I. Background

Psychology of 50's:

-"soft physics": German heritage (Wundt, Fechner, Egginghaus, Titchner)

-applied psychology seen as crude social engineering; done by tinkerers, not thinkers

Call for Social Accountability:

George Miller: urged psychologists to "go public, get real, … be relevant"

-time to stop talking only to other psychologists, writing only for professional journals,

-time to go beyond endless quest for experimental rigor in perfectly designed study to test a theoretically derived hypothesis

-start using a language that most ordinary citizens could understand

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Is this desirable? What are potential drawbacks?

Use of Media:

-according to Zimbardo, the media are the gatekeepers between the best, relevant psychology we want to give away and the public. Need to utilize the different kinds of media that are most appropriate for delivering a specific message to particular target audiences.

-psychologists need to write effective brief press releases, timely op-ed essays, articles for popular magazines, radio, print, TV interviews, video records of research

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS?

How accurately does the media present results from experiments?

Is there something wrong with the fact that "a PSA on MTV or article in teen magazine will have a broader impact than detailed journal articles"?

-Kimura studies on gender & spatial skills; TV/movie depictions of psychological issues
II. Fundamental Contributions of Psychology

A). Testing and Assessment:
- development and reliance on objective, quantifiable means of assessing human talents, abilities, strengths, weaknesses

- Binet and IQ tests; SAT; GRE

QUESTIONS: political misuse, overuse, accuracy issues???

B). Positive Reinforcement:
- punishment has gradually been replaced in schools with positive RF
- Animal training

C). Psychological Therapies:
- Freud and 'talk therapy"
- CBT; systematic desensitization; group therapies

D). Self-Directed Change:
- "self-help" books

QUESTION: How can you differentiate between "pop Psych" and those with real empirical basis to back claims

E). Dynamic development across the Lifespan:
- view of children has changed- from "small adult" to person with age-related development periods that depend on interactions with environment, other people, mental stimulation, etc.

F). Parenting:
- parenting style advice; necessity for secure attachments

- effects of same sex parents

G). Psychological Stress:
H). Unconscious Motivation:
- Freud
- Split-Brain
- Subliminal Effects

I). Prejudice and Discrimination:
- factors leading to maintenance and undoing of prejudice and discrimination

J). Humanizing Factory Work:
- I/O research changing monotonous and dangerous assembly lines with small work teams

K). Political polling:
- Gallop Polls, etc

III. Real World Relevance
- www.psychology matters.org
  compendium of research and theory translated into practice

A). Human factors: colors of emergency vehicles

B). Criminal Justice:
- unreliability of eyewitness testimony led to guidelines for collection of unbiased and accurate testimony
  - Stanford Prison Study & Milgram Experiment: demonstrates power of social situation and institutional power

C). Education:
- "Jigsaw classrooms" as strategy to decrease segregation

D). Health:
- PTSD
Stanley Fish Essay: Psychology and Torture (Posted NYTimes, Nov 9, 2008)

Synopsis of his argument:

“In Sept 2008, APA voted to ban members from participating in interrogations in US Detentions centers

Previously, didn’t ban participation, but passed resolution listing a number of methods they should not be involved in: sleep deprivation; sexual humiliation; exploitation of phobia; loud music; harsh lights; mock executions”

Why did AMA and American Psychiatric Association ban participation long before psychology??

Fish’s view: others are primarily “healing” professions; psychology is a behavioral science

Product not mental health exclusively, but knowledge

“Are there limits to uses to which these skills might be put?”

“Are psychologists experts for hire… or expertise only to be deployed for benign purposes”

Is there a line between coercive techniques and facilitative techniques?

“Moment psychological knowledge of causes and effects is put into strategic action is the moment when psychology ceases to become a science and becomes an extension of someone’s agenda”

Comparison of Psychological knowledge to rhetoric- the art of persuasion.

Rhetoric manuals were tools for lawyers- taught tricks of the trade
 -how to make an argument
- how to disguise weakness of an argument
- what to do when facts not on your side
- how to modulate voice, position body

In rhetorica Herennium: “it was in order to discover the truth that our ancestors wished to make use of torture”
-rationalization of torture with “appearance of plausibility”

Rhetoric is successful because of ‘defects of our hearers’ which rhetoric exploits

Psychology, according to Fish, “mapped and scientifically described” the susceptibility of “men and women to base appeals”

Can the use of psychology be defended?

Defense of rhetoric: techniques it catalogs are morally neutral; should not be condemned because some people misuse it.

“we just supply the knowledge; what is done with it is someone else’s responsibility”

APA position on torture: regards transformation of psychological insights into torture as crossing a line.

Is line crossed whenever knowledge of psychology made into technology of persuasion?

“Applied Psychology can never be clean”