

A stage with a grey wall and a white floor with a perspective grid. Five gold spotlights are mounted on the wall, pointing down at the text.

WEEK 1

Introduction

Unit 3: Understanding Wundt's
science of psychology

Goal

- ❖ Wundt established psychological experiments in general psychology and conducted many psychological experiments to understand human consciousness.
- ❖ Wundt defined "the human as a motivated and thinking subject," with consciousness, purpose, will, intentionality and was interested in investigating the relationship between perception, cognition, emotion, and motivation.

Goal

- ❖ He outlined the goal and direction of psychology as examining the “**entire experience in its immediately subjective reality.**”
- ❖ The goal of psychology is to accurately investigate the **consciousness process**, to assess how the complex connections are made to ascertain the **laws governing the human mind.**

Goal

- ❖ He articulated that psychology is not a science of individual soul, but a science to investigate the mental and physical processes to discover **general principles** of cognitive and motivational development in an **integrated** manner.

Psychophysical parallelism

- ❖ He clearly articulated that psychological explanations cannot be reduced to physiology “because the interrelations between mental processes would be incomprehensible even if the interrelations between brain processes were as clearly understood as the mechanism of a pocket watch.”

Psychophysical parallelism

- ❖ The basic unit of analysis in psychology is **conscious** and the goal is to investigate the conscious processes.
- ❖ He rejected investigating **subconscious** and **unconscious** mental processes as a part of scientific psychology since they cannot be investigated scientifically.

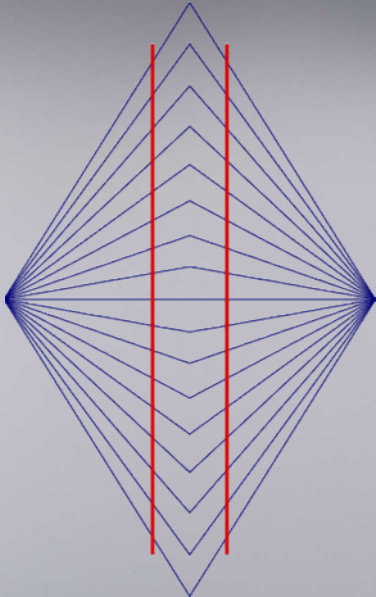
Psychophysical parallelism

- ❖ Influenced by Leibniz, he introduced the **psychophysical parallelism**: "... wherever there are regular relationships between mental and physical phenomena the two are neither identical nor convertible into one another because they are per se incomparable..."

Psychophysical parallelism

...but they are associated with one another in the way that certain mental processes regularly correspond to certain physical processes or, figuratively expressed, run 'parallel to one another'."

Wundt's Illusion



- ❖ He investigated the optical illusion, called the *Wundt illusion*, that shows perception is influenced by context.

Psychic causality

- ❖ He notes the difference between *physical causality* based on neurophysiology from mental or *psychic causality* of the consciousness.
- ❖ Although they can occur simultaneously, the former can be explained through the physiological process and the latter can be explained through psychological consciousness.

