

This text was written long after a 2010 SSPP presentation. It was under review by the *American Journal of Psychology* in October 2016. It was not rejected. I was considering two reviews the Editor obtained after I had revised it extensively following his requests. Unrelated to this attempt to publish, I had too much distress in my life at the time, and I asked the Editor to withdraw manuscript from further consideration. It has been revised somewhat since then, including the addition of the photographs.

Conflict Between E. B. Titchener and L. R. Geissler: Applied Psychology vs. Structuralism

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Edward Bradford Titchener

1867-1927



Ludwig Reinhold Geissler

1879-1932

Abstract

Edward Bradford Titchener, “the Dean of experimental psychology in America,” was also well known for his advocacy of “pure” or “theoretical” psychology as well as his opposition to applied psychology; both advocacy and opposition were manifested when he, a founding member of the American Psychological Association (1892), stopped attending after five years and formed the Society of Experimentalists as an act to promote purification of psychology. It is a credit to Titchener that he was dissertation supervisor for many independent-minded Ph.D. recipients, some of whom would become pioneers in applied psychology. For example, Guy M. Whipple (Ph.D., 1900) compiled the first American *Manual of Mental and Physical Tests* (1910). Ludwig R. Geissler (Ph.D., 1909) became principal founder of the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (1917). As will be shown, Titchener and Geissler were mutually supportive until Geissler began his shift towards applied psychology. Much of this article is based on the heretofore minimally-considered, Titchener-Geissler correspondence in which Titchener expressed strong, sometimes sarcastic and demeaning opposition to applied psychology. Also irritating to Geissler was Titchener’s repeated efforts to get him to leave the South and return up East where he could be again “at the center of things.” Apparently after years of pent-up anger, Geissler replied to one of Titchener’s efforts at the latter with a scathing indictment of Titchener’s approach to psychology.

Conflict between E. B. Titchener and L. R. Geissler: Applied Psychology vs. Structuralism

Edward Bradford Titchener, a native Englishman (1867-1967) has been described accurately as “the dean of experimental psychology in America” (Boring, 1927/1987, p. 377). Titchener earned an A.B. degree from Oxford University in 1890 under the renowned physiologist, John Scott Burdon Sanderson to whom Titchener, dedicated his *A Text-Book in Psychology* (1910). Titchener earned his Ph.D. degree (1892) under the generally acknowledged founder of experimental psychology, Wilhelm Wundt. Undoubtedly, Sanderson and Wundt shaped Titchener’s strongly held view that psychology must be a pure science based on experimentation and theoretical reasoning.

Equally strong was Titchener’s opposition to approaches to psychology that advocated professionalism or applications of psychology (hereafter these will be combined in the phrase “applied psychology”). An early indication of his fierce opposition to applied psychology was his cessation of attending meetings of the American Psychological Association in 1897, only five years after APA’s founding. Instead Titchener created the Society of Experimentalists which he insisted be a forum for discussions of purely experimental and theoretical psychology (O’Donnell, 1979).

It is somewhat ironic that so many of Titchener’s students chose to specialize in applications of psychology and some did so in the *American Journal of Psychology* (*AJP*) during Titchener’s Associate Editorship (1895-1920) and Editorship (1921-1925). One of the first was Stella Emily Sharp (Ph.D. 1898) who published an article in *AJP* titled *Individual Psychology: A Study of Psychological Method* (Sharp 1899). Part I of Sharp’s 62-page article focused on mental testing and the study of mentally abnormal

individuals based heavily on the works of Europeans such as Kraepelin, Binet, and Henri but also Americans such as Jastrow, Sharp's article contributed to the development of psychiatry, clinical psychology, and other areas of applied psychology. The larger Part II was based on Sharp's dissertation, the stated aims of which were ". . . (1) to ascertain the practicability of the particular tests employed and (2) to answer the . . . question of the tenability of the theory upon which they are based . . . (p. 348)

Among her conclusions was:

