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A HISTORY OF "RELEVANCE" IN PSYCHOLOGY

WAHBIE LONG

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A History of "Relevance" in Psychology

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Cape Town
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List of Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
APA	American Psychological Association
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CDA	critical discourse analysis
CPS	Chinese Psychological Society
FAK	Federasie van Afrikaner Kultuurorganisasies
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IMRAD	Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion
IOK	Islamization of Knowledge
LSP	Liberation Social Psychology
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NIPR	National Institute for Personnel Research
NP	National Party
OASSSA	Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa
PASA	Psychological Association of South Africa
PIRSA	Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa
PROD	Personal Relations and Organisational Development
PSJ	Psychological Society, Johannesburg
PsySSA	Psychological Society of South Africa
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAJP	South African Journal of Psychology
SAPA	South African Psychological Association
SARSC	South African Road Safety Council
SPSSI	Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNISA	University of South Africa

UP	United Party
WESSA	White English-speaking South African
WFC	Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come.

(Victor Hugo)

A Question of "Relevance"

It was early 2005 in Cape Town, South Africa. I had just submitted a formal request to the Professional Board for Psychology to have my name removed from the professional register. Having completed a year of compulsory community service as a newly qualified clinical psychologist, all that stood between me and my chosen career was the mandatory board examination. The trouble was that 12 months of visiting community health centers in the most impoverished areas of the Western Cape had left me feeling disillusioned about the social value of the profession. It was not for me. So I traveled instead, did some contract research and, by the end of the year, found myself back where I had left off.

I wrote the exam. But after 4 years as a military psychologist, addictions counselor, and university lecturer, the same questions remained. How "relevant" was the "talking cure" in a country with eleven official languages, where 80 % of psychologists could only speak English or Afrikaans—historically, the languages of privilege? How "relevant" could a psychologist hope to be who charged the kind of hourly rate that most South Africans would never be able to afford? And how "relevant" was this discipline—beavering away at the southernmost tip of Africa—that saw little wrong with importing most of its university textbooks from the

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USA? Rather than deregister for a second time, I thought I had a good enough reason to register for doctoral studies. Soon enough, "relevance" started taking on a life of its own: the answers to my questions would not involve anything close to what I had hoped for, namely, the happy exchange of "irrelevance" for "relevance." Instead, what emerged from my early readings was the realization that psychologists around the world had been thinking about "relevance"—that is, the relationship of psychology to society—from the very beginning.

Historicizing "Relevance" in Psychology

The dangers of origin diving notwithstanding, this book claims that a history of "relevance" in psychology goes hand in hand with a history of the discipline itself. When American students traveled to Germany to immerse themselves in Wilhelm Wundt's "New Psychology," they returned to their homeland in the midst of what historians have termed the "Progressive Era" (Pickren and Rutherford 2010). Between the 1890s and 1920s, the USA underwent a period of rapid modernization that accelerated its development into an educated, urban-industrial society. Pragmatism was the order of the day and, with the nation preoccupied increasingly with the resolution of social problems, returning psychologists had no option but to adapt the German psychology of their training to local contingencies. Being "irrelevant" to American conditions, Wundtian experimental introspection fell foul of William James' functionalism, which was superseded in turn by John B. Watson's behaviorism—"a profound reconceptualization that brought [the discipline] more fully in line with the progressivist values of social order, control, and management" (Pickren and Rutherford 2010, p. 57). Indeed, the American insistence on "a useful psychology" (Pickren and Rutherford 2010, p. 84) informed an indigenizing process, which, driven by achievements in education and industry, resulted in the creation of a local psychology that was as much applied as it was experimental.

Similarly, in Britain, it was the discipline's ability to orient itself toward urgent social questions that facilitated its gradual expansion (Thomson 2012). In the nineteenth century, psychology in that country had become allied with philosophy rather than physiology with the result that, by the start of the twentieth century, it had yet to establish its scientific credentials. The disciplinary profile was a far cry from what obtained in Germany and the USA—given the dearth of laboratories and university

positions—while the lack of theoretical unity further compromised the pursuit of scientific eminence. But in the first decades of the twentieth century, influenced in part by emerging trends in anthropology, British psychologists began focusing their attention on social issues. This development, along with the growing prominence of the Labor Party, the soul searching that followed the devastations of the Great War, and the relative underdevelopment of the social sciences in general, presented psychologists with an opportunity to showcase the public value of the discipline (Thomson 2012). As in the American example, the discipline did not develop on account of its scientific standing but because it was able to demonstrate its "social relevance."

To be sure, the debate about "relevance" has dogged psychologists for most of their history, becoming at various points a focal topic of discussion. At the end of World War One, many psychologists adopted the view that the optimal development of the discipline necessitated the prioritization of social problems (Rosnow 1981). The sentiment was hardly unanimous when one considers the ax-grinding of the 1920s between Edwin Boring and Lewis Terman, but in the wake of the Great War, "[m]obilization had invigorated the social ideals of service and efficiency and had stimulated the postwar demand for what was precipitately called psychotechnology" (O'Donnell 1979, p. 290).[1] The Great Depression only deepened the sensitivity of scientists to social issues, with the 1936 founding of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) in part a reaction against the perceived "irrelevance" of a psychological science that, until then, had failed to deliver on what the American Psychological Association's second president, George Trumbull Ladd, had imagined for the discipline—"that it is able and destined to contribute greatly to the welfare of mankind" (Ladd 1894, p. 19). The outbreak of the Second World War consolidated this sensitivity still further as social psychologists sought to address key wartime concerns such as personnel deployment, soldier morale, eating habits, and the like (Burr 2003; Rosnow 1981).

By the early 1960s, however, the mood was decidedly different. Basic research was on the rise once more—in large part the result of governmental support—while obligationist rhetoric was dismissed as anti-intellectual (Rosnow 1981). For William McGuire, the elevation of application-based research above theory-driven investigation was "as inelegant as trying to push a piece of cooked spaghetti across the table from the back end" (McGuire 1965, p. 139), whereas science for its

own sake offered an almost ineffable joy to such purists. But in the latter years of that decade of political upheaval, a succession of crises in psychological experimentation intersected with a renewed spirit of social activism to inaugurate "the age of relevance in social psychology" (Rosnow 1981, p. 78). In his work on subject artifacts, for example, Martin Orne (1962) noted that experimental findings could have less to do with the manipulation of experimental variables than with the demand characteristics of the experimental situation; the implications for reproducibility and ecological validity were obvious. Working in the opposite direction, Robert Rosenthal (1966) demonstrated how experimental outcomes could be influenced in a variety of ways by the investigator. Diana Baumrind (1964) objected to the treatment of subjects in Stanley Milgram's obedience study and claimed that it was impossible for behavioral psychologists to justify their actions. These contributions succeeded in reframing the experimental setting as a social space like any other, with all of the accompanying moral dilemmas. More than that, by questioning the real-world applicability of social psychological theory, they set the scene for what was to come: a blistering attack on the "relevance" of psychology that spread like wildfire across the worldwide psychological community.

Understanding "Relevance" in South African Psychology

When viewed from an international perspective, the debate about "relevance" can be said to have reached its zenith over the course of the 1970s. Yet, the problematics that were raised in relation to psychological theory, practice, and research continued to resonate in developing contexts, with South Africa proving no exception. In the final years of apartheid rule, critical psychologists slammed the discipline's indifference to the human rights abuses of the day, accusing it of lacking "relevance," but after 22 years of democracy, questions persist about the "relevance" of psychology for the lives of the majority of South Africans. Claims of professional "irrelevance" refer variously to the skewed racial demographics of the country's registered psychologists and counselors (Pillay and Siyothula 2008), the lack of qualified professionals who speak indigenous African languages (Ahmed and Pillay 2004), biased selection criteria for admission into professional training programs (Stevens 2001), and the uneven racial composition of selection panels (Mayekiso et al. 2004).

Academic psychology is deemed, also, to have fallen short on the "relevance" index. The argument made repeatedly is that psychological theories remain beholden to Euro-American models of human functioning (e.g. Holdstock 2000)—the more radical version stating that the paradigmatic inclinations of psychology are in keeping with "the worldview of the coloniser" (Ahmed and Pillay 2004, p. 631). Others object to what they imagine as the implied alternative, namely, the reification of culture, the relegation of class, and the revival of an apartheid-era discourse of cultural difference (Long 2013). Even on the research front, one encounters allegations of continued disinterest in the sociopolitical affairs of the country—as in, for example, an analysis of papers published in the *South African Journal of Psychology* (SAJP) between 2007 and mid-2012, according to which a mere 2 % of articles dealt with the issue of "race" (Macleod and Howell 2013).

To be sure, South African psychologists over the years have understood "relevance" to mean different things, complicating the task of definition (Biesheuvel 1991; Dawes 1986). One articulation—*social relevance*—expresses the view that the discipline must contribute to human welfare by ensuring the psychological well-being of the citizenry (Nell 1990). According to another version, *cultural relevance* holds that psychology must embrace Afrocentrism in order to meet the mental health needs of the country's black African majority (Holdstock 1981a). A third reading—*market relevance*—encourages psychological research and practice that address the imperatives of state and industry. By contrast, a fourth strand—known as *theoretical relevance*—observes that a fragmenting discipline's lack of universals is not helped by a focus on context-driven research at the expense of hypotheses constructed from basic theory. The implication here is that "theoretical relevance" must be pursued in conjunction with "social," "cultural," or "market relevance."

With several iterations of "relevance" in circulation, the ubiquity of "relevance" discourse in South African psychology has assumed remarkable proportions. Accordingly, when undergraduate students unfamiliar with the nuances of the debate comment matter-of-factly on their chosen field of study's unsuitability for the national life, some modicum of explanation is warranted. One possibility for the enduring appeal of "relevance" is its conceptual plasticity, its meaning chronically indeterminate. When peddlers of "relevance" insist that psychology attend to "real world" concerns, they have to register such claims about materiality discursively—and since discourses involve invariably the presence of

counter-discourses, the credentialing of "relevance" becomes forever disputable. Other possibilities—disciplinary in scope—include psychology's indecisiveness regarding its cognitive interest, its reliance on a basic but rarefied science for its scientific reputation, and a longstanding difficulty accommodating sociality, all of which become especially noticeable during periods of social turmoil.

But talk of "relevance" can also lead to a searching examination of the troubled antinomy inhabited by science and society. Not only is the idea of science "for its own sake" increasingly untenable (Harding 1991), but also the notion of a "public good" that underlies talk of "relevance" is "unendingly contestable, dangerous in the extreme, inevitably manipulated by elites" (Mansbridge 1998, p. 3). Science is a fundamentally social exercise, a form of intellectual practice located within a wider, rule-bound community of practice that is itself immersed in hegemonic social configurations. Associated with values and institutions for at least the last 400 years, the production of knowledge has been "nationalized" to an ever-increasing degree, especially over the last one and a half centuries (Pestre 2003). As for the "public good," its philosophical meaning is historically variable[2] with a political meaning that is just as equivocal: the "public" is neither unitary nor homogeneous, while the multiple communities that comprise it are constituted historically and discursively (Calhoun 1998). Consequently, petitions in the name of the "public good"—in other words, demands for "relevance"—are subject to several constraints. First, in any given situation it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty what the "public good" is. Second, despite the concept's open-endedness, dominant social groupings retain the advantage of defining the "public good" in their interests. Third, promoting the "public good" by appealing to altruism—"love" and "duty" are the latter's foremost incarnations—"opens the door to demagoguery" (Mansbridge 1998, p. 4).

Structuring the Book

This book does not assume, therefore, that the achievement of "relevance" in psychology constitutes a desirable state of affairs, nor, for that matter, does it seek to locate itself beyond politics. Its general argument, rather, is that "relevance" discourse takes hold in divided societies where it is summoned in contrasting ways in the service of contradictory ends. Accordingly, Chapter 2 takes the reader on a veritable tour of "relevance,"

passing through the USA, Europe, and the so-called Third World, revealing how demands for "relevance" in the 1960s and 1970s emerged during times of crisis in national conversations around the world. The chapter describes how conditions of social unrest—the war in Vietnam, totalitarian governance, and the colonial aftermath—offered fertile breeding grounds for advocates of "relevance." In the context of a then internationalizing discipline, it observes further how concerns about "relevance" arose during moments when psychological knowledge and expertise started "traveling" beyond their traditional homelands.

Chapter 3 attempts to theorize this preponderance of "relevance" discourse in the worldwide psychological community. It revisits the discipline's struggle to define its subject matter, the relationship between its pure and applied branches, and its difficulty accommodating the social world, arguing that psychology is constitutionally predisposed to being charged with "irrelevance," a vulnerability that is triggered at times of rapid social change. The chapter also discusses the rhetorical quality of "relevance," detailing its linkages with an insoluble discourse-materiality binary while preparing the reader for a South African case study that brings into focus some of the general themes in the international history of "relevance."

The remainder of the book, then, is given to the presentation of this case study. Over the course of six chapters traversing a 63-year period, the book traces the concatenation of politics, knowledge production, and calls for a "relevant" psychology in a divided South Africa, chronicling the process through which "relevance" came to be emptied of its emancipatory potential. Drawing on the works of Michael Billig, Robert Connors, Edward Corbett, Norman Fairclough, Jonathan Potter, and Margaret Wetherell, these chapters offer a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of forty-five presidential, keynote, and opening addresses delivered at national South African psychology congresses between 1948 and 2011, demonstrating how appeals for "relevance" were advanced by conservative, progressive, and radical psychologists alike. On the basis of this case examination of "relevance," the book advances the argument that, far from being a politically neutral construct, "relevance" is not immune to the ideological currents of the day. Once the anthemic call of a psychology that threatened revolution, the idiom of "relevance" has been co-opted into a market rationality, raising questions about a discipline, which, now mired in accusations of involvement in the practice of torture, is in a battle to save its reputation.

At this point, the reader is justified in raising three objections: why 1948, why the focus on national congresses, and why the emphasis on discourse? The answers to the first two questions are mutually supporting: 1948 is an analytically useful point at which to begin the case study because it marks the dawn of a totalizing political rationality that would come to saturate the social fabric in South Africa. But apart from it being the year in which the National Party (NP) won the elections and set about constructing the apartheid state, it was also the year in which the country's first psychological society—the South African Psychological Association (SAPA)—was founded. As contradictory conceptions of the goals of psychological science emerged, a conflict between Anglophone and Afrikaner psychologists escalated to the point of associational rupture, and the question of "relevance" insinuated itself, gradually, into the life of the discipline. Indeed, this book argues that psychological communities in divided societies function as powerful social barometers,[3] with "relevance" constituting an integral part of disciplinary life.

As for the discursive emphasis, the endemic presence of "relevance" debates in psychology brings to the fore the discipline's relationship with materiality: should psychology engage with the "real world" and for what ends? What such questions tend to overlook, however, is the nature of the engagement. The seeming inevitability of "relevance" obscures the fact that "relevance" and materiality are approached, represented, constructed, and transmitted discursively (Pujol and Montenegro 1999). This is why deliberations on "relevance" defy consensus: language permits the description of a given phenomenon in multiple ways (Potter and Wetherell 1987), entrenching the term's indexicality (Hessels et al. 2009; Kâğitçibaşi 1984). Whereas Dawes (1986), for example, attempts a synthesis of research, theoretical, practical, and political "relevance," Biesheuvel (1991) distinguishes between its "communal," "utilitarian," and "sapiential" aspects, while Moghaddam and Taylor list the key characteristics of an "appropriate psychology" as "(1) self-reliance, (2) needs responsiveness, (3) cultural compatibility, (4) institutional feasibility, (5) economic suitability, (6) political practicality" (Moghaddam and Taylor 1986, p. 256). In the absence of an authoritative definition, it is impossible to assess the merits of a term that vacillates between over-inclusive catchall and empty signifier.

This book does not attempt, then, to determine the working parameters of a genuinely "relevant" psychology by examining the material practices of psychologists. Its objective is to analyze *accounts* of "relevance"—discourses—as articulated by psychologists themselves. It is the variability of

these accounts—and the unending disputes they set in motion—that is of analytic interest. The credentialing of "relevance" is achieved rhetorically, consisting of a series of persuasive acts seeking to convince an interested audience of "the expected value [disciplinary activities] will have for society" (Hessels et al. 2009, p. 388)—and therein lies the problem. "Value" and "society" are abstractions, while the "expected" timeframe is no more definite. In the interim, various appeals are made to history, posterity, the present, the public good, and common sense—all tendentious concepts themselves. Talk of "relevance," that is, generates a rhetorical space in which competing arguments are constructed and dismantled without relent. Whether it is Biesheuvel (1987) insisting that the worth of knowledge transcends utility, European social psychologists refusing to abandon the traditions of experimentalism (Tajfel 1972b), or McGuire (1965) invoking his spaghetti simile, "relevance" provokes dissent. There is little about it that can be taken for granted: "relevance" functions as a rhetorical trope that legitimates, disqualifies, and attempts to arrogate to itself the final word.

Nonetheless, this book considers ways of speaking about "relevance" as being inseparable from wider social practices. While discourses about "relevance" may call into being a range of subjects and objects—"progressive psychologists," "black Africans," and so on—they are also rooted in a world where subjects and objects already exist. Consequently, the book is concerned as much with the construction of "relevance" discourses as with the sociohistorical milieux that attended the emergence of those discourses. As for the judgmental relativism that is associated frequently with the discursive outlook, it is rejected in this book on the grounds that the discursive spaces within which the material world is represented already possess criteria for the acceptance or rejection of statements (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002). In other words, although the book maintains that a "relevant" South African psychology is not inherently preferable to an "irrelevant" one, it insists that the merits of "relevance" and "irrelevance" are "the very things to be argued for" (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 35). A priori assumptions about "relevance" only end up endorsing a Whiggish conception of history "going somewhere," of it having "a mind," of it progressing—or regressing, in the Marxist course of events—toward some immutable end.

Returning, then, to the structure of the remaining chapters, Chapter 4 provides the reader with a synopsis of the official addresses that is organized around three broad themes: first, the widespread belief that psychology in South Africa has failed its social mandate; second, the prominence

of an individual-social antinomy that results in contrasting prioritizations of individual well-being and social welfare; and third, the existence of an antagonistic relationship between science and profession. The chapter offers, also, the provocative suggestion that the debate about "relevance"—at least during the apartheid years—may have symbolized a resumption of English-Afrikaner hostilities by other means, rather than a concern for the psychological health of all South Africans.

Accordingly, Chapter 5 focuses on two presidential addresses delivered in 1962, a pivotal year in the history of South African psychology when Afrikaner psychologists withdrew from SAPA to form the whites-only Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA). Emphasis is placed on the social and rhetorical contexts within which the two addresses were situated, as well as on the rhetorical devices that were deployed in mobilizing what were diametrically opposing positions regarding the desirability of "relevance" in psychology. Whereas the PIRSA president hinted at the association's impending promotion of a discourse of *volksdiens* (ethnic-national service), the SAPA president endorsed a discourse of *liberal individualism* that valorized the independence of science.

In order to clarify the emergence of these contradictory discursive projects, Chapter 6 explores addresses delivered in the years leading up to the split (1950–1961). It identifies among Afrikaner psychologists a concern with "social relevance" expressed in the shape of a *professionalist* discourse that encouraged public service yet bore no trace of the Christian-National influence that would soon come to dominate the Afrikaner discursive formation. By contrast, the chapter reveals how, among English-speaking psychologists, "relevance" was less of a priority in a discourse of *disciplinarity* concerned with fundamental debates in the field. The chapter concludes that Afrikaner psychologists of the 1950s dispensed with Christian-Nationalism not only because the NP of those years had succeeded in sidelining the ideologues of the Broederbond,[4] but also because the primary goal of professional registration necessitated a spirit of cooperation with their Anglophone colleagues.

However, with the declaration of a republic in 1961 and South Africa's subsequent departure from the Commonwealth, it did not take long for Afrikaner ideology to assert itself. Chapter 7 deals with PIRSA addresses of the 1960s and 1970s, observing how, during the 1960s, a discourse of *volksdiens* (ethnic-national service) emerged that called for "ethnic-national relevance" in the discipline. With the Afrikaner *volk*

facing such menaces as communism, capitalism, and egalitarianism, psychological research needed to dedicate itself to addressing these and other threats. But the chapter also details how, in the 1970s, appeals for "ethnic-national relevance" became less prominent as discussions of South African issues disappeared from the agenda. Instead, the centerpiece of "ethnic-national relevance"—*volksdiens* itself—came under attack. The unraveling of PIRSA's quest for "ethnic-national relevance," the chapter proposes, reflected the disintegration of the apartheid rationality from the mid-1960s onward, which resulted from the confluence of a series of economic, cultural, and political upheavals.

Chapter 8, then, covers the ensuing years of transition between 1978 and 1993, offering a political analysis of a period during which SAPA and PIRSA reunited to form the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA) and progressive mental health workers organized themselves to form the rival Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA). The chapter demonstrates how, during the height of resistance to apartheid rule, SAPA, PIRSA, and then PASA advanced a depoliticized order of discourse consisting of *disciplinary*, *professionalist*, and *cultural* discourses in which "social relevance" was either deemed a non-issue or articulated in politically conservative terms. On the other hand, it illustrates how OASSSA, in its rendition of "social relevance," promoted a *liberationist* discourse that insisted on the harmful impact of apartheid policy on mental health and the ensuing obligation of mental health professionals to align themselves with the mass resistance movement. The chapter establishes, also, PASA's anointment of a *salvation* discourse in which the pursuit of "social relevance," with a new political era beckoning, became a redemptive act to secure the future of the discipline.

The post-apartheid years are discussed in Chapter 9, which identifies two competing discourses in addresses delivered during this period. The first—a *market* discourse—advocates the development of a psychology that is financially rewarding, globally competitive, and internationally recognized. Here, "market relevance" is sought in which teaching, research, and community service outputs are graded according to international standards and priorities. The second discourse of *civic responsibility* casts South Africa's traumatic past as unresolved and requiring, therefore, the intervention of psychologists. In this case, "social relevance" is desired in order to bring about the emancipation of marginalized communities. The chapter contends that it is, on balance, the market discourse that pervades the discipline's current discursive order, showing how South Africa's

reentry into the international community resulted in far-reaching changes to the country's political, economic, and higher education landscapes, which had to adjust themselves to the demands of a globalized neoliberal hegemony.

Over the course of these chapters—and again in the concluding chapter—key insights about "relevance" in South African psychology are related to broader theoretical issues in the international history of "relevance." In so doing, Chapter 10 places special emphasis on a newfangled rendering of "relevance" that has arisen in recent years, in which market considerations appear to have ousted a once emancipatory agenda. The chapter suggests that, since its liberationist heyday in the 1970s, "relevance" has been reduced to little more than a catchphrase in funding applications and mission statements, and has now outlived its usefulness. At a moment in history when co-option appears to be emerging as a disciplinary norm, the book offers a vision of resistance—rooted in critical historiography—through which psychology can begin to shape itself into a credible moral force.

Notes

1. With applied psychology in the ascendancy during the post-war years, Boring took it upon himself to keep the experimentalist agenda afloat. This brought him into conflict with Terman who had earned a reputation as "the watchdog of applied psychology" (O'Donnell 1979, p. 293).
2. For example, whereas Plato claimed that what was good for the public was good for the individual, Adam Smith argued the opposite in his treatise on "invisible hand" economics. Their shared position on the compatibility of private and public goods, meanwhile, contradicts a third perspective that developed out of medieval Christian theology. As for contemporary meanings of the "public good," these include (1) the aggregate of individual private goods; (2) the outcome of a process (e.g. a democratic process); and (3) that which accrues to a collective rather than to the individuals that constitute the collective (Mansbridge 1998).
3. Whether one views a psychological community—for example, a psychological association—as a random assemblage of psychologists or an agenda-setting guild, developments in fields such as the rhetoric of inquiry have made claims of scientific disinterestedness more anachronistic than ever. Consider, for example, the founding of the American Psychological Association (APA). Samuel Fernberger contends that "seven men met and decided that it was worth while [sic] to form an association for the discussion of psychological

matters" (Fernberger 1932, p. 3), creating the impression that the APA came straight from the heads of seven people. By contrast, Michael Sokal submits that the APA "emerged at a particular time, in a unique social and institutional environment, and as the result of actions of specific individuals" (Sokal 1992, p. 111). The APA itself acknowledges the role played by "[t]he progressive movement in politics" and other academic disciplines in the course of its founding (American Psychological Association 2012, paras. 5 & 6). Moreover, because psychology has always depended on the patronage of powerful interest groups (Danziger 1987), national psychological associations are seen, frequently, to reproduce the power relations of the societies in which they are embedded. The recent fallout surrounding the APA's involvement in the practice of torture is an extreme case in point.

4. The Broederbond was established in 1918 as a secret males-only organization concerned with the promotion of Afrikaner interests.

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CHAPTER 2

A History of "Relevance"

When ideas go unexamined and unchallenged for a long enough time, certain things happen. They become mythological, and they become very, very, powerful.

(E.L. Doctorow)

The "Irrelevance" of Higher Education

Demands for "relevance" are confined neither to psychology nor to South Africa. This much is plainly evident in the appeal of the 1960s for educational "relevance," made first by disaffected university students and taken up subsequently by their teachers (Rotenstreich 1972). On both sides of the Atlantic, emancipatory anti-capitalist sentiments that demanded reforms in knowledge production achieved particular resonance among the social sciences. Unusually, the inner circles of student activists were distinctly bourgeois (Boudon 1971): the young people that railed against the "irrelevance" of their educations were not the working-class victims of epistemic violence but, rather, a well-to-do generation scandalized by what they saw as the moral hypocrisy of preceding ones. Student protesters the world over were sympathizing, in effect, with those they deemed less privileged than themselves and, in an ironic reversal, began rubbishing the same institutions that had served their interests. In the rarefied atmosphere of higher learning, they had come to the conclusion that there was little on offer that could steel them for entry into a society traumatized by racism and war (Sampson 1970).

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Originating in the late 1950s, a discourse of *social relevance* made headway on a handful of university campuses around the USA where, for a vocal minority of conscientized students, the college experience had impacted negligibly on their values (Jacob 1957). The curriculum had not changed in half a century while methods of instruction harked back to medieval times—the direct results of an institutional climate that rewarded faculty for participation in non-teaching activities (Axelrod et al. 1969). Students rebelled against the conception of education as steady accumulation of facts and uptake of skills as well as their perceived exclusion from decision-making processes in the university—a state of affairs that, in their reckoning, amounted to the preparation of human inputs for the machineries of graduate schools and industry. The natural subversiveness of the academy had been overtaken by "its technical, applied social service functions" (Sampson 1970, p. 2)—an inevitable consequence of life in the administered society.

The dominant culture of vocationalism, then, had come under attack: an interest in interdisciplinary studies started to emerge along with the hope for a deeper understanding of the human condition. The privatism of the 1950s—"the expectations of college students of finding contentment in their own personal careers and family life and…their relative unconcern with larger national and international issues" (Axelrod et al. 1969, p. 90)—was now seen as contemptible. In particular, the so-called Sputnik Crisis of 1957 and the promulgation of the National Defense Education Act in 1958 had put an end to that indifference. With the establishment of the campus political party, SLATE, at the University of California, Berkeley, a new era of student activism was initiated. Unlike their parents—who had lived through the years of the Great Depression—these students knew nothing of deprivation or, for that matter, early 1950s' McCarthyism; this made it somewhat easier for them to criticize what they interpreted as their parents' social and occupational conformism. They knew all too well about the military draft, too, and at a time when the Supreme Court was making landmark rulings against segregation and censorship, dissident politics had become a manifest possibility.

Drawn disproportionately from the upper middle class, committed to the goals of a liberal education and not usually prompted into action by the violation of their own rights, American student activists viewed themselves as the voice of the oppressed. Indeed, the typical activist protested "because he perceive[d] injustices being done to others less fortunate than himself…with whom [he was] identified, but whose fate he [did]

not share" (Keniston 1970, p. 162). Just as education in its classical sense was meant to mold character, student protestors hoped for a meaningful appreciation of human nature, society, and morality that would teach them how to be and what to do in a troubled world. They scored higher than their non-activist counterparts on measures of verbal aptitude, theoretical orientation, a penchant for reflective thought, aesthetic sensitivity, diversity of interests, emotional expression, social maturity, psychological autonomy, tolerance, and a sense of communal responsibility—and they were also overrepresented in the social sciences and humanities.[1]

In Europe, their German doppelgängers were similarly "the first generation that [knew] no economic insecurity and relative poverty [yet] openly perceive[d] the disproportion between the potential wealth and potential gratification of an industrially developed society, and the actual life of the masses in that society" (Habermas 1971, p. 24). Just as a clutch of American universities were forced into a reflexive rethinking of their modus operandi, European student protests in connection with a host of social issues—totalitarian governance, nuclear proliferation, environmental degradation, homophobia, and the like—brought about analogous but more thoroughgoing consequences. Young radicals committed to a transdisciplinary agenda of social and academic transformation took inspiration from critical theory and the Frankfurt School—despite the School's own misgivings.[2]

In the Third World, meanwhile, critics insisted that the "colonial aftermath" was a contradiction in terms on the grounds that post-coloniality was located at the onset—not the termination—of colonial rule (Gandhi 1998). Newly liberated societal energies were sublimated in the euphoria of independence, the groundswell of anti-Western nationalism, the twin imperatives of development and change, popular uprisings against political oppression, and more general social contradictions, and coincided with discerning calls for the decolonization of everyday consciousness (Fanon 2008), knowledge institutions (al-Attas 1985; al-Faruqi 1982), and the educated class (Mazrui 1978). Within the academy this revolt against "cultural dependency" (Mazrui 1978, p. 13)—Fanon (2008) called it "imitativeness"—was taken up in the form of discipline-specific debates about "relevance." For some, what was required was the indigenization of these disciplines, but for others, the disciplinary order itself was "a particular manifestation of…how western civilization [saw] its problems [and had] no real meaning for non-western cultures" (Sardar 2005, p. 200). Questions about "relevance" were consequently difficult to resolve.

The "Irrelevance" of American Psychology

On September 1, 1969—against an international backdrop of appeals for educational "relevance"—the president of the American Psychological Association (APA), George Miller, was introduced at the Association's annual convention. The theme for that year's congress had been titled, *Psychology and the Problems of Society*, and Miller's (1969) imminent address would become a watershed moment in American psychology's debate on "relevance."[3] But before he could deliver his talk, a group of students emerged from the audience and approached the stage. Gary Simpkins, national chairman of the Black Students Psychological Association, requested that the student organization be permitted to present a list of demands the following day to the APA Council of Representatives (Simpkins and Raphael 1970). Council would endorse the list after six hours of debate, validating a five-pronged proposal that demanded equitable selection procedures for entrance into professional psychology training programs, aggressive recruitment of black academics into psychology departments, financial assistance for black students, practical community experience for black trainees, and terminal programs at all degree levels. In varying degrees of explicitness, each of the demands was predicated on the felt "irrelevance" of psychology for black America.

On another front, artifact and ethics crises in psychological experimentation had undermined the real-world applicability of social psychological theory (Baumrind 1964; Orne 1962; Rosenthal 1966), inaugurating "the age of relevance in social psychology" (Rosnow 1981, p. 78). In an influential paper, Kenneth Ring (1967) framed the corrupting and aimless flamboyance of experimental social psychology as a defensive posturing against the vacuousness of the field. The "frivolity" of it all could only be countered by, among other things, initiating research of broad human importance; what Ring hoped for was a return to Lewinian values according to which science and society could progress simultaneously. In a similarly devastating indictment, Kenneth Gergen's (1973) central thesis was that social psychological facts were mostly unrepeatable and that the experimental method was, therefore, entirely inadequate as a method of enquiry. Gergen argued that the relationship between psychological science and society was characterized by a "feedback loop"; this resulted from prescriptive bias in psychological theory, the non-existence of naïve subjects, and the influence of western cultural values on subjectivity (specifically, freedom and individuality). The upshot was that "social psychology

alters the behavior it seeks to study" (p. 314), invalidating itself precisely *because* of its relationship with society. Gergen added that society in any event changed across time and place, thwarting in perpetuity all efforts "to build general laws of social behavior" (p. 316): at any given point in time, social psychological theory could never be more than contemporary theory. The implication was that pure science—with its canonical focus on timeless universals that tended to be of passing significance anyway—had to make way for the investigation of "socially relevant," applied—albeit time-bound—hypotheses.

But the equating of "social relevance" with applied research or, more pointedly, "the promotion of human welfare," simplified matters to a fault. Miller, for one, reminded his audience that "human welfare ha[d] never been operationally defined as a social concept" (Miller 1969, p. 1064). Whereas Ring's (1967) version of "social relevance" was concerned mostly with *what* to study, McGuire (1973) believed that the demand for "social relevance" deflected attention from another, more troubling matter: the "socially relevant" hypothesis was based on a linear model of causality and did nothing to address the fundamental shortcomings of the experimental method itself. The "relevance of relevance" was now in doubt: the real problem appeared to be "a basic inadequacy of methodology rather than direction," resulting from "a persistent, slavish obsession to fit the study of behavior into existent models of other experimental sciences" (Silverman 1971, p. 583). "Social relevance"—and, by implication, social change—seemed inconceivable in an ahistorical psychology that, for decades, had dedicated itself to a mechanistic understanding of human action.

The "Irrelevance" of European Psychology

Contemporaneous with these developments, a kindred *Zeitgeist* took hold in Western Europe. Inspired by the Frankfurt School's insistence on the interestedness of all knowledge, the student revolution of 1968 fostered a crisis of "social relevance" among European social psychologists who stood accused of methodological fetishism (Moscovici 1972). The discipline had imported wholesale the American "social psychology of the nice person" (p. 18) while inoculating itself against European social verities—and since the American research agenda was apparently in thrall to economic and political stakeholders (Parker 1989), the implication was that its European hangers-on had "done no more than to operationalize questions and answers which were imagined elsewhere" (Moscovici 1972, pp. 31–32).

To worsen matters, the theoretical impoverishment of European social psychology—a consequence of positivist epistemology, methodological tensions, and an aversion for philosophical speculation—confounded any desire to generate locally "relevant" questions and answers. The outcome was a "psychology of well-tried aphorisms" (p. 37) and an associated charge of triviality. In contrast to Ring's argument, experimental research was not irrelevant because it was fundamental rather than applied—what made it irrelevant was "due to…social psychologists having often taken the wrong decision as to what kind of *homo* their discipline [was] concerned with: 'biological,' 'psychological' or 'sociopsychological'" (Tajfel 1972a, p. 71). The triteness of social psychological knowledge derived from an ill-conceived attempt to explain social phenomena at the level of the individual—or, to rephrase Moscovici's (1972) provocative question, there was nothing social about social psychology.

Harré and Secord's (1972) analogous argument drew a line under many of the same themes. The banality of experimental research in social psychology was a direct consequence of the prevailing behaviorist hegemony. The assumption that complex behavior was the uncomplicated aggregate of simple behaviors made the laboratory experiment inadequate for understanding real-world behavior but suitable for making sense of "a kind of never-never land of behavior" (p. 49). An information-processing model of human beings, conceptual simplemindedness, the confusion of scientific with human variables, and the "special kind of society" (p. 46) that was generated by the psychological laboratory were all implicated in a corresponding loss of "verisimilitude." Theory and method were mutually "irrelevant," a scheme of near-axiomatic proportions that could only be salvaged by a dramaturgical model of behavior at the center of which stood a capable and conscious actor preoccupied with presentation, monitoring, and control.

The "Irrelevance" of Third World Psychology

It did not take long for the "relevance" crisis to gain purchase in the disciplinary hinterland. Beginning in the mid-1960s and spreading rapidly over the following decade, a sustained critique of both American and European pre-eminence proliferated among psychology communities throughout the Third World (Abbott and Durie 1987; Abdi 1975; Ardila 1982; Ching 1984; Holdstock 1979, 1981a; Khaleefa 1997; Naidoo and Kagee 2009; Sinha 1984). This was less a matter of "social relevance" contradicting

itself to become an instance of Fanonian imitativeness than of inevitable questions being asked about the Third World applicability of an imported Euro-American "ready-made intellectual package" (Nandy 1974, p. 7). These calls for "social relevance" formed the intellectual starting-points for attempts at indigenizing the discipline that focused variously on "structural" (resource-driven), "substantive" (content-driven), and "theoretic" (concept-driven) aspects (Kumar 1979, pp. 104–105 quoted in Atal 2004, pp. 105–106).

For newly independent countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, the end of colonialism generated powerful imperatives for socioeconomic and technological development that had taken centuries to accomplish elsewhere. Systematic planning was required not only to effect the necessary changes but also to overcome any resistance, which was to be achieved by revisiting the core ideals of knowledge-making industries. A shift in the balance was inevitable: "research for prestige" needed to be tempered with "research for policy." Psychologists had to assume problem-oriented approaches "so that the data provided through psychological research [could] be of some use in dealing with myriads of [sic] pressing demands connected with national development" (Sinha 1975, p. 10). In research circles throughout the Third World, "social relevance" became the new mantra, counterposing itself against the "immorality of irrelevance" (Baumrin 1970 quoted in Sinha 1973, p. 5). In order to appreciate, then, how social conditions facilitated the internationalization of the "relevance" question in psychology, the unfolding of various calls for "relevance" across the developing world—with a special focus on the South African instance—will now be explored.

Indian "Relevance"

The Indian search for a "macropsychology" is a prime example of substantive indigenization (Sinha 1985). During the preindependence years, Indian research in psychology was at best imitative of Euro-American trends. The situation changed slightly after independence, although topics popular in Western psychology continued to predominate and related only peripherally to the requirements of Indian society. In the early 1960s, however, a distinctive problem-oriented stance emerged: Indian psychologists became increasingly concerned with practical problems involving national development and social change, and began to direct their research efforts accordingly (Sinha 1986). There was also a growing awareness

that theories and methods borrowed from Western sources could not be applied indiscriminately. Jai Sinha, for example, not only discovered that high need for achievement (nACH) individuals were unable to maximize their individual outputs in contexts defined by limited resources but also came to the realization that he had to make a choice between an exploration of "real-life issues" or a commitment to a "straight-jacketed methodology" (J.B.P. Sinha 1997, p. 79). By the mid-1960s, propelled by a now strident critique of the patent "foreignness" of Indian psychology, attempts to indigenize the discipline were under way.

As it happened, Indian psychology's indigenizing mission yielded mixed results. The psychology of the mid-1970s was deemed "not merely imitative and subservient but also dull and replicative" (Nandy 1974, p. 5); even the call for "relevance" was considered imitative and therefore constituted little more than a "gambit." At the start of the 1980s, there were "signs of growing crisis in psychology" (Pareek 1980 quoted in Sinha 1986, p. 64). By the 1990s, in spite of a stronger indigenizing trend that encouraged the selection of "socially relevant" research topics and variables, Indian psychology—marooned in Nandy's "recipient culture of science" (Nandy 1974, p. 1) and its own endemic parochialism—had failed to reap the benefits of multidisciplinarity. It was not that no gains were made at all but that "[m]any psychologists, even in India, are finding it difficult to cast off the microcosmic and individualistic orientation acquired in the West; they are bound by the prevailing disciplinary ethos, are critical about this [indigenizing] tendency, and doubt the distinctive identity of psychology in India" (Sinha 1993, p. 40).

Chinese "Relevance"

While similar to the Indian example, the development of the discipline in mainland China differs from it in other respects. Between the establishment of the Chinese Psychological Society (CPS) in 1921 and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese psychology was unmistakably Western. However, with the coming to power of the Communist Party, Western psychology was repudiated in favor of Soviet psychology: reductionist Pavlovianism and a studied avoidance of social problems were now the defining features of the discipline. But by the late 1950s, a rising tide of ultra-leftism resulted in a critique of what were seen to be psychology's bourgeois underpinnings, namely, "biologization" and "abstractionism" (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological

Society 1983, p. 170). The Twelve-Year Plan of 1958—according to which the discipline was defined as a basic science—made it a target for the Anti-Rightist Movement, which emerged in reaction to Mao Zedong's liberal Hundred Flowers Campaign. The two-pronged criticism was that the use of Pavlovian theory to explain the contingencies of human behavior undermined the assumptions of socialist education, while the dry experimentalism of the discipline relied on variables that did not obtain in the real world. In the context of a developing country with industrial, technological, and scientific ambitions, psychology seemed little more than a "luxury" science (Ching 1984). The effect of the so-called Criticism Movement was to force more psychologists to familiarize themselves with Marxist and Maoist thought, as a result of which they developed a dialectical materialist understanding of the discipline. Nonetheless, the mounting skepticism toward psychology was realized to devastating effect on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. In 1965, Yao Wenyuan—the Communist Party's propaganda chief and one of the notorious Gang of Four—wrote an article under the pseudonym Ge Mingren ("The Revolutionist") that dismissed psychology as bourgeois gobbledygook and led to its eventual banning (Petzold 1987). In the ensuing "ten years of calamity," psychologists were routinely harassed and imprisoned (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society 1983, p. 171); it was only at the 1978 Baoding meeting of the CPS that the discipline's standing was restored.

The remarkable collapse of psychology in the face of the Cultural Revolution has been attributed to the discipline's susceptibility to political influence (Ridley 1976 cited in Petzold 1987). This may explain why Chinese psychologists later cautioned against the wholesale renunciation of Western psychology in order that, "[u]nder the guidance of the Four Fundamental Principles, on the basis of scientific research…a hundred flowers [may] blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society 1983, p. 185). Before any thought could be given to the potential contribution of psychology to the advancement of Chinese society, the significance of the basic science had to be appreciated. After all, the fallout from the Cultural Revolution resulted from "the inability to distinguish between political and academic problems" (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society 1983, p. 184)—hence the importance of distinguishing "between popular and vulgar, scientific and not scientific" (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society 1983, p. 183). And yet Chinese psychology continued to tread an awkward path in its attempt "to establish a psychological

system possessing our national features and meeting the demands of our socialist construction" (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society 1983, p. 187). Having experienced a traumatic crisis of "relevance" between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, it found itself in the curious position of wanting "to prevent interference from both left and right, inspire enthusiasm, stride proudly ahead, work wholeheartedly for the cause of psychology, in order to contribute to the magnificent cause of socialist modernization" (Executive Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society 1983, pp. 186–187). Today, sustained talk of "relevance" appears to be a thing of the past, but beyond the mainland—in Taiwan, for instance—the problematics of *yanghua* (literally, Westernized) psychology remain firmly in place (Yang 1997).

Filipino "Relevance"

Of all the Asian countries, the indigenization project has proven most successful in the Philippines (D. Sinha 1997). Initially a Spanish colony for more than 300 years, the Philippines eventually achieved independence from the USA in 1946. By then, psychology—which was introduced as a subject at the University of the Philippines in 1908—was thoroughly American (Montiel and Teh 2004). However, with Filipino nationalism in the ascendancy during the early years of independence, psychologists began directing their attention toward the study of Filipino national identity and personality (Lagmay 1984). By the 1960s, the general ill-suitedness of American psychology for the Filipino context was widely acknowledged, but with much problematizing and little theorizing, what was lacking was a coherent alternative (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000).

The Philippines was deeply affected by the worldwide student protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Lagmay 1984). The lingering imperialism of American culture was the shared object of disenchantment; there was a growing feeling that the dominance of the English language in education—in psychology, for example—needed to be challenged by installing the national language as the medium of instruction. Nationwide teach-ins, demonstrations, and violence culminated in the imposition of martial law in September 1972. By then, Virgilio Enriquez had just returned to the country after completing his doctorate in social psychology at Northwestern University. If anything, his American education had made him even more Filipino-centered in his teaching and research, and he set about establishing the Philippine Psychology Research House. In 1975,

he chaired the First National Conference of Filipino Psychology at which the guiding principles of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology) were officially enunciated (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000) and, in January of the following year, he founded the National Association for Filipino Psychology (Lagmay 1984). The association sought deliberately to expand its membership beyond psychology, opening its doors to anthropologists, sociologists, historians, philosophers, and others besides, consonant with Enriquez's adage, "Psychology is too important to be left to the psychologists alone" (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000, p. 54).

Sikolohiyang Pilipino is essentially a site of protest against "a psychology that perpetuates the colonial status of the Filipino mind, the exploitation of the masses, and the imposition of psychologies developed in industrialized countries" (Church and Katigbak 2002, p. 131). It is constellated around four core themes, namely, (1) an understanding of identity and national consciousness with a social psychological focus on an indigenous conceptualization of the psyche; (2) an awareness of and involvement in social issues; (3) attention to national and ethnic languages and cultures; and (4) the development of psychological practices appropriate for the Filipino context (Enriquez 1993). Notwithstanding the "social" and "cultural irrelevance" of its parent discipline, Sikolohiyang Pilipino does not promote the outright rejection of Western psychology: rather, it encourages—in some versions—an etic-emic hybridism, which Enriquez (1979 cited in Church and Katigbak 2002) championed by distinguishing between "indigenization from within" (utilizing native psychology) and "indigenization from without" (adapting foreign psychology).

