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# HOW TO FIND OUT IN PSYCHOLOGY

*A guide to the literature and  
methods of research*

by

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and

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# Preface

SINCE antiquity scholars have recognized certain basic principles which must be observed when establishing a new theory. Among these is the necessity to ensure that a new view will harmonize with already accepted findings and tested facts even though it may conflict with existing interpretations. To this end it is essential that one knows where to find such opinions recorded and such facts listed.

It is the purpose of this work to guide students of psychology towards documented information and to suggest sources for the discovery of recorded data and the exploitation of such sources. Additionally there are sections describing aids to research methodology and to the presentation of the result of psychological research. What we have attempted to do in this book that is different from its predecessors is to arrange the above points in the form of an annotated guide that bears some relationship to the whole process of serious study and research.

We emphasize that we have not intended to present here a reading list in psychology. There are numerous introductory studies of this subject available today which include reading lists. Those who use them to further their studies should bear in mind that all such guides are naturally selective and bear more or less visibly the impression of the compiler's bias. This should not be considered a disadvantage; on the contrary it is preferable by far to know where one is going than to pay the fare without knowing the goal or the means of travelling. There are no teachers as dangerous as those who pretend to be "unbiased".

The work is divided into eleven chapters. The first two deal with what psychology is about and its major theories, and chapters III–VI deal with the bibliographic aids used by psychologists who want to find out about the literature of the subject. In general terms this part offers an explanation of the core of library search resources and of the way of using them. It must be added at once, however, that we have restricted ourselves to citing only works directly related to psychology, though that term has been given the widest possible interpretation. We have not dealt with general reference works, encyclopaedias, dictionaries and similar sources of information though they may well be excellent starting points for a broad outline of psychological concepts. Readers wishing to know about such general reference works are advised to consult Dr George Chandler's book in this same series, *How to find out*.

How one gathers and presents such material is the subject of chapters VII–X, which include guides to the principles and methods of research. The emphasis is on practical issues and an attempt has been made to enable readers to approach this part with their own problems of research and find suggestions for their solution.

Chapter XI is concerned with professional matters and includes information on psychological organizations, and on further training in psychology.

In culling the literature we have been obliged to make a choice between numerous works of seemingly equal excellence and to restrict our selection to some examples. Many of the titles finally included are of the early 1970s, and we stress that their listing was based on the criteria of well-known provenance, professional regard and tested usefulness. Other examples might have been selected by others writing on this same topic. However, the omission of one title or another in this book should not be construed as a criticism. Our aim was to be selective, not exhaustive, and to keep the book within a modest size; our cut-off date has been June 1982.

Instructors may wish to use this work as a teaching book. Our aim has been, of course, to present the material in such a way that will lend itself to this purpose as well as serving as an autodidact. Among our several goals is the education of the library user.

The writers are aware of the problems of sexist language. Insofar as it was consistent with style we have attempted to avoid it. Where masculine pronouns are used in the generic sense there was no intention to be male chauvinist. “Man” embraces “woman”.

It remains to be added that while we claim to have chosen a new and particularly useful approach to the subject of this book, we are of course indebted to the extensive literature of this kind that has been compiled during the past 25 years. It is unquestionably our experience that there is a need to introduce students to the methodical exploitation of academic and general research libraries and to show them how to organize their own work, their notes, their reading and their experiments. This book is more than an updated review of the senior author’s *How to find out in philosophy and psychology* (1969). It is a completely new approach to the same objective: to enable students to be better students through a systematic introduction to the literature of, and basic research techniques in, psychology.

This book is aimed at the psychology student who is proceeding with the formal study of psychology. It should be appreciated that different sections of this book will appeal to students at different years of their study. This work is meant to be retained as a reference source rather than to be acquired for a specific course and then discarded.

A number of students of the Chisholm Institute helped by testing some of the procedures recommended for the presentation of results and for

following up literature searches; others provided assistance by reading sections of the book and commenting on the appropriateness of the presentation for undergraduates. The following deserve special mention: Joan Buzzard, Nic Eddy, Eric Kratzer, Coralee Lane, Bob Sinclair.

We are grateful for the skilful assistance received from Valerie Machin and Lorna McVeity who helped with the typing of the first draft, and to Nancy McElwee who was responsible for the preparation of the final draft.

