

# Introduction

## **Some Quick Reasons for Studying History and Philosophy of Psychology**

This book covers the history of psychology, the people and their theories, and shows how the ideas in the development of this discipline are linked to ideas in philosophy, both East and West. This book is intended for laypeople interested in the topic, and undergraduate and postgraduate students in psychology. Students might wonder why they should study this topic. Very briefly, there are four reasons.

Firstly, it is useful to know about history because history can provide information about the present. Those who do not learn from history are condemned to make the same mistakes that have gone before. After all, it is easy to keep reinventing the wheel but reinventing the wheel is not the best way of spending one's life! Many of the issues that faced the early psychologists still face psychologists today. Controversies have persisted throughout the history of psychology.

Secondly, psychologists are not the only people who are interested in humans, and some of the questions that psychologists address, such as how to be happy or human, have been studied since the dawn of time. It would be arrogance to suppose that psychologists have the only insight into human nature. In order to truly understand humans, it is necessary to use insight from many sources, one of which is philosophy. Another source of understanding is that of common sense or an intuitive understanding of people.

Thirdly, history and philosophy broaden the mind. Like travel, it is helpful to see how other people live and deal with problems, and history and philosophy allow the mind to travel in realms beyond the standard psychology textbook. The history of psychology provides a background to the ideas of modern psychology. It shows how those modern ideas have developed.

The final reason is that these topics are intrinsically interesting. There are real people in the history of psychology with real stories to tell. Many of the thoughts and theories of these early psychologists are stimulating and thought provoking, as are their philosophical ideas. We have written the book with an emphasis on finding the interesting parts in the history and philosophy. We hope that students enjoy reading our book as much as we have enjoyed writing it.

### **Some Features of the Book**

In writing for those interested in the history of psychology, we have not attempted to provide a definitive text that includes all aspects of history and philosophy that are relevant to psychology. Instead, our aim is to select those landmarks in history which are needed to give a background for understanding the rest of psychology, and to select ideas in philosophy which exemplify how philosophical exploration can be carried out. We aim to provide sufficient depth of material, more than in some other texts, to cover the selected material. So, for example, we cover the work of Freud and Jung in some detail so the reader can compare between their theories, but we place less attention on other psychoanalysts. Similarly, we provide some detail about the theories of Rogers and Kelly so readers can compare two very different phenomenological psychologists, but the same depth of analysis is not shown to all phenomenological psychologists. Our selection is based on the principle of showing the scope of variation within these different approaches to psychology, but not submerging the reader in so much information that the book becomes a chore to read. Our aim has been to educate but at the same time to interest the reader with some of the quirky parts of the story of the history of psychology. In comparison with other histories of psychology, ours is more selective with regard to biography, but provides more detail about selected experiments and theories. At the same time our aim is to give examples to show the reader how to engage in the intriguing activity of philosophy.

Having read this book, the student of the history of psychology should have an understanding of the sequence of the people, events, theories and ideas that make up the history of psychology. We also want those reading this book to learn about philosophical implications from the historical development of psychology. The main motivation for this is to encourage our readers to develop their critical skills and to gain some insight into how to do philosophy. This should encourage them to avoid simply memorizing historical facts but to learn, from reading the philosophical implications, how relevant philosophical problems can be identified, relevant philosophical questions can be raised and assumptions of modern psychology can be critically evaluated from a philosophical framework. In other words, this book is not just intended to give answers but to open questions.

Our text has the unusual feature of including philosophy from both Western and Eastern perspectives. Although academic psychology was developed within a Western intellectual tradition, philosophical ideas originating in the East are just as relevant.

## About the Structure of the Book

One of the most important questions known to men and women is the nature of the role humans have on planet earth. Chapter 2 examines the question of 'who we are in relation to God and divine forces' from a philosophical point of view and before the development of modern psychology. Both Eastern and Western philosophical traditions are discussed in this chapter with the aim of showing that Western and Eastern philosophers from antiquity, like contemporary psychologists, also investigated who we are as humans by understanding our relationship with nature or God or some spiritual or divine forces.

Chapter 3 describes the beginning of modern psychology up to the point of the founding of the first psychology laboratory by Wundt in Germany, and the ideas which developed from that laboratory in America by Titchener. Chapter 4 covers the philosophical implications of that beginning. In particular, it looks at the philosophical issues between the body and mind interaction as implied in that period of psychology. It also looks at the distinction between immediate and mediate experiences (Wundt and Titchener) and examines psychology, as a science discipline, from the philosophy of science perspective.

Chapters 5 and 6 continue with the history of psychology. Chapter 5 covers the early psychologies that were developed in America, England and France, including functionalism, psychometrics, and different types of applied psychology, as well as the philosophy of functional description. Chapter 6 sees a return to Germany and ideas that were developments which were different from those suggested by Wundt, namely the Wurzburg school and Gestalt Movement, and the idea of emergent properties.

Chapter 7 covers the story of behaviourism and Chapter 8 covers the philosophical implications of behaviourism. One implication from behaviourism is that the notion of free will is an illusion. We examine this notion by discussing philosophical literature concerning incompatibilism, free agents, compatibilism, free will and morality.

Chapter 9 covers the psychoanalytic movement with an emphasis on the theories of Freud and Jung. Focusing on Freud, Chapter 10 provides a philosophical critique of Freudian theory, drawing from philosophy of science literature and insights from Wittgenstein and existential psychotherapists.

Chapter 11 covers the humanistic/phenomenological/existential tradition in psychology in which ideas of Rogers and Kelly are described in detail with additional descriptions of Maslow, Frankl and May. Chapter 12 covers the philosophical basis for that tradition focussing on the ideologies of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre.

Chapter 13 is devoted to the history and philosophy of clinical psychology. We have emphasized this area because of its particular interest to students. Focusing on schizophrenia, some philosophical issues concerning mental illness will be explored. These issues pertain to the subjective experiences and meanings of schizophrenics, and the notions of self and agency among the sufferers.

Chapters 14 and 15 address the question of how to preserve oneself, or to maintain our happiness. These chapters cover both perspectives from Western and Eastern philosophers who have demonstrated different ways through which we can preserve ourselves individually and collectively.

The final chapter, Chapter 16 examines the qualitative approach in psychology, including the more recent movements of social constructionism and critical psychology, and returns to a fundamental question as to the extent to which an intuitive or hermeneutical understanding of people provides useful information.

The structure of the book reflects the view that both the history of psychology and a philosophical exploration of that history go best hand in hand. Students may find it helpful to realize that the book was written as an exchange of ideas between two people, with one of the authors taking the role of a historian and the other a philosopher. Consequently, the book does not divide naturally into a 'history part' and a 'philosophy part'. Rather, it is often the case that a historical chapter provokes a philosophical chapter in which the philosophical implications or issues of the historical facts presented will be explored. We hope that this exchange from more than one perspective will encourage the student to think actively about the problems and issues discussed rather than accept the information as fact. When used as a course text, we hope that the book will also stimulate exchange in ideas between students.