

**UCT Psychology Centenary:
A contextual analysis of the founding years of UCT's Psychology Department**

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Abstract

In 2020, UCT's Department of Psychology will be celebrating its centenary; a milestone that signifies a long history and, at first glance, 100 years of academic excellence. But what does academic excellence look like over that extended a time period? The overall objective of this research is to document as full a history as possible of the foundational years of the University of Cape Town's Psychology Department beginning in 1912, when the first head of department, Dr. Hugh Adam Reyburn, started teaching Psychology at what was then the South African College, and going until just before World War II. The project seeks to maintain a contextually sensitive exploration of the years 1912 to 1939, with the aim of revealing how social structures of the time may or may not have influenced the beginning years of UCT Psychology and how UCT Psychology may have influenced society. This analysis acknowledges that academic realities and knowledge should be considered as both historical and hegemonic, constantly being negotiated and recreated to fit the time and place in which they exist. In other words, instead of discussing a timeline of events and discoveries, we ask who was involved, why and how things came about, and when and where events happened. UCT's Psychology Department was founded during violent colonialism in a space that included mostly white men. The implications of these social realities need to be considered in order to understand the shape and knowledge creation of UCT Psychology during the years in question. Data was drawn from UCT calendars, handbooks, textbooks, and research outputs of the time period, as well as documents and research expanding upon the people and historical events of the time. Whereas other universities officially aligned themselves with segregationist policies and later helped in the official structuring of apartheid, Reyburn developed a program based on empiricism, inquisitiveness, and a sense of responsibility toward the public good. This open-mindedness and critical lens pushed him toward challenging the status quo through academic publications and speeches, though he never challenged government or Afrikaaner applied research or practices directly. While Reyburn's thoughts on the mind were progressive for the time period and involved incorporation of thought regarding social factors, the main focus of the department was on empiricism and individualism.

Key words: contextualism; Department of Psychology; history; preapartheid; English liberalism; HA Reyburn

Introduction

The University of Cape Town (UCT), a preeminent university in South Africa, established its Psychology department in 1920 and began teaching classes in 1921, preceded only by Stellenbosch University's Psychology department being established in 1918 (Foster, 2008). In 2020, UCT's Department of Psychology will be celebrating its centenary; a milestone that signifies a long history and, at first glance, 100 years of academic excellence. But what does academic excellence look like over that extended a time period? Most of us are guilty of erasing, forgetting, ignoring, or explaining away aspects of history that paint us personally, or by association, in a bad light. Thus, an initial instinct by a UCT student or staff member assigned with writing something for the centenary is probably to write only about the celebratory aspects of the department's history, much like most similar endeavours completed previously at other South African universities (van Ommen, 2008). While a timeline of one hundred years of celebratory achievements may indeed be factual in their representation, it should cause pause that a timeline that long in any modern society would be without blemish, especially in a place with such turbulent social realities like South Africa.

UCT's Psychology Department was founded during violent colonialism in a space that initially included only white men. The implications of these social realities need to be considered in order to understand the shape and knowledge creation that make up the foundations of UCT's Department of Psychology. The overall objective of this research is to document as full a history as possible of the years in question. The project seeks to maintain a contextually sensitive exploration of the years 1912 to 1939, with the aim of revealing how social structures of the time influenced the beginning years of UCT's Department of Psychology and how the department may have influenced its social surrounds.

The Importance of Historical Analysis Regarding Psychology

At its most basic, there are two frames of thought regarding 'looking back' at history: 'objectively' and critically. When framed objectively, it is viewed as a continuous progression of scientific discoveries that have lead us to the achievements and 'absolute truths' of the present (van Ommen & Painter, 2008b). Histories that take this stance are often celebratory or authoritarian in nature, taking our current understandings of psychology and science as objective and taken-for-granted (Louw, 2009). Thus, the histories of the past are used to 'prove' and

normalize the theoretical positions of the present, a position Graham Richards (2000) terms to be 'presentist' (p. 3). Psychological histories of this kind align themselves with the scientific ontology of universal truths; through scientific and experimental inquiry, we can uncover truths about human beings that are applicable the world over (Staeuble, 2006). As a result, knowledge exists in binaries: right and wrong, fact and fiction, true and false. However, this view has tended to regard Western perspectives as authoritative, reducing social factors to third variable problems and placing indigenous knowledges as immature and still evolving toward the truth (van Ommen, 2008). This can be seen, for example, in the import and application of British, German, and American psychological theories to South Africa and other countries during its proliferation, a dominance of knowledge that still persists today. This type of thinking begins to reveal the possibility of multiple truths and the marginalisation that exists in the world of science (Staeuble, 2006).

This leads us to the second way of looking at history, which critically analyses truths and facts as products of a certain place and time (Richards, 2000). In other words, instead of discussing what the truth is, it asks who 'discovered' it, why and how it came about, and when and where it happened, explicitly bringing social factors and power imbalances into the production of 'facts' (Rose, 1988). This view allows us to analyse truth as multiple and contextual (Foucault, 1979). In this second view, biases and subjectivities impact on the way human beings understand and write about the world, with psychological research and understandings interacting in some way with every single facet of our lives because they inform all of our interactions with others and our understandings of the nature of the world and of ourselves (Jansz, 2004). If this is the case, it becomes clear that a contextual analysis of UCT's Department of Psychology will further reveal the reciprocal nature of research and society, locating the department within its time period and asking the questions of how and why it was founded and organised as it was.

