

Everything I always wanted you to know about . . .

When faced by the textbooks and the journals of social psychology, with their specialized vocabularies and their descriptions of the strange rituals of experimentation, one might ask 'what is the meaning of all this activity?' The answer is not to be found merely by examining the motives, laudable or otherwise, of the practitioners of social psychology; nor is it to be discovered by looking at the stylistic qualities to be found in their discourse. Instead, the argumentative context of social psychology must be sought.

(Billig 1990: 52)

It is generally believed by academics that textbooks exert a powerful influence on students' understanding of psychology. Ziman, in his description of historically different modes of communication in scientific communities, writes that textbooks:

expound currently accepted views, within a standard curriculum, for the benefit of students. An undergraduate textbook that has been recommended widely for a popular course in many universities is a valuable literary property, and comes to exert a wide influence. Its point of view will become established as the conventional wisdom in the subject, the original source of a paradigm from which the next generation of research workers will not easily escape.

(Ziman 1976: 199)

I was reminded recently that the impact of textbooks may not be immediate (the time when psychologists often like to measure effects). In a discussion of free trade, an American-born colleague and I somehow arrived at the topic of previous American challenges to Canadian political independence. My colleague began to talk about the time when the Americans won the War of 1812. I didn't remember it that way at all and unearthed my Grade 12 history textbook, McNaught and Cook's (1963) *Canada and the United States: A Modern Study*. I consoled myself with the following: 'By the end of 1814 the war had dragged to a conclusion. Clearly, neither side had won. But even a draw was an impressive achievement for Canada, for despite the odds against her, Canadian

independence from the United States had been preserved' (McNaught and Cook 1963: 290).

The possibly subtle and slow-acting inculcation of values achieved in the curriculum through textbooks was discussed explicitly at a Canadian symposium in 1978 on the teaching of social psychology. I had returned to Canada in 1977 after graduate work and teaching in the United States and found myself almost completely preoccupied with American social issues and assimilated to American ways of conducting social psychological research. At that symposium, I heard Jim Alcock read a paper on 'Social psychology textbooks and the importation of values'. He argued that 'textbooks, like television, influence the way in which we perceive and interpret our own society' (1978: 2). He went on to say that 'imported social psychology textbooks deprive students of knowledge about their own society' and that through these imported values, 'often taught without conscious awareness by the teacher', 'we may be gradually teaching our students to integrate themselves psychologically with their American neighbours' (1978: 2). Alcock, Carment and Sadava's *Textbook of Social Psychology* (1988) undoubtedly grew out of that symposium and aimed at providing 'a social psychology of Canadian life' by using Canadian content within the American textbook structure.

It is possible to question American political and social ideology conveyed in textbooks of social psychology while setting apart scientific values as inviolable by national concerns. On the other hand, one could tackle the historical development of psychology as a science within American cultural and intellectual practices and the role that textbooks have played in this process. In such an historical perspective, science itself does not escape time and place and the development of textbooks as the central purveyors of scientific knowledge becomes of interest.

My own starting place for understanding textbooks was enhanced by Tom McArthur's *Worlds of Reference: Lexicography, Learning and Language from the Clay Tablet to the Computer*. In the author's view, his book is 'an account of the long effort involved in knowing, and struggling to retain what we think we know' (McArthur 1986: ix), one result of which is the kind of knowledge that we amass in textbooks.

McArthur traces out the 'taxonomic mentality' (1986: 41), that is, the desire to compile everything conceivably thought of as knowledge. He chooses Pliny's *Natural History* in the first century AD as one arguable forerunner to the 'scientific treatise, the monograph, and even the textbook' (1986: 43), by virtue of some of the literary conventions used, namely, clear subject divisions, referencing of sources of information, attempts at objectivity and comprehensiveness. McArthur tells us more about compilers down through the generations and when he gets to the rise of monastic schools in the Middle Ages he reminds us that texts were 'rare and precious' (p. 58) and that this was still an oral culture. Out of

the monastic schools developed the centres of general learning, the *studium*, that extended beyond clerical control. A guild for scholars of the studium known as a *universitas* grew up around these centres and eventually 'the name for the scholarly brotherhood was transferred to the institution in and for which they worked' (McArthur 1986: 59).

