# Philosophical Roots of Psychology

* Rene Descartes: Father of modern philosophy; said “I think; therefore I am”; believed in dualism (mind and body are separate but linked)
* John Locke: Tabula Rasa—blank slate at birth; we are a product of our experiences; primary contribution—making psychology an empirical science
* James Mill --Believed humans and animals are fundamentally the same; laid the groundwork for modern theories that assume similarity between humans and animals

# Physiological Roots of Psychology

* Johannes Muller--Recommended removal or isolation of organs to see how they worked; doctrine of specific nerve energies (nerve impulses are the same, no matter where they originate), which led to belief that brain must be specialized
* Hermann von Helmholtz--measured speed of nerve impulses; supported idea that mental events could be the subject of scientific investigation

***Philosophy + Physiology🡪 Psychology***

# Schools of thought in Psychology

**Structuralism**

Founded by Wilhelm Wundt*--*set up first psychological laboratory in Leipzig, Germany, in 1879; considered the father of psychology; wrote the first psych textbook

Science of immediate experience; goal was to break down consciousness into its most basic elements to see how they’re related; detailed analysis of consciousness called *introspection*

Edward Titchener --student of Wundt’s who brought structuralism to America

G. Stanley Hall --student of Wundt’s, but not a true structuralist; set up first psych lab in U.S. in 1892 at Johns Hopkins; helped start the American Psychological Association (APA) and served as 1st president; considered the father of developmental psychology

**Functionalism** – founded by William James

Focused on functions & process of conscious activity (perceiving and learning); focused on child development and educational practices; very practical…*functional; i*nfluenced by Darwin’s natural selection idea; believed consciousness is uniquely human; thus, it should be a focus of study.

Tenets of Functionalism: study of mental operations and not mental structures; mind and body are not indistinguishable; purpose of psychological studies was to determine the relationship between an organism and its environment

Stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R model) : Stimulus is an event that affects the organism (human or animal). The “O” part indicates what goes on in the person/animal’s mind; and the “R” is the response (behavioral or emotional).

John Dewey --A functionalist whose influence was in progressive education around 1920; believed children knew what was best for them—adults shouldn’t intervene in school or otherwise; Montessori schools are based on this idea

Functionalism ultimately failed as a school of thought, but it is closely related to evolutionary psychology today

**Behaviorism –**founded by John B. Watson in 1913

Called for psychologists to study only overt behavior; the S-O-R (stimulus-organism-response) model became the S-R model (stimulus-response) because cognitive processes (the “O”) were not studied.

Really caught on because psychologists were tired of trying to pin down elements of consciousness. Lasted for decades

Important Behaviorists

* Edward Thorndike (studied behavior of cats)
* Ivan Pavlov (studied dogs’ response to a ringing bell that indicated food was about to be served)
* John B. Watson—got the behavioral perspective really started
* B.F. Skinner—did a lot of work in the field of learning (operant conditioning)

Impact of Behaviorism

* Focused on objective science
* Field ultimately evolved into “cognitive behaviorism,” which is now an effective therapy tool.
* S-R model of behaviorism is now once again S-O-R model of cognitive behaviorism.

**Psychodynamic/Psychoanalytic Theory –**founded by Sigmund Freud

Occurred in Europe at the same time as behaviorism was going on in America; focused on functions of consciousness and unconsciousness, biological drives and instincts

**Humanism** –associated with Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow

Arose in 1950s in direct opposition to both Freud and the behaviorists; emphasized the unique qualities of people, freedom, and potential for personal growth; unconditional positive regard; largest impact was on clinical psychology

**Cognitive Psychology** –started with the “Cognitive Revolution” in the 1960s

The ultimate, most successful challenge to behaviorism; one of the most popular viewpoints in psychology today; reestablished the study of consciousness; aided by computers—they help us study mental processes (e.g., reaction time) more precisely

Information-processing approach--information received through senses is “processed” by various systems of neurons in the brain (e.g., “memory system”); modern model of human brain is a computer

We now study mental structures, but not in the way Wundt did. We use the more objective behavioral methods that behaviorists taught us.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy--involves changing maladaptive thoughts/feelings and the undesirable behaviors they produce; considered by many to be the most effective type of therapy

Today, there is a focus on **physiological psychology** as well as **cognitive psychology.** Psychologists recognize the importance of biological processes on human thought, emotion, and behavior. Another popular and recent branch of psychology is **evolutionary psychology**, which attempts to explain human behavior from our evolutionary roots.