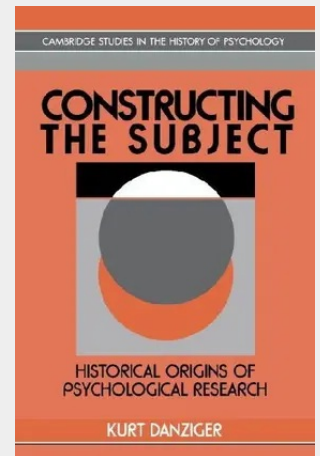


Constructing the Subject

Historical Origins of Psychological Research

Constructing the Subject traces the history of psychological research methodology from the nineteenth century to the emergence of currently favored styles of research in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Kurt Danziger considers methodology to be a kind of social practice rather than simply a matter of technique. Therefore his historical analysis is primarily concerned with such topics as the development of the social structure of the research relationship between experimenters and their subjects, as well as the role of the methodology in the relationship of investigators to each other in a wider social context. The book begins with a historical discussion of introspection as a research practice and proceeds to an analysis of diverging styles of psychological investigation. There is an extensive exploration of the role of quantification and statistics in the historical development of psychological research. The influence of the social context on research practice is illustrated by a comparison of American and German developments, especially in the field of personality research. In this analysis, psychology is treated less as a body of facts or theories than a particular set of social activities intended to produce something that counts as psychological knowledge under certain historical conditions. This perspective means that the historical analysis has important consequences for a critical understanding of psychological methodology in general.

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