Why 1912-1939?

As mentioned above, dominant scientific consensus believes that we continue to develop science upon universal truths and scientific objectivity, with corrections and development made in the same spirit of scientific brotherhood along the way (Richards, 2000). In a time of transformation and institutional introspection, possessing a record of the subjective nature of the

department and a reminder of the influence of social and political factors on research and theory will hopefully be helpful and contribute positively toward the processes of transformation. In addition, the years 1912-1939 were important historically both in the world and South Africa, though much research tends to focus on WWII, apartheid, and beyond (Van Ommen & Painter, 2008a). While these time periods are important to understand, it is also important to see what happened in the lead up to them. Though 1912 precedes the establishment of UCT or the Psychology Department itself, it was a significant year due to Hugh Adam Reyburn beginning his position as a Philosophy and Psychology professor at the South African College, which later becomes UCT (Phillips, 1993). Reyburn was not only integral to the establishment of UCT, he was also the founding member and first head of department for UCT's Department of Psychology (Phillips, 1993; UCT, 1949). The time frame for this research project stops in 1939 as it is just before WW2 and before the formalisation of apartheid, focusing the project scope to exploring the pre-WWII, pre-apartheid era of the department. The time period covers key years of the expansion and institutionalisation of psychology as a discipline, noting the powerful social influence of psychology (Van Ommen & Painter, 2008a). A detailed analysis of the development of one department is a way to better understand pre-apartheid psychology and its social applications.

Historical Orientation

Psychology as a discipline arrived in South Africa just after England gave the colony the freedom to self-govern (van Ommen, 2008). For years prior, attempts by the colony to exact harsher control over the native population (Cornwell, 1996) often came in the form of 'science' conducted by a majority of European researchers and a few South Africans that was used to justify exploitation and social inequalities (van Ommen, 2008). For example, moral panics surrounding black sexuality had been created to further entrench fear and difference throughout the colony (Cornwell, 1996). In addition, the inferiority of both indigenous populations and women by way of intelligence tests and other measures were continuously created to both further science and justify white male dominance (Foster, 2008). These justifications paved the way for the successful installation of Apartheid (Foster, 2008).

Worldwide, psychology at the beginning of the 20th century was a fractious discipline of sub-fields dogmatically vying to be the definitive way forward for the discipline (Jansz, 2004).

Industrialisation brought with it trade unions and increased empowerment for the working class in Europe that offered direct challenges to the white male elite (Albee, 1996). Throughout this time, South Africa was in great economic turmoil due to factors from war and failing farms (Brookes, 1934). Poverty was increasing and whites and blacks were competing for low paying jobs, increasingly moving to the cities to find work (Albee, 1996). In order to maintain their farms, white farmers needed cheap black labour that they were losing to the cities and demanded stricter mobility and pass laws (Cornwell, 1996). Thus, the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries were defined by social and financial instability.

While the social order faced these challenges, theories about the innate differences of groups began to scientifically ‘prove’ the dominant position of the white and wealthy (Albee, 1996). Darwin (1859), Galton (1894), and others pioneered eugenicist theories that believed in biological determinism and the degeneration of races should ‘mixing’ occur (Laffey, 1985). Socially, it provided justification for colonialism and inequalities of class and race (Dubow, 1989). Scientifically, it entrenched the importance and necessity of academics and created a space for Psychology to establish itself and flourish (Bowman, Duncan, & Swart, 2008). Behaviourism, with its focus on reaction to the environment, offered a popular alternative to innate difference, placing collectively shared and learned culture as deterministic of individual traits (Bohmke & Tlali, 2008). However, this manifested a paternalistic view of evolutionary potential through environmental control (Dubow, 1989). While there were alternatives and staunch opposition to these views (like Boas, Macrone, and others), the views that linked best with societal power maintenance were most supported, both financially and by way of social and scientific consensus (Bowman et al., 2008).

As universities in South Africa were direct products of colonialism and were in their infancy in the 1920s, psychological theories were imported (along with many of the professors) from Europe and America (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). In 1927, the Carnegie Commission funded a study on the ‘poor white problem’ in South Africa, prompted by, an issue deemed by local South African scholars E.G. Mahlerbe and C.T. Loram, both trained in America and connected to American segregationists, to be the most important issue regarding South African poverty at the time (Bowman et al., 2008; Heyman, 1972). In a country with far-reaching poverty across races, the estimated 300,000 ‘poor whites’ were deemed an abnormality that required intervention (Bowman et al., 2008). Overall, the study supported segregationist policies and the

need for whites to be uplifted for the good of South Africa (Heyman, 1982), showing that theories can be blended to tie with the specific aims of the context (Foster, 2008).

Psychologists that were not expressly in support of the racist social climate often hid behind ‘objective’ empirical studies on behaviour, promoting the ideas around normality and the need to intervene at the individual level (Dubow, 1989). How did UCT’s Department of Psychology articulate itself in these existing relations of power? Contextual histories help to illuminate this, though they also run the risk of being influenced by the present as even well-intentioned researchers can never fully remove themselves from their personal contexts (Byrne & Ragin, 2009). This research project will be taking a critical look at the past of UCT’s Psychology Department in the spirit of the critical historians of psychology mentioned above, focusing on the foundational years. It is an exploratory project looking into who was teaching, what was being taught, what research was being created, and in what social conditions, looking to see how the field impacted and was impacted by the circumstances surrounding it.

