Culture, history, and psychology: Some historical reflections and research directions

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Abstract
Psychologists have typically narrated their discipline’s history so as to glorify an experimental method, which analyzes the mind independently of cultural and historical factors. In line with Jahoda’s sociocultural sensitivity to psychology, this article critically interrogates the plausibility for this vision of psychology as cut off from wider social processes, and offers an alternative based on a re-appropriation of concepts and methods from psychology’s past that highlight cultural processes. This approach is illustrated with a study of how people remember history narratives on the basis of cultural resources taken over from social groups they belong to, and which thus embed them within a stream of history. Both psychologists’ narratives of their discipline and people’s everyday memory of history are shown to be motivated toward the justification of particular visions of social reality.

Keywords
History narratives, experiments, cultural resources, Bartlett, repeated reproduction, Irish conflict

In historical perspective the narrow natural-science ethos in psychology—an ethos that resolutely ignores culture, and remained dominant for a considerable part of the present century—can be seen as probably constituting a temporary aberration. (Jahoda, 1992, p. 189)
Taking account of anthropological contributions, was not, and still is not shared by mainstream social psychologists; and I think this explains at least in part why I have remained at the margins of social psychology throughout my career. (Jahoda, 2016, p. 366)

Jahoda devoted his long and distinguished career to exploring precisely what psychologists of his generation had ignored: the complex relationship between culture and mind. He did this firstly through his pioneering studies in West Africa and secondly through his broad-ranging works in the history of ideas. With the latter, he showed how discussions on the cultural nature of mind extended back into antiquity and the recent (re)emergence of interest in the subject could be traced to the enlightenment (in regards to cross-cultural psychology) and to a German tradition stemming from *Naturphilosophie* (in the case of cultural psychology) (see esp. Jahoda & Krewer, 1997). Although “culture” is variably understood in all cases, there is consensus that it is something that is taken over from society, rather than being innate, and is transmitted across generations with modifications (Jahoda, 1992, p. 5ff). This being the case, we point out the importance of embedding minds within history and what this means in practice. Thus, our distinctive contribution here is to explore different ways in which history is important to and can be used by a culturally inclusive psychology.

The present article aims to unpack the idea of the cultural formation of mind in relation to history through a number of different points of view: First, we will look at how psychologists relate to their own discipline’s history, including origin myths and forms of ancestor worship (esp. those defining psychology as an experimental discipline). In this context, we highlight how the “social” was decoupled from culture and history in early 20th-century psychology. Second, a contrasting understanding of the “social” is explored through Bartlett’s (1923) early vision of a societal psychology that unabashedly considers individual experience and action within a historical perspective—and as such can be considered a forerunner to cultural psychology. For these reasons, it was a standard feature in Jahoda’s various histories of psychology narratives. Third, we use concepts from cultural psychology and Bartlett’s method of repeated reproduction to investigate how people remember history narratives with the help of cultural resources acquired in interactions with other group members. We conclude by advocating for a culturally sensitive psychology and for a history of the discipline in which its sociocultural dimension can be brought back to the fore.

**Origin myths and ancestor worship: Psychologists recount their discipline’s history**

Historical inquiry into psychology’s past is unavoidably connected to present concerns of the discipline and the interests of the person doing the history. We cannot escape entering a stream of interpretation, resources, and set of interests that precede us (Gadamer, 1989; Ricoeur, 1981). However, this does not mean that
all historical accounts are equally convincing or meet professional standards of scholarship. For example, Jahoda’s work demonstrates what a depth and breadth of knowledge in historical material can bring to a reading of both well-known and forgotten figures of the past. This contrasts to what is often called a “Whig history,” where the present is projected back into the past in order to glorify the current situation, a kind of history that speaks primarily to a group’s collective memory and identity project (Brescó, 2017). There are many examples of it in psychology, such as the declaration that psychology began in 1879 with Wilhelm Wundt’s founding of an experimental laboratory in Leipzig or that the first social psychology study was done by Triplett (1898) on social facilitation, though Triplett himself hardly saw it as dealing with “social” phenomena (Haines & Vaughan, 1979).

