSYCHOLOGICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD

From the vantage point of a strong presence of women in U.S. psychology’s organizational hierarchy, it might appear that expanding psychology’s knowledge base and increasing the power of individual women psychologists were inevitable developments once the “woman problem” was explained and understood. It is important, therefore, to explore the history of feminist organizing in other parts of the English-speaking world (space limitations preclude the inclusion of non-English-speaking national organizations).

In Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, as in the United States, women psychologists responded to the second wave of societal feminism by developing organized groups devoted to both political action and change in the intellectual content and methodology of their field (Getz, 1997; Pyke & Greenglass, 1997; S. Wilkinson, 1990a, 1990b). These attempts took somewhat different forms, aroused varying levels of opposition from the primarily male psychological establishment in each country, and had different outcomes.

As in the United States, organizational efforts were preceded by attempts to restructure the field’s knowledge about women. However, proposals involving this new knowledge had difficulty being accepted by established disciplinary structures. For example, a session on the psychology of women was rejected by the program committee of the Canadian Psychological Association in 1972 because “it didn’t fit in anywhere” (Greenglass, 1973, p. 11). After repeated and futile attempts to pass the screening, six women psychologists organized an underground independent symposium held in conjunction with the official meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association. Although CPA actively opposed this action, the symposium was well attended (Pyke & Stark-Adamec, 1981). A symposium on sex roles was accepted as an official part of the program for the annual meeting the following year (Getz, 1997). The creation of the Task Force on the Status of Women followed quickly and became the basis for the foundation of the Section on Women and Psychology (SWAP), which was recognized as an official section of the CPA in 1976.

The establishment of an official section on the psychology of women was much more problematic in the United Kingdom. Although a session on sex-role stereotyping and psychology was presented at the annual meeting of the British Psychological Society (BPS) in 1975 and an international conference on this subject was held in Cardiff in 1977, official recognition of a section on the psychology of women came only after a considerable amount of conflict (S. Wilkinson, 1990b). In fact, the Council of BPS rejected the request for such a section when it was first proposed in 1985.

The governing body had three major objections to the proposal: (1) The section was seen as neither fitting the scientific concerns of the BPS nor meshing well with other sections of the organization (such as social and developmental psychology) that purportedly dealt with the psychology of women; (2) the name of the new section, Women in Psychology, was mistakenly seen as separatist; and (3) the organization was seen as a quasi-political pressure group concerned with feminist causes. The organizers were asked to make clear the conceptual distinction between scientific responsibility and the promotion of causes based on moral conviction alone (BPS to section proposers, July 1985, cited by S. Wilkinson, 1990b). After a two-year campaign by the members of the Women in Psychology organization and a change in the name to the Psychology of Women, the section became an official part of the BPS in 1987. A very similar pattern has been found in Australia, where an initial proposal for a Women in Psychology interest group was first rejected by the Professional Board and accepted two years later in 1984 (S. Wilkinson, 1990a).

Of the English-speaking countries surveyed, only New Zealand has no organization on the psychology of women. Feminist psychologists attempted to establish one in the 1970s, but unlike feminist psychologists in other countries, opted for a women-only division. The male leaders of the New Zealand Psychological Society rejected this proposal because it violated rules of the Human Rights Commission, which upheld their decision (S. Wilkinson, 1990a). The movement lost its momentum and a formal organization still does not exist (Lapsley, personal communication, December 10, 1999).

What do these various patterns tell us? In every country surveyed, attempts to form organizations of, for, and about women produced conflict with established authorities. Sue Wilkinson
(1990a) has suggested that opposition took three forms, all of which involve the use of institutional power to control deviance. The first mechanism is control by definitions or rules; for example, organizations that focused on women were seen as not fitting into the current taxonomy of psychology. A second mechanism is more informal, ignoring the deviant organization or failing to provide it with information necessary for effective functioning. For example, although the militant activities of AWP pressured the APA to set up its Task Force on Women, AWP was not officially informed about its proposal to set up a Division on the Psychology of Women (Unger, 1998). A third mechanism involves the use of rhetoric to justify formal and informal methods of exclusion; here, the most frequently evoked argument is the incompatibility of science and advocacy (Unger, 1982).

Those who study the psychology of women are themselves ambivalent about the relationship between scholarship and advocacy. In the United States, this dilemma has been partially resolved by the continued existence of two groups, one inside (Division 35) and one outside of (AWP) official psychological structures. Although this frees AWP to be an advocate for women, it also remains less legitimate than Division 35. At times, their different status has created friction between the two groups, although they also work together on a variety of projects (Russo & Dumont, 1997; Tiefer, 1991; Unger, 1998).