Latin American "Relevance"

Latin America represents another part of the world in which "relevance" discourse earned traction among psychologists.[4] In the 1950s and 1960s—when popular movements against economic oppression sprung up in the region—psychology in particular and the social sciences in general proved especially receptive, articulating critical perspectives committed to social justice. Drawing on ideas from liberation theology, critical pedagogy, and other traditions (Burton and Kagan 2005), the Liberation Social Psychology (LSP) movement was launched, in part, not only as the product of the service orientation within Latin American psychology, but also as the result of an autonomously functioning intellectual culture that distanced itself from state interests (Jiménez 1990 cited in Burton and

Kagan 2005). The term *psicología de la liberación* first appeared in print form in 1976, before gaining widespread currency through the works of the assassinated Jesuit priest and Spanish social psychologist, Ignacío Martín-Baró, and the Venezuelan social psychologist, Maritza Montero. Forged amid the maelstrom of Argentina's Dirty War, the Chilean coup of 1973, the Salvadoran Civil War, and the experiences of subjugated communities in Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, and Brazil, the birth of LSP challenged the "social irrelevance," universalist pretentiousness, and moral apathy of empirical social psychology (Burton and Kagan 2005).

Yet, Martín-Baró's terms of reference extended beyond social psychology. He argued that "psychology as a whole: theoretical and applied, individual and social, clinical and educational…has not only remained servilely dependent when it has needed to lay out problems and seek solutions, but has stayed on the sidelines of the great movements and away from the distresses of the peoples of Latin America" (Martín-Baró 1996, p. 17). For Martín-Baró, the stakes were impossibly high, having said to one North American colleague, "In your country, it's publish or perish. In ours, it's publish *and* perish" (Aron and Corne 1996, p. 2, original emphasis). In his view, the "historical misery" of Latin American psychology was the product of, first, a "scientistic mimicry" by means of which the discipline hoped to secure a status comparable to its North American progenitor (Martín-Baró 1996, p. 20); second, a deficient epistemology that canonized positivism, individualism, hedonism, homeostasis, ahistoricism; and third, an unhelpful dogmatism that was founded on false binaries. He advocated, instead, a new disciplinary horizon dedicated to the cause of liberation, the perspective of the oppressed, and an unashamedly political praxis that has continued to inspire liberation psychologists around the world.

Islamic "Relevance"

Compared to liberation psychology, a relatively obscure intellectual movement of the twentieth century was the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) project. After World War II, most Muslim countries had attained independence from their erstwhile colonial masters, but by the late 1960s, a new milieu had arisen. Invigorated by the advent of "black gold" *nouveaux riches* and widespread agreement regarding the failures of capitalism and socialism, calls grew for the development of Islamic solutions to the social problems of Muslim countries (Haneef 2005). The *ummah* (worldwide

Muslim community) was in a state of malaise epitomized by political disunity, economic underdevelopment, and religio-cultural alienation—and the root cause of the malady was thought to involve the knowledge-making enterprise. For the Palestinian-American philosopher, Ismail al-Faruqi, the Muslim world had committed the error of embracing a "bifurcated" educational system that differentiated between religious and secular knowledge (al-Faruqi 1988, p. 16). The result of this distinction was that the non-religious sciences—including the social sciences and humanities—were imported mindlessly from the West. By contrast, the Malaysian philosopher, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, reasoned that the principal cause of Muslim backwardness was the "loss of *adab*" of Muslims themselves (al-Attas 1985, p. 99). Because of this loss of discipline "that assures the recognition and acknowledgement of one's proper place in relation to one's self, society and Community" (al-Attas 1985), Muslims were no longer able to discriminate between categories of knowledge.

Although al-Attas "is credited for laying the theoretical foundation of the IOK…while [al-]Faruqi's contribution is more on the methodological side" (Haque and Masuan 2002, p. 279), the chief implication of their respective positions was essentially the same: knowledge was not neutral. Two things needed to be done: first, the IOK project had to be adequately defined, rationalized, and theorized, and second, the disciplines themselves were to be subjected to its processes. International conferences were held in Saudi Arabia in 1976 and 1977, with economics and education the first disciplines considered for Islamization (Haneef 2005). In the case of education—the logic applied to all disciplines—it was argued that "[t]he foreign elements and disease [would] have first to be drawn out and neutralized before the body of knowledge [could] be remolded in the crucible of Islam" (al-Attas 1979, p. 44). By 1979, psychology had become a candidate for Islamization. In his celebrated *The Dilemma of Muslim Psychologists*, the Sudanese psychologist, Malik Badri (1979), argued that in their eagerness to locate themselves beneath the aegis of science, Muslim psychologists had parroted Western psychological theories and practices that were inapplicable in Muslim countries. For Badri, the dilemma involved a tension between the psychological theories of premodern Muslim scholars and those of contemporary mainstream psychology (Haque and Masuan 2002).[5]

As a result, attempts at fashioning a *bona fide* Islamic psychology took one of two forms: a critical revision of Western psychology—involving the exegesis of relevant passages from the Qur'an—or an elaboration of

the classical Islamic legacy. A theocentric-individualistic outlook marked both strands and was evident in a landmark special issue on Islamic psychology in the *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*. Badri (1998), for example, juxtaposed the West's failed campaigns against drug abuse with an Islamic treatment approach based on religious observances, Shehu (1998) regarded human development as subject to God's will, while, for Achoui (1998) psychology had intrinsic religious, philosophical, and moral dimensions. The theocentric individualism of these accounts emulated a similar penchant in a well-known earlier attempt at articulating a framework for an Islamic psychology (al-Attas 1990). Outwardly asocial, these formulations of Islamic psychology not only problematized the "theoretical relevance" of Western psychology but also ended up reproducing, in hindsight, the twin indigenization scheme of Sikolohiyang Pilipino.[6]

African "Relevance"

As with the rest of the developing world, calls for "relevance" on the African continent arose in response to various social contradictions that had become increasingly apparent in the post-colonial years. Psychology had arrived in Africa during colonial times in the form of ethnopsychology when nineteenth century writers, philosophers, and anthropologists set about reifying a world of newfound curiosities (Nell 1990), but until the 1960s, the discipline comprised little more than a motley collection of ex-colonists, expatriates, visiting scholars, and, in the case of South Africa, white psychologists (Abdi 1975). Even then, foreign researchers in cross-cultural psychology were more concerned with theoretical questions than "socially relevant" issues crowding the agendas of developing countries (Jahoda 1973). The lack of African involvement was such that, by the early 1990s, it was possible to claim that "the average black African is likely to declare that he has never heard of the term 'psychology' in his life, or if he has heard of it, he is most likely to swear that he does not understand what it means" (Eze 1991, p. 28).

In 1962—with the exception of South Africa—not a single department of psychology existed in sub-Saharan Africa (Peltzer and Bless 1989 cited in Nsamenang 1995). It was only in the late 1960s and increasingly during the 1970s that African researchers in psychology started to emerge—at the same time that their colleagues in the West were becoming more reflexive about their own practices (Wober 1975). Until then, psychological research in Africa was more focused on solving Euro-American

disciplinary conundrums—with the subtext of "mak[ing] more effective the African's exploitation [and] advancing a 'science' of dubious relevance to African reality" (Bulhan 1981, p. 27). Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's (1923) oft-cited *Primitive Mentality*, for example, in which he presented his thesis on the "prelogical mentality" of "uncivilized communities," became a seminal work that would inspire psychological research in Africa for decades. This line of theorizing was taken up by, among others, John Carothers (1951 cited in Richards 1997), according to whom Africans did not use their frontal lobes, Carl Jung (1961 cited in Nell 1990), in whose reckoning the African mind featured as something infantile and largely unconscious, and Octave Mannoni (1968 cited in Bulhan 1981), who dismissed the struggle for independence as a reaction formation against the underlying "dependency complex" of the African personality.

Psychological expertise dedicated itself to the service of state and industry—both of which were ill-disposed to African interests. Despite occupational psychology having developed two approaches in the study of adaptation to industrialization—one focused on worker efficiency, the other on worker satisfaction—in Africa, more studies accorded with the first approach (Wober 1975). Employed usually by industrialists, psychologists tended to endorse an economic outlook that was consistent with dehumanizing attitudes toward workers. In South Africa, "for the most part, psychological practice [was] a matter of treating individuals as objects of political or management decisions not made by themselves" (Louw and Danziger 2000, p. 59), while elsewhere—in Nigeria, the Cameroons, South West Africa, and Ghana, for example—it was reasoned that Africans preferred the congested living arrangements that typified worker compounds (Wober 1975).

Despite improvements in the post-independence era, neocolonial tendencies endured. By the 1980s—there were twenty departments of psychology on the continent (Serpell 1984 cited in Nsamenang 1992)—black psychologists socialized in the Euro-American tradition continued to administer the kinds of studies that had "long served as a bulwark of rationalisation for oppression" (Bulhan 1981, p. 25). In the mid-1990s, one survey of twelve countries reported that psychological services remained Western in outlook (Mpofu et al. 1997 cited in Mpofu 2002); it was also being argued that psychological theories were individuocentric and failed to capture the purported sociocentrism of African societies (Mpofu 2002). Eventually, at its founding meeting in July 2000, the Working Group on the Development of the African Psychological Society

noted the minimal African involvement at the International Congress of Psychology and concluded that "[e]ither we are marginalized, or not taken seriously at all" (Mpofu 2002, p. 180).

Justifications for the "irrelevance" of psychology in Africa are varied. Among the explanatory factors that have been advanced, are political instability (Nsamenang 1995), overseas training (Mpofu et al. 1997 cited in Mpofu 2002), an exodus of intellectual capital (Nsamenang 1992 cited in Nsamenang 1995), antagonistic peer relationships (Nsamenang 1995), poor communication networks across the continent and beyond (Abdi 1975), language barriers (Mpofu 2002), methodological enigmas (Abdi 1975), the Westocentrism of the discipline (Abdi 1975), and, inevitably, the "social irrelevance" of a "luxury oriented" discipline at odds with the prevailing conditions of hunger, disease, and economic backwardness (Abdi 1975, p. 230).[7] Accordingly, the African debate about "relevance" shows no sign of slowing down.

South African "Relevance"

Unlike the rest of the continent, psychology in South Africa developed rapidly from the 1920s when John Dunston—a British psychiatrist and the country's first Commissioner for Mental Hygiene—returned from an official tour of England, Europe, and the USA. Having learnt that mental health care extended beyond the provision of custodial services, Dunston introduced a series of interventions that included the appointment of psychologists and the standardization of intelligence tests for South African conditions (Minde 1975). His views on African intelligence, however, were unflattering: Dunston believed that Africans were appreciably less intelligent than whites, were short on initiative, did not learn from experience, and lacked not only the reasoning skills but also the requisite number of brain cells for becoming paranoid (Dunston 1923 cited in Seedat and MacKenzie 2008). These ideas dovetailed seamlessly with the untested notion of a "hierarchy of races," advocated in 1920 by the Eugenics and Genetics Standing Committee of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science. In need of scientific validation, here was a challenge tailor-made for the ministrations of psychological expertise (Louw 1997 cited in Seedat and MacKenzie 2008).

Yet, the discipline's most noteworthy achievement during the interwar years would stem from its involvement in the Carnegie Commission's Poor White Study. The so-called poor white problem had raised con-

cerns about sexual relations across the color line, which, it was speculated, resulted from the social proximity of poor whites to "the great mass of non-Europeans…. This impairs the tradition which counteracts miscegenation, and the social colour divisions are noticeably weakening" (Grosskopf 1932, p. xx). But whereas the poor white problem led psychologists to demonstrate the social utility of psychometric techniques with extraordinary success (Louw 1986b), it also saw the discipline align itself with the precepts of scientific racism, which served, in turn, the project of racial capitalism (Seedat and MacKenzie 2008).

The post-war period saw the institutionalization of Afrikaner apartheid rule and the increasing isolation of the South African academy from continental Europe and Britain. The National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR)—established in 1946 and staffed initially by air force psychologists who had made important contributions to the mobilization effort—was instrumental in generating knowledge concerning the adaptability of African labor. Funded by state and industry, the NIPR's unwritten mandate was to discover "how white-owned industries could best expropriate and exploit the labour of the African workforce" (Seedat and MacKenzie 2008, p. 80). By the 1970s, however, a deteriorating political situation meant that psychologists now had to assist in defusing a rising working-class militancy. A discernible shift in political momentum was afoot, epitomized by the failure of Calvinist individualism, mounting local and international condemnation of the wide-ranging depredations of apartheid policy, and, in psychology, a looming revolt against an Afrikaner-led profession. The promulgation in 1974 of the Afrikaans Medium Decree contributed to the Soweto riots of 1976, which was followed in 1977 by the death-in-detention of the Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko. Along with the regional turmoil of those years—particularly in Angola, Mozambique, and Rhodesia—from the mid-1970s onward the apartheid state lurched from one crisis to the next in a steady trajectory of terminal decline.

By the late 1970s, South Africa's first black psychologist, Chabani Manganyi, had been writing about the black experience of political oppression for some years (see, e.g. Manganyi 1973). Manganyi's early contributions were made during the apogee of apartheid rule, yet it was only with the writing already on the wall that developments in the professional mainstream started reflecting what was going on in the country and beyond. From 1978, PIRSA—the Afrikaner whites-only psychological association—backtracked on its founding ethos of racial separatism to hold

joint conferences with the racially integrated South African Psychological Association (SAPA). However, despite the two societies burying the hatchet in 1982 to form the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA), the new association failed to convince progressive psychologists that the merger was anything more than a pragmatic gesture aimed at consolidating statutory recognition of the profession. Then, in 1983, the Institute of Family and Marital Therapy hosted an international conference at Sun City—a gambling and entertainment center in a Bantustan "setting which is responsible for the break-up of thousands of [black] families" (Vogelman 1987, p. 24). In protest, disappointed practitioners and students formed the Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA), which dedicated itself "to work only with those who are the victims of oppression" (Anonymous n.d., p. 2). In the same year, the critical psychology journal *Psychology in Society* was launched to "contribut[e] to serious debate and understanding of a psychology which is clearly at a cross-roads [and] is being torn apart by its inability to contribute meaningfully to a South African society increasingly in the throes of a deep structural crisis" (The Editor 1983, p. 1). But by the late 1980s, the white-run OASSSA was deemed not radical enough by black psychologists who founded the Psychology and Apartheid Committee instead.[8] With the state apparatus unraveling and political violence escalating, critical psychologists condemned the discipline for its "social irrelevance," claiming that it was culturally insensitive (Holdstock 1979, 1981a, 1981b), bourgeois (Turton 1986), politically indifferent (Anonymous 1986; Dawes 1985; Liddell and Kvalsvig 1990; Mauer et al. 1991; Strümpfer 1981), economically inaccessible (Berger and Lazarus 1987; Vogelman 1987), and theoretically impoverished (Gilbert 1989).

A generation later, South Africa remains trapped in a sea of poverty, inequality, unemployment, violence, and poor education as calls for "social relevance" preponderate. The skewed racial profile of South African psychologists is a touchstone in these debates, for, despite the country having a black majority of 90 %, "[b]lack professionals make up only 25 % of the profession" (Cooper 2014, p. 843). It is not that "race" itself represents a problem but that racial identity overlaps with language proficiency, which has implications for a profession built on the premise of a "talking cure." In a setting where 40 % of the population speaks either isiXhosa or isiZulu as a home language and 80 % of psychologists are able to converse only in English and/or Afrikaans, the accessibility of psychological services becomes questionable—a situation not helped by the gradual

discontinuation of "registered counselor" training programs across the country.[9] Efforts are being made to improve the "cultural relevance" of the discipline yet the Africanization of psychological theory remains a fairly peripheral endeavor (e.g. Holdstock 2000; Mkhize 2004; Nwoye 2015). As for research practices, recent trends suggest a greater degree of contextual sensitivity, although a range of socioeconomic issues—along with the poor and working-class populations they mostly affect—continue to be underrepresented in studies (Macleod and Howell 2013).

Various explanations attempt to comprehend the failure within South African psychology to address these markers of "relevance." Some cite the legacy of apartheid-era practices, the norms of training institutions, and the generally slow rate of transformation within the discipline (Pillay et al. 2008). Others advance the reactionary view that psychology is incompatible with African ways of being, that indigenous healers are the designated "psychologists" in African society, that rural Africans prefer visiting traditional healers, and that black students are attracted to more lucrative professions (Ahmed and Pillay 2004; Pillay and Kramers 2003). Another perspective is that psychology's indifference to black working-class problems has alienated black students from the discipline (Mama 1995; Pillay and Kramers 2003). There are also theoretical explanations that are explored in Chapter 3—but for the time being, it is apparent that the discipline continues to align itself with the well-resourced (Ahmed and Pillay 2004).

Discussion

The foregoing examples reveal how questions about "relevance" surface during periods of social unrest. In the USA, opposition to the Vietnam War and domestic racism had peaked; in Europe, students rallied around a host of political causes; in China, a new regime proceeded to repress anything it deemed "bourgeois"; in Latin America, economic exploitation occasioned a populist revolt; while in India, the Philippines, Africa, and the Muslim world, struggles with post-colonial realities endured.

Debates about "relevance," that is, do not emerge in social vacuums. In the USA, for example, concerns about experimentalism had done the rounds for many years, but it was only in the 1960s that these anxieties precipitated "the age of relevance." Any one of Wundtian dualism, the Clever Hans phenomenon, the Hawthorne effect, and the insights of Luther Bernard and Saul Rosenzweig in the 1930s and Edgar Vinacke

in the mid-1950s could have triggered a call for "relevance." That none of them did, had much to do with the *Zeitgeist*; by contrast, a tipping point had been reached in the late 1960s and early 1970s, brought on by an accumulation of political crises. Domestic wiretapping, the Watergate scandal, and the American public's growing knowledge of the excesses of biomedical research resonated with underlying themes of invasion of privacy, distrust of authority, and scientific accountability (Rosnow 1981).

In the non-American appeals for "relevance," however, a second factor must be considered. Their calls for "relevance" depended as much on an "ecological niche"[10] as they did on ill-conceived attempts at internationalizing the discipline.[11] In almost all of the foregoing histories of psychology, concerns about "social relevance" declared themselves at the respective intersections of "translation" and "indigenization" periods, when national and regional aspirations seemed to have been short-changed by a foreign disciplinary logic. Because psychological knowledge had been made to "travel" beyond its political, cultural, and intellectual center, it now appeared "socially irrelevant" and in need of indigenization.

Interestingly, the association of calls for "relevance" with conditions of social change resulted in these appeals presenting most frequently in social psychology. After World War II, American pre-eminence in this field was a *fait accompli*: it was American money—tied to "a prescriptive model of what science should be" (Moscovici and Markova 2006, p. xiii)—that had rebuilt European institutions. Accordingly, at the end of the 1950s a rudimentary alliance existed between American and European social psychologists, mirroring the broader efforts of the International Social Science Council to coordinate social sciences internationally. But in the early 1960s, the Americans encountered a problem: social psychology's links with sociology and cultural anthropology were fueling questions about its status as an independent area of study.

One solution was to promote the field internationally, which led to the 1964 formation of the Committee on Transnational Social Psychology. With Leon Festinger playing a leading role, the Transnational Committee's founding purpose was to generate a universally valid body of social psychological knowledge by encouraging colleagues around the world to conduct investigations in their own countries.[12] However, because it favored the exploration of real-world phenomena, the Transnational Committee risked alienating itself from an American mainstream that had distanced itself increasingly from applied work (Moscovici and Markova 2006). On the other hand, the Committee's assumption that internationalization

involved the *dissemination*—and not the *advancement*—of knowledge threatened to alienate its international partners. After several networking conferences and training seminars in Europe, Latin America, and Africa, collaborative arrangements remained more "vertical" than "horizontal" (Gergen et al. 1996; Jahoda 1973, 1975) as the social questions in developing nations took a backseat to the theoretical preoccupations of American researchers (Tajfel 1966). Because of unidirectional economic and intellectual sponsorship, the policy of cooperative cross-cultural research proved useful neither for developing nations nor for the "organic" development of social psychology in those countries (Tajfel 1968). Consequently, by the 1970s, appeals for "social relevance" had taken root in Western Europe (Israel and Tajfel 1972), Latin America (Martín-Baró 1996), Asia (Sinha 1973), and Africa (Abdi 1975). Induced by political crises and a push for internationalization that resembled "intellectual imperialism" (Moscovici and Markova 2006, p. 186), a situation arose in which a debate that had started with American psychologists had taken on intercontinental proportions (Moghaddam 1987). The internationalization of the "relevance" question represented not only a questioning of political authority but an interrogation of disciplinary authority. In psychology as much as in politics, American and European models had come to be seen as ineffectual in other parts of the world.

Notes

1. Nonetheless, the activist population was anything but doctrinally consistent, reflecting perhaps its distrust of organized belief systems. Moreover, because of a noticeable predilection for individualistic values—and its being lumped with the politically disenchanted "Pot Left"—it invited charges of anarchy, irrationality, barbarism, and "ego-litarianism" (Axelrod et al. 1969, p. 206).
2. The Frankfurt School believed that mobilization risked its own undoing through the privatization of "alternativeness" and an aimless "new actionism" (Habermas 1971, p. 26); the rapid dissolution of the student movement seems to have vindicated this skepticism. Another perspective is that a corporatist assimilation of May 1968 values (Pestre, 2003) ensured that the students' main legacy would be one of "libertarianism which came to be appropriated by a Right eager to dismantle bureaucracies and the welfare state" (Müller 2002, p. 33).
3. In his address, Miller suggested that psychologists needed to think beyond their scientific obligations in order to realize their responsibilities as citizens: "The demand for social relevance that we have been voicing as psychologists

is only one aspect of a general dissatisfaction with the current state of our society. On every hand we hear complaints about the old paradigm… So let us continue our struggle to advance psychology as a means of promoting human welfare, each in our own way" (1969, p. 1074).

4. Ruben Ardila repeats three times in one paper that "science is not a cultural value in Latin America" (1982, pp. 105, 112 & 120), emphasizing the heterogeneity of the region and its psychological traditions, along with the fact that "there is no such thing as 'Latin American psychology'" (ibid., p. 103). Nonetheless, it can be asserted that psychologists in Central and South America have been influenced broadly by psychoanalysis, "French" psychology, and Skinnerian behaviorism, and have tended to apply themselves to the specific problems of their countries to the extent that, by the 1920s, the discipline was already an established part of public life (Pickren and Rutherford 2010).
5. A direct result of the 1977 education conference was the establishment of Islamic universities in Islamabad and Kuala Lumpur in the early 1980s (Haneef 2005). Muslim social scientists from around the world joined Kuala Lumpur's International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), eager to immerse themselves in the IOK project. Badri himself joined IIUM's Department of Psychology in 1992 and became the first faculty member to introduce an undergraduate course on Islam and psychology. Despite his relocation to al-Attas' International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)—a research institute of IIUM—he continued to publish in the area of psychology and religion, while other international figures from Algeria, Iraq, India, and the Sudan would go on to teach Islamic psychology at the university (Haque and Masuan 2002).
6. Recent work on Islamic psychology may also be classified as belonging to either the revisionist or classical camps. In their respective discussions of human personality, Mohamed (2009a) draws on classical Islamic philosophy in his thesis of "man as microcosm"—specifically, the cosmologies of the Brethren of Purity, Ibn Miskawayh, al-Raghib al-Isfahani, and al-Ghazali—while Rahman (2009) presents Mulla Sadra's theory of the soul in relation to the propositions of Ibn Sina, al-Razi, and others. Elsewhere, Alawneh (2009) identifies the shortcomings of psychoanalytic and behaviorist thinking around "motivation" and frames the Islamic alternative in Qur'anic terms, just as Mohamed (2009b)—in his discussion of "drives"—interrogates Western articulations of the term before clarifying Najati's Qur'anic model. In another revisionist work, *Psychology from an Islamic Perspective*, Noor (2009) makes it clear in her preface that this collection of papers "is *not* an outright rejection of Western psychological knowledge, but a re-examination of this knowledge so that they are in conformity with

Islamic teachings” (original emphasis). In Noor’s volume, established topics are delineated—personality, learning, motivation, cognition, and so on—and then reorganized according to Islamic (i.e. Qur’anic) terms of reference.

7. In response to some of these reasons, a group of psychologists started to develop an indigenous African psychology in the mid-1980s—despite the allegedly open resentment of “white-washed” colleagues (Eze 1991, p. 36).
8. The paradoxical outcome was that psychology’s resistance to apartheid was organized mostly along racial lines (Foster 2008; Suffla et al. 2001; Yen 2008).
9. “Registered counseling” refers to a practice category that was introduced in 2003 with the understanding that an earlier exit point in professional training would make basic counseling services more available to economically disadvantaged communities throughout South Africa. Whereas clinical psychology training lasts a minimum of 6 years and registered counselor training takes 4 years, most universities have terminated registered counselor programs—for a variety of reasons—despite evidence that primary level psychological services are sorely needed across the country (see Petersen 2004).
10. Ian Hacking (1998) coined the term to describe the phenomenon of “transient mental illnesses,” which flourish in accommodating environments but disappear as soon as their surroundings become inhospitable.
11. Hiroshi Azuma’s (1984) account of the development of Japanese psychology providing a compelling illustration of this latter point. In Japan, it was an initial “pioneer period” involving recognition of the discipline’s potential that facilitated its introduction at textbook level. Then, in the “introductory period,” increased academic regard encouraged the intellectual elite to train overseas. In the ensuing “translation and modeling period,” the numbers of students and researchers multiplied as theories and research practices were modeled on those of the developed world; applications were as yet only successful in culture-free areas. An “indigenization period” followed in which culturally sensitive theories were developed and applied, while an “integration period” marked the final synthesis of Western and Japanese theories and practices.
12. The involvement of social psychologists in the expansion of cross-cultural psychology cannot be ascribed wholly to their pursuit of a universal social psychology. There was also a desire to understand the shared traumas of World War II, a Cold War preoccupation with international relations (Segall et al. 1998), and an interest in the challenges that accompanied political independence in the Third World (Jahoda 2009).

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CHAPTER 3

Theorizing "Relevance"

"Everything which if of use to mankind is honorable. I only understand one word: useful! You can snigger as much as you like, but that's so!" (Andrey Semyonovitch Lebeziatnikov, from Crime and Punishment)

In psychology, it is usually the case that "relevance" functions as an adjective, with disciplinary trends either lauded as "relevant" or dismissed as "irrelevant." The adjectival form of "relevance," however, obscures a historical significance that can only be enabled through a focus on its nominal usage. With this alternative focus, "relevance" becomes transformed into a *concept* that, like any other, is the bearer of its own history. To be sure, Chapter 2 represented an attempt at a conceptual analysis of "relevance"—its primary observation was that calls for "relevance" and conditions of social upheaval have tended to coincide—although the chapter revealed more about the world in which psychology is situated than it did about the discipline itself. Accordingly, in this chapter, I present a series of theoretical perspectives in order to demonstrate how the durability of debates about psychology's "relevance" depends as much on rapid social change as it does on the historical character of the discipline and the discursive quality of "relevance."

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Psychology and Its Subject Matter

In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Jürgen Habermas (1972) describes three modes of scientific enquiry, each of which produces "interested" knowledge. First, in the *empirical-analytic* (i.e. natural) sciences, hypotheses are tested via observation and measurement in order to generate nomological facts. Considered value-free, this type of predictive knowledge aids technical mastery of the environment. Second, in the *historical-hermeneutic* (i.e. social) sciences, the assumption is that human action—enabled by consciousness—is inherently meaningful to self and others. "Access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning, not observation" (Habermas 1972, p. 309), which occurs through acts of interpretation. The investigator's situatedness is acknowledged in that "[t]he world of traditional meaning discloses itself to the interpreter only to the extent that his own world becomes clarified at the same time" (Habermas 1972, pp. 309–310). Knowledge obtained hermeneutically has a practical—rather than technical—interest in a "possible consensus among actors in the framework of a self-understanding derived from tradition" (Habermas 1972, p. 310). And third, in the sciences of *social action*, law-obeying knowledge is also sought, although an attempt is made to produce a reflective consciousness in "those whom the laws are about" (Habermas 1972). Here, the cognitive interest is emancipatory and seeks liberation from "ideologically frozen relations of dependence" (Habermas 1972).

Psychology has the unusual distinction of belonging to all three knowledge traditions. The discipline's failure to demarcate its boundaries—its most enduring controversy involves the scope of its subject matter—has encouraged not only the development of an astonishing array of fields and subfields but has bequeathed a legacy of turf wars exemplified by incessant calls for "relevance." For, despite "the individual" being identified as the discipline's proper focus of attention, its meaning has been overextended to the point of promoting either a dilettantism of sorts or the fullest culmination of human disciplining yet. Sensation, perception, will, habits, consciousness, mind, brain, the unconscious, behavior, cognition, being, personality, attitudes, sociality, subjectivity, discourse, and community have all been advanced as the discipline's proper starting point, with the lack of consensus fueling one "revolution" after another: a behaviorist revolution ended introspectionism, a cognitive revolution ended the "social irrelevance" of "rat psychology," and a discursive revolution (Harré 2001) was touted as the answer to cognitivist reductionism at the same time

that a dialogical revolution was expected to remedy the shortcomings of this second cognitive revolution (Shotter 2001). But underpinning these disagreements about questions and methods was a basic dispute about the discipline's legitimate cognitive interest.[1] Committed variously to the interests of control, understanding, and critique, psychology has never managed to resolve this fundamental issue—which Thomas Kuhn (1962) viewed as evidence of its "preparadigmatic" status.

And yet, even if psychologists were to agree on a single subject matter and on how best to study it, appeals for "relevance" would still not subside. As historical constructions, psychological categories are not naturally occurring phenomena—they only appear that way because "the network of categories… has been adopted from the broader language community to which psychologists belong" (Danziger 2010, p. 55). Standard historiography in the discipline merely formalizes this appearance by virtue of a tacit commitment to "a timeless human nature" (Danziger 2010, p. 56), sanctioning thereby the use of natural scientific methods in its investigation. Psychological categories are "human kinds," which, since they permeate social life, are value-laden and able to operate upon their human carriers, altering continually the "things" to which they refer (Hacking 1995). A constantly evolving subject matter would only lead to further disagreements about questions and methods—and a return to debates about "relevance."

Basic and Applied Psychology

Apart from the reflexive quality of human subjectivity, psychology is also structured in a manner that invites questions about "relevance." To be precise, there are two requirements that must be met in order to establish a discipline, namely, the formation of cooperative partnerships and the production of socially useful knowledge (Danziger 1990). In order to build effective alliances, new knowledge producers must prove their credentials to established producers. Knowledge must be created in forms that are deemed valuable and by means of techniques that are considered reputable—"even though such rituals [may] have more in common with magic than with science" (Danziger 1990, p. 181). In addition, knowledge products must address the interests of influential social groupings, failing which important sources of sponsorship can be lost. Subject to changing exigencies, the founding of a discipline is a politicized endeavor: practitioners must "accommodate themselves to the specific opportunities offered by a particular historical context" (Danziger 1990, p. 102).

In the early days of modern psychology, these mutually dependent but contradictory demands—the discipline-bound pursuit of scientific respectability on the one hand and the marketing of psychological products for public consumption on the other—regulated the activities of its practitioners.[2] By exploiting "the mystique of the laboratory and the mystique of numbers" (Danziger 1990, p. 185), "pure" research conferred upon the products of "applied" research a scientific authority analogous to a competitive edge, which validated the important role the basic science played in the creation of expert knowledge.[3] But these complementary disciplinary pursuits also aggravated tensions between pure and applied research. Psychological applications were of two kinds: grand applications that had implications for social policy and localized applications with circumscribed possibilities. What told them apart was the distance between the setting in which the research was conducted ("context of investigation") and the settings in which findings were to be applied ("context of application"). Grand applications were characterized by a sizeable gap between the two contexts that could only "be bridged by a host of unproven and often unspoken assumptions" (Danziger 1990, p. 187); for localized applications, it was considerably narrower. The problem was that the rhetoric of universalist science demanded the magnification of the gap, whereas the discipline's predictive accuracy depended on its minimization. The net effect was to concretize a somewhat false opposition between pure and applied psychology—with the latter allegedly the stronger performer on the "social relevance" index.

Danziger's account of the origins of modern psychology delivers several insights about the "relevance" concept. First, it suggests that the history of "social relevance" is central to the history of psychology itself. The abiding interest in a "socially relevant" psychology is symptomatic of an oversimplified distinction between its pure and applied versions. Psychology could not have established itself without addressing the social management priorities of bureaucratic elites: by making itself "socially relevant," it secured a vital source of patronage. But it needed a "socially irrelevant," apparently asocial foil whose scientific disinterestedness would underwrite the authority of its knowledge claims. The discipline, that is, traverses a polarity of "relevance" that cannot be dissolved: the accusation of "social irrelevance" is the price it must pay for the preservation of its scientific eminence. Second, Danziger's work anticipates the remarkable internationalization of the "social relevance" question: the fact that the development of modern psychology was determined by the requirements

of a specific social order clarifies why its later introduction in societies that did not share those contingencies would be experienced as jarring, alienating, and therefore "socially irrelevant."[4] Third, if one acknowledges the politics of discipline formation, it becomes clear that any attempt to create a "socially relevant" psychology implies a particular constellation of social alliances—and when, over time, those alliances shift, the meaning of "relevance" must change correspondingly. "Social relevance" as an abstract ideal, that is, means little, because it is the world of practice—where possibilities are inevitably circumscribed—that imbues it with meaning (Danziger 1990). This suggests, in turn, that psychology's inability to settle on a cognitive interest is not problematic in itself: after all, it is surely "interest" that determines the parameters of "social relevance" and, since the latter is historically contingent, one can hardly expect "interest" to be finalizable either. And fourth, Danziger's contributions shed light on the proper scope of "relevance-making." Varieties of psychological knowledge are prepared with discrete audiences in mind; to advance the cause of a "socially relevant" psychology does not require one to reinvent the discipline but only to supplement its activities judiciously—and "[t]here is nothing strange about that. What is strange is the notion of a single body of abstract psychological knowledge that is valid in all contexts and for all purposes" (Danziger 1987, p. 10).

Psychology and Social Change

It has long been observed that, when these "contexts" change, psychological theory struggles to remain "relevant." Gustav Jahoda once noted that the issues psychology tended to overlook were "mainly accompaniments or consequences of rapid social change" (1973, p. 466). Its theories lacked "social relevance," which generated "talk of a crisis" (Jahoda 1973). Because research methods in the discipline were developed on the assumption that the individual—and not wider societal configurations—was its proper subject matter, psychology was hamstrung from the beginning when it came to theorizing change. Having modeled its methods on those of the natural sciences, psychology proved "somewhat late in accepting the challenge posed by problems emanating from the planned programmes of rapid socio-economic development and social change adopted by most of the developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America" (Sinha 1984, p. 17). The result was a lasting difficulty persuading these nations of its "social relevance."[5]

In developed countries, a similar problem arose: rates of social change had accelerated to the point where "the overall framework can no longer be taken for granted, and also because psychology is being challenged to cope with problems that are new or have become intolerable in the present climate of opinion" (Jahoda 1973, p. 466). The methods that had proven successful in the study of the individual were devised in an era of socio-economic stability such that factors beyond the individual were not considered important. Faced now with the social turmoil that fueled both the political radicalism of the late 1960s and early 1970s as well as the post-colonial moment that was reverberating throughout the Third World, the field to which everyone turned for answers—social psychology—was not up to the task. Reckoned not social enough (Moscovici 1972), its perceived failure to explain and intervene in the goings-on of the real world took on "crisis" proportions while questions about "social relevance" preponderated. During periods of social equilibrium, psychology had been able to survive with its meta-theoretical inadequacies concealed, but in times of discontent, this was no longer possible. Theoretically speaking, these debates about "social relevance" amounted to an interrogation of the discipline's dominating interest of control—and a coinciding desire for a critical, emancipatory mode of enquiry.

"Relevance," Realism, and Relativism

Thus far, the implications of a discursive focus on "relevance" have not been fully discussed. In particular, the claims of the introductory chapter regarding the rhetorical nature of "relevance" and the associated "imperative to establish the claims of some versions over others" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, p. 68) will imply for some a maddening epistemological relativism. The objection may even be raised that rhetoric has no place in a history book. Indeed, the relative neglect of rhetoric by historians of psychology derives from rhetoric's insistence on the equivocality of accounts. The relativism that underpins rhetorical theory is inimical to the thoroughgoing realism of mainstream historiography. Since its classical beginnings, rhetoric has been vilified as "a shabby little weasel word in most circles" (Harris 1991, p. 282), "the refuge of… the demagogue" (Nel 1998, p. 105). Philosophers today have not forgotten the Kantian admonition either, namely, that rhetoric "is not worthy of any respect at all" (Kant 2000, p. 205). Nonetheless, since the 1950s, rhetoric has undergone something of a revival with rhetoricians arguing that their traditional stomping grounds of law and politics could be extended to

science itself (Gross 1990; Nelson et al. 1987). Moreover, when Kuhn (1962) announced the irrationality of science's paradigm shifts and, later, Feyerabend (1975) gainsaid the unity of scientific method, philosophy—the archenemy of rhetoric—had contrived to put the rhetors back in business. Soon enough, fields as disparate as architecture, biology, economics (Nelson et al. 1987), and even mathematics (Davis and Hersh 1987) would be subjected to rhetorical examination.[6]

To be sure, rhetoric and psychology are closely related at the disciplinary level: not only does rhetoric have its own psychology, but also the reverse is equally true (Carlston 1987). For example, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca note that "[t]he theory of argumentation which, with the aid of discourse, aims at securing an efficient action on minds might have been treated as a branch of psychology" (1969, p. 9). Conversely, psychology is itself highly rhetorical: semantically, psychological terminology can be imprecise in ways that encourage inaccurate inferences; in its not infrequent recourse to metaphor, the psychological narrative can breed factual embellishment; while, in respect of argumentation, psychological accounts are as beholden to the IMRAD blueprint[7] as natural-scientific ones (Carlston 1987). Psychologists are no less rhetorically skilled than professional rhetoricians themselves.

It becomes a curiosity of note, then, that historical investigations of psychology are concerned only rarely with the rhetorical practices of the discipline itself.[8] It is as if discourse—rhetoric is its argumentative form—is something performed by people *outside* psychology and not by psychologists themselves. Psychological studies in the qualitative tradition routinely set about identifying the discursive practices of a range of social actors to the invariable exclusion of the discipline's own protagonists. This book attempts to correct the imbalance by taking psychologists seriously—not by quoting them in order to buttress other arguments, but by making their words an object for rhetorical analysis.

On the question of ontology, some will be offended at the suggestion that "relevance" involves both material *and* rhetorical considerations. After all, critical psychologists such as Martín-Baró have made the supreme sacrifice in their pursuit of a "relevant" psychology. For South African psychologists, the international academic boycott of white colleagues during the apartheid years—inasmuch as the latter's work was viewed as "irrelevant"—contributed to the regime's downfall. There was, surely, nothing "rhetorical" about that: "relevance" revealed itself tangibly when *real* people were *really* turned away at *real* conferences on account of *real* material concerns. In this context, to claim that discourses

"systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault 1976, p. 49) and that "there is nothing outside of the text" (Derrida 1976, p. 158 quoted in Burr 2003, p. 88) is to invite ridicule. Yet, the position advanced by many social constructionists—and taken up in this book—is not that the world beyond language is unreal but that the representation of that world through language is inevitable. The result is neither naïve realism nor unbridled relativism but a *critical realism* that is epistemologically relativist and ontologically realist. Discourse and reality, as it were, do not pass like ships in the night, nor is there a fully overlapping degree of correspondence (Burr 2003).

Like Parker (1992) before her, Willig aligns herself with this circumscribed relativism, distancing herself from the unrestrained relativism of "the postmodernist position [that] so easily slides into political conservatism" (1998, p. 96). Collier, for one, commits himself to an even stronger form of critical realism because, despite its performative capacity, "[l]anguage can only be learnt by reference to reality. That indicates that there are other, prior means of access to reality. Not only is there no one privileged means of access to reality, language is not even the first runner" (1998, p. 48). Whether one speaks of consciousness, experience, practice, or language, each of these is always *about* something: the pre-existing real world. For Collier, epistemological relativism means that, "in a sense no one can be wrong about anything" (Collier 1998, p. 56), resulting in the kind of dogmatism that refuses to adjust itself even with "reality hit[ting one] in the face" (Collier 1998, p. 51).

It is a formidable argument in debates about "relevance" that "bottom line" material issues are at stake (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 26). In the USA and Europe, "relevance" movements arose in response to the *material* devastations of war, totalitarianism, and environmental degradation; in the Third World, they signified a post-colonial uprising against the *material* injustices of racism, militarism, socioeconomic backwardness, undemocratic politics, and, in turn, American and Western cultural imperialism. Yet radical relativists insist that realist bottom lines must be presented *rhetorically* in the shape of "Death" moves such as "misery, genocide, poverty, power—the reality that *should not* be denied" (Edwards et al. 1995, original emphasis). What such moves enact is a moral universe comprising two forms of prohibition, namely, "the Good that must not be undermined" and "the Bad that should not be justified" (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 33). The Good kind avoids easy detection because it operates as the unstated corollary of the Bad kind, according to which bad things

really happen and relativist denials will only result in other bad things *really* happening too. The relativist rejoinder, however, is that despite "the overwhelming majority of the world's politico-moral disputes [being] conducted exclusively by realists" (Edwards et al. 1995), this has not prevented the bad things from happening anyway. In fact, relativists may add that realist tropes about a predetermined external reality can fuel "rhetoric for inaction" (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 34).

When Death moves are contradicted in this manner, realists resort to "Furniture" moves (pounding tables, pointing at trees, etc.) that affirm the reality of the concrete world. For radical relativists, such appeals lay bare the innermost sanctum of the realist bastion: they are a last resort, an attempt to win the debate by moving it "beyond" rhetoric despite the fact that the persuasiveness of Furniture moves does not invalidate what they are, namely, *moves.* Petitioning furniture, in other words, is not above rhetoric: it is a rhetorical device whose purpose is to state what cannot be denied (Edwards et al. 1995). Such "undeniability devices" construct a rhetorical arena in which potential rebuttals undermine themselves by being "long-winded and over-elaborate in comparison with the compactness and brevity of the devices themselves" (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 28). For radical relativists, the deployment of Furniture moves does not represent the triumph of realism but a concession that Death moves are contestable. They insist, moreover, that Furniture devices (e.g. the case of table-thumping) are not beyond refutation either, falling foul of metonymy (thumped parts of tables stand for whole tables), mistaking individual instances for general categories (one table is the same as all tables), and confusing individual for collective experience (the experiences of all table-thumpers are equivalent).

On the other hand, radical relativists are accused of championing a realist bottom line of their own—the text itself—although for Edwards et al. (1995), this is a misconstrual of the constructionist position. "We do not claim that texts have an out-there meaning, any more than furniture has" (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 32), they declare, adding that their objective is not to arrive at a "definitive reading" of the text "but to engage with consensus and argument" (Edwards et al. 1995, pp. 31–32). That, however, only invites further objections since relativists assume the equivalence of accounts, they do not support any politico-moral narrative, but in *privileging* this stance, they reveal the inconsistency of their position. For their part, relativists deny the charge of moral nihilism (Burr 1998) by insisting that claims about right and wrong have to be defended, taking

issue only with those aspects of realism that are presented theologically in order to discourage argumentation (Edwards et al. 1995). Perspectives do not become hegemonic because they are "true" but because they are presented convincingly, while a belief in algorithms that can settle moral dilemmas reflects the realist assumption of a stable and knowable world. Potter explains:

> *No! Please! How many times does it have to be repeated that "anything goes" is a realist slur on relativism… Anything goes is an* extraordinarily *realist claim, which no relativist has any business espousing. It is a fundamental, timeless, contextless statement about the nature of causal relations, not all that dissimilar from the laws of physics or psychology.* (1998, p. 34, original emphasis)

As for the charge of inconsistency, relativists see

> … *no contradiction between being a relativist and being* some*body, a member of a particular culture, having commitments, beliefs, and a common-sense notion of reality. These are the very things to be argued for, questioned, defended, decided, without the comfort of just being, already and before thought, real and true.* (Edwards et al. 1995, pp. 35–36, original emphasis)

For radical relativists, it is a rhetorical achievement of note when realist morality escapes detection as, first and foremost, an *account*. They view realism as a sleight-of-hand rhetoric that pretends not to be: it is "the rhetoric of no rhetoric" (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 35), "a kind of magic… the signified without the signifier" (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 37). As with science and magic, realist arguments attempt to divorce results from methods, creating the impression that results are self-generating. By contrast, according to its own estimation, relativism places itself squarely in the sights of its own potential repudiation; it does not stand in opposition to realism but involves a meta-level critique of "realism and relativism alike, viewed as *rhetorical practices*" (Edwards et al. 1995, p. 41, original emphasis). Unlike realists—who have selective recourse to relativist tools—relativists believe that they apply their tools reflexively and to the fullest degree.