This and much of psychologists’ myth-making about its history has served the particular purpose of arguing that the discipline became a science when it adopted an experimental method (Danziger, 1990; Farr, 1996). This can already be seen in Ebbinghaus’s (1908, p. 3) famous dictum that “psychology has a long past, but only a short history,” by which he aimed to draw a sharp line between metaphysical speculation about the mind and its investigation through scientific (viz. experimental) methods. Ebbinghaus was at this time himself involved in a public dispute with Dilthey (a friend of Wundt) over the proper methods of psychology, the latter arguing that the experimental method was limited and that we could learn more about human beings by looking to history (see Jahoda, 1992b, p. 168ff). Interestingly, Ebbinghaus’ (1885/1913) own classic work Memory: A contribution to experimental psychology does not avoid continuity with the “long past”: although his sense-syllable method was a new innovation, his conceptualization of memory as a mark on the mind directly follows a tradition of thought going back three millennia to Plato (Danziger, 2008). At least since Ebbinghaus (1908), psychology’s long past has been routinely split from its short history to glorify the use of the experimental method and downgrade other forms of inquiry, especially those highlighting social and cultural processes.1

To illustrate this argument in more recent social psychology, Farr (1996, p.12ff) points to the series of Handbooks of Social Psychology, edited by Lindzey (1954) and Lindzey and Aronson (1968–1969, 1985). Handbooks have a formative influence on socializing successive generations of graduate students into the discipline, and these books are no exception, having gone through three major editions. In the last edition, Allport’s (1954) famous chapter on the history of ideas is followed by a chapter on American institutions of research between 1935 and 1985 (i.e., Jones, 1985). Not only does this separate the long past from the short history, but the story told of this short history is of narrow scope, even within the American scene: it completely ignores traditions of social psychology that are more closely aligned to sociology and other social sciences than psychology, though these tend to be more European than American (we will return to this issue with the Handbooks in relation to their discussion of Bartlett’s work below). Finally, only minor modifications are made to Allport’s chapter 30 years on, signaling that the editors tend to
think of the long past as dead and gone, rather than as a constant force of renewal in the present.

Psychology’s main origin myth is that the discipline began when Wundt opened his laboratory in Leipzig in 1879, marking year zero of psychology’s short history. Disciplines are not born on a single day, but rather emerge over an extended period of time in relation to social conditions (Valsiner, 2012). The institutionalization of psychology happened slowly and in response to other social forces: for example, on the back of the French Revolution in 1806 Herbart offered the first university course in psychology on “Staatswissenschaft” (State science). The first professorship was given in 1860 within the area of Völkerpsychologie (what might be translated as “cultural psychology,” a label Wundt himself considered—Jahoda, 1992, p. 183). In this, we see that the earlier trends in the emerging discipline had much to do with social and cultural issues, and in many ways resemble contemporary cultural psychology (Diriwächter, 2004; Jahoda, 1992; Valsiner, 2012). Wundt saw Völkerpsychologie as a necessary complement to experimental psychology, which he thought should only be applied to sensation and perception, and not higher psychological processes. The importance Wundt placed on Völkerpsychologie grew through his career, such that he spent the last 20 years of his life writing 10 volumes on the subject (dying 2 weeks after the last volume was published), while his students did the laboratory work. Historian of psychology Edwin Boring knew all this very well but nonetheless helped forge the founding myth:

(Wundt) is the first man who without reservation is properly called a psychologist. Before him there had been psychology enough, but no psychologists (…) When we call him a “founder” of experimental psychology, we mean both that he promoted the idea of psychology as an independent science and that he is the senior among psychologists.” (Boring, 1950, p. 316)