Aims and Objectives

Aims

The overall objective of this research was to document as full a history as possible of the foundational years of the University of Cape Town’s Psychology Department. The project sought to maintain a contextually sensitive exploration of the years 1912 to 1939, with the aim of revealing how social structures of the time influenced the beginning years of UCT’s Department of Psychology and how the department may have influenced its social surrounds.

Main Research Question

How do the course offerings or research output of UCT’s Department of Psychology implicate interaction with the social world?

Sub-Questions

- What were the teaching and research trends of Psychology internationally?
- What were the teaching and research trends of Psychology in South Africa?
- What was the social context in South Africa of the years in question?
- What were the demographics of the students and staff?

Theoretical Framework: Contextualism

The historiographic framework used for this research project is contextualism. Contextualism sees reality as multiple and context specific, challenging the notion of discoverable universal truths (Jansz & van Drunen, 2004). Positivist and popular understandings of reality are based on the idea of ultimate truths and the ‘concrete’ knowledge of the time, often considered to be unchanging and superseding human influence (Staeuble, 2006). However, contextualism reminds us that knowledge is created in different and specific times and places, influenced by varying societal, cultural, institutional, and individual processes (Pettigrew, 1985). Thus, knowledge can be considered as both historical and hegemonic, constantly being negotiated and recreated to fit the time and place in which it exists.

However, historical events are often viewed through a presentist lens, judging the past with the ideological frameworks of the present (Richards, 2000). Using the present as a standard for analysis leaves little room to be critical about the present or to fully understand the past or the present. A contextually sensitive analysis allows for greater understanding of the past and a frame to view the present critically. If everything can be viewed contextually, the present holds no primacy over the past; each should be evaluated fully within its own context. Contextualism contends that the understanding of researched subjects, objects, or events is only possible when the environment and all of the social processes surrounding it are considered (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000). Though this framework attempts to be sensitive to contexts, there is no way to completely remove your present subjectivities from all aspects of the research project (Jansz & van Drunen, 2004).

The development of psychology has always been intertwined with social processes (van Ommen & Painter, 2008b). People do not research arbitrarily, so there is much more to understanding research than the written result at the end of a project (Rose, 1988). Contextualism is a frame through which we can examine the multiple processes that impact upon research questions (Pettigrew, 1985). The founding years of the UCT Department of Psychology could easily be looked at through celebratory lenses or frames that patronise, but these analyses would not be full histories of those years. A contextual analysis allows for the full exploration of the time period as it relates to the research question, placing UCT Psychology firmly within its context that was rife with international and local influence.

Methodology

Qualitative Research Design: Archival and Contextual

This project is both archival and contextual. Archival research design begins with research questions and sub-questions about past or present histories that have not been fully told, believing that the best way to answer these questions is to find and read as much archival data relating to the questions as possible (Gaillet, 2010). Archival projects are exploratory and dependent upon the data that is available, thus the research questions and direction of the project are likely to change throughout the course of the study (Gaillet, 2010). Contextualist research is explanatory and descriptive about specific research questions (Byrne & Ragin, 2009). Contextual research does not seek to end with results that declare universal truths or understandings because it sees each object of study as unique (Byrne & Ragin, 2009).

Key to the design is the idea that we should reflect upon and situate knowledge, with the ontological assumption that there are multiple, socially constructed realities (Byrne & Ragin, 2009; Gaillet, 2010). The importance placed upon description and context does not preclude analyses of social, cultural, and institutional processes or questions of power (Byrne & Ragin, 2009). In fact, contextual research is descriptive about all aspects of the research in question, with a focus on exploring the micro and macro processes and elements relevant to the research (Pettigrew, 1985). Archival and contextualist research also demand reflexivity in the design as knowledge creation itself is viewed as contextually specific, thus the internal and external aspects of the research in question must be interrogated throughout (Byrne & Ragin, 2009; Gaillet, 2010). This study focuses on describing and understanding the founding years of the UCT Psychology Department in a way that incorporates the aforementioned principles and methodologies.

Sampling Strategy

Purposeful sampling was utilised as it allowed the researcher to seek out data pertinent to the study, constructing a distinctive sample of rich information (Struwig, Struwig, & Stead, 2001). Purposeful sampling is particularly good for exploratory studies that may require growth and change throughout the research process (Struwig et al., 2001). As this study is based around excavating the circumstances of UCT Psychology's foundational years, the need to continuously sample new directions of data based on findings was paramount.

The sample was textual, gathered from archives, libraries, and the internet. The initial sample was from the UCT yearly calendars and other academic documents that are available in UCT's Administrative Library. Based on what was found, further purposeful sampling was done to continue to explore the research output from UCT's Department of Psychology and any historical data needed to facilitate layered and contextual readings of the data.

