

PSYCHOLOGY

Looking at Ourselves

James Geiwitz

Second Edition

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PSYCHOLOGY

Looking at Ourselves

SECOND EDITION

James Geiwitz



Little, Brown and Company
Boston Toronto

To Pete and Hansina

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Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 79-88189

ISBN 0-316-307068

1098765432

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Published simultaneously in Canada by Little, Brown & Company (Canada) Limited

Printed in the United States of America

The first edition of this work by James Geiwitz was published in 1976 under the title *Looking at Ourselves: An Invitation to Psychology*.

Book editor: Barbara Sonnenschein

Designer: Anna Post

Art editors: Tina Schwinder, Designworks/Pembroke Herbert

Illustrators: Susan Spellman Mohn, Judy Norton, George Ulrich, Lily Yamamoto

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Preface, p. ix: Bill Boyd.

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Preface

(in which the author sets behavioral objectives for himself)

The other day I opened a psychology book to read that "since his earliest beginnings man has known that he constitutes a complex of differing elements and processes which interrelate with one another in multiform fashion, and that by virtue of such interrelationships he is enabled to operate as an integrated whole." Foolishly, I pushed on, only to encounter a definition: "What the system can and cannot do defines the system's performance capabilities at any particular place and time, and is a product of a variety of factors." Quietly I closed the book and turned to an article. When I reached the adjective "syndromic," I gave it up. Enough is enough.

When I first decided to write an introductory textbook, I set as my primary goal the description of modern scientific psychology in clear and straightforward prose. I tried to avoid what Edwin Newman (1976) calls the "gelatinous verbiage" of the social sciences. I did not always succeed—often I wrote "behavioral objectives" when I meant no more than "goals"—but I believe you will find this book relatively free of the jargon and the excessively complicated constructions that so often plague psychologists' attempts to communicate with others. Instead you will find my approximation of what Newman calls "a civil tongue," language that is "direct, specific, concrete, vigorous, colorful, subtle, and imaginative . . . something to revel in and enjoy."

A second "behavioral objective" I set for myself was to write a fair and accurate account of scientific psychology as it exists today. The path to this goal, like that to uncluttered prose, was strewn with pitfalls and obstacles. For one thing, as a relatively

brief introduction to the field, my book is bound to leave out or skip too quickly over some readers' favorite studies and topics. By far the biggest obstacle, however, was the constant pull to forsake informativeness for interest. Many topics of legitimate interest in psychology—biofeedback, brainwashing, ESP—invite flashy, superficial treatment. To avoid this, I tried to focus on the experimental evidence, to tone down the glitter by treating the issues seriously.

Several special topics are covered in their very own short chapters called "interludes." There are interludes on sex differences, drugs, hypnosis, parapsychology, sexuality, sleep and dreams, and several other themes. Most introductory textbooks cover some of these topics, usually in a chapter with related content. Drugs, for example, might turn up in the biological chapter (emphasizing physiological effects) or in the abnormal chapter (emphasizing drug abuse as a personality disorder). By placing these topics within a chapter, these books have to limit their discussions to the one aspect of the topic related to the content of the chapter. In my book, by setting the topics apart in their own interludes, I can bring in research from many areas and discuss the issues from many perspectives. Lie detection is a *test of emotion*; it draws on research and theory in assessment as well as in motivation and emotion. Sex differences have biological aspects (hormones), developmental aspects (sex-typing), social-psychological aspects (roles); also relevant to the topic is research in motivation (achievement) and assessment (tests of masculinity, femininity, and androgyny).

But most of the content of psychology is contained in the 14 regular chapters. In this, the second edition, two important new

chapters have been added. One is on motivation and emotion, integrating material from biological hunger to individual self-actualization. (Note I didn't say *how well* it was integrated! Let us not make extravagant claims for an area that has resisted integration for a hundred years!) The other is on adult development and aging, a vitally important area in which theory and research are currently burgeoning. There are some new interludes, too: careers in psychology, behavior genetics, parapsychology, human sexuality, sleep and dreams.