It was not long before Wundt’s students transgressed his restrictions on experimentation by applying it to higher psychological processes—what Danziger (1979) called “the positivist repudiation of Wundt.” Ebbinghaus, by contrast, was probably unaware of Wundt’s restrictions when he set out in 1878 to study “memory” (an unscientific term for Wundt) with the experimental method adopted from Fechner’s (1860) *Elements of Psychophysics*. He did this by restricting the meaning of memory to reproduction of some material and thereby ignoring a host of other factors, such as group norms and history. Ebbinghaus (1885/1913) memorized lists of nonsense syllables (meaningful material was memorized too quickly) and explored their retention under a variety of conditions. Rote memorization was a familiar practice to him from his work as a school tutor during the same period. His nonsense syllable method thus shifted the focus from Wundt’s experimental interest in qualitative experience to a quantitative performance. Like a traditional school exam, ideal recall meant a perfect match between inputs and outputs. When performance fell below the ideal, the question was how much “work” was needed to bring it back (Danziger, 2008). Ebbinghaus’s vision of psychology won out over
Wundt’s and Dilthey’s because of its higher valuation of experimentation, use of commonsense terms (e.g., memory) and application to institutions outside the laboratory (viz., education) (Danziger, 2002).

Experimentation as practiced by Ebbinghaus is now firmly entrenched in psychology as the royal road to knowledge, despite dissenting voices (e.g., Harré & Secord, 1972). Jahoda (2016, p. 370ff) has astutely pointed out a number of critiques to its contemporary use: First, it supposed to be capable of establishing causality, but in practice this is rare. Rather what we have is the normative regulation of some process (Brinkmann, 2010). Second, control by manipulation of variables is often illusory, as the most significant “variable” is the social context of an experiment and its implicit norms, which is not open to manipulation. Third, most experimental studies are done on American undergraduate students in psychology with the assumption that the results can be generalized to all of humanity. This is particularly problematic because this sample tends to be an outlier in the whole of humanity rather than at the median point—in other words, psychology studies mostly “WEIRD” people, meaning that they are Western, Education, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). This sampling bias is often justified through the notion of “psychic unity” of humankind; however, the term was earlier employed to mean that humans have equal potential but not that they share the same mentality (Jahoda, 1992, chapter 7). Thus, the contemporary model of experimentation excludes the study of cultural and historical factors. When the notion of the “social” is used in this context it is taken in the weakest sense of short-term effects (usually negative) of small, artificial groups on an individual (Danziger, 1992; Jahoda, 2007, chapter 10). It neglects the older notion of the “social” as norms, values, and traditions of specific social groups that carry a history (Greenwood, 2009). However, an experiment need not be seen as a “social vacuum” (Tajfel, 1972; Wagoner, 2009): it can also be used to highlight the role of the social-cultural in psychological processes, rather than attempting to exclude them. This strategy is powerfully illustrated by the work of Frederic Bartlett, to whom we now turn.

Remembering Bartlett: Toward a culturally and historically sensitive psychology

Bartlett shows up as a key figure in psychology’s traditional history narratives but features even more prominently in Jahoda’s historical accounts. While Jahoda can be credited with shaping the emerging disciplines of cross-cultural and later cultural psychology through his innovative research in Africa that started in the 1950s, Bartlett had made some more preliminary steps in this direction exactly a generation before him. For this reason, Jahoda likely saw a kindred spirit and an immediate predecessor in Bartlett’s innovative research on the relationship between culture and mind. Both figures did field studies that required testing out new methods of research “in the wild,” as well as grappled with such scandalous
topics as witchcraft, magic, and superstition, and their co-existence with so-called rational modes of thought (see Bartlett, 1923; Jahoda, 1968). In numerous works, Jahoda (1992, 2007; 2016) offers an integrative account of Bartlett’s work that highlights the “group-specific” character of the social-cultural shaping of psychological processes, which can be found both in his experiments and theories based on ethnographic data. This contrasts sharply with how Bartlett is typically remembered in the discipline as either an experimental, cognitive psychologist or as a social and cultural psychologist (paralleling the division discussed above).