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The first site for data collection was the UCT Administrative Library where I read through all documents available to me pertaining to the UCT Psychology Department between 1912 to 1939, particularly UCT calendars, general senate minutes, and departmental minutes. Data applicable to the study was scanned to PDF. Based on what was found, visits to other UCT libraries and offices, as well as searches through online library catalogs and journals, were necessary for further exploration of archival data. In addition, I immersed myself in literature that explores the social and political milieu of the time period. My personal laptop was used to store the data using EndNote, ScanBot, and a dedicated folder.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using contextual analysis which focuses on in-depth description and contextually specific analyses of research questions (Byrne & Ragin, 2009). In this view, 'reality' is socially constructed and not simply universal and natural. Thus, the data analysis focused on reading between the lines of the text being analysed, situating the text firmly and fully within the processes and environment of the time (Blanche, Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). It acknowledges that research and knowledge are in reciprocal relationships with the social realities of the time, thus what is knowledge and 'truth' changes as contexts change (Blanche et al., 2006).

Pettigrew (1985) provides a general guide for the questions and topics that need to be explored in order to ensure a rich contextual analysis. First, it is important to provide a full descriptive analysis of the topic in question, followed by identifying variability and/or consistencies throughout the topic. After this descriptive work, theories regarding the possible reasons for the variability and consistencies are explored. Once general theories have been established, the levels of processes that influence them should be analysed in great detail and

depth. Micro levels of analysis are considered to be those processes that flow directly through the research focus (intra-UCT processes and influences) while macro levels relate to the larger processes surrounding the topic (social, political, and ideological influences of the time). Conclusions are drawn about the research question once the context has been fully described and explored. Finally, alternative possibilities and criteria should be discussed in order to maintain a reflexive analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Traditional ethical approval is not necessary because this project is entirely textual, involves no data creation, and does not involve human participants. That being said, it does still have ethical considerations that need to be considered.

Danger of Presentism and Whiggism

There is a risk of the researcher doing exactly what the study seeks to avoid, namely conducting the research process in ways that could be considered as presentist (as discussed above) or ‘Whiggish,’ a term signifying the assumption that all history is progressive, leading up to a ‘better informed’ present (Richards, 2000). This needs to be considered under ethics as the way the past is represented greatly affects the social, institutional, and individual understandings of the present. It also has the potential to unfairly judge and misrepresent past groups of people and their lived experiences. Even with the best intentions, there is no way to completely immerse oneself in past contexts without aspects of present judgments and understandings being involved (van Ommen & Painter, 2008b). It is also difficult to personally view the past in ways that avoid aspects of Whiggish and progressive understandings. Indeed, we are people that live in certain times and places with specific lives and lived experiences that will always affect our analyses. However, through constant reflexivity and a contextualist approach, presentism and Whiggism can be greatly reduced and avoided as much as possible (Jansz & van Drunen, 2004). Instead of assuming that our present is at the end of the crescendo of science throughout time, we look at ourselves and the present as something that is also biased and contextual *just like the past* (Jansz & van Drunen, 2004).

Reflexivity

When conducting contextual research, it is imperative for the researcher to locate themselves within the research process (Byrne & Ragin, 2009). Researchers decide what to study, how to study it, and then determine what conclusions to draw (Blanche et al., 2006). Subjectivities and biases are always present, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to acknowledge this in writing within their research and also as a reflexive practice throughout the entire research process. I am a young, white, heterosexual woman that grew up in the United States. I have lived with my South African husband in South Africa for the last four years and we intend to keep South Africa as our permanent residence. While my position as an American citizen places me as an outsider with no personal emotional connection to South Africa's past, I have been studying South African history and psychology through UCT for my three-year undergrad. I currently study within the Department of Psychology at UCT for an Honours degree in Psychology.

Some contextual historians say that histories written by those with an insider status can sometimes be less critical or tend toward being celebratory in manner (Jansz & van Drunen, 2004). My outsider status as an American may position me in a way that allows for a more critical and objective look at South African history, while my insider status as a UCT Psychology student may make me describe the program that I am in in a more positive or celebratory light than is contextually accurate. My positioning as a feminist may also influence the way I approach the past, risking judging it and drawing conclusions in ways that are not conducive to the contextualist framework.

Locating myself at the beginning of the research process and identifying risks that could affect my ability to fairly represent the past is an important aspect of helping to reduce these problems as much as possible (Blanche et al., 2006). By establishing this at the beginning of the research, my selection of readings for the literature review, my selection of data, the way that I analysed the data, and the conclusions I have drawn was all done with a conscious effort to represent the past as contextually sensitive as possible.

Findings and Discussion

The Timeline of the UCT Department Psychology

Hugh Adam Reyburn founded the Department of Logic and Psychology in 1920 at a time when the direction of psychology was being established in South Africa as a whole, heading the department from when he taught its first class in 1921 until his retirement in 1949 (Phillips, 1993; SAC, 1949). The University of Stellenbosch was the only psychology department to precede UCT when it was founded in 1919, with the universities of Pretoria, Rhodes, and Wits rounding out the 1920s (van Ommen, 2008, p. 3). From a presentist position, disciplines are made up of large departments and the merging of uncountable minds throughout history. However, when disciplines are new, only a few people are involved at the beginning, wielding a lot of control in their shape and direction. In this case, 5 universities and perhaps as many white men helped set the tone for psychology in South Africa.

Psychology, Reyburn and the SAC. UCT began as the South African College (SAC) in 1829. Psychology was offered as a course in the Philosophy Department at SAC by Professor Hoernlé, Reyburn's predecessor, as far back as 1895 (SAC, 1895). In 1911, Hoernlé made a request to add Experimental Psychology to his course load (SAC, 1911). That same year, Hoernlé took a position elsewhere and a 26 year old Reyburn, two years into his teaching career at the University of Glasgow, was hired to teach Philosophy and Psychology at the SAC (SAC, 1912). Already outgrowing their facilities and desiring to improve academic scholarship in South Africa, the professors on the SAC Senate Council, which included Reyburn, began to work on ideas that later resulted in the formation of UCT. (For a full overview on SAC and beginning of UCT, please see Eric Walker's (1929) and Howard Philip's (1993) informative histories on the topic.)