INSIDE/OUTSIDE? COMPETING TRENDS IN THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN

Does the structure and legitimacy of women’s organization within psychology influence scholarship? Certainly, some of the scholarly work produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s was more activist than most of what is published in the psychology of women today. It questioned the status quo in both society and the discipline. For example, Naomi Weisstein (1968a) began what is considered to be the first important paper of the second wave of feminist psychology with the challenging statement that psychology had nothing to say about what women are really like, what they need, and what they want because psychology did not know. Weisstein was part of a feminist group in Chicago and this paper was first given as a talk and later published as a monograph by a feminist press (cf. Weisstein, 1993a, for some details about the circumstances that led to the paper). This paper (which has been reprinted over 25 times) was a radical, polemical piece that foreshadowed later feminist theoretical concerns with social construction.

Weisstein’s ideas appear to have had more impact on feminists outside of psychology than within it. As noted earlier, Division 35 chose to emphasize the scientific nature of the subdiscipline, and in the United States, the psychology of women remains more empirical and less theoretical than feminist scholarship in most other disciplines. The strong positivist, empiricist orientation of psychology has had a great influence on the study of women and gender. Many of the women in the field had internalized its norms and, even when we began to reject them, it was difficult to find publication outlets for work that was “deviant” in both method and content (Unger, 1998).

THE CONTENT OF EARLY U.S. TEXTS IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN

Because mainstream scholarship in psychology tends to be both individualistic and conservative, it is not surprising that early U.S. textbooks on the psychology of women also focused on intrapersonal forces. For example, the content of the first two textbooks on the psychology of women, authored by Judith Bardwick (1971) and Julia Sherman (1971), indicates the important early influence of theories stressing intrapsychic differences between the sexes. These books reflected both the training and the interests of their authors (both clinical/personality psychologists) and what materials were available. But they also reflected the state of the art of the psychology of women at its inception.

The chapters in Bardwick’s (1971) book emphasized psychoanalytic theory, sexuality and the female body (with particular emphasis on psychosomatic dysfunctions involving the reproductive system), and differences between male and female brains. The text also included chapters on
identification, self-esteem, achievement, and changes in motives and roles during different life stages. One chapter is entitled “Dependence, Passivity, and Aggression.” This rather brief book (218 pages) illustrated the intrapsychic bias of psychology. This bias is retained even within the psychology of women today and contributes to its conservatism relative to feminist scholarship in other disciplines (A.S. Kahn & Yoder, 1989). The book also assumed the existence of major sex differences in personality and behavior and stressed the negative correlates of female reproductive phenomena such as menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause.

Bardwick (1971) was, at best, ambivalent about feminism. Consider, for example, this passage from her book:

Feminism is not and actually never has been a widespread movement among American women, and the goals and values held by most women are gratified primarily in the traditional feminine activities. Given the extent of the preference in the culture for masculine activities, one must ask why this is so, why so few women are motivated to perform professionally. Most women may never have developed a strong achievement motivation as children and adolescents, they may fear failure because they fear competition and the implications of public failure, and they may fear that success will make them less feminine. (p. 145)

These comments clearly blame the victim, giving little consideration to external barriers, although Bardwick did acknowledge restrictions on women due to lack of institutionalized child care arrangements.

The chapters in J.A. Sherman’s (1971) book also indicated a preoccupation with biological and psychodynamic issues. The book contained chapters on biological and psychological sex differences, several chapters on female development with an emphasis on Freudian theory, and chapters focusing on particular life stages such as adolescence, pregnancy, and motherhood. This text had, however, a more feminist flavor than Bardwick’s (1971). For example, although Sherman extensively discussed reproductive events and their relationship to women’s psyches, she also acknowledged the important role of societal values and socialization on women’s behavior. The book was also more inclusive: An examination of the subject index shows 4 page references to Black women, 4 to homosexuality, and 19 to social class (there are 246 pages in the book). Although “feminism” was not a category in her subject index, Sherman’s commitment to egalitarianism is evidenced by five page references to “equality” and five to the “double standard.”