It is notable that debates about realism, relativism, and "relevance" emerged simultaneously in the early 1970s in the form of intersecting social psychological crises (Foster 1998). Indeed, the realist-relativist dichotomy raises troubling questions about agency and change (Burr 1998)—standout terms in the vernacular of "social relevance." For relativists, agency

is a discursive effect proceeding from occidentalist understandings of the self-contained individual—but since discourse analysts believe that the world can be other than what it is (Willig 1998), the relativist undertaking starts to unravel. Moderate relativists end up eschewing radical relativism for "fear of losing our critical edge on important social phenomena" (Burr 1998, p. 15). For them, "the slide into relativism" (Parker 1992, p. 22) hastens a descent into "social irrelevance," while critical realism facilitates engagement with "socially relevant" issues in the world *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.

The question of "relevance," then, evokes a longstanding controversy about the relationship between discourse and materiality, between a microsocial constructionism that is radically relativist and favored by discursive psychologists, and a macrosocial constructionism that is moderately relativist but preferred by critical realists. Whereas the former is concerned with the use of language in interpersonal contexts, the latter addresses issues of practice, materiality, historicity, and subjectivity (Willig 2008). Both perspectives are epistemologically relativist, although critical realists insist on a realist ontology. While some commentators regard the realist-relativist divide as contrived—the two camps disagree on the meaning of "reality" and misconceptions regarding relativism abound (Burr 1998)—others see the dispute as essentially insoluble.[9] For Michael (1999 cited in Burr 2003), the realist-relativist binary—like other dualisms—is representative of forms of analysis that are characteristic of patriarchal societies. But for Wetherell and Potter (1992), the way out is to draw together "top down" (Marxist-Foucauldian) and "bottom up" (interpretative repertoire) approaches, which they justify on the grounds that, in Foucauldian genealogy, "[t]oo much seems to be lost when the subjects of history are replaced with rituals of power" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, p. 86), whereas Marxist ideology ignores "the mobility of discourse" (Wetherell and Potter 1992).

Ontology aside, what does epistemological relativism—shared by relativists and critical realists alike—mean for a *history* of "relevance"? If one accepts that history "relies on someone else's eyes and voice" (Jenkins 2003a, p. 14), amounts to nothing but "the labour of historians" (Jenkins 2003a, p. 8), and represents no more than "the history of historians' minds" (Jenkins 2003a, p. 57), why bother with it at all? Not only is it impossible to "enter" the mind of someone from the past—never mind the present—but even if it were achievable, the actual rendering of that mind would still be subject to filtering processes involving contemporary categories of understanding. Historians draw on a range of epistemological, methodological, ideological,

and practical tools without which they are barely capable of thinking historically at all. In the end, the nonstarter that is empathic historiography is upended by the sentiment that "all history is contemporary history" (Croce 1941 quoted Jenkins 2003a, p. 48).

Nonetheless, it is worth recalling that history is never for its own sake, being "constantly… re-worked and re-ordered by all those who are variously affected by power relationships" (Jenkins 2003a, p. 21). Historical texts—as collections of statements—are aesthetic, narrative, and political works that are as much acts of imagination as representations of the past.[10] There exists "a *politics* with regard to the statement, and… the *text* is the result of this *politics*" (Ankersmit 1990, p. 277 quoted in Jenkins 2003b, p. 48, original emphases). History—being no more than an *account* of the past—is an empty signifier whose meaning depends on its "filling up… by those with the power to do so" (Jenkins 2003b, pp. 35–36). To regard it as truth "is already to figure that which has merely occurred before now into a shape, a form, a unity and, quite often, a content, a direction and a significance" (Jenkins 2003b, p. 35).[11] And yet, history still matters. It is something to be claimed—"epistemological frailties" (Jenkins 2003a, p. 13) notwithstanding—because "we as human agents find ourselves within a context in which things are always already going on or being done" (Willig 1998, p. 96). To leave the past to its own devices is to allow others to claim it unchallenged; it must "be argued for, questioned, defended, decided" (Edwards et al. 1995, pp. 35–36). This is especially the case with a history of "relevance" that amounts to a history of the oppressed in the absence of which the "mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath" (Gandhi 1998, p. 4) is allowed to prevail. The point of history, then, is not to get it right but to occupy space, to open it up "beyond its own attempted closures so as to make it yours" (Jenkins 2003b, p. 26).

Some Remarks on Method

As per the tenets of critical realism, this book regards both social and discursive practices as essential to the study of "relevance."[12] Chapters 2 and 3 of this book have attempted to historicize and theorize the notion of "relevance" in the context of an internationalizing discipline struggling to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. In the chapters that follow, a case study of psychology in South Africa offers an analysis of the fluctuating discursive quality of "relevance," along with an account of

how this "floating signifier" (Laclau 1990) intersects with shifting socio-political conditions.[13] Toward these ends—as described in Chapter 1—64 addresses delivered at South African psychology congresses between 1948 and 2011 were collected. Of these, 26 were presidential addresses, 21 were keynote addresses, and 17 were opening addresses. Addresses were gathered from a number of sources, including the National Library of South Africa (both from its Cape Town and Pretoria branches), the Raubenheimer archive at Stellenbosch University, the Mayibuye archive at the University of the Western Cape, the Pretoria branch library of the University of South Africa, the Psychological Society of South Africa's archive, directly from the speakers in question, or, in cases where the latter had passed on, from their surviving colleagues and acquaintances. Some of the addresses were provided at considerable inconvenience to their owners, having to be dug out from boxes relegated to the forgotten corners of dusty garages, retrieved from hard drives no longer in use, or posted from remote parts of the world. On other occasions, the news was less positive: potential key informants had died, addresses had been misplaced, or, regrettably, discarded. So although the book does its best to trace the trajectory of associational life in South African psychology, there are the inevitable gaps.

Moreover, not all of the collected addresses were selected for analysis. A handful of addresses amounted to no more than summaries of the speaker's research activities and were considered to be of limited analytic interest. Other addresses delivered by non-South Africans were excluded automatically on the assumption that only locally based speakers would be able to speak authoritatively on the state of the discipline in South Africa. The result of these two exclusionary criteria was that the data set consisted of 45 addresses delivered by 30 speakers. These differed in length from being as brief as one page (e.g. van der Merwe 1961) to as long as twenty-five pages (e.g. du Toit 1975). In view of the fact that addresses were delivered by a range of prominent personalities both within and beyond psychology, it was expected that their reflections on the "relevance" question would populate a range of positions in the debate. It was anticipated further that, because such addresses are not ordinarily subject to the academic review process, they would also bypass the latter's homogenizing tendencies and possess a measure of discursive variability that might otherwise have been difficult to attain.

As for the definition of *discourse* favored in this book, it is worth mentioning that some have wondered whether discourse is a "noun, verb, or social practice" (Potter et al. 1990, p. 205). The meaning of discourse is notoriously difficult to fix, shifting with virtually every crossing of a disciplinary boundary. Discourse means one thing in linguistics, for example, but something quite different in post-structuralist social theory. This book, however, relies on Norman Fairclough's understanding of the term:

> *In using the term "discourse," I am proposing to regard language use as a form of social practice, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables. This has various implications. Firstly, it implies that discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation. Secondly, it implies that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure, there being more generally such a relationship between social practice and social structure: the latter is both a condition for, and an effect of, the former. On the one hand, discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels.... On the other hand, discourse is socially constitutive.... Discourse contributes to the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure which directly or indirectly shape and constrain it.* (Fairclough 1992, pp. 63–64)

Correspondingly, (critical) discourse analysis is defined in this book as "an attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices" (Fairclough 1995, pp. 16–17). At the level of the text, the South African case study utilizes Billig's (1996) and Corbett and Connors' (1999) contributions to rhetorical theory by focusing on the gestures that "mobilize" discourse (Wetherell and Potter 1992, p. 105). Oratorical genres and means of persuasion are identified along with schemes and tropes pertaining to rhetorical style. Attention is given to grammatical properties such as transitivity and modality in addition to other textual features, including wording, metaphors, and politeness strategies (see Fairclough 1992). At the level of discourse practice, various discourses about "relevance" are identified. In accordance with Wetherell and Potter's (1992) description of interpretative repertoires, the flexibility of speakers' discursive moves in changing rhetorical and social contexts is also highlighted. And at the level of social practice, the orders of discourse that are generated by discursive practices are described, while non-discursive practices are analyzed by elaborating the social matrices within which these discourse practices are situated.

Notes

1. For example, in South African psychology, accusations of "social irrelevance" have emphasized the incongruity of the discipline's scientistic predilections within investigative and applied contexts of institutionalized inequality. This amounts to a clash between technical and emancipatory cognitive interests.
2. In South Africa—as in the USA—both demands were met by producing quantitative knowledge for use in educational and military settings.
3. Critical histories of the discipline, however, observe that early "applied" psychology tended to operate relatively autonomously while "pure" psychology borrowed liberally from its practices; the two-step model functioned more as a rhetorical device that buttressed the scientific integrity of the discipline (Danziger 1990).
4. For example, Western liberal democratic polities—in which displays of naked power had become unfeasible—required an alternative "government of the soul" for which psychology's expert technologies proved well suited (Rose 1990); in countries with dissimilar social histories, however, the "irrelevance" of an imported "psy-complex" was almost unavoidable.
5. Then again, the production of "socially relevant"—for example, Afrocentric—research could always be accused of amounting to little more than "a sophisticated blueprint for intellectual neocolonialism by showing Western scholars a way to survive in Africa by serving the needs of the new ruling class" (van den Berghe 1970, p. 334).
6. Despite the splintering of the academy into myriad fields, *rhetoric of inquiry* insists that they remain united in their shared dependence on argumentation. Rhetorical moves—appeals to common sense, authority, or metaphor, to name a few—are part and parcel of the academic life. On the other hand, '[e]very field is defined by its own special devices and patterns of rhetoric—by existence theorems, arguments from invisible hands, and appeals to textual probabilities or archives—themselves textures of rhetoric' (Nelson et al. 1987, p. 4–5). Scientific knowledge and "the facts" are not one and the same: the former is a "product of professional *conversation*" (Gross 1990, p. 4, added emphasis) that is shaped in laboratories, conferences, publications, and countless other rendezvous. What is meant by rhetoric of science, then, is "the study of the role of discourse in science, particularly in its more clearly suasive functions—galvanizing, resolving, or avoiding disputation" (Harris 1991, p. 287). The production of scientific knowledge always involves an assessment of scientific *value*—an inherently rhetorical matter that equates to a rhetoric of "relevance." Hence, when interlocutors set about delimiting the parameters of "relevance," they are reinforcing the very edifice of science, which, in the absence of "relevance," loses its rationale and ceases to be science at all.

7. The suasive power of the IMRAD ritual—introduction, methods, results, and discussion—cannot be underestimated: the textual organization of scientific papers functions rhetorically to suggest a naturally unfolding and therefore incontestable logic of discovery (Woolgar 1980).
8. Leary (1987) and MacMartin and Winston (2000) are exceptions to the rule.
9. See Elder-Vass (2012) for a recent discussion of the bottom line controversy.
10. 'The facts do not speak for themselves—hence, the commonplace of a single set of historical sources generating a plethora of divergent historical accounts. For example, were the 1960s "a decade of trauma or years of banality? Or Joy? Or was it *really* a lazy decade, a sort of snoozy-doozy decade, or was it, *really*, the Swinging Sixties" (Jenkins 2003b, p. 51, original emphases)? "Facts" by themselves are meaningless, acquiring significance only after interpretation and interpolation into the body of a narrative structure—and the interpretive act is never positionless.
11. Foucault's argument is similar: 'truth isn't outside power… [it] is a thing of this world… to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements' (1980, pp. 131–133).
12. This is a significant departure from conventional accounts of "relevance" that simply repeat ahistorical claims of a Euro-American bias in theories of human functioning, with little or no consideration given to either sociohistorical or discursive practices.
13. It may be asked, of course, what a book of this kind has to do with psychology, to which one may answer: everything. After all, the question of "relevance" influences directly the kind of psychology that is done and is not done (K. Danziger, personal communication, March 8, 2012).

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CHAPTER 4

Themes in South African Psychology (1948–2011)

> *It is only in psychology that we tend to have sharp separation between the basic researcher and the applied researcher. And I believe the basic researchers are to be blamed for this…*
>
> (*Ronald Albino 1983*)

Psychology is prized in Western societies on account of its interest in social problems—an inclination that, historically, assumed such proportions that it did not take long for practical psychology to supersede in scope the marginally older academic psychology (Jansz 2004). In a similar manner, the development of psychology in South Africa depended on its degree of social engagement, exemplified by psychologists' contributions to the Poor White study, during mobilization efforts, and in the disciplining of black labor (Seedat and MacKenzie 2008). Indeed, the relationship of psychology to society is a recurring motif in South African psychology congresses, going some way toward explaining the persistence of debates about "relevance" in the country. But before commencing with the critical discursive analysis itself, some degree of familiarity with the contents of the analyzed addresses is required.

In Search of a "Relevant" Psychology

Over the entire period of analytic interest (1948–2011), official addresses at psychology congresses were replete with references to the role of the discipline in society and the latter's reciprocal demand for psychological services. Here is an excerpt from the opening address delivered at the 1953 South African Psychological Association (SAPA) congress:

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> *Here in South Africa we are fond of stressing the immense complexity of the problems which face us as a multi-racial society. If we, as psychologists, are to play our proper constructive role in their solution, we cannot afford to spend much time on theoretical controversy, however much intellectual fun and stimulus we may undoubtedly derive from it. The problems which face us are indeed urgent, and it behoves us to be both liberal-minded and pragmatic in our approach to them.* (Pratt-Yule 1953, p. 9)

Almost a quarter of a century later—at the 1977 Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA) congress—the president remarked as follows:

> *We do not need only basic and even applied research, but also the development of research to the point where it attains practical value. And where necessary, the requisite help must also be extended for the implementation of the results. In short, we are not responsible only for the development of psychology as science, but also for psychology as profession, which must deliver a service to the community.* (Langenhoven 1977, p. 13)[1]

And after further decades of political turmoil, the same problem-centered sentiments of responsibility and urgency were expressed in this keynote address at the 2002 Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) congress:

> *We simply must not take our young democracy for granted for there is much yet to be done to make it work for all our fellow citizens. In the challenges that face us as a country, and as higher education academics and administrators and as professional psychologists, we must be able to respond, heads held high…* (Badat 2002, p. 15)

Regardless of the milieu, the sense of mission in the foregoing extracts is almost palpable. Yet, that mission was—and is frequently—said to have failed. Criticisms of the discipline—its research tradition especially—predominate in addresses delivered during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s while denunciations of the profession are prominent from the 1980s onward.[2] In 1969, for instance, the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA) president had this to say:

> *An analysis of current research projects in South African psychology leaves a person without any doubts. Too much of these bear no relationship to our*

> *national needs and the findings are frequently of such a nature that they hold no meaning for anyone other than the researcher. Research is frequently of a fragmentary nature, seldom forming aspects of a central topic. Research on a topic such as the sexual life of a scorpion is clearly a waste of manpower, especially when our country's many human problems are taken into account.* (Robbertse 1969, p. 8)[3]

On another occasion—this time at the opening ceremony of the 1983 Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA) congress—it was observed that

> [*t*]*he relation between South African psychology and our society is complex…* [*U*]*nless we become aware of the ideology affecting our discipline and its applications we will be unable to be useful in the new society which is undoubtedly to come; our knowledge and not only our skills may be found to be inappropriate for solving the problems which will present themselves and which we may not even perceive.* (Albino 1983, pp. 1–2)

The feared state of "irrelevance" would eventually come to pass when, a generation later, a stinging attack was visited on the profession at the opening of the 2007 PsySSA congress:

> *This country has a bag full of apartheid wounds as revealed during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. No active follow-up was ever done to bring about true reconciliation and healing so that there would be closure to some of the gruesome revelations that our nation was exposed to. And so if you asked me, what is the state of the discipline, I would say, it is a quiet or silent discipline in the face of an evident national cry for oral and emotional catharsis.* (Mkhize 2007, pp. 5–6)

Irrespective of the association in question, psychology as science and profession was deemed repeatedly to have failed its social mandate. In South Africa, as in other parts of the world, the discipline never succeeded in defining either its subject matter or its cognitive interest—a situation that became increasingly intolerable amid rapidly changing sociopolitical conditions. It is equally true, however, that South African psychologists were hardly indifferent to considerations of social context. They may not have responded to that context in the manner that their critics had hoped they would—but respond they did. Official addresses, for example, reveal how divergent preoccupations with "the individual" and "the social" were

influenced by local and international political developments. With the Cold War in full swing in the 1960s and early 1970s, it was "the individual" that was purportedly under siege, but from the late 1970s onward, with apartheid rule coming undone and resistance abroad gathering pace, psychologists began attending to the claims of "the social." In fact, the discipline's local "irrelevance" reflected a certain tendency to cast the relationship between "the individual" and "the social" in oppositional terms. Whereas Afrikaner conservatives sought initially to defend "the individual" by focusing their research on what they regarded as "socially relevant" topics, later speakers concerned with wider South African society looked increasingly to systems theory for answers. Just as Moscovici (1972) had argued in the early 1970s that European social psychology lacked a proper understanding of social behavior, South African psychologists of that decade became increasingly taken with the question of sociality.

Making Psychology Social

In 1962, SAPA split acrimoniously on the question of "race" membership. Apartheid law demanded—so the argument went—different psychological associations for different "races," which led to the founding of the whites-only PIRSA. For PIRSA conservatives, SAPA's proposed "leveling" of the racial hierarchy reflected the machinations of "a worldwide, hysterical mass movement" (la Grange 1962, p. 7), whereas SAPA progressives viewed the perpetuation of that hierarchy as an affirmation of the "tyranny of the group" (Schlebusch 1963, p. 8). At both ends of the political spectrum, a monolithic group mentality was constructed as problematic. For PIRSA, that group was the international community, while, for SAPA, it was none other than PIRSA itself and, by extension, the Afrikaner government.

From this point on, PIRSA presidents started to lament the loss of individuality that they attributed to the "robotism" (Robbertse 1968, p. 2) of a worldwide social order committed variously to capitalism, communism, and scientism. In his 1963 address on gifted children, Adriaan la Grange objected to the communist position where "all forms of separation of pupils according to giftedness, even within a class or school, are condemned as unethical or undemocratic" (la Grange 1964, p. 3).[4] He took issue also with capitalists for whom the question of giftedness was purely utilitarian, being "mainly a matter of the extraction and exploitation of the available human material in such a manner that it can serve to the greatest advantage of the nation or the state as well as in the economic

and the political terrain[s]" (p. 5). He then censured the middle position—"liberalistic socialism"—whose "highest ideal is the realization of a classless… community in which all people can live together happily on the basis of perfect equality, despite differences in descent, heredity, giftedness, etc." (p. 7). By 1968, another PIRSA president was describing the situation with Orwellian horror:

> *It is indeed as if we can speak of a process of disintegration that is occurring in the Western world and that is largely attributable to the progress made in the field of technology and its ultimate expression in the splitting of the atom. The process of natural-scientification did not, as expected, make man freer, but on the contrary bound him tighter in slave chains so that he was eventually delivered up to his own handiwork. It's no wonder that Schubart claims that the West has given to mankind the most well-considered forms of technology, state and commerce, but that it has robbed him of his soul.… Man as a utilitarian being in the great machine of Robotism becomes an efficiency being that can be replaced by a new part if he is worn out.* (Robbertse 1968, p. 2)[5]

The association's response to the perceived assault on "the individual" was to encourage research on individual differences in areas such as giftedness (la Grange 1964), creativity (Krige 1973; Robbertse 1964), the religious personality (Robbertse 1968; van der Merwe 1974), and, notoriously, racial difference (Robbertse 1967). Yet, it was not an unspecified individual but the *Afrikaner* individual that was at stake. For la Grange, the neglect of giftedness endangered "on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence" (la Grange 1962, p. 17). In the same way, Paul Robbertse advocated research on racial difference "because it involves the scientific basis of separate development and it touches on the root of our survival" (Robbertse 1967, p. 11).

From the mid-1970s onward, the winds of change swept through South Africa's political establishment. The 1974 promulgation of the ill-fated Afrikaans Medium Decree precipitated the 1976 Soweto riots—completely unanticipated events that turned the course of South African history on its head. Fueled by mounting condemnation of the wide-ranging depredations of apartheid policy, the political momentum shifted irrevocably. The country suffered a succession of international, regional, and local setbacks that filtered through to Afrikaner institutions. In a sign that it was starting to lose its ideological moorings, PIRSA entered negotiations with SAPA and abandoned its founding philosophy of racial exclusivity. Meanwhile, the state—faced with the accumulating victories of political mass movements

such as the United Democratic Front (UDF)—resorted to violent repression, declaring a partial state of emergency in July 1985 that was extended to the whole country in June 1986.

These were the bloodiest years of apartheid rule. Inside psychology, the leadership was split three ways between the conservative-leaning PASA, the progressive Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA), and the radical Psychology and Apartheid Committee. Capitalism was still the enemy. The evolving Afrikaner constituency, however, meant that anti-capitalist sentiments were now the province of anti-apartheid campaigners. In OASSSA circles, apartheid was explicitly linked to capitalism and its deleterious social consequences while the privatization of mental health care was vigorously opposed (Coovadia 1987; Vogelman 1986). The victim was no longer "the individual" but "the people," a populist shift in emphasis that echoed the changing political situation in the country. Explaining the logic of involving professional associations in mass mobilization, the opening speaker warned the 1987 OASSSA conference:

> *Twentieth century capitalism is a totally different creature: sophisticated, sure of itself and enormously powerful. Its influence has been shown to extend far beyond the factory, the mine and the mechanised farm. Indeed, its ideology is widely pervasive. Education, health, welfare, housing, transport, communication, political representation, and in fact, virtually every sector of society, is influenced to a greater or lesser extent, if not indirectly controlled, by capitalism. The baneful influence of this new form of capitalism therefore, creates contradictions for a wide array of people, thus directly creating the conditions for the mobilisation toward opposition by all classes.* (Coovadia 1987, pp. 16–17)

The rising significance of "the social" coincided with an increasing number of references to systems theory, as seen in this passage from the 1979 SAPA presidential address:

> *Psychology is the study of human development and behaviour in a variety of contexts and in interaction with many systems of which the individual is a part. The major systems are: the family, the educational and knowledge systems, the social and ideological systems, the economic and occupational systems, the environmental, health and recreational systems… The psychologist has a place in all these areas of human development.* (Gerdes 1979, p. 3)

Elsewhere—on the occasion of the reunification of SAPA and PIRSA in 1982—the first PASA president remarked that

> Interpersonal relationships *has aptly been chosen as the central theme for this congress: not only does it refer to the socio-political problems which we are experiencing in our society at this point in time, but from the vantage point of an informed scientific community it reflects a singular sensitivity for the epistemological shift which we are currently experiencing in our discipline… and I am obviously referring to the advent and development of* general systems theory. (Rademeyer 1982, p. 2, original emphases)

Mental health was no longer theorized in relation to individual-specific factors, but in relation to broader social phenomena, as seen in this excerpt from the opening address at OASSSA's first national conference:

> *To summarise: That mental health must be located within a political context. Politics is primarily responsible for the nature of our society, and it is societal conditions that largely determine the mental health of South Africans.* (Vogelman 1986, p. 11)

By the time of his opening address at the 1989 PASA congress, Deo Strümpfer remarked how,

> [*p*]*articularly over the last decade or so, there has been an increasing awareness of suprasystems, collateral systems and subsystems—depending on where you start. All of these systems are in constant interaction. Systems thinking tells us that to exist means to be related.* (Strümpfer 1989, p. 1)

Consistent with the growing focus on the social determinants of psychological health, approaches to intervention started changing too. Catchphrases such as interdisciplinarity (Gerdes 1979, pp. 11–12), community psychology (Biesheuvel 1987, p. 2), Afrocentric psychology (Mkhatshwa 2000, p. 3), primary health care (Coovadia 1987, p. 28), prevention and promotion (Asmal 2001, p. 4), and social change (Gerdes 1992, p. 41)—each indebted to systems thinking in one way or another—became emblematic watchwords in the discipline.

Science Versus Profession

A prominent feature of addresses was the repeated juxtapositioning of the "theory" and "practice" of psychology (Pratt-Yule 1953, p. 8), the "scientific" and "applied" aspects of the subject (van der Merwe 1961, p. 229), "researchers" and "professional practitioners" (Badat 2002, p. 2),

and "knowledge," and "skills" (Mkhize 2010, p. 1). On some occasions, such references were made in passing, but on others, they drew attention to a "division" within the discipline (Pratt-Yule 1953, p. 4)—a "dilemma" (Biesheuvel 1954, p. 134)—that fostered recriminations on both sides. It was initially the basic science that was castigated for failing to address issues of "relevance" (e.g. du Toit 1975; Robbertse 1969), while later, a similar charge was levied against the profession (e.g. Asmal 2001; Mkhize 2007; Vogelman 1986).

In his presidential address at the 1954 SAPA congress, Simon Biesheuvel reflected on this seemingly insoluble tension between pure and applied psychology:

> *Our analysis appears to be leading us to the absurd conclusion that in order to carry out his job properly the occupational [industrial] psychologist must become a kind of scientific "superman" required to conquer a universe of sciences within the time of an ordinary professional training course. In this predicament, he could either choose to become a scientific dilettante, knowing the headlines but none of the contents, or accept the advice given by Hamlet to his mother concerning her heart, to "throw away the worser part of it, and live the purer with the other half," the worse in this case presumably being the mechanistic, the purer the humanistic aspects of psychological application, or vice versa, according to one's background and inclinations.* (Biesheuvel 1954, p. 134)

Thirty years later, references to this bifurcation retained an accusatory tone. In the opening address of the 1983 PASA congress, it was remarked that

> [*i*]*t is only in psychology that we tend to have sharp separation between the basic researcher and the applied researcher. And I believe the basic researchers are to be blamed for this for they have, in general, been working in a natural scientific paradigm that is quite inappropriate for dealing with the problems found by the applied psychologists concerned with persons in social situations. Often they have been dismissive of what they see as the unscientific fumblings of the applied prac*[*ti*]*tioners.* (Albino 1983, p. 8)

But in the opening address at PASA's 1993 congress, a different sort of claim was made—that the distinction between basic and applied psychology was reflected in the opposing traditions of psychology departments at English- and Afrikaans-medium universities.

> *For a long time psychology at the Afrikaans universities was characterized by a strong service orientation. Heavy emphasis was put on applied subdisciplines, particularly clinical, counselling, industrial/organizational and educational psychology—all of those that became registration categories when South African psychology became professionalized.... At the traditionally English universities there always was a heavy emphasis on basic, theoretical psychology and research publication has always been the norm for recognition. There was a certain ambivalence towards application, with clinical psychology for some time the only significant exception.* (Strümpfer 1993, p. 78)

Prior to World War Two, South African psychology had a distinctly Euro-British orientation, but after the war, it acquired an American character—the result of Afrikaner apartheid rule and the South African academy's ensuing isolation from continental Europe and Britain (Cooper and Nicholas 2012; Strümpfer 1993).[6,7] In spite of different underlying philosophies, American pragmatism would complement an Afrikaner "service orientation" that revealed itself in PIRSA addresses in the form of regular discussions about the professionalization of the discipline.[8] The Afrikaner-dominated Stellenbosch University took up the gauntlet in the drive toward professional regulation (Strümpfer 1993)—ostensibly to protect the public and earn its respect (la Grange 1950; Langenhoven 1978)—while the political motivation for statutory recognition derived variously from the (failed) 1960 and (successful) 1966 attempts by psychiatric patients on the life of the Prime Minister, as well as ministerial investigations into Scientology and the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (Strümpfer 1993).[9]

By contrast, psychology departments at English-language universities were noted for their "heavy emphasis on basic, theoretical psychology and research publication" (Strümpfer 1993, p. 8). It was not that English-speaking liberals were indifferent to the social problems of the day but that they placed their faith in science itself—in "the hope that reasoned enquiry and patient persuasion would triumph over 'ideology'... [in] an increasingly race-obsessed state" (Dubow 2001, p. 116). When the revolt against an Afrikaner-led profession began in the late 1970s, it was these universities that affirmed their solidarity with the "community of the oppressed" (Strümpfer 1993, p. 9).[10] Indeed, as early as the 1930s, psychology in South Africa was split between conservatives partial to Afrikaner nationalism and liberals who either opposed racism or attempted to analyze it scientifically (Foster 1993).

To be sure, a central proposition of this book is that Anglophone and Afrikaner psychologists engaged differently with the question of "relevance." For example, when early criticism of the discipline was aimed at academic psychology, it was mostly Afrikaner psychologists who slated the methods and topics of psychological research (e.g. du Toit 1975; Langenhoven 1977; Robbertse 1967; Roux 1971)[11]—an area traditionally dominated by English-speaking psychologists. Then, when the apartheid state started to unravel, it was the "relevance" of an Afrikaner profession that was called into question. With accusations revolving around professional complicity with the apartheid regime, the roles were reversed as Anglophone psychologists rounded on their Afrikaner colleagues. Consequently, if one were to think of the "relevance" debate during the apartheid years as composed of two halves—an early debate about the value of the basic science (prior to the 1980s) and a later one about the merits of the applied science (starting in the late 1970s)—it is tempting to conclude that it was no more than another incarnation of Anglo-Boer antagonisms, "the continuation of politics by other means."

This raises the possibility that the anti-apartheid quest for "social relevance" may not have been about the trope-like "majority of South Africans," confirming Spivak's (1988) thesis on the impossibility of the subaltern voice. It is true that black academics contributed significantly to discussions about "social relevance" (e.g. Nicholas and Cooper 1990; Seedat et al. 1988), but by that stage—the latter half of the 1980s and the early 1990s—the terms of debate had already been set. Whether the conversation would have followed a different trajectory had black psychologists been involved from the start, is a matter of speculation. What is clear, is that post-apartheid iterations of "relevance" have been dominated by black psychologists (e.g. Ahmed and Pillay 2004; Cooper and Nicholas 2012; de la Rey and Ipser 2004; Duncan et al. 2001; Naidoo and Kagee 2009; Pillay and Kramers 2003)—at the same time that it has become "more closely linked to the discourse of marketing than that of politics" (Painter and van Ommen 2008, p. 441).

In any event, when one revisits the theoretical discussion of Chapter 3, it was almost to be expected that the universally antagonistic relationship between basic and applied psychology would find expression in the debate about "relevance" in South African psychology. That this opposition set Anglophone and Afrikaner psychologists against one another served only to aggravate tensions, but the South African example suggests, also, that the "disinterested" basic science is not by definition the more "irrelevant"

of psychology's poles. When an evolving social landscape forces a discussion of cognitive interests, it becomes possible for the *applied* science to find itself at the epicenter of the rhetoric of "irrelevance." Indeed, the SAPA and PIRSA presidential addresses of 1962 are a fitting illustration of what can happen when a dispute about cognitive interests in an already bifurcated discipline gets caught in the vortex of a political storm—and of how divisive the resulting question of "relevance" can be.

Notes

1. This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.
2. Psychology as a profession was only recognized statutorily in 1974 with the establishment of the first Professional Board for Psychology.
3. This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.
4. All excerpts from this address were translated from the original Afrikaans.
5. This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.
6. This explains the frequent references in PIRSA addresses to trends in American research (e.g. la Grange 1966; Robbertse 1967; van der Merwe 1974)—with Robbertse at one point feeling the need to justify his support for this "new American illness" (Robbertse 1964, p. 8).
7. Language barriers also played a part in the Americanization of psychology in post-war South Africa (Strümpfer 1993).
8. Prior to the 1982 SAPA-PIRSA merger, these discussions were conducted almost exclusively by PIRSA presidents (du Toit 1975; Hattingh 1966; la Grange 1950; la Grange 1962; Langenhoven 1977; Langenhoven 1978; Rademeyer 1982; Raubenheimer 1981). The significance of this finding is attenuated, however, by the fact that no SAPA addresses could be sourced for the period 1963–1978. Nonetheless, it is generally accepted within the literature that Afrikaner psychologists dominated the vanguard of professionalization efforts (e.g. Cooper and Nicholas 2012; Strümpfer 1993).
9. The Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (WFC) was established in 1949 by Christian ministers and teachers to promote ecumenicalism and multiracialism. It provided several anti-apartheid organizations with T-group training through what were known as Personal Relations and Organisational Development (PROD) programs. The WFC counted Steve Biko among its attendees and can be said to have played a role in the formation of the Black Consciousness movement. In the early 1970s, the WFC came under attack from several Afrikaner newspapers that alleged that the Centre was using psychological methods to foment a liberal-socialist takeover. Following a ministerial commission of inquiry, the then Prime Minister branded the WFC a "den of iniquity" (Vanek 2005, p. 157).

10. Some of the important papers to come out of English language psychology departments include Holdstock (1979, 1981a, b); Dawes (1985, 1986), and Berger and Lazarus (1987). Holdstock's series of papers was influential in the early days of the "relevance" debate and has become popular again in recent years. He called attention to the "neglected potential" (Holdstock 1979, p. 118) of indigenous healing, citing the fact that "there is only one registered black clinical psychologist in the Republic of South Africa" (p. 119). Two years later, his tone was less diplomatic: "Psychology departments at Afrikaans universities, in the first instance, are generally more applied than their English counterparts. Secondly, they attach greater importance in their clinical endeavors to the therapeutic techniques of Rogers than is the case at English-speaking departments. The paradox to be resolved is how, in the light of adherence to certain Rogerian principles, Afrikaans departments have managed to remain as aloof as they have been from the racial issues facing the country" (Holdstock 1981a, p. 125). As far as Holdstock was concerned, psychologists in South Africa needed "a crash course in the teaching of empathy" (Holdstock 1981a, p. 127). He argued that "Psychology in South Africa is like the proverbial ostrich" (Holdstock 1981b, p. 7), requiring not only an "attitude transplant" (p. 8) but also a dose of "unconditional positive regard" (p. 9) in order to realize that "[b]lack persons are people too" (p. 8). By contrast, Dawes took issue with what he called Holdstock's "innocent Rogerianism" (Dawes 1985, p. 57) and the latter's elevation of cultural over class considerations.
11. The weight of this finding is diminished, again, by the fact that no SAPA addresses could be located for most of the 1960s and 1970s. Then again, SAPA addresses of the 1950s were not critical of the psychological research of those years.

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CHAPTER 5

"Relevance" and the SAPA-PIRSA Split

It is my heartfelt wish that PIRSA, out of the strength of its will to live and serve, will grow into an institution that will earn the recognition and love not only of its own people but also of its other-raced fellow citizens…

(Adriaan la Grange—PIRSA president 1962)

[T]he great inventor and creator should not be motivated by the needs of his fellow people but by his search for the truth, by vision, strength and courage that springs from his own spirit.

(Bob Schlebusch—SAPA president 1962)

SAPA Breaks Apart

The year 1962 marked a watershed in the associational life of South African psychology. The South African Psychological Association's (SAPA) much-feared split had come to pass. On June 23, approximately 200 people met at the University of South Africa to establish the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA) (Louw 1987). The matter of admitting blacks to SAPA ranks had been shelved for 6 years, first with the application of an Indian psychologist, Josephine Naidoo, in 1956, and again in 1960 with another Indian psychologist, Chanderpaul Ramphal. Naidoo had been told by Simon Biesheuvel—then SAPA president—to withdraw her application as he "thought it better to let sleeping dogs lie" (Louw 1987, p. 342). The

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decision on Ramphal—who had postponed his application for 3 years because "he did not want to upset us"[1]—was deferred. In the words of Council chairman A.B. van der Merwe, Ramphal's application was to be revisited when "Council has formulated the principle of admission, as requested yesterday at the AGM, and until it has been agreed to by the [next] Annual General Meeting."[2]

At the time of its 1961 congress, SAPA branches throughout the country had deliberated over and formulated responses to a number of issues pertaining to black membership. In turn, Council had agreed unanimously that the AGM would be asked to ratify two of its proposals: "that whites and non-whites be admitted to the association subject to membership qualifications as stipulated in the constitution" and that, "given that we have non-white and white members in the association, annual general meetings and branch meetings will be organized as in the past and that arrangements will be made, subject to local conditions, to accommodate all members."[3] Council appeared committed to the ideal of a racially integrated society, albeit "subject to local conditions." By contrast, SAPA's Pretoria branch—while not taking as extreme a position as the association's Potchefstroom and Bloemfontein branches—wanted the constitution amended in order to facilitate its recommendation

> *that the members of the Psychological Association consist of whites and non-whites [but] that the Council will consist only of whites; that the non-whites will choose three whites to represent their interests, namely one for Bantus, one for Asians and one for Coloreds; that the Council's powers and functions will remain as in the past; that no mixed gatherings will take place, namely of whites and non-white members; and that whites and non-whites will establish their separate branches and will conduct their congresses and annual general meetings separately.*[4]

The Pretoria resolution was defeated by forty-four votes to five, while Council's resolutions were passed by thirty-one votes to twenty-three (Louw 1987). In an interview 20 years later, Biesheuvel recalled

> *Prof la Grange [former SAPA president] saying we have debated this thing, [it is a] fair decision by the majority so we must now just accept this and live together. That same evening, I was told, there was a meeting in someone's house in Stellenbosch where they decided to break away and then PIRSA was born.*[5]

For his part, Dreyer Kruger—who in 1960 had opposed Ramphal's application on the grounds that he had failed to follow the correct application procedures—recollected decades later that

it came to a head at the Stellenbosch congress. At that congress, the so-called Afrikaner nationalist-leaning psychologists convened on one side—we caucused together and decided that we must vote that there must be separate associations for the different population groups—or rather for the whites one side and the non-whites must then not become members. A person that took an incredibly strong position was Dr Paul Robbertse who was head of the Human Sciences Research Council at the time…. For him it wasn't just a matter of professional interest but he put it very clearly that for him it was about the maintenance of apartheid in all spheres and on all levels. So we decided beforehand that we shall vote for separate associations but that we would then make an appeal to the whole congress that we would not break away under any circumstances. How deeply that promise of not breaking away was meant, became clear immediately after the vote was taken where we then lost and then I remember very well [what] Prof la Grange said. When he said we must stick to the point that we must not split he actually thought that we were going to be on the winning side, but we ended up being on the losing side. At the last moment the opposition organized things—[they] brought [a] whole lot of people from [the University of] Cape Town to Stellenbosch to outvote us. That caucus then decided to appoint an action committee to take the matter further. The action committee was under the chairmanship of Robbertse…. The members eventually decided that we must establish a separate association and it was then decided that we shall hold a congress of all likeminded people and that we must not resign from SAPA but only make known our resignation as it were by joining a new association. And this then also happened early in 1961. That is how PIRSA came into being. The motivation for it was completely and exclusively political and the whole aim of it was to maintain apartheid in the profession. I believe that Dr Robbertse towed us along—some of us that sat there were too scared to oppose the man because we knew all too well that our posts will be in danger and we therefore just played safe. Many people belonged to PIRSA because they knew [this] and Prof Roux who was head of a big [psychology] department [at the University of South Africa] and Dr Robbertse and Mr Bekker [Department of Labor] said that a person that stays with SAPA will not get an appointment in his bureau or department and will also not get any promotion under any circumstances. They made it very clear that if a person did not join, they would do their best to force you out. So let it be said once: the whole thing was politically motivated, [there was] incredibly strong Broederbond motivation behind the whole thing. This is now the truth as I see it. And I was there.[6]

Kruger's version of events reveals the divisions in the Afrikaner camp. There were non-separatists led by Adriaan la Grange,[7] for whom a possible secession was no more than a gambit, and genuine separatists directed by Paul Robbertse—a member of the Broederbond (Wilkins and Strydom 1978)—who fully intended breaking away. When asked in what manner he viewed PIRSA's historical significance, Robbertse replied:

There was an incredible reawakening of the Afrikaner as a result of PIRSA. The old SAPA and the Afrikaans speaker: he wasn't at home there and it was actually people—Biesheuvel, people from Wits and Natal, English-language universities—they were the people that wielded the scepter. We just felt we were strangers and in an organization that actually spoke for South Africa. We didn't count—we were nowhere—this was our experience…[8]

For Robbertse—who resigned his SAPA membership in 1959—the reason behind PIRSA's breakaway was clear:

That time with the old SAPA—it reached a point that you can only describe as—the affair had now stagnated—stagnation over what then sounded strange [is] today not so strange, [but it] was the strange ideology—the whole color question again entered the thing—actually took over as it were—[I] do not really want to mention names.[9]

A.S. Roux was of the same view:

You know why we founded PIRSA: the SAPA meetings wasted an incredible amount of time through emotional outbursts, through lecturers at English-language universities that dragged politics into psychology and we later saw we were making no progress.[10]

Although Kruger described PIRSA's formation as shot through with politics, Robbertse and Roux insisted that whatever politicking there was, came from SAPA's side.[11] Robbertse, in particular, drew on the haunting Afrikaner peroration on British persecution: SAPA's English members had thwarted Afrikaner interests once again, relegating the long-suffering Boers to the ranks of obscurity. As for la Grange, he found himself in what must have been an awkward situation. Having served as SAPA's first president in 1948, he was the patriarch of South African psychology; Robbertse, however, had earmarked him as possessing the necessary gravitas for advancing the cause of Afrikaner separatism. To be sure, notwithstanding la Grange's belief that "I am personally [one] hundred percent in favor of [non-whites] being admitted,"[12] he had also expressed the view that "the intention from the start was that [SAPA] is an association for whites[13]:"

The point is just: shouldn't we take our time. There are other people that think otherwise. In light of such a division, then, we must not be hasty. If we are hasty,

> *we run a risk of causing a rift. We agree about the merits of the matter, but for me there remains the problem of the interpretation of the Constitution* [*regarding racial integration*].[14]

Despite his evident ambivalence regarding the racial politics of the day, la Grange ended up becoming PIRSA's first president. Giving the lie to a seemingly cautious demeanor, his address at PIRSA's inaugural congress was a virtuoso performance that, in the tranquil hindsight of posterity, embodied the quintessence of unbridled racism. It would appear that la Grange and a delegation of psychologists from the southern—and traditionally more liberal—part of the country had "converted" after a visit to their politically conservative colleagues in the north:

> [*I*]*t took work to get Prof la Grange to join our ranks. He was from Stellenbosch and came up with a delegation—we put him up in the old Residency Hotel* [*in Pretoria*]. *La Grange was a very levelheaded, well-balanced person with a very unique outlook on life and—but his sympathies—*[*it*] *does not matter where his sympathies were—but it was a question of is it the right thing…. Prof JM du Toit from the south and AB van der Merwe eventually also joined our ranks and those people made a big contribution to the establishment and advancement of psychology under the banner of PIRSA—great men those—left deep imprints in psychology—but la Grange was for one or other reason—we felt we must also have a commander. This* [*is what*] *we saw in Prof la Grange. In his gentle, shrinking manner he eventually joined us—I think he was also our first president—I think of him* [*having*] *great authority.*[15]

This meeting of north and south was of considerable import when one reflects on the political complexities of those years. Deep-set fault lines continued to hamstring the ruling National Party (NP) whose hardliners from the Transvaal and Orange Free State clung to their "northern demonology of the machinations of *die suidelike belange* (southern interests)" (O'Meara 1996, p. 90).[16] The Cape NP was accused frequently of being too liberal. It had wanted a republic *within* the British Commonwealth and, in the early 1960s, appeared to support the re-enfranchisement of "coloreds." Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd—a former psychology professor who became the "architect of apartheid"—was not about to take this intransigence lying down. In August 1961, he appointed to his cabinet the feared Cape NP secretary, P.W. Botha, entrusting him with the Colored Affairs portfolio. Next, in the landmark general elections in October that year, the NP won almost two-thirds of seats in Parliament, playing on white fears

of African nationalism in South Africa and across the continent. Verwoerd dominated the NP scene in a manner hitherto unprecedented, having survived not only the point-blank entry of two of David Pratt's bullets into his head on April 9, 1960, but also the country's withdrawal from the Commonwealth on May 31, 1961. La Grange's change of heart between the 1961 and 1962 congresses reveals the stellar rise of Die Hollander's[17] political stock. In psychology, as in politics, the North was well and truly in control—and after a personal meeting with Verwoerd on June 12, 1962, that fact was not lost on Adriaan la Grange (Fig. 5.1).

