

INTRODUCING PSYCHOLOGY

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WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

The science that seeks to understand
behavior and *mental* processes



SOME SUBFIELDS OF PSYCHOLOGY

Biological

Developmental

Cognitive

Personality

Clinical

Counseling

Community

Health

Social

Industrial/ Organizational

Educational

School

Sports

Forensic

Environmental

Women & Child

WHAT IS EMPIRICISM?

Knowledge is gained through experience and observation, not through speculation

Psychologists use methods of science to conduct empirical research

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY

Birth of modern, scientific psychology is credited to Wundt in 1879

Wundt established the first formal psychology research laboratory at the University of
Leipzig, Germany

But, roots of psychology can be traced back through centuries of history in
philosophy and science

STRUCTURALISM

Goals: To study conscious experience and its structure

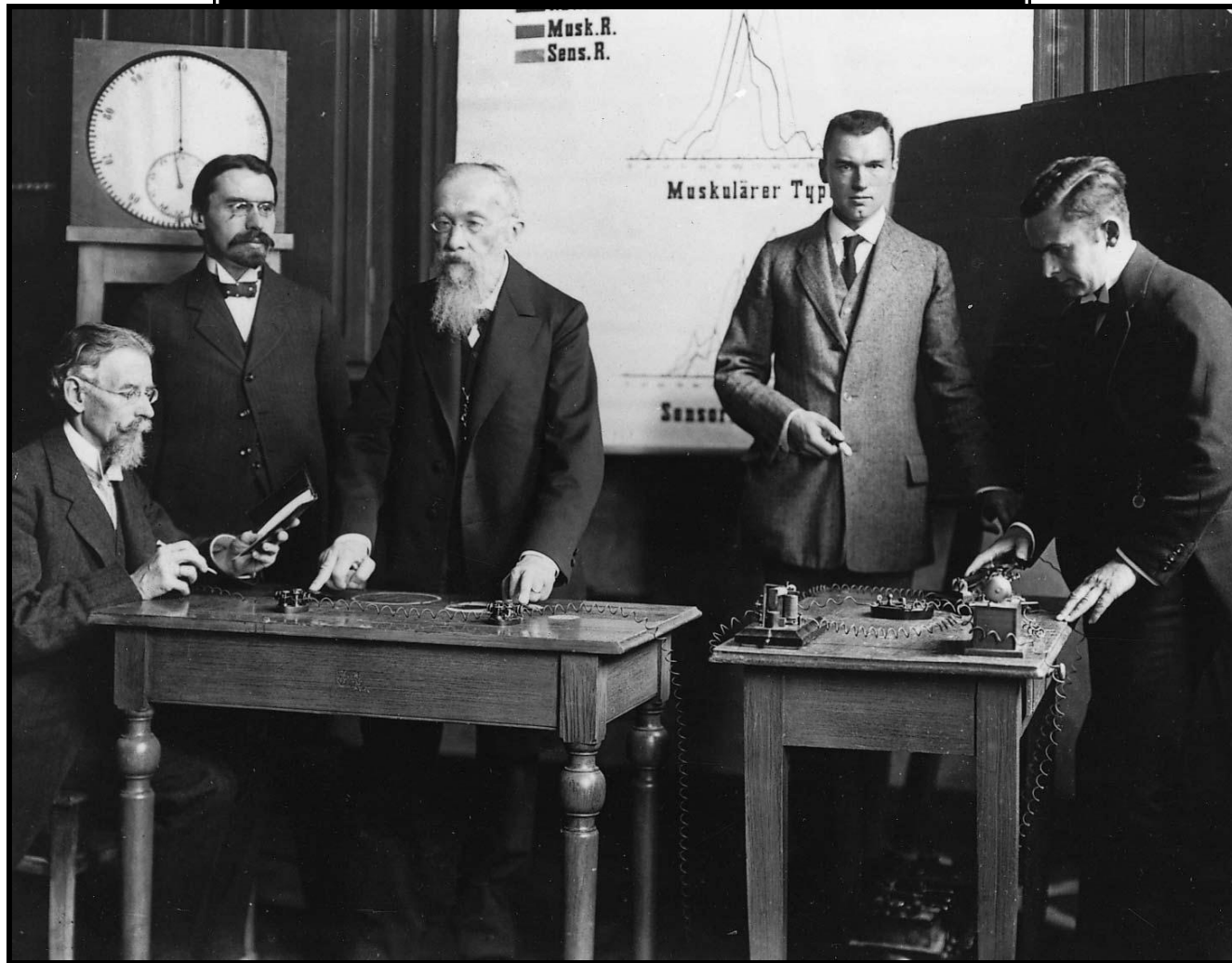
Psychologists: Wundt, Titchner

Methods: Experiments, introspection

Application: “Pure scientific research”

Spurred development of psychological laboratories

WILHELM WUNDT (1832–1920)



GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY

- Goals:** To describe organization of mental processes
“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”
- Psychologists:** Wertheimer, Koffka, Kohler
- Methods:** Observation of sensory/perceptual phenomena
- Applications:** Understanding of visual illusions, laid some groundwork for humanistic and cognitive psychology

