

Lecture 11: Functionalism, the US brand of Psychology

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

- Early psychology full of conceptual tension
 - Wundt's laboratory in 1879 is an important date in the history of psychology
 - Perhaps as important is the 1890 publication of William James' *Principles of Psychology*.
 - It predates Titchener's Structuralism in the US and is best conceived as a competitor.
 - James' book is often seen as the foundation of a new uniquely US approach psychological called **functionalism**
 - Functionalism and Structuralism seems to be the paradigmatic battle that Kuhn had talked about.

I. INTRODUCTION

B. Psychology in the US

- Shaskin's (1975) History of US Psychology
 - Stage one: moral and mental philosophy
 - Psychology included topics such as ethics, divinity, and philosophy.
 - To learn psychology was to learn the accepted theology of the day.
 - Influence of Samuel Johnson and John Locke.
 - Stage two: intellectual philosophy
 - Psychology became a separate discipline and US psychology.
 - Influenced by the Scottish common sense philosophers of Thomas Reid and William Hamilton.

I. INTRODUCTION

B. Psychology in the US

- Shaskin's (1975) History of US Psychology
 - Stage three: the U.S. Renaissance
 - Psychology becomes an empirical science and by the late 1880's there is a uniquely US take:
 - Publishing of John Dewey's textbook, the first issue of the *American Journal of Psychology*
 - James's *Principles of Psychology* (1890)
 - Psychology began emphasizing individual differences, adaptation to the environment, and practicality.
 - Stage four: functionalism
 - Science, emphasis on the individual, and evolutionary theory combined into the school of functionalism.

I. INTRODUCTION

C. Functionalism

- An understanding of psychological processes by their casual relations to one another and to sensory inputs and behavioral outputs
- Never a well-defined school
 - Did not have one recognized leader or an agreed-on methodology.
 - Common themes, however, ran through the work of those calling themselves functionalists.
- Opposed the elementarism of structuralism
 - Rejected the reduction of psychological processes into basic elements.

I. INTRODUCTION

C. Functionalism

- Focus was to understand the function of the mind
 - Focus was not upon a description of its attributes.
 - The function was to aid the organism in adapting to its environment.
- A practical science
 - Desired to be a practical science and findings to the improvement of the human condition
- Research on many participants
 - Participants included animals, children, and abnormal humans and the use of any methodology that was useful.

I. INTRODUCTION

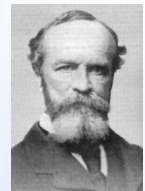
C. Functionalism

- Concerned with “why” of mental processes
 - This led directly to an interest in motivation.
- Accepted both mental processes and behavior
 - Both accepted as legitimate for psychology
- Interested in individual differences
 - More interested in individual differences among organisms than similarities.
- Influenced directly or indirectly by William James
 - William James was strongly influenced by Darwin’s theory of evolution

II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

A. William James

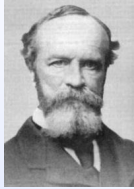
- William James (1842- 1910)
 - Born American and was the brother of author Henry James
 - He wrote influential books on the science of psychology, educational psychology, psychology of religious experience and mysticism, and the philosophy of pragmatism.
 - He taught the first experimental psychology course at Harvard in the 1875-1876 academic year.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

A. William James

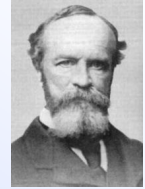
- William James (1842- 1910)
 - His *Principles of Psychology* (1890) is 1200 pages in 2 volumes which took 12 years to complete.
 - *Psychology: The Briefer Course*, was an 1892 abridgement
- Criticized Associationism and Hegelianism as having no explanatory value.
- He sought to re-conceive of the human mind as inherently purposive and selective.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

A. William James

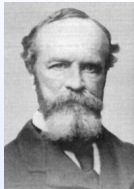
- William James (1842- 1910)
 - Pragmatism
 - The belief that if an idea works, it is valid
 - Radical empiricism
 - All consistently reported aspects of human experience are worthy of study
- Opposed Wundt's approach to psychology
 - Specifically challenged Wundt's experiential not cultural psychology.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

A. William James

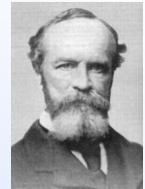
- Central Ideas
 - Stream of consciousness
 - Personal to the individual
 - Continuous; cannot be divided up for analysis
 - Always changing
 - Selective; some events are selected for further consideration while others are not
 - Functional; purpose is to aid the individual in adapting to the environment.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