It is in that milieu that the textbook developed into a unique form of written communication. The textbook required mediation by members of the guild, and McArthur writes:

[i]t is the teacher who, as mediator, controls the use of the book – and without the teacher the book would not usually be read at all by most of the people for whom it was designed. Its justification is entirely in terms of the institution in which it may be used, the course into which it may fit, and the master or mistress who may use it.

(McArthur 1986: 62)

The textbook was part of the system of oral repetition and debate. Textbooks were read or studied, not just consulted, as in the case of reference works. Textbooks were considered the foundation of a good education and were guarded by the gatekeepers of the universities.

Outside the universities other compilations of the thirteenth century, more like 'teach yourself' books, flourished. From the late fourteenth century on, compilation continued with a vengeance enhanced by the invention of the printing press, the rise of the printing trade and the publishing industry. As European culture moved from its oral tradition to a 'scribal' one, the world of books became a commercial industry no longer monopolized by the Church or the universities. McArthur's 'taxonomic mentality' gave rise to the establishment of various types of reference works: dictionaries, grammars, encyclopedias and the thesaurus.²

The textbook genre of scientific communication is altered by the commercialization of books, as well as by the rise of science, popular and academic, and changes in the university as an institution of learning. Diane Paul (1987), in her paper 'The nine lives of discredited data: old textbooks never die – they just get paraphrased', dates a marked change in the university textbook to the 1970s. 'As recently as the 1960s', she writes, 'textbooks tended to be idiosyncratic, reflecting the author's own approach in both style and substance' (Paul 1987: 27). This is consistent with my own findings (Cherry and Corkery 1986) that the conceptual framework for social psychology textbooks became fairly standardized in the mid-1970s, favouring the natural science model over the historical (see Chapter 1 for further detail).

Paul sees the change in textbooks as a response to the 'enrolment surge of the sixties' (1987: 27). It is in this decade that textbooks were simplified for less skilled readers. Publishers introduced ghostwritten or 'managed textbooks' to overcome academic literary habits that didn't market well.

The numbers of textbooks increased. For example, one of the first thorough content analyses of introductory psychology textbooks (Quereshi and Zulli 1975) was conducted on a sample size of seventeen textbooks written or revised between 1968 and 1972. The replication study performed three years later (Quereshi and Sackett 1977) included sixty textbooks written or revised between 1968 and 1975. There were, by mid-1980, about 120 introductory psychology textbooks in print (Rogers and Bowie 1984) claiming to provide authoritative accounts of valid knowledge in psychology. One study of widely used social psychology textbooks found that authors rarely cite the same studies, with the overlap in citations ranging from 7 per cent to 25 per cent (Findley and Cooper 1981).

Book publishing in the United States was a six billion dollar industry by 1980 of which 1.5 billion came from the textbook market. Seventy-five per cent of the total sales of college textbooks is controlled by the ten largest text publishers (Apple 1985). In an effort to profit from growing markets, publishers enhanced their books with visuals such as full-colour photographs and 'boxes' and provided instructors with what Paul (1987) calls 'standard satellite materials'³ such as test files and study guides.

With the growth of the textbook industry, the balance between economic profit to the publisher/writer team and the intellectual goals of the textbook author to provide a survey of valid knowledge has been discussed in the pages of *Teaching of Psychology* (McKeachie 1976), among other places. Textbooks, more than other forms of scientific communication, currently stand at the juncture of 'the popular' and the 'scholarly' and therein lies both their strength in holding student interest and their weakness in perpetuating an oversimplified and often uncritical stance to scientific knowledge. While textbooks are intended as a comprehensive overview of valid knowledge in the field, they have in actuality been shaped over the past two decades for competition in the marketplace of the 'popular' and the 'up-to-date'.⁴