Fig. 5.1 Adriaan la Grange, December 1961. Used with permission of Stellenbosch University

PIRSA's President Speaks

Titled *The Background and Most Important Objective of the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa*, la Grange (1962) locates his address within the forensic and deliberative oratorical genres. In the wake of the SAPA split, a presumably shaken audience would expect as much—that is, firm statements of past fact and a future course of action. La Grange's opening paragraph does not disappoint and is notable for its high-stakes character:

> *On the occasion of the first Congress and annual meeting of our Psychological Institute, it is not only appropriate but even necessary that plain and unambiguous answers be formulated in respect of a number of fundamental questions. It is necessary for the sake of developing a sober self-understanding of the nature and existence of our society, as well as in consideration of the desirability of providing a clear image to others, friend as well as enemy, of what we are, where we come from and where we are heading.* (1962, p. 7)[18]

Speakers are advised ordinarily to avoid antagonizing audiences and to align themselves with common values. The fact that la Grange does not stop to ingratiate himself with his listeners—he introduces his talk in a manner that would arouse hostility, wariness, or confusion in the uninitiated—suggests a mindfulness of preaching to the converted. There is no need to establish common ground: one's mere presence in this whites-only, Afrikaner-dominated gathering guarantees rapport between speaker and audience. Indeed, the two are practically indistinguishable as evidenced by la Grange's repeated usage of the pronouns "we" and "our." There are none of the politeness strategies that ordinarily accompany what under different circumstances would constitute a "face-threatening act" (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 60 quoted in Fairclough 1992, p. 163). Moreover, la Grange's use of words such as "sober," "clear," "unambiguous," and "plain" is evidence of what is known in rhetorical parlance as an *introduction corrective* (Corbett and Connors 1999, p. 262)—deployed typically when speaking about misrepresented subjects and consistent with defensive positionings.[19]

La Grange sets himself the task of addressing three overarching issues:

1. What are the deep-seated factors that led to the formation of a society like PIRSA?
2. What are the psychological principles of our basic policy of separate societies for different racial groups?

3. What are the most important immediate objectives to which PIRSA should apply itself? (1962, p. 7)

In answering the first question, la Grange argues that there is a "natural need for self-protection against a worldwide, hysterical mass movement for equalization that is also busy steering some of our own people off course" (La Grange 1962). He contends that this impulse for self-preservation represents "the sane opposition against the irrational manner in which some western nations disregard the basic facts and devastating consequences of racial integration" (La Grange 1962). La Grange reasons that the establishment of PIRSA represents "the natural striving for self-realization that forms the stimulus for the healthy development of every self-respecting individual as well as for every self-respecting people or nation" (La Grange 1962). He repeatedly nominalizes processes when he speaks of "self-protection," "opposition," "self-realization," and "development," which is typical of scientific language (Fairclough 1992, p. 179). By turning "concretes into abstracts" (La Grange 1962, p. 182), he does not have to explain how the "self-protection," "self-realization," and "development" of whites living in apartheid South Africa are actually achieved, namely, by brutalizing blacks in every detail of their lives. Distinct from Strijdom's doctrine of white *baasskap* (domination), la Grange adopts an attenuated Verwoerdian idiom of "separate freedoms" that is mindful of anti-colonial and independence movements sweeping through the developing world (see O'Meara 1996).

With each justification for PIRSA's existence, la Grange directs an appeal to the reasonableness of his audience (*logos*) by portraying racial equality as non-sensical. But he also expresses the rationale for what Verwoerd had begun calling the policy of "separate freedoms" (O'Meara 1996, p. 107). In May 1959, when the Minister of Native Affairs, Daan de Wet Nel, introduced the *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill* to Parliament, he articulated formally these touchstones of apartheid thinking: first, the existence of an inviolable, God-given calling for every *volk* (ethnic group); second, the *volk*'s right to self-preservation; and third, its self-actualization through segregation from other ethnic groups (Moodie 1975; O'Meara 1996). La Grange succeeds intertextually in binding PIRSA to the political agenda of the state.

On the other hand, he points out that

> [*t*]*he allegation that is frequently heard that the policy of racial separation is based on white fears that they will be devoured by the numerical superiority of non-whites… is evidently an utterly naïve and inaccurate manner of stating the matter…. If the whites were no good for anything other than being devoured by the encircling masses, why should they be afraid of their destruction*? (1962, p. 8)

La Grange knows that white fear is a flimsy rationale for apartheid rule. He proceeds to *metaphorize* whiteness as threatened by a rapacious blackness, building into the metaphor a *hyperbolic* trope (Corbett and Connors 1999, p. 403) that makes white fear seem preposterous.[20] Besides, the state-sponsored policy of separate development has nothing to do with emotions (i.e. irrationality) and everything to do with a discourse of reasonableness—"natural striving," "self-protection," "sane opposition," and the like. The foregoing passage merely underscores the self-evident truth of apartheid rationality by ending with an unanswerable question that negates attempts to locate the essence of whiteness at the lower end of the food chain (see Billig 1996). That is, la Grange's refutation (*confutatio*) is submitted by means of a logical appeal (*logos*) in which the terms of reference for whiteness are disputed in a manner that supports his general argument. Where fear is admitted, "if there is such a thing… [it is] at the prospect of our striving being impeded and that, instead of mental health, prosperity and happiness, we [end up having to] pick the bitter fruits of mental disturbance, social decay and the sorrows of an unhappy and miserable existence" (1962, p. 8). And under such conditions, fear is a justifiable response.

To analyze la Grange's strategy differently, he proves his point by making use of an abbreviated syllogism, or *enthymeme*.[21] In order to contest the charge that whites fear destruction, he resorts to a shortened argumentative form that, if spelt out in full, would read as follows:

> *All people that exist only to be devoured do not fear their destruction* (*Premise A*).
>
> *Whites exist only to be devoured* (*Premise B*).
>
> *Therefore, whites do not fear their destruction* (*Conclusion*).

The argumentative form in itself is valid. What la Grange wants to reveal, though, is the specious reasoning of PIRSA's opponents. He concedes the "utterly naïve" belief expressed in Premise B—but only for the purpose

of demonstrating the desired Conclusion. The implied Premise A is the one that he excises for the audience's convenience (Corbett and Connors 1999). Yet, it is this major premise—not mentioning the minor one—that is open to contestation. Are there people that exist only to be "devoured" and, if there are, do they never fear "destruction"?

On the subject of "racial mixing," la Grange says it would enjoy the "wholehearted support of all reasonable people" if its goal were "the attainment of a clear and meritorious objective for the promotion of human joy and peace between the members of different races" (1962, p. 9). As for the empirical findings on interracial contact, however, "we find precisely the opposite" (p. 10). La Grange quotes extensively from William McDougall's *Group Mind* and Kenneth Little's *Race and Society*, citing evidence of the deleterious fallouts resulting from racial integration in Brazil, India, and Hawaii. He concludes that human felicity depends on "obedience to the demands of the elementary natural law that brings together those who on the basis of common inborn characteristics belong together" (p. 12). An instance of *manifest intertextuality*, the resemblance of this passage to the former Prime Minister D.F. Malan's celebrated aphorism—"Bring together what, through inner conviction, belongs together"—situates la Grange once again within the confines of Afrikaner nationalist discourse.

Drawing on John Carothers' *The African Mind in Health and Society*, la Grange argues that racial integration policies obstruct the root taking of normal identification processes fundamental to the "natural striving for self-realization." He summarizes Carothers' position on the African experience of integration as one in which "[t]he greater the contact with white civilization, the more frequent the occurrence of mental illnesses" (pp. 12–13). La Grange reasons that "a state of tension and psychical conflict is initiated in the non-whites.… In its turn this impairment of the personality core led to a lowering of the resistance threshold against tension and the result is loss of personal identity and eventually neurotic or psychotic breakdown" (p. 13). By focusing on the psychological sequelae of racial integration among non-whites, la Grange deploys the technique of *prolepsis* (Billig 1996, p. 269), forestalling possible objections by turning to the authority of science. He is using a hidden *disclaimer* that, if it were to be repeated out loud, would sound something like, "I'm not racist—but the facts of racial integration speak for themselves." And, because he makes the case for other racial groups to establish their own psychological societies for the sake of their mental health, he legitimates PIRSA's existence further. Over

and above its other virtues, apartheid is an ethical policy that guarantees the survival and development of all groups in a *veelvolkigge* (multiethnic) polity. In fact, "[o]nly those who for one or other reason refuse to be themselves or refuse to accept themselves will refuse to accept the principle of separate societies for separate racial groups" (1962, p. 13). As the product of science and ethics, la Grange's *logos* is difficult to overturn.

He then proceeds to the second of the three questions: the psychological principles that underpin the state's policy of separate development. As with much of his speech, la Grange continues to work intertextually, in this case referencing a text "only in order to contest and reject" it (Fairclough 1992, p. 122). He opposes Otto Klineberg's view that "we simply do not know how or why [racial differences] arose in the first place" by second-guessing Klineberg's scientific standing and asserting that he contradicts himself in his argument. Whether la Grange's attack on Klineberg had anything to do with the latter's reservations about South Africa's future admittance to the International Union of Scientific Psychology cannot be determined (Dumont and Louw 2001). Even so, la Grange is not Afrikanerdom's typical ideologue: though he may declare the only "true" Christians to be Afrikaners, he takes the trouble of addressing himself to someone of Klineberg's eminence. Despite PIRSA's laager mentality, la Grange signals his ongoing affiliation with the international psychological community.

> *How on earth can a person reconcile it if a "scientist" like Klineberg gives the assurance that we do not know how or why differences between races arose, but in the same breath says that he is certain that the differences are not due to racial differences, in other words that inherited factors play no role therein?* (1962, p. 15)

The charge of inconsistency is a rhetorical device that provides grounds for refutation. La Grange proceeds to quote Carl Jung for whom "resistances to psychological enlightenment are based in large measure on fear" (La Grange 1962). That is, Klineberg's oversight is the result of fear: it is not Afrikaners that are afraid but supporters of "the superficial American psychometric-statistical approach" (p. 16). Drawing on Jung's concept of a *collective unconscious*, la Grange then theorizes an unbridgeable divide that separates the 2000-year-long evolution of Western Christianity from "[t]he Christian-conditioned primitive person [who] in the long run cannot satisfy the higher requirements of the true Christian civilization" (La Grange 1962). "True" Christianity, meanwhile, is to be distinguished from what

is practiced in Western Europe, since "[p]erhaps it is a fact that western Europe indeed was never truly Christian" (La Grange 1962). In disputing the essence of Christianity, la Grange uses *dissociation* to separate its "true" and "false" forms (Billig 1996, p. 181), before delivering his *coup de grace* that casts in stone the impossibility of racial integration:

> *Who knows*! *But one thing is certain*: *If it is true that two thousand years were too few for the true Christianity to take root in the deepest core of the western person*, *how can we ever* (*humanly speaking*) *assume that a period of two or three centuries will suffice for it to take root in the deepest core of Africa*'*s barbarism*? (la Grange 1962, p. 17)

La Grange concludes his address by listing what he believes should be PIRSA's main objectives: the establishment of a professional board, the institution of appropriate theoretical and practical training facilities for all categories of psychologists, and the provision of assistance to other racial groups seeking to form their own psychological societies. Foremost, however, are "the urgent demands [presented by] the social questions that at a national level are coming stronger to the fore… [and] that are busy threatening on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence" (la Grange 1962). For la Grange, these issues include alcoholism, traffic accidents and road safety, family disintegration, national mental health, moral decay, and youth criminality.

In sum, la Grange provides natural, psychological, ethical, and religious justifications for the existence of a whites-only association, implying that SAPA's racial integration runs counter to the cosmic order. He fixes PIRSA's mission to matters of "social relevance," inaugurating the new association not as a learned society where knowledge is to be shared and enjoyed for its own sake, but as a forum in which psychological expertise should be brought to bear on the national affairs of the day. With the country on the brink of obliteration, South Africa is dependent consequently on PIRSA's "service orientation" (Strümpfer 1993, p. 6). To quote la Grange again:

> *It is my heartfelt wish that PIRSA*, *out of the strength of its will to live and serve*, *will grow into an institution that will earn the recognition and love not only of its own people but also of its other-raced* [*anderrassige*] *fellow citizens who*, *through its benefaction*, [*will*] *fulfill themselves in happiness and independence in their own associations in service to their own people.* (1962, p. 18)

Afrikanerdom, PIRSA, and the Survival of the *Volk*

One reading of la Grange's positioning of psychology at the service of an imperiled nation will describe it as typical of an Afrikaner sentiment that values service to the *volk* more than anything. The Afrikaner psyche was hypervigilant when it came to the preservation of its group. Built up over centuries, this unique sensitivity spanned, *inter alia*, the survival fears of early slave owners concerned about disruptions to the ready flow of human cattle, the apprehensions of burghers at the frontier worried about the "barbarization" of their offspring, the revolt of the Voortrekkers (1836–1884) against the perceived threats of *gelykstelling* (social leveling) and cultural assimilation, the catastrophic reversals of the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), and the pernicious decades-long consequences of the *volk*'s subsequent urbanization—sympathetically termed the "poor white problem" (Giliomee 2003).

As had been the case for much of its history, *survival* remained the *leitmotif* of the mid-twentieth century *volk*. Three centuries had not dulled its frontier mentality: there were democrats, republicans, anarchists, atheists, and *rooi gespuis* ("red scum") all of whom NP security policy from the 1960s onward would deem enemies of the state (O'Meara 1996). La Grange is in survival mode when he catalogues "the social questions… that are busy threatening on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence" (1962, p. 17). As countless others before him had done, he reminds his audience that they inhabit the "southern extremity of Africa" (p. 8), accentuating intertextually the precariousness of the divine Afrikaner calling.[22] Chastened in a crucible of successive tribulations, la Grange's *volk* remains in need of practical solutions rather than obscure meanderings. For, just as the exigencies of life in the New World had given birth to American pragmatism (Boorstin 1958), the perpetually endangered *volk* is not about to fiddle while Pretoria burns.

As far back as 1918, N.J. Brummer had eulogized

> [*t*]*he Afrikaner* [*as*] *utilitarian. "Useful" is his favourite word. Everything is judged according to its usefulness for living. The Afrikaner will therefore not do any science for science's sake, but because it can be of service to him. The Afrikaner university will therefore have to strive above all to make the student suitable for the more responsible positions in society.* (Brummer 1918, p. 197 quoted in Louw 1986a, p. 81)

More recently, Jonathan Jansen argues that, as an ethnic minority, Afrikaners in contemporary South Africa remain a "pragmatic" community with a history of adjusting themselves to difficult circumstances (2009, pp. 237–238).[23] But there are several problems that arise when taking the notion of Afrikaner pragmatism too literally. For one, it leans heavily on the kind of cultural essentialism that dominated racist NP discourse. Second, the idea of a historically monolithic Afrikaner nation, positively identifiable across four centuries, leads inevitably to debates about "invented communities" that have troubled historians in recent years. Third, if Afrikaners were really so pragmatic, one would have expected them to have seen the political writing on the wall considerably earlier than they eventually did—that they did not, was due to differing degrees of pragmatism in the NP, with the realists in the Cape offsetting the insular diehards of the North. And fourth, when linking American to Afrikaner pragmatism, it is important to keep in mind that, conceptually, the philosophical pragmatism of the former is a different prospect to having merely a practical outlook on life.

To explain more adequately the "service orientation" of Afrikaner psychology, one needs to look beyond oversimplified ideas about group traits in the direction of Christian-National ideology, the evolution of which signaled a significant departure from previous versions of Afrikaner nationalism. When General Hertzog and his NP followers "fused" controversially with Jan. Smuts' South African Party to form the United Party (UP) in 1934, it was only the NP's Cape branch that was left relatively unscathed. In the affected provinces of the north, however, a key group of young urban Broederbond intellectuals took the lead in defining *gesuiwerde* (purified) Afrikaner nationalism. The problem around which their deliberations converged was the *armblanke vraagstuk* (poor white question) of the 1920s and 1930s. The devastations of the Anglo-Boer War and the lost Republics were no longer their explicit points of reference (O'Meara 1996)—rather, it was the adaptive difficulties of Afrikaners in relation to capitalist agriculture and growing industrialization that galvanized their efforts. In its joint findings, the Carnegie-funded commission of inquiry into the poor white question reported that

> [*l*]*ong-continued economic equality of poor whites and the great mass of non-Europeans, and propinquity of their dwellings, tend to bring them to social equality. This impairs the tradition which counteracts miscegenation, and the social line of colour division is noticeably weakening.* (Grosskopf 1932, p. xx)

The future existence of a discrete Afrikaner nation hung in the balance. In the hands of these young intellectuals, the emerging doctrine elevated above everything the idea of *volksgebondenheid* (ethnic solidarity):

> *the belief that ties of blood and* volk *come first, and that the individual existed only in and through the nation. The* volk, *rather than the individual, was the divinely ordained basic unit of social organisation. Individuals could realise their "true" selves and social potential only in identification with and service to the* volk. (O'Meara 1996, p. 41)

South Africa was the divinely ordained homeland of an Afrikaner nation, charged with the sacred task of establishing a Calvinist republic and liberated from the chains of British imperialism, "Hoggenheimer"[24] capitalism, and godless communism. But despite the meticulous articulation of Christian-National dogma during "the 1930s and 1940s [it] was an almost purely intellectual affair, conducted in the inner circles of party, press, Broederbond and church. The broad mass of Afrikaans-speakers displayed scant interest in these abstruse philosophical/theological debates" (O'Meara 1996, pp. 41–42). Most Afrikaners still voted for Hertzog's UP in 1938 and did so once more in 1943—notwithstanding the ruling party's support for Britain during the war. It was only after accommodating Christian-National ideology to the lived experiences of Afrikaners throughout the country that gains were made. During the 1940s, by appealing to "the economic disadvantages of speaking Afrikaans in an Anglophone-controlled economy, under a government minimally concerned with the fate of the Afrikaans language" (O'Meara 1996, p. 42), the Broederbond launched a highly effective economic, cultural, and educational mobilization campaign that targeted emerging Afrikaner business and labor via a proliferation of civic associations.[25]

For its part, the NP—once it had gotten its house in order—capitalized on the new broad-based alliance by preaching an intoxicating doctrine of Afrikaner exclusivism that would have found favor with an audience defined as oppressed by virtue of being Afrikaner. Indeed, it won the 1948 polls—albeit narrowly—because of this fledgling Afrikaner *volksbeweging* (people's movement). Before the elections, the NP had downplayed its republican ambitions: within the party and beyond, the republican manifesto was not unanimously supported and threatened the greater good of *volkseenheid* (people's unity). It decided instead to run its campaign by focusing on consensus-driven issues, namely, mother-tongue education,

the communist threat ("*rooi gevaar*"), and apartheid, interpreting each through the lens of Christian Nationalism. While the election victory could be explained in terms of the changing support bases of Smuts' UP and Malan's NP, the former's political ineptitude, and considerable post-war social changes (O'Meara 1996), it owed as much to Christian-National ideology, Broederbond support, and, still, the civil theology (Moodie 1975).

Following the NP's upset victory, this theology took even more of a back-seat as the party went about broadening its support base. Consequently, neither of its first two prime ministers—the "convinced republican" D.F. Malan (1948–1954) and the "fiery republican" J.G. Strijdom (1954–1958)—made much noise about declaring a republic (Moodie 1975, p. 282). The republican ideal had been central to Afrikaner civil theology since its enunciation by Paul Kruger, president of the South African (Transvaal) Republic from 1881 to 1900. Although the civil religion did not represent at the outset all of Afrikanerdom, "conceived as a constellation of symbols [it was] held fairly universally and consistently by Afrikaners at least since the end of the Anglo-Boer War in 1902" (Moodie 1975, p. 295). Afrikaner civil religion was rooted in the sacred history of the *volk* that was, in the words of Malan,

> *nothing other than the greatest artwork of the centuries. We have a right to this nationhood because it was given to us by the Architect of the universe. The aim of the Architect was the formation of a new nation among the nations of the world… A miracle has occurred in the last hundred years, a miracle behind which must lie a divine plan. The history of the Afrikaner signifies resoluteness and a determination, which leaves a person feeling that Afrikanerdom is not the work of people but the creation of God.* (Malan 1964, pp. 235–236)[26]

The "miracle" to which Malan was referring was the epic tale of survival of a persecuted Afrikaner community. Against all odds, the *volk* had weathered eighteenth-century Dutch East India Company oppression; nineteenth-century British liberalism and Anglicization policies; the Slagtersnek gallows of 1815; the Kaffir War of 1834; the treacherous murders of Piet Retief and his deputation at Blaauwkrantz; the successive British annexations of the Natalia, Orange Free State, and Transvaal Republics; the deaths of 26,000 Afrikaner women and children in British concentration camps; the death-in-exile of Paul Kruger; and the martyrdom of Jopie Fourie. In short, Afrikaner sacred history was "made up of two cycles of suffering and

death—the Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War" (Moodie 1975, p. 12). But although the suffering was redemptive, "the logic of Christian theodicy [did] not rest alone in the notion of suffering for righteousness' sake" and provided for a much-anticipated resurrection (Moodie 1975, p. 13). Just as the Groot Trek had culminated in the foundation of the Afrikaner republics, the woes of the Anglo-Boer War would eventually be transformed into "a republican second coming" (Moodie 1975, p. 14). God had brought Afrikanerdom to the Promised Land and would do so again.

Resisting the allure of its republican ideals, the NP busied itself with the consolidation of its still tenuous hold on power: the civil religion lost its place to pragmatism and bureaucratization while the Broederbond became better known for reserving *baantjies vir boeties* (jobs for pals) (Moodie 1975, p. 102; O'Meara 1996, p. 44). Nonetheless, the 1950s and 1960s would prove the highpoint for Christian Nationalism, while the task of exploiting it in the service of apartheid policy fell to Verwoerd and the Afrikaner intellectual elite.

To be sure, by the mid-1940s, the Christian-National exegesis of Afrikaner sacred history was already the standard version of the civil religion. In 1944, then Broederbond chairman Joon van Rooy summed up Christian-National philosophy in an address delivered in Stellenbosch:

> *In every People in the world is embodied a Divine Idea and the task of each People is to build upon that Idea and to perfect it. So God created the Afrikaner People with a unique language, a unique philosophy of life, and their own history and tradition in order that they might fulfill a particular calling and destiny here in the southern corner of Africa. We must stand guard on all that is peculiar to us and build upon it. We must believe that God has called us to be servants of his righteousness in this place. We must walk the way of obedience to faith…* (Die Burger, October 11, 1944 quoted in Moodie 1975, pp. 110–111)

It had also been decided at that year's *Volkskongres* of the Broederbond-inspired *Federasie van Afrikaner Kultuurorganisasies* (F.A.K.) that

> *it is in the interest of both the white and non-white in South Africa that a policy of apartheid be followed so that non-white ethnic groups will also have the opportunity to develop according to their own nature, in their own area, and ultimately to obtain full control over their own affairs there.* (Inspan, October 1944 quoted ibid., p. 263)

It was the Christian-National responsibility of whites that they enter into a relationship of trusteeship with non-whites, acting as guardians until the latter had attained a sufficient level of maturity to administer their affairs independently (Dubow 1995):

> *In order to give the natives sufficient opportunities freely to realize their national aspirations, they must be provided with separate areas which will be administered and developed initially for them and eventually by them as self-ruling native areas in which the whites may have no rights of citizenship.* (Inspan 1944 quoted in Moodie 1975, p. 273)

Apartheid was justified on the grounds that it was God's will that "the Afrikaner… implement it for the well-being of black and white alike" (Moodie 1975, p. 248). Correspondingly, racial integration was sinful.

Fifteen years after the 1944 *Volkskongres*, when de Wet Nel stood before Parliament with the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill, he would state in full the F.A.K.'s conclusions, reiterating that Christian Nationalism was as important for "the white man" as it was for "the Bantu." Apartheid policy no longer amounted to a purely "negative" defense of the white race against degenerative miscegenation, but had a "positive" aspect too—the creation of a segregated yet prosperous and peaceful multiracial society. With a subtle shift in the nomenclature, negative apartheid was transformed into Verwoerd's positive-sounding "theory of separate development."[27]

The evolution of Christian Nationalism explains how, in 1962, la Grange was able to deny the longstanding view that the apartheid concept of "self-preservation" was premised on whites' annihilatory fears.[28] He could even appeal to the wisdom and generosity of Christian-National logic: not only would a non-white association preserve the mental health of its members, PIRSA would extend a paternalistic hand to its "other-raced [*anderrassige*] fellow citizens who, through its benefaction, [would] fulfill themselves in happiness and independence in their own associations in service to their own people" (la Grange 1962, p. 18). When la Grange listed the various *sosiale vraagstukke* (social problems) that warranted disciplinary attention, he was not only thinking as an enterprising applied scientist but was also adumbrating the Christian-National injunction of serving the *volk*. His own doctoral supervisors had done just that some three decades earlier: Raymond Wilcocks (1932)—"the doyen of Psychology in South Africa, the unforgettable professor" (van der Merwe 1977, p. 1)—served

the *volk* by producing the Carnegie Commission's psychological report on poor whiteism, while Verwoerd became a leading advocate on the issue, assisting in organizing the 1934 *Volkskongres.*

In his report, Wilcocks urged the establishment of

> *a thoroughly well-equipped department of social studies at one of our South African Universities, where skilled social workers will be trained, and where one of South Africa's most important social problems will be assured of receiving that degree of scientific attention which it truly deserves.* (Wilcocks 1932, p. 181)

The faculty at Stellenbosch University obliged by creating the country's first Department of Sociology and Social Work before the report was even published—with Wilcocks' former student, Verwoerd, at the helm (Miller 1993). From its earliest years, la Grange's Stellenbosch University had associated itself closely with "the Afrikaner and his 'struggle'" (Louw 1986a, p. 81). Despite his belief in the heritability of intelligence, Wilcocks inclined toward environmental causes when it came to the substandard test performances of poor white children—evidence of his sensitivity to Afrikaner nationalist claims (Dubow 1995). As professor of applied psychology, Verwoerd opened the 1929 academic year by reiterating the university's mission, namely, the preparation of the student for a vocational life—which meant serving the *volk* (Louw 1986a).[29] Indeed, la Grange set the tone for Afrikaner psychologists who would advance throughout the 1960s a discourse of *volksdiens* (ethnic-national service) that demanded psychological research of "ethnic-national relevance" in order to safeguard "our continued national existence" from the "threat" presented by "urgent social questions."

An Anglicized Afrikaner Strikes Back

A year on from the Stellenbosch debacle, the mood at SAPA was one of "exhaustion" and "sadness" for, despite the terminally insoluble "race" question, the association's affairs had been proceeding smoothly prior to the split, particularly with regard to the urgent matter of professional registration (D. Strümpfer, personal communication, March 10, 2012). Since 1948, SAPA had been run more or less by Afrikaners: the English universities of Natal, the Witwatersrand, and especially Cape Town had never taken much interest in the association's activities (K. Danziger,

personal communication, March 8, 2012).[30] As a result, the mass exodus of Afrikaner psychologists in 1962 was a significant setback not only for the SAPA leadership but also for its administration. Because of an aggressive recruitment drive, PIRSA's numbers grew exponentially, whereas SAPA soon found itself in the unfamiliar position of having to convene its meetings in conspicuously low-profile settings.[31] Few would have predicted the rapid decline in SAPA's fortunes or, for that matter, that la Grange would write an obituary for his adversary—Bob Schlebusch—8 years later. SAPA's first post-split president, Schlebusch was one of a handful of Afrikaners who withstood considerable pressure to remain with SAPA—but unlike his fellow members who were keen to put the recent debacle to bed, Schlebusch, despite inheriting a fractured and demoralized society, was not quite done.

Schlebusch (1963) begins his address by thanking the audience for doing him the honor of electing him the fourth president of SAPA. Unlike his counterpart—who petitions the *logos* of the PIRSA audience—Schlebusch, in his opening remarks, harnesses the attentions of his constituency through ingratiation, invoking his *ethos* as speaker. He accomplishes this, first, by expressing his gratitude to an approving audience; second, by pledging his loyalty to an association made vulnerable by a bitter secession; and third, by paying his respects to a former SAPA luminary (and leading member of the breakaway party) whose position he has just assumed:

> *I have attempted and will continue to strive to serve the interests of the association to the best of my ability. To our retired president, Prof A.B. van der Merwe, although no longer a member of the association, on behalf of you I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for the competent manner in which he furthered the interests and goals of the association and wish him the best for the future.* (p. 3)[32]

Ethical appeals are common when faced with an ambivalent audience: by appealing to the goodness of one's character and will, the listener is more inclined to being influenced by other logical (*logos*) and emotional (*pathos*) appeals (Corbett and Connors 1999).

Unexpectedly, Schlebusch then informs his listeners that he will *not*, after all, be delivering a presidential address:

> *At a conference on group dynamics in Leicester, England, it occurred to me how all the speakers began by saying that it was practically impossible to discuss such a broad subject in such a short time. I became so obstreperous about this*

> *that when I myself was allotted half an hour for a certain subject, I began by saying that I actually only need fifteen minutes for the subject but will at least attempt to devote half an hour to it. I am afraid that this is becoming true today. While I wanted to deliver a presidential address, because of the almost unbelievable convergence of events, the time to develop it was lacking. Instead of working on an address on psychodynamics, I had to be satisfied with a substitute and had to ask the congress's organizing committee to present it simply as "The president speaks." I would like to apologize for this and express a few thoughts about the possible contribution of literature to psychological study.* (1963, p. 3)

It is not immediately clear how the interpretation of this passage should proceed. Schlebusch resorts to what Corbett and Connors call an *introduction narrative* (1999, p. 263): he uses the anecdotal lead-in as he attempts to pique the audience's interest in his subject, although the anecdote itself is laced with humor and disappointment. As for what it is that can possibly have upset Schlebusch on this occasion, he does not tell, but that he *is* perturbed is communicated through the admission that he did not have sufficient opportunity to prepare a presidential address. He makes mention of "the almost unbelievable convergence of events" that robbed him of the requisite time but stops short of giving details—though his use of the definite article suggests that his audience is privy to the nature of these events anyway. While la Grange is willing to air the dirty laundry in public, Schlebusch offers only an obliquely disapproving reference to the bitterness of recent months. Instead, he resorts to pedantries by explaining how he approached the organizing committee to recast his address as "The president speaks." And then he apologizes for no clear reason. Perhaps he feels guilty for claiming to feel honored by the society while appearing simultaneously to distance himself from the very position with which he has been honored. Perhaps he feels he has let his audience down, which has gathered in troubled days in anticipation of a presidential statement rather than "a few thoughts." Perhaps he is apologizing for wanting to talk about literature, rather than psychodynamics, at the single most important event on the society's calendar. Or perhaps the audience—well aware of "the almost unbelievable convergence of events"—already knows what the apology is for.

Schlebusch now moves on to the *narratio* (statement of fact) by citing the founding of Wundt's laboratory in 1879 as a milestone in the development of the discipline, acknowledging how psychology in its early days adopted an empirical-scientific perspective modeled on the physical sciences:

> *No one will find fault with this, and everyone will agree that this development was absolutely necessary and will become even more necessary in the future.* (1963, p. 4)

Proceeding to the *confutatio* (refutation) by logical appeal, he draws attention to the fact that,

> *with the main and almost singular emphasis on this* [*empirical-scientific perspective*], *another equally important aspect was frequently pushed to the background. I am referring to the fact that a person can also think scientifically—your thoughts can be subjected to the objectivity that is demanded in the execution of an experiment.* (Schlebusch 1963)

Schlebusch argues against a narrow empiricism that does not allow for the investigation of "subtle behavioral expressions… [and] frequently prevents an analysis of the deeper-seated psychodynamics of the individual" (p. 4). Describing the intricacies of the psychotherapeutic encounter, he insists that

> [*i*]*f a scientifically-schooled mind observes* [*patient and therapist behavior*] *the subjective observation and the observation of the subjective can indeed be objective and scientific.* (*p. 5*)

For his *confirmatio* (proof), Schlebusch praises the work of the novelist Thomas Mann for its astute observations on the nature of grief. But this serves merely to justify the main focus of his talk, namely, literary depictions of social conformity, to which he now "brings to bear 'all the available means of persuasion' to support the cause he is espousing" (Corbett and Connors 1999, p. 11).

After reading Schlebusch's full address, one wonders why he does not simply title it "The consequences of majority influence." It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, just as he shuns direct reference to the politics of the SAPA-PIRSA schism, Schlebusch is clearing the decks for an allegorical attack on *volksgebondenheid*—that is, the Afrikaner group solidarity that hastened the split. Seeing as there are still a number of Afrikaners in the audience—least of all himself—he does not name the object of his assault directly. He is, after all, the president of Anglophone SAPA: any criticism of Afrikanerdom will likely offend even dissident Afrikaners if it is perceived as originating in the outgroup (Louw-Potgieter 1986 cited

in Billig 1996). Instead, he executes the face-threatening act by using an *off-record* strategy, retaining his politeness by saying things in a roundabout way (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 60 quoted in Fairclough 1992, p. 164). He accomplishes this by expressing an undirected dissatisfaction with the latter-day "domination of the group" in which "slavery and autocracy" have reappeared parading themselves as "freedom," but because of the dissimulation, embody an even stronger form of "utter bondage" (Schlebusch 1963, p. 6):

> *Whereas the individual formed the group to protect himself, the group became the monster that used the individual to protect itself.* (Schlebusch 1963)

Drawing on Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, Schlebusch describes the outcome as a "dependence on the group… [that] led to standardization and inflexibility not only of behavior but also of thought and creative activities" (Schlebusch 1963). It is Colin Wilson's "cult of the ordinary chap" (p. 7) that has snatched the accolades while Ayn Rand's protagonists—"being rebellious purely for the sake of rebellion" (p. 8)—are not heroes at all. Although he criticizes Rand's depiction of heroism, Schlebusch appears sympathetic to the objectivist philosophy that

> *the great inventor and creator should not be motivated by the needs of his fellow people but by his search for the truth, by vision, strength and courage that springs from his own spirit.* (Schlebusch 1963)

He asks the audience to consider whether in fact "this tyranny of the group" (Schlebusch 1963) has gained such a foothold that the age of heroes—individuals in the truest sense—has passed.

The extensive use of nominalizations—"domination of the group," "standardization and inflexibility," "this tyranny of the group"—allows Schlebusch to register his point from afar without having to wade into the messiness of SAPA-PIRSA politics. It is the *individual*—the hero—that he wishes to rescue from this state of affairs, which is why

> *psychologists must make greater use of novels with the specific goal of using the shrewd observations of the writer for training [themselves] in observation and especially for further interpretation…. Changes in the social structure, as mentioned, and the* individual's *reaction thereto, are frequently reflected first in the works of great writers.* (p. 9, added emphasis)

And yet, for Schlebusch, Rand's account of her heroes' internal conflicts is inadequate. Accordingly,

> *[t]he psychodynamic elaboration of the heroes' reactions will be extremely interesting.… Intensive knowledge of these social processes and* individual *reactions thereto is in different areas so important that it must be investigated in all possible sources.* (Schlebusch 1963, added emphasis)

The minutiae of human sociality essential to individual psychotherapy are lost in the psychological report's "dead succession of cold facts" (Schlebusch 1963). Moreover, in the field of organizational psychology,

> *the work context… that can bring to the fore or even strengthen the anxieties created by the social order is overlooked besides. The immovable standardization [the worker encounters] in social life he must now negotiate even more acutely in his work situation.* (Schlebusch 1963)

Schlebusch bemoans the standardization of thinking itself. A situation has arisen where success in the world of politics depends on one's affiliation with a strong party, while, in research circles, it hinges on "being a team member in a big organization like the [Council for Scientific and Industrial Research], such that most books nowadays appear under the writer, 'edited by'…." (p. 10). The dearth of knowledge that human beings have about themselves is the result of being "caught up in [this] narrow passage in which [our] culture allows us to think" (Schlebusch 1963). Psychological studies must become correspondingly "more alive" and "more interesting" by breaking out of "the conventional mentality" (Schlebusch 1963).

By the end of his address, Schlebusch seems to have abandoned his community of practice, presenting himself as a modified Randist maverick released from jingoistic groupthink. In casting mainstream politics, big industry, and society in general ("*die maatskappy*") in the role of villain with their unending "requirements and objectives" (p. 9), Schlebusch appears to take a dig at his Afrikaner colleagues for capitulating to the machinations of big-time politics. After all, it was Prime Minister Verwoerd who, 3 months earlier, had informed a triumvirate of Stellenbosch University professors comprising Adriaan la Grange, A.B. van der Merwe, and J.M. du Toit:

> *But look, if you are then developing in this direction—SAPA, I am after all an honorary member—then I am now obliged to terminate my honorary member-*

> *ship immediately. I can hardly belong to an association that is in direct conflict with our country's policy* [*of racial segregation*]. *How can I belong to it? I must terminate it immediately.*[33]

As Robbertse would observe years later, "At that time, Dr. Verwoerd did South Africa's thinking to a great degree."[34,35]

Whereas la Grange venerates the *volk* and so can hardly do otherwise than to offer the discipline in service to the nation, Schlebusch adopts an opposing stance, driving a wedge between psychology and broader society. In effect, the two men's dispute about the independence of science is an argument about cognitive interests: la Grange pursues the "social relevance" of a committed Afrikaner nationalist while Schlebusch desires the disinterested freedom of the intellectual pioneer, the vehemence of state, and the elegance of science colliding in an attritional battle of rhetorical styles. Of course, for Schlebusch, it is not solely about science for science's sake, but an associated liberal tradition that resonates with the English speakers in the audience. Despite delivering his address in Afrikaans, he makes no mention of the Afrikaans literary canon, eschewing it in favor of English-language classics. Schlebusch presents himself as an Anglicized Afrikaner in an expression of solidarity with white English-speaking South Africans (WESSAs).

Prior to the republican declaration of 1961, WESSAs tended to divide their loyalties between Britain (the homeland) and South Africa (the colony). Now, in the wake of the NP's shock electoral victory, the ethnic mobilization of Afrikanerdom, and the split from the Commonwealth, the question for WESSAs was whether they had any home at all (Foley 1992). But even with the "identity crisis" (Schlebusch 1963, p. 16) that was in part the result of their heterogeneous composition, a discrete WESSA cohort distinguished itself through its social, cultural, and political progressiveness. This grouping of WESSAs

> [*was*] *associated with university education*, *with high socio-economic status*, *with occupations in education and service sector of the economy*, *and with non-affiliation to a religious denomination*.... [*It*] *also seem*[*ed*] *to be related to anti-materialistic attitudes*, *opposition to authoritarian political measures*, *lower needs for in-group identification*, *a secular outlook*, *a non-patriotic orientation*, *a non-traditional moral outlook*, *a belief in the social and political responsibility of the Church*, *and with a sophisticated view of literature*, *art and intellectual activity.* (Schlemmer 1976, p. 124)

Schlebusch's address is an oratorical *tour de force* that displays almost all of the above. His valorization of inspired individualism serves as antidote to "clumsy hatchet jobs" in which WESSAs are reviled as imperialist "bastards," "pseudo-liberal weaklings," and "ghosts with ears" (Banning 1989 quoted in Foley 1991, p. 15). Yet, his disdain for politics does not make him one of a near majority of WESSAs described as

> *political introverts…* less *concerned with encouraging a practical solution to South Africa's problems*, more *concerned with preserving a "White" heritage*, more *concerned simply with leading a quiet*, *respectable life and* more *concerned with protecting the standards of the social class to which they belong*. (Schlemmer 1976, p. 124, original emphases)

When Schlebusch stops short of "outing" an issue that must have been foremost in the minds of his listeners, he is employing the rhetorical trick of undermining an opposing position by virtue of withholding what would be a dignifying response (Billig 1996). The SAPA president's reticence is not the mark of a political introvert but of Schlemmer's "political activist" (1976, p. 124).

The indiscriminate ascription of political conservatism to South African psychology, then, overlooks the "tradition of dissent" among an influential minority of independent-minded WESSAs (Garson 1976, p. 37 quoted in Foley 1991, p. 22). Then again, Schlebusch's politics does not mean that SAPA had no apartheid sympathizers—or that his brand of activism was non-ideological. After all, he may have distanced himself from the Afrikaner group ethic, but he hardly aligned himself with African nationalism either. Indeed, a politics that idealizes an amorphous (scientific) freedom but stops short of naming its object of criticism—in this case, racial policy—does itself no favors. By invoking science in the struggle against apartheid, Schlebusch adopted what was a common discursive practice among English-speaking liberals (Dubow 2001). But, having "scant awareness of themselves as a group"—and Schlebusch went assuredly to great lengths to isolate himself from any group—the WESSA appeal to science was prone to being interpreted as the political dithering not of activists but "wimps" (Foley 1991, pp. 15–16).

In the final analysis, la Grange (1962) and Schlebusch (1963) espoused divergent views on the desirability of "relevance" in psychology. The former's concern for the welfare of the *volk* anticipated PIRSA's *volksdiens* discourse of the 1960s that would urge the discipline to conduct

research of "ethnic-national relevance." By contrast, Schlebusch sought to uncouple psychology from societal considerations, advancing instead a *liberal-individualist* discourse that panegyrized an almost esoteric science in which "the great inventor" as "truth seeker" struggled valiantly against "this tyranny of the group." But the rival presidents also confirmed several theoretical insights about the general concept of "relevance." First, their debate about "relevance" took place at a time of significant social change that included separation from the Commonwealth, the mobilization of Afrikanerdom, and an increase in state repression. Second, the debate featured incongruous expressions of the goals of psychological science as competing constituencies vied with each other for the soul of the discipline. And third, despite the fact that the first Professional Board for Psychology would be established only in 1974, la Grange and Schlebusch's respective articulations exposed a basic-applied divide, endorsing Strümpfer's (1993) depiction of Afrikaner psychology as "service oriented" and the English version as driven by the basic science. In other words, in keeping with the international history of appeals for "relevance," the primary ingredients in this early controversy were antagonistic cognitive interests, an irredeemably bifurcated discipline, and a sociopolitical scene that brought these divisions to the boil. In order to account for the development of la Grange and Schlebusch's contradictory positions, Chapter 6 offers an examination of addresses delivered during SAPA's formative years.

Notes

1. The words of Ronald Albino. Addendum to the minutes of the SAPA Council Meeting, Durban, July 15, 1960, p. 6, Raubenheimer Archive, Special Collections, J.S. Gericke Library, Stellenbosch University.
2. ibid., p. 7.
3. Minutes of the South African Psychological Association Council Meeting, May 27, 1961, p. 7, Raubenheimer Archive, Stellenbosch University. This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.
4. ibid., p. 6. This passage was translated from the original Afrikaans.
5. Simon Biesheuvel interview, May 14, 1982, pp. 19–20, Raubenheimer Archive, Stellenbosch University. All interviews cited in this book were drawn from this archive. Naas Raubenheimer, a former PIRSA president, donated a collection of audiocassettes and transcripts of interviews with important figures in South African psychology to Stellenbosch University. I am indebted to Mimi Seyffert (Special Collections) and Desmond Painter (Department of Psychology) for facilitating my access to this material.

6. Dreyer Kruger interview, April 15, 1982, pp. 1–3. Translated from the original Afrikaans.
7. Born, raised, and educated in the Cape—South Africa's southernmost region—la Grange served as professor of psychology at the University of Pretoria from 1945 to 1953 (van der Merwe 1977). He returned to his *alma mater*—Stellenbosch University—in 1955 to take up the Chair in Educational Psychology. He then left Stellenbosch in 1962 to head the research planning division of the South African Road Safety Council (SARSC). He returned to the University of Pretoria's psychology department in 1968 (Matieland 1969).
8. Paul Robbertse interview, May 12, 1982, pp. 14–15. Translated from the original Afrikaans.
9. ibid., p. 14.
10. A.S. Roux interview, May 11, 1982, p. 2. Translated from the original Afrikaans.
11. To the neutral observer, it may seem ironic that PIRSA blamed SAPA for digging up political hot potatoes. Robbertse and Roux, however, were thinking in terms of the time-honored distinction between *volkspolitiek* (people politics) and *partypolitiek* (party politics). During the Boer rebellion of 1915, the (Afrikaner) *volk* was divided over former Boer general and then Prime Minister Louis Botha's decision to call out an *Afrikaner* citizen force to crush the insurrection (Moodie 1975). Accounting for 90 % of Afrikaner parishioners, the Dutch Reformed Church was walking a tightrope with some ministers supporting Botha and others opposing him. To hold the flock together, the Church responded by creating a pragmatic division between *volkspolitiek* and *partypolitiek*: the idea was that the Church would involve itself in community issues—such as Afrikaans-medium education and Afrikaner poverty—but would not presume to advise its congregation on how to vote. Whether churchmen or party politicians, for Broederbond members in particular, this separation of church and state was to prove crucial: "the political unity of Afrikanerdom required conscious differentiation between the spheres of political activity, church affairs, and the nascent civil religion" (Moodie 1975, p. 98). Hence, for PIRSA and its Broederbonders, the mistake that SAPA made was to involve itself in a "race" question that belonged to the realm of *partypolitiek*. Apartheid was state policy—and there was no question of psychologists interfering in it.
12. Addendum to the minutes of the SAPA Council Meeting, Durban, July 15, 1960, p. 4, Raubenheimer Archive, Stellenbosch University. Translated from the original Afrikaans.
13. ibid., p. 5.
14. ibid.

