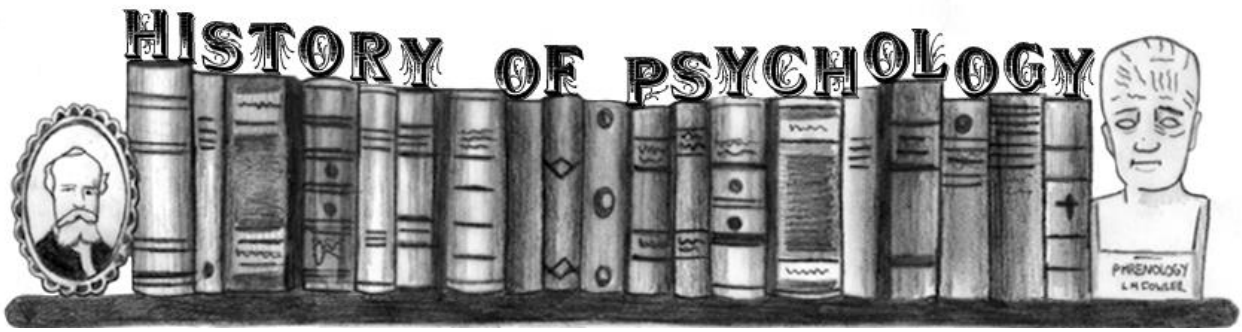
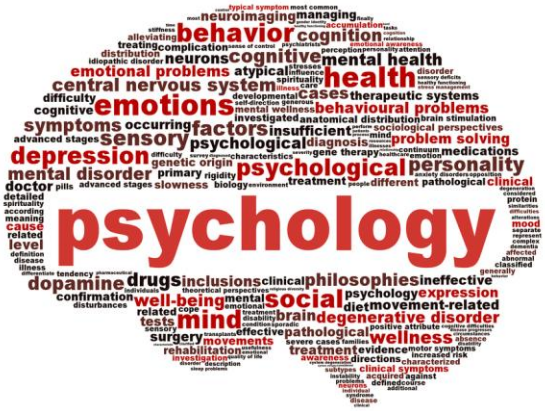
# AP Psychology




## 1.1 – Intro & Historical Approaches

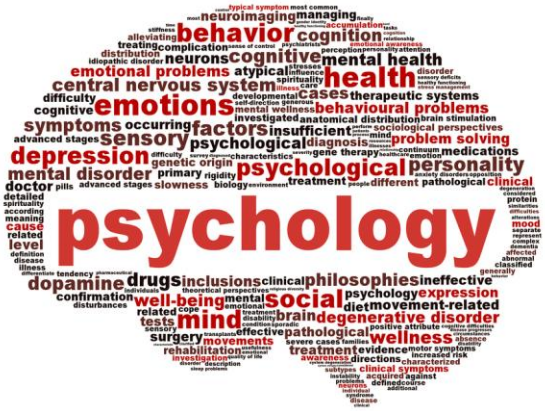
# Introduction

- **What is Psychology?**
  - The scientific study of behavior and mental processes
    - Behavior: Any action or reaction of a living organism that can be directly observed
    - Mental Processes: Internal processes such as thinking, feeling, and desiring that can only be indirectly observed



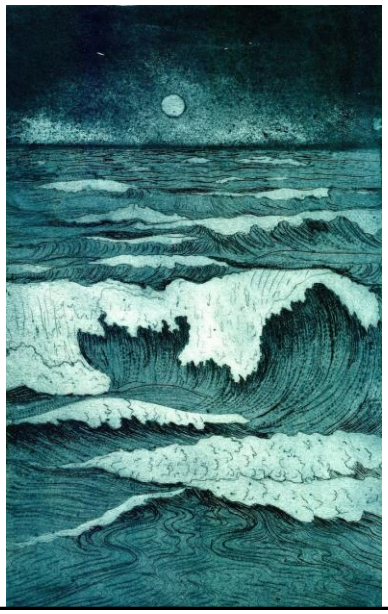
# Introduction

- **Origins of Psychology**
  - Archaeologists and historians find evidence that humans have always contemplated thought and behavior:
    - Evidence of trephination
      - Stone Age humans carving holes through the skull to release evil spirits.
    - Greek philosophers such as Plato and Democritus theorized about the relationship between thought and behavior