It is the claim that textbooks are a comprehensive summary of valid psychological knowledge that is being increasingly challenged. Using the broader context of a sociohistorical study of knowledge, the critique of textbooks can be added to current studies of laboratory research practices in psychology (Danziger 1985) and the writing of laboratory research reports (Bazerman 1988). There are three broad aspects to the critique of textbooks that I have discerned through a bibliographic study of articles on textbook knowledge in psychology (Cherry 1989).⁵ First, there are several articles that seek inclusion for a specific subdiscipline in introductory textbooks accounts, for example, industrial-organizational psychology and school psychology. Other articles seek inclusion of specific themes, e.g. aging, the family and ethics in research, so that students may approach their study of psychology with a greater sense of the relevance of psychology and their own personal rights.

Second, there are several articles that discuss the total absence and/or bias in existing educational materials of the perspective of groups with low status and power in society. These articles generally critique the treatment of gender, race, age and sexual orientation in pedagogical materials and connect to a wider set of references at all levels of the curriculum, e.g. primary readers and high school textbooks. These papers are a challenge to the assertion that textbooks are comprehensive and valid knowledge by examining the politics of knowledge. They explore the issue of whose knowledge is legitimate and consequently distributed through textbooks.

A third and final set of articles provide research showing inconsistencies between textbook presentations and original research accounts. These historically oriented articles challenge the notion that a textbook is to summarize 'the central facts and theories of a discipline' (Paul 1987) by working directly with the validity of the facts in their social and historical context. Several papers explore the diverse treatment in textbooks of historically controversial topics: sociobiology, Freudian theory, 'Jensenism', 'left-wing rhetoric'. Such papers challenge the idea that psychological science is a cumulative science with well-replicated trans-historical facts, well-defined origins, forefounders and classic studies that mean one thing for all time. Historically based studies provide a strong challenge to the idea that there can ever be a factually perfect or near-perfect psychology textbook or one that is ideologically neutral or value-free (see for example, Finison 1983; Haines and Vaughan 1979; Harris 1979, 1983; Lubek 1993b).

The current concern over textbooks is not that they have a point of view but the uncritical way in which their point of view prevails. Textbooks are embedded in the often unstated values of the textbook writer, the publisher and the larger scientific community. It cannot be assumed that a non-American textbook of social psychology will do anything more than substitute Canadian experiments for American ones while still accepting that textbooks are exemplars of valid social psychological knowledge.

Given the standardization of the natural science approach conveyed in social psychology textbooks over the past twenty years, it becomes increasingly important to place students in a critical rather than an authoritarian relationship to the textbook. There are a variety of ways of doing this. Textbook writers might consider an explicit chapter on the sociological aspects of the production of psychological knowledge in their books (Finison 1983) or instructors might preface the use of the text with such materials. Instructors could involve students in the critical comparison of textbooks. Students might compare versions of a study across several textbooks of the same period, or across different time periods by examining several textbooks or editions of the same textbook

over time. I have asked students to trace the changing context in which various studies are located (e.g. Sherif's boys' summer camp studies) and to trace the rise and fall (and rise again) of various themes (e.g. chapters on social movements in social psychology) in order to obtain a broader sociohistorical perspective on what they are studying. Finally, a return to books of original readings in psychology with textbooks consulted as reference works rather than memorized as valid knowledge is more in keeping with a critical stance to knowledge and with the textbook genre at present.

It is however, more likely that North American university students will continue to learn most of the analytical perspective social psychology has to offer through textbooks. The textbook will introduce them to a large set of 'findings' backed up by bracketed references to journal articles but rarely will introductory students read in any depth, a challenge that awaits more senior undergraduate and graduate students. How then to approach the material of social psychology in a way that engages students in the 'argumentative context' of social psychological analysis? For this approach to be taken, the research article needs to be presented as a persuasive communication that constructs its argument through appeal to experiment or survey data. Argument precedes data. By comparing journal articles in pairs, for example, it becomes possible to see the persuasive aspects of social psychological texts more clearly.