15. Paul Robbertse interview, May 12, 1982, pp. 14–16. Translated from the original Afrikaans.
16. The last two battles for the country's premiership had pitted North against South—the first in 1954 between the "Lion of the North" J.G. Strijdom and the Cape-backed candidate Nicolaas Havenga, and the second in 1958 between Hendrik Verwoerd and Eben Dönges.
17. This moniker was a reference to Verwoerd having been born in the Netherlands.
18. All excerpts from la Grange's address were translated from the original Afrikaans.
19. Strümpfer describes the atmosphere at the inaugural congress: "I actually went with the rest of the department, all the psychologists in Potchefstroom went to that meeting and it was really a Blood River kind of climate. A [Reformed Church] minister who was also a psychologist opened the meeting with scripture readings and prayer and he read from somewhere in the New Testament where it says that those that are not for us are against us, that little bit. The way he prayed about all of this, we were at Blood River. It was a Total Onslaught kind of meeting that he opened" (Nell 1993, p. 35). (In 1838, the Voortrekkers defeated the Zulu king, Dingaan, at Blood River. Thousands of Zulu soldiers were killed with no loss of life on the Voortrekker side. The victory was seen as proof of God's will that the Afrikaners prevail as an independent people.)
20. Metaphors exert a powerful influence not only on the way people think, but also on how they act (Fairclough 1992, pp. 194–195).
21. What makes enthymemes different from syllogisms is that they trade in probabilities rather than certainties, exchanging strict logic for "the province of rhetoric" (Corbett and Connors 1999, p. 63). Moreover, because enthymemes are difficult to spot, those probabilities are taken up frequently as certainties.
22. For example, D.F. Malan opines about how God "[i]n his wisdom… determined that on the southern point of Africa, the dark continent, a People should be born who would be the bearer of Christian culture and civilization" (Die Transvaler, December 16, 1942 quoted in Moodie 1975, p. 248). Elsewhere, Broederbond chairman Joon van Rooy interprets the God-given uniqueness of "the Afrikaner People [as assisting them to] fulfill a particular calling and destiny here in the southern corner of Africa" (Die Burger, October 11, 1944 quoted in Moodie 1975, p. 110). And again, this time in a newspaper editorial: "The Day of the Covenant is indeed the day of inspiration for the People. It is the day upon which the heart-strings of the People are tuned in harmony with the great Divine Plan here on the southern point of Africa" (Die Transvaler, December 15, 1945 quoted in Moodie 1975, p. 21).

23. Jansen cites the immortalization of Afrikaner adaptability in the Afrikaans language through the saying, "'*n Boer maak 'n plan*"—that is, "An Afrikaner will make a plan."
24. An anti-Semitic reference to the imperialist-capitalist connection in the South African Party, "Hoggenheimer" was a cartoon character in the Afrikaans-language daily, *Die Burger*, and was "English-speaking, imperialist, and clearly Jewish" (Moodie 1975, p. 15).
25. Moodie notes in passing James Luther Adams' observation that "Calvinism encourages the formation of voluntary associations" (1975, p. 106).
26. Translated from the original Afrikaans.
27. As prime minister, Verwoerd was alert to the Black Nationalist sentiment taking hold across the continent: "[We] cannot govern without taking into account the tendencies in the world and in Africa. We must have regard to them. We are… taking steps to ensure that we adopt a policy by which we on the one hand can retain for the white man full control in his areas, but by which we are giving the Bantu as our wards every opportunity in their areas to move along a road of development by which they can progress in accordance with their ability" (Pelzer 1966, p. 243 quoted in Moodie 1975, p. 264).
28. The NP had come to power by reminding the electorate repeatedly of a "sea"—an "inundation" (*oorstroming*)—of blacks (O'Meara 1996, p. 34). The metaphor of an unstoppable black deluge—not infrequently tinged with sexual anxiety—had animated the South African political landscape for decades. Fanon (2008) and Kamin (1993) have written about the sexualization of black identity in European and American contexts.
29. Although Miller (1993) makes the important point that Verwoerd was not a strident Afrikaner nationalist during his years as an academic, she cannot account conclusively for his later conversion. At the very least, it seems likely that he would have been influenced to some degree by the intellectual milieu in which he studied and taught for almost two decades—and his 1929 address suggests as much.
30. This contradicts Robbertse's claim regarding the position of Afrikaner psychologists within SAPA (quoted above): "We didn't count—we were nowhere."
31. Even SAPA's archives for the ensuing decade and a half (1963–1977) disappeared mysteriously. Its one-time secretary, Dev Griesel, remarks blandly in a letter to the director of the National Library of South Africa: "We do not publish the proceedings of our annual congresses. Persons who attend the congress and our own members receive a copy of the summaries of papers read at the congress but in no way is this a publication" (February 20, 1979).
32. Schlebusch's address was delivered in Afrikaans.

33. Quoted in the Newsletter of the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa, August 1962, Vol. 1, p. 13. The passage—translated from the original Afrikaans—is taken from a statement delivered by la Grange at PIRSA's founding meeting on June 23, 1962.
34. Paul Robbertse interview, May 12, 1982, p. 13. Translated from the original Afrikaans.
35. In a remarkably similar turn of phrase, Verwoerd's successor, John Vorster, reminisced at the first cabinet meeting after the prime minister's assassination: "Dr Verwoerd was an intellectual giant. He did the thinking for each one of us" (Schoeman 1974, p. 14 quoted in O'Meara 1996, p. 112).

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CHAPTER 6

Science and Society in the Time of SAPA (1948–1961)

Although contemporary psychology has in the main passed out of that phase of its immediate past history generally referred to as the "battle of the schools," that does not mean that contemporary psychologists are necessarily in agreement upon fundamental issues at the present time.

(Ian MacCrone 1951)

Our association developed out of a need… for professional psychological services in this country, a gap the community feels increasingly with each passing day.

(A.B. van der Merwe 1958)

The 1962 splitting of the South African Psychological Association (SAPA) ranks among the most distasteful episodes in the history of psychology in South Africa. While a fair amount has been written on the subsequent founding of the whites-only Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA), comparatively little is known about SAPA, which was established in 1948 as the first national association for psychologists in the country. If anything, SAPA has come to be defined by the events of 1962, discussions of which tend to suggest that, whereas the association's Afrikaner psychologists ended up being mouthpieces for the apartheid state, its Anglophone members remained faithful, more or less, to a non-racial psychology. This chapter suggests, however, that such an assessment of SAPA's politics simplifies matters to a fault. While it is true that many of the association's Afrikaner members went on to devote themselves to

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a brazenly racist formulation of the discipline, the ostensibly progressive politics of their English-speaking counterparts is not beyond interrogation.

To be sure, this is not a novel contention. Nicholas (1990, p. 59), for example, advances the position that SAPA's apparent openness to multiracial membership "centered around avoiding censure from the international community, maintaining standards for all psychologists, and promoting unity and the study of psychology by blacks rather than defeating unjust apartheid laws." More recently, Richter and Dawes (2008, p. 296) have claimed that, since its membership was "99 %" white, SAPA was only "notionally" integrated. But despite the reasonableness of assertions such as these, none has been validated in any empirical sense. The primary objective of this chapter, then, is to trace the ideological contours of SAPA's pre-1962 intellectual project on the basis of available evidence. Indeed, the SAPA of the 1950s and early 1960s was more than just a learned society: it functioned as a microcosm of the social and political matrices in which psychologists of those years lived and worked.

Of Quacks and Pseudo-Psychologists (Presidential Address, 1950)

In 1950, Adriaan la Grange was SAPA president, a position he had held since the founding of the association in July 1948.[1] SAPA had been established for professional reasons—chief among them the registration of trained psychologists (Foster 2008; Seedat and MacKenzie 2008). In the published summary of his address, la Grange identifies "[t]he greatest problem facing modern psychology [as] the fact that [the unprecedented demand for psychological services] is being shamelessly exploited by quacks and pseudo-psychologists of all kinds" (la Grange 1950, p. 7). He adds that "[c]ondemnation and disapproval of these practices must be voiced in the strongest of terms" and recommends "[p]romulgation of an energetic short-term policy intended mainly for the protection of the title 'psychologist'" (la Grange 1950). He advises further that SAPA membership be made conditional "not only on the basis of academic and professional qualifications, but also upon proof of a deserving reputation and high standing in public esteem" (la Grange 1950).[2] Regarding long-term policy, la Grange sets out in some detail the contents of a suitable undergraduate curriculum, proposing the introduction of a dedicated bachelor's degree for aspiring teachers and the provision of training facilities

for both undergraduate and post-graduate students. He anticipates such outcomes as the improvement of clinical services in schools, public appreciation of psychological services, increased interdisciplinary cooperation, and "facilitation of the achievement of the ultimate goal" (p. 8): statutory recognition of the discipline.

For an Afrikaner—given the ascendancy of Afrikaner nationalism at the time—la Grange's non-partisanship is surprising. Granted, a public service motif does feature prominently in the address—but it is not couched in the nationalist idiom of serving the *volk*. On the political front, the newly installed National Party (NP) regime did not regard the further elaboration and dissemination of Christian-National ideology as a pressing concern: because it had won the 1948 elections on a minority of votes, the party's immediate challenge was to broaden its constituency. In a similar vein, la Grange would have understood the significance of his audience comprising "psychologists of various stripes, English and Afrikaans-speaking, liberal and conservative, [who] came together to form… SAPA" (Foster 2008, p. 105). To persist with the Afrikaner nationalist agenda that had percolated the discipline since the formulation of the poor white question would have risked alienating his English listeners. SAPA's forerunner, the Psychological Society, Johannesburg (PSJ), had been dominated by English-speaking psychologists (Wulfsohn 1948)—and with registration ostensibly the new association's "ultimate goal," having all hands on deck was a basic prerequisite.

The Battle of the Schools (Opening Address, 1951)

In July of the following year, the liberal psychologist and former president of PSJ, Ian MacCrone, delivered the opening address at the SAPA congress in Pietermaritzburg. Titled, *Perspective in Psychology*, MacCrone attempts to define the discipline's proper subject matter. He dismisses the potential role of neurophysiology in understanding human behavior for the reasons that "fundamentally it is a cock-eyed view which offends against psychology, against its own logic, and against a sound philosophy of science" (MacCrone 1951, p. 9). He criticizes on similar grounds stimulus–response theory, as it "seems to me to reduce behaviour to an unreal abstraction, a kind of artifact, since it consistently ignores the organism itself" (MacCrone 1951). MacCrone's address ends abruptly with him arguing instead for the importance of consciousness in behavior and self-consciousness in particular.

Simon Biesheuvel remembers MacCrone as "essentially an academic" who was not easily interested in psychological applications (Biesheuvel 1981, p. 2). Indeed, the disparity between la Grange (1950) and MacCrone—the latter was at the time of his address head of psychology at the English-language University of the Witwatersrand—cannot be starker. La Grange is already plotting the extension of the discipline into the public domain, while MacCrone has yet to move on from "the fundamental debate in psychology"—known otherwise as the "battle of the schools" (MacCrone 1951, p. 8). Whereas la Grange restricts himself to professional issues, MacCrone immerses himself in "these fundamental issues… that go back to the beginnings of psychology as science" (MacCrone 1951). MacCrone reminds his audience that, although the "battle" may have receded in recent years, it remains unresolved. By implication, hopes for the professionalization of a "pre-paradigmatic" discipline with an undecided subject matter are misplaced—which explains in part why, despite psychologists' desire for professional registration since at least the mid-1940s, they had to wait until 1974 before the establishment of the first Professional Board for Psychology (Seedat and MacKenzie 2008). All hands were not on deck: MacCrone spoke a scientific vernacular familiar to English-speaking psychologists, while la Grange represented Afrikaner pragmatists eager to serve the public. From its earliest days, SAPA's psychologists disagreed about the discipline's cognitive interest, as well as the relative importance of basic and applied psychology; all that was needed for a full-blown controversy about "relevance" to develop was a facilitative political climate. With the NP of those years more interested in consensus building, however, that was not yet on the cards.

The Basic–Applied Dichotomy (Opening Address, 1953)

At the 1953 SAPA congress, Eleanor Pratt-Yule, long-time head of psychology at the University of Natal, delivers the opening address. Unlike MacCrone and la Grange, who confine their deliberations to the basic and applied sciences, respectively, Pratt-Yule focuses her attention on the "dichotomy" itself, lamenting the harm it has done "in Britain where clinically oriented and experimentally minded research workers are separated by an abyss of prejudice" (Pratt-Yule 1953, p. 4). Trained as a psychoanalyst but interested in animal experiments (Böhmke and Tlali 2008), she concedes "at the outset that both the clinical and the

experimental approaches have their aberrations" (Pratt-Yule 1953, p. 4). Expressing concern about "the type of article too frequently found in the psycho-analytic reviews," she rebukes the scientific approach for its "worship of measurement for its own sake, a tendency to juggle with statistics, a free use of pseudo-mathematical symbols" (Pratt-Yule 1953). She implies, also, that the clinical approach is of greater real-world significance, as "[v]ery often the results of precise and carefully designed experiments appear to have little relevance to significant and urgent problems of behaviour" (Pratt-Yule 1953). Pratt-Yule then sets herself the task of "bridg[ing] the gap between the two approaches and consider[ing] what contribution each may properly make to the scientific study of behaviour" (Pratt-Yule 1953). But since the "achievements… of experimental psychology are obvious… it is the clinical approach which requires clarification, evaluation and defence" (Pratt-Yule 1953).

Pratt-Yule's position is somewhat contradictory: she finds fault with both traditions but states that only one is in need of "defence." According to her protégé,[3] Ronald Albino, Pratt-Yule had played an instrumental role in the founding of SAPA:

> *Now also in that time the South African Psychological Association was founded. I was present on the very morning that it began when Prof Pratt-Yule said to me: "I think there are enough psychologists in South Africa to have a psychological association," which she then proceeded to form. She wrote a letter to Prof MacCrone at Wits making this proposal, [I] can't remember the year…. He wrote back and said, "Fine," and immediately… the first [congress] was [held] in Bloemfontein. I don't know how many were there, [it] must have been about twenty people at the most—that was our first conference…. That meeting was very interesting in that it exhibited this conflict… between behaviourism and the non-behaviouristic psychologies. There was a man at Wits—American—he got up and told us in very vigorous terms that… behaviourism was what psychology was all about. That immediately produced an uproar and for the rest of the three days it was a battle.*[4]

From its humble beginnings, SAPA was split not only along the pure/applied divide, but also—and more or less correspondingly—between behaviorists and non-behaviorists. Pratt-Yule was a compromise figure in both controversies, having interests in psychoanalysis and animal experimentation while excelling as teacher[5] and practitioner.[6] Albino recalls how, because of the limited number of psychology staff at the University of Natal, "we did everything: we taught fundamental psychology, applied psychology, we

did service work—everything that came to hand—which I think made us all quite good general psychologists."[7] Pratt-Yule was uniquely positioned to appeal to all constituencies: by placing the burden of proof squarely on the clinical approach, she endears herself to experimentalists; on the other hand, by taking it upon herself—a psychoanalyst—to present the clinical case, she is assured the approval of non-experimentalists.

While Pratt-Yule suggests that her point of departure is experimentalist, this amounts to little more than a rhetorical attempt to set experimentalists at ease. Midway through her address, she returns once again to the shortcomings of the scientific method:

> *Every day research workers in the field of personality get new reminders that restricted test situations are restricted in their effects; they do not "excite" the subjects adequately. If people are placed in non-significant situations and set trivial tasks, trivial and non-significant responses are elicited, and conclusions based on these have little predictive value for real behaviour. The more complex, the more involved in total character structure, the more significant the variables we wish to estimate, the more useless the laboratory and test situation. Examples are legion.* (Pratt-Yule 1953, p. 6)

Pratt-Yule proves unable to further the claims of clinicians without circumscribing those of experimentalists—one would expect nothing less in a "dichotomy." Yet, she admires the work of Lorenz and Tinbergen because, "[i]f they have shown us the value of the clinical eye, they have never questioned the value of the experimental eye" (p. 7). It is this approach that allows her to resolve the impasse:

> *We like the outlook of a certain professor who has portraits of Freud and Pavlov on opposite walls of his study and declares that his aim as a psychologist is to move those portraits round till they hang side by side on the middle wall!* (Pratt-Yule 1953).

Pratt-Yule asserts that much psychological research entails in any case "the proper blending of both approaches… despite the theoretical controversy between the die-hards of both camps" (Pratt-Yule 1953). Confronted with urgent real-world problems, psychologists have been forced into a methodological pragmatism, "developing new techniques ad hoc, ignoring methodology, and drawing heavily on 'hunches.' For such as these, theoretical dichotomies have not existed" (p. 8). Pratt-Yule concludes her address with the observation that

> [*h*]*ere in South Africa we are fond of stressing the immense complexity of the problems which face us as a multi-racial society. If we, as psychologists, are to play our proper constructive role in their solution, we cannot afford to spend much time on theoretical controversy, however much intellectual fun and stimulus we may undoubtedly derive from it. The problems which face us are indeed urgent, and it behoves us to be both liberal-minded and pragmatic in our approach to them.* (p. 9)

By the end of her speech, Pratt-Yule comes down decisively on the side of the clinical approach. She talks up the potential of "intuition… as a potent source of testable hypotheses" in the course of a lengthy discussion on "how the clinical approach may enrich the experimental" (Pratt-Yule 1953). By contrast, her account of the benefits of the experimental approach is considerably less substantial as she reproaches "militant experimentalist[s]" for their "basic insecurity" (Pratt-Yule 1953). The ongoing theoretical controversy is, for the most part, the fault of experimentalists, the continuation of which will curtail the discipline's efforts to solve the country's problems. Still, Pratt-Yule maintains the importance of being "both liberal-minded and pragmatic" (Pratt-Yule 1953)—a significant choice of adjectives given the opposing constituencies they call forth. Whereas English science provides objectivity and Afrikaner practice affords "social relevance," she suggests that neither can do without the other. Anticipating Danziger's observation that the basic–applied dichotomy maps onto a polarity of "relevance," Pratt-Yule identifies and attempts to heal a fracture in South African psychology that, less than a decade later—with an accommodating political climate then in place—will break entirely.

A Dilemma (Presidential Address, 1954)

By virtue of the fact that he is the first personnel psychologist to lead the association, Simon Biesheuvel believes that his choice of topic—*The Relationship between Psychology and Occupational Science*—is justified.[8] He admits the possible tedium the field may induce in clinicians and theoreticians—shades of Pratt-Yule's "dichotomy"—but "make[s] no apology for discussing it on this occasion" (Biesheuvel 1954, p. 129). Biesheuvel links productivity to economic prosperity and reasons that psychologists should involve themselves in the question of labor efficiency—"[i]f for no other reason than that their own way of life is directly and vitally involved" (Biesheuvel 1954).

And yet his tone is preponderantly apologetic. Biesheuvel appeals to his *ethos* (the presidential prerogative) as well as the *pathos* (sympathy) and *logos* (reasonableness) of the audience, creating an impression of being uncertain of his place in the discipline. While he acknowledges the field's "disreputable origins" (p. 130)—he describes how Hugo Münsterberg's "economic psychology" was focused primarily on providing "the means whereby industry and commerce could best achieve their ends, the social and moral value or wisdom of these ends being none of its concern" (Biesheuvel 1954)—he hails its improved sensitivity to workers' needs. He accepts, further, that occupational psychology's subject matter can appear at times to be unpsychological and, on other occasions, to transcend psychology, and suspects that

> *in order to carry out his job properly the occupational psychologist must become a kind of scientific "superman" required to conquer a universe of sciences within the time of an ordinary professional training course. In this predicament, he could either choose to become a scientific dilettante, knowing the headlines but none of the content, or accept the advice given by Hamlet to his mother concerning her heart, to "throw away the worser part of it, and live the purer with the other half."* (p. 134)

Just as Pratt-Yule resolves her "dichotomy" by asserting the mutual dependence of basic and applied psychology, Biesheuvel unlocks his "dilemma" (Biesheuvel 1954) by explaining the process through which a pure science is able to generate a "technology"—or "practical art"—such as occupational science (Biesheuvel 1954). He reasons that, since medical doctors and engineers are not required to master all of their respective ancillary sciences,[9] the same holds true for occupational scientists. Several sciences have contributed to the birth of occupational science and warrant different degrees of devotion: "mothered" by occupational psychology with mathematical statistics in "the role of father," physiology and sociology are its "godparents" while education, physics, economics, and the rest of the multidisciplinary family function "as aunts and uncles" (p. 136).

To be sure, Biesheuvel's position on the basic–applied continuum is uncertain. According to one commentator, he lacked stamina for theoretical niceties (Dubow 1995), though his address does not come across as anti-scientific in the least. He makes the case, for example, that regardless of whether trainees are interested in human relations, personnel techniques, or ergonomics, mathematics and statistics are "essential for

all" (Biesheuvel 1954, p. 139). In his later years, moreover, he seemed especially taken with the notion of scientific disinterestedness (Biesheuvel 1987, 1991). Gordon Nelson—a former National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR) director—remarks that Biesheuvel's career had "a profound effect on the [post-war] development of applied psychology *and* basic psychological research in South Africa" (Biesheuvel 1991, p. 571, added emphasis). If anything, Biesheuvel seemed to position himself beyond the "dilemma." When reminiscing a quarter-of-a-century later about the early SAPA congresses, he recalled how "a perennial debate between behaviourists and psychoanalysts developed, which I found rather sterile and partisan" (Biesheuvel 1979, p. 6). While "irritated by irrelevancies and anything that he construed as a waste of time" (Nelson 1991, p. 572), he also cautioned against the pursuit of the "perfect product [because] one would have to spend one's whole life on it, and in the end it would probably be irrelevant" (Nelson 1991, p. 571). Unlike Pratt-Yule, Biesheuvel considered applied psychology as susceptible to "irrelevance" as the pure science. This would explain not only the circumspection of his own conceptual analysis of "relevance" (Biesheuvel 1991) but also why, despite wanting to put occupational science "on the map," he made virtually no effort in his address to extol its real-world virtues. Instead, in his introduction, Biesheuvel set himself apart from "those who require their subject matter spiced with the more colorful and imaginative aspects of personality study" as well as those desirous of "opportunities for the formulation of theoretical ingenuities, so amply provided by behaviour studies" (Biesheuvel 1954, p. 129).

Interestingly, it is equally difficult to determine Biesheuvel's location on the *political* spectrum, his standing in the history of South African psychology now a matter of some controversy. Described as a "liberal-inclined psychologist and critic of race bias in intelligence testing" (Dubow 2006, p. 253) but elsewhere as a "public apologist" for the exploitation of black labor (Cooper et al. 1990, p. 10), Biesheuvel's detractors will argue that his address revealed nothing of the fact that the NIPR's special interest in African educability was born not of intellectual curiosity but of funder-driven obligations "to generate knowledge [that would] promote efficiency of the workforce and curtail industrial action by workers" (Seedat and MacKenzie 2008, p. 80). Others take the benign view that the NIPR's studies on personnel management corresponded to a massive expansion in South Africa's industrial capability, which resulted in skills shortages and an associated need for vocational and aptitude testing (Dubow 1995). In the reckoning of the

former, NIPR research exemplified the kind of liberalism typical of WESSA "bastards"—"rapacious, exploitative imperialists cunningly masking their racist, reactionary attitudes and conduct beneath a veneer of apolitical neutrality" (Foley 1991, p. 15; see also Terre Blanche and Seedat Terre Blanche and Seedat 2001)—while, for the latter, such research "involved an element of social meliorism" (Dubow 1995, p. 237).

To some, it may seem puzzling that Biesheuvel's views on these subjects even mattered. That they did, confirms not only his status in the discipline but also the political significance of the basic–applied dichotomy in South African psychology. For Afrikaner psychologists of the 1950s, engaging in "relevant" psychology meant that one was interested in applied rather than theoretical questions. For someone in Biesheuvel's position, however, there was a great deal more to the question of "relevance," namely, the possibility of associational rupture. Similar to Pratt-Yule, he must have sensed the storm that was brewing and, for better or worse, adopted a policy of non-commitalism that was to be his strategy for holding SAPA together. Indeed, diplomacy would prove effective for the remainder of the decade—until it was overwhelmed by a resurgent Afrikanerdom.

Psychotherapy of a Different Nature (Presidential Address, 1955)

After obtaining a master's degree in psychology in 1938 from Stellenbosch University, A.B. van der Merwe went on to qualify as a medical doctor at the University of Cape Town. He returned to his *alma mater* in 1945 to teach clinical psychology, earning a doctorate in 1949 for his exploration of *Peripheral Vasomotor Reactions as an Index of Emotional Tension and Emotional Stability*. By 1955, van der Merwe was SAPA president: titled *Tension and Psychosomatic Reactions*,[10] his address was a précis of his doctoral thesis and consisted of a two-page foray into physiological psychology.

In comparison with those of his predecessors, van der Merwe's address is arguably the least controversial. It resembles in content most APA speeches in which "presidents… summarize their own substantive contributions or… describe recent developments in a particular subarea of psychology" (Fowler 1990, p. 1). Just as la Grange had done in 1950, van der Merwe steers clear of Afrikaner ideology—unusual for a Broederbonder (Wilkins and Strydom 1978)—and of wading into the "battle of the schools" that troubled in varying measure such

Anglophone psychologists as MacCrone, Pratt-Yule, and Biesheuvel. Then again—as regards the interpretation of psychosomatic disturbance—he mentions in passing how "[o]n the one side there is the school that wants to see a deep-seated symbolic meaning in every functional symptom" (van der Merwe 1955, p. 4). He ends his address just as enigmatically, concluding that

> [*t*]*he concepts of basic tension and lability help us to view certain reactions of the normal person, the neurotic as well as the psychotic from a new vantage-point, and necessarily direct our attention to psychotherapy of a different nature*. (van der Merwe 1955)

Although psychology at Stellenbosch University cared little for psychoanalysis for most of the twentieth century, van der Merwe's comments about the field were not evidence of an underlying behaviorist antipathy.[11] Young Stellenbosch psychologists of the late 1940s and early 1950s may have been "obsessed with the idea… of giving the theoretical subject a practical orientation" (van der Merwe 1984, p. 1 quoted in Scholtz 2002, p. 10), but this was never going to be accomplished through interschool one-upmanship or, for that matter, Christian-National rhetoric about serving the *volk*. Similar to NP strategy, the first half of the 1950s was a period of consolidation rather than antagonization within the discipline. Psychologists throughout the country were beginning to open private practices (O'Meara n.d.); SAPA was in the process of developing an ethical code of conduct and had been negotiating since 1951 with the Minister of Health and the South African Medical and Dental Council regarding the registration of psychologists (Louw 1997). In short, professional interests required SAPA in-group solidarity "against a pretty tough and exclusive [medical] trade union" (O'Meara n.d., p. 15).

A Humbled Elisha (Presidential Address, 1958)

Three years later, van der Merwe is into his second term as SAPA president. He starts his address by thanking the audience for the confidence it has placed in him by electing him president.[12] He pays tribute to la Grange and Biesheuvel for their leadership at a time "when the air was but rather thin" and "feelings of insecurity, and inferiority, were busy overcoming many of us" (van der Merwe 1958, p. 2). He then compares both of his predecessors to the prophet Elijah, who, upon being raised into the

heavens on a chariot drawn by steeds of fire, drops his mantle, which is then gathered by his successor, Elisha. Humbled by the occasion, van der Merwe "in this case cannot help but wonder if Elijah's mantle has descended on the true Elisha" (van der Merwe 1955). Under the successive stewardships of la Grange—"the father of our association"—and Biesheuvel—who "with his thorough, scientific aggression inspired us to independent conduct" (van der Merwe 1955)—SAPA has emerged from "its infant years" and "youthful uncertainty" to "where we stand today" (van der Merwe 1955).

Van der Merwe proceeds to remind his listeners of the association's founding sentiment, namely, the "need for professional psychological services in this country, a gap the community feels increasingly with each passing day" (van der Merwe 1955). He recognizes the role of the clinical psychologist—firstly, in respect of "the positive promotion of mental health" (p. 3) and, secondly, in encouraging the rehabilitation of patients who otherwise would spend their lives confined to institutions. He details the shortage of psychiatric facilities and trained personnel in the face of massive public demand, criticizing the fact that, while only 200 beds exist in the country for the treatment of patients with serious neurotic illnesses, there are ten state institutions for a much smaller population of psychotic patients. He states, further, that national mental health organizations and education departments are constrained by a crippling shortage of trained clinical psychologists. For van der Merwe, the remedy involves a focus on preventative work and the creation of "a more effective psychotherapy" (p. 4). By the latter he means an "active psychotherapy" (p. 5) that is offered in outpatient settings, is multidisciplinary in scope, and involves a "thoroughly elaborated readjustment program for each patient" (van der Merwe 1955). Citing British, Dutch, and American examples of community-based mental health services, van der Merwe predicts the end of custodial care, an eventuality owing much to the maturation of modern psychopathology over the previous 50 years and the development of tranquilizer drugs. Moreover, because no single science can assume responsibility for the mental health of a community, he insists that the clinical psychologist play a central role in a multidisciplinary team, failing which "he will commit an unforgiveable sin against humankind" (p. 6).

Whereas van der Merwe's 1955 address was primarily an example of forensic oratory, the 1958 address belonged to the epideictic and deliberative genres. Two developments contributed to this change of tone: first, in December 1955, the profession attained statutory recognition as an

auxiliary medical service (Louw 1997), and second, a code of ethics was adopted at that year's AGM, affording psychologists a much-desired sense of legitimacy. This was why van der Merwe could "biblicalize" the occasion, sanctifying the discipline for having moved beyond its "periods of youthful uncertainty" with psychologists now operating alongside psychiatrists, general practitioners, and social workers (1958, p. 2). Because the profession possessed the necessary ethical and legal credentials, he was in a stronger position than any of the previous presidents to affirm the importance of psychological services, while chastising "the ignoramus [who was] busy gambling with the mental health of his patient" (p. 4). Unlike MacCrone, Pratt-Yule, and Biesheuvel who were burdened with intra-disciplinary controversies, van der Merwe could extend the discipline's horizon of ambition by exhorting his fellow professionals to dedicate themselves to the mental health of all. Like la Grange (1950), moreover, he managed to do so by drawing on the unifying ideal of public service without ever having recourse to Afrikaner nationalist discourse.

Mercury Rising (Presidential/Opening Address, 1961)

By 1961, however, events are about to take a turn for the worse. Since the Naidoo debacle of 1956, the "race" question has been simmering in the background. Delegates have arrived at the Stellenbosch congress in the knowledge that, this time around, there will be no postponement of a matter on which there are fierce differences of opinion. Then, in the absence of the university's rector, Adriaan la Grange calls on van der Merwe—who is president once again—to deliver the opening address.[13]

To general laughter, van der Merwe complains that the venue is lacking in homeliness, before adding that "[y]ou will however not get too cold or warm as we regulate the temperature automatically according to the heatedness of the discussions taking place" (1961, p. 229). His mood darkening, he then gives the lie to his 1958 celebration of SAPA's coming of age:

> *Ladies and gentlemen, the Psychological Association is now in its thirteenth year—from a genetic point of view it can thus be considered in the stage of puberty—and we must perhaps expect some or other growth pain and passing fancy. I just hope that, as true professional psychotherapists, we shall be very sober-minded when considering and dealing with these whims.* (van der Merwe 1961)

Van der Merwe stops short of outing the "race" question. He attempts, instead, to normalize the controversy as a foreseeable growth pain, cautioning the audience against overreaction. Three years earlier, he had waxed lyrical about the "independent conduct" of the association and its successful negotiation of "youthful uncertainty"—now, he returns SAPA to the adolescent gawkiness it was supposed to have resolved.

In contrast to his earlier addresses, van der Merwe also takes the trouble to converse with delegates in English, quoting for good measure the national poet of Scotland. With this ethical appeal (*ethos*), he attempts to ingratiate himself as a benevolent and even-handed leader (Corbett and Connors 1999). He appreciates the importance of finding common ground with Anglophone psychologists, since it was more or less understood that the English-medium universities entertained liberal views on the "race" issue. And then, having already made reference in Afrikaans to the temperature in the venue, he informs his English-speaking colleagues of the expected weather outside:

> *Our branch secretary, Mr. Botha, guarantees fine weather. If we do get a few occasional showers, please remember the immortal words of Robert Burns: "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley."* (Corbett and Connors 1999)

In quoting Burns, it is impossible to tell whether van der Merwe was making a veiled threat against the English contingent that had come to Stellenbosch in droves to outvote any proposal for racial segregation (Nell 1993). As surely as la Grange did not foresee the incipient drama,[14] it is probable that van der Merwe did not anticipate what was to happen either—that the coming days would alter irrevocably the direction of South African psychology. Notwithstanding tense debates between Freudians and behaviorists, English-Afrikaner relations during the early SAPA conferences were at least collegial. But in the years following the 1961 congress, which resulted in the establishment of the whites-only PIRSA, "a lot of damage was done"[15] between the two associations—and South African psychology's international profile suffered accordingly.[16]

An Inevitable Split

It is evident that Anglophone and Afrikaner psychologists of the 1950s and early 1960s entertained divergent conceptions regarding the place of psychology in society. Both Afrikaner presidents of that period—la

Grange (1950) and van der Merwe (1958)—articulated a *professionalist* discourse of public service. They spoke variously of the imperative to protect a “shamelessly exploited” public, a service “gap the community feels with each passing day,” and “an unforgiveable sin against humankind” should psychologists fail to assume their places on multidisciplinary teams. In turn, English-speaking psychologists advanced a discourse of *disciplinarity* that left them preoccupied with a “battle of the schools” (MacCrone 1951), a “dichotomy” between the clinical and the experimental (Pratt-Yule 1953), a “dilemma” between pure and applied psychology (Biesheuvel 1954), and a “search for the truth” (Schlebusch 1963). Troubled by these “fundamental issues,” they sought “perspective” and “liberal-minded pragmatism.”

It was not by accident that the Afrikaner professionalist discourse of the 1950s lacked the explicitly political accouterments of the *volksdiens* (ethnic-national service) discourse that would dominate PIRSA addresses of the 1960s. In order to set in motion the apartheid project, the NP needed to expand its political base: there was little likelihood of an Afrikaner republic with a five-seat parliamentary majority when the United Party had won the popular vote in the 1948 elections by some margin. Moreover, because D.F. Malan and J.G. Strijdom “were determined to keep the nationalist policy agenda firmly in the party’s hands” (O'Meara 1996, p. 47), the Broederbond—the custodians of Christian-Nationalism—ended up being sidelined for much of the 1950s. So, too, within the discipline, the apparent absence of ideology among Afrikaner psychologists mirrored the general downplaying of Christian-Nationalism in political circles of the 1950s, while there was also the practical matter of professional registration that required cooperating with their Anglophone colleagues.

As for English-speaking psychologists, the discourse of disciplinarity involved a marked degree of political retreatism. Concerned with the scope, structure, and independence of the discipline, their ensuing advocacy of circumspection, “perspective,” “liberal-minded pragmatism,” and “truth-seeking” was characteristic of “liberals in the post-1948 era [whose] insistence on reason and moderation was, perhaps, a comfortable and comforting position to adopt—because it allowed those in the beleaguered middle ground to cast their opponents as extremists” (Dubow 2001, p. 116). But with the resurgence of Christian-Nationalism in the new republic and the subsequent secession of Afrikaner psychologists now confident of their mission, this posture hardened—at least in Schlebusch’s (1963) case—into a liberal-individualist ethic that was inimical to social formations of any kind.

It might seem as though SAPA addresses of the 1950s provided no discursive indication that a split was on the cards. Occasional references were made in respect of tensions that existed between the basic/behaviorist and applied/non-behaviorist camps—which corresponded roughly to an English-Afrikaner divide—but at no point over the course of that decade did addresses ever turn overtly political. If there were hostilities of an ideological kind, then it would appear that Anglophone and Afrikaner psychologists colluded in displacing their resentments upon an unsuspecting pure–applied antinomy instead. Nonetheless, addresses did hint at the eventual unravelings of 1962 because they implied a dispute about the independence of the discipline. In one corner were Afrikaner psychologists arguing for a "socially relevant" discipline that would minister to the mental health needs of the wider public, while in the opposite corner stood Anglophone psychologists intent on restricting themselves to intra-disciplinary considerations. In the wake of the NP's shock electoral victory of 1948, the growing assertiveness of Afrikanerdom, and the imminent split from the Commonwealth, it was only a question of time before the Afrikaner service motif of the 1950s assumed an ethnic-national flavor.

The SAPA–PIRSA split, then, involved more than just the question of admitting black psychologists to the national psychological association: the schism looks to have resulted from a longstanding fault line regarding the goals of psychological science. But as the history of "relevance" debates around the world reveals, that fault line could not trigger demands for "relevance" on its own. Quarrels over cognitive interests and disagreements between basic and applied psychologists—although endemic to the history of the discipline—are dependent on an "ecological niche" for talk of "relevance" to take hold, and such a niche did not exist in the 1950s with the NP attempting to build consensus among white South Africans. That would change in the 1960s, however, when Afrikaner society became increasingly anxious about its survival and Afrikaner psychologists responded with calls for research of "ethnic-national relevance."

Notes

1. Since no records for SAPA's 1948 and 1949 conference proceedings could be traced, the earliest collected address was from 1950.
2. This stipulation was a far cry from the later recruitment efforts of PIRSA begun under his presidential watch.
3. Jack Mann interview, May 14, 1982, p. 13. In this interview, Mann referred to Albino as Pratt-Yule's "protégé."

4. Ronald Albino interview, April 7, 1982, p. 3.
5. Mann interview, ibid., p. 15. When asked to think of "great names in South African psychology" (p. 14), Mann answered: "I think on the purely academic scene Pratt-Yule had an enormous influence on the teaching. It was interesting that after the Second World War there was a time that nearly all the top posts at the English universities in psychology were held by people that had been trained by her and they seemed to naturally go into academic psychology" (p. 15).
6. Albino interview, ibid., p. 2.
7. ibid.
8. At the time of his address, Biesheuvel was also the director of the National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR).
9. "Of necessity the treatment must often be synoptic, but never to the point of inculcating headlines only…" (Biesheuvel 1954, p. 135).
10. The address was delivered in Afrikaans.
11. In those years, the psychology department at Stellenbosch was "eclectic in nature" (Scholtz 2002, p. 10).
12. This address, like the 1955 one, was delivered in Afrikaans.
13. On this occasion, van der Merwe takes turns to speak in Afrikaans and English.
14. According to Dreyer Kruger, la Grange had not prepared himself for the possibility that the Afrikaner psychologists might lose the vote on the "race" question (Kruger interview, April 15, 1982, p. 2).
15. Ronald Albino interview, April 7, 1982, p. 10.
16. Biesheuvel interview, May 14, 1982, pp. 20–21.

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CHAPTER 7

The Rise and Fall of "Ethnic-National Relevance" (1963–1977)

Research on a topic such as the sexual life of a scorpion is clearly a waste of manpower, especially when our country's many human problems are taken into account.

(Paul Robbertse – PIRSA president 1969)

Serving the Endangered *Volk*

The advent of psychology in Africa occurred against a backdrop of slavery and colonialism. Its lengthy history of racism derived from a disciplinary regime "established between 1850 and 1945 [that] implied an imperial divide … between European modernity as subject and the colonized world as object" (Staeuble 2006, p. 193). In South Africa, where an "internal" (Hook 2004)—and more virulent—form of colonialism prevailed, that racism had been evident as far back as the 1840s with the racial segregation of "lunatics" on Robben Island. By 1891, when white patients were being accommodated on the mainland at Valkenberg, their black counterparts had to wait another quarter of a century for a separate facility "across a small river" (Louw and Foster 2004, p. 173). Later still—during the 1920s and 1930s—South African psychologists continued to ignore the subjugation of blacks by focusing instead on the poor white problem and the attendant "threat" of miscegenation.

It was not unusual, then, that in the mid-1950s questions about "race" continued to dominate the collective imagination of South African psychologists. During those years, the South African Psychological Association (SAPA) had threatened to break apart on the matter of admitting

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black psychologists to the association. Eventually, at its 1961 annual general meeting, Council's proposal in favor of racial integration was ratified—but in June 1962, in response to what they considered a challenge to the state's apartheid policy, Afrikaner psychologists broke ranks to form the whites-only Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA). SAPA's fortunes declined rapidly as its associational life came to a virtual standstill. In contrast, PIRSA's membership increased exponentially as it grew into a vibrant and efficient association. By 1978, however, PIRSA had renounced its founding ethos of racial separatism to hold joint conferences with the racially integrated SAPA; in 1982, it ceased to exist altogether, fusing with SAPA to form the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA).

This chapter describes how, throughout the 1960s, PIRSA presidents expressed concern for the survival of the Afrikaner *volk* and stressed, correspondingly, the need for a psychology that would serve Afrikanerdom. Despite the apartheid state reaching its pinnacle between the mid-1960s and early 1970s (O'Meara 1996), the sense of threat was pervasive. In the reckoning of Christian-National Afrikaners, the spread of communism and African liberation movements across the continent represented, respectively, the dreaded *rooi gevaar* ("red threat") and *swart gevaar* ("black threat"). Accordingly, the Afrikaner civil religion—described in Chapter 5—contributed a stirring sense of mission to PIRSA's early congresses.

Psychological Research as White Trusteeship (Presidential Address 1963)

Re-elected president in 1963, Adriaan la Grange begins his discussion of giftedness by criticizing the egalitarianism of revolutionary France and, later, "[t]he unrealistic post-war socialistic-inspired policy of provision of primary education for all [in the belief that] it should be a universal human right" (1964, p. 3).[1] He notes that, whereas "Russia has nevertheless been acutely aware of how to nurture the development of her gifted" (1964), she has done so only to actualize "[t]he communist striving for world domination" (p. 5). He then castigates the USA for its utilitarian outlook on giftedness, which he traces to "[t]he capitalistic-democratic striving for self-assertion by means of the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the directors of private and state-supported enterprises in all areas of life" (1964). He also takes issue with what he locates "[b]etween the titanic power struggles of communism on the one side and

capitalism on the other side" (p. 7), namely, "[t]he liberalistic-socialistic striving for the obliteration of all class differences and the equalization of all people regardless of race, nationality or individual differences of whatever kind whatsoever" (p. 5).

La Grange cautions against the "one-sided development of giftedness" (p. 6) in the service of scientific and technological achievement. Quoting Abraham Tannenbaum, he asserts that "[a]ny definition of talent must have a social reference" (p. 11), which, in the South African instance, means "separate development for the different racial groups that make up the population" (ibid.). However, despite the fact that these different groups are "considered potentially equal in all respects" (ibid.), he insists that, "because of the existing differences in level of civilization and education, culture, and traditions, there are basic differences in the valuation of different forms of giftedness within the different communities" (ibid.). Moreover, since the level of civilization is directly proportional to the number of careers available in a given community, and, because it is "the basic task of the white community … to lead the non-whites gradually to the highest rung of civilization and full independence" (ibid.), "… the non-whites—with the growing differentiation and increase in the number of careers—will require special help directing the multiple talents of their own children in the desired directions according to the special needs of their community" (ibid.).

La Grange advises the education system to commit itself to the fulfillment of two goals. First, white South Africa's "rich heritage of the past [must] be transmitted faithfully to posterity, and its principles made known to the non-white communities in the country" (p. 12). Second, "provision [must] be made … for highly skilled manpower in all areas of national existence" (ibid.). The preservation of this heritage—"with its predominantly Christian and Nationalist life- and worldview" (ibid.)—indicates that "we are not willing to sacrifice our highest spiritual values for material gain" (ibid.), while the supply of skilled labor means "that we shall also not countenance our material decline by allowing, through neglect of our gifted [people], that we fall behind the rest of the Western world in scientific and technological areas" (ibid.). The viability of apartheid policy depends on the "ethnic-national relevance" of psychological research: without the study of giftedness, the "non-white communities" cannot attain the heights of white civilization, while the ensuing failure of white trusteeship—*voogdyskap* (p. 11)—amounts to a breach of Christian-National morality.

The New American Illness (Presidential Address 1964)

In 1964, the new president, Paul Robbertse, delivered a talk entitled, *Creative Thoughts or Abilities.* Just as la Grange had spoken of the "indispensable contributions" that psychologists could bring to the question of giftedness, his successor now claimed—regarding the broader matter of human potentiality—that "psychology has a meaningful contribution to make" (Robbertse 1964, p. 1). Robbertse echoes his predecessor in several places besides, noting in his introductory comments the underdevelopment of the social sciences and humanities in comparison with the natural sciences, "the shortage of highly trained manpower," and the necessity of applying "the Republic's human potential in the most effective manner" (Robbertse 1964). Robbertse, that is, frames his speech intertextually as an extension of la Grange's—he references explicitly the latter's 1963 address—adding that "the objective in this address is to shed light on a particular form of giftedness namely creative thoughts or abilities" (Robbertse 1964). Reviewing several authoritative American sources—he apologizes for reinforcing this focus on the "new American illness" (p. 8)—Robbertse considers at length the nature and measurement of creative thoughts and abilities. He concludes that neither question is settled and that "[t]he matter of creative thoughts is recommended eagerly to PIRSA members for [further] research" (p. 9). Despite an implicit endorsement of la Grange's volksdiens discourse, Robbertse's 1964 address is a far cry from his addresses later in the decade, which will go a long way toward cementing his reputation as arguably PIRSA's most outspoken ideologue.

