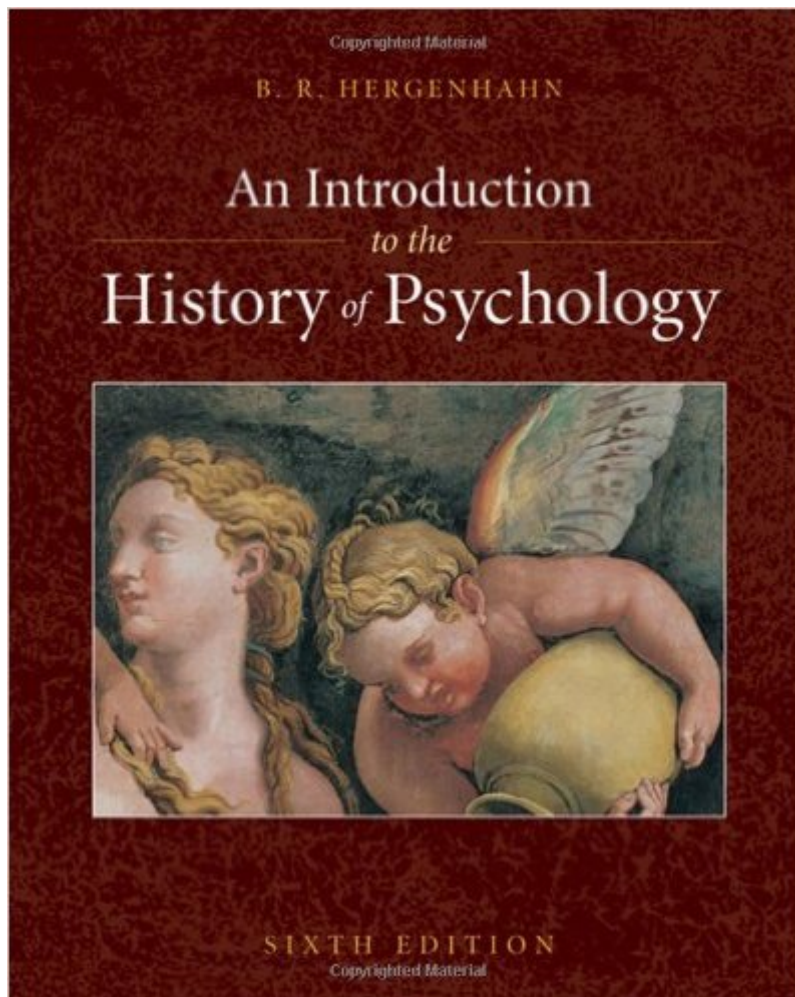# An Introduction To The History Of Psychology (PSY 310 History And Systems Of Psychology)

Synopsis

Dreams puzzled early man, Greek philosophers spun elaborate theories to explain human memory and perception, Descartes postulated that the brain was filled with "animal spirits," and psychology was officially deemed a "science" in the 19th century. In this Fifth Edition, B.R. Hergenhahn demonstrates that most of the concerns of contemporary psychologists are manifestations of themes that have been part of psychology for hundreds-or even thousands-of years. The book's numerous photographs and pedagogical devices, along with its biographical material on key figures in psychology, will engage you and facilitate your understanding of each chapter.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text books are by no means expected to be thorough and exhaustive of their subject. However, Hergenhan's garbage brings this incompleteness to a new and frustrating level. As stated by several other reviewers, the profiles of the individuals covered in this book are so vague and watered down that they border complete inaccuracy. In many cases, Hergenhan has completely missed an individual's point and this is especially prevalent in his treatment of pre-Enlightenment philosophers. And the bias! In covering the Classical Greek and neo-Platonic philosophers, he draws almost exclusively from Whitehead and Russel! These two logical positivists most definitely have an agenda in their analysis of these earlier philosophers, and Hergenhan offers no alternative sources. Furthermore, there are wide swaths of his book where citations are scarce or nonexistent.

Jesus, St. Paul, St. Augustine and Averroes receive one citation each. His section on the "Dark Ages" is completely false and offers zero citations, and he fabricates historical claims in order to support his own post-Enlightenment bias. For instance, claiming the high middle ages were known for the abuse and execution of the mentally ill, when in fact medieval standards of mental healthcare exceeded those of the modern world until the late 19th century. (Monks and nuns often ran what we would call group or community homes for the mentally ill). Aquinas also receives no citations, even though his philosophical thought was the spring board for almost all later philosophical endeavors. Finally, even when citations are found, Hergenhan almost never cites the writing of the actual person he's covering. All in all, he deigns to speak as an authoritative expert on all topics, without having the decency to utilize or even read the individuals he covers.

This text was used in a graduate-level History of Psychology course. I found it to be highly readable. Many of the stories here are interesting, and many ideas are thrown around. As someone who was not super familiar with philosophy, these ideas served to be interesting if a bit brief. Unfortunately, this book tries to cover the history of ideas from ancient Greece to modern times, and when something like positivism can fill its own textbook, corners are cut and concepts are simplified. With that said, this book doesn't do a terrible job of summarizing these turning points in science in a conversational and easy way.As a textbook, AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY too often repeats its formula: here's a time in history, here are individual people that wrote things during this time, here's a turning point, and here's the shift of this paradigm. Rinse and repeat. Bias is also present here; the chapter on Freud and Psychoanalysis feels overcritical (compared to how other controversial figures are treated). The ending chapter on modern psychology consists of little more than statistics of the American Psychological Association.At its best, this book is easy and fun to read, but at its worse, it is an assortment of loosely related anecdotes. I would recommend this to psychology students who have an interest in the history of their field of study, but I don't know if I would have it required for a class.

I am finding more and more that text books give the worst account of history. This book proved that point. For an overview of the history of psychology, the book was okay. However, I found many times that the theories of the psychologists were so watered down, one can hardly get a good idea of their original studies and propositions. I know it is difficult to read each and every work of each and every psychologist, but this text book is a waste of time for anyone who really wants to understand how ideas developed. In addition, I get really annoyed when writers do not quote the

original author. Most of the quotes in this book were taken from other text books or biographers.

I read this book for a senior undergrad level History of Psychology course. The book begins by explaining with excellent clarity the definitions and importance of the -isms (eg. dualism, monism, determinism) and uses these basic characteristics to categorize the various approaches to Psychology described throughout the text.I also appreciate that the text frames the history of Psychology in terms of a bigger scientific picture by discussing in Ch 1 Kuhn and Popper and the idea of paradigmatic shifts and then by showing how Psychology is subject to the same cycles and biases as any other scientific discipline. The book does go into great detail about the more influential persons in Psychology's history, but I found that this really reinforces their human-ness and serves as evidence for the basis for the shifts between dominant philosophies. In my opinion, Hergenhahn does not describe Psychology's personalities to the point of neglecting of their ideas. He seems to me to do a wonderful and readable job of integrating the two.Yes, there are an incredible number of details thoughout the text. These details served to enhance my appreciation of both persons and their ideas. The details also served to greatly enhance my GRE scores, thank Goodness! The details follow each other well and do serve to give a broader picture of the history of Psychology.This text is one of the best I've read because it both gives an overall picture AND includes the details to back up and reinforce this picture. I enjoyed reading this text and found it fascinating as well as educational.

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