Several of our colleagues have critically read one or more chapters of this book and we are much indebted to them for helpful comments. In particular we owe thanks to Professor Ray Over, Emeritus Professor Bill O'Neill and to Ray Choate, Head of the Library Reference Section at La Trobe University.

Appendix B (Report writing) is a substantially modified version of an article which appeared in the *British journal of educational psychology* in 1973. The contribution of R. D. Francis, J. K. Collins and A. Cassell is gratefully acknowledged.

Professor George Singer contributed to the section on careers for psychology graduates which appears in chapter XI.

Jean Hagger compiled the index and kindly checked the bibliographic references; she and Julie F. Marshall helped to proof-read the text, for all of which we thank them warmly.

Melbourne 1983

DHB  
RDF

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## CHAPTER 1

# Definitions and Overviews

PSYCHOLOGY is the term commonly applied to the sciences concerned with human mental life and behaviour. It embraces a large number of almost independent sub-disciplines; that is to say while psychology is an integral field and comprises numerous theories and practices, there are many areas of psychological study which are looked upon by some as being self-sufficient and clearly limited theoretical fields in their own right. To understand the present divisions and separate development of psychology it is helpful to examine the evolution of this quite old subject which has its roots in the teachings of Aristotle whence it also derived its name: psychology, i.e. the study of the soul or of the mind. The difficulty of translating “psyche” is well known and no apology is needed here for having cited at least two English equivalents which by their very nature indicate the difficulties this field of study has experienced in the period of its early development.

Modern psychology was born out of the rationalism and pragmatism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The long close association with philosophy, physiology, theology and the essential emphasis on human behaviour and performance, all contributed to mark it as a “dangerous” field where fools would rush in to disturb divine gifts, dispositions and, at times, invite retribution.

There is no need to recapitulate here the history of psychology, but since the source materials for the various branches of this discipline are specialized according to the subdivisions that have developed, it will be useful to identify briefly the major branches at least. To spell out this problem of the divisions of the subject, Henry Bliss wrote:

When I—or better we—see a dog run and jump a fence and come to us panting, smiling, and wagging his tail, what in this complex object-matter is zoological, what is physical, what is physiological, what is psychological, what is objective, and what is subjective? For the subjective aspect may affect our perception of, and attitude toward, the object. The dog is of course by definition zoological. The fence and the dynamic jumping over it are rationally physical. The dog’s panting is a

physiological action, and it is by no means a simple study. The smiling and tail-wagging are what? Well, they are complex behavior too, physical and psychological correlated. So psychology is very complex, a complication of mental and physiological and even physical elements. In the history of science psychology began as a philosophical and subjective study, close to mental philosophy and epistemology. Recently this study has become especially concerned with its endeavour to attain full status as a fundamental science. For this purpose more of objective study has been requisite, more experiment and induction from recorded findings and statistical data. The *objectivist* proceeds to measure the fence and the dog and the tail and the wag, and even the smile. But the objectivist also remembers that the dog has an inside and a nervous system, and an endocrine system, and even a mentality back of his emotion. His mentality is the basis of his behavior. Then, what is his behavior? It is the action of the dog; but one may argue that it is the dog in action, zoological-physical-physiological-psychological, not merely his physical action, that it depends on the physiological and psychological correlates. But let us not confuse the mental and the physical, the cause and the effect. The objective behavior is the physical and maybe physiological effect or correlate of the mental experience of motivation within the organism. It is the *mental* that is psychological. So the study of behavior is not psychology properly but only contributory to psychology; and psychology is more than the study of the behavior, it is the study of the *mental in life*, of mentality correlated with the behavior, and psychology studies the mental not only in the behavior but in other experiences and evidences.\*

Any attempt to analyse or explain the story of the dog will illustrate adequately that the main streams now current in the science of psychology are concerned with physical and biological processes, physiological processes and reactions, sensory and cognitive processes and social or cultural settings. To understand the place of psychology as one of the several basic sciences developed by man, to explain his existence on this planet, we may try to fit it into the gamut of rationalizations which—as far as we know—are unique to our species. By arranging them in a circle, these attempts at theoretical interpretations of our existence are shown to be independent and of equal merit as the foundations of ontological explanations.