. . . we concur with Mm. Binet and Henri in believing that individual differences should be sought for in the complex rather than in the elementary processes of the mind , and that the test method is the most workable one that has yet been proposed . . . (p. 390)

Perhaps, the most important early advocate of applications of psychology among Titchener 's Ph.D. students was Guy Montrose Whipple (Ph.D. 1900), whose *Manual of mental and physical tests* (1910), is widely regarded to be the first of its kind, at least, on the North American continent. Many if not most of the tests included in Whipple's *Manual* were based on research done in Titchener's laboratory by Titchener's students and published in the *AJP*. For example, the test for "Range of Visual Attention" was based heavily on Ludwig Reinhold Geissler's dissertation (Ph.D. 1909), "The Measurement of Attention," published by the same title in *AJP* (Geissler, 1909a).

In *A Text-Book of Psychology* Titchener (1910) strongly endorsed Geissler's research on attention in two paragraphs under "*References for Further Reading*" (p. 302 Titchener cited, among other "Important references ". . . work by Wirth (published in German; see Geissler's related publications below for references listed for Wirth). In

the next paragraph, Titchener cited Geissler (1909a) very favorably together with other critiques and analyses Geissler had written concerning Wirth's views of "Attention" (Geissler, 1909b, 1910a) and "Consciousness" (Geissler, 1910b). In Geissler's obituary, Dallenbach (1933) wrote:

During the early part of his professional life Geissler was concerned with scientific and systematic problems; his contributions during these years numbered fourteen papers, all of which were published in this JOURNAL [AJP]. His studies upon attention¹ [Dallenbach's footnote] were systematically important, as they shaped the Titchenerian doctrine which was formulated during his [Geissler's] stay at Cornell.

In addition to the four articles by Geissler that Titchener cited with respect to Geissler's work on attention and, particularly, as that applied to Wirth's research, Dallenbach's footnote 1 referred also to Geissler (1907, 1912). Not cited by Dallenbach but obviously related was Burr and Geissler (1913); of course, Titchener (1910) could not have cited Geissler (1912) or Burr and Geissler (1913).

An important collaboration between Titchener and Geissler was their joint-publication in *AJP* of the four-part bibliography of Wilhelm Wundt's publications (Titchener & Geissler, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911). Nevertheless, Geissler had begun to shift into applied psychology where his crowning achievement would be as principal founder of the *Journal of Applied Psychology (JAP)* first published in 1917 (Thomas, 2009). Geissler's shift into applied psychology began when he was in a postdoctoral position at Cornell University and that resulted in part with Geissler's work with Whipple. Geissler wrote:

. . . I assisted Professor G. M. Whipple in the collection and standardization of many new psychological tests, which he incorporated in his Manual of Mental and Physical Tests. (Geissler, 1921; quoted in Thomas, in press, p. 3)

In 1911 - 1912, Geissler accepted a position as “Research Psychologist” for the National Electric Lamp Association (Cleveland, Ohio) where he studied the effects of levels of illumination on reading and detailed work. His research there also included research on color saturation (Geissler 1913b) conducted in the Titchenerian framework. Geissler had sought Titchener’s advice regarding the color saturation manuscript, and in a letter to Geissler, Titchener wrote, “This seems first rate. I have made only a very few verbal suggestions.” (Titchener, 1913b) Thus, Geissler was beginning to blend his education under Titchener, his work with Whipple, and his increasing interest in applied psychology.

Among the extant letters between Titchener and Geissler, Titchener (1911) also provides the first evidence that Titchener expressed opposition to Geissler going into applied psychology. As noted at the beginning of this article, Titchener was a stalwart opponent of applied psychology, but his letters to Geissler reveal deep and, at times, sarcastic opposition to applied psychology that he may never have been expressed publically, and it seems unlikely that Titchener’s other students ever responded as vehemently as did Geissler (1923). After years of delay and, apparently, pent-up anger Geissler (1923) wrote a fiery letter that was highly critical of Titchener’s approach to psychology. The Titchener-Geissler conflict over pure versus applied psychology constitutes most of the remainder of this article.

