Editorial

I am flattered that the American Psychological Association's Division of General Psychology has selected me to be founding editor for its new journal, and I am awed by the historical mandate of this division. Like the original members of Division 1, I see psychology as a unified field with shared methodological and substantive values. The editorial board and I will work hard to see that the Review of General Psychology will transcend the idiosyncrasies of traditional subfields of specialization and emphasize a commitment to general principles.

In the service of this goal, authors of manuscripts submitted to the Review of General Psychology are encouraged to write their manuscripts from the perspective of more than one subfield. Some of the most exciting work in psychology is at the edges of subdisciplines, and specialized journals accommodate broad articles only with difficulty. The Review of General Psychology seeks to publish such integrative articles that advance theory, evaluate and synthesize research literatures, provide a new historical analysis, or discuss emerging methodological developments in psychology as a whole.

A broader, integrative approach to psychology may seem elusive in this era of specialization, but there are ways it can be fostered. At Yale University, for example, the faculty is building a department of psychology in which every member contributes to more than just one of our programs of study. Although my doctorate was completed in clinical psychology, I identify professionally as a social psychologist, and many of my empirical contributions concern health psychology. Furthermore, the function of human emotion—a focus that cuts across subfields—is a theme in most of my research. My colleagues have similar integrative approaches to psychological theory and research. Although specialization and generalization are fully compatible, factionalization does not serve our field (nor an academic department) well.

In addition to publishing articles that borrow from the knowledge base of several fields and subfields, the Review of General Psychology is also interested in manuscripts that could be controversial. Obviously, there are distinguished journals in our field that publish excellent, conceptually oriented literature reviews and theoretical statements. Indeed, I recently retired as an associate editor of one of them. However, manuscripts that provide a provocative challenge to the customary or prevailing view in an area of study appear all too rarely in these somewhat more traditional journals. It is the explicit editorial policy of the Review of General Psychology to encourage these kinds of submissions. In my experience as an associate editor of Psychological Bulletin, I sometimes encountered reviewers of challenging manuscripts who did not see the value in a new approach or believed that the mainstream point of view should be honored. Usually, editors feel paralyzed by this dilemma: Should they accept the controversial manuscript despite the negative reviews or play it more conservatively? Editors often consider the missions of their journals and err on the side of caution. When editors choose not to do so, there can be quite an outcry, as I discovered on more than one occasion. But what if a journal took as its mission the publication of provocative manuscripts that seriously challenge the zeitgeist? Reviewers would be asked to evaluate potential contributions based on the heuristic value of their main theses, whether the theses seem right or wrong. The field needs a publication outlet in which authors can present controversial views (responsibly, of course), without concern that such views would not be tolerated by the mainstream. Of course, the Review of General Psychology considers for publication excellent theoretical, conceptual, historical, or methodological articles that are not necessarily
controversial. At the same time, the editorial board and I place special emphasis on somewhat more intellectually contentious pieces.

In years gone by, *The General Psychologist*—the other publication of the Division of General Psychology—regularly ran a short piece called "The Generalists' Agenda." "The Generalists' Agenda" declared that general psychology (a) encompasses the whole field of psychology; (b) is based on the supposition that there can be a gradual approach to a coherent understanding (a "big picture") of human nature and its relationship to society and the environment; (c) is based on the supposition that all of the subfields and specialties within psychology, along with other disciplines, contribute pieces that must be part of this coherent understanding; and (d) is concerned with the development of this coherent understanding by continually redrawing the "big picture." General psychology endeavors to enhance the linkages among all aspects of psychology and related disciplines. It presupposes that specialization is necessary for optimum development of subfield knowledge, but that specialization without reference to the big picture is unfortunate. As readers consider submitting their manuscripts to the *Review of General Psychology* and as they peruse the inaugural issue of our journal, they are encouraged to be mindful of this agenda.

The editorial board and I look forward to considering your manuscripts for publication in the *Review of General Psychology* and to hearing your thoughts about the journal. We will endeavor to make the experience of sharing your scholarship with us an efficient, fair-minded, and constructive one.——Peter Salovey, Editor