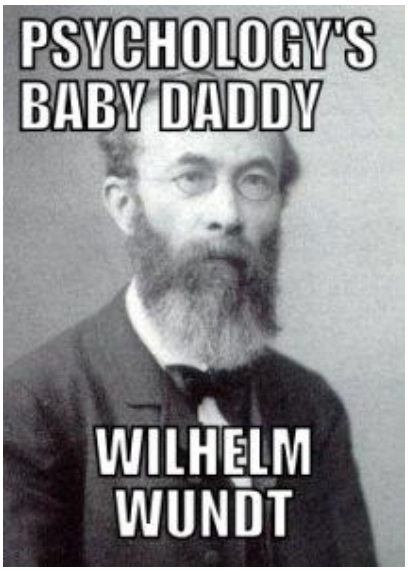

# "Waves" of Psychology

- One way to think about the history of psychology is to organize the various theorists and theories into "waves" (schools of thought)
- Each wave is a way of thinking about psychology that dominated the field for a period of time until a new wave started to dominate the field



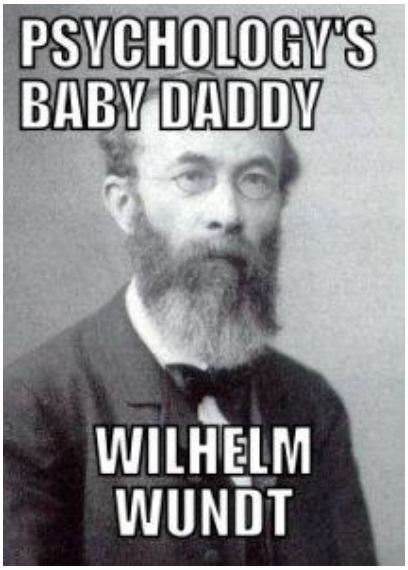
# "Waves" of Psychology

- **Wave 1 – Introspection**
  - Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920)
    - German scientist who established the first psychological research laboratory
      - First person to call himself a "Psychologist"
    - Wundt trained subjects in "Introspection"
      - Subjects were asked to record accurately their cognitive reactions to simple stimuli
      - Through this process, he hoped to examine basic cognitive structures



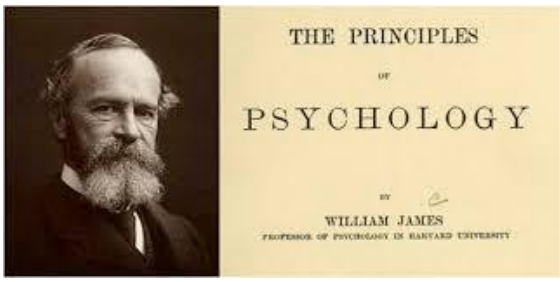

# "Waves" of Psychology

- **Wave 1 – Introspection**
  - Wundt eventually described his theory of "Structuralism"
    - The idea that the mind operates by combining subjective emotions and objective sensations
  - Edward Titchener (1867-1927) eventually used the same approach with his students
  - Proved to be unreliable for many reasons:
    - Different subjects offered very different introspective findings about the same stimulus
    - Could not be used to study children, animals, or complex topics such as mental disorders



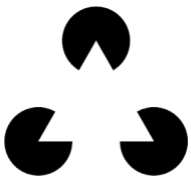
# "Waves" of Psychology

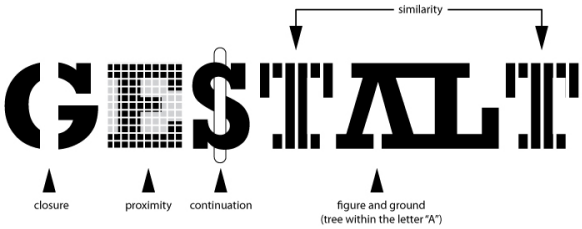
- **Wave 1 – Introspection**
  - Functionalism
    - Led by William James (1842-1910)
    - First American psychologist
  - Emphasized studying the purpose, or function, of behavior and mental experiences
  - Rejected the introspective method of gathering information
    - Example: Instead of asking subjects to describe the emotion of fear, Functionalists studied how fear enables people and animals to adapt to their environment




# "Waves" of Psychology

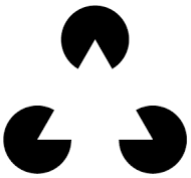
- **Wave 2 – Gestalt Psychology**
  - Max Wertheimer (1880-1943)
    - Argued against dividing human thought and behavior into discrete structures
  - Gestalt Psychology tried to examine a person's total experience
    - Believed that that the way we experience the world is more than just an accumulation of various perceptual experiences
  - Demonstrated that the whole experience is often more than just the sum of the parts of the experience.