Road Accidents and "Relevance" (Presidential Address 1965)

At the 1965 congress, la Grange returns as president one last time. On this occasion, his concern is with road safety research—he listed road accidents in his 1962 address as one of "the social questions … that are busy threatening on a large scale the foundations of our continued national existence" (la Grange 1966, p. 1)—and he proceeds to encourage university authorities to increase their involvement in national road safety education (*volksopvoeding*). The modern-day university, he opines, is a "people's university" (p. 15), the result of centuries-long democratizing processes

that succeeded eventually in wresting control of the university from the Church. Quoting from H.B. Thom's address at the official opening of the 1965 academic year at Stellenbosch University, la Grange stresses that universities "have become a mirror of society … [and] provide leadership to the community through which they are nourished in the first instance, and also leadership to the whole country" (ibid.). Since road accidents are "the curse of contemporary society … as regards the prevention of road accidents the honor belongs to [the universities] as the trailblazers" (pp. 15–16).

Acknowledging that a university-driven road safety program must "appeal to national self-respect and national pride" (ibid.), la Grange asks the audience:

> *How can we… ever attain national self-respect and national pride, given the multiracial composition of our population? The answer to this question will only be discovered when the different universities for the different racial groups in our country… all become true people's universities and each with its own service orientation* [diensmotief] *that arises from its own ethnic solidarity* [volksgebondenheid]. (pp. 16–17)

But as far as PIRSA is concerned,

> *it is above all my inner wish that* [*PIRSA members*] *will not be found wanting when, in relation to questions of national scope, an appeal for help and leadership is made to them. Only on the basis of a strong orientation of service to country and people* [volk], *including service to fellow citizens within the different national associations of different racial groups, is our survival justified and our future assured.* (p. 18)

It is unclear whether, in his closing sentence, la Grange has in mind the survival of PIRSA, Afrikanerdom, or the white "race" generally. Regardless, the survivalist outlook of his 1962 address is still apparent: the only way to guarantee "our survival" is through "a strong orientation of service to country and *volk*." La Grange, therefore, remains committed to a *volksdiens* discourse: a psychology devoted to questions of "ethnic-national relevance" is valorized to the point that research problems of limited consequence have their social significance read into them. After all, it is with some difficulty that the prevention of road accidents or, for that matter, the cultivation of giftedness, can be considered matters of national urgency, the neglect of which will imperil "the foundations of our

continued national existence." La Grange, however, under the spell of an apocalyptic Afrikaner nationalist discourse, seems to view any given question through the prism of "ethnic-national relevance."[2]

Professionalizing Clinical Psychology (Presidential Address 1966)

Delivering his address on *Clinical Psychology*, *Professionalism*, *and Own Identity*, Potchefstroom University's J.M. Hattingh takes issue with the medical community's opposition to the professional recognition of clinical psychology. He argues that given the contributions of South African clinical psychologists in a variety of settings—educational and psychiatric in particular—public esteem for the profession is evident. Registration with the Medical Council as one of several "auxiliary services" confers on the profession no more than "underling" status (1966, p. 5) while the ideal of a clinical psychology with "a fully-fledged professional status with [its] own identity can only be obtained in [its] own association, with [its] own register and ethical code, under control of its own Psychological Council" (1966). For Hattingh, this is to be achieved partly through universities offering suitable training programs for students and partly through clinical psychologists "actively convincing the public and the medical profession of their competence" (p. 7). In turn, the standing of clinical psychology depends on the profession's effectiveness in ministrating to the needs of a help-seeking public. Although Hattingh's address is aligned more closely with the professionalist discourse of Afrikaner psychologists in the 1950s than with PIRSA's *volksdiens* discourse of the 1960s, it remains faithful to the Institute's focus on social application.

The Science Behind Apartheid (Presidential Address 1967)

In 1967, it is the turn of Paul Robbertse who, like la Grange (1962, 1964), takes aim at "[t]he shift in opinions about natural [racial] differences [in the direction of racial] equality" (Robbertse 1967, p. 1). Robbertse contends that "egalitarianism is the scientific joke of the century [but] a dangerous joke [at that] in so far as it implicates other people's survival" (p. 3). Citing a host of American researchers and the work of the International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics, Robbertse decries the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO)

Statement on Race as "notorious" (p. 5). Just as la Grange did in 1962, he falls back on "the ground-breaking work" (p. 7) of John Carothers who likened the intellectual capacity of the African to that of the lobotomized European. Yet, he insists that the PIRSA principle on "the unlikeness of races" should not be confused with a belief in "the superiority or inferiority of races" (p. 3). PIRSA was founded on the conviction that the equality of races was a "false religion" (ibid.) and its members—he calls them "realists"—have a "solemn duty" to "destroy the faulty and dangerous image that the egalitarians have created" (p. 4). The task is all the more urgent since

> *some of the lecturers in psychology at our Afrikaans-language universities have become entangled in the nets of the racial equality philosophy… they have become its victims and… they are busy spiritually poisoning our students with it. Let us wake up before it is too late.* (p. 10)

A Broederbonder himself (Wilkins and Strydom 1978), Robbertse concludes his address by asking PIRSA members to "engage in research in the area on a greater scale because it involves the scientific basis of separate development and it touches on the root of our survival" (Robbertse 1967, p. 11).

Robbertse's rhetoric is saturated with religious imagery. In his rendition, PIRSA's mission takes on Abrahamic proportions and involves nothing less than the destruction of a false idol: egalitarianism. Similar to la Grange, Robbertse's primary concern is to guarantee "our survival" by proving through research of "ethnic-national relevance" that "the scientific basis" of apartheid policy is well established. He, too, advances the discourse of *volksdiens* in which psychologists have a "solemn duty" to protect the *volk* from "spiritual poisoning." But unlike the professionalist discourse of the 1950s that concentrated largely on psychological *practice*, PIRSA's presidents—with the exception of Hattingh—are concerned only with the "ethnic-national relevance" of psychological *research*.

Man and the Machine of Robotism (Presidential Address 1968)

The following year, Robbertse—referencing the worldwide turmoil of 1968—notes "the current unrest in human events on account of strike actions, protests, and revolution, the misinterpretation and unholy violation of the moral codes of society on virtually all … fronts" (1968, p. 1).

He asks to what extent the "natural-scientification" of the discipline "has contributed to [the fact that] at present man's ethico-religious mode of existence is deteriorating at increasing pace" (1968). Following la Grange's (1964) line of argument, Robbertse takes the view that technological progress "has robbed man of his soul" (1968, p. 2): now "a utility-being in the great machine of Robotism," modern man "has become estranged from the cause of his existence, namely, God" (1968).

With the world in irreligious meltdown, the scene is set once more for socially conscious psychologists to intervene timeously. Indeed, "as fellow guardians of national distinctiveness, we cannot but deliver a timely plea through our psychological work by attempting at least to make a contribution as a matter of support for a deranged humankind in a reeling world" (1968). Robbertse points the way by claiming that humans are both spiritual and relational beings: he finds fault not only with the Freudian and behaviorist traditions but also with the dehumanizing manner in which psychologists routinely interact with their respondents. Arguing for an "intersubjective method of approach in psychological practice" (p. 10), he contradicts any would-be objectivists on the grounds that "God the Creator … is the only complete Knower of each person and thereby the entire mankind" (1968). Robbertse adopts an expansive service-oriented discourse of *benevolence* that, while distinct from Christian-National survivalism since it is concerned not with Afrikaners specifically but with a "deranged humankind," retains nonetheless a focus on the precariousness of the human condition.

"Relevance" and the Sexual Lives of Scorpions (Presidential Address 1969)

In 1969, Robbertse returns to type. Foregoing humanitarianism for the familiarities of Afrikaner survivalism, he argues that the spread of communist ideology demands that

> *the psychologist must ask himself what his duty is. Does the psychologist have a duty as regards the spread of ideologies that weaken his own worldview right down to the root so that his own survival is thereby threatened, or must he just follow an ostrich-politics and not notice the problem?* (Robbertse 1969, p. 7)

In fact, the psychologist must do more than merely notice the problem because

> *his spiritual assets will be threatened… he must also actually undertake research in the area* [*of communication studies*]*… The question can also be posed as to whether research in the field of psychology is providing the necessary contribution to the elaboration of our national affairs* [volkshuishouding]*—or is it purely research for the sake of research? … An analysis of the research projects that are currently underway in the field of psychology in South Africa does not leave a person without doubts. Too much thereof bears no relation to our national needs and the findings are often of such a nature that they have no meaning for anyone other than the researcher… Research on a topic such as the sexual life of a scorpion is clearly a waste of manpower, especially when our country's many human problems are taken into consideration.* (pp. 7–8)

According to Robbertse, psychological research that orients itself toward issues of national import can curtail the reach of communist propaganda and contribute to the national life by addressing its manifold human problems. His rhetoric is, once again, symptomatic of the siege mentality that pervades Afrikaner nationalist discourse. Consistent with *volksdiens* discourse, he prescribes studies of "ethnic-national relevance" for duty-bound psychologists in order to avoid the calamitous trajectory of "irrelevant" research, which includes a communist takeover and a barrage of other social problems.

The Death of Ideology

Over the course of the 1970s, calls for research of "ethnic-national relevance" receded into the background. Politics took a backseat as PIRSA presidents resorted to discussions of intradisciplinary matters and—as Robbertse did in 1968—the existential angst of human beings in general. This is surprising in view of the fact that, by the early 1970s, the apartheid state was beginning to show signs of decline. Instead of an even more bellicose discourse of danger, one observes a growing distance from the vicissitudes of politics that manifests rhetorically as a series of *red herrings* (Corbett and Connors 1999), including culturally imperiled Bantus (Robbertse 1971), intellectually inferior women (Krige 1973), pervasive anomie (van der Merwe 1974), and the scientific posturing of an unscientific discipline (du Toit 1975).

Several factors explain the changing discursive order of those years. First, with the declaration of a South African republic in 1961, Afrikaner nationalism forfeited its *sine qua non* as it "could no longer avail itself of its old British bogeyman to mobilise the *volk*" (O'Meara 1996, p. 116).[3] Second, economic developments weakened the apartheid project further

as *verligtes* (reformists) and *verkramptes* (conservatives) battled each other for control of the ruling National Party (NP). When, in 1964, a mining deal was struck between Federale Mynbou and Harry Oppenheimer's Anglo American Corporation, Afrikanerdom was outraged at this violation of "the myth of a classless *volk*" (O'Meara 1996, p. 136); after its travails against the depredations of British imperialism, it appeared now to be cutting deals with capitalists. The uncomfortable truth, however, was that the NP's economic policy of favoring Afrikaner workers had increased their social stratification to the extent that, by the mid-1960s, it was no longer possible to identify the *volk*'s common interest. And third, on the cultural scene, the rise of the *Sestigers*—a literary movement that tackled questions of sexual liberation, racial tolerance, and modernity—scandalized the sedate Afrikaner establishment but ignited the imaginations of Afrikaans readers (Giliomee 2003). Conservatives interpreted the trend as evidence of a creeping communist influence and the remainder of the decade saw much maneuvering within Afrikaner cultural institutions and a concomitant struggle to define authentic Afrikanerdom (O'Meara 1996).

Meanwhile, inter-Afrikaner tensions were complicated further by the eruption of a press war that stoked longstanding north-south rivalries. When, in late 1965, the Cape-based *Nasionale Pers* decided to publish a Sunday paper—*Die Beeld*—in the Transvaal, it loosed upon itself the fury of northerners, lighting the fuse for an all-out war between *verligtes* and *verkramptes*. Driven by commercial interests, the press saga drove another stake into the heart of Afrikaner unity. With Hendrik Verwoerd's killing in 1966 and John Vorster's succession to the prime ministership, the flames of discontent spread rapidly (Fig. 7.1). Vorster had no NP track record to speak of, nor did he enjoy a provincial constituency within the party. With a consequently hands-off leadership style, he not only came close to presiding over what would have been a catastrophic splitting of the *volk* but also proved unable to provide any ideological direction for the party (O'Meara 1996). It was only when he returned to his strongman past—as one-time Justice Minister, Vorster is credited with having put down the black resistance of the early 1960s—that a semblance of order was restored. In 1969, after establishing the brutal Bureau for State Security and using it as his de facto political base, Vorster—a *verligte* by default—crushed what had been building into a formidable *verkrampte* insurrection. While he may have lacked the ideological nous of his predecessor, he was not short on pragmatism, for, despite flirting with defeat at the hands of those more inclined to a *laager* psychology, state had trumped party.

Fig. 7.1 Hendrik Verwoerd (R) at a Stellenbosch University function, May 1962. Used with permission of Stellenbosch University.

With the emergence of newly rich Afrikaners during the boom years of the 1960s, Vorster was indifferent to *verkrampte* disgust at "the crass materialist excess of the new Afrikaner bourgeoisie [and] its easy renunciation of the populist civic culture of Afrikaner nationalism for capitalist wheeling and dealing" (O'Meara 1996, p. 165).

But beyond Afrikaner society, South Africa's capital-intensive mode of production was causing growing unemployment among black African workers, while job reservation for whites and movement restrictions on blacks translated into a shortage of workers with the requisite technical skills (O'Meara 1996). Inflation started rising in the early 1970s, black African workers began striking and, by 1976, the country had plunged into a recession. The buffer states, too, were experiencing revolutionary change. Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) guerrillas succeeded in infiltrating Rhodesia in 1972, Mozambique attained independence in 1975 via the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, the South African army suffered a humiliating defeat in early 1976 at the hands of Angolan and Cuban forces, and, after the death by shooting of scores of Soweto youths later that year, the NP could no longer swear by the morality of the Afrikaner mission (O'Meara 1996). If the 1960s were about the splintering of the party, the 1970s oversaw the decline of state ideology that would filter into PIRSA's discursive order.

Assisting the Bantu in His Hour of Crisis (Presidential Address 1970)

In his final presidential address, Paul Robbertse reiterates his plea from the previous year that "psychological research in the Republic of South Africa must relate to our national needs" (1971, p. 2). He has in mind "an actual human problem that affects closely everyone in South Africa, regardless of color or political conviction … [namely] the reaction of the Bantu to the twentieth century Western world" (1971). Consequently, he regrets the fact that "publications about any aspect of the psychology of the Bantu are far scarcer than what they should be" and are restricted for the most part—as in the work of Biesheuvel—to the study of urban Bantus working in "White" areas (p. 4).

In terms of "research on psychological factors that play a role in *the development of the Bantu homelands* … what *is* the duty of psychology?" Robbertse asks (ibid., original emphases). He wonders whether "science can put itself in the service of the state" (ibid.), reasoning that "applied science, you will surely concede, primarily seeks after *methods for the attainment of policy goals*" (ibid., original emphasis). Besides, if Chris Barnard can find the justification to lengthen a person's life by giving him another heart,[4] "isn't there just as much, if not more, justification to find a scientific basis for the motivation of people to develop their underdeveloped homeland" (p. 5)? Certain characteristics—determinable through appropriate psychological research—"must be cultivated [in the Bantu] if he wants to function effectively in a predominantly Western capitalistic world" (p. 6). While accepting that a scientist may choose not to contribute to the realization of a certain policy goal, Robbertse maintains that, "if a policy goal for humanitarian reasons … appears desirable or even crucially necessary, who can condemn [the researcher] if he orients his research towards the realization of that goal" (p. 5)? He concludes with yet another question: "Are we, more particularly, directed adequately to the study of the Bantu in his hour of crisis, which is perhaps also our own hour of crisis" (p. 7)?

Robbertse's address heralds a softening of hard-boiled PIRSA dogma. Whereas in previous addresses capitalism was an object of sustained derision, it is presented here as an economic system that Bantus need to embrace. To be sure, Robbertse continues to patronize "the Bantu" in a manner consistent with the notion of white stewardship, but his overriding concern—bar the closing question—is not with the future of the *volk*. Drawing heavily on *erotema*—the rhetorical question (Corbett and

Connors 1999)—Robbertse is challenging his audience to break with the Christian-National survivalism of bygone years. As in his 1968 address, he employs a humanitarian discourse of *benevolence* that, "regardless of color or political conviction," is less concerned with the plight of Afrikaners than with the well-being of "Bantus." Even in the published conference proceedings, one observes the oddity of a PIRSA presidential address being followed for the first time by a brief English-language synopsis. At the level of the text, the once doctrinaire Afrikaners are more accommodating of a world dominated increasingly by Anglophones and Western capitalists.

Revolution in the USA (Opening Address 1970)

Described by South Africa's first black psychologist, Chabani Manganyi, as "a very thoughtful person" (Segalo 2006, p. 27), A.S. Roux was a member of PIRSA's first executive committee and, by 1970, had chaired the psychology department at the University of South Africa for nearly a quarter of a century. His address—*Revolution*: *A Few Social-Psychological Characteristics*—is divided into two sections: first, a general commentary on the genesis of revolutions, and second, an assessment of revolutionist potential in the USA.

Roux's position on revolution is not immediately clear. His low-key introduction does not reveal much, containing only the matter-of-fact remark, "We live in a time of revolution" (p. 10). The first indication of his politics comes later in the form of a description of Patrice Lumumba as "half-literate" (p. 12). Approximating the reformed Robbertse (1971), Roux does not regard American capitalism as the enemy; he expresses solidarity with Richard Nixon, claiming that it is the "subverters of authority" (Roux 1971, p. 13)—leftist intellectuals and student radicals—that present the greatest danger to future civilization whose "potential leaders in their youth are wasting their valuable opportunities for preparation … for the increasingly stern demands of the technocentric civilization for which we are heading" (pp. 13, 17). Then, reflecting on one Franklin H. Williams' assertion that "the traditional, hide-bound white-power [university] establishment … has abandoned its democratic ideals, and become bogged down in technocratic irrelevancies" (1969, quoted ibid., p. 14), Roux observes first of all that Williams is "a Negro" (p. 14) before writing him off as one among several instances of "authority figures and intellectuals that attempt to whitewash lawlessness, violence, and anarchy" (p. 15).

Since campus radicalism was a response to the "social irrelevance" of universities, Roux's repudiation of Williams is ironic given the service orientation of Afrikaans-medium universities themselves. Like Robbertse (1971), he appears to accept the "Robotism" against which the same president had railed just 2 years earlier. He also offers no commentary on revolutionist potential in *South Africa*. Again similar to Robbertse (1971), Roux distances himself from the Christian-National discourse of dangerousness and from PIRSA's consequent imperative to serve an endangered *volk*. After all, if the period between the mid-1960s and early 1970s symbolized the heyday of apartheid rule, then the sense of threat may well and truly have subsided. With the Afrikaner predicament no longer what it used to be, PIRSA bigwigs started to go along with the prospect of a technocratic capitalism, drifting from the "ethnic-national relevance" of yore and occasioning a corresponding change in the order of discourse.

Cultivating Giftedness, Preventing Rebellion (Presidential Address 1972)

Talking about *Personality, Giftedness, and Creative Thoughts* against the backdrop of "all the dangers of changing world conditions," H.L. Krige (1973, p. 1) recalls la Grange (1964) and Robbertse (1968) in their pomp, as well as Roux's address on revolution. He blames the "rapid technological development of Western civilization" for creating "a worrying gap between old and young" (Krige 1973, p. 1), with the result that "the gifted youth in particular … revolts against existing systems" (p. 2). Speaking to "one of the greatest contradictions of the modern youth rebellion" (p. 4)—gender equality—Krige points out that "the woman … has a smaller brain than the man" (ibid.) and that "because the emotionally labile person displays a tendency to perform worse under pressure … we cannot expect therefore that the achievement of the woman will match that of the man in all respects" (p. 5). According to his research, men are more capable of creative thoughts than women—"it is therefore surely not pure coincidence that the four most creative personalities that I was able to identify during 10 years of research in this area were all boys" (p. 7). Krige's broader point, however, is that unless provision is made for gifted children in the schooling system—many of whom are already underachieving—they will not achieve in later life in accordance with their abilities and may end up dedicating their creative talents to the cause of political rebellion.

Although Krige introduces his topic with political-sounding turns of phrase—"the challenge of the near future," "the leaders of the future," and "maintenance of current progress" (p. 1)—the remainder of his address is devoted to the humdrum reportage of correlations and means. The discontinuity between his opening paragraphs and what follows is a function of being a new president with no reputation to precede him. Krige must earn, as it were, the right to speak. He accomplishes simultaneously an ethical (*ethos*) and emotional (*pathos*) appeal, revealing his moral character to the audience by speaking a language with which it is well acquainted: the significance of giftedness and creativity in a dangerous world. By declaring his allegiance to standard PIRSA doctrine, Krige shows his "respect for the commonly acknowledged virtues" (Corbett and Connors 1999, p. 73)—that is, the importance of "ethnic-national relevance" in psychological research—while the audience, now convinced of his good intentions, is better disposed to receiving his message.

Religion as the Answer to Anomie (Presidential Address 1973)

The first southerner to lead PIRSA, A.B. van der Merwe structures his address around *The Medical Model in Clinical Psychology*. Contradicting the biologism of his 1955 SAPA address, van der Merwe advises the natural scientist against reducing all conscious experience to biochemical reactions, which will result in "the person being treated more and more like a robot" (1974, p. 9). On the other hand, he questions the competence of psychologists in treating a new form of personality disturbances that emerged in the 1960s: "[a]nomie, alienation, rootlessness, existential vacuum, nonbeing, meaninglessness, absurdity, despair philosophy, credibility gap, generation gap, campus radical, backlash, etc." (Mitchell 1971, p. 120 quoted ibid., p. 11). According to van der Merwe, neither Freudian pessimism nor Rogerian humanism can provide adequate frameworks within which to conceptualize these phenomena, while cognizance must be taken of the importance of the religious sensibility to personality structure:

> *The religious self enables the human being [to participate] in a completely different relationship to the purely interpersonal, namely, the relationship with his personal Creator. If this highest need of the personality is not satisfied, or if the personal relationship is severed, then we can expect nothing other than alienation, meaninglessness, and aimlessness.* (p. 15)

Similar to Robbertse (1971) and Roux (1971), van der Merwe is far removed from PIRSA's habitual survivalism. It is not that some intractable discrepancy exists between the political articulations of southern and northern Afrikaners (O'Meara 1996)—besides, Robbertse (1971) and Roux (1971) are hardened northerners themselves who appear to have relinquished many of the ideological assurances of old, while van der Merwe's views resonate appreciably with those of la Grange (1964) and Robbertse (1968) in recalling the dehumanizing consequences of modern living. All things considered, van der Merwe's address fits the mold of the 1970s during which PIRSA's discursive formations become increasingly unstable.

The Triviality of Psychology (Presidential Address 1975)

J.M. du Toit begins his address with an introduction narrative in which he describes how Sigmund Koch, the editor of a seven-volume tome on the discipline in the 1950s, was "now looking back with a measure of disillusionment and despair at the undertaking of those days" (du Toit 1975, p. 1). Taking his own advice "to stare your sacred cows … in the eye" (p. 2), du Toit launches into an excoriating takedown of the discipline, lambasting what he sees as the intersection of cult formation in psychology (p. 3) with the scientific posturing of psychoanalysis (pp. 4–5), psychodiagnostics (pp. 6–10), psychophysiological measurement (pp. 10–13), encounter groups (pp. 13–15), behavior therapy (pp. 15–17), and research practices (pp. 17–21). In contrast to Roux's (1971) unruly students, du Toit expresses sympathy for his charges who—he quotes Koch—

> *are asked to read and memorize a literature consisting of an endless set of advertisements for the emptiest of concepts, the most inflated theories, the most trivial "findings," and the most fetishistic yet heuristically self-defeating methods in scholarly history—and all of it conveyed in the dreariest and most turgid prose that ever met the printed page.* (du Toit 1975, p. 25)

Just as he prefaces his wide-ranging criticism of the discipline with the disclaimer that his intention "is not to discredit psychology" (du Toit 1975, p. 2), du Toit apologizes for his forthright remarks about the profession with a negative politeness strategy that makes liberal use of nominalizations and the passive voice: "[w]hat is mentioned here is not meant as accusations [but is presented] only as considerations … for deliberation"

(p. 21). But despite himself, du Toit ends up questioning the Afrikaner ideal of public service through psychology, claiming that registration does not protect the public but, rather, practitioners themselves, adding that psychotherapy on average achieves nothing. Indeed, his second guessing of the benefits of registration contradicts not only the views of la Grange (1962) and Hattingh (1966) but also seems ill-advised when one considers that the first Professional Board for Psychology had been established only a year earlier—and after much struggle at that.

More than Robbertse (1971), Roux (1971), or van der Merwe (1974), du Toit turns 1960s' PIRSA dogma on its head. He forgoes the strains of Afrikaner piety for a discourse of *disciplinarity* while rejecting the charge of scientism (1975, pp. 2, 4). Akin to Robbertse (1969), he concedes that "despite advanced methodological development a very large part of the overwhelming amount of research remains insignificant, trivial, practically inconsequential or unreliable" (du Toit 1975, p. 18). Du Toit's relentless interrogation of science and profession constitutes a sweeping re-evaluation of the discipline's "ethnic-national relevance" credentials. A programmatic U-turn that began with Robbertse (1971) has culminated in an iconoclastic free fall: du Toit's diatribe hints at an association in despair over the merits of its case.

Serving Society (Presidential Address 1977)

If du Toit's address marks a low point in PIRSA's regular order of business, H.P. Langenhoven attempts to restore equilibrium. Like du Toit, Langenhoven begins with an introduction narrative, his opening comments an implicit reference to the deadly riots of 1976 and the ongoing border wars:

> *In 1917, when the U.S.A. entered the First World War, the American Psychological Association appointed a committee to determine what psychology could do to win the war… Today South Africa is also involved in a war, not just a military war but a war on different fronts that is being waged against it—especially psychologically. Today every citizen, every organization, even science, even psychology, should ask itself what it can do to confront our current problems. In my opinion we in psychology have a very meaningful contribution to make… Our country is involved in the first instance in a psychological war that must be fought with the best psychological means. I wonder if the time has not come for our universities to make far better provision for the teaching of military psychology.* (1977, pp. 1, 4)

Elsewhere, on an economic front marked by "capital shortages, a decrease in economic activity, unemployment, and inflation" (p. 4), Langenhoven recommends that psychologists assist in the identification of leadership potential and the maximization of workforce productivity. As for "race" relations, "the psychologist can make an important contribution by putting the problem in proper perspective, collecting and analyzing appropriate data, coming to conclusions, communicating these in an understandable and acceptable manner, and helping with the implementation of the findings" (p. 8). Similarly, valuable contributions can be—and are being—made in education and mental health.

Consonant with early PIRSA addresses, Langenhoven recapitulates the precariousness of the South African situation and the consequent duty of psychologists to intervene: "we are not only responsible for the development of psychology as science but also of psychology as a profession that must deliver a service to society" (p. 13). He asks if "the courses that we teach and the training that we provide to students [are sensitive to] the needs of the future in a changing society" (p. 11), adding that the lack of incentives for researchers means that research for curiosity's sake is becoming scarcer too. However, although he counters du Toit's nihilism, Langenhoven commends social engagement to his listeners from a position of seeming remoteness. For example, he never pauses to disclose the identity of the enemy in this "war of low intensity" (p. 3). As for the 2-year compulsory military service, he speaks impersonally of "the absolute importance of special steps being taken [to ensure] that *these people's* time is put to best use" (ibid., added emphasis). The proposed solution for "race" relations—quoted earlier—is similarly abstract: all that is required is for one to follow the standard research recipe, namely, problem formulation, data collection, data analysis, conclusion, communication of findings, and implementation—in that order. In other places, "the group that stands apart" (p. 15) remains unnamed, while non-specific talk of "proactive forces," "reactive forces," "pressure from outside" (p. 6), and "people" (e.g. pp. 7–8) proliferates.

In light of Langenhoven's frequent use of the high modality auxiliary verb, *must*, it is not clear where the necessary human agents will be coming from when his subjects' identities remain consistently indeterminate. It is poignant, moreover, that la Grange (1964) warned of the existential threat facing the Afrikaner nation, Robbertse (1968) grieved the loss of man's soul, and van der Merwe (1974) inveighed against alienation, for, by the time one gets to Langenhoven, there appear to be no sentient

beings left at all. It is as if du Toit's annihilation of the discipline ends up depriving Langenhoven of the very protagonists his plan of action requires. Although Langenhoven goes through the motions of advancing a *volksdiens* discourse—the country is "at war" while the discipline struggles with "exceptionally difficult duties" to "deliver a service to society"—the *volk* itself seems to have disappeared.

Beyond Apartheid

When interpreting PIRSA presidential addresses, the sociopolitical currents of the 1960s and 1970s assume heightened significance. The speeches point clearly to the progressive unraveling of the Institute's ideological coherence, which can be explained in terms of several developments. First, with the fulfillment of the republic dream, nationalist discourse no longer exerted a vice-like grip on the collective imagination of Afrikaners. Second, economic progress led to the disintegration of the "classless" *volk*. Third, cultural trends undermined the received wisdoms of Afrikanerdom. Fourth, a rancorous press war fomented regional divisions. And fifth, contrasting prime ministerial leadership styles ensured that the ideological certainties of bygone years were lost forever.

PIRSA's inability to get back on the ideological bandwagon did not proceed from the non-partisan professionalization of the discipline that took place during the 1970s. Rather, its ideological dithering was the inevitable consequence of the bandwagon itself—Grand Apartheid—losing its wheels entirely. In the 1960s, PIRSA, in pursuit of a psychology of "ethnic-national relevance," could appeal to an age-old discourse of dangerousness. But at the start of the 1970s, with the fragility of the apartheid project starting to show, it was a more generic "social relevance" that was sought, rationalized by identifying conditions obtaining in the wider world such as Western capitalism (Robbertse 1971), the contradictions of a technocratic social order (Krige 1973), and the preponderance of anomie (van der Merwe 1974). Later still, the pursuit of "social relevance" mutated into an impugnment of the Afrikaner service ideal (du Toit 1975) and a formulation of "socially relevant" psychology best described as rarefied (Langenhoven 1977). With its politics on the brink, one discerns in PIRSA's final years the collapse of its ethnic-national register.

The case of PIRSA may seem exceptional in the history of "relevance" debates in psychology. Over the course of the 1960s, Afrikaner psychologists were in agreement about the discipline's cognitive interest, namely,

the generation of psychological knowledge in defense of Afrikanerdom—while there was no evident friction between basic and applied scientists—and yet the talk was still about "ethnic-national relevance." Behind the scenes, however, the SAPA-PIRSA split had given rise to a malignant rivalry. PIRSA's preoccupation with research of "ethnic-national relevance" challenged the tradition among Anglophone psychologists that emphasized basic psychology and international—rather than local—"relevance."[5] In addition, an unremitting history of Afrikaner persecution—and subsequent pragmatism—had made "relevance" the default position in Afrikaner psychology, a sensibility that was roused in the 1960s by the triple threat of communism, capitalism, and egalitarianism. But with a succession of *internal* crises assailing the *volk* from the latter half of the 1960s onward, PIRSA dogma lost its coherence and talk of "ethnic-national relevance" disappeared altogether.

Notes

1. In this chapter, all excerpts have been translated from the original Afrikaans.
2. Talk of "social relevance"—of which "ethnic-national relevance" can be considered a subtype—is associated typically with fears of "imminent social catastrophe" (Sher and Long 2012, p. 569).
3. Verwoerd himself would abandon the goal of fully Afrikanerizing the country. Pursuing a conciliatory line with English-speaking whites and pressing ahead with his "Homelands" policy, he was always headed for trouble with the far right. But because of the prime minister's commanding personality, dissent did not break out until after his assassination in September 1966.
4. Robbertse is referring to the first successful human heart transplant performed in 1967 by South African cardiac surgeon Chris Barnard.
5. Reflecting on the consequences of the SAPA-PIRSA split, SAPA's first secretary, Daan Swiegers, suggests that it ended up dividing the academy: "The English universities have a different … thought pattern…. If you speak to the guys at Wits or UCT [University of Cape Town] or Natal, they communicate in the first instance scientifically with the outside world. They do research that is internationally relevant—their audience is in the world out there. The Afrikaans universities … [their] activities are more South African-oriented—what is done here will not for example get an ear in the outside world." (Daan Swiegers and Wynand Herholdt joint interview, May 1982, p. 12. Translated from the original Afrikaans.)

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CHAPTER 8

The Quest for "Social Relevance" (1978–1993)

> *Knowledge for the sake of understanding, not merely to prevail, that is the essence of our being… For if we fail to struggle and fail to think beyond our petty lot, we accept a sordid role.*
>
> *(Simon Biesheuvel quoting Vannevar Bush—PASA address 1986)*

> *[T]raditional professional organisations… have in the perception of both the people of this country and beyond, been seen to be too closely allied to the ideology and practices of the apartheid state and are therefore irrelevant to people's needs.*
>
> *(Jerry Coovadia—OASSSA address 1987)*

The Politics of No Politics

When he came to power in 1978, Prime Minister P.W. Botha knew that the dream of Verwoerdian apartheid was no longer feasible. The black population explosion, the refusal of three homelands to accept independence, the rise of Marxist rule in Mozambique, the growing despondency among Afrikaner intellectuals, and the emergence of an Afrikaner bourgeoisie—all militated against a literal reading of the apartheid vision (Louw 2004). "We are moving into a changing world, we must adapt otherwise we shall die," Botha is alleged to have said, though he would deny having uttered these exact words (Lipton 1986, p. 51 quoted in Giliomee 2003, p. 586). Promising a slew of apartheid reforms, the pragmatic Botha met with shrill resistance from *verkramptes* for whom the means never justified the ends (O'Meara 1996). But given his four-decade-long apprenticeship honing a

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prodigious managerial acumen, he was unwilling to continue with policies that had ceased to work.

Already as Minister of Defense, Botha had devised the beginnings of a plan for reforming apartheid in order to reverse the National Party's (NP) mounting isolation. Soon enough, upon ascending to the highest office in the land, he was able to give effect to his ideas. Alienating NP politicians by recruiting to his inner circle a team of technocrats—senior military officers, high-ranking civil servants, academics, and captains of industry—Botha and his reformers drew on a blend of Arend Lijphart's *consociational democracy*, Samuel Huntington's *enlightened despotism*, and Andre Beaufre's *total strategy*. What followed was "government by technocratic professionals" (Louw 2004, p. 94). While the details of this highly coordinated response to a surmised Muscovite "total onslaught" are not of concern here, the discursive logic of the South African state during this period is.

Between 1978 and 1983, a "new language of legitimation" started to emerge in official state discourse (Posel 1987, p. 419). The ideological fidelity of the years of Verwoerdian orthodoxy gave way to a supposedly apolitical discourse of "effectiveness" that was built on notions of "technocratic rationality, 'total strategy' and 'free enterprise'" (Posel 1987, p. 420). Pragmatic government was required that would respond to "reality": reform had nothing to do with ideology and everything to do with the "objective" resolution of technical problems by qualified "experts." As for the "fact" of "total onslaught," a "total strategy" was needed to repel the threat of communism, which was to be accomplished through a combination of objective military expertise and free-market economics (the latter's benefits would make communism less attractive to the black population). The business sector became wedded to the state, which, depending on the "factual" contingencies of the moment, ended up regulating the market as it saw fit. Capitalism was justified no longer by appeals to liberal ethics—it was warranted on practical grounds alone. Meanwhile, the net effect of depoliticizing any given state intervention was to render it incontestable: "[t]he discourse of Total Strategy … encouraged the spread of a new technocratic managerialism throughout the wider white South African society. Government, business, educational institutions, the media—seemingly the entire establishment—became infected by this craze for technocratic rationality" (O'Meara 1996, p. 269). Correspondingly, one observes a declining political consciousness in the South African Psychological Association (SAPA), Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA), and Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA) addresses from the late 1970s onward.

Protecting the Public (PIRSA Presidential Address 1978)

In *The Registration of Psychologists*,[1] H.P. Langenhoven describes at length the events that led to the establishment of the first Professional Board. He states that the board was established "with a view to protecting the general public from psychological malpractices" (p. 3); the anticipated result is that the public will be "more inclined to utilize the services of psychologists" (pp. 5–6). In turn, "the reputation of the profession and the status of practitioners can be improved" (p. 6). Langenhoven expresses his concern, however, at the possibility that certain provisions in the Medical, Dental, and Supplementary Health Service Professions Act may end up placing much-needed psychological services beyond the reach of the community. By reserving certain practices for registered psychologists, the Act can "do serious harm to psychology and deprive society of valuable services" (p. 8). Statutory recognition, therefore, is not a goal in itself: "[it] is a necessary means to help ensure that the goal of good psychological services to the community and satisfaction with the people that deliver it is attained" (p. 14).

On the other hand, although the Board continues to function under the aegis of the South African Medical and Dental Council, Langenhoven believes that the goal of psychologists should not be the attainment of full independence: "[w]e should rather with all our strength develop our profession to deliver the kinds of services to society by which we shall earn their respect" (p. 14). What this requires is not "a long list of regulations which even prescribes the size of nameplates" (p. 15)—"[i]n this way we do not win the respect of the public" (ibid.)—but ongoing SAPA–PIRSA cooperation in order "to keep [the Board] on the right track" (ibid.). Langenhoven concludes with the assurance that "I have no fear that on the road ahead there will not be work for psychologists" (p. 16).

As he did the year before, Langenhoven continues to speak the language of public service—the difference on this occasion is that he makes no reference to the domestic political landscape. Instead—like the Afrikaner psychologists of the 1950s—he inserts the service motif into a *professionalist* discourse, precipitating something of a contradiction: protection of the term "psychologist" means not only that "better services can be rendered to society" (p. 6) but also that "[r]egistration is compulsory for everybody *who wishes to practice as a psychologist for a profit*" (p. 5, added emphasis). The choice of words is revealing: Langenhoven implies that not everyone

practices for a profit and—true to the Afrikaner service ideal—distances himself from the profit motive. That he stops to draw this distinction arises from the fact that the composition of his audience has changed. Langenhoven is no longer preaching to the converted: he is addressing the first-ever joint SAPA–PIRSA congress and must innovate, therefore, a non-partisan, inclusive discourse.[2] It is unavoidable that incongruities such as the service-profit antinomy will arise, the direct result of his discursive hybridization (Parker 1992).

Apolitical "Relevance" (SAPA Presidential Address 1979)

Appointed in 1975 as the first female head of the University of South Africa's (UNISA) Department of Psychology, Lily Gerdes observes that her presidential term coincides with the discipline's international centenary. She notes that "psychology and psychologists stand on the brink of a new era" and encourages—among other objectives—interdisciplinary collaboration, the relating of "teaching, research, professional training and community needs to one another by being sensitive to real-life situations and crises" (ibid.), and a consideration of "what psychology can do to enhance the future of this country and its peoples" (ibid.).

For Gerdes, "[p]sychology is the study of human development and behaviour in a variety of contexts and in interaction with many systems of which the individual is a part" (p. 3). She adds that there is a need to utilize the services of lower-level graduates with undergraduate and honors degrees because of the high demand for services, the wastage involved in using "highly trained persons for certain activities" (p. 8), and the fact that "[t]he greatest shortage of registered psychologists exists in the Black, Indian and so-called Coloured population groups" (p. 9). The contributions of laypersons are also not to be underestimated, particularly since "the indications are that psychologists will increasingly move into the community" (p. 11). A professional focus on prevention and "optimum development" is essential (p. 13) as is a re-evaluation of disciplinary values—for example, the sexism of psychoanalysis.

Gerdes is speaking the language of "relevance": from her use of systems theory, her positive valuation of the role of lay persons in the profession, and her concern at the shortage of psychologists in other "population groups," her objective is evidently to promote the "social relevance" of the discipline. Nonetheless, while she regards the "social and ideological

system" (p. 3) as an integral part of the human context, she never explores this system that has brought untold misery into the lives of the majority of South Africans. She focuses, rather, on the "cardiac patient" (p. 4), a "woman in a maternity home" (ibid.), and helping "the aged in their own homes" (p. 11). For Gerdes, "social relevance" amounts to a capacity for "involvement with 'normal' crisis situations of non-psychiatric and non-clinical groups" (ibid.), and implies further differentiation of the professional register. The idea of drawing on lay expertise, meanwhile, occurred to her not on the basis of local insights but during "my recent study-tour overseas to the USA, Netherlands, England, Germany and Austria. In a hotel in the USA I was, for example, amazed by an array of brochures on where to seek help for [a variety of] problems" (p. 10). She also desists from explaining why the "shortage of registered psychologists [that] exists in the Black, Indian and so-called Coloured population groups" (p. 9) is problematic in the first place. It may be that there is nothing to explain: her allusion to various racial groupings is symptomatic of the country's hegemonic discourse of difference and its taken-for-granted implication that effective psychological interventions can only occur between patients and professionals of the same "population group." In sum, Gerdes' rendering of "social relevance" is politically conservative, articulating itself in the form of a *professionalist* discourse.

Disciplinary Concerns (PIRSA Presidential Address 1980)

Naas Raubenheimer begins his address with the observation that "South Africans are moving into an era which is characterized by marked changes in almost all spheres of life—political, societal, religious, social and psychological" (1981, p. 1). He adds that since "South Africans today ask penetrating questions about the future … it is imperative that psychologists or behavioural scientists should be certain about the role they can play in contributing to, or in adapting to the processes of change" (ibid.). He reflects positively on the growing profile of academic, professional, and research psychology in the country and notes that "psychologists in South Africa have succeeded in attracting the attention of the public at large. The demand for their services is certain, they are increasingly acquiring esteem and respect, and have secured a particular status in society" (p. 3).

Nevertheless, Raubenheimer is critical of the state of the discipline. Broadly, "all work done by South African psychologists" (ibid.) is either unempirical or shows "little or no concern for generalized validity and applicability to real life situations" (ibid.). The local corpus of psychological knowledge amounts to little more than "an overwhelming collection of facts" (ibid.), while psychological practice inhabits "a climate of pragmatism and superficiality" (ibid.). In order to integrate this "uncoordinated collection of facts" (p. 4), Raubenheimer talks up the potential of a general systems approach that, because "it comprises a breadth of vision … [it] makes provision for the integration of knowledge in a wide array of fields" (p. 4). He concludes that "[i]t seems as if the end of an era in many spheres of life has been announced…. All factors considered, it would appear that two interesting decades await us, a period during which unprecedented progress and breakthroughs could be made" (p. 5).

Like Gerdes, Raubenheimer reminds the audience of the momentous changes sweeping through the country yet provides no details about what or whom these changes involve. Because of his acknowledgment of "the contemporary South African scene" (p. 1), he ends up invoking the importance of systems theory—again similar to Gerdes—but without a grounded demonstration of its suitability for the South African situation. Instead, when referencing the national context—that is, the impending collapse of apartheid ideology—he opts for the orthodoxies of scientific language, describing a tumultuous process of social change that is seemingly agentless. While he asserts that "the end of the twentieth century is no longer on the distant horizon" (p. 5) and that, therefore, a more "socially relevant" psychology is urgently required, he ends up keeping the exact details of "the end of the twentieth century" at arm's length. Raubenheimer, in fact, spends the greater portion of his address reflecting on "a psychology whose metaphysical framework … is outdated [and whose] conception of its subject matter, man, is no longer appropriate if indeed it ever was" (p. 3). Taken up with fundamental questions, he ends up endorsing a discourse of *disciplinarity*.

Talking About "Relevance" (SAPA Keynote Address 1980)

Deo Strümpfer claims that "the incidence of social pathology among our black population" (1981, p. 18) and the rates of divorce and coronary heart disease on the white side means that "there is undoubtedly enough to be done by psychologists" (ibid.). He finds himself wondering, however,

"[w]hat can be done to wake us up" (ibid.) because "from where the budget is to be balanced many of our activities look like games academics play" (p. 19). And yet, he says, "I am fully aware of all the problems inherent in defining what is 'relevant.' I know that today's basic research may tomorrow produce an explosion of technological applications" (ibid.). This does not prevent Strümpfer, however, from criticizing psychologists who "tend to be method-orientated rather than problem-orientated" (ibid.), as a result of which "we dawdle … [and] get tied up in irrelevancies" (ibid.). He questions the experimental method and "the extent to which empirical generalizations are feasible in a world in which most effects are interactive" (ibid.), as well as the ethics of deception, citing a host of papers from the American "relevance" corpus (e.g. Cronbach 1975; Gergen 1973; Ghiselli 1974).

Strümpfer calls for a closer relationship between psychology and the real world, one in which "psychologists maintain constant dialogue with decision makers" (1981, p. 25). What this requires is "willingness and courage to get our hands dirty. [It is] when we really accept responsibility [that] we become … both learned scientists and useful servants of humanity" (1981). Strümpfer recommends accordingly a need for "better understanding, as well as new or improved technology" (1981) on such social issues as school boycotts, labor disputes, black unemployment, disintegration of the black family, and the future likelihood of urban terrorism. Although he denies "suggesting that psychologists should enter the political arena as ordinary citizens—that is a matter of choice and conscience" (p. 26)—he expresses the view that industrial psychologists in particular should be trained "to become active agents of this kind of change … [and] that such changes should be motivated by convictions of social responsibility, so as to contribute indirectly to the struggle against social pathology" (ibid.).