One might start by encouraging students to ask questions of journal articles, such as 'What's the story here?', in the same way that they might look at any other instance of cultural communication – rock videos, romance novels, rap songs or virtual realities. What are the multiple purposes served by the journal article for its author and its audiences? This is a way of going beyond the literal story to the meta-narrative, to sensitize oneself to the rhetorical devices used by different modes of communication and to engage in a dialogue with the authors of the articles *as equals*.

This sort of exercise can serve a broader purpose than learning to read critically for the strengths and weaknesses in social psychological research design. It places a further value on questioning the questions framed by social psychologists. North American university students have, for the most part, learned to accept textbook knowledge as a literal representation of reality by the time they begin to read articles in any depth. The multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank format of testing their knowledge reinforces this notion of single correct answers. Problems that arise are those of experimental design, procedure and statistical analysis but not generally problems of assumption and meaning.

Not unreasonably in a society steeped in meritocratic beliefs, undergraduate students often come to research articles assuming that only the best work is printed for consumption. They have little awareness that

before the article ever reaches their eyes, the author has made choices about form and content within the context of a complex set of interconnected social relations. The author will be thinking about several issues not unrelated to the intellectual merit of the research itself. She or he will be constructing the paper according to the publication policies and styles of a particular journal. The author will be aware of which journals are likely to give this research a more sympathetic review. The author will be asking at various points in his or her career whether the journal is regarded as one in good standing in the peer review process for tenure, promotion and other academic rewards.

Where, how and even whether the article that students are reading reaches print is a matter of study in and of itself. In recent years, I have introduced students to the field of social studies of science that is rich with anthropological investigations of investigative practices (Latour and Woolgar 1979). The field includes analyses of how written research reports take shape (Knorr-Cetina 1981; Bazerman 1988). Writing the research article is itself understood as a social activity in which several individuals often participate. Report writers have different statuses and roles (undergraduate researcher, graduate student, junior faculty member, research consultant, senior faculty member) that can affect the control they have over what is included and what is excluded in the research report. In the final decision-making process, the written report is shaped according to stylistic (e.g. third-person narrative) and formal (e.g. sequence of introduction, methods, results, discussion) criteria established by historical convention and disciplinary gatekeeping mechanisms which enforce what is to count as knowledge (Lubek 1993b; Rothman 1971).

In classroom discussions of any social psychological topic, students have their commonsense and often contradictory views of that topic.⁶ It is often part of the classroom dynamic to have a general discussion and to hear quite different points of view. This is followed by the professor putting forward the research article or the textbook as the arbiter of these points of view, as in 'Let's look at what the research says'. It is in our teaching practices that research is established as the ultimate judge of whose 'commonsense' point of view will prevail. By selecting research articles or textbooks in pairs one can demonstrate to students that researchers are not above their own incomplete, commonsense and contradictory viewpoints. There too one can find disagreements that cannot be completely resolved by factual evidence because the researchers have approached their problem of interest with quite different assumptions and values right at the outset. If students can analyse the way in which questions are framed in the works of others, the next step is to examine their own operating framework to see what they have included and excluded from their own intellectual analyses.

A quite reasonable goal for those of us teaching social psychology is that our students might find in an historically contextualized social psychology some significant and humane insights that several of its practitioners have had. Leaving the pseudo-scientific baggage aside, I think that many of the observations made by social psychologists can be used effectively to draw students into an ongoing conversation about knowledge, power and social change in their society. The pseudo-science can also be used to advantage to alert students to the way in which social scientists have modelled their practice on a very narrow definition of systematic enquiry. It is important to see how ideas constructed in the service of liberatory efforts can become useful to an ideology of social control. Inevitably, the concerns of social psychology expressed through any one part of the research data base open onto discussions of morality and politics in the practice of a critical social psychology.