Indeed, psychology may be regarded as a middle-of-the-spectrum science. It is clearly not as molecular or analytical as physics nor so molar and synthetic as anthropology. At the one end of the spectrum the notions of physics incline to philosophical and in particular epistemological

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\*Bliss *Bibliographic classification*, 2nd ed. p. ix (by J. Mills & Vanda Broughton ... Class I: Psychology and psychiatry). London, Butterworths, 1978.

considerations about the nature of matter and the nature of evidence; at the other end of the spectrum some of the theories and postulates of anthropology are at a remove from the empirical domain. If one looks upon these fundamental and broad divisions of our knowledge of the world around us as forming a continuum, they may be diagrammatically presented by a circle (Fig. 1).

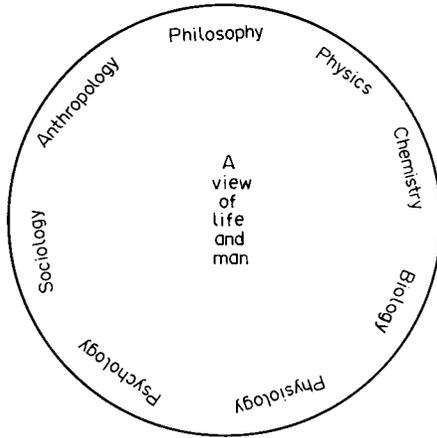


FIG. 1. Broad divisions of knowledge

In their attempts to provide answers in terms of these starting points—often taken as axiomatic rather than as empirical bases—psychologists have formed, wittingly and unwittingly, “schools” which it is customary to label according to some fundamental principle or after the name of the founder: behaviourism, Gestalt psychology (configurationism), “type” psychology, and psychoanalysis. In addition to those “labelled” schools there are areas of scientific inquiry which form, as it were, an extension of the core of psychology. Thus we have child psychology, clinical psychology, psychosomatic studies, industrial psychology, abnormal psychology, mental health, educational psychology, psychology of mental testing, etc.—all of which link fundamental psychological theory and principles to related fields of human behaviour.

The use of the term “classic” has been rightly and strongly criticized by T. S. Eliot in his famous lecture on the role of Virgil in the making of European literature, *What is a classic?* We have avoided using the term though it was tempting to apply it to the fundamental contributions by some of the great psychologists of this century. However, in the strict Eliotian sense, J. M. Baldwin’s *Dictionary of philosophy and psychology*, with its two supplementary volumes by B. Rand, *Bibliography of philosophy, psychology and cognate subjects*, 1901–5 and reprinted in 1928, is a true classic. This work represents the quintessence of nineteenth

century thought and knowledge on psychology and its philosophical origins. Students should not be put off by the complementary treatment of philosophy and psychology; that approach reflects the academic trend of the period and is appropriate for the turn of the century, and the perceptive reader will discover in Baldwin's definition and explanations a wealth of helpful ideas and interpretations. Nevertheless, its significance lies in the historical summing up of the link between philosophy and psychology; even though at the time of its first appearance scholars contributed to and witnessed the permanent separation of these two disciplines. The *Dictionary* proper, that is the first two volumes of this work contains, in one alphabetical sequence, concepts, names and terms that have bearing on, or are used in, philosophical and psychological discussions; to these are added explanatory passages of major schools and systems. Most of the articles are signed, and besides ample cross-references there are many brief bibliographic references. The editor's claims, set out on the title page, are, however, not fulfilled by the contents of this dictionary; references to the philosophy of the physical sciences are too meagre and the treatment of the biological sciences is mainly limited to the impact of neurophysiology on psychology. However, bearing in mind the date of first publication this criticism must be tempered by the perspective of time. From the point of view of the history of philosophy and psychology Baldwin's great work remains the starting point for any investigation of concepts at the beginning of this century; furthermore, his work provides us today with the *summa philosophica* of the nineteenth century. The bibliographical section of Baldwin's *magnum opus*, i.e. Rand's *Bibliography*, is discussed below.

Leaving this monument of an age we now turn, first of all, to a number of overviews which also deserve our special admiration because of the courage and dedication which have inspired the editors.