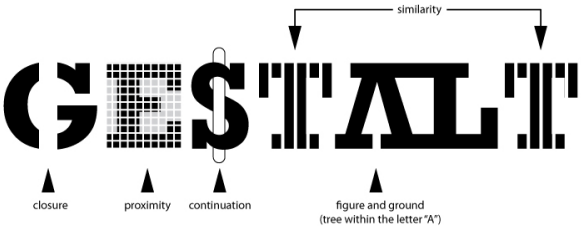




# "Waves" of Psychology

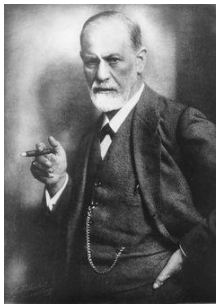
- **Wave 2 – Gestalt Psychology**
  - Example:
    - A painting can be represented as rows and columns of points of color
      - However, the experience of the painting is much more than that
  - Gestalt psychology has little influence on current psychology

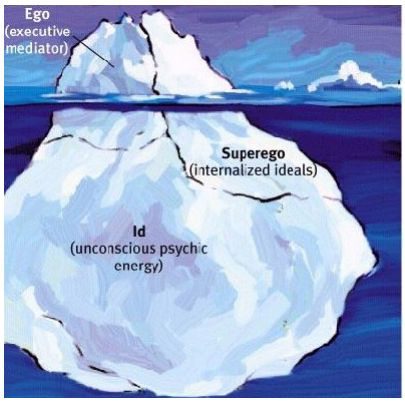





# "Waves" of Psychology

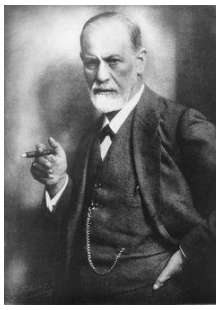
- **Wave 3 - Psychoanalysis**
  - Developed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)
  - Rather than conscious experiences, Freud emphasized the role of the unconscious conflicts in determining behavior and personality
  - Focused attention on conflicts between accepted social norms of behavior and unconscious sexual and aggressive impulses

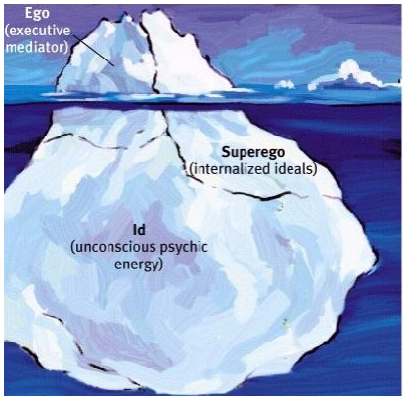




# "Waves" of Psychology

- **Wave 3 – Psychoanalysis**
  - Freud believed certain experiences provided glimpses into the unconscious mind
    - Examples:
      - Dreams
      - "Slips" of the Tongue
      - Memory Blocks
  - Modern Psychodynamic Approach incorporates many of Freud's theories



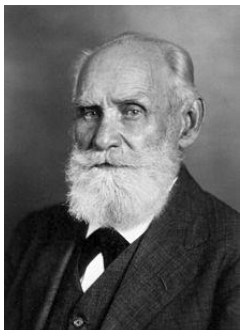


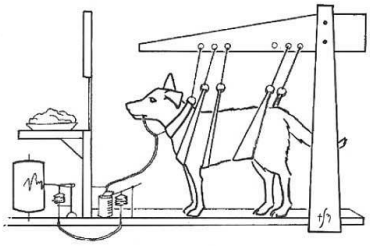

# "Waves" of Psychology

- **Wave 4 – Behaviorism**
  - Believe that both conscious and unconscious mental processes are unobservable
  - Focuses on scientific investigations on observable behaviors that can be objectively measured
  - Believe that human behavior is learned and can be controlled through the presence or absence of rewards/punishments