In the previously mentioned Handbook of Social Psychology (Lindzey & Aronson, 1968, 1985), Costall (1992) points out that five chapters see Bartlett as a conventional cognitive psychologist and six chapters see him as a social and cultural psychologist; there is one chapter that recognizes Bartlett as being both, but these are juxtaposed rather than integrated. In fact, Bartlett set out to develop an integrative psychology that makes flexible use of social and culturally situated experiments, as well as ethnographic data from around the world (Wagoner, 2017). Even his early experiments—now widely remembered as showing that memory is inaccurate or distorted (e.g., Bergman & Roediger, 1999; Schacter, 1996)—were actually first framed as “a contribution to the experimental study of the process of conventionalization” (Bartlett, 1916b). Conventionalization describes how foreign cultural elements (such as decorative art, folk stories, and rituals) change toward existing cultural patterns when they enter a new group. Most famously, Bartlett (1916, 1932) showed how when the Native American folk story War of the Ghosts was repeatedly or serially remembered by people living in Cambridge, it tended to progressively look more like an English story—for example, “hunting seals” becomes “fishing,” and strange elements like “ghosts” are rationalized away.

Thus, these experiments provided a psychological mechanism—based on what Bartlett (1932) referred to as a person’s “effort after meaning”—to help understand an anthropological process (see Rosa, 1996). Similarly, when he came to theorize the experiments as being about remembering, he did not see it as a purely individual process but as occurring through the conventions taken over from one’s social group. Bartlett’s experimental strategy of highlighting the role of participants’ historically embedded meaning-making contrasts starkly with Ebbinghaus’s attempt to remove meaning from memory in order to study it in its purest form. The first chapter of Bartlett’s (1932) Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology, provides a devastating critique of the application of Ebbinghaus’s model of experimentation (borrowed from psychophysics) to the study of higher psychological functions, such as memory. His critique is usually remembered as an argument for “ecologically valid” (Neisser, 1976) experiments. This is not wrong but incomplete: Not only should experiments be brought closer to everyday life activities but should also include how participants’ meaning making carries a history and is part of a wider social process. Contrast this to the typical focus of experimental psychology on how a stimulus causes a given response, without attending to the context in which it occurs or meaning it has for participants.
Rather than his experimental studies, it is his early book *Psychology and Primitive Culture* (Bartlett, 1923) that most clearly outlines the argument for a historically sensitive, social-cultural psychology. He says in no uncertain terms there that in social psychology the unit of analysis should be “the-individual-in-a-given-social-group” (p. 11). By this, he means that human beings cannot be treated as atoms of experience unencumbered by the social-cultural world to which they belong. Instead, they need to be investigated in relation to historically evolving cultural patterns or conventions of the groups of which they are a member. In his own words,

> It is only if we interpret individual to mean pre-social that we can take psychology to be prehistoric. The truth is that there are some individual responses which simply do not occur outside a social group. To look for these outside such a group is to court failure, and leads inevitably to speculation and guess-work. (pp. 12–13)

This argument was here made against approaches to culture that treated it as originating from individual minds, separated off from groups and their history. By contrast, Bartlett thought experience and action come into being already shaped by conventions and history of a specific group, as also illustrated by his experimental studies. Even perception is infused with the cultural patterns through the subjective processes of affection and imagination entering into it. Wundt called this “appreciation,” but the idea goes back even further to Giambattista Vico (Jahoda, 1992, p. 67ff; Tateo, 2017). Bartlett (1916a) had himself discovered it in his early experiments on “perceiving and imagining.” The idea was later taken up by Moscovici (1984) who argued that psychological processes were organized through social representations, such that explaining issues like prejudice through individual causes misses the point. Along these lines, Bartlett (1932) defined social psychology as “the systematic study of the modifications of individual experience and response due directly to membership in a social group” (p. 239), which fit the focus of an earlier era of social psychology that included Wundt, Dilthey and McDougall, among others, and much less so the era that followed (see Jahoda, 2007). His classic experiments on remembering referred to above (Bartlett, 1916, 1932) were designed along these lines. More specifically, through the *method of repeated reproduction* Bartlett set out to explore the gradual transformation of different materials (viz., drawings and stories) throughout different recall sessions at increasing time intervals. He showed how the material was increasingly *conventionalized*, thereby it was assimilated to the narrative forms and meanings of his English participants. Furthermore, the changes were *rationalized* on the basis of how participants interpreted the material—for example, how “something black” coming from a dying person’s mouth in *War of the Ghosts* is reinterpreted and remembered as his soul leaving his body.