The most comprehensive guide to the state of the art and directions of research in all fields and aspects of psychology is the *Handbuch der Psychologie* (1966). Planned to consist of twelve volumes—some of which are made up of two physical tomes, the *Handbuch* has been edited by a team of German academics (K. Gottschaldt, P. Lersch, F. Sander and H. Thomae); the text has been contributed by scores of specialists, including some from English- and French-speaking countries, in translation, and the thousands of citations refer to the international literature on psychology. The subject-matter is divided over the twelve volumes as follows: general psychology (perception; learning, thinking and motivation); developmental psychology; psychology of personality; psychology of expression, tests and testing; social psychology; clinical psychology; industrial psychology; educational psychology; forensic psychology. The *Handbuch* began to appear in 1966 and it is the intention of the publishers to issue revised editions of separate volumes as the need arises.

Students and readers unfamiliar with German will have to make do with somewhat shorter expositions of terms, concepts and issues in psychology. The only English-language work conceived on a similar scale is S. Koch's *Psychology: a study of a science*. Intended to consist of seven volumes, six only have appeared between 1959 and 1963. The seventh, which was to be a summing-up of this extensive collection of essays on theoretical psychology, appears to have been abandoned. The work is divided into two major sections. The first three volumes are dedicated to conceptual and systematic studies, the other three volumes are concerned with empirical substructures and relations with other sciences. About ninety leading psychologists, mainly from the USA, have collaborated in this fundamental survey of the field. An updating of this work has not been envisaged.

An entirely different approach is represented by B. B. Wolman's *International encyclopedia of psychiatry, psychology, psychoanalysis, and neurology* which was published in twelve volumes in 1978. This is at present the most exhaustive treatment of the subjects listed in the title. In the introduction Wolman writes: "It is the collective effort of 2,000 authorities, bringing together the varied scientific data pertaining to human nature, its deficiencies, and their treatment." This is a scholarly work written for professionals who seek definitions and expositions on areas in which they are not experts; the encyclopaedia will help advanced students and researchers in the whole area of theoretical and applied psychology. It is not written for the layman. All articles are signed and a short biographical statement on every editor, associate editor and author can be found in the first volume. The index volume contains synopses of the topics treated (i.e. a list of the terms into which the main areas are divided), a complete list of articles arranged alphabetically under title, a name index and a subject index. Cross-references in the body of the work further help readers to find what they want.

Another comprehensive survey in English is Eysenck, Arnold and Meili's *Encyclopedia of psychology* of 1972. This three-volume work by international scholars contains dictionary-type definitions of terms as well as longer articles on complex topics; there are also biographical notes and bibliographies of major figures in the field. More specialized is Goldenson's *Encyclopedia of human behavior: psychology, psychiatry and mental health*, 1970.

All of these suffer from the unavoidable defect of relatively rapid obsolescence; advances in some fields of psychology are such that encyclopaedia entries tend to be out of date within five years or less. Nevertheless, the works mentioned offer reliable background information for students. Experienced scholars will, of course, keep up with the most recent developments through the journal literature of which much will be said below.

Besides encyclopaedic approaches to fundamental data, students are well advised to use appropriate dictionaries to ensure the safe handling of specialist terms. It is beyond the scope of this book to comment on the importance of general dictionaries of the English language for those who want to write for publication. It cannot be stressed enough that specialist knowledge is as much in need of a clear and unambiguous (not to mention grammatically correct) medium of expression as any other field of activity whose practitioners seek communication with a wider public. The proper use of one's own language is an indicator of one's own understanding of the subject under discussion; the tendency to hide fundamental ignorance behind the use of jargon is deplorable and brings discredit to every profession that allows it.

None should, therefore, be shy of seeking help from that unsurpassed guide to the use of English, the *Oxford English dictionary*, and the "Shorter" version at least should be at every writer's elbow. Those addressing themselves specifically to the North American literary market would be well advised to use *Webster's . . . international dictionary* to avoid misinterpretation of their message. As G. B. Shaw pointed out decades ago, the British and the Americans are two great nations divided by a common language.