Strümpfer's address achieves several firsts vis-à-vis the quest for "social relevance." Unlike any of his predecessors, he is the first to speak of "relevance" reflexively, as in his remark, "I am fully aware of all the problems inherent in defining what is 'relevant'" (p. 19). It is his familiarity with American "relevance" literature that enables him to make this and other critical comments about "social relevance." Moreover, his interrogation of the concept will shift mere *talk* about "social relevance" to an actual *debate* about it. Second, Strümpfer is also first in relating "social relevance" to the concrete social problems endemic to the country, emphasizing by means of an *alliterative scheme of repetition*, for instance, how "people live and

work in dread, dearth and desperation" (p. 18). Whereas Langenhoven (1978), Gerdes (1979), and Raubenheimer (1981) flatter only to deceive, Strümpfer pulls few punches about the starkness of lived realities. And third, he is unique among his contemporaries for expanding the terms of reference. "Relevance" does not connote an exclusive relationship between psychology and society, but encompasses an industrial-commercial aspect as well: Strümpfer's use of such terms as "budget" (p. 19), "go-getter" (ibid.), "decision makers" (p. 25), and "technology" (ibid.) is as much a nod to his own background in industrial psychology as it will prove to have been a harbinger of the discipline's eventual adoption of a technocratic rationality.

Then again, in view of his honorific as a "dissident" Afrikaner psychologist (Nell 1993), Strümpfer's non-treatment of apartheid policy and practice per se is worthy of note. No different from his peers, he never mentions the "A"-word. Other than presenting a litany of social problems, there is little to no consideration of their *political* correlates—only agentless nominalizations such as "poverty" and "unemployment" that are true of most countries in the world. Consequently, as much as he declares himself a supporter of "social relevance," Strümpfer's reading of it is not an explicitly politicized version, which, in 1980, is yet to come.

Technicizing Social Processes (PASA Presidential Address 1982)

As the first president of the newly minted, racially integrated PASA, Gert Rademeyer celebrates the fact that "[f]or the first time in more than 20 years psychologists are uniting enthusiastically and pooling their resources in an effort to play a more constructive role in South African society" (1982, p. 1).[3] In his view, the SAPA–PIRSA split occurred because "this first Society fell prey to centrifugal forces … [but f]ortunately enough, centripetal forces also emerged" (1982). He then recaps the congress theme of "Interpersonal Relationships" that refers, firstly, to "the socio-political problems which we are experiencing in our society at this point in time" (p. 2), and secondly, to "the epistemological shift which we are currently experiencing in our discipline … and I am obviously referring to the advent and development of *general systems theory*" (ibid., original emphasis).

Rademeyer spends the majority of his fifteen-page speech detailing the clinical insights of such family therapy luminaries as Jay Haley, Mara Palazolli, and Salvador Minuchin. Apart from one comment in passing about political activism during his discussion of morphogenesis (p. 8), his overriding concern is with the quality of relationships between (1) organized psychology and the Professional Board; (2) the various professional psychological associations (e.g. clinical, counseling, and educational psychology); and (3) psychologists and the public. Using various principles from family therapy, he demonstrates how these relationships can become healthier.

Despite referencing "the socio-political problems which we are experiencing in our society" (p. 2), Rademeyer applies the principles of systems theory in an apolitical manner. Similar to Langenhoven (1978), Gerdes (1979), and Raubenheimer (1981), he offers token acknowledgment of the deteriorating political situation,[4] while a *professionalist* discourse proceeds to dominate a discursive order whose organizing principle is the consolidation of what is still a fledgling profession. While he makes implicit reference to the question of "social relevance" by virtue of his periodic invocation of the psychology–society dialectic, Rademeyer does so within the confines of a depersonalized rhetoric. The use of terms such as "systems" (Rademeyer 1982, p. 2), "centrifugal forces" (p. 1), "centripetal forces" (ibid.), "seesaw" (p. 4), "homeostatic" (p. 12), "digital" (p. 6), "analogic" (ibid.), "pathogenesis" (p. 7), "morphogenesis" (p. 7), "elements" (p. 9), "cybernetics" (pp. 11–12), and "the new technology of behavior modification" (p. 12) creates the impression of a stage without actors, muddying the ethico-moral dimension of the world about which he speaks. While systems theory can offer valuable commentary on political phenomena, in Rademeyer's discursive universe it succeeds only in technicizing social processes.

Studying Black Africans (PASA Opening Address 1983)

Commenting on the recent creation of PASA, Ronald Albino observes "the caravan to have many parts, each differing from the others and often in conflict" (1983, p. 1), a state of affairs he attributes to "basic differences in what it is thought Psychology should be" (ibid.). For Albino, the subject matter of psychology is determined by the prevailing ideology—which is that "the only forms of management and organisation and of life

appropriate for an urban and industrial society are those devised by European and American minds" (p. 2). For this reason, he predicts that "we will be unable to be useful in the new society which is undoubtedly to come" (p. 1). While he does not reflect on the form this "new society" will take, he is issuing a warning to his colleagues—that they run the risk of becoming "culturally irrelevant." Reminiscing about the early days of South African psychology, he recalls how "we psychologists were a tentacle of the North lying in an alien land, believing and acting as Northerners—intellectual colonialists" (p. 2).

Because he advocates the importance of research on black Africans, Albino anticipates the possible objection that "you may be taking my suggestions as supporting arguments for the separation of peoples. I most certainly do not intend that," he disclaims (p. 6). Instead, he insists that such research has been overlooked because of "the belief that what has been discovered of the basic psychological functions of Western man is universal" (ibid.). He identifies a knowledge-gap—a dearth of "local descriptive theories" (p. 7)—that must be filled if we are "to live together in a cooperative social order" (p. 6). What is needed, therefore, is "a new breed of investigator which I will, following industry, call a development researcher" (p. 7). Albino is skeptical of what he deems an unhelpful tendency within psychology to separate basic from applied knowledge—hence the appeal for a special type of researcher capable of generating both forms of knowledge.

Albino is enunciating a *cultural* form of "relevance" that will become increasingly influential in the post-apartheid years. In his reckoning, the matter is straightforward: the discipline is "culturally relevant" only insofar as it generates culturally inclusive knowledge. But his position also involves a measure of racial othering peculiar to iterations of "cultural relevance." As a result, when juxtaposing sameness and difference, Albino finds himself encumbered with the stubborn intricacies of apartheid logic.

"Science Transcends Utility" (PASA Keynote Address 1986)

In his address, Simon Biesheuvel refers to "the power struggle [in South Africa] between a dominant white minority and a disadvantaged black majority [that is aggravated by] strife within each ethnic group about the course to be followed to arrive at a settlement" (1987, p. 1). As with previous speakers, he believes that community psychology and general

systems theory can be "of considerable help in gaining an understanding of the South African turmoil" (p. 2). He notes the growing awareness of "the relativity of psychological constructs" (ibid.) and the importance of developing indigenous psychologies "[f]or a country like ours, with so many culturally divergent value systems and ways of living" (p. 3). Biesheuvel insists, however, that while science "has never been value free" (ibid.), the scientific *method* "should be value-free and obedient only to its own prescriptions" (ibid.) (Fig. 8.1).

Fig. 8.1 Simon Biesheuvel

Biesheuvel turns his attention to a recent paper by Andy Dawes for whom "[a]partheid and health, whether mental or physical, are irreconcilable" (1985, p. 60). For Biesheuvel, "[t]he stresses experienced by blacks in their daily lives cannot by any means be ascribed totally to apartheid" (1987, p. 5), which is, at best, "only a proximate cause" (p. 4). Rather, what underlies the enactment of apartheid law is, first of all, white prejudice, which is only incidentally racial; second, white fear, which "is not entirely irrational" (p. 5); and third, economic exploitation, for which "[t]here is no guarantee whatever that there would be a radical change in the power position of the black masses if they exchanged a white for a black government elite" (ibid.).

Whereas Dawes argues that South African psychology is bordering on "social irrelevance" because "the source of the illness [i.e. apartheid policy] needs attention if we are to move towards primary intervention" (1985, p. 57), Biesheuvel believes that

> *what is needed first of all is in-depth study of the numerous factors that influence their* [*black*] *lives, the interaction of these factors and their susceptibility to intervention. The pathogenic apartheid laws to which Dawes refers are only part of the situation, albeit a very important part.* (1987, p. 6)

The task at hand, therefore, is not the sole preserve of clinical psychologists, but requires input from multiple disciplines including sociology, social anthropology, economics, demography, and political science.

> *Joining the ideological bandwagon of those inside and outside South Africa who demonstrate against apartheid will achieve little or nothing, apart from moral self-satisfaction on the part of the protesters. Anyway, it is wrong to use the prestige attaching to the clinical psychological profession to speak out on action about which they can claim no expertise. To accuse those who refuse to tag along of being morally suspect, as Dawes does, is unwarranted. They may have rational reasons… for not doing so. Meanwhile, the first duty of clinical psychologists* [*such as Dawes*] *is towards their clients, to alleviate distress and to build up coping behaviour. There are other constituencies available through which they can if so inclined and acting as concerned citizens, make their views known on what they consider to be desirable political action.* (ibid.)

Appealing to the *pathos* of a multiracial audience, Biesheuvel defends his position with a disclaimer: "Let me emphasize that I share [Dawes'] views about apartheid as a mistaken policy, intolerable to blacks, reprehensible in its administration" (p. 4).

By resorting to a discourse of *disciplinarity*, Biesheuvel invisibilizes white complicity in black suffering by redefining the purpose of psychological knowledge. Questioning the worth of "socially relevant" science, Biesheuvel closes with the words of Vannevar Bush:

> '*Science has a simple faith which transcends utility… It is the faith that it is the privilege of Man to learn to understand, that this is his mission. If we abandon this mission under stress, we shall abandon it forever, for stress will not cease. Knowledge for the sake of understanding, not merely to prevail, that is the essence of our being… For if we fail to struggle and fail to think beyond our petty lot, we accept a sordid role. The light of our minds tells us that there is more to life than that.*' *I share these sentiments.* (p. 7)

Similar to Anglophone psychologists of the 1950s—which included himself—Biesheuvel's concern is with the scope of the discipline. In asserting that the scientific method "should be value free" (p. 3), that social scientists must "be clearly aware how and where values and ideology can legitimately enter in scientific endeavour, how and where they cannot" (ibid.), and that "it is wrong to use the prestige attaching to the clinical psychological profession to speak out on action about which they can claim no expertise (p. 6), Biesheuvel prescribes the limits of psychological science and practice. Despite his conservatism, he is the first speaker since PIRSA's early years to initiate a frank discussion on the subject of apartheid itself—but because he summoned science to justify a politics of neutrality, Biesheuvel's intellectual forthrightness would not avail him in the courtroom of his peers (Cooper et al. 1990).

The Birth of Liberatory Politics

Until the mid-1980s, for the most part, SAPA, PIRSA, and PASA addresses advanced a *professionalist* discourse in which political discussions were conspicuously absent (Gerdes 1979; Langenhoven 1978; Rademeyer 1982) or a discourse of *disciplinarity* that interpreted politics via the internal logic of the discipline (Biesheuvel 1987; Gerdes 1992; Raubenheimer 1981). How this degree of political indifference could occur at a point in South African history described as "apartheid's most brutal period" (Louw 2004, p. 83), is difficult to comprehend. At a time when Steve Biko had been killed, young white men were being forced into military service, the African National Congress (ANC) was bombing

energy plants, white professionals were starting to leave the country in droves, South Africa was under an arms embargo, and the economy was in recession (Beck 2000), not a single speaker was able to mention the word "apartheid" except for Biesheuvel in 1986. By then, tricameralism had failed,[5] rebellion in the townships had been brutally suppressed, hundreds of thousands of workers and students had embarked on a boycott campaign, disaffected comrades were "necklacing"—burning alive—suspected collaborators, and the country was in the grip of a national state of emergency (Louw 2004). In the meantime, SAPA/PIRSA/PASA talk of general systems theory (Gerdes 1979; Rademeyer 1982; Raubenheimer 1981) and its suitability for the national situation was articulated in technicist ways more befitting the theory's cybernetic origins.

Although SAPA and PIRSA buried the hatchet to form PASA in 1982, the reunion meant nothing to progressive psychologists as far as the political direction of the discipline was concerned. Matters came to a head in 1983 with the hosting of an international family therapy conference at Sun City—a gambling and entertainment center in a Bantustan "setting which is responsible for the break-up of thousands of [black] families" (Vogelman 1987, p. 24). Appalled at what they considered a questionable display of judgment, disaffected mental health professionals and students formed the Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) and committed themselves "to work[ing] only with those who are the victims of oppression" (Anonymous n.d., p. 2). While PASA's apolitical congresses continued, OASSSA was marching to the beat of a different drum. A self-avowed "political organisation which … situates itself within the mass democratic movement, but operates from a nonaligned position" (ibid.), OASSSA pursued a liberationist line from the outset.[6]

Apartheid and Mental Health (OASSSA Opening Address 1986)

OASSSA chairperson, Lloyd Vogelman, opens the association's first national conference by reminding his audience that

> [*o*]*ur gathering today is more than an act of protest, it is more than an acknowledgement that apartheid and ill-health are inseparable and indivisible. This conference is a beginning of trying to discover what appropriate social services are* (*and are not*). (1986, p. 3)

In this passage, Vogelman makes rhetorical use of a scheme of repetition known as *anaphora* (Corbett and Connors 1999). The duplication of the words "it is more than" creates a rhythm between successive clauses that produces a powerful emotional effect. Vogelman has already broken the mold of Biesheuvel's (1987) dispassionate scientist. He states unequivocally: "We are not a neutral organisation. We identify with the forces of progress rather than reaction and we are thus vigorously opposed to apartheid and to the oppression and exploitation that go with it" (Vogelman 1986, p. 3). His position—"In order to make South Africans more psychologically healthy and to resolve crises of mental health, we need to engage in politics" (ibid.)—is consistent with that of Dawes (1985) who is himself an OASSSA member. For most of his address, Vogelman drives home his point that apartheid policy in all its manifestations—high unemployment, low wages, forced removals, skewed mental health services, and low welfare grants and pension payments—is a major contributor toward poor mental health outcomes among the black majority. In contrast to Biesheuvel (1987), he criticizes both community psychologists—"[T]hey accept the status quo. Their activities help people to live in surroundings of crisis" (Vogelman 1986, p. 9)—as well as cross-cultural psychologists for downplaying the significance of class.

Although Vogelman is concerned exclusively with professional matters, he is not a proponent of the professionalist discourse favored by Langenhoven (1978) and Gerdes (1979) for whom the consolidation and expansion of the profession are prime considerations in their own rights. Vogelman is opposed to what he terms the "commercialisation" (1986, p. 4) and, by extension, urbanization of mental health services that proceed on the mistaken premise that "mental health is an individual matter" (ibid.). He devotes himself, rather, to the view that the provision of mental health services is a political affair: with talk of "exploitation" (p. 3), "ideology" (p. 4), "class" (p. 10), and "collective power" (p. 11) dominant, Vogelman promotes a *liberationist* discourse in the struggle for an inclusive, politically engaged, and therefore "socially relevant" profession.[7]

Social Services in Mass Politics (OASSSA Opening Address 1987)

Jerry Coovadia, professor of pediatrics at the University of Natal, picks up where Vogelman leaves off. He notes in an example of manifest intertextuality that "[t]he damaging effects of apartheid on mental health have

been documented most elegantly by Vogelman … among others" (Coovadia 1987, p. 23).[8] He relies on four different schemes of repetition in the first page of his address—a feature of emotionally evocative prose (Corbett and Connors 1999). Like Vogelman, Coovadia makes use of *anaphora*: "These people-based organisations are the most visible evidence of the unyielding will of South Africans of all races and colours, all sexes and creeds, to achieve freedom and democracy" (Coovadia 1987, p. 1). He follows this up with an instance of *epistrophe*, which occurs when the same group of words is repeated at the end of consecutive clauses: "In these organisations no formulations are accepted without reason, nor any model rejected without cause" (ibid.). Immediately thereafter, *anadiplosis* is deployed in which the same word that ends one clause is used to start the following clause: "The struggle for liberty is thereby transformed from being only a means to an end, to being an end in itself" (ibid.). And, finally, Coovadia employs a device known as *epanalepsis* by using the same word to open and close a single clause: "In the peculiar symmetry of South African politics, an extra-parliamentary President is being opposed by extra-parliamentary organisations of the people" (ibid.).

Coovadia constructs a detailed argument in favor of the involvement of professionals in the mass struggle for democracy. First, professional organizations "have in the perception of both the people of this country and beyond, been seen to be too closely allied to the ideology and practices of the apartheid state and are therefore irrelevant to people's needs" (p. 15). Second, the capitalist hegemony creates contradictions for people of all classes. Third, institutionalized racism is offensive to the sensibilities of all people, the "petit bourgeois … as much as the urban and rural proletariat" (p. 17). Fourth, a victory is needed "not only with regard to the state … but of civil society too" (p. 18). Fifth, in the majority of twentieth century revolutions, success has depended on "the collective action of all classes" (p. 19). And sixth, it is the personal responsibility of social service professionals to cultivate deliberately egalitarian relationships with laypeople.

Akin to Vogelman, Coovadia emphasizes the political aspects of mental health service provision, the avoidance of which translates into "socially irrelevant" practice. Coovadia, however, draws on *liberationist* discourse to an even greater extent with an assortment of references to ideology, class, exploitation, "bourgeoisie" (p. 19), "proletariat" (p. 17), "state apparatus" (p. 14), "the people" (p. 18), and "false leaders" (p. 24). He appears, also, to disagree with Vogelman regarding the political effectiveness of the

community psychology movement: Coovadia makes positive reference to "empowering people" (p. 14), "primary health care" (p. 28), "promotion" (p. 29), and "the optimum guiding of life for every citizen" (p. 30).

Culture and Progressive Social Services (OASSSA Keynote Address 1988)

Bonginkosi "Blade" Nzimande contradicts Vogelman (1986) and Coovadia (1987) on a crucial point of doctrine. Despite being comfortable with Marxist terminology—Nzimande refers to "bourgeois scholarship and practice" (1988, p. 77), "subjective interpellations" (p. 82), and "ideological carry-overs" (p. 83)—he questions what he regards as OASSSA's oversimplified theorization of the relationship between racial capitalism and mental health. For Nzimande, "left wing theoretical discourses on mental health … have been argued in a rather rhetorical way, without being concretely linked to a theory of mental health practice" (p. 82)—hence, "the very choice of the topic I will address you on tonight is partly a function of trying to go beyond rhetoric" (p. 76). The result of OASSSA's class reductionism "is the absence of a dialogue with the traditional practices" (p. 82) in relation to which the majority of Africans have made "ontological commitments" (pp. 80, 83) that "transcend historical conjunctures" (p. 83).

Alert to the threats of paternalism, romanticism, and professional elitism, Nzimande urges OASSSA members to ask themselves whether "our openness in working with the oppressed communities go[es] as far as to be prepared to incorporate these traditional conceptions of madness as part of the emerging progressive social services" (ibid.). And yet his comment on the "rhetoric"—and poverty—of left-wing theories of mental illness is not without irony. An industrial psychologist like Biesheuvel, Nzimande's remark does not differ much from the latter's caustic appraisal of left-leaning psychologists as drivers of an "ideological bandwagon [who] speak out on action about which they can claim no expertise" (Biesheuvel 1987, p. 6). Doubtless, Nzimande—like Albino (1983)—is dissatisfied with the lack of "cultural relevance" in the discipline. But his disagreement with what has become OASSSA canon also lets slip what will become progressive psychology's most crippling ideological rupture.

Inside PASA (PASA Opening Address 1989)

Then chairman of the Professional Board for Psychology, Strümpfer sets the scene for his address by commenting on the rise of systems thinking, telling his audience that he "would like to touch upon some areas where there is a great need for working together within and between systems" (1989, p. 1). Noting the poor relationship that exists between PASA and the Professional Board, he chastises the former for its passivity and for setting up the Board "as a convenient straw man from whom all blessings are expected to flow and then to be attacked and vilified if the blessings do not flow" (p. 2). He warns, also, that frayed relations between English- and Afrikaans-speakers within PASA risk the possibility that "the system of psychology will break into two again, with worse consequences than those of our nearly two decades of shame before PASA came about" (p. 3). Strümpfer criticizes his white colleagues for acting either like Afrikaners of the Great Trek or English imperialists who dream of other colonies, saying, "When the others don't want to play my game, I'll take my marbles and go play elsewhere" (ibid.). He censures PASA for "behav[ing] as if it is a whites-only association" (ibid.), for failing to encourage dialogue between its constituent subdisciplines, for not doing enough to reach "an amicable understanding" with OASSSA "radicals" (p. 4), and for failing to appreciate the necessity of interdisciplinary collaboration. Similar to Rademeyer (1982), his plea is for the discipline to apply its knowledge of systemic processes in order to heal its own fractiousness.

Strümpfer departs significantly from his 1980 address in which he engaged more readily with the social challenges of the day. Nine years later and at the height of resistance to apartheid rule, he restricts himself to an appraisal of internal organizational politics. By way of comparison, Albino's (1983) cultural relativism reads just as tamely when one considers the progressive role he played in the 1950s' debate about mixed-"race" membership. It is as though PASA reformists—in keeping with Biesheuvel's (1987) vision of an apolitical discipline—are succumbing to an increasingly blinkered existence. Although he advances neither a discourse of disciplinarity nor one of professionalism, Strümpfer, while taking issue with PASA's creeping insularity, does not expand the association's terms of reference either.

"The Generality/Specificity Issue" (PASA Keynote Address 1991)

Lily Gerdes claims that psychology is internally fragmented and that—she agrees with Strümpfer (1989)—it has isolated itself from other disciplines. What follows is an imbalance

> *between three basic assumptions, which address the generality/specificity issue. Stated briefly they are: (i) That in some respects all people are alike, thus recognizing their common humanity; (ii) That in some respects certain people are alike, thus recognizing differences between groups, such as age, ethnic, sex, educational level, and ethnic groups; (iii) That in some respects every individual is unique. Imbalance results if any one of these assumptions is stressed at the expense of the others.* (Gerdes 1992, p. 40)

Gerdes notes that "[i]n South Africa different political groupings and ideologies may partly be understood in terms of where they place the emphasis. Concerning the future the ultimate challenge to planners is to strike a balance between these three assumptions" (ibid.).

Gerdes continues that since "psychology lacks integration and balance it must inevitably experience difficulties with the projection of its image" (ibid.). Wondering if it is at all possible "to formulate some kind of corporate image of the discipline as a whole" (ibid.), she devises a "mission statement" (p. 41) for the discipline that includes, *inter alia*, the pursuit and application of knowledge vis-à-vis human problems, the promotion of individual and communal psychological development, future planning regarding people's psychological needs, and adherence to a code of conduct. Gerdes recommends media involvement—on ethical grounds—in the dissemination of information regarding important developments in the discipline, facilitating thereby the mental health of communities. Besides, "psychologists as agents of change need to combine the role of psychologist and that of public spirited citizen" (ibid.). Recognizing the distinction between "advertising personal services and heightening public awareness" (p. 42), Gerdes thinks "[p]sychology needs to strive for more recognition of its actual and potential contribution. To this end it has to become more active and pro-active, especially in regard to future planning and the wider application of its knowledge and skills" (ibid.).

As in her 1979 presidential address, Gerdes advocates "social relevance" by lobbying for a closer relationship between psychology and the public. Yet, despite her recourse to such commonplaces as "the new South Africa"

(p. 43) and "a better quality of life for all" (ibid.), her enduring political circumspection is evident—never more so than when she dubs the apartheid conundrum "the generality/specificity issue" (p. 40). For Gerdes, "balance" (ibid.) is preferable to choosing political sides, which runs the risk of "fragmentation" (ibid.). Matching Strümpfer (1981, 1989) in her elision of the "A"-word, she enjoys a discursive affinity with Biesheuvel's (1987) politics of non-intervention. Gerdes places herself squarely in the service of a discourse of *disciplinarity* in which the "subject's diversity" (1992, p. 39), the "artificial dichotomy" between theory and application (1992), "consultation between persons from different fields within the discipline" (p. 40), and a mission statement that "states psychology's aims" (p. 41) are dominant concerns.

Atonement (PASA Opening Address 1993)

In *A Personal History of Psychology in South Africa*, Strümpfer apologizes for talking politics—"My brief was specifically not to repeat the history of psychology associations in this country" (1993, p. 3)—but states that he does not want to speak about "politics in the ordinary sense" (ibid.). Noting that Afrikaans universities were—for the most part—apartheid strongholds, he recalls how psychology at these institutions "was characterized by a strong service orientation" (p. 7). English departments of psychology, by contrast, focused on basic psychology—"There was a certain ambivalence towards application, with clinical psychology for some time the only significant exception" (p. 8)—yet "the call for 'relevance'" (ibid.) originated at these Anglophone universities, albeit "with a strong element of 'political correctness'" (pp. 8–9).

Strümpfer is reluctant to condemn the founders of South African psychology for having, "in many ways, overtly and covertly, consciously and unconsciously, perhaps actively perhaps reluctantly, but mostly by doing nothing or too little, accepted and condoned much of the apartheid policy" (p. 31). Aware of the dangers of "retrospective history" (Gould 1988, p. 27 quoted ibid., p. 29), he cautions that "it is very easy to be liberal-minded when one's whole milieu is one of liberalism" (p. 5). Still, he admits that "we too have to confess our guilt, repent with utmost sincerity, ask for forgiveness and then make atonement by working, as scientists and professionals, as hard as we can at a new, better future for all" (p. 32)—and commits himself thereupon to the creation of "a more socially liberatory discipline" (Hayes 1993, n.p. quoted ibid., p. 32).

Turning to a religious vernacular of "confession," "repentance," "forgiveness," and "atonement," Strümpfer anoints a discourse of *salvation* in which psychologists are urged to reconcile themselves with their past. The ensuing pursuit of a "socially relevant" psychology that is simultaneously "Afrocentric" and "socially liberatory" becomes a redemptive act through which the discipline earns the right to belong in "a new South Africa" (p. 33).

"Psychology Will Live On" (PASA Presidential Address 1993)

By the time of his address, Bodley van der Westhuÿsen knows that PASA will soon be dissolved. All too aware of being its last president, he surpasses Strümpfer (1993) in the use of religious images and clauses. Philosophizing about how, "[t]o my mind people are better judged by their deeds than by their words," he affirms that change brings with it "the opportunity to take stock" (van der Westhuÿsen 1993, p. 3). Meditating on "leaps of faith" (p. 2), he quotes at length from William James' *The Will to Believe*, in-between references to "uncertainty" (p. 1), "dangers" (p. 2), and "choice" (ibid.). Conjuring up phantasmagorias of Death and The Reckoning, van der Westhuÿsen laments how "[w]e as individuals are of no importance. We will eventually all cross the bridge to the other side and soon be forgotten" (pp. 2–3). Yet all is not lost as he affirms the one thing that will outlast them all, for "psychology will live on" (p. 3). What matters is that psychologists ensure the discipline's "right of existence [which] lies in the impact, the effect it has as a science and a profession, when the community out there experiences psychology as meaningful and of value" (p. 2). In the manner of Strümpfer (1993), van der Westhuÿsen rallies the audience around the discourse of *salvation*. He may not speak the language of reconciliation—he never mentions the imminent demise of the apartheid project—but, like Strümpfer, he assures his colleagues that psychology has not come to the end of the road. Despite PASA's approaching end, they can still embrace a new associational life and bind themselves to a disciplinary project of "social relevance."

Party Politics to the Fore

PASA's engagement with the notion of a "socially relevant" psychology varied across a series of politically conservative discourses. These included, first, a *professionalist* discourse that focused on consolidating

the profession by servicing the needs of the South African public (Gerdes 1979; Langenhoven 1978; Rademeyer 1982); second, a discourse of *disciplinarity*, which concentrated on fundamental questions rather than political ones that were rendered via the depoliticizing logic of the discipline (Biesheuvel 1987; Gerdes 1992; Raubenheimer 1981); third, a *cultural* discourse that stressed the importance of producing psychological knowledge about black Africans (Albino 1983); and fourth, a *salvation* discourse that understood the quest for "social relevance" as a form of disciplinary rebirth (Strümpfer 1993; van der Westhuÿsen 1993). By contrast, OASSSA's appraisal of a "socially relevant" discipline—which centered on the profession—was embedded in a *liberationist* discourse that stressed the negative consequences of apartheid policy on mental health and the attendant responsibility of social service workers to organize politically (Coovadia 1987; Vogelman 1986).

Strümpfer once noted in an interview how "right from the start PASA was very much an Afrikaner organization" (Nell 1993, p. 40). Complaining of a PIRSA takeover, former SAPA members "simply felt they had had enough" (p. 39) and withdrew subsequently from active involvement in the amalgamated association. There was unhappiness about PIRSA not being made to apologize for embracing apartheid dogma (Nell 1993), the domination of the PASA executive by white Afrikaner men (Seedat and MacKenzie 2008), and the new association's continued alignment with the repressive political dispensation of the day (Louw and Foster 2004). Perhaps the prominence of professionalist discourse in SAPA/PIRSA/PASA circles had less to do with their co-option by an increasingly technocratic state than with the establishment of the first Professional Board for Psychology in 1974. And yet their depoliticized order of discourse coincided with a decline in both scientific and political papers on "race" in the *South African Journal of Psychology* (*SAJP*)—their official journal (Durrheim and Mokeki 1997). The attempt to dispense with politics was neither due to professionalizing forces inside the discipline nor due to any desire to steer clear of troubled waters—rather, "P.W. Botha's attempts at a policy of 'non-racialism' during the early 1980s may have … [made] a race focus seem irrelevant" (Durrheim and Mokeki 1997, p. 211).

As for OASSSA speakers, Vogelman and Coovadia belonged to the United Democratic Front (UDF) (A. Dawes, personal communication, December 21, 2012), a charterist front for the banned ANC that meant "different things to different people" (Louw 2004, p. 150). Founded in 1983 in opposition to Botha's tricameral reforms, the non-racial coalition

of hundreds of civic, women's, youth, and religious organizations (Beck 2000) succeeded in "fudging its discourse" to generate a constituency spanning much of the political spectrum (Louw 2004, p. 150), though Vogelman and Coovadia's rhetoric would have appealed specifically to its leftist supporters. But when Blade Nzimande—also a UDF figure—refuted his comrades by placing culture ahead of class, the cracks were starting to appear. By the time of Nzimande's address in September 1988, the UDF had been banned for 6 months and had ceded influence to a new coalition partner, namely, the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Nzimande's culture-speak was not only a criticism of OASSSA but also an indictment of the UDF's terminal inability to convince the African majority that it was more than an Indian and colored cabal.

In historical-theoretical terms, the struggle between PASA and OASSSA displayed the usual patterns found in "relevance" debates around the world. First, the rival associations had conflicting cognitive interests, with PASA's technical and practical interests contrasting sharply with OASSSA's emancipatory goals. Second, although both associations sought to address professional matters, PASA's intradisciplinary focus differed markedly from OASSSA's applied, populist emphasis. And third, these variations played out during the most chaotic years of the apartheid era. Consequently, there was no telling what would happen when, in 1994, PASA and OASSSA—not forgetting the Psychology and Apartheid Committee—disbanded to form the Psychological Society of South Africa.

Notes

1. Full text versions of this address are available in both English and Afrikaans. Most excerpts here have been taken from the English version.
2. In 1974, SAPA and PIRSA's joint efforts culminated in professional registration becoming a requirement by law (Nicholas, 1990). By November 1976, PIRSA was putting out feelers with a view to establishing an even closer alliance—including the possibility of outright unification. Dreyer Kruger, for example, who had opposed the registration of the Indian psychologist Chanderpaul Ramphal in 1960, now believed that the existence of the two associations was not in the best interests of the discipline: apartheid policy was not working, professional divisions made little sense to the younger generation of psychologists, and "[n]o black or brown group had made use of PIRSA's willingness to assist in the establishment of separate organizations for these groups" (PIRSA Newsletter 16, 1977, p. 3 quoted ibid., p. 62). Kruger's position, however, did not represent the Institute's

official line: PIRSA hardliners were not interested in integration, while moderates such as Langenhoven (1977) were more circumspect in their appraisals. It took, consequently, several more years before the amalgamation was realized, but between 1978 and 1982, SAPA and PIRSA agreed to hold joint national congresses.

3. This address was delivered in both English and Afrikaans.
4. Given the heterogeneity of their audiences, it is perhaps the most all four presidents can do.
5. Prime Minister Botha attempted unsuccessfully to establish a tricameral parliament for whites, coloreds, and Indians to the exclusion of black Africans.
6. Two keynote addresses from the Psychology and Apartheid Committee congresses were located but were excluded from the data set on the grounds that they were delivered by non-South Africans.
7. It would be something of an overinterpretation to cite the rhetoric of Vogelman and subsequent OASSSA speakers as instances of Marxist discourse. While OASSSA addresses abound with Marxist terminology, it cannot be claimed that the organization was Marxist in any programmatic sense.
8. Unlike Biesheuvel (1987), neither Vogelman (1986) nor Coovadia deem it necessary to launch a multipronged investigation into black impoverishment—the deleterious impact of apartheid policy is obvious. In the words of their colleague, Dawes, who was reflecting on the scientific credentials of his own paper: "There are no figures quoting mental health/ill health statistics in this article, which would have added a certain scientific respectability to my argument. I maintain that to argue that my reasoning is suspect until such figures are presented, is similar to suggesting that because we do not have stress data on concentration camp victims in the Boer War this experience was not psychologically destructive. The events speak for themselves…" (1985, p. 60).

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CHAPTER 9

"Relevance" in the Post-Apartheid Era (1994–2011)

PsySSA has already attained international accolades and we as members can be, rightfully, proud of our Society.

(Patrick Sibaya 2004)

And so, if you asked me, what is the state of the discipline, I would say, it is a quiet or silent discipline in the face of an evident national cry for oral and emotional catharsis.

(Boyce Mkhize 2007)

Enter the Market

In the final quarter of the twentieth century, a new regime of knowledge production emerged as a response to rising economic competitiveness, the escalating requirements of post-industrial technoscientific society, and the decline in public funding of universities (Slaughter and Leslie 1997). The ensuing capitalization of knowledge led to a proliferation of both "market-like behaviors" (tuition fees, endowment funds, university–industry collaborations) and out-and-out "market behaviors" (patenting activities, spin-off companies, for-profit bookstore arrangements) on campuses all over the world. With the fall of apartheid and South Africa's gradual assimilation into the global community, leading educationists encouraged the implementation of this new dispensation in which universities had come to be run like businesses.

As the products and beneficiaries of these institutions—and given their characteristic sense of enterprise—South African psychologists were

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unlikely to ignore the growing "relevance" of market considerations. They fell into line quickly, rising to positions of power in government, higher education, and various regulatory bodies. A neoliberal ethic now permeated the discipline, which, in its "eagerness to situate itself on a plane beyond history, politics and even science," was being "championed… by a presiding Professional Board of Psychology populated by once politically active critics of the apartheid regime and of racist Psychology. Such," wrote Painter and van Ommen in 2008, "[were] the contradictions of our times" (p. 442). Indeed, psychologists around the world "under[stood] the demands of neo-liberalism and capitalism all too well and [were] eager to make themselves useful once again as consultants for the New World order" (Painter 2012, para. 28).[1] Accordingly, despite the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) retaining "social relevance" as a core value in its *Vision, Mission, and Value Statement*, questions about "relevance" endured. This chapter describes the dramatic changes that came to characterize South African psychology's discursive order in the post-apartheid years.

Corporate Speak (Presidential Address 1996)

In his address, Theo Veldsman details the state of PsySSA's financial health, his reliance on phrases such as "healthy growth," "financial viability," "key stakeholders," and "financial scenarios" (p. 2) sounding more like the talk of a business manager than a doctor of psychology. Despite acknowledging, in the midst of these market tropes, PsySSA's obligation to address "the constraints of past injustices and discrimination" (p. 2), his use of nominalizations such as "injustices" and "discrimination" downplays agency and responsibility (Fairclough 1992), while the term "constraint"—peculiar to mathematics, computer science, and economics—adds to the business-like tone of his address.

Veldsman notes that "[w]e as a helping profession ha[ve] to serve as a role model for reconciliation and healing in our country" (1996, p. 3). He lists, accordingly, the different measures taken to address the "degrees of mistrust, suspicion, anger, guilt and/or apathy [that] are still hampering our bonding" (Veldsman 1996), which include regular briefs, newsletters, meetings and "our Society [going] electronic via e-mail and a location on the Worldwide Web" (Veldsman 1996). One observes how technology-speak enters the realm of human interaction and is understood as facilitating interpersonal relationships.

Veldsman speaks of how PsySSA has envisioned the future by starting "a process of building a national agenda of mental health… against the backdrop of rectifying past injustices in our country and working through the associated traumas" (p. 4). He uses *anaphora*—repetition of the same word(s) at the start of successive clauses—to appeal to his audience's emotional vocabulary (*pathos*): "A vision energises, mobilises and inspires. Without a vision psychology will be adrift in our country. A widely shared vision also will build credibility for our Society" (Veldsman 1996). The suffering of South Africa's oppressed communities works in the service of a broader goal, namely, the consolidation of the newly formed society's legitimacy.

Veldsman underscores the importance of "finding our place under the sun" (1996). The "context" is not only about restoration and reconciliation, but is also about securing PsySSA's vital interests. He speaks of "vertical" and "horizontal" relationships (Veldsman 1996), "policy engagement" (p. 5), "service delivery" (Veldsman 1996), "value adding working relationships" (Veldsman 1996), and "improvement in tariffs" (Veldsman 1996)—all indicators of business-model thinking. He mentions "our clients" (p. 6) and "ourselves as service providers" (Veldsman 1996)—more business terms—and the need to find "the appropriate balance [between] looking after our own interests and satisfying the needs of those we have to serve" (p. 7). Despite expressing a commitment to pursuing a "socially relevant" psychology, the PsySSA president does so by invoking a *market* rationality.

Culture in the Marketplace (Keynote Address 2000)

Smangaliso Mkhatshwa, Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister of Education, claims that "[p]sychology has a vital role to play in assisting government to understand the forces at play in our national psyche or, as the case may be, individual and group psyches" (2000, p. 1). He asserts that social and mental problems "negatively impact… on our ability as a country to compete in an increasingly globally-competitive environment" (Mkhatshwa 2000)—hence the need for psychologists to "assist with the healing of people whose lived reality, even to this day, bears testimony to the psychological and other ravages of a brutal past" (Mkhatshwa 2000). Yet, he suggests that psychologists are indifferent to the psychological violence of the apartheid era: "Six years after our liberation, what are psychologists doing about minds and consciousnesses disfigured by our

bloody past? I ask you" (Mkhatshwa 2000). In this impassioned appeal, Mkhatshwa uses *erotema*—the rhetorical question—to challenge his audience and advance a claim by insinuation. Additionally, by phrasing the accusation of political apathy as a question, he not only makes it difficult for his listeners to contradict him but he may succeed, also, in being more persuasive than if he were to have made his assertion directly. Mkhatshwa requests his audience "to locate these issues and challenges within the broader thrust of the African Renaissance" (p. 3). Stressing the need for "culturally relevant" research and practice, he continues in the discursive tradition of Albino (1983) and Nzimande (1988). Mkhatshwa's position is also consistent with OASSSA's concerning the pernicious effects of apartheid policy on psychological health (Coovadia 1987; Vogelman 1986). Where he differs from these speakers, however, is in his recognition of an *international* audience—that "increasingly globally competitive environment" in which mental illness is an efficiency handicap and cultural sensitivity is *de rigueur*. As a result, Mkhatshwa's entreaties about "cultural relevance" end up resonating with Veldsman's (1996) market discourse.

"Sangomas… Tea Leaves… and Soap Operas" (Keynote Address 2001)

Kader Asmal, law professor and Minister of Education, shares Mkhatshwa's sentiment when he says, "I have no doubt that psychology has a vital role to play in the healing of our people and in dealing with the psychological scars wrought by apartheid" (2001, p. 1). He wonders, however, why it is that the general public is more inclined to turn to pop psychology—including "sangomas" (Asmal 2001)[2]—than to "psychology in its scientific and professional form" (Asmal 2001). He, too, resorts to *anaphora* and *erotema* in an emotionally charged series of questions:

> *What are you doing as a profession… to heal the burdens of the past…? What are you doing to help the security monsters bred by apartheid and who continue to live in our midst, to come to terms with their past and to ensure that they do not return to their evil ways? What are you doing to address the recurring resort to violence at the slightest provocation…? … What are you doing to address the violence against women and children? What are you doing to address the scourge of HIV/AIDS and alcohol and drug abuse?* (Asmal 2001)

Perhaps aware of the affront he may have caused, Asmal appears to backpedal, though he is actually using a disclaimer: "I am not suggesting that the Psychological Society is not seized with these issues" (2001). His larger point is that "the profession requires locating the issues within a new knowledge and education and training paradigm that is firmly located in the context and reality of South Africa as a developing African country" (pp. 1, 4). For Asmal, the creation of such a paradigm entails, *inter alia*, training greater numbers of African psychologists in a profession that "is still more than 90 % white" (p. 4); ensuring that trainee psychologists become proficient in at least one indigenous African language ("for the psychological profession to become truly relevant, language barriers need to be addressed" (2001)); equipping professionals for work in primary health care settings "to ensure relevancy" (2001); and providing incentives that will reverse the "brain drain" (2001) of South African psychologists to "developed nations" (2001). The bottom line is to "ensure that all our people are provided with appropriate, accessible and affordable psychological services" (2001).

Although Asmal advocates the transformation of the discipline in ways that will increase its sensitivity to "lived realities" (2001) in South Africa, he places sangomas in the same company as "tarot cards… tea leaves… palm readings… and soap operas" (p. 1), parting company with Albino (1983), Nzimande (1988), and his former deputy Mkhatshwa (2000). Like Veldsman (1996) and Mkhatshwa, however, Asmal is cognizant of the international community, indicating that "developing" countries must be able to compete with "developed" ones (2001, p. 4). He is fluent, consequently, in market discourse, as suggested by his references to "meeting targets," the "shortage of skilled personnel," "not having invested in their development," and the "free flow of human capital" (2001).

Critiquing the Market (Keynote Address 2002)

For the third year running, a high-profile education official is invited to deliver the Psychological Society of South Africa's (PsySSA) keynote address. Saleem Badat, education professor and chief executive officer of the Council on Higher Education, notes "the emergence of a global economy and changes in the world that have been captured by the concept 'globalisation'" (2002, p. 4). He declares that what "is purveyed by eloquent intellectuals… as 'common sense' is actually highly ideological, the ideology of neo-liberalism which is the dominant ideological current of

the era of globalisation" (Badat 2002). Then again, he acknowledges that "[g]lobalisation is a reality and [there is no] question of escaping it. The challenge for higher education," he believes, "is to produce the knowledge and personpower that will enable South Africa to engage proactively, critically and creatively with globalisation" (Badat 2002). In the final analysis, however, "economic reconstruction," "political democratisation," and "redistributive social policies" (Higher Education White Paper 1997 quoted Badat 2002) are incompatible with neoliberal thinking.

Badat identifies "the great danger of a rampant and profane marketisation and commodification of higher education" (2002, p. 10) that may lead to the humanities and social sciences being "sacrificed at the altar of 'market relevance' and 'market needs'" (p. 6). The rise of private higher education institutions means "the traditional unity of teaching, research and service is fragmenting" (Badat 2002). He beseeches his listeners to ensure that students "are not reduced to 'clients' and 'customers' but are embraced as real partners in higher learning" (p. 9), imploring them "to hold tight to the moral basis of higher education" (p. 10). Like Asmal (2001) before him, Badat uses *anaphora* and *erotema*, forcing his audience to ask of the discipline whether it "produce[s] men and women that, to put it idealistically, personify good" (2002, p. 10). At the end of a series of searching "what" questions, he asks:

> *Are we producing excellent technicians and technocrats, or excellent technicians and technocrats and* simultaneously *enlightened and critical South African and African citizens? Put in another way, what discourse of social responsiveness prevails in the departments of psychology today? Is it a notion of "social responsiveness that is thinned down and reduced to that of market responsiveness and the needs of being economically productive alone, emptied of all content except for that which advances individual or organisational economic competitiveness"?* (p. 11, original emphasis)[3]

Badat's verdict is that the "evidence seems to suggest that we are not" producing graduates who will "engage with the ideologies of neo-liberalism and privatisation, the privileging of private benefits above public good and the attitude of 'greed is cool' and 'get what you can and screw the rest'" (pp. 12–13). He rejects the "rhetoric of the 'rainbow nation'" (p. 13) and culturally exclusivist formulations of the African Renaissance. Returning to the devices of *anaphora* and *erotema*, he concludes that "our responsibility"

> *as professional psychologists* [*is that*] *we must be able to respond*, *heads held high if asked*: … *Where is the intellectual* critique *of globalisation and its effects…?* … *Where is the intellectual* engagement *with the imperative of equity and redress…?* … *Where is the intellectual* vision? *And where*, *above all*, *is the intellectual* contribution *to the development of an equitable*, *just and humane society*? (p. 15, original emphases)

Advancing a discourse of *civic responsibility*, Badat is unique among his education colleagues in reflecting critically on the changing ethos of higher education. His address contains relatively few examples of market discourse and considerably more instances of Marxist signifiers, such as "ideology," "bourgeoisie," and a glowing reference to Eric Hobsbawm. But in a testament to the insidiousness of business speak, he advises at one point against treating students as "clients," only to suggest embracing them as "partners" (p. 9). The latter no less market friendly, hegemonic discursive configurations prove difficult to escape.