A minor behavioral objective of mine was to introduce students to some of the humor in psychology. As TV shows like *Candid Camera* and the situation comedies so vividly demonstrate, what people do—the stuff of psychology—is often very funny. Given a choice between illustrative anecdotes, why not choose the more humorous one? Thus, in Chapter 4, I discuss my own failure as a teacher when, in the midst of a classroom demonstration of operant conditioning, my rat ate the ping-pong ball I was using as a prop! (My class was thereby treated to a vivid demonstration of "instinctive drift," although a week or two of embarrassed self-pity passed before I realized the demonstration's salvage value.) In Chapter 11, I describe an elderly friend of mine, about to take his first-ever objective test (a driving examination). He asked what a "true-false" question was, but my explanation failed; he could not believe that the United States Government would write false items!

Moral issues must be faced, one way or another, in every introductory textbook. I have tried very hard to eliminate racism, sexism, and ageism from the content and the language of this book. Sexist language is a

particular problem, because some aspects of it have no agreed-upon solution. Nobody has a right to expect a woman to think of herself as "he" or as part of "mankind," no matter how neutral the words are supposed to be. Sooner or later, I believe, a new pronoun must be created, one that means "either he or she" (Geiwitz, 1978). In the meantime, the only alternative to overt sexism is the attempt to be fair: I have used "he or she" (or "she or he"), except in sentences with so many pronouns that meaning would be lost if the number were doubled. In the remaining cases, I have used a "generic he"—meaning "he or she"—in even-numbered chapters and the interludes following them, and a "generic she"—meaning "she or he"—in odd-numbered chapters and following interludes. I have tried to balance male examples with female examples and to do the same with illustrations.

I want to say a few words about the role of feedback in the creation of an introductory textbook. By my last count, we have had reviews from 66 instructors and 178 students to help us construct the second edition. Most of these reviews were favorable—as one student said, "It wasn't as boring as it could have been"—but many had minor suggestions for improvement which we were able to implement. A good example was the repeated suggestion by students that they found the "Focus" sections within the chapters—the "boxed" supplementary or incidental material that every textbook has these days—*distracting*. Thus, I took pains to incorporate much of this material directly into the text, and to introduce the remaining "Focuses" *between* major headings, where they will be less disruptive. We made several changes in format to improve the text, and, of course, we made several changes in the

content in response to new developments and criticisms of old material.

My goal was to create a textbook that is a fascinating account of modern scientific psychology, one that is aware of problems and moral issues but faces them with what one editor called my "typical optimistic realism." I wanted to write a book that the student would find interesting and informative, a book solidly based on current research and theory, written in simple but vivid prose. My image was of a student who would enjoy learning and, when he or she finished the book, would feel good about psychology as a science and about his or her own progress as an intellectual being. I frankly think that the result, this textbook, is a fairly close approximation of those objectives.

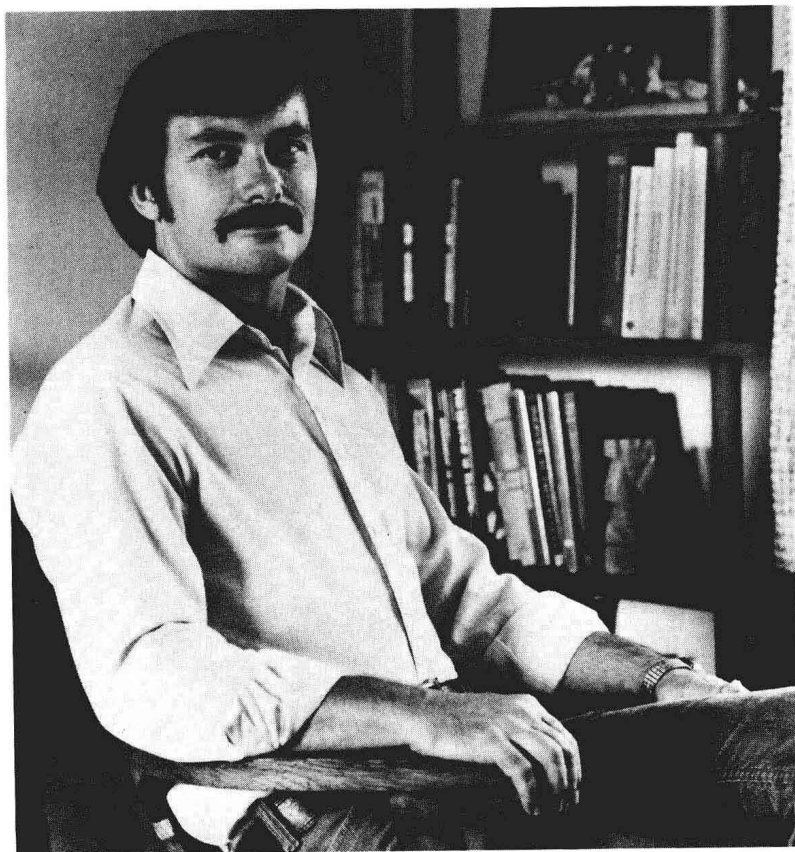
Introductory textbooks these days are not simply books; they are "programs," with an instructor's manual, a study guide, and test items. We worked very hard to make these elements of the *Psychology: Looking at Ourselves* program interesting, informative, and valuable. Ann Syrdal-Lasky's study guide is truly well done; it can be used by itself or in PSI. Ralph Protsik's teacher's manual is fascinating; there are good ideas for every kind of instructor. And what can one say about book-company test items, except that most of them are almost useless? Our test bank by Burleigh Seaver and others is clearly superior; the items were thoughtfully constructed to be fair and educational, and we intend to eliminate stinkers and introduce new items periodically.

