

In his view of experimental psychology, Wilhelm Wundt followed a rationalist perspective, in which an active mind transforms sensory information and understands abstract principles not contained only in sensory data. Wundt believed that psychology's goal was to understand simple and complex consciousness; this was achieved by both determining the basic components of thought and by discovering the laws which organized them. Wundt's ideas on apperception and creative synthesis closely reflect rationalist ideas. Here, the mind played an active role, not only organizing and synthesizing information, but also actively controlling attention. For Wundt, there is willful activity occurring, creating more than what is provided by sensory experience. These ideas help align Wundt with the rationalists.

Good paragraph

Conversely, Edward Titchener was more influenced by empirical and positivist ideas to form his conception of experimental psychology. He believed that experimental psychology should observe and describe mental events; speculation was not a component in science. For Titchener, there were no underlying processes governing mental events such as attention. (He maintained that attention occurs when individuals have a clear sensation, similar to the empirical idea.) Titchener assumed that humans possess a passive mind containing few mechanistic principles to organize, but mostly determined by sensory experience. Psychology, then, could only observe and define the passive mind, an idea reflected in the empirical tradition.

vague what kind of mental events?
vague

Explain this argument more completely

4/4 Complete
3/3 correct
1.5/3 writing
8.5/10

first paragraph is well written, but the second paragraph is far less clear

- very nice
1st sentence

Although often grouped together in textbooks as structuralists, Wundt and Titchener approached experimental psychology from considerably different standpoints. Some scholars differentiate between Wundt and Titchener's ideas by associating the two men with different schools of thought: Wundt with rationalism and Titchener with the empiricism and positivism.

great paragraph

The rationalists supported the idea of an active mind; that is, the idea that humans possess a mind equipped with the innate capability to apply abstract thought and reasoning to the sensory data it encounters. Wundt's ideas were in agreement with the rationalists' in this manner: While he maintained that the study of more basic mental processes (e.g., sensation) had merit, he also took an interest in higher mental processes postulated by the rationalists. Although he believed these higher processes could not be directly observed or studied, he argued for their existence and posed hypothetical descriptions of their function in the mind (e.g., his ideas of apperception and creative synthesis).

- very nice
definitive

The empiricists supported the idea of a passive mind that was only capable of taking in and categorizing sensory data; like Titchener, they typically supported traditional associationism to explain the mind's tendency to combine sensory experiences and to direct behavior. Seeing as Titchener's ideas were more in line with those of a passive human mind, research concerning higher thought processes would be impossible as such processes cannot exist within a passive human mind. Instead, Titchener focused his studies on consciousness, preferring to use only data on the most basic elements of sensation (and avoiding the reporting of perception) to guide his studies.

define
Key
terms

this sentence is a little unclear

Titchener
thinks that
higher
cognitive
processes
did
not exist

or did he think
that they could
not be studied
int. psychologists

explain

Completeness 4/4
coherence 3/3
writing 2/3 - 4th paragraph
is a little unclear
9/10

Both Wundt and Titchener heavily influenced the development of experimental psychology, which emphasized the issue of how sensory experience and conscious processes are related. They both highlighted the importance of understanding consciousness, sensations, and immediate experience, but besides sharing those goals, they tended to differ significantly in their approaches to experimental psychology. Rationalist philosophy had a clear impact on Wundt's approach. He believed deeply in the mind as an active, powerful player in the perception of the outside world. According to Wundt, the mind not only analyzes and organizes sensory experience, it also has the power to choose on what information it wants to focus. He said that we are not merely passive receivers of information and emphasized the role of will. We attend to certain stimuli over others and then organize them as we choose (creative synthesis), thus altering our own perceptions. The mind has the power to alter what activities we engage in because it generates motivation. Wundt believed that experimentation could not be used to study these higher processes of the mind, and that while physical events could be predicted (psychological events were determined according to our will.)

In contrast, Titchener subscribed to a more empiricist philosophy. Although he believed in the mind and attempted to study its structure, he did not believe in explaining mental experience. He was a positivist in that he endeavored only to study what can be directly experienced and observed. Mental processes were to be carefully described through strict introspection, but there was no point in trying to explain them (as Wundt wanted to). Following the empiricist concept that knowledge is derived from experience, Titchener thought of the mind as more passive. Cognition is determined by sensory experience, including Wundt's idea of attention, which Titchener described as merely an attribute of a sensation (clarity). He trained introspective observers to monitor basic mental elements from which higher-level cognitive experience was formed, remaining an empiricist by studying sensations, not perceptions.

nice into

little unclear

→ this last part is misleading, it implies to me that Wundt thought that we have free will and it implies that Wundt was not a determinist. Both of these ideas are in correct. (ie. Wundt did not believe in free will & he was a determinist)

what do you mean by this phrase?

4/4 completeness
2.5/3 correctness
2.5/3 writing
9/10