"A Fiercely Violent Society" (Keynote Address 2003)

Whereas Mkhatshwa (2000) assumes the existence of a national psyche, the editor of the country's largest weekly paper—*The Sunday Times*—asks whether, given "general acceptance that the two nations theory still applies," such a psyche can be said to exist at all (Tsedu 2003, p. 6). Mathatha Tsedu criticizes Desmond Tutu's "rainbow nation" metaphor—as Badat (2002) does—on the grounds that it obscures simmering inter-racial tensions in the country and "disempower[s] people from engaging with the challenges of the time" (2003, p. 6). For Tsedu, the national reality is one of greed, "a fiercely violent society" (2003), white superiority and black inferiority, and "[m]any people walk[ing] around carrying burdens of time past" (2003). He speaks of how black journalists frequently question themselves when it comes to reporting the indiscretions of black politicians for fear of "feeding the stereotype" (Tsedu 2003). Tsedu's belief, however, is that "we should show you what is real. We should tell you the truth as far as is possible. Anything less would be a disservice" (2003). As with Mkhatshwa (2000) and Asmal (2001), Tsedu claims that the psychological wounds of the past have not been addressed. Like Badat (2002)—for whom the "real past" must not be forgotten (p. 3)—Tsedu insists that "the truth" must come out. At a discursive level, these speakers describe the continuing fragility of the national life and the civic responsibility of psychologists to respond accordingly.

“Let Us Care for Our Fellow Psychologists” (Presidential Address 2004)

Having relatively little to say about the national situation, Patrick Sibaya’s views are considerably different. He praises his audience, in fact, declaring that, “[b]y your gracious cooperation, commitment to transformation and support of membership, you have demonstrated to the South African population, and the world at large, that we are a united people” (2004, p. 2). Apart from one other sentence in which the president asks his listeners “to rededicate ourselves… to the nation of South Africa” (p. 3), the remainder of his address is given to organizational matters.

Prominent among Sibaya’s reflections is PsySSA’s international reputation. He cites “international accolades” (p. 1), the inspiration received from “contingents of international attendees” (Sibaya 2004), and the “world-class journal of psychology” (Sibaya 2004) published by the association. Proficient in market discourse, Sibaya speaks variously of “management teams” (p. 2), “foster[ing] productivity” (Sibaya 2004), “our core products” (p. 3), “the quality of services we offer” (Sibaya 2004), and a need for “quality assurance” (Sibaya 2004). Moreover, because “[p]sychology is a caring profession,” he reasons that “[w]e must care for one another, first…. Charity begins at home. Let us care for our fellow psychologists” (Sibaya 2004). Sibaya is concerned about “special interest groups” (p. 4) within the association “whose needs have been neglected for too long” (Sibaya 2004). Nonetheless, he maintains that “[t]aking a fellow psychologist to court, discredits our profession” (Sibaya 2004) and that “[t]hese divisions must align themselves with PsySSA and its constitution” (Sibaya 2004).

In contrast with previous years’ speakers, Sibaya makes no mention of the social context in which South African psychology is located. Then again, his preoccupation with the internal affairs of the association and its international standing—along with his adoption of market parlance—are consistent with the globalizing, commodifying trends that Badat (2002) identifies. With almost no evidence of a psychology beholden to the public, Sibaya’s address is emblematic of a new order of discourse in which post-apartheid psychology—no longer isolated from the worldwide discipline—must realign itself with a different set of priorities.

"A Silent Discipline" (Opening Address 2007)

Advocate Boyce Mkhize, Registrar of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), raises implicit questions about Sibaya's (2004) "united people" thesis. Aligning himself with the discourse of civic responsibility, he notes how, in relation to rising numbers of HIV/AIDS orphans, child-headed households, and traumatized surviving spouses, "the most fundamental question is what the profession of psychology has done to position itself to address these mental health problems which are inextricably interwoven with our social challenges today" (Mkhize 2007, p. 5). In a similar vein as Mkhatshwa (2000) and Asmal (2001), Mkhize offers a damning assessment of the discipline:

> *This country has a bag full of apartheid wounds… No active follow-up was ever done to bring about true reconciliation and healing so that there would be closure to some of the gruesome revelations that our nation was exposed to. And so, if you asked me, what is the state of the discipline, I would say, it is a quiet or silent discipline in the face of an evident national cry for oral and emotional catharsis.* (2007, pp. 5–6)

The opposite of Sibaya (2004), Mkhize impresses upon his audience that "[i]n our quest to professionalize our input and interventions… I urge us to look beyond ourselves… without falling foul [of] our own web of narrow professional interests" (p. 7). With his assault on market discourse in full flow, Mkhize proceeds to lecture his listeners on the role psychology should be playing in society:

> *We want to see a discipline that is socially responsive as well as professionally and ethically astute. We want to see a discipline that is not so much inward looking than outward looking or put differently, a discipline with an inward glance but an outward focus. If in our deliberations we miss the discourse around the plight of the masses of our people and how this discipline ought to impact them in a positive way, I want to submit that we will be a discipline that may stand accused of existential irrelevance.* (ibid.)

Although mindful of the discipline's international profile, Mkhize is adamant that psychological research and practice in South Africa must attend to local issues first: "Our science and approach needs to be developed and adapted to our own local context while also [being] comparable to the world's best" (ibid.). Akin to Badat (2002), he retains a critical stance on

the new market discourse: professionalization of "our input"—a term common in economics and computer science—must be subject to an ethic of social engagement.

Psychology Making "Enormous Strides" (Keynote Address 2010)

Hlengiwe Mkhize (2010), psychologist and Deputy Minister of Correctional Services, expresses her pleasure at "the enormous strides made by psychology in this country" (p. 1)—feedback she has received "from various quarters, nationally, internationally and from my colleagues in government" (Mkhize 2010). Juxtaposing "our terrible history in the science and profession of psychology" (Mkhize 2010) and "the advances made by our rainbow nation" (Mkhize 2010), Mkhize notes "the steady pace of progress that organised psychology under the leadership of PsySSA has made" (Mkhize 2010). Despite that fact that "a nascent democracy like ours makes us merely a teenager compared to other countries, particularly in the Global North" (Mkhize 2010), she observes that "[o]ur country, flush from [the FIFA] World Cup, has come together remarkably and there is a new sense of common purpose" (Mkhize 2010). She ends with the prediction that psychologists "will play a very progressive role… to assist those less fortunate amongst us" (Mkhize 2010).

In light of the many comments made by PsySSA speakers regarding the challenges the discipline faces, one can be forgiven for thinking that Hlengiwe Mkhize is talking about psychology in another country. Largely an exercise in epideictic oratory, her address employs mostly "ceremonial discourse," which is less concerned with persuading than it is with pleasing an audience (Corbett and Connors 1999, p. 23). Mkhize accentuates the achievements of the discipline, convinced of its future "social relevance." As was the case with almost all of her predecessors, she invokes the local–global binary, implying that the adolescent South will eventually attain the standards of the established Northern democracies. Moreover, her delivery is somewhat removed from the ongoing plight of the majority of South Africans. She creates a distancing effect when referring to "those less fortunate amongst us," framing the impoverishment of millions in relation to the relative prosperity of her audience, making human suffering a question of "fortune." In this way, "those less fortunate amongst us" become a charity case rather than an indictment of unequal social relations.

On Serving the Unserved (Presidential Address 2011)

In comparison with Mkhize (2010), Emmanuel Tlou is less than complimentary toward his colleagues, castigating them for "the self-limiting and defeatist attitude I have seen among many of you" (2011, p. 1). He accuses them of unnecessary bickering over the revised professional scope of practice, when, instead of fighting about "the sub-20 % of the population who are on medical aid or hospitalised" (p. 2), the focus should be on "the rest of the population we could be serving" (Tlou 2011). He reminds the audience that South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world with over two million economically inactive young adults. Consequently, "[w]e need to be asking ourselves what defines the South African society, what is unique about it and what psychology should do to address the society's needs" (Tlou 2011). If anything, the scope of practice should be about "how much we are not doing" (Tlou 2011).

Tlou reenters the genre of deliberative oratory. His concern is with the future of the discipline, and, positioning himself within a discourse of civic responsibility, he exhorts and dissuades in equal measure. However, by using a metaphor in which he likens those who can afford psychological services to "a slice of bread" (p. 2) and the rest of the South African population to "a whole bakery full of freshly baked bread that is not being eaten" (Tlou 2011), Tlou appears to exploit the very market discourse whose ethic, moments earlier, he had found objectionable. Indeed, whereas he discourages his fellow practitioners from "engaging in turf wars" among themselves (Tlou 2011), he calls on them to "protect… our profession from invasion by unqualified laypersons calling themselves psychotherapists and hypnotherapists and other kinds of healers of the mind and soul" (Tlou 2011). Even so, Tlou's bread metaphor does not signify a latent commercialist instinct: his point is that "[w]e have lost sight of the developmental role our profession could play in creating a better society" (Tlou 2011).

A Different Kind of "Relevance"

PsySSA's presidents and guest speakers repeatedly deployed a *market* discourse that concentrated on commercial interests (Veldsman 1996), global competitiveness (Asmal 2001; Mkhatshwa 2000), and the discipline's international standing (Mkhize 2010; Sibaya 2004). References to the past were prominent, too, and animated a competing discourse of

civic responsibility (e.g. Badat 2002; Mkhize 2007; Tlou 2011; Tsedu 2003)—but taken as a whole, the hegemonic discourse within PsySSA's discursive order was that of the market, with "relevance" shifting closer to economics than politics (Painter and van Ommen 2008).

The seeming proliferation of market discourse in post-apartheid psychology reflects important shifts in the country's political, economic, and higher education visions. During the late 1980s, the ruling National Party (NP) and the banned African National Congress (ANC) held secret "talks about talks," motivated partly by American and Soviet behind-the-scenes involvement but also by a shared concern about the social cost of economic decline.[4] Soon enough, by the early 1990s, the ANC had converted to the so-called "Washington Consensus," thanks to the efforts of diplomats, the corporate sector, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank (Louw 2004).[5] In 1993, the Congress—in partnership with the NP and corporate "super salesmen"—endorsed a secret protocol that favored "trickle-down" economics (Terreblanche 2002). ANC leaders were anxious to bring about a speedy political settlement—Zulu federalists and the white Right were threatening to derail the fragile negotiation process—and found themselves pressured into making economic concessions that read "like the wish list of a corporate sector desperate to resolve its 20-year-long accumulation crisis" (Terreblanche 2002, p. 97). To be sure, the party did offer the interventionist Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) as its 1994 election manifesto—but two years after winning the elections, the Ministry of Finance unveiled an alternative program called Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR), which, "decorated with all the trimmings of globalisation, … represent[ed] an almost desperate attempt to attract [foreign direct investment]" (Terreblanche 2002, p. 114).

While the view of some is that, since 1994, South Africa's ruling political class has "enthusiastically embraced the philosophy of the late capitalist 'free market'" (Bertelsen 1998, p. 221), it is equally true that the ANC was unfortunate enough to come to power at a time when the project of global capitalism was already operating at full tilt (Louw 2004). Caught between the expectations of a socialist-developmentalist constituency and those of an international neoliberal orthodoxy, the party found itself in an impossible position. "[C]heckmated by the power of globalized capital and the white [corporate] establishment" (Louw 2004, p. 198), the ANC-led government resorted to a policy of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) to uplift *some*—rather than *all*—black South Africans. What appeared

to be multiracial capitalism was, in effect, "blurred racial capitalism" (Louw 2004, p. 178)—but the semblance of upward mobility it created was sufficient, for the time being, to stabilize the economic system.

The end of isolation impacted powerfully on the South African academy, too. Persuaded by the Mode 2 thesis (Gibbons et al. 1994), a group of prominent policy scholars developed a series of influential papers on higher education that encouraged the adoption of the new mode of knowledge production (Jansen 2002).[6] It was clear that, despite the traditional "disciplinary" discourse's continued domination of the country's higher education landscape, the growing influence of the "credit exchange" discourse could no longer be denied (Ensor 2004). In keeping with state priorities, the academy came increasingly to assess its teaching, research, and community service outputs in terms of their global competitiveness, while notions of academic freedom and social emancipation assumed largely rhetorical significance (Singh 2001). International best practice "would overrun the national reform agenda for higher education like a flood through a hole in the wall" (Maassen and Cloete 2002, p. 15). The "public good" benefits of higher education were superseded by economic imperatives; "social relevance" was overlooked in favor of "market relevance." All the while, the contradiction persisted of institutional reform that was rationalized in entrepreneurial terms and mission statements that continued to express these very institutions' commitment to social transformation.

For their part, South African psychologists adjusted rapidly to the demands of the new dispensation, but to enquire on that basis whether PsySSA betrayed its social mandate is unhelpful. Problems of definition do not allow for satisfactory answers as it is by no means certain, when speaking of the "public good," "which public," or "whose good" is intended (Calhoun 1998, p. 20). Furthermore, it should be noted that six of the nine addresses presented in this chapter were delivered by non-PsySSA office bearers, five of whom were not psychologists. Since PsySSA has no control over what its invited speakers choose to say in their addresses—and with only three presidential addresses sourced for a period spanning 17 years—it cannot be concluded that the association has endorsed "market relevance" at the expense of "social relevance." To make such a determination, other forms of data would need to be examined, such as strategic plans, policy documents, minutes of meetings, and the like. It suffices, rather, to note that the reliance on market discourse at PsySSA congresses mirrors the managerialist ethic that now pervades South African

politics, economics, and higher education. And, since globalization as neoliberalism and localization as Afrocentrism have become ideologically compatible at a moment in world history when many claim that the "economic imperative… will sweep all before it" (Singh 2001, p. 20), the "social relevance" over which apartheid-era psychologists agonized, may well have become an irrelevance of the past.

For the period in question—and keeping in mind the many addresses that proved untraceable—it would appear that calls for "social relevance" at PsySSA congresses featured neither disagreements about cognitive interests nor debates on the respective merits of basic and applied psychology. At first glance, that would appear to confound this book's basic theoretical argument—that controversies over cognitive interests, disputes between the basic and applied sciences, and conditions of social upheaval intersect to generate appeals for "social relevance." However, it is important to note that, unlike previous psychological associations in South Africa that were established as *scientific* societies—in which questions of disciplinarity assume central importance—PsySSA is primarily a *professional* body representing psychology professionals. By its own account, the association is "a trade union for the discipline [that] negotiates with relevant bodies to increase tariffs and the representation of psychologists and is nationally accredited to provide training and continuing education courses according to the changing needs of psychologists" (http://www.psyssa.com/aboutus/history.asp). Moreover, since a majority of the addresses in this chapter was delivered by non-psychologists, one can hardly expect to encounter deliberations on such theoretical matters. The fact that an idiom of "social relevance" survived in the absence of these questions, then, does not contradict this book's central claim, though it does raise the problem of how to interpret such talk. In this regard, it is telling that three of the four speakers who used the language of "social relevance" were—again—not psychologists; they were referencing an unending national catastrophe characterized by poverty, inequality, unemployment, and violence rather than a recurring theme in the history of psychology. Although PsySSA continues to cite "social relevance" as one of its core principles, on the evidence presented in this chapter, the principle that inspired progressive psychologists in the 1980s has since been surpassed by a market-driven form of "relevance."

Notes

1. Translated from the original Afrikaans.
2. A *sangoma* is a South African traditional healer for whom the supernatural world plays an important part in the etiology and treatment of illnesses.
3. The quote in the latter half of this excerpt is from Singh (2001).
4. According to scenario planners, sanctions and falling foreign investment could have precipitated all-out revolution.
5. At the time of its unbanning in 1990, the ANC favored a socialist economic dispensation.
6. According to the Mode 2 thesis, knowledge production in the final quarter of the twentieth century came to be organized in fundamentally different ways. Context-driven, transdisciplinary, innovative, and highly reflexive, the new regime was the result of a globalizing world economy, increased economic competition, and changing public policies. What Etzkowitz (e.g. 2001) calls a "second academic revolution" that began in the 1970s and took off in the 1980s was, theoretically, a search for "relevant" knowledge (Hessels and van Lente 2008). Beginning in the USA, an academic revolution predicated on the capitalization of knowledge spread throughout the world. In Thatcherite Britain,

   > [*t*]*he universities, long suspected by Conservatives of being incubators of socialism, were particular targets. They, too, were told to become entrepreneurial. Academics were to be useful members of the society, contributing directly to the national goal of wealth-creation. The government, which finances the main funding councils of research, has made it clear that research, which aids the nation's profitability, should be given priority.... Entrepreneurial professors are the order of the day. Academics compete to obtain research contracts. Funding is not sought in order to do research, but research is done in order to get funding*. (Billig 1996, p. 8)

   The standard account is that calls for "relevance" originated in a context of global economic competition and scientific achievement, with universities forced to adopt a third industry-driven mission that complemented the first two missions of teaching and research. But the less-cited version is that appeals for "relevance" emerged in response to widespread socioeconomic turmoil and that Gibbons et al. (1994) "might not only present too Manichean a picture, but also an overly-optimistic vision of the changes affecting science and society today" (Pestre 2003, p. 246). The result was that a discourse produced under conditions of social alienation was assimilated into a reinvigorated "spirit of capitalism" (ibid., p. 252). Reminiscent of Benda's (2007) treasonous intellectuals and Marcuse's (1965) repressive tolerance, "engaged scholarship"—known

otherwise as "social responsiveness"—was commodified into a series of signposts on the road to tenure. Known variously as *finalization science* (Böhme et al. 1983), *strategic research* (Irvine and Martin 1984), *post-normal science* (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1994), *Mode 2* (Gibbons et al. 1994; Nowotny et al. 2001), *post-academic science* (Ziman 2000), *academic capitalism* (Slaughter and Leslie 1997), the *triple helix* (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 1997), and *systems of innovation* (Edquist and Hommen 1999), the new regime's significance remains open to interpretation.

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CHAPTER 10

Conclusion

Social relevance: We encourage a multiplicity of opinions and seek ways to incorporate the voices and experiences of all communities and avenues of psychology.

(PsySSA's Vision, Mission and Value Statement)

A History of "Relevance"

This book has approached talk of "relevance" in psychology as an indicator of social unrest and, simultaneously, a discursive phenomenon. As far as can be determined, it represents the first attempt to historicize and theorize appeals for "relevance," despite these being part and parcel of the international history of psychology. It was noted in Chapter 1, for example, that the pursuit of "relevance" framed the activities of American and British psychologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Then, in Chapter 2, the emergence of a more recent iteration of "relevance" was traced. In particular, the chapter described how the 1960s' appeal for "relevance" in American psychology was reproduced in Western Europe as psychologists in those parts of the world struggled to relate their undertakings to the social turmoil that engulfed them. The chapter went further in observing how psychologists in the Third World experienced analogous difficulties in adapting a Euro-American package to meet the developmental needs of newly independent nations, triggering calls for "relevance" in the disciplinary hinterlands. In short, questions were being asked everywhere about the value of psychology in a rapidly changing world.

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In Chapter 3, this preponderance of "relevance"-speak was theorized in terms of the discipline's lasting difficulty defining its subject matter and cognitive interest, its dependence on a basic science for its scientific pedigree, and its chronic inability to accommodate the social world. Calls for "relevance," that is, assumed that psychology *should* intervene in the "real world," but since social "reality" was only accessible via language, an argument was also made that "relevance" had to be credentialed discursively, which went some way toward explaining the interminability of debates about "relevance." As much as "relevance" spoke to issues of materiality, its rhetorical quality could not be circumvented, necessitating a critical realist understanding of the concept that was epistemologically relativist yet ontologically realist.

Over the next six chapters, a historical case study of "relevance" in South African psychology was presented. In keeping with the book's definition of "relevance," namely, "the expected value [disciplinary activities] will have for society" (Hessels et al. 2009, p. 388), 45 presidential, opening, and keynote addresses delivered at national psychology congresses between 1948 and 2011 were collected. The decision to make use of official addresses as a data source was based on the assumption that psychology congresses represented, in principle, fora at which one would have expected the relationship between the discipline and the broader public to be discussed. In turn, Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis was selected as an analytic frame on the grounds that it made provision for textual/rhetorical, discursive, and social levels of analysis.

Chapter 4 outlined, for the period concerned, three dominant themes in South African psychology as expressed in these addresses. First, the discipline was widely interpreted as having failed to meet its social responsibilities. Second, psychologists favored individual or social levels of analysis in accordance with prevailing political formations. And third, the discipline's traditional scientist–practitioner divide was overlaid with English–Afrikaner animosities. Apart from the resonance of these themes with disciplinary trends in many parts of the world, the chapter concluded by raising doubts about the possibility of subaltern agency in the apartheid-era debate about "relevance."

Chapter 5 revisited a pivotal moment in the history of psychology in South Africa, namely, the South African Psychological Association–Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (SAPA–PIRSA) split of 1962. It observed that the schism involved more than the question

of integrating black psychologists into the ranks of SAPA but, rather, a fundamental conflict over the relationship of psychology to the broader public. Detailing the discursive confrontation between, on the one hand, an Anglicized psychologist of a theoretical bent and, on the other, an Afrikaner colleague with more practical concerns, the chapter demonstrated how competing cognitive interests, a basic–applied antipathy, and a changing political landscape could eventuate in an explosive debate about "relevance."

Chapter 6 attempted to reconstruct the discursive commitments of Anglophone and Afrikaner psychologists prior to the split. It noted how, in the 1950s, Afrikaner psychologists were advancing a *professionalist* discourse of public service that was concerned, clearly, with "social relevance"—correcting a common misperception that the South African call for "relevance" originated in Anglophone universities of the 1980s. But although an Afrikaner government had been in power since 1948, these psychologists avoided Afrikaner nationalist discourse in the same way that National Party (NP) politicians downplayed their republican ambitions in order to broaden their constituency. English-speaking psychologists, by contrast, promoted a discourse of *disciplinarity* that was preoccupied with the structure and content of the discipline—typical of apartheid-era liberals who preferred reason and moderation to outright political involvement. Accordingly, the chief ingredients of the split were already present in the 1950s—specifically, antagonistic readings of the goals of psychological science and a language divide that pitted theoretical against applied psychologists—although an all-out struggle for "relevance" did not materialize due to the lack of a facilitative "ecological niche."

Chapter 7 described how, in the 1960s, Afrikanerdom grew bolder. Now that a republic had been declared—and given the looming threats of capitalism, communism, and egalitarianism—PIRSA speakers would not countenance the prospect of a racially integrated discipline. Their concern for the survival of the Afrikaner *volk* and, by extension, the preservation of apartheid rule, led them to articulate a *volksdiens* discourse that called for "ethnic-national relevance" in psychological investigations. This insistence on research of "ethnic-national relevance" reflected, moreover, a longstanding theoretical dispute with Anglophone psychologists whose preference was for a basic psychology of international "relevance." By the 1970s, however, the apartheid state had to contend with one crisis after another. The neutralization of the "British bogeyman," the *volk*'s economic stratification, cultural upheaval, and inept political

leadership oversaw the parallel unraveling of PIRSA ideology. Addresses became less concerned with South African politics: "ethnic-national relevance" was replaced with a generic "social relevance" whose points of departure were now anomie, Western capitalism, and a growing technocratic order. Later still, by the mid-1970s, the idea of "social relevance" lost any semblance of coherence.

Chapter 8 documented the divergent politics of South African psychologists in the 1980s—a turning point in the struggle against apartheid that would witness the resurrection of "social relevance." Influenced by the United Democratic Front (UDF) politics, Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) speakers promoted a *liberationist* discourse that blamed apartheid policy for mental health problems, generating a sense of obligation that encouraged psychologists to participate in mass politics. In contrast, PASA officials interpreted "social relevance" in politically conservative terms. They endorsed, variously, a *professionalist* discourse that sought to consolidate the profession by meeting the general mental health needs of the South African public; a discourse of *disciplinarity* that filtered political questions through the depoliticizing lens of the discipline; a *cultural* discourse that, while advocating the importance of studying black Africans, lapsed into racial "othering"; and a *salvation* discourse that appropriated "social relevance" as a means to reinvigorating a reactionary discipline. PASA's almost studied aversion to politics replicated the apartheid state's technocratic turn in the late 1970s and early 1980s when Prime Minister Botha adopted a "new language of legitimation." Invisibilizing "race," the official "Total Strategy" discourse embodied a technocratic managerialism that would saturate the discursive practices of many white South Africans. Against a backdrop of state terrorism, PASA's technical and practical cognitive interests clashed with OASSSA's emancipatory goals; whereas both associations paid attention to professional matters, PASA's intradisciplinary inflection differed strikingly from OASSSA's applied, populist orientation.

Chapter 9 recounted how the quest for "social relevance" in the post-apartheid years took shape via a discourse of *civic responsibility*. Considered unresolved, the country's brutal past was primed for the ministrations of socially conscious psychologists. Yet the discursive order of Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) speakers was governed by a *market* discourse that prescribed, correspondingly, a form of "market relevance." What was important were "international accolades," "global competitiveness," and "improvement in tariffs," with a matching focus on "our core

products," "service delivery," "fostering productivity," and "meeting targets." Upon returning to the international community, South Africa's political, economic, and higher education philosophies were forced to conform to the stipulations of a neoliberal hegemony. Dictating the capitalization of knowledge, a new mode of knowledge production ruled the roost—and psychologists everywhere were expected to play by the rules. A form of "market relevance" regulated their order of discourse that—since it was indifferent to disputes over cognitive interests and other disciplinary bifurcations—was theoretically distinct from all previous forms of "relevance."

Understanding "Market Relevance"

The constitutional mélange of an indefinable cognitive interest, a basic–applied divide, and an asocial disposition, along with worldwide conditions of social turmoil, suggest that questions about the "social relevance" of psychology are likely to linger. Simultaneously, however, the marketization of institutions of higher education has led to "market relevance" becoming an important arbiter of "relevant" knowledge. Already in the latter decades of the twentieth century, philosophers and sociologists of science began noticing certain changes to the then dominant mode of knowledge production—in particular, a growing spirit of intersectoral collaborativeness. In the USA and elsewhere, the key drivers of this process were the globalizing economy, increased economic competition, and changing public policies (Kleinman and Vallas 2001). Indeed, "[t]he fiscal crisis of the welfare states and the neoliberal course of the Reagan and Thatcher governments made the battle against budget deficits and against government spending into a political priority" (Lorenz 2012, p. 599). With state sponsorship of education on the wane, universities turned increasingly to industry for financial backing while the "social relevance" sought by critical students was converted into the "economic relevance [of] business and industry in the knowledge society" (ibid., p. 600).

It has become a tenet of faith that universities have "to operate (under government pressure) as if they were ordinary businesses competing to sell their products to consumers" (Fairclough 1993, p. 143). Tuition fees have risen, teaching loads have increased, untenured staff have been "bought in" to manage those loads, and research practices have been commodified to a considerable degree (Lorenz 2012). The doctrine of scientific disinterestedness must contend, now, with the challenge of a "production-line

model of research" (Couldry 2011, p. 41) in which "impact"—as defined by policy and economic considerations—is the primary measure of research value, while ubiquitous ranking tables for citations, individual researchers, and entire institutions contribute still further to the "McDonaldization" of universities (Lorenz 2012).

Inevitably, a wave of commentaries has attempted to theorize this changing ethos of higher education that appears to signal an unprecedented reordering of the relationship between science and society. Among the various explanations, "Mode 2" has emerged as the leader of the pack (Hessels and van Lente 2008) and is understood to supplement—rather than replace outright—the old dispensation. Having achieved its apotheosis in the form of Newtonian physics, "Mode 1" approaches the realm of the rarefied with ritualized "claims to exceptionalism" (Becher and Trowler 2001, p. xiv). It develops, refines, and preserves its own sociocognitive rules, determines without external consultation the problems worth investigating, identifies its own practitioners, and decides for itself what counts as "good science"—with problems and their solutions being articulated from the vantage point of isolated disciplines. By contrast, Mode 2 is pursued within highly localized "contexts of application" (Gibbons et al. 1994, p. 3), employing a transdisciplinary posture in which a range of disciplines trains a collective gaze on a given problem, and theoretical and practical aspects engage with one another in an iterative manner. Mode 2 is committed, also, to social accountability as "[t]he research towards the resolution of [Mode 2] types of problem has to incorporate options for the implementation of… solutions and these are bound to touch the values and preferences of different individuals and groups that have been seen as traditionally outside of the scientific and technological system" (ibid., p. 7). A prime consideration when assessing the value of a Mode 2 solution, then, is its social acceptability, in contrast to the internal peer review mechanism that endorses Mode 1 knowledge. Whereas success according to Mode 1 logic is a function of "the traditional [criterion] of scientific excellence" (ibid., p. 18), Mode 2 only allows room for usefulness and efficiency.

The Mode 2 utopia of transdisciplinarity represents in part a nostalgic reconstellation of the days when the "unification of science" was still thought possible (Gibbons et al. 1994). From this perspective, transdisciplinarity is a unique response to the needs of knowledge societies in a post-modern age of uncertainty, complexity, and risk (Maasen and Lieven 2006). Consistent programmatically with Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff's

"triple helix of university-industry-government relations" (1997, p. 1), transdisciplinarity attenuates the "social distance" between science and society by rendering the former "socially accountable" to an "audit society" (Maasen and Lieven 2006, p. 406). Yet the production of "socially robust knowledge" (Nowotny et al. 2001) involves an epistemological stand-off between democratic representation and scientific credibility. While public governance of science in the form of "[r]ound tables, ethics commissions and citizens' juries" (Maasen and Lieven 2006, p. 406) constitutes an *agora* of sorts—that is, "the public space in which 'science meets the public,' and in which the public 'speaks back' to science" (Nowotny et al. 2001, p. 247)—it also situates science in a neoliberal, post-welfare world in which *enterprise* becomes the name of the game (Maasen and Lieven 2006). Critics argue that Mode 2 embodies an apolitical account of knowledge production that appears to naturalize the change process, perpetuating a form of false consciousness (Pestre 2003). For them, the Mode 2 disposition—networking, mobility, adaptability, creativity, and egalitarianism—conceals a revamped capitalist ethic that has marketized the "social relevance" agenda of the "May 68" generation.

The exact significance of the Mode 2 knowledge regime remains the subject of controversy. For some, the differences between the two modes offer compelling evidence that science was once "an autonomous enclave that is now being crushed under the weight of narrowly commercial or political interests" (Gibbons et al. 1994, p. 22). And yet science has never lived "outside" the social fabric: it has seldom been a reluctant partner, influencing society and being influenced all the while. At the very least, one can conclude that the present climate is no longer as accommodating of "ivory tower" academics (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 1997), the phenomenal success of the scientific mission forcing them, ironically, into cultivating a business savvy capable of attracting the attentions of strings-attached funders (Barnes 1985).

Local Implications

Although "social relevance"—one of PsySSA's core values—continues to animate discussions among South African psychologists, almost no attention is paid to the "market relevance" that has infiltrated the association's order of discourse. A hegemonic discourse is obscured in what appears to be a case of the fish being last to discover the ocean. Meanwhile, psychologists continue to advance the well-worn discourse of civic responsibility,

asking why, despite their best intentions, psychology in the country is no closer to meeting the mental health requirements of the majority of South Africans. At the time of writing, it costs sixty dollars for a fifty-minute visit to a clinical psychologist, whereas half the population survives on less than two dollars a day. With a shortage of psychologists in rural areas, unaffordable taxi fares to get to urban centers, long waiting times at clinics in those centers, mental health professionals that cannot speak indigenous African languages, and employers unwilling to lose employees for a day, the odds are stacked against South Africans who *want* to avail themselves of counseling services. For the many who do *not* wish to do so, there are non-structural barriers to contend with, including stigma around mental health problems, misconceptions about the nature of psychological services, and the middle-class logic of a discipline at odds with the living conditions of its patients.

This book does little to address the obstacles that most South Africans encounter before making it into the consulting room. What it offers, instead, is what Norman Fairclough calls "critical language awareness," providing psychologists with an opportunity to become more aware of their discursive practices. When one recognizes the constitutive quality of discourse—along with the existence of a hegemonic market discourse that is unconcerned with the lives of subjugated communities—one is better placed to create a profession that is accessible to all South Africans. Invisible discourses cannot be contested, "consciousness is the first step towards emancipation" (Fairclough 2001, p. 1). It does not suffice for a critical psychology to study the discourses that circulate in the public domain when psychology itself remains beyond interrogation. Until the discipline becomes the subject of its own reflexive gaze, its marketization will continue without relent as the country's majority gets left behind.

Psychologists who were once in the vanguard of the anti-apartheid struggle now dismiss talk of "relevance" as the discourse of trauma: the war is over, they say, we need to move on. They are both right and wrong. For it is not the case that, with sufficient effort, the "social" will eventually supplant the "market" when it comes to the floating signifier of "relevance"; the time may well have arrived for us to dispense with the idiom of "relevance" altogether. On the other hand, disparities between the haves and have-nots are rising all the time and—if they are to be checked—will require some form of challenge to the prevailing market hegemony.

In this regard—if alternative imaginings of the future are to emerge—critical histories of post-apartheid psychology are needed that will reveal

how "the present is just as strange as the past" (Kendall and Wickham 1999, p. 4). As it happens, the number of historical writings on South African psychology has declined significantly over the last 10 years. It is as though history itself has ended, its ascendant trajectory seeming to confirm the Enlightenment postulate of it having a point. Until the 1970s, historical accounts were largely of the celebratory "Great Man" genre, uncritical of the repressive politics of the day (van Ommen 2008). Then, in the 1980s, descriptions of the discipline's complicity with apartheid ideology (Bulhan 1981) began to appear. The early 1990s witnessed a proliferation of similar works (Duncan 1993; Foster 1991; Nicholas 1990) though critical pieces would be published at ever increasing intervals in the post-apartheid years (Duncan et al. 2001). The spirit of critique did not last as the story of South African psychology came to function as a morality tale (Cooper 2014; Cooper and Nicholas 2012), the "hidden transcripts" of both the powerful and the powerless remaining out of earshot (Scott 1990). The struggle was over[1]—history was over[2]—and the dearth of historical writing on post-apartheid psychology proved as much (Painter and van Ommen 2008).

As for the *cultural* iteration of "social relevance," the search for an "African" perspective continues to loom large in South African psychology's struggle for "relevance"—particularly now that talk of "decolonization" has overtaken institutions of higher education. African thinkers the likes of Cheikh Anta Diop, Leopold Senghor, and John Mbiti are routinely lionized in the course of hackneyed arguments about the cultural uniqueness of the continent and its potential as a fountainhead for indigenous psychological theory. A supposedly African *Weltanschauung* provides the intellectual starting point for this new psychology, which, juxtaposed with an equally monolithic Western tradition, is described as past- and present oriented, encouraging harmonious relationships of all kinds, emphasizing the processual nature of personhood, and presuming a sociocentric definition of self (Mkhize 2004). Animating this quest for an African psychology is a desire to reclaim and reassert an inferiorized past, necessitating the renunciation of internalized whiteness and the veneration of one's "own revolting ugliness" (Césaire 1946, p. 65 quoted in Fanon 2008, p. 156).

In post-apartheid South Africa, the "African Renaissance" movement inaugurated by then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, exemplifies this growing celebration of all things local. The idea of a reborn "hopeless continent" first entered the official parlance of the African National

Congress (ANC) in 1997 and was followed in quick succession by an African Renaissance conference in 1998, the establishment of the African Renaissance Institute in 1999, and the launch of the South African Chapter of the African Renaissance in 2000 (Maloka 2001). In his keynote address at the conference, Mbeki (1999) quotes from an article that appeared the day before in the Sunday press:

> *For long our people have suffered untold hardships. For long our collective destiny has been compromised by selfish rulers. This conference should not end up another academic talk-shop irrelevant to the needs of the common man. We want practical solutions to our problems. This is our chance.* (*p. xiii*)

Mbeki aligns himself with the writer's "spirit of impatience" and confirms his belief that the conference participants, "by convening as you have, you have taken all of us an important step forward towards the realisation of our common goal of the renewal of our continent" (ibid.). He hopes for a "new African world which the African renaissance seeks to build... one of democracy, peace and stability, sustainable development and a better life for the people, nonracism and nonsexism, equality among the nations, and a just and democratic system of international governance." (p. xviii). Mbeki calls for the restoration of African pride, lost through centuries of "contempt for the colour black... [W]hat this means is that we must recall everything that is good and inspiring in our past" (p. xx–xxi). It is, moreover, "the enormous brain power" (p. xxi) of Africa that must secure the new century for the continent.

The African Renaissance is, in the first instance, an anti-imperialist project (Maloka 2001): it represents a post-colonial, pan-African protest again global domination and an academy-inspired commitment to locally generated, "socially relevant" solutions. Even so, critics point out that it is unclear who the keepers of the African Renaissance really are. Some are skeptical of its European parallels, others liken its thoroughgoing discourse of reified difference to the divide-and-rule strategy of the apartheid regime, while others still—such as the former president's brother—decry it as "a triumphalist syndrome that afflicts newly liberated African countries" (M. Mbeki 1999, p. 213 quoted in Maloka 2001, p. 2). The political currency of Africanization is hard to miss, its ethnophilosophical inclinations urging a wistful return to "traditional African practices and beliefs" (Maloka 2001, p. 4). The now much-bandied-about feel-good term, *ubuntu*, which stresses the virtues of the communal life, has become the

trade name for a free-source computer operating system. A Zulu *impi* bussed in from the nearest township can put on a spectacle for appreciative Versace-clad tourists in air-conditioned designer shopping malls. The late South African health minister, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, attempts to treat acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) patients with a vegetable cocktail (specifically garlic, beetroot, lemons, and African potatoes), believing that "[w]e cannot use Western models of protocols for research and development" (BBC News 2008). For the Comaroffs (2009) what these self-conscious, stage-managed performances of culture instantiate, is a commodification of ethnicity.

Despite the Freedom Charter rhetoric—"The people shall govern!"—Mbeki never managed to shake the public's impression of him as a tweed-wearing (Gevisser 2007), pipe-smoking "black Englishman" (van Zyl Slabbert 2006 quoted in Butler 2007, p. 271). He was not the first politician to speak "for the people"—nor will he be the last—but in a country where even the vegetation has to be indigenous—the plan for Cape Town is to get rid of the colonizer pine trees surrounding Table Mountain National Park by 2025—one wonders what "cultural relevance" has in store for South African psychology. The allure of continental myth making and the associated demand for "cultural relevance" undermines to some extent the realization of a non-racial society, perpetuating in the eyes of many the same false consciousness propagated by the positive-sounding "theory of separate development." But to even imagine the possibility of a "culturally relevant" psychology, one has to presume that Spivak's subaltern can speak after all—and if that were possible, whether it would make any difference in the end:

> *For me, the question "Who should speak?" is less crucial than "Who will listen?". "I will speak for myself as a Third World person" is an important position for political mobilisation today. But the real demand is that, when I speak from that position, I should be listened to seriously; not with that kind of benevolent imperialism...* (Spivak 1990, p. 59–60)

Whither Psychology?

Although the marketization of higher education will seem anathema to some, it is unlikely to upset psychology's regular order of business. After all, when one considers the discipline's tried-and-tested facility for meeting the administrative needs of powerful social groups, the rise of a neoliberal

rationality within the academy does not appear especially threatening. If anything, psychology's discordant cognitive interests suggest that *internal* challenges are more likely to emerge. As the latest case in point, it is now being claimed that the discipline has constellated itself around the divergent camps of "hard" neurocognitive and "soft" cultural-discursive psychology (Harré and Moghaddam 2012). Commentators suggest that the rise of the neurosciences involves "a shift in human ontology… [that] enables us to govern ourselves differently" (Rose 2007, p. 82). Yet the dominant notion of a "plastic" human brain is not to be celebrated because "plasticity firmly situates the subject in a normative, neoliberal ethic of personal self-care and responsibility linked to modifying the body" (Pitts-Taylor 2010, p. 639). The neurosciences, in other words, endorse a neoliberal outlook that replaces "an ethic of state care with an emphasis on individual responsibility and market fundamentalism" (ibid.). Some claim that, at the heart of neuroscience discourse is an "economy of the brain" (Rose and Abi-Rached 2013, p. 16), which, since it centers on the social *cost* of brain disease, is not only of evident "market relevance" but dovetails neatly with the empirical-analytic interests of prediction and control. On the other hand, cultural-discursive psychology recognizes "the primacy of representation… and its locus in situated social practices rather than abstracted mental models" (Edwards 1995, p. 63). Whereas neurocognitive psychology is concerned with observation and measurement, cultural-discursive psychology is preoccupied with interpretation—the excavation of *meaning*—leading to the corresponding interests of understanding and critique. Accordingly, the cultural-discursive pole is viewed in some quarters as synonymous with an emancipatory form of "social relevance."

It is tempting to cast this emergent bifurcation of the discipline as a struggle between "establishment" and "anti-establishment" forces, as if the latter were operating "outside" power (see Foucault 1980). Crucially, however, the "market relevance" of neurocognitive psychology is no less "social" than the "social relevance" of critical-discursive psychology; each of the Habermasian knowledge traditions claims to want to "change the world." Moreover, the academy of the twenty-first century has been transformed into a battleground in which all are implicated; both the "hard" sciences *and* "soft" humanities that constitute the "temporally dominated" disciplines are engaged in perpetual struggle over intellectual and academic capital (Bourdieu 1988; 2001). It would be naïve to imagine that cultural-discursive psychologists are any less entrepreneurial than their neurocognitive counterparts. In any case, the longstanding conflict between

basic and applied psychology—often overlaid with competing cognitive interests—serves as a reminder that psychologists have been at war with each other since the very beginning. The Bourdieusian model, that is, does not predict the commencement—but the intensification—of hostilities within the discipline.

For reasons described in this book, debates about "social relevance" in psychology are unavoidable: first, the discipline has failed to confirm either its cognitive interest or its subject matter; second, psychology is dependent on a disinterested, "socially irrelevant" basic science for the authorization of its knowledge claims; third, the discipline has always struggled to accommodate sociality on account of its natural scientific methodolatry; and fourth, none of the above would have mattered had it not been for the litany of social upheavals that has dominated world history over the last half century. Nevertheless, the present-day scramble for capital has transformed "social relevance" into something of a chimera, overused to the extent of becoming all things to all comers, its revolutionary potential assimilated into a hegemonic neoliberal rationality. For those who believe in the ideal of an emancipatory psychology, "relevance" as a transformative concept has passed its sell-by date. They argue that the capitalist supremacy is one half of a "fusion" whose complementary aspect is the technological subjugation of nature—and that its overthrow, therefore, can only be achieved by a repudiation of the scientific method (Edgar 2006). Notwithstanding reservations about the unity of that method, such a strategy would almost certainly spell the end of psychology as we know it. But there are others who urge caution on the grounds that talk of "relevance" is a necessary feature of the discipline's constitution. As successive generations of South African psychologists have demonstrated over a period spanning six decades, the rhetorical character of "social relevance" means that it is neither a transcendent principle nor an inherently radical concept, and, since it is rooted in the social, economic, and political exigencies of the day, its meaning can never be finalized.

Although the once subversive quality of "relevance" has been compromised, recent developments in the discipline may offer a way forward. In particular, because of a predilection for pandering to power, psychology finds itself increasingly on the wrong side of history. Whether one has in mind South African psychologists embracing "market relevance," American psychologists involving themselves in the practice of torture, or psychologists in general feeling the pressure to provide funders with statistically significant results, the question of *co-option* arises repeatedly.

With a resurgent scientism gaining traction in the discipline, market fundamentalism displacing all rival ideologies, and intersecting social crises assuming unprecedented proportions, critical psychologists have much to contribute. However, as universities continue to capitulate to the demands of powerful interest groups, critique will bring with it the risk of marginalization, the presence of a heart no longer sufficient when only a spine will do. For if the corrosive influence of co-option is to be repelled by psychologists of conscience, more will be required than speaking truth to power, to borrow Edward Said's reading of the matter. In an irony of note, we may find ourselves having to speak ever more against our own discipline, practicing the same autocritique that we expect of our patients. Indeed, these are interesting times.

Notes

1. Early post-apartheid talk of the "rainbow nation" exemplified this spirit of optimism.
2. Fukuyama's (2006) "end of history" thesis comes to mind, in which democracy becomes an unsurpassable form of governance.

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