Through these studies, Bartlett sought to highlight, in line with Wundt, Dilthey, and Durkheim, the idea that higher mental functions, such as remembering, are constituted by cultural products of the group and thus cannot be understood
independently of them. In doing so, he was clearly advocating a psychology in which we need to take account of the historical and social-cultural context without losing sight of the active role of individuals in it. As Castorina (2006) puts it, remembering is performed at in the intersection between a subject (who carries a set of historically established knowledge, values, and resources) and a historically situated cultural product. In the following section, we shall present the results of a study aimed at empirically analyzing this intersection, in the context of people’s remembering and relating to history texts through their historically developed social frameworks.

Remembering history through culture: An illustrative example

Bartlett’s sociocultural approach to remembering has recently been taken up by various authors close to cultural psychology (Cole, 1996; Kashima, 2000; Wagoner, 2017). For instance, Wertsch (2002) has examined how people reconstruct the historical past by means of different cultural tools available to them within a specific context. In his study on how Russian history is traditionally taught in schools, Wertsch highlights the mediational role of “schematic narrative templates” in the way Russia’s past is collectively transmitted, remembered and endowed with a meaningful form in light of a general pattern of interpretation inherited by the group. His work can be easily linked to Bartlett’s approach, and more specifically, to his studies on conventionalization and rationalization. Both approaches point to the reconstructive process through which a relatively alien or unfamiliar material (be it a historical event or a Native American folk story) is reconstructed according to certain cultural patterns.  

Grounded within this perspective, a study conducted by Brescó and Rosa (2017) sought to explore the progressive conventionalization and rationalization of two different versions of the Northern Ireland conflict. Sixteen Spanish university students participated in the study—eight from the University of the Basque Country and eight from the Autonomous University of Madrid. After being divided into two groups, participants were given the task of remembering a different historical version of the Irish conflict in three recall sessions: (1) after reading the story, (2) 1 week later, and (3) 4 weeks later. Both versions of the conflict included the same number of words (1500) and the same historical events (47), beginning in Roman times until the present day. However, these historical events were rhetorically depicted according to two different biased versions of the conflict. On the one hand, a pro-Irish version, characterized by an epic tone through which the Irish struggle for independence against British rule was justified. On the other hand, a pro-British version was endowed with a more institutional tone, justifying the defense of the political unification of both islands. The choice of the Irish conflict, as well as the inclusion of participants from Madrid and the Basque Country, was due to the fact that, while the contents of both versions were quite unfamiliar to participants, both the themes and the way in which they were
emplotted were not. Therefore, the analogy between the Basque and Northern Ireland conflicts (e.g., Carlin, 2007) was intentionally emphasized in both versions.

Let us consider an example of rationalization taken from this study, in which various violent episodes of the Irish conflict are condensed into just one, Bloody Sunday, and misattributed to the IRA (instead of the British army, as stated in the original account) according to the way the participant interpreted the text on the basis of the Basque country issue—where ETA has typically been the responsible for most of the massacres perpetrated during that conflict. This example is of a participant from the Autonomous University of Madrid, who was assigned the pro-British version. Table 1 shows the rationalization of Bloody Sunday. The first column features the description of this event, as stated in the original material, while the other columns contain the recollection of Bloody Sunday by the participant in the three recall sessions. In the first recall session, we can see how the massacre is attributed to the British army, although the murders carried out by Irish groups under the command of De Valera are described as “bloody.” In the second recall session, the British army is no longer mentioned, and Bloody Sunday begins to be associated with the IRA, the group that is ultimately blamed for the massacre in the third session.