Titchener Versus Geissler Over Pure Versus Applied Psychology

There are known to be 14 extant letters between Titchener (11 letters) and Geissler (3 letters). All letters are archived in the Titchener Correspondence at the Cornell University Library and also among Geissler's papers in the University of Georgia Library. Thirteen of the 14 letters were at Cornell, and 13 were provided to me, together with additional materials, unpublished and published, by Geissler's granddaughters (see Author Note). Cornell had one letter I did not have (Titchener, 1922), I had one letter (Titchener, 1909) Cornell did not have, and we exchanged copies.

Only 4 letters (Titchener, 1901, 1911, 1923a; Geissler, 1923) bear strongly on the Titchener-Geissler conflict, and two have a less direct bearing. (Titchener, 1916a; 1916b). Regarding the latter two, a reasonable inference can be made that a letter not available from Geissler must have written as Titchener's (1916b) appears to be a response to a reply from Geissler. It is apparent in Titchener (1913b) that he was responding, at least in part, to correspondence from Geissler where Geissler had discussed his interest in applied psychology, but Geissler's letter is not known to be available. It is reasonable to conclude that Geissler (1923) withheld his feelings regarding criticism by Titchener over the years, as it was not until 1923, that Geissler harshly criticized Titchener's approach to psychology, and Geissler expressed his evolving and contrasting views of what psychology should be.

Overlapping with the pure versus applied conflict were Titchener's efforts to persuade Geissler to be careful about moving South (Titchener, 1911) to the University of Texas which did not occur and later about moving back north (Titchener, 1923) from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Virginia where Geissler had relocated in 1920

which also did not occur. From the available Titchener letters, there is no indication regarding his feelings about Geissler being at the University of Georgia from 1912-1916.

It was Titchener's anti-South position that triggered Geissler's (1923) angry response to Titchener (1923a) rather than any direct reference by Titchener to any theoretical difference between them, although Titchener did write that a return from Virginia to the "East" would have the advantage of bringing Geissler "*. . . up into the center of things again, and so throwing you into relationship with a number of psychologists of your own rank and standing.*"

Titchener is so well known that little more needs be written about him here, but for a biographical essay see Boring (1927/1897) as well as an excellent chapter about Titchener in Watson and Evans (1991). Biographical information about Geissler may be seen in Thomas (2009) and Thomas (in press a). Perhaps, most important here is that Geissler was a native German who came to the United States of America at age 23 and after having earned a teaching certificate in Germany; he came in 1902 to be with his brother in Texas. Geissler earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Texas (1905) and earned the PhD degree (1909) at Cornell University under Titchener's supervision. Rand Evans, the leading contemporary Titchener scholar wrote (R. Evans, email personal communication, December 1, 2006): "Geissler was a personal favorite of Titchener at first, I suppose because he was good at German."

The Evans quotation was well substantiated in a letter Titchener (1909) wrote to Geissler in August 1909 who was visiting his Leipzig, Germany birthplace. Geissler had been born in the same city during the same year (1879) that Wilhelm Wundt is widely credited with founding scientific psychology. Titchener and Geissler (1908) had already

published in *AJP* the first installment of Wundt's bibliography which included his publications from 1856-1908. Titchener's (1909) letter began by commending Geissler for having visited Wundt, and Titchener wrote that he had received a recent letter from Wundt with "a very nice line about the bibliography." Titchener then mentioned that he had "chased up only 5 new things for the October installment" and asked Geissler whether he knew "of any recent fugitive things of Wundt's" and if so to "please let me have them at once." Titchener's letter then turned to other matters including a request that Geissler send to Titchener's mother Geissler's England departure location address so Geissler could receive and bring to him a family heirloom watch.