Let me give you an example of how research can be presented asking not 'What are the findings of this or that study?', but rather 'How does researcher X want me to think about phenomenon Y?' For this I'll return to the subject of violence towards women, specifically the subject of rape, to provide an example of how authors/researchers interact with readers through the research report to construct an understanding of their subject matter. My approach will be to contrast a view of the journal article as the unbiased or objective report of the latest findings, with the article as a device wherein Researcher X uses a particular format to argue for an understanding of a social phenomenon in a certain way.

To this end I will contrast two papers that came out in the literature at about the same time and that illustrate how two researchers would have us know about rape in somewhat different ways. One was Martha Burt's (1980) article, 'Cultural myths and supports for rape' and the other was Hubert Feild's (1978) article 'Attitudes toward rape: a comparative analysis of police, rapists, crisis counsellors and citizens'. Both articles were published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Publication in the most prestigious journal in the field of social psychology legitimizes rape as a serious scholarly topic and locates an understanding of rape in one of the largest areas of concern to social psychologists – attitude measurement and change.

That both articles under examination are concerned with attitudinal studies of rape reflects a longstanding commonsense belief shared among social psychologists that behaviour is determined causally by our thoughts, feelings and intentions towards objects and/or people. Furthermore, it is believed that there is some stability to these thoughts, feelings and intentions and that better measurement techniques allow us to find a closer fit between what goes on in the mind and action. Both authors want us to know that what we think and feel about rape, the victims of rape and the perpetrators, is expected to be integrally tied to

behavioural outcomes such as judging rapists in a legal context or providing help to victims. They locate the importance of their work in the linkage between attitudes and behaviour. Burt writes:

The burgeoning popular literature on rape . . . all points to the importance of stereotypes and myths – defined as prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists – in creating a climate hostile to rape victims.

(Burt 1980: 217)

The task of preventing rape is tantamount to revamping a significant proportion of our societal values.

(Burt 1980: 229)

Developing an accurate theoretical understanding of rape attitudes and assaultive behavior will help make social change efforts more effective.

(Burt 1980: 229)

Feild writes of this linkage:

The perceptions or attitudes of people toward rape are important for understanding not only their reactions to the act itself but also their behaviors concerning the victim and/or offender.

(Feild 1978: 156)

[m]any programs designed to prevent rape assume that rape is a social/cultural act best deterred by modifying the attitudes or perceptions of rape held by victims, offenders, and members of the criminal justice system.

(Feild 1978: 157)

There is for both researchers, then, an implicit philosophy of knowledge that considers attitudes as the causal determinants of action. Understanding these antecedents would give us a theory of rape. The utility of collecting attitudinal data is that the theory will derive from (in Feild's case) or be tested by (in Burt's case) the data collection process. Scientific work, they both proffer, is about both description and explanation.

Both researchers presented their work as an improvement on the 'popular' and the 'anecdotal' by a move away from such inexact accounts to the concrete quantifiability of attitudes towards rape. Both argued that their work was important because it provided new and more precise information.

There are some immediate problems that arise with the attitude framework argued in this way. First, one could argue back quite convincingly that if quantification provided greater precision, it may have done so by

leaving out much important detail in its unnecessarily rigid categorization of respondents' agreements and disagreements to various statements. One could argue that the studies did not really provide much that was newer than the 'burgeoning popular literature' cited by Burt that combined the more journalistic writings of Brownmiller (1975), Clark and Lewis's (1977) detailed study of 'founded and unfounded' rapes according to Metropolitan Toronto Police records, and Griffin's (1971) experiential account of rape from a feminist perspective. For Feild, some of these same references were acknowledged as 'popular' and 'best-selling'. In both cases, there is an uneasy blurring of the reference to 'feminist' and 'popular'. What both these researchers want us to know, however, is that rape understood quantitatively is more accurate than, and an improvement over, rape understood qualitatively, popularly and anecdotally. That's the argumentative structure behind their research and the one with which students need to engage.