If rationalization implies the transformation of the original story about the Irish conflict in light of the subject’s interpretation of it, conventionalization results from adapting that story—rather unfamiliar to the Spanish participants—to

<table>
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<th>Table 1. Rationalization of “Bloody Sunday.”</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Original material</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The IRA, not recognizing the legal framework agreed with the United Kingdom, has continued, until recently, with its campaign of attacks and assassinations, causing a large number of civilian casualties and even requiring the intervention of the army, whose actions have not been exempt from controversy, as in the case of the so-called “Bloody Sunday”</td>
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...
those meanings and forms in which participants are more familiar with—viz., those referring to the Basque conflict. The following example—taken from a participant from the University of the Basque Country, assigned to the pro-British version of the story—shows how an event of the Irish conflict (the assassination of Michael Collins) is transformed according to the way in which some assassinations in the Basque country conflict were carried out. Table 2 features the assassination of Michael Collins, as depicted in the original material (first column) together with the recollection of that event during the three recall sessions. As we can observe, besides changing Michael Collins’ name to “Millen,” this participant turned his shooting into a “bomb attack” in the first recall session, which subsequently became a “car bomb” in the next two sessions. In this case, the conventionalization process responds to the common use of the term “car bomb” in the context of the Basque conflict, given that this is a known method of attack used by ETA.

As we can see in these two examples, remembering is studied not so much as a product (viz., in terms of the number of events accurately reproduced from the original material) but as a process, whereby material is gradually transformed according to participants’ meanings and cultural patterns. The rationalization, consisting of shifting responsibility for the Bloody Sunday massacre from the British army onto Irish pro-independence groups, can be explained in light of the massacres perpetrated by the Basque pro-independence terrorist group ETA in Spain when it was still active—which was the case when the study was conducted. Changing the way in which Michael Collins was murdered can also be explained if we know that ETA used to plant car bombs, which was thus more familiar to participants. In other words, rather than trying to exclude the historical

**Table 2. Conventionalization of the murder of Michael Collins.**

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<th>Original material</th>
<th>First recall session</th>
<th>Second recall session</th>
<th>Third recall session</th>
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<td>The position of De Valera, a supporter of continuing on the path of violence (now directed against the democratically elected government of Michael Collins), ended up plunging Ireland into a civil war, in which Collins himself was killed during an ambush by a group of gunmen sent by De Valera.</td>
<td><strong>Millen</strong> accepts this proposition but the IRA believes that accepting this decision is a betrayal, so they kill Millen by planting a bomb.</td>
<td><strong>Faced with this situation, the IRA</strong> accuses Millen of treason: They believe that autonomy does not go far enough; they want Ireland to be fully independent and continue attacking. This time they attack Millen by planting a car bomb.</td>
<td><strong>In Southern Ireland,</strong> Mullen becomes the democratic president and admits that England has offered them very little independence. As the IRA believes that he has surrendered to the British government, they attack and kill him with a car bomb.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
and social dimensions, these two examples highlight the role of these aspects in shaping psychological processes such as remembering. Moreover, they illustrate Bartlett’s alternative stance in relation to Ebbinghaus’s approach, by replacing the study of memory—as a faculty confined to the minds of individuals—with the study of remembering as a historically and socioculturally mediated activity.

According to Jahoda (2016), Bartlett was a key contributor to social psychology in the interwar years, as well as one of the only culturally inclusive frameworks on offer at the time. However, he also lamented that Bartlett’s sociocultural approach remains “often ignored by present-day social psychologists who too readily make implicit claims of universality for their generalizations” (p. 365). This brings us back to the importance of history, and more specifically, to how psychologists recount their discipline’s history; a discipline whose origin myth is bound to an experimental method from which historical and sociocultural factors are supposed to be excluded. It is then no surprise that while Bartlett’s sociocultural approach to memory has been often neglected, he is frequently regarded as a forerunner to cognitive psychology, especially in relation to the concept of schema. The history of the schema concept is itself illustrative of the reconstruction of the past to fit current cultural frameworks: The concept was originally conceived as a dynamic and embodied concept that incorporated affect and interests, but was rendered a static knowledge structure in the head when it was reinterpreted in light of the computer metaphor of mind, which emerged with the cognitive revolution in psychology (see Wagoner, 2013, 2017).