A. William James

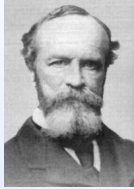
- Central Ideas
 - Study of the Self
 - Three components of self (empirical self)
 - Material self : Body, family, and all things owned
 - Social self: Self known by others; many social selves
 - Spiritual self : State of consciousness, one's own subjective reality
 - The self as a knower is the awareness of one's empirical self.
 - He was among the first to examine self-esteem.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

A. William James

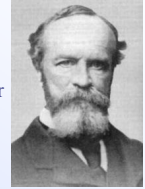
- Central Ideas
 - Habits (instincts) are formed as an activity is repeated.
 - He had a neurophysiological explanation of habit formation.
 - Theory of emotion
 - Event (stimulus) causes a bodily reaction/behavior, which is then experienced as an emotion.
 - Science must assume determinism, including psychology, but for certain approaches, the assumption of free will might be fruitful.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

A. William James

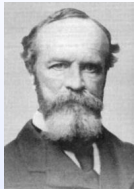
- Speculations
 - An idea of an action precedes and causes that action.
 - In most cases, ideas and actions flow immediately and automatically producing habitual or reflexive behavior
 - For voluntary behavior, ideas of various behavioral possibilities are retained from previous experiences
 - The recollection and selection (by mental effort) of a behavior is a prerequisite to voluntary behavior.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

A. William James

- Speculations
 - Pragmatism is the cornerstone of functionalism.
 - Behaviors, thoughts, or beliefs must be judged by their consequences.
 - If it works for the individual than it is appropriate.
 - Truth must be judged by its effectiveness in the situation.
 - What works is true for that circumstance.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

B. Hugo Münsterberg

- Hugo Münsterberg (1863 – 1916)
 - Disagreed with James on many points regarding behavior and consciousness
 - Stated that behavior causes ideas rather than ideas cause behavior as James had stated.
 - He was one of if not the first applied psychologist.
 - He studied clinical psychology and he wrote books on forensic psychology, and industrial psychology.



II. FUNCTIONALISM AT HARVARD

C. Mary Whiton Calkins

- Mary Whiton Calkins (1863 – 1930)
 - Attended seminars with James and researched with Münsterberg.
 - Women could not enroll in Harvard so she unofficially took the Ph.D. exam but could not receive her degree.
 - Developed a paired-associate technique to study the influence of frequency, recency, and vividness on memory.
 - Developed self psychology, which was her major contribution to psychology.



MARY WHITON CALKINS

III. FUNCTIONALISM AT CLARK

A. G. Stanley Hall

- G. Stanley Hall (1844 - 1924)
 - Interests in childhood development and evolutionary theory.
 - First president of APA and of Clark.
 - He earned his doctorate in psychology under William James at Harvard, after which he spent time at Wundt's lab.
 - In 1882 (until 1888) he is appointed Prof. of Psychology and Pedagogics at Johns Hopkins where he organized the first psychology laboratory
 - Founded the *American Journal of Psychology*



III. FUNCTIONALISM AT CLARK

A. G. Stanley Hall

- G. Stanley Hall (1844 - 1924)
 - Influenced by Darwin's evolutionary and Haeckel's recapitulation theory
 - Recapitulation theory states that the development of an individual through their lifetime mirrors the evolution of the species.
 - Hall's developmental ideas were greatly influenced by this theory.
 - His work in this area did much to stimulate educational psychology and start the child development movement in the U.S.



III. FUNCTIONALISM AT CLARK

A. G. Stanley Hall

- G. Stanley Hall (1844 - 1924)
 - Hall work on Adolescence is revolutionary
 - Coins the phrase "Storm and Stress" to characterize adolescence.
 - He had several ideas about adolescence including ideas about sexual behavior, religious conversion, and sex-segregated schools.
 - He also believed that adolescence was a good time to study human instinctual makeup.
 - Hall also focused on the study of the end of the lifespan



III. FUNCTIONALISM AT CLARK

A. G. Stanley Hall

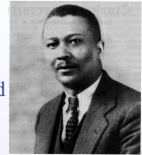
- G. Stanley Hall
 - He was responsible for inviting largely unknown Freud and Jung to visit and deliver lectures in early Sept, 1909.
 - William James, James Cattell, William Stern, and E. B. Titchener were in the audience.