Geissler is best remembered as the principal founder of the *Journal of Applied Psychology (JAP)*; the first issue was published March, 1917. Any history of psychology textbook prior to Thomas (2009) in which the founding of *JAP* was mentioned gave sole credit to G. Stanley Hall. Hall's role as a founder was minor (Thomas, 2009). A third cofounder, John Wallace Baird, also had a minor role. The three cofounders financed the journal initially. Later and referring to Geissler, Hall (1920) wrote, "He began [*JAP*] with nothing and has made it pay already." Hall, Baird, and Geissler were listed in that order in the first issues of *JAP* as Co-Editors, but, again, it is clear that Geissler did most of the editorial work. Geissler's *JAP* foundational work began at the University of Georgia in 1916 (Thomas, 2009) before he relocated to Clark University where Hall was President and had the resources to launch a new journal.

Pure Versus Applied Psychology

It is well known that in the early decades after Psychology emerged from philosophy and scientific disciplines such as biology, physics, and physiology, there was

a several-decades-long struggle to establish a best systematic approach. This is well represented in Heidbreder's *Seven Psychologies* (1933; reviewed in *AJP* by Boring (1934).

*The seven psychologies are: (1) **structuralism, meaning Titchener**; (2) William James; (3) functionalism, meaning Dewey, Angell and Carr (Carr at last gets his due); (4) behaviorism, meaning just Watson; (5) dynamic psychology, meaning Woodworth . . . ; (6) Gestalt psychology of the German triumvirate [Wertheimer, Koffa, Köhler]; (7) psychoanalysis, meaning Freud. (p. 157; emphasis added).*

This is not the place to summarize structuralism, which best represents Titchener's view of "pure" psychology, and Titchener provided a succinct account of structuralism in "The Postulates of a Structural Psychology" (Titchener, 1898). Geissler, who was educated in the tradition of structuralism and who conducted and published his early work in that framework as well as continuing to some extent throughout his career, distinguished between pure and applied psychology in the article, "What is Applied Psychology?" published in the first issue of *JAP* (Geissler, 1917). Geissler, 1917, p. 48) in a side by side presentation format compared and contrasted "General or Pure or Theoretical Science" and "Practical or Applied Sciences or Technology" (see below). The equivalent of most of Geissler's representation of "General or Pure or Theoretical Sciences" may be found among Titchener's writings, especially for example, Titchener's (1910) chapter, "SUBJECT-MATTER, METHOD AND PROBLEM OF PSYCHOLOGY."

Transcribed Verbatim with Approximate Spacing as seen in Geissler (1917, p. 48)

General or Pure or Theoretical Sciences	Practical or Applied Sciences or Technology
AIM	
To extend and improve Human Knowledge	To extend and improve the conditions and phases of Human Life and Conduct
STANDPOINT	
of Objectivity or Universal Validity expressed in Scientific Laws	of Subjective Particularity or Individual Interest in Utility
SCOPE	
depends upon Inherent Similarity of all facts of a science or aspects of knowledge	depends upon Inherent Frequency of factors composing concrete events
PROBLEM	
to discover or establish instances of universal similarity or validity to trace their origin or development to explain their causal connections	to analyze situations and responses (or events) into variable and constant or essential and unessential components to trace their interrelations to modify these components so as to produce same results more efficiently
METHOD	
Observation and Experimentation identical as to Comparison, Repetition, Accumulation, Modification, Elimination, Measurement, different as to Simplification, Isolation, Abstraction, Induction, and Classification	Observation and Experimentation identical as to Comparison, Repetition, Accumulation, Modification, Elimination, Measurement, different as to Differentiation, Separation, Correlation, Deduction, and Standardization

Titchener Versus Geissler's Being in the South

Titchener's opposition to Geissler being in the South should be considered because Titchener's (1923a) suggestion that Geissler apply for an anticipated opening position at Clark University and, thus, leave Randolph-Macon Woman's College (R-MWC) in Virginia appears to have triggered Geissler's (1923) angry reply in which he vehemently denounced Titchener's approach to psychology. Titchener had written almost nothing in his letter (Titchener, 1923a) opposing applied psychology or to promote specifically his approach to psychology.

