Abstract. Psychology is a plethoric, frustrating, and divided science, partially, because of its youth and complexity; fundamentally, because of a basic dualism of data: private experience and public behavior. This dualism is not incompatible with unity. The historical and epistemological development of scientific psychology converges on a notion of science as a body of knowledge empirically and experimentally verifiable and falsifiable through autocorrective research programs, and on a notion of its subject matter as behavior. Behavior is conceived of as physical action that is biologically and/or personally meaningful. The grounds for a unified psychological science are given by the unity of its subject matter: behavior as meaningful physical action, and by the unity of its method: verification of public behavior. Unity is possible! Whether it will be attained is doubtful. It depends on the actual strategies of research, teaching, intervention, and organization, which today favor a reinforcing system for fragmentation and disunity.

Despite James Thurber's admonition, "Let your mind alone," man will continue forever minding himself, for human life includes its own interpretation. Since the very first written documents, from the Vedas to Plato, this need for knowing himself has been expressed in multiple attempts to develop a systematic account of man's thoughts, feelings, and doings based on experience, belief, reason, and facts. Within this context grew the effort to elaborate a psychological science. The question is: Has the effort been successful? Here are my concrete questions and answers: Is there scientific psychology? I think yes. Is psychology one science? I think not. Can it become one? I do not know; I think it is possible, but doubtful. In what follows I will try to justify these answers.

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1. The Present Status of Psychology

1.1. A Plethoric Science

Psychology today is, so it seems to me, a plethoric, frustrating, and divided science. First, it is plethoric. There is an obvious and growing proliferation of psychologists and psychological investigations, theories, facts, methodologies, technologies, institutions, professions, and services to individuals and society.

In this regard psychology partakes of the general accelerated growth of science. Price (1971) estimated that 80% to 90% of all scientists who ever existed are alive today. Garvey and Griffith (1971) found that the number of psychologists duplicates itself every 10 to 12 years. The American Psychological Association began in 1892 with 26 members; by 1974 the membership was around 40,000 (Little, 1975; McKinney, 1976). The Spanish Psychological Association started with 12 founding members in 1952; now we have over 1,500 members. In 1970, 36 national societies belonged to the International Union of Psychological Science with a membership of about 50,000; in 1980 there were 44 national societies, with 100,000 members (Rosenzweig, 1982). The actual number of psychologists is, of course, much greater. For instance, in Spain, about 1,500 belong to the association, but, in fact, there are about 30,000 psychologists.

There are today more than 300 psychologists per million inhabitants in developed countries. If a similar ratio held for the whole world, assuming the growth rate persists, and if we allow ourselves to extrapolate, we could predict, as Le Ny (1982) does, that by the end of the century there will be four billion psychologists and two billion consumers of psychology; and not much later there will be more psychologists than inhabitants on our little blue planet.

Similar growing trends apply to research and publications. Scientific events duplicate themselves every 10 to 20 years (Price, 1971) and psychological information every 15 to 20 years (Garvey & Griffith, 1971). In 1969 I counted 16,000 entries in the Psychological Abstracts (Yela, 1971); in 1973 there were 24,000 (Monserrat-Esteve, Porta, & Vallejo, 1974); now there may be over 30,000. It would be easy to provide evidence of similar growth regarding journals, congresses, associations, and professional work.

In 1946, when I met Carl Seashore, the psychologist of music, in Iowa, he told me, “When I was a student there was one single course of psychology; now, there are hundreds; in the future there will be as many diversified psychological specialities and disciplines as human activities.” And so it has come to pass.

One other remark: psychological research, both theoretical and applied, is not only rich and plethoric. In some fields, as in the area of neuropsychology, it is in the vanguard of general scientific inquiry.

1.2. A Frustrating Science

Psychology is also frustrating. Psychologists have proven able to develop and successfully apply in their research the most precise and sophisticated procedures, comparable to those used by the most advanced sciences. But some-