PSYCHOANALYSIS

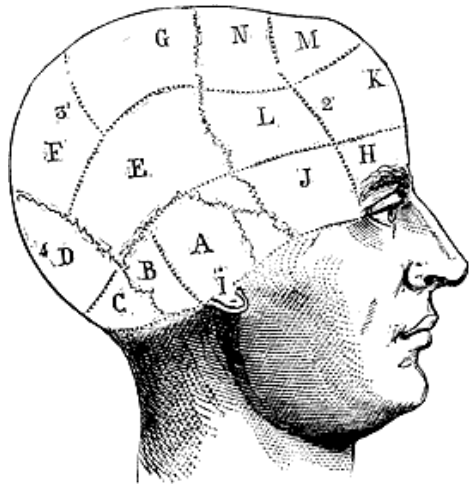
- Goals:** To explain personality and behavior and develop techniques for treating mental illness
- Psychologists:** Freud, Jung, Adler
- Methods:** Free association under guidance of analyst; clinical insight
- Applications:** Development of psychotherapy; emphasis on childhood as important in later personality

FUNCTIONALISM

- Goals:** To study how the mind works to allow an organism to adapt to its environment
- Psychologists:** James, Cattell, Thorndike, Dewey
- Methods:** Naturalistic observations of animal and human behavior
- Applications:** Child psychology; educational and industrial psychology; study of individual differences

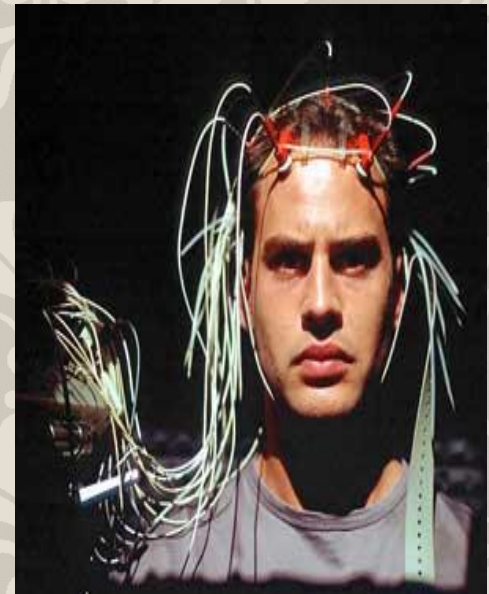
BEHAVIORISM

- Goals:** To study only observable behavior and explain behavior via learning principles
- Psychologists:** Watson, Skinner
- Methods:** Observation of the relationship between environmental stimuli and behavioral responses
- Application:** Behavior modification; improved teaching methods



PSYCHOLOGY'S PERSPECTIVES

Past and Present



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WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT APPROACHES IN PSYCHOLOGY?

Psychology is a new science.

To understand the complexity of human behaviour, psychology has taken different perspectives.

APPROACHES TO THE SCIENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

- **Biological Approach**

Emphasizes activity of the nervous system, especially the brain, the action of hormones and other chemicals, and genetics

- **Evolutionary Approach**

Emphasizes the ways in which behavior and mental processes are adaptive for survival

- **Psychodynamic Approach**

Emphasizes internal conflicts, mostly unconscious, which usually pit sexual or aggressive instincts against environmental obstacles to their expression Childhood experiences, especially conflicts with parents, shape our personality.

APPROACHES TO THE SCIENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

- **Behavioral Approach**

Emphasizes learning, especially each person's experience with rewards and punishments

Behaviour is learnt through classical conditioning (Pavlov), operant condition (Skinner), and modeling (Bandura).

- **Cognitive Approach**

Emphasizes mechanisms through which people receive, store, retrieve, and otherwise process information

- **Humanistic Approach**

Emphasizes individual potential for growth and the role of unique perceptions in guiding behavior and mental processes

Studies the total human being and its potential to grow and develop (Rogers).

Humans are motivated to achieve (Maslow).

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RESPOND

Which perspective offers the most potential to understand your behaviour?

HUMAN DIVERSITY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Are all people essentially the same?

Sociocultural factors shape people's experiences and what they learn from them e.g., social identity, gender, ethnicity, social class, and culture.

These variables can lead to many significant differences in behavior and mental processes, especially across cultures

SOME CHARACTERISTICS TYPICAL OF INDIVIDUALIST VERSUS COLLECTIVIST CULTURES

Personal Identity

- **Individualist:** Separate from others
- **Collectivist:** Connected to others

Major Goals

- **Individualist:** Self defined; be unique, realize your potential, compete with others
- **Collectivist:** Defined by others, belong, occupy your proper place, meet your obligations to others, be like others

SOME CHARACTERISTICS TYPICAL OF INDIVIDUALIST VERSUS COLLECTIVIST CULTURES

Criteria for Self Esteem

- **Individualist:** Ability to express unique aspects of the self, be self-assured
- **Collectivist:** Ability to restrain the self and be part of a social unit, ability to be self-effacing

SOME CHARACTERISTICS TYPICAL OF INDIVIDUALIST VERSUS COLLECTIVIST CULTURES

Sources of Success and Failure

- **Individualist:** Success comes from personal effort; failure from external factors
- **Collectivist:** Success due to help from others, failure due to personal faults

Major Frame of Reference

- **Individualist:** Personal attitudes, traits, and goals
- **Collectivist:** Family, work group

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RESPOND

International school students have been called “Third Culture Kids”.
Which individualist or collectivist traits more closely define you?