# "Waves" of Psychology

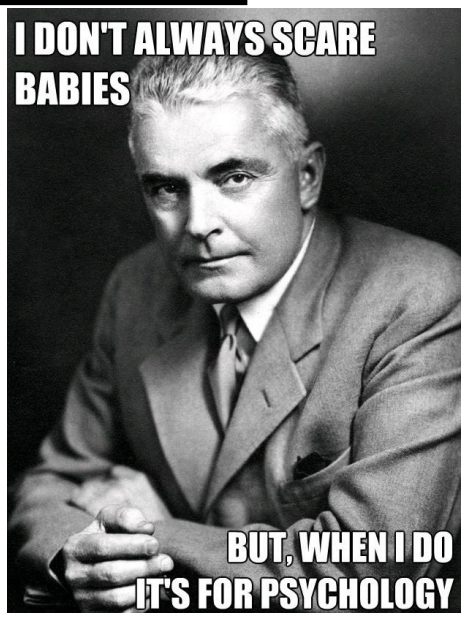
- **Wave 4 – Behaviorism**
  - Emerged from work of Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936)
  - Conducted a series of famous experiments that demonstrated much behavior among animals is learned rather than instinctive





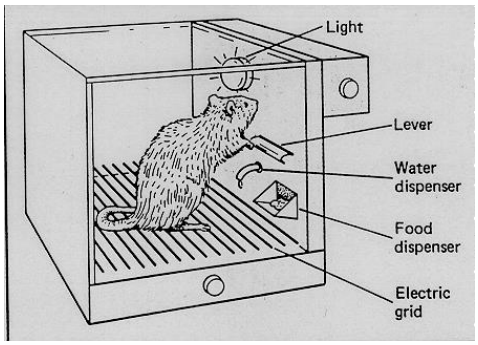
# "Waves" of Psychology

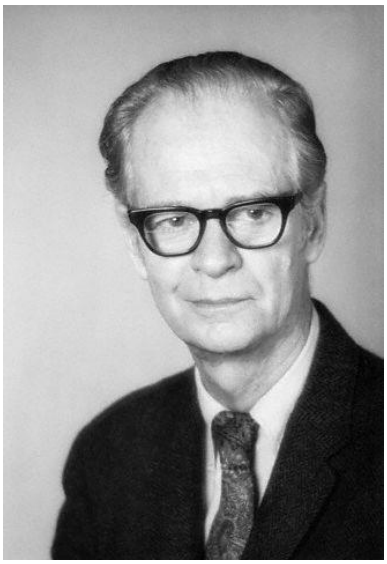
- **Wave 4 – Behaviorism**
  - John B. Watson (1878-1958) applied Pavlov's thinking to human behavior
    - Believed that human beings could be socialized in any direction through learning
    - *"Give me a dozen healthy infants, well formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in, and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to be any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant…"*

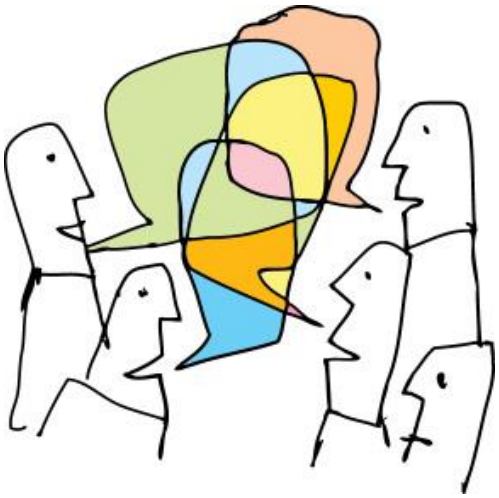


# "Waves" of Psychology

- **Wave 4 - Behaviorism**
  - Watson's work greatly influenced B.F. Skinner (1904-1990)
  - Viewed by many as the leading advocate for Behaviorism.



# "Waves" of Psychology

- **Wave 5 – Multiple Perspectives**
  - Currently, there is no one common way of thinking about psychology
  - Many psychologists describe themselves as "eclectic"
    - Drawing from multiple perspectives to view and explain thought and behavior
  - For now, psychologists look at thought and behavior from multiple perspectives