

...with Christopher Green

Professor of Psychology at York University, Canada, and blogger on the history of psychology

One reason I started blogging on the history of psychology

Gutenberg's movable type is grand, if you don't have any better way to communicate. But now, we have *lots* of ways to communicate that are faster, that integrate different kinds of media, that are more interactive among authors and readers. Blogging is just one of these.

One book that you think all psychologists should read

Kurt Danziger's *Naming the Mind* shows us how modern psychology's basic vocabulary of intelligence, behaviour, attitude, motivation, etc does not represent timeless 'natural kinds' but are, instead, categories that were constructed for particular purposes at certain points in our history. Taking that message to heart, we can see that these older aims eventually fail to serve our present needs, and the categories we created in their

wake may become obstacles to future progress. Be open to the possibility of radical change (but be wary of most individual radical proposals).

One cultural recommendation

The plays of Christopher Marlowe.

One challenge

History of psychology faces the challenge of figuring out the research and teaching potentials of all the new electronic technologies that are tumbling down upon us week by week. Soon we will be able to simultaneously search the contents of virtually every book and journal ever published to find out, for example, every single printed instance of the word 'consciousness' in history. Then we will need to develop computational methods (or learn the methods that have already been developed) for making sense this enormous mountain of data. Most

historians are not prepared for that kind of change (nor are most psychologists).

One Canadian perspective on the history of psychology

The first permanent experimental psychology laboratory in the British Empire was founded at the University of Toronto in 1890 by an American (James Mark Baldwin).

One hero

I wish more people knew the work of Charles Sanders Peirce. He was a deeply flawed man, in some ways, so I would not model myself after him, but he may have been the smartest man in America just before the turn of the 20th century. He is best known today as a philosopher, but he was also a working scientist and mathematician, and he conducted, with his student Joseph Jastrow, among the first psychological experiments published in the English language (1885).

One great resource on the history of psychology

The Virtual Laboratory at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin: <http://vlp.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de>

One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

It is easy to say 'do what you love'. But that's the kind of thing said by people who have already been successful while doing what they love. (No one asks advice from those who've failed while doing what they love.) Students must monitor the relationship between what they like to do, and what the reaction is from those who will, in part, determine their futures. Be honest with



Christopher Green
christo@yorku.ca

resource

'This Week in the History of Psychology' podcast series (www.yorku.ca/christo/podcasts). 'Often, textbook history is written as though it was just there for the taking, as though no one had to work very hard to find out what happened in the past. The TWITHOP interviews enabled a number of historians to emerge from the background and speak directly about the research they had done.'

yourself about others' reactions. Then find a balance between your wants and the world's needs that you can live with.

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