Titchener's anti-South attitude as expressed to Geissler began with a letter (Titchener, 1911) when Geissler was seeking a position at the University of Texas (UT). This is also one of two letters where Titchener most strongly, expressed his feelings about "pure" versus "applied" psychology which will be considered later in this article. One quotation is sufficient to reflect Titchener's (1911) anti-Texas, anti-South attitude.

If a bona fide offer comes . . . then you will have to consider the following things . . . the renouncing for ten years at least of decent research work.

Nevertheless, to be fair, Titchener also tried to "put on a good face" for Geissler at times in the letter about his prospect of a position at UT. For reasons unknown to me, Geissler did not go to UT, rather he accepted a position at the University of Georgia in September 1912.

None of Titchener's letters between 1912-1916 reflect Titchener's opposition to Geissler being at the University of Georgia (UGA) in Athens, GA, possibly because Geissler was hired as UGA's first full-time *bona fide* experimental psychologist when psychology was in a new building with separate rooms for the study of Vision,

Attention/Memory, Work Shop, Taste, Smell, Kin. Etc, and Audition (see *Bulletin of the University of Georgia 1912-1913*). Titchener likely knew that UGA's psychology laboratories were well equipped and consistent with Titchener's laboratory. Celestia S. Parrish was Titchener's student (earning a Ph.B. and not a Ph.D.) when she established the first psychology laboratory in the South at Randolph-Macon Woman's College (R-MWC) in Virginia (Thomas, 2006). Parrish relocated in 1902 to the State Normal School in Athens, GA, and she taught Child Psychology at UGA during summer school held mainly for teachers; this was before women held full-time positions at UGA. Circumstantial evidence suggests she helped select equipment for the first UGA psychology research laboratory using a generous donation in 1902 by Oscar Straus, a Georgian immigrant who served as Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior under President Theodore Roosevelt (<http://psychology.uga.edu/about/brief-history-department>). Parrish also established a well-equipped Titchenerian laboratory at the State Normal School using funds donated by philanthropist, George F. Peabody (Thomas, 2006)

Geissler left UGA in September 1916 after beginning the early *JAP* foundational work (e.g., inviting Co-operating Editors and soliciting articles for the first issue; Thomas, 2009). Geissler relocated to Clark primarily to launch the publication of *JAP* with G. Stanley Hall's and John Wallace Baird's (Ph.D. 1902 with Titchener) important if not vital financial assistance. Geissler remained at Clark University from 1917-1920. He left because Clark was undergoing severe turmoil associated with the newly appointed President, Wallace Atwood (Koelsch, 1980, 1987). Atwood, a Harvard science professor, was brought to replace G. Stanley Hall as Clark University President

before Hall was ready to be replaced. Atwood handled many matters heavy-handedly, including unfairly denying Geissler the opportunity to take *JAP* with him to R-MWC (Thomas, 2009).

It was Titchener's (1923) urging Geissler to leave R-MWC and return to an anticipated opening at Clark that triggered Geissler's (1923) angry reply.

There are . . . several strong reasons why I would not consider the place [Clark]. . . first . . . Pres. Atwood and I are incompatibles, on account of the despicable treatment he gave me in connection with the J. Appl. Psych. . . . [G. S. Hall had also expected that Geissler would take JAP to R-MWC; see Thomas (2009, p. 399).] . . . second . . . New England or the East is no longer the center of things psychological, for me. If I had thought so, I would have accepted the Wellesley offer two years ago In the third place I would consider it folly to board a sinking vessel after I had once safely departed from it . . . and I do not consider it any honor Other reasons have to do with climate, health, living conditions, etc.

Geissler continued by noting that despite Titchener's low opinion of "our Southern schools," he had found them to provide supportive environments that compared favorably with most of the northern schools with which he had personal experience.