Later texts were more social psychological in tone. For example, Rhoda Unger and Florence Denmark (1975) put together a composite text and reader titled Woman: Dependent or Independent Variable? that explicitly challenged intrapsychic explanations for sexual inequality. This text began with a section on sex-role stereotypes, examined how therapists viewed women, and examined the development of sex differences and sex roles before moving to explanations of sex differences in cognitive function: whether there is psychosexual neutrality at birth, unique female conditions such as menstruation and pregnancy, and concluding with a chapter on internal versus external barriers to female achievement. Other early textbooks used a more developmental framework (e.g., Hyde & Rosenberg, 1974). All of their authors believed, however, that good science would explain societal sexism and eventually do away with the need for a separate psychology of women (Unger, 1979a, p. 487).

Early Research on the Psychology of Women

Relatively little of the research and scholarship on the psychology of women that began to be published in the late 1960s and early 1970s focused on societal sexism. Exceptions were Weissstein’s (1968a) scathing critique of psychological methodology and content, an important chapter by Sandra Bem and Darryl Bem (1970) titled “Training the Woman to Know Her Place: The Power of an Unconscious Ideology,” and Nancy Henley’s (1973) groundbreaking work on the “politics of touch.”

Instead, consistent with the individualistic focus of U.S. psychology, feminist psychologists began to explore sexism in interpersonal attitudes and behavior. For example, a group of psychologists began a series of studies on sex-role stereotypes (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, 1970; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968). They documented the existence of stereotypes in college students,
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their parents, and mental health practitioners. They found that sex-role stereotypes had changed lit-
tle from the last time anyone had looked for them (C. Kirkpatrick, 1936; McKee & Sheriffs, 1957).
Other researchers looked at the effect of sex on evaluative judgments as well as more overt behaviors.
Philip Goldberg (1968), for example, conducted an early study showing that women were more likely
to evaluate essays purportedly written by women more negatively than identical essays purportedly
written by men. Other researchers looked at the effect of a driver’s sex on other drivers’ horn honk-
ing behavior (Deaux, 1971; Unger, Raymond, & Levine, 1974).

Many of these studies were atheoretical in nature. They were designed to show that discrimi-
nation against women existed in a variety of circumstances, in minor as well as major arenas.
They formed a counterpoint to studies of discrimination at an institutional level such as that by
Helen Astin (1969) on the woman doctorate in America. Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation
and using “real” rather than analogue data, she was able to document discrimination against
women in academia. She found that even when women had academic qualifications equivalent to
those of men and had contributed equally to their disciplines in terms of scholarly publications,
they were promoted more slowly and received fewer rewards.

Linda Fidell (1970) provided a dramatic example of such discrimination in psychology in a
study that probably could not be replicated in today’s more suspicious climate. She sent depart-
ment “chairmen” (used advisedly, in terms of the time period) a collection of resumes of junior
faculty with the justification that she was trying to find out what criteria determined whether
they would be hired and the rank and salary that would be offered them. The chairs received dif-
ferent versions of the same resumes, with male or female names attached. She found that men
were more likely to be hired than women with the same qualifications and offered higher rank
with fewer qualifications. Her study was considered important enough to be published in the
American Psychologist, the journal of record of the APA.

This study was an empirical verification of what those of us in the job market during this period
already knew. It was, however, the kind of evidence that psychologists were more willing to listen to
and accept. It showed how empirical information could be used as an argument for social action.

Surprisingly, many of these studies were conducted by clinical rather than social psychologists
(Unger, 1998). A major exception to this trend was the publication in 1972 of a special issue of the
Journal of Social Issues entitled “New Perspectives on Women.” This collection was edited by
Martha Mednick and Sandra Tangri. It was an extraordinarily useful resource that provided pow-
erful scholarly material for the new courses on the psychology of women. Many of the articles
were reprinted in the 1970s and early 1980s but may not be as familiar to today’s generation of
feminist psychologists as they are to those of us whom they energized when we were the younger
generation.

The issue focused on the theme of achievement, an early focus in the psychology of women as
high-achieving feminists tried to figure out why women were not as successful as men. This issue
included articles such as Matina Horner’s (1972) classic work on “fear of success,” an important
article summarizing their work on sex-role stereotypes by Inge Broverman and her associates,
and a paper on personality by Rae Carlson, who had been one of the earliest psychologists to crit-

Despite its theme of achievement, the issue focused more on internal variables such as atti-
dudes and motives than on external barriers to success. The psychology of women seems to have
begun to turn inward at this point. Having demonstrated that prejudice and discrimination
against women were pervasive, researchers began to ask questions that were generated by more
disciplinary concerns, such as What are the characteristics of people who stereotype? Do sex-role
stereotypes have any basis in fact? Do stereotypes influence behavior?

