

Chapter 3  
Essay 3

I found Hermann Von Helmholtz to be interesting because even though he faced some challenges early in his life due to his health, he overcame them and rose to success, becoming such an important figure with all his contributions still being used today. At the early age of 17, he enrolled in the Berlin medical institute whereby no tuition was charged as long as he became an army surgeon after graduation. While serving in the army he was able to continue his studies in mathematics and physics and even published several articles. I'm sure this was not an easy task since the medical field was also advancing one researcher at a time. His research on visual perception and the invention of the ophthalmoscope is used to examine the retina of the eye even up to this day. This research was instrumental in the diagnosis and treatment of retinal disorders, theories of vision and color vision. Amazingly, he achieved career advancement and worldly recognition by the age of 30.

He also studied and published research on acoustical disorders such as the sensation of tone, the nature of harmony and discord and the perceptions of sound. I found his belief in conducting experiments not for the purpose of collecting data but for the purpose of solving problems was compelling. Through his research he was able to study and come up with solutions to visual and auditory problems.

Helmholtz's investigations on the speed of neural impulse were recorded. He provided the first empirical measurement of the rate of conduction by stimulating a motor nerve and the attached muscle in the leg of frog. His findings yielded the speed of conduction was not instantaneous and movement followed each other at measurable intervals and do not occur simultaneously.

Most interesting is that Helmholtz was not a psychologist and psychology was not his major, but he contributed to the way human senses work. He gave so much to the experimental approach central to the new psychology.