Titchener on Pure Versus Applied Psychology in Letters to Geissler

As reported above, Titchener (1911) was fearful of what a move to UT might do to Geissler's career, but it was also in this letter that Titchener began his attack on applied psychology. As quoted above, one of Titchener's reasons against Geissler going to UT was, as noted above, that it meant "*renouncing for ten years at least of*

decent research.” It also meant “. . . *the practically final exchange of psychology for applied psychology.*” There is so much more that is quotable in this 3-page letter, but space requires moving on. On page 3 Titchener offered a gentle slap at Geissler’s wife’s influence when he wrote, “*But I think you have a real leaning towards teaching and application; and your wife has a definite claim on you as regards money and position.*” The next two, final paragraphs are friendlier and more compassionate, and Titchener ended with, “*And there is no doubt that you could real good to Texas.*” This might be the place to note that most of the time Titchener wrote as a father might who wanted what he perceived to be best for a wayward son.

Titchener’s 1913 letter, also three pages, continued his attack on applied psychology and he became sarcastic near the end. Most of page 1 addressed matters unrelated to applied psychology, but near the end of the page and referring to Geissler’s interest in testing, Titchener wrote,

If you decide to work this way, I should certainly get backing from Whipple.”

[A bit later on page 2, Titchener continued] “*Personally . . . I shall be sorry to see you go into test work. You have the training and ability for straight theoretical work, such as very many of our expl. psychologists have not*”

Page 2 in Titchener (1913) continued with Titchener’s expressed concerns if Geissler continued to pursue applied psychology, and on page 3, Titchener wrote sarcastically,

We have not decided [at Cornell] on a Seminary topic; but I have curiously enough (in view of your letter) [not in the Cornell or UGA collections] been thinking of Application! That is a study of the concept of Application, and of the various meanings which may be given to Applied Science; with a consequent

*classification of work done, and a differentiation of attitudes, methods, etc. Last year we took up Functional Psychology, and gave the men an intimate knowledge of **what that pretended to be and really is; so they might have a positive basis for choice.** This year I have thought that **a like study of Application might be serviceable to them** in view of the situation they will have to meet when they get out into positions. [Emphasis added.]*

There was a 10-year delay before Geissler (1923) finally responded, and as noted above, his outburst was not triggered by Titchener's comments about applied psychology but by Titchener's attempt to entice Geissler away from R-MWC and go back to Clark University.

There is one more thing among their correspondence that might have annoyed Geissler. In 1916 and referring to Geissler's impending launch of *JAP*, Titchener (1916a) wrote,

I have been meaning to write about your journal. I wish you all manner of luck, and there is room for such a journal if you keep its tone high enough and don't fall to the common level. I would gladly subscribe if I could, but I am subscribing to too many things already But I have a paper that may possibly do for you.

The paper was not Titchener's but one by Paul Fitts of South Africa. Titchener continued that Fitts had submitted it to *AJP* and had asked Titchener to try to find a place for it elsewhere if *AJP* could not take it. Titchener explained that it would cost *AJP* about \$20-\$30 to publish, owing to table, figures, and mathematical formulae,

which was too costly for him, and he wrote, “*But if you are wealthy enough to publish it, it would be quite a feather in your cap.*” Here the letter ended.

Apparently, Geissler replied and asked to see the manuscript, Titchener (1916b) responded,

I am sorry but I am not authorized to submit the MS. to an editor, for judgment on its merits, until after the question of costs has been settled.

If you promise to publish free of cost to the author, provided that you find the article good enough for you, then of course I can send it.

Titchener continued to say that he was also considering “*Watson’s new Journal*” before closing, “*Meantime, them’s my orders.*” Perhaps editorial practices differed then, but it is hard to imagine an editor today responding with equanimity to such a condescending proposal (which is not to suggest that Geissler did). It has not been determined whether Geissler published Fitt’s manuscript. In any event, it is not difficult to imagine how the cumulative effect of Titchener’s letters over the years (1911, 1913, 1916a, 1916b, and 1923a) might have pushed Geissler beyond the point of a polite reply.