In other words, researchers in the psychology of women began to move away from exploring
the cues for prejudice to the examination of the psychology of prejudice. This was a move from be-
havior to attitudes. It helped make the psychology of women more legitimate within the disci-
pline, but at some cost to activist research. For example, behavior can be changed by rules and
laws, whereas attitudes require much more long-term solutions, such as changes in familial so-
cialization or educational strategies. Internal or intrapsychic explanations for social inequalities
are very popular with society as a whole as well as within the discipline. Nevertheless, they con-
tinue to be seen as problematic by more activist feminists in the field. As Mednick (1989) has
pointed out, “The focus on personal change diverts scholarship and action away from questions that could be directed toward an understanding of the social foundations of power alignments and inequity” (p. 1122).

FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Because of the smaller numbers involved, feminist psychologists in other parts of the English-speaking world have not separated into insider/outside groupings. I also know of no studies that have looked at the comparative legitimacy of the field in each country. It appears, however, that Canadian and British feminist psychologists are more aware than those in the United States of structural constraints on feminist scholarship. Celia Kitzinger (1990b) has pointed out, for example, “When I write as a feminist, I am defined out of the category of ‘psychologist.’ When I speak of social structure, of power and politics, when I use language and concepts rooted in my understanding of oppression, I am told what I say does not qualify as ‘psychology’” (p. 124). Like feminist organizations in earlier times, explicitly feminist work is ignored or marginalized. This exclusion makes it difficult for feminist psychologists to achieve professional success, and indeed, there are fewer women fellows of the BPS and fewer women in important gatekeeping positions than their numbers warrant (S. Wilkinson, 1991).

One response to the exclusion of particular categories of scholarship was to establish a journal, as Division 35 did some years earlier. The contents of *Feminism and Psychology*, the international journal founded by British psychologists in 1991, support the view that the British version of the psychology of women is more radical than the U.S. version (S. Wilkinson, 1997b). This journal publishes much more qualitative and theoretical work than its U.S. counterpart, which is more quantitative and empirical in focus. Indeed, several content analyses comparing U.S. feminist journals in psychology with their mainstream counterparts have found little difference between them in terms of either method or content (Fine & Gordon, 1989; Lykes & Stewart, 1986). Recently, however, there has been more communication between U.S. and British feminist psychologists (probably because of the new journal), and the *Psychology of Women Quarterly* recently published two issues on innovative methods for feminist research (M. Crawford & Kimmel, 1999a).

STAGE THEORIES OF PROGRESS IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN

Mary Crawford and Jeanne Marecek (1989b) have argued that development during the first 20 years (from 1968 to 1988) of the psychology of women can be characterized in terms of four major themes: “exceptional women,” in which empirical work focused on the correlates of high achievement in women and the reevaluation of women’s history; “woman as problem,” in which research emphasized explanations for “female deficiencies” such as fear of success and the deficits of females compared to males; “psychology of gender,” in which research shifts from its focus on individual women and moves to a consideration of gender as a form of social organization that structures relations between women and men; and “transformation,” which challenges the values, assumptions, and normative practices of the discipline.

Similarly, I have suggested that feminist scholarship in the United States can be traced through a series of stages (Unger, 1998). The first stage of such scholarship (discussed earlier in this chapter) challenged the bases for discrimination against women (with the rather naïve assumption that if cues of femaleness and maleness could be shown to be inaccurate predictors of attitudinal and behavioral differences between the sexes, they would disappear from use). A second stage involved the examination of power at the individual, interpersonal, and sociostructural level (see Henley & Freeman, 1975; J.B. Miller, 1976; C. Sherif, 1979). A third stage involved feminist critique of method and content (e.g., see Grady, 1981; McKenna & Kessler, 1977; Parlee, 1981; Wallston & Grady, 1985). Finally, feminist psychologists have begun to concern themselves with epistemology (see Riger, 1992; Unger, 1983; Wittig, 1985); this stage is probably analogous to the transformational stage suggested by M. Crawford and Marecek (1989b).

