# Psychological Schools of Thought

Defining Consciousness

- Consciousness is the parts of our minds that we control
  - Actions
  - Behaviors
- Our unconscious mind are the workings of our brain we do not control or are unaware of
  - Memories
  - Dreams
  - Personality

Structuralism School of Thought

- Founded by Wilhelm Wundt (German)
  - Helped break Psychology away from Philosophy to be independent field
- Focus on the basic elements of consciousness
  - Broke down consciousness between objective sensation and subjective feelings
    - Objective sensations accurately reflect the real world thus can not really be argued
   - Subjective feelings include mental images and emotional response