It seems reasonable to debate much of what attitudinal research promises us. In this example, both researchers promise us a great deal with their two very different studies – a key to social change, new information, explanation and understanding beyond what other sources can provide. This is to be done through the quantitative study of attitudes. Critiques of attitude research, such as those given by Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue that the aim is futile because the variability of accounts is obscured in attitude measurement studies. One can argue that there is tremendous precision in variability – that is, the collection of details eventually adds up to a clearer picture of the phenomenon of interest in all its complexity. Whatever the case, what falls out of the discussion is a questioning of the assumption that the quantification of what people think and feel is somehow a better form of knowledge than any other possibility.

A second issue raised by locating an account of rape in the context of attitudes and behaviour has to do with the limitations of a framework that relies so heavily on the individual outside a socio-economic framework. The reader/student might want to be cautious in thinking that a specific instance of rape is exclusively the product of the psychological predispositions of the rapist and/or victim or that somehow the study of attitudes will lead to the early identification of rapists. Actions of rape and other forms of violence towards women reflect the opportunity structures in our culture that have permitted those actions – privacy of the home, laws that protect men, support from male peers, economic dependence of women. Social psychologists have not always considered the mutual interaction of structural and psychological frameworks for understanding. These other structural frameworks – legal and economic ones particularly – are at work concurrently with the social psychological level of analysis, and they are as reasonable a framework for understanding specific instances of violence towards women.

Up to this point, both researchers want me to locate the study of rape within an individual attitude-social behaviour framework. Looking now more specifically at the studies themselves and how they construct the analysis of rape attitudes points more at their differences than their similarities. While working within the same general investigative framework of surveying attitudes, these two researchers have chosen to instruct us very differently about rape by constructing quite different content, methods of obtaining data and analyses.

In the case of Burt, we are privy to the social pulse of '598 Minnesota adults, aged 18 years and over' (Burt 1980: 220) who accepted to be interviewed by 'experienced women recruited from U.S. Census Bureau interviewers in Minnesota' (p. 220) about their 'attitudes and feelings about the behavior of men and women towards each other in their everyday lives, and also their romantic and sexual behavior' (pp. 220-1). The interviewers indicate also that they are 'particularly interested in what you think about rape and sexual assault' (p. 221). We don't know how many refused to be interviewed from the published article. In the case of Feild we hear from 1,448 (82 per cent) of the surveyed respondents identified as 'adult citizens of a medium-sized community', 'patrol police officers of two urban and two rural communities', 'committed rapists at a state mental hospital' and 'female counsellors from rape crisis centres located in 12 major metropolitan areas across the United States' (Feild 1978: 158). Feild tells us that 'black and white experimenters of both sexes with various levels of status (professor to undergraduate student) were used in administering the instruments' (p. 160) and that they were trained to do so. Some respondents received the inventories individually and others in small groups and all completed the questionnaire anonymously. In the one case, our account of rape comes from relatively intimate one-to-one interviews and in another from more distanced and anonymous survey interactions.

Besides creating a different social context for examining rape attitudes, each researcher has set up the data for quite different analytic purposes. For Burt this takes the form of a regression analysis that shows the way in which various attitudes are weighted and interrelated:

The research reported here presented a unique opportunity to assess the predictive validity of feminist theoretical ideas about the rape-supportive nature of American culture.

(Burt 1980: 228)

[T]he author knows of no other published research that attempts to document the complex web of attitudes and beliefs surrounding rape in this culture. The present research, therefore, constitutes a first effort to provide an empirical foundation for a combination of social

psychological and feminist theoretical analysis of rape attitudes and their antecedents.

(Burt 1980: 229)

For Feild this goal takes the form of dimensionalizing attitudes to rape through factor analytic procedures and comparing dimensions across populations. He writes:

Such research is needed for the further development of a theory of rape.

(Feild 1978: 157)

For the most part, when rape attitudes have been studied, the data base has been restricted to anecdotal events or case histories . . . Of course, these data are useful, but such information is not readily susceptible to quantitative analysis and provides little objective evidence on the generality or magnitude of the problem.