Reyburn, known for his keen intellect and natural administrative acumen, was a philosopher with a growing interest in Psychology (Taylor, n.d.). By November of his first year, he was already developing the psychology classes and, in a well-researched and persuasive letter, urgently requesting 80 pounds because "it is not possible to teach psychology properly without some apparatus for demonstration" (SAC, 1912). And even though the Literature Committee only received 50 pounds annually to split between 3 departments, they allocated "the whole of the 50 voted by Council this year to the Department of Philosophy" (SAC, 1913).

In March of 1913, he wrote another letter indicating the need of at least one more professor because “it is not possible for one man to be proficient in all” (SAC, 1913). In the letter, his commitment to academic excellence and the importance he places on teachers remaining up to date, humble, and constantly curious becomes apparent. Regarding psychology, Reyburn says, “The subject for which arrangements are most defective is Psychology...” (SAC, 1913). He then successfully petitioned for changes, proposing that the Philosophy Department should be split up into three separate majors with, ideally, three separate and qualified professors (SAC, 1913). The split he outlines in 1913 is Ethics and Politics, Logic and Metaphysics, and Psychology, eventually approved in 1920 for implementation in 1921.

Psychology, Reyburn, and UCT. Psychology, previously within the domain of philosophy, was beginning to self-identify as a discipline in its own right. By the incorporation of UCT in 1918, Reyburn was fully immersed in what he called “the emancipation of Psychology from Philosophy,” requesting that the Philosophy Department be split into two departments, Ethics and Politics and Logic and Psychology (Phillips, 1993, p. 29; Senate, 1918). In 1920, he was made chair of the new Department of Logic and Psychology and was approved to hire a lecturer to take over the major of Logic and Metaphysics, leaving him the freedom to focus exclusively on Psychology (Senate, 1920). True to form, he wasted no time and, that same year, secured 1000 pounds from UCT for a laboratory (Phillips, 1993, p.29). By 1922, Reyburn had the Faculty of Science recognise Experimental Psychology as part of its faculty so that he had access to their maintenance fund and even persuaded Senate to build a Psychology Block on the new Groote Schuur campus (Phillips, 1993, p.30).

Continuing his whirlwind of administrative accomplishments, Reyburn hired his first psychological academic staff member, Senior Lecturer, J.G. Taylor, in 1924, the same year that a Masters in Psychology began to be offered (UCT, 1924). Within the BA and BSc structures, Psychology as a class began on the bottom tier as one of the most optional courses on offer and progressively made its way into higher tiers of the degree and into more department requirements within the Faculty of Arts and beyond (UCT 1921-1939). This shows how the discipline was gaining respect within academia.

UCT's Department of Psychology

Classes. Psychological classes were focused on “the elements and structure of mind: the forms of mental activity; perception, imagination, memory, thought, instinct, emotion, will, the development of self-consciousness; the relation of mental and neural processes; the methods of psychological investigation” (UCT, 1938). While psychiatry students did take Psychology I as a requirement from the late 1920s, psychology students did not dabble in courses to do with mental illness. Classes met three times a week for lectures and once a week in the lab for the first qualifying course, and then two afternoons in the lab for the second qualifying course. Due to so much emphasis being placed on time in the laboratory, it is most likely that the department tended towards behaviourism and scientific empiricism. This assumption is also made due to his first hire, JG Taylor, being known as a “staunch behaviourist” (Phillips, 1993, p.30).

Demographics. The below demographics exclude the School of Music in an attempt to create more accurate assumptions regarding gender and UCT. The College of Music was integrated into the UCT structure in 1923, tripling the number of women and increasing the student population by 50% (Phillips, 1993, p. 112). However, most music students were taking non-degree courses and many music students had yet to matriculate. “Clerical assistants” were also omitted from ‘teaching staff’ demographics even though they were listed on the teaching staff pages. ‘Assistants’ were still included, though they may have been clerical in nature.

Staff. By 1930, the psychology teaching staff was made up of two white men and two white women, with one white male lab assistant filling out the staff. Professor H.A. Reyburn, M.A., D.Phil began his professorship in the department in 1921, Senior Lecturer Mr. J.G. Taylor, M.A. began in 1924, Lecturer Miss. E.M. Thompson, B.A. began in 1927, Lab Assistant Mr. P.R. Humphris began in 1930 and was upgraded to Second-Grade Mechanical Assistant in 1934, and Demonstrator Mrs. G. Rees Davies, Ph.D began in 1939.

In 1930, white women were pointedly given the right to vote while black men were denied, simultaneously increasing the strength of white votes against the votes of coloured men (Dubow, 1989). The decision to extend the vote as a political tactic rather than a true extension of equality is further evidenced when looking at the teaching positions held at UCT. Even though the percentage of female students (including music) was an impressive 40% plus from 1929, women were still not placed in many positions of power (Walker, 1929). Indeed, no women were professors or on any committees through at least the end of the time period. In 1921, only 2

faculties out of 6 had women on the teaching staff, representing 8% of the total teaching staff for UCT; all 9 women on the teaching staff taught in departments deemed acceptable for women, with 2 lecturers of Botany, 1 ‘instructress’ of needlepoint, 1 ‘instructress’ of drill, 1 lecturer of English, and a team of women running the Bolus Herbarium (UCT, 1921). By 1940, the teaching staff was made up of 24% women, though only 6% of the teaching staff were women possessing the title of lecturer, demonstrator, or tutor—the rest were called ‘assistants’ (UCT, 1940).