These stages may not be inevitable. British feminists, in particular, seem to have been aware of systemic processes earlier than feminists in the United States. For example, although they too did
early work on sex-role stereotyping (Hartnett, Boden, & Fuller, 1979), books with such titles as *The Sex Role System* (Chetwynd & Hartnett, 1978) appeared at the same time. British psychologists also appear to have been less interested in reevaluating their history or examining female achievement than were feminists in the United States. These differences may reflect their greater familiarity with French feminist theory. For example, terms such as “standpoint,” “subjectivity,” and “positionality” are more apt to be found in British than in U.S. work (see Henwood, Griffin, & Phoenix, 1998; Hollway, 1989).

**USING THE PAST TO LOOK AT THE FUTURE**

Until recently, the psychology of women in the English-speaking world has suffered from in-group bias. With few exceptions, the unit of analysis has been White, middle-class women and girls. As women from more diverse backgrounds have entered the field, however, it has paid more attention to issues involving race/ethnicity (see Comas-Diaz, 1991; B.A. Greene & Sanchez-Hucles, 1997; Landrine, 1995; P.T. Reid, 1993), class (see WalkerDine, 1996a), and sexuality (see L.W. Brown, 1989; C. Kitzinger, 1996). More important, feminist psychologists have recognized that marginal categories are not just the responsibility of members of marginalized groups. Thus, feminist scholars have begun to interrogate “Whiteness” (Fine, Weis, Powell, & Wong, 1997) and heterosexuality (S. Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1993a) as sites of privilege.

Recognition of the existence of many kinds of women makes generalizations about women as a group more difficult. It is possible, therefore, that this proliferation of groups studied may finally eliminate the study of sex differences as a major area of research (Unger, 1992). But this area of research has not yet disappeared and has, in fact, been fueled by the development of meta-analytic techniques that permit researchers to examine large numbers of studies in particular areas and compare the results. Feminist psychologists are on both sides of the debate in this area, arguing both that sex-related differences in traits and cognitions are substantial and meaningful (Eagly, 1995) and that they are trivial and transient (Hyde & Plant, 1995).

Other arguments from the past have also not disappeared. For example, evolutionary psychology has supplanted sociobiology as an important theoretical framework that views sex differences as caused primarily by genes and sees sex differences as adaptive in nature. As in earlier times, differences between women and men are used to explain societal inequalities.

Unlike in earlier periods, the psychology of women has become a legitimate part of psychology in the United States at least. There are many examples of female lineages, among them some influential feminist psychologists (mentioned in this chapter) who have been mentored by other feminists. They include, for example, Stephanie Shields, who was mentored by Carolyn Sherif, and Sandra Tangri, who was mentored by Martha Mednick. The development of feminist organizations within psychology also facilitated more informal collegial networks among women similar to those fostered for men by World War II. Thus, a number of younger feminist researchers at various U.S. institutions were tutored in social construction by Carolyn Sherif (cf. Unger & Kahn, 1998); some of the early leaders of Division 35 received a political education from Florence Denmark (Unger, 1998); and after she received her Ph.D., Kay Deaux’s scholarly interest in gender was facilitated by Janet Spence (Deaux, personal communication, December 16, 1999). Courses on the psychology of women are taught in more than 50% of all undergraduate and graduate programs in the United States (Women’s Program Office, 1991). And the number of textbooks on the psychology of women that have been published since 1971 is too large to enumerate here.

This degree of legitimacy would seem to suggest that women and their accomplishments will never again disappear from psychology’s history. However, there are some disturbing trends. Courses and textbooks with the title *Psychology of Gender* are beginning to replace courses and texts on the psychology of women. At first glance, this appears to be a positive step, but it is positive only if gender is used as a “verb” rather than a “noun” (Unger, 1988).

Because of psychology’s individualistic focus, gender as a social construction is easily confused with the socialization of gendered traits: “Rather, the constructionist argument is that gender is not a trait of individuals at all, but simply a construct that identifies particular transactions that are understood to be appropriate to one sex” (Bohan, 1993, p. 7). These transactions both construct and maintain gender and may be independent of the individual’s actual biological sex.
Texts that focus on gender appear to be more interested in comparisons between females and males than are those that identify themselves as women-centered. It is possible, therefore, that the study of women will be subsumed under the study of gender, which would further distance the field from its activist roots.

In another disturbing development, feminist critique has largely disappeared into the critiques of critical psychology, which has global concerns about the impact of values on psychology’s questions, methods, and knowledge claims. The insights of feminist pioneers in these areas are used, but not necessarily attributed to them. This is how history is re-created. Critical psychologists and historians have taught us that there is no one “true” version of history. Therefore, it is well to be vigilant when we write histories of our own.