(Feild 1978: 157)

There are other quite striking differences beyond who will tell us their attitudes, by what investigative practice and how these attitudes will be structured to provide a picture of rape. The authors themselves turn out to have quite different ideas about what constitutes a rape attitude. In comparing feminist and social psychological research, Lott wrote that 'values are an integral part of science, that they influence all phases of the process, and that they should be acknowledged and made explicit in the same way that we recognize that scientific truths are not independent of time and place' (1985: 159). What then, are the values explicit in these two papers?

First, the acknowledgement of an experiential data base is clearer in Burt's work: 'The present author used feminist writing plus her own extensive field experience with rape victims, victim support workers, and audience response to public presentations about rape attitudes and beliefs to conceptually isolate three additional variables' (Burt 1980: 218). These sources are in addition to and no less important than established findings from 'social psychological research on reactions to victims' and 'literature on the socialization of aggression' (Burt 1980: 217). This researcher blends the personal, political and professional sources of information available to her. There is a sense of personal engagement with the material, whereas in Feild's work there is a clear sense that rape, 'one of the most rapidly increasing, hotly debated, and newly researched crimes in America' (Feild 1978: 157), provides a convenient set of fresh materials to try out ideas about dimensionalizing attitudes through factor analytic techniques. There is no reference to other than 'scientific' commitments.

Burt's work is addressed to what she calls 'rape culture' (p. 219). Consequently, she selects out some statements about rape and tells us

quite definitely at the outset that these are 'myths', that is, the stereotyped and prejudiced aspects of beliefs. Burt's 'rape myths' are Feild's 'beliefs or opinions about rape'. Each of the following scale items are roughly comparable:

BURT (RAPE MYTHS)	FEILD (RAPE ATTITUDES)
Any female can get raped.	A woman can be raped against her will.
Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to.	A woman should be responsible for preventing her own rape.
Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.	Most women secretly desire to be raped.
(Burt 1980: 223)	(Feild 1978: 159)

Burt's language leaves little doubt that rape myths are falsehoods. Feild's approach allows for the possibility that some statements about rape, such as those provided above, are 'beliefs' whereas others are 'factual', that is, some are true or verifiable while others are open to debate. The split between fact and value is a major distinction in Feild's approach to the extent that it is concretized in two separate scales - Attitudes Toward Rape and the Rape Knowledge Test. Feild expresses doubts about his own distinction, one which Burt does not even attempt to concretize in her research. Her approach to the matter is put succinctly: 'Excessive violence has long been a theme in American life; rape is only one of its modes of expression' (Burt 1980: 228), and many of the attitudinal dimensions she explores 'have helped to produce a rape rate in the United States that is the highest of any industrialized country' (Burt 1980: 228).

To find out about attitudes and to develop an instrument capable of assessing attitudes, Feild writes, '[s]ince no published, empirically developed measure of attitudes toward rape was available, the Attitudes Toward Rape questionnaire, or ATR, was developed for use in the study' (Feild 1978: 158). He further notes: 'The content should be indicative of comments or statements frequently cited in the literature as reflecting people's beliefs or opinions about rape' (Feild 1978: 158). His major sources for categorizing domains of attitudes to rape, rape victims and rapists, are, as noted earlier, the popular and scholarly literature, some of which is to be found in recent feminist writings.

Feild goes on to develop an additional measure called the Rape Knowledge Test (RKT). This is a multiple-choice measure of 'people's factual knowledge of rape' (Feild 1978: 159). In other words, Feild separates items according to whether they are expressions of value, opinion or attitude, as opposed to expressions of knowledge.

