

# History

Psychology: scientific study of mind and behavior

## Aristotle

- Greek naturalist and philosopher
- Theorized about learning, memory, motivation, emotion, perception, personality
- He was way off...but he was one of the first to ask questions about these ideas
  - Eating makes us sleepy because it causes gas and heat to collect around the heart (source of personality)

## Rene Descartes

- One of the 1<sup>st</sup> to suggest that the mind actually controlled the body (movement, sensation, perception, etc)

## John Locke

- Empiricism – what we know about the world comes through experience and observation...we are born a blank slate
  - Earlier philosophers believed in an innate knowledge

## Wilhelm Wundt

- Germany December 1879
- 1<sup>st</sup> Psychological experiment
- Scientific experiment to study the mind
  - Created a machine to measure the time lag between people hear a ball hit a platform and them pressing a key
  - 1/10 of a second when asked to press the key as soon as they heard to ball
  - 2/10 of a second when asked to press when they were consciously aware of perceiving the sound
    - To be aware of your awareness takes a bit longer☺

Before long psychology developed into different branches, or schools of thought (late 1800s-early 1900s)

## Structuralism

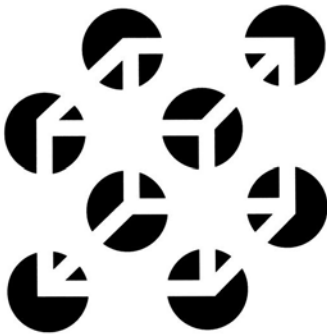
- Edward Bradford Titchener – Wundt's assistant
- Aim was to discover the structural elements of the mind
- Had people engage in *introspection* (looking inward)
  - He wanted them to report on their immediate reactions to a stimulus...their sensations, images, feelings, etc
- BUT introspection was unreliable
  - We often don't know WHY we feel what we feel

## Functionalism

- William James
- Examined the functions of our thoughts and feelings
- Our nose smells our brain thinks, BUT why
- He was influenced by Darwin, so he believed that things like thinking and smelling developed because they helped our ancestors survive
- Study how mental processes help people/animals adapt to the environment

## Gestalt (German for whole)

- German psychologists
  - Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Kohler, Kurt Koffka
- Noticed that when people are given a cluster of sensations we tend to organize them into a whole
- Necker Cube: we don't see 8 circles with 3 white lines in each...we see the cube



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- When you look at a table you see a table, not 4 legs and a top

## Inheritable Traits

- Sir Francis Galton
- How does heredity influence a person's abilities, character, and behavior?
- Traced the ancestry of families...found greatness runs in families...so he concluded that it must be in the genes...not considering the advantages they might have had in terms of money, etc.