Geissler Responds

As reported above, Geissler (1923) began his long overdue rejoinder to Titchener with two paragraphs about why he rejected Titchener’s (1923a) proposal that he leave R-MWC and move back up East where, according to Titchener, he could be “*up into the center of things again.*” Recall that Titchener (1923a) had not referred to applied or theoretical psychology, but Geissler was ready to attack. Geissler’s third and fourth paragraphs merit quoting fully. Following on his comments quoted earlier about

why he preferred his southern R-MWC to the schools in the north, Geissler (1923) continued:

Likewise my views of Psychology, to continue my confessions, have undergone considerable changes, and "Eastern" or structural psychology looks less formidable to me now. This does not mean that I have embraced functionalism or behaviorism or psycho-analysis or anything else of the kind. It does mean that I am searching for a deeper, more fertile understanding of mental life, more inclusive at least of any single modern tendency in present psychology. To gain such a more synthetic view-point I have as good an opportunity here as anywhere, and that is another big reason why I am in no hurry to change. And I have had actual offers from other places.

Perhaps you think I might be lost to Experimental Psychology and research, especially as I have not turned out anything in recent years, and so would offer me a chance to publish minor studies in your Journal, as you did not think me good enough for anything else Clark did have something worth while to offer. [This somewhat confusing sentence is quoted accurately.] So I may just as well tell you that I anticipate no glory from adding to the present array of structural psychological investigations. They look so futile and puny, so self-sufficient and yet so insufficient to me that I would not care to indulge in them. I would rather not be associated in print with that sort of output, even though I may never be able to arrive at some bigger concept of psychology. I can anticipate auditorily all of your objections and poo-hoos,

and yet I believe that you yourself are not really satisfied with present systemic psychology, but you feel duty bound to try out the system to see how much it will bear. You may call my attitude destructive radicalism, if you please, although I have kept it to myself so far, because I am looking for constructive principle; but to me it is merely dissatisfaction with modern psychology which has come to the breaking point, because we are too deep in the woods to see anything but trees and "shrubbage."

Geissler's equally long last paragraph shifts more towards how good things are for him at R-MWC including funds for equipment, books, good students, good weather etc. He closed with, "*With kindest regards to Mrs. Titchener, also from Mrs. G.*"

Aftermath

This did not end their correspondence. Later that year (Titchener, 1923b) wrote to ask Geissler to assist with indexing *AJP*, specifically asking him if he would agree to do one volume. There is no hint of any reaction Titchener may have had to Geissler's (1923) letter. Geissler (1924) replied, in part to thank Titchener for his permission to use some figures from Titchener's "*Experimental Psychology Students' Manual*" for a booklet he was assembling in conjunction with his teaching at R-MWC. Geissler also had some questions about the *AJP* indexing project and requested that Titchener prepared a sample index card as a guide that he thought others might appreciate as well. This was the last letter from Geissler. Titchener (1924, 1925) wrote two more relatively brief letters to Geissler addressing small matters of business between them.

Whether Geissler (1923) found the "constructive principles" that he had written Titchener that he was seeking has not been determined. However, the continued

pursuit is well represented in his article, "THE OBJECTIVES OF OBJECTIVE PSYCHOLOGY" (Geissler 1929). Based on the date of his presidential address on March 30, 1929 for Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology and the date *The Psychological Review* received the manuscript (April 10, 1929) the article appears to have been the manuscript written for the presidential address. Wryly and humorously, Geissler (1929, p. 353) began by noting:

[Having] . . . *decided, since I could not have my own way of abolishing the custom of presidential addresses, that I could at least have my own objective in obeying this custom. But as I know so little about the nature of objectives in human actions, I decided that this would be a good reason for talking about it glibly, hoping that in doing so, I might find out what is meant by the term.*

Geissler (1929) then noted that the term "objective" originated in military language (p. 354) and was later "taken over into general literary style" (p. 355). Geissler traced a history of the evolution of thought regarding use of "objective" beginning with Aristotle and including Descartes and Francis Bacon before reaching its "modern" meaning as represented in Karl Pearson's (1911) *Grammar of science*. Geissler reported that use of the term "objective" was new in psychology, and he cited Dashiell's (1928) book, *Fundamentals of objective psychology*. Geissler examined what "objective" meant in the sciences of physics, geology, and biology and cited Woodruff's (1913) contention that biology provided a ". . . *connecting link between the natural sciences and the mental sciences*" (Geissler, 1929, p. 360). Geissler then examined what is or should be the role and responsibility of psychological science and how to include "*mental activity*."