III. FUNCTIONALISM AT CLARK

B. Francis Sumner and Kenneth Clark

- Francis Sumner (1895 -1954)
 - G Stanley Hall's last Ph.D. students
 - First African American psychologist and taught at Howard University
 - Sumner supervised Kenneth Clark
 - Kenneth B. (1914 - 2005) and Mamie P. Clark (1917-1983)
 - Known for their 1940s studies using dolls to assess children's race attitudes.
 - The work contributed to the Supreme Court ruling that racial segregation in public education was unconstitutional.



Francis Sumner



Kenneth Clark

IV. FUNCTIONALISM AT CHICAGO

A. John Dewey

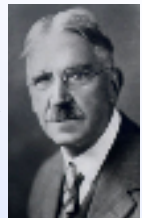
- John Dewey (1859 – 1952)
 - American philosopher, psychologist, and educational
 - Dewey, along with Charles Sanders Peirce and William James, is recognized as one of the founders of the philosophical school of pragmatism.
 - He is also one of the founders of functional psychology
 - He was a leading representative of the progressive movement in U.S. schooling during the first half of the 20th century.
 - Worked inder G. Stanley Hall.



IV. FUNCTIONALISM AT CHICAGO

A. John Dewey

- John Dewey (1859 – 1952)
 - His *The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology*” begins functionalism.
 - Proposed that the three elements of the reflex (sensory processes, brain processes, motor response) must be viewed as a coordinated system directed toward a goal, usually related to the survival of the organism.
 - Influential in creating “progressive” education, which stated that education should be student-oriented and not subject-oriented and students should learn by doing



IV. FUNCTIONALISM AT CHICAGO

B. James Angell

- James Angell (1869 - 1949)
 - Presented the three major points of functionalism
 - Functional psychology is interested in mental operations, not conscious elements.
 - Mental processes mediate between the needs of the organism and the environment. Mental functions help the organism survive.
 - Mind and body cannot be separated, they act as a unit in an organism's struggle for survival.



IV. FUNCTIONALISM AT CHICAGO

C. Harvey Carr

- Harvey Carr (1873 - 1954)
 - Because learning is a major tool used in adjusting to the environment, it was a major concern of functionalism.
 - Carr proposed the adaptive act, which has three components.
 - A motive that acts as a stimulus for behavior (such as hunger or thirst).
 - An environmental setting or the situation the organism is in.
 - A response that satisfies the motive.



V. FUNCTIONALISM AT COLUMBIA

A. James Cattell

- James M. Cattell (1860 - 1944)
 - In 1891 moved to Columbia University where he became Department Head of Psychology, Anthropology, and Philosophy.
 - Proposed that psychology should be applying its methods in all human activity because that is what humans do.
 - Through his many editorships and ownerships of journals (including Psychological Review), he advanced the discipline of psychology and particularly functional psychology.



V. FUNCTIONALISM AT COLUMBIA

B. Robert S. Woodworth

- Robert S. Woodworth (1869-1962)
 - Interested in what and why of people's behavior, particularly motivation.
 - He called his brand of psychology dynamic psychology
 - He formulated the symbols S-O-R to include the organism and particularly the organism's motivation.
 - His text, Experimental Psychology, remained the standard text in experimental psychology for two decades.



IV. FUNCTIONALISM AT COLUMBIA

C. E. L. Thorndike

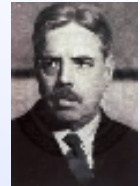
- E. L. Thorndike
 - Thorndike studied animal behavior true to functionalism's use of various methods.
 - Animal research in psychology helped by Conwy Morgan's (1894) canon
 - *In no case may we interpret an action as the outcome of the exercise of a higher psychological faculty, if it can be interpreted as the outcome of the exercise of one which stands lower in the psychological scale*
 - Margaret Floy Washburn (1908) published several books and articles on animal psychology.



IV. FUNCTIONALISM AT COLUMBIA

C. E. L. Thorndike

- E. L. Thorndike
 - Used the apparatus called a puzzle box to study trial-and-error learning using cats.
 - Observed the sequence of learning resulting in cats learning to escape.
 - He made the following conclusions:
 - Learning is incremental
 - Learning occurs automatically without being mediated by thinking
 - Same principles of learning apply to all mammals.



IV. FUNCTIONALISM AT COLUMBIA

C. E. L. Thorndike

- E. L. Thorndike
 - Psychology's first learning theory
 - Combines associationism and hedonism and consists of the laws of exercise and of effect.
 - Law of effect states associations followed by a "satisfying state of affairs" are strengthened and by "annoying state of affairs" it will be weakened.
 - Law of exercise states that the more an association is practiced, the stronger it becomes
 - Thorndike went on to abandon the law of exercise and discarded the second part of the law of effect.