Conclusion

“Science and History would not appear to be an easy marriage” according to Rosa (2008, p. 32). From the natural science perspective developed in the 19th century and debated in psychology by Ebbinghaus and Dilthey, most scientists “tend to see their work as a progressive unveiling of the nature of the objects comprising the world and the regularities of their behavior” (p. 32). If from this standpoint, we assume that the human psyche operates in accordance with a series of laws and principles unrelated to any cultural or sociohistorical dimension, it is not difficult to comprehend the greater importance psychology has typically placed on the former perspective at the expense of the latter. Thus, while there is a tendency to consider the natural science perspective as capable of explaining the underlying causes of human behavior, the history of psychology tends to be viewed as a mere account of the steady progress toward this end. This progress narrative serves the function of socializing successive generations of psychology students to the discipline through identity-based origin myths (e.g., Leipzig 1879 as birth of psychology as a “scientific” discipline). Apart from this socializing function, history is nothing more than a post hoc narrative, based on recordings of what science has previously discovered, not a source of potential inspiration for new discoveries.

However, history can be more than a whig version of the past, based on a recollection of deeds, or a way to celebrate some arbitrary foundational myth by
which the current hegemonic approach to the discipline is justified. It can also be used to revitalize, question and renew the discipline. In his essay on *The use and abuse of history for life*, Nietzsche (1870/1957) outlines three kinds of history: monumental, antiquarian and critical. Only the last of these (i.e., critical history) engages with the past in order to interrogate the present, as Nietzsche himself did in his book *The Genealogy of Morals*. That, among others, has been one of Jahoda’s endeavors during his scientific career. With scholarly rigor, he has shown us that the past is not dead and gone but continues to shape current practices and ways of thinking. This is especially clear in his historical research on how 20th century prejudice in Western Culture and psychology, in particular, has ancient roots (Jahoda, 1999). Furthermore, his work has not only pointed out the misuse and misunderstanding of the past but also directed our attention to ideas unjustly left behind, which are capable of rejuvenating the discipline today. Thus, by providing us with history narratives of the discipline that highlight cultural and historical dimensions of psychology, Jahoda has repositioned us within the discipline itself and set before us a treasure trove of theory and methodology to advance psychology beyond its a-historical impasse.

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**Notes**

1. In this regard, as the philosopher of history White (1986) points out, the narrative reconstruction of the past by assigning a clearly-distinct beginning belongs more to the category of judgments of value than of fact.

2. This idea has affinities with Levy-Bruhl’s (1910/1926) characterization of people in “primitive cultures” as not sharply distinguishing themselves from objects, but instead *emotionally participate* with them. Piaget (1930) later used this concept to characterize the mentality of children. Similarities can also be found in Werner’s (1948) notion of “physiognomic perception,” whereby we perceive dynamic and expressive qualities in things by projecting our body into them, such as a sad tree or smiling sun. This mode of thought, most visibly seen in magical beliefs, co-exists alongside so-called rational thinking; it is not displaced by scientific training (Jahoda, 1968).

3. As Wagoner (2015) points out, Bartlett’s focus on the transformation of material as it moves from one group to another is also clearly in line with Moscovici’s theory of social representations. In fact, Moscovici (1984) directly drew on Bartlett’s work, when he argues that the primary function of social representations is “to make something unfamiliar, or unfamiliarity itself, familiar” (p. 25).
4. Both the Basque Country and the Northern Irish issue were characterized by the presence of a terrorist group—ETA in the former case and the IRA in the latter—fighting for the independence of the Basque region from the Spanish state, and for Ulster to become part of the Republic of Ireland, respectively.

5. Referred to the incident occurred in 1972, during a demonstration in Derry (Northern Ireland), where the British army caused the death of 14 unarmed protesters.

6. Michael Collins (1890–1922) was member of the IRA intelligence who participated in the negotiation of the treaty that led to the formation of the Irish Free State, becoming the first Irish government minister and chief of his army. He died in an ambush during the civil war that followed the signing of the treaty between the Free State government and supporters of the republic, led by De Valera, who was against the partition of the island.

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