With regard to the special terminology of psychology, the following dictionaries offer reliable guidance. Of long standing, and tested by thousands of psychologists, is the broadly conceived work by H. B. and A. C. English, *Comprehensive dictionary of psychological and psycho-analytical terms*. This work is the successor to the senior author's *A student's dictionary of psychological terms*, which ran through four editions during 25 years. It may indeed be interesting to note how the terminology of the subject has changed and expanded over almost half a century of the subject's development. In its current edition the *Comprehensive dictionary* aims to include all the terms, both special and technical, that are in use by psychologists today. Illustrations and a brief commentary accompany many of the 12,000 terms in the dictionary. Somewhat more up to date and more broadly conceived is B. B. Wolman's *Dictionary of behavioral science* (1973). A large team of prominent psychologists, psychiatrists and scholars from related fields collaborated in this dictionary, which covers all areas of psychology, psychiatry and neurology, and also includes basic terms and concepts from genetics and pharmacology. Entries vary from very concise word equivalences to short notes of the encyclopaedia type; illustrations, short biographies and photographs make this dictionary especially attractive. The appendices include a statement on ethical standards for psychologists, drawn up by the American Psychological Association, as well as their classification of mental disorders devised by the American Psychiatric Association. This classification is revised from time to time and is at present available in a third edition known as DSM III (i.e. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III).

There are also specialist dictionaries for different translation purposes, e.g. commercial or scientific. Not only do they vary in quality, and have a tendency to age rather quickly, but the more specialized dictionaries are often without the common words—ordinary everyday verbs, prepositions, and the like—but they do in fact presume a certain knowledge of the foreign language for whose specialist vocabulary they offer equivalent expressions in the user's native tongue. For the purpose of comprehending a foreign text they are usually adequate, provided the reader can grapple successfully with the foreign syntax. They are rarely adequate for the purpose of translating from one's own language into a foreign language—the obvious exception being of course those fortunate people who really master “like a native” the other language.

Useful in this context is Duijker & Rijswijk's *Trilingual psychological dictionary*, the second edition of which appeared in 1975. It consists of three volumes, in each of which the entries are arranged according to one of the three languages covered: English, French and German. Thus the series of entries ‘abasement–abaissement–Erniedrigung’ is changed according to the base language of each volume. On a narrower scale there exist French and German dictionaries of psychology which, besides their intrinsic merit for those who have enough command of French and German, include at least a large number of English equivalents in their explanation of terms. Piéron's *Vocabulaire de la psychologie* and Dorsch's *Psychologisches Wörterbuch* belong to this useful category. Both these works are recognized as fundamental texts and include features which are not to be found in their English counterparts, e.g. Dorsch's *Wörterbuch* has special appendices on psychological tests and testing, on the mathematical treatment of psychological problems, and has an extensive bibliography. Piéron, on the other hand, made a feature of describing the work of psychologists and their specific contribution, and besides mathematical formulae particularly important to psychology, there are also lists of relevant pharmacological terms and compounds.

Other dictionaries and encyclopaedias, compiled to ensure the proper understanding and use of words in specialized branches of psychology, will be dealt with in the appropriate sections of this book.

A new and intrinsically interesting approach to an explanation of psychological terminology is the construction and use of a thesaurus of the subject. The difference between a dictionary and a thesaurus should be well understood if each is to be fully exploited. While a dictionary helps us to understand the meaning of words by defining their boundaries and narrowing down the references to which they may apply, a thesaurus helps us to understand the meaning of a word by placing it into a wider context where it has greater generality or is related to other terms by great similarity of meaning. A thesaurus offers “alternatives” which are not necessarily exact equivalents but which, when used judiciously and in the appropriate context, may add shades of differences to a sentence and thus

lend a wider or even a more precise meaning to the message that is to be conveyed. In other words, a thesaurus offers synonyms as well as opportunities for refinements of meaning. It may also include antonyms, as is the case with the most famous of general thesauri in the English language, Roget's *Thesaurus of English words and phrases*. Every writer should have it beside his desk!

For the purpose of this survey the *Thesaurus of psychological index terms* deserves a more detailed note. Sponsored and published by the American Psychological Association, it was specifically designed to help in the exploitation of machine-readable indexes to the literature of psychology. More will be found on this topic in Chapter V. Here it suffices to stress that a thesaurus has considerable intrinsic merits and is not necessarily and solely produced for the benefit of computer-based literature searches; indeed, its significance for the improvement of communications among scholars lies quite obviously in the fact that it constitutes a "treasury" of specific technical terms. These are so defined, and hedged with dos and don'ts, that misunderstandings due to loose usage of words are much less likely if the suggested terminology is adhered to. Let us also bear in mind that language is a live means of social as well as scientific and scholarly intercourse. It changes, abandons some words, adopts new ones. A thesaurus has to be brought up to date regularly.