

FunctionalismCh6,7,8

6. Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution changed the focus of the new psychology from the structure of consciousness to its functions and brought a change in psychology's subject matter and goal. Darwin proposed that the physical characteristics of animals and humans evolved because they were useful, or functional. So, all the ongoing changes had reasons. According to this new functionalist theory, the mind, like the body, had developed to perform specific tasks essential to survival and reproduction. Psychologists came to realize that studying animal behavior was essential to understanding human behavior. Thus, the new topic was introduced to psychology laboratories. Psychology came to be more concerned with how humans and animals functioned in adapting to their environment.

The investigation of individual differences impacted Functionalism's conception. Functionalists acknowledged that individuals differed from one another and that comprehending these variations was essential to understanding how the mind and behavior functioned. To comprehend how these differences affected behavior and adaptability, psychologists investigated differences in various areas. Thus, Francis Galton studied how intelligence was inherited and strongly believed in the possibility of artificial selection. He originated the concept of mental tests to practically measure individual intelligence levels.

7. Chapter 7 explores various ideas that relate to the development of the Functionalist school of thought. One idea that influenced the development of functionalism is Social Darwinism by Herbert Spenser, a psychologist and philosopher who applied the theory of evolution and the principle of natural selection to human nature and society. The chapter notes that if the principle of survival operated freely, then only the best would survive. Through its concept of survival for the fittest, Social Darwinism influenced functionalism by illustrating how living organisms adapt to survive. They continue living because their traits evolve in response to the surroundings.

William James being the major American precursor of functional psychology presented his ideas clearly and effectively. In the *Principles of Psychology*, he stated the new goal of psychology that was not the discovery of the elements of experience (as Wundt and Titchener thought before, but the study of living people as they adapt to the environment. James emphasized the study of consciousness and people's behavior as a whole. New methodology was suggested that included introspection, experimental and comparative methods. Thus, functionalist movement was no longer restricted to a single method. James' approach significantly broadened the scope of American psychology. It was James' ideas that laid the foundation for the development and practice of American functionalism.

Major themes of functionalism were summarized by Angel who stated that functional psychology was the psychology that focused on studying mental functions and how mental processes operate. He pointed out the importance of consciousness that mediates between the needs of the organism and the environment that becomes an important factor of survival. The

new psychology became the psychology of psychophysical relations of the living organisms and the environment, of the mind and body.

8. The German approach to psychology went through a significant transformation in the United States. The accumulated scientific knowledge, human resources available and the demand of the society made it possible for psychology as a science to become more of a practical discipline. The applied psychologists changed the nature of American psychology and took their scientific knowledge into the real world. The value of the research became inseparable from its' application to real-world problems.

The first and most obvious field of application for psychology was education. Psychology focused on how to improve the results of studies, create effective methods of teaching, and design specialty programs for different groups of people. A vast variety of tests were created to assess and measure cognitive functions such as memory, attention, imagination and comprehension that provided a better measure of intelligence. The introduction of the mental age concept made the testing more accurate. Significant contributions were made to the field of clinical psychology. Witmer having interest in assessing and treating learning and behavioral problems in school children, a psychology area that now called school psychology was instrumental in developing clinical psychology. In the sphere of industrial-organizational psychology the research was conducted on employee selection, advertising, and job performance.

Psychology proved itself useful in solving every day and every person's issue. It became a useful science that could be used to help people solve problems rather than study contents of their minds.