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History of Psychology

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Test 3

Functionalism in the context of psychology refers to the principle that the mind is viewed as a functional or instrumental mechanism in the way that it allows us to become shaped by our environment. In chapter six, the question that functionalism tries to answer is what mental processes accomplish. Functionalism has the mind studied through the collection of its various functions and processes rather than its entire build up and structure. Chapter six begins with Darwin and it discusses Darwin's school of thought in regard to functionalism. The chapter states that his beliefs changed the focus of psychology into the mind's function and also that the physical makeup of a certain species is determined by its conditions for living. Through this school of thought, many biologists and other scientists view the physical makeup of a species with the same school of thought as functionalism; that each physical structure acts as a specific function or process. This theory boosted the psychological school of thought regarding functionalism which helped develop functional psychology.

In chapter 7, significant psychologists such as Herbert Spencer and William James are mentioned. It discusses Herbert Spencer's theory of synthetic philosophy. Through this theory, Herbert Spencer discusses the concept that our minds exist in the way it does now due to its past and present efforts to continually adapt to our own surroundings. Adaptation being a concept all too familiar with Darwin and a concept that perfectly aligns with the principles of functionalism. William James is looked upon as the father of modern psychology and anticipator of functionalism in psychology. He openly opposed Wundt's goal for psychology which was to look upon the mind through its specific elements, a concept that perfectly contrasted with functionalism. James believed that individuals are emotional beings that harbor reason and thought. He also believed that since the mind was always changing and adapting, that it is also continuous, thus providing the world with the concept of the stream of consciousness. This concept states that the mind is always in a state of flow and processes. An attempt at diminishing this into elements will fully misshapen it. Other concepts that he provided include pragmatism, the theory of emotions, and the three part self which all play a role in the functional school of thought. Functionalism also received a plethora of criticisms from psychologists such as Titchener since it did not align with how structuralism works. Titchener believed that any theory that held the mind not viewed as elemental or structural was not psychology. Although functionalism did contribute in the way that it allowed for the introspective method along with data formed through other methods as well.

In chapter 8, one can see the lasting effect that functionalism had on American society. We see psychology spread throughout the world in more libraries and universities and even more so throughout the everyday, daily walk of life. Functionalism brought forth massive change into the world of psychology especially through the field of applied psychology. For example we see work in industrial-organizational psychology, counseling and clinical psychology, educational

and school psychology, exercise and sports psychology, and so on. Thanks to the work of psychologists such as Munsterbeg, Wilhelm, Witmer, Scott, and so on, psychology is now one of the most significant sciences within today's society.