Students. By 1920, 23% of the students that had received bachelors through UCT were women. Women also achieved 23% of the master degrees. Through 1940, 13 people, 31% of them women, had gotten Masters in Psychology, while 27% of all masters degrees from UCT through 1940 had gone to women. 54% of the people taking Psych 1 and Psych 2 in 1940 were women and around 100 people a year were taking Psychology courses. While the archival records make it difficult to determine the ethnicity of students, a cursory look at names matches with histories that claim the student population was white with only a handful of coloured students and no black students through the end of 1940 (Phillips, 1993).

Assigned Texts. Per the UCT Calendars, Reyburn assigned 9 different textbooks over his 20-year tenure. While it is impossible to gauge the tone of a class without lecture notes, I hope analysing two of the books selected by Reyburn for his department and used the longest will help to illuminate his focus, especially since one of the books was authored by Reyburn himself. It is also important to remember that half of the major took place in the laboratory, and what he taught there may not be articulated in the texts. For this reason, published work of the department will be analysed in a later section. Please see Appendix A for the list of the other 7 prescribed texts.

McDougall’s “Introduction to Social Psychology” (1905). Used from 1922-1935.

McDougall was a well-known and polarising figure who published one of the first textbooks on social psychology, even though his book focuses on the individual. The book is in line with his teacher Galton and his colleague, Pearson, supporting evolutionary theory and eugenic arguments. He viewed everything social as being a direct outcome of hereditarian factors, arguing in his 1920 book “Group Mind” that social systems like governments and religions are the result of innate propensities (Pastore, 1944). While his name is not well known now, he was popular during the time period. This book, by 1944, had already been through more editions than any other text on psychology (Pastore, 1944). This shows how popular eugenics was at the time,

reinforcing that people were indeed looking for scientific reasons to explain and maintain the social dominance of whites. The most important contribution from the text was his notion of instinct that described it as a “psycho-physical disposition” which determines how a person reacts to their environments in action or at least internal impulse (McDougall, 1924, p.29). He believed different races had natural propensities, all of which justified their positioning in the world, like the German’s strong pugnacity instinct that inclines them toward war and blacks having a strong submissive instinct that inclines them toward subjugated positions (McDougall, 1924, p. 118 & 280).

Despite Reyburn’s inclusion of McDougall’s book in the prescribed texts, Reyburn did not agree with McDougall’s focus on evolution and instinct (Reyburn, 1925). Perhaps Reyburn initially wrote his textbook as a companion text to McDougall’s as he challenges aspects of McDougall’s book throughout his own (Reyburn, 1925). Reyburn’s ambivalence towards McDougall is even apparent when comparing their tables of contents, as Reyburn sterilises his book of anything social or political. This apolitical style, often called English liberalism and discussed in more detail below, was how many in Psychology and other disciplines responded to more blatantly ideological and socially influenced theories. Also, since Reyburn believed a part of being an academic was being fully versed in all areas of your discipline (SAC, 1913), it could be that he assigned this book because it described one of the most popular theories and was the most reprinted text on psychology at the time (Pastore, 1944). While this cannot be confirmed without lecture notes, based on his approach to higher education and the other texts that he assigned throughout the years, it is plausible that he may have used McDougall’s book to teach from a critical perspective.

Reyburn’s “Introduction to Psychology” (1925). Used from 1925-end of research parameters. Reyburn’s (1925) book begins with a chapter that functions to both define and position psychology in the world of science so that the knowledge they produce is truly knowledge and not a selfishly developed falsehood or half-truth. Reyburn’s writing never uses language as a means to shock and gain attention and his style and content always suit the questions he is trying to ask or the knowledge he is trying to convey. In his book, he warns against scholars that subjectively choose an object of study, but then do not relinquish their values to study it fully, thus hindering the knowledge that is produced (Reyburn, 1925, p.3). Reyburn believed in the interaction between natural endowment and learning, suggesting that

solutions to the psychological problems of the day are too simplistic. He rejects instinct theories and behaviourism as being too simplistic and ideological, saying “it is possible that the final solution may come from another quarter, like the qualitative analysis of thinking” (Reyburn, 1925, p. 272).

Regarding mental processes and the study of experience, Reyburn shows a level of reflexivity not often exhibited in experimental psychology at the time when he says “the field of psychology which we naturally study first and of which we most easily acquire a preliminary knowledge is that of the normal European adult” (p.61). He then outlines ‘psychologist’s fallacy’ and the risks of false equivalencies and experimenter bias, suggesting caution when making inferences (Reyburn, 1925, p. 55). While he uses words like “primitive” and “savage” in a few examples, at the time, those words were used regularly and did not yet possess the extreme negative connotations that they have now. In a time when a lot of psychological science was promoting judgment, Reyburn was speaking of empathy and context (Reyburn, 1925). Throughout his book, he acknowledges that social inequalities can be causal of perceived mental inferiority. In fact, in sections he discusses how other minds and the influence of social norms are a part of what shapes who we are, in places sounding like theories of social psychology that only come about years later than his time of publication in 1925.