Even though Feild admits that the 'facts' of rape might be distorted owing to data reflecting biased samples of incarcerated rapists, police reports and reports from victims, he still goes on to construct a test which is guided by his conceptualization that there are factual and non-factual items about rape. The facts of rape for his purposes include 'only items dealing with factual information and verified by two or more independent studies' (Feild 1978: 159). These independent studies are essentially previous social science surveys or police records. Out of a possible fourteen 'correct' answers, the average for the sample was 4.59, indicating that the accounts of rape based on current statistical sources such as the Uniform Crime Reports are not widely known. Furthermore, police records are known to err in the direction of the underestimation of 'founded' rape (Clark and Lewis 1977). It seems untenable to maintain a distinction between factual and attitudinal information in the way that Feild does for a variety of items, given that rape reporting has always been subject to local variation and bears an underestimated relationship to actual occurrence.

Even if one accepted an arbitrary standard of the current factual understanding of rape at any given time or place, it is still not clear whether a respondent in giving information is providing his or her knowledge or opinion. Feild attempts to distinguish what a respondent knows about reported rape from his or her opinions about rape by structuring the former as questions in multiple-choice format with one correct answer and the latter by six-point Likert scales to which there is no right answer but only a scale of agreement or disagreement. Perhaps some examples of the content of items from these scales without regard to Likert versus multiple-choice format would be helpful here. About which items would you be expressing an opinion and for which ones do you have a right or wrong answer? On what evidence are you basing your response?

- Reported rapists generally brutalize their victims.
- Most women secretly desire to be raped.
- The reason most rapists commit rape is for sex.
- The percentage of raped women who know their rapist.
- Most reported rapes occur in the victim's residence.

Feild completes his study by relating the attitude (ATR) and knowledge (RKT) instruments to his respondents' attitudes towards women, various demographic features of the sample, and finally to the extent of contact respondents have had with victims of rape and rapists. This particular

study of rape attitudes wants us to know about rape as a concretization of previous popular and scholarly writings. The concrete attitudes are separated into those which are 'factual' and those which are attitudinal, with only a footnote indicating the possible limitations of this division.

The study by Burt also begins with the aim of providing a delineation of rape attitudes and takes the perspective that rape myths are part of a broader nexus of attitudes. It is the interrelationship that is important, that is the interconnectedness of beliefs about the nature of rape, rapists and victims. These additional attitudinal variables include sex-role stereotyping, sexual conservatism, adversarial sexual beliefs and the acceptance of interpersonal violence. From this quite different starting point, Burt has not separated fact and value in designing a set of response items. She has drawn on both the popular and academic literature as well as her own quite extensive experience in the field of rape prevention.

These authors want us to know somewhat different things about rape attitudes despite using a similar attitude-behaviour framework. Burt wants us to know that rape myths are only part of an interconnected set of ideas contributing to rape culture. Feild wants us to separate the facts of rape from beliefs and to think of the latter in terms of dimensions that he finds 'make sense' quantitatively and confirm the available literature.

Burt is conducting her data-gathering exercise to direct it outwards towards efforts at social change. She writes:

The data reported here imply that changing adherence to rape myths will not be easily accomplished, since they are so closely interconnected with other strongly held and pervasive attitudes.

Developing an accurate theoretical understanding of rape attitudes and assaultive behavior will help make social change efforts more effective.

(Burt 1980: 229)

Feild strikes me as more concerned with finding a 'relatively objective way for measuring concepts not previously well "operationalized"' and to improving 'the psychometric properties of the scale'. He writes:

The ATR (attitudes to rape) . . . might be applied to any investigation in which the assessment of rape attitudes could play an important role.

The present data are thus presented as a tentative model, albeit crude, in the hope that future research on rape attitudes might be stimulated.

(Feild 1978: 177)

When I present students with these two 'understandings of rape' there is inevitably a discussion of their own different understandings of violence towards women. Conflicts arise as to who defines what is rape? Many of the women students feel the space opened to discuss feminist

research on rape that leads into discussions of the differential perception of men and women in our society. Often we spend considerable time debating the usefulness of studying attitudes outside of a social, legal and political change paradigm. Ideally, whether it is a textbook or a journal article that students read next, they will think it reasonable to ask 'What's the story here?' and 'How does this researcher want me to think?'