He then noted problems associated with the issue of measurement, before considering and rejecting the possibility:

. . . for psychology to split into two new sciences, one of which would confine itself to the behavioristic facts of human nature and the other to the conscious phases of it. (p. 363).

Regarding the study of mental activity in psychology, Geissler rejected efforts such as Watson's (1919) to equate thought with, for example, sub-vocal speech, and Geissler's discussion of the concept of "feeling hungry" bears striking similarity to Skinner's (1990) discussion of the same; compare Geissler (p. 366) to Skinner (p. 1209). Geissler (1929) continued:

*Enough has been said to show that there are certain aspects of human nature in which the interrelations of behavior and consciousness are so intimate and so essential to the facts involved that an artificial separation of the two distorts the facts and leads to one-sided interpretations or abstractions. We must therefore conclude that psychology should not split . . . nor limit itself exclusively to either consciousness or behavior, **because both are mere abstractions from the concrete events to be studied.** (p. 367; emphasis added)*

A few pages later, Geissler wrote,

My contention . . . is that introspection must always be an essential part of our study of human nature, because without it we lose sight of the concrete objects of our investigations and handle only abstractions. (p. 370)

Reaching page 372 (of 353-374), he asks and answers the question “. . . what is objective psychology?” by providing a definition of psychology and a discussion of that definition. This is difficult to summarize in a few words, and it is best left to the reader to read the original. In closing, Geissler returned to the vexing question of measurement.

. . . about measurement, the Kantian stumbling-block . . . measurement should never be an aim in itself, as some seem to wish to do, but only as a means to an end, whenever it helps to greater accuracy of observation and clearer statement of results . . . Measurement may become harmful . . . if it is pursued for its own sake and thereby lead to a misconstruction of concrete facts in terms of abstract mathematical units and relationships. The force of a fruitful idea such as Einstein’s theory, can never be calculated in terms of ergs, and yet may accomplish more than the largest engines that can be constructed. The greatest physicists . . . recognize this fact; why should psychologists apologize for dealing with such immeasurables? (p. 374)

In conclusion, Geissler’s SSPP presidential address provided a useful historical examination of the mind-body relation issue that has been with psychology through its long past as may be traced through such early thinkers as Democritus, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and others on down through the ages, and the contemporary relevance of Geissler’s presidential address is as good as any contemporary consideration of the tension regarding the mind-body relation as, for example, between cognitive psychology and behavioral neuroscience (e.g., Uttal, 2001).

Closing Remarks

As noted above, when Titchener's letters included personal advice, etc, one might read them as letters from a concerned father to a son, and Titchener could be caring and thoughtful at times. For example, the primary purpose of Titchener's (1922) letter was to update Geissler (then at R-MWC in Virginia) about Mrs. Geissler's wellbeing when she was in Ithaca, New York (where Cornell University is located). Mrs. Geissler was in Ithaca to care for her seriously ill sister, Ellen Steele, who was a librarian at Cornell. Mrs. Geissler had also worked in the Cornell Library but not as a librarian. Mrs. Geissler (Sarah Marie Steele) met Geissler at Cornell, and they were married in 1909 (R. Noel, electronic personal communication, September 8, 2016; see Author Note).

Titchener's place in history is that of being among the giants who founded and established American experimental psychology. Geissler's place in history is likely to be limited primarily to the role he had in founding the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Given his broad perspective and powerful intellect as revealed, for example, in Geissler (1917, 1918, & 1929), one can only wonder how much greater his place in history might have been had Atwood not "stolen" the *JAP* from him in 1920 nor had he not died at the relatively young age of 53.

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