English Liberalism and Afrikaner Idealism

19th century liberal ideals of diversity and cosmopolitanism as being integral to successful universities and central to university values were held by most of the founders of UCT, but the influence of South African social realities at the very minimum pressured UCT to slow down internal desires for progress and at maximum changed the minds of scholars so that their liberalism was not-inclusive of persons of colour (Phillips, 1993). Indeed, there was a fear that white students, especially Afrikaners, would leave for other institutions if students of colour were admitted (van der Poel, 1979). This is evidenced in a quote from Johann Smuts, a central figure in the founding and establishment of UCT and its second Chancellor after King Edward VIII.

“In the end I suppose we shall do what the British Empire does with trade and establish a quota. But this is not a satisfactory solution and none is in sight for the present. I remember that Christ’s was almost ruined by an excessive influx of Indian students after my time. The same happened at the Middle Temple.

Europeans silently leave the uncongenial surroundings and the institution is ruined. Lord Morley agreed to quotas... as the way out.” (Smuts, 1938 as quoted in van der Poel, 1979).

In addition, Caruthers Beattie, who spearheaded the foundation of UCT, saw the bridging of races as a problem of extreme importance, but his immediate focus was on reducing inequalities and improving relationships between the English and Afrikaanders as race relations at this time was focused on the two white races that had been at war (Phillips, 1993).

More than just their warring pasts separated the two white ‘races’ in South Africa; they fundamentally differed in their approaches to making a better South Africa (Long, 2014). Afrikaans people increasingly wanted more interventions at the levels of Government and academia that would make a ‘better’ South Africa, mostly predicated on a relational dichotomy between white people and persons of colour and segregationist policies (Long, 2014). English South Africans still functioned with colonial ideals of an eventual multi-racial English civilization, focusing on empiricism and guided interactions toward an eventually ‘enlightened’ and diverse society (Dubow, 1989). These differences were reflected in the way Afrikaans and English-medium universities were structured.

Conflict between ‘Pure’ and ‘Applied’ Psychology. Afrikaans universities mostly worked toward creating and implementing practical applications of science in service of an idealised and segregated South African society which they deemed would be better for all races (Brookes, 1934). Thus, psychology focused on experiments and theory that supported social management (Richards, 2000). For example, if we elaborate on the ‘poor white’ study, the direct influence of social ideology on ‘applied’ psychology becomes apparent. The commission for the ‘poor white’ study was portrayed as objective and impartial, but the group was mostly isolated to Stellenbosch University, an Afrikaans institution, with the idea that those involved should be working closely with one another in order to create professionals on the topic and to increase speed of communication and ability to implement change (Heyman, 1972). The Carnegie Corporation attempted to send in sociologists to help as the skill was lacking in South Africa, but help was refused due to the intended scholars’ British connections (Heyman, 1972). Instead, an Afrikaans school teacher conducted the approximately 500 interviews that created the basis of the report that ended up focusing on the detrimental breakdown of the patriarchal family unit, with trained help only being allowed to come in at the end to assist with the write-up (Heyman,

1972). This shows that ideals held primacy over knowledge creation. Other findings found poor-whites to be less intelligent than 'normal' whites and at risk for miscegenation and the degeneration of the white race (Heyman, 1972). It even found that forcing the intellectually inferior to attend school until 16 makes them miss out on apprenticeships and work opportunities that would be more appropriate for their mental capabilities and more beneficial for the community (Heyman, 1972). It becomes clear that the study was less about the causal elements of poverty and more about proving the Afrikaaner ideals that would eventually lead to apartheid.

While theory took a back seat in Afrikaans institutions' 'practical' uses of psychology, the opposite extreme was true of English-medium universities. Many department chairs at South African universities, like RW Wilcocks at Stellenbosch, became popular, often by using their research politically or by focusing on one area of the science (Dubow, 1989). Reyburn focused instead on Psychology as a whole. UCT's studies were done on a single race at a time, often reiterating how important environmental factors are on differences in intelligence (Hay, 1990). They also challenged studies that were proving gendered personality traits and the superiority of male intelligence (Hay, 1990). Thus, while Afrikaans idealists were supporting segregationists in government with their research, English empiricists were entrenching themselves in discourses of normality and wellness (Hay, 1990). (For a full discussion on UCT's Child Guidance Clinic and mental hygiene, read Hay, 1990). Studies that reinforced social inequality and social management, as well as an attachment to individualistic empiricism, continued to define South African Psychology through the 20th century, with prevalence still noticed today (van Ommen, 2008).