Writing an introductory textbook is a mammoth task. I want publicly to assume responsibility for the entire textbook; this is no "managed textbook." I had magnificent

help, however, from many people. This book was born in discussions with Christopher Hunter, then psychology editor at Little, Brown, and later nurtured with great care and skill by Marian Ferguson, who is certainly one of the best, if not the best, psychology editor in the business. Developmental editor Carol Verburg is so precious I hardly know what to say; through two editions, she has been my "gelatinous verbiage" detector, polishing my material to a sheen I did not know it was capable of. Book editors Barbara Sonnenschein (second edi-

tion) and Lynn Lloyd (first edition) tended to the creation of the book itself—the pages, the illustrations—a process for which I never lost my wonder nor my admiration.

Ernest Kohlmetz, David Gordon, and Barbara Miller Wertheimer wrote drafts of interludes in the first edition on "applications of psychology" (now incorporated into the interlude on careers), "moral development," and "aging and death" (now incorporated into the chapter on adult development and aging), respectively. Gerald Jacobs, Walter Gogel, Anna Kun, Carol Jacklin, Ervin L.



The author, James Geiwitz earned his undergraduate degree at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He has taught at Michigan, Stanford University, and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Betts, James Brown, Robert Castleberry, Robert DaPrato, Joan DiGiovanni, Tullius Frizzi, Roberta Klatzky, Susan McFadden, Arthur Caccese, Philip Captain, Daniel J. Cohen, Richard T. Colgan, Willie Davis, James Durant, Steve Ellyson, Gene R. Empson, Judith Farrell, Albert Gorman, Erwin J. Janek, Karl G. Krisac, B. H. Levin, Charles McCallum, Harold L. Mansfield, M. J. Mistek, Janet Morahan, Harve E. Rawson, Robert G. Riedel, Eugene Rosenthal, Ronald Senzig, A. B. Silver, Colin Silverthorne, Dawn Taylor, Rev. Dean L. Walbaum, Velma Walker, and Clair Wiederholt reviewed all or part of the first or second edition, or both, and provided many valuable comments and constructive criticisms. Numerous instructors and students who used

the first edition offered their suggestions. Joanna Pyper and Chris Messick wrote the glossary. Jane McAfee was not only the best typist I've ever had but an able reviewer as well.

Finally, there is Bobby Klatzky. She read and criticized the manuscript. She provided support, amusement, and love; she worried in secret. I wish to thank her especially.

For the author, the preface comes at the end of the book. For the reader, it is just the beginning of a lot of reading and thought. I hope you find it informative *and* something to revel in and enjoy!

J. G.
Santa Barbara

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PART

1 Bases of Psychology

Psychology is the study of the workings of the mind. Or is it the study of behavior? Psychologists sometimes differ in their definitions, just as they sometimes differ in how they do research and interpret the results. But all psychologists agree that the scientific method is a basis of psychology. All disputes are taken to court in the halls of science, and evidence always wins over speculation. In Chapter 1, we shall look at how this process works.

Chapter 2 is about another basis of psychology: biology. Seeing, hearing, feeling, eating, sleeping, loving, thinking—all forms of human activity depend on biological systems. We will discuss how information is collected from the environment through our sensory systems and how it is processed in our brain—or perhaps we should say our “brains,” since each of us has two of them.

These two bases of psychology—the scientific method and biology—are the first steps in looking at ourselves.