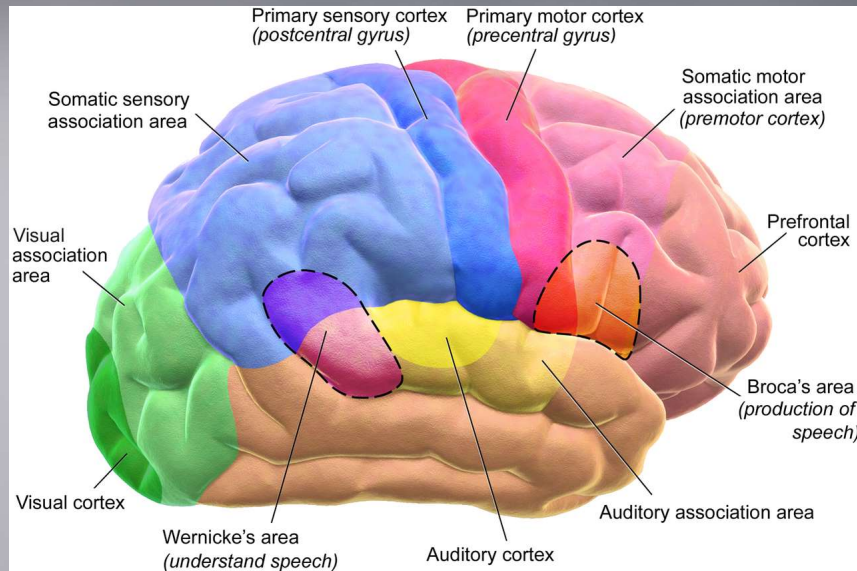
Psychic causality

- ❖ He investigated **Apperception**.
- ❖ It is the process in which new information or experience is assimilated with past experience and knowledge to provide a coherent integrated understanding.
- ❖ The sensory information passes through self-consciousness and connected to individual's intention, purpose and goal.

Psychic causality

- ❖ He outlined the neuropsychological modelling that occurs in the **frontal cortex of the brain** as integrative process of consciousness through selective attention in cognitive, emotional and motivational integration.

Human brain



Humanities sciences

- ❖ He considered psychology is an empirical humanities science.
- ❖ He noted psychology investigates the direct experience of people while the natural sciences can only analyze the indirect observation abstracted from the object of investigation.

Humanities sciences

- ❖ He saw a close interrelationships between physiology, philosophy, logic, epistemology and ethics and they are the keys to understand Wundt's psychology.
- ❖ The experimental approach is a part the natural sciences tradition became the defining feature of general psychology when it was transported to the USA and Canada by Wundt's students.

Humanities sciences

- ❖ In establishing psychology as an independent scientific discipline, he recognized two traditions in science: *Naturwissenschaften* (the natural sciences tradition) and *Geisteswissenschaften* (the cultural sciences tradition).

Cultural sciences

- ❖ The German word *Geiste* can be translated as spirit.
- ❖ Although Wundt was instrumental in establishing the experimental method in psychology, he recognized the limitation of experimental method in understanding human consciousness at the cultural level and emphasized the importance *Völkerpsychologie* (translated as cultural psychology).

Cultural sciences

- ❖ Wundt recognized that although the experimental method is appropriate for investigating some basic psychological processes, it is inappropriate for studying psychological phenomena that are shaped by language and culture.

Cultural sciences

- ❖ As early as 1866, he stated that "attempts to subsume mental processes under the types of laws found in the physical sciences will never be successful."

Cultural sciences

- ❖ Wundt observed that thinking is heavily conditioned by language and customs and regarded *Völkerpsychologie* to be a "more important branch of psychological science which was destined to eclipse experimental psychology."

Völkerpsychologie

- ❖ In the latter part of his life, he devoted his life examining sociocultural influences in psychological processes by writing 10 volume works on *Völkerpsychologie* (1910–1920) examining sociocultural influences in psychological processes.

Völkerpsychologie, Cultural psychology

- ❖ **Cultural psychology** is a direct descent of Wundt's cultural sciences tradition as represented by his work on *Völkerpsychologie*, examining cultures, myth, history, beliefs and language.
- ❖ The cultural sciences tradition recognizes the need to develop theories and methods that are appropriate for human beings and not view human as simple objects of investigation.

Völkerpsychologie, Cultural psychology

- ❖ In this tradition, human qualities and their cultural contexts are incorporated into the research design.
- ❖ It is a version of science that encompasses the physical, biological, social, and applied sciences, such as management.

Cultural sciences tradition

- ❖ The cultural sciences tradition recognizes the need to develop theories and methods that are appropriate for human beings as subjects and not view human as simple objects of experimental investigation.

Cultural sciences tradition

- ❖ In this tradition, human qualities such as consciousness, intention, motivation, meaning and goals and their relational, social, cultural and ecological contexts are incorporated into the research design.
- ❖ It is a version of science that encompasses the physical, biological, social, and applied sciences, such as management.

Understanding people in context

Ecology: Terrain, weather, wildlife

Culture: Collective values, beliefs, norms, and creativity

Society: Institutions, laws, media, education

Community: Type, resources, system

Understanding people in context

Relations: Family, friends, neighbors, colleagues

Individual: Behavior, cognition, and emotion

Physiology: Brain, organs, circulation

Genes: Genome