Reyburn's Liberal Psychology. Reyburn focused instead on Psychology as a whole, watching and contributing to the shaping of the entire discipline (Taylor, n.d.). He remained well-read in all disciplines, publishing articles on South African history, building his own telescope and writing about astronomy, joining academic philosophical discussions, and co-creating the first hypothetical-deductive orthogonal factor rotation in statistics (Taylor, n.d.). A sense of justice and responsibility permeates his work, and he believed remaining open-minded and inquisitive was tantamount to knowledge creation (Reyburn, 1934). Many histories place UCT as apolitical because it was not involved with the government, but Reyburn was political in a way that was aligned with his values (Phillips, 1993). He fully involved himself in the running of the university, helping to facilitate the ideal university education, preparing professionals from

all walks of life to become honour-bound public servants (Reyburn, 1934). In 1934, he was a speaker at convocation, publicly announcing and subsequently publishing his views on what a university should be, in line with English liberal ideals. “[A university] is limited by its time and place, its members may be biased and partisan and one-sided; but the University is not tied to their weaknesses” (Reyburn, 1934, p.4). He speaks directly against exclusion and acknowledges that most people accessing higher education are privileged and risk being oppressive if they do not situate themselves within their contexts. He extols against the ‘practical’ man who picks and chooses aspects of science in order to further personal or political goals. The whole speech, while never directly mentioning Afrikaaner nationalism or applied psychology, implicitly, and most likely obviously for the time, argues against the ways science was being used to further ideological and oppressive pursuits, both internationally and in South Africa.

“The practical man, to use his own rather arrogant word for himself, is a man of routine, for mere practice is mainly routine. The man who plumes himself on his practical nature and derides theorising is apt to be the man who does not really understand what he is doing... We must run our practice back into its theory.. and not merely learn to repeat... we must see it in its context and know how it came about. The history of knowledge is an integral part of it; I believe that this is one of the features which ought to be more marked in university teaching” (Reyburn, 1934, p. 7)

Here it is clear that Reyburn himself sees the importance of contextualism and the need to see knowledge and truth as constantly growing and changing. In this way, he challenges English liberalism and its assumption of apolitical knowledge creation. He does this again in several other journals, reminding people to think reflexively. For example, in “The Nature of Magic” he explores imagination through traditional magic, but ends up with a discussion on how we all use magic, it just manifests itself differently culturally (Reyburn, n.d.). “Why does the magician adopt these extraordinary means and abandon ordinary or scientific knowledge for this world of unrealities? And the answer to the question is not difficult to find: human beings take this course, because, for the object they are seeking, ordinary logic fails them” (Reyburn, n.d., p.4). This shows his willingness to work through prejudice, with this study also providing an example *sameness* between races when most at the time (and even still) regard the magic in African culture to be one of the most damning instances of their primitiveness (Reyburn, n.d.).

Conclusion

UCT's Department of Psychology was founded during a time of violent colonialism in a South African context that was leading toward Apartheid. While a simplified view of history may place all people in positions of power during the time period as supportive or at least complicit in policies and mind-sets that galvanised eugenicist theorising and segregationist policies, a contextual lens and archival exploration has revealed many grey areas and some surprising alternatives and challenges to the dominant norm. Whereas other psychology departments and universities officially aligned themselves with segregationist policies and later helped in the official structuring of apartheid, Reyburn developed a program based on empiricism, inquisitiveness, and a sense of responsibility toward the public good. Reyburn himself believed that knowledge and reality need to be viewed as a product of a certain time and place, offering up a criticism to the positivist culture of science and the assumption of universal truth. This open-mindedness and critical lens pushed him toward challenging the status quo through academic publications and speeches, though he never challenged government or Afrikaaner applied research or practices directly. The Department of Psychology officially avoided questions of race. The classes focused on theory of mental processes and experimentation, with a broad range of reading that allowed for critical analysis. While Reyburn's thoughts on the mind were progressive for the time period and involved incorporation of thought regarding social factors, the main focus of the department was on empiricism and individualism. The research output from the department aligned itself with the mental hygiene movement and entrenching psychology on the levels of society and the individual. Two of five teaching staff members were women in a time of gendered oppression. Suspending negative connotations of language concerning race and gender allowed me to see the progressive complexity and subversive arguments in papers that I may have written off as supportive to white male elitism on an initial skim. Overall, a contextual analysis has revealed the complexity of the pre-apartheid time period, showing how social factors, the individual views of academics, and the prevailing psychological theories of the time interweave in ways that create unique responses to social contexts and varying approaches to the uses and application of psychology.

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Appendix A: List of Prescribed Textbooks

Stout's "A Manual of Psychology" (1915). Used from SAC days to 1921. Stout approached Psychology as a philosopher, first describing the development of the discipline and then providing an in-depth overview of its theories and topics. He remains open-minded about the young science and prefers to stick to descriptive methods regarding mental processes.

Titchener's "Textbook of Psychology". Used from 1920-1928. Titchener established structuralism in the United States and focused on stringently studying the consciousness through introspection and experimentation. The unconscious and idea of instincts were not topics on which he focused.

Titchener's "Experimental Psychology". Used from 1921-1931/32. A guide book on experimental methodology and practical instructions for laboratory work.

Perrin & Kleins' "Psychology" (1926). Used from 1929-1935. A review of the book from 1928 says, "Perrin and Klein have illustrated better than any other text book, perhaps, the recent tendency to divest psychology of its multifold philosophical appendages and discursive proclivities and hew strictly to the line of the study of human behaviour" (House, 1928, p. 160).

Murphy's "General Psychology". Used from 1936/37-end of research parameters. Gardner Murphy's book replaces McDougall's. He was known for his liberalism and focuses on the interaction between heredity and environment.

Murphy's "Experimental Social Psychology". Used from 1936/37-end of research parameters. Murphy wrote a well-received and updated book on experimentation.

Spearman's "Abilities of Man". Used from 1936/37-end of research parameters. Here statistics and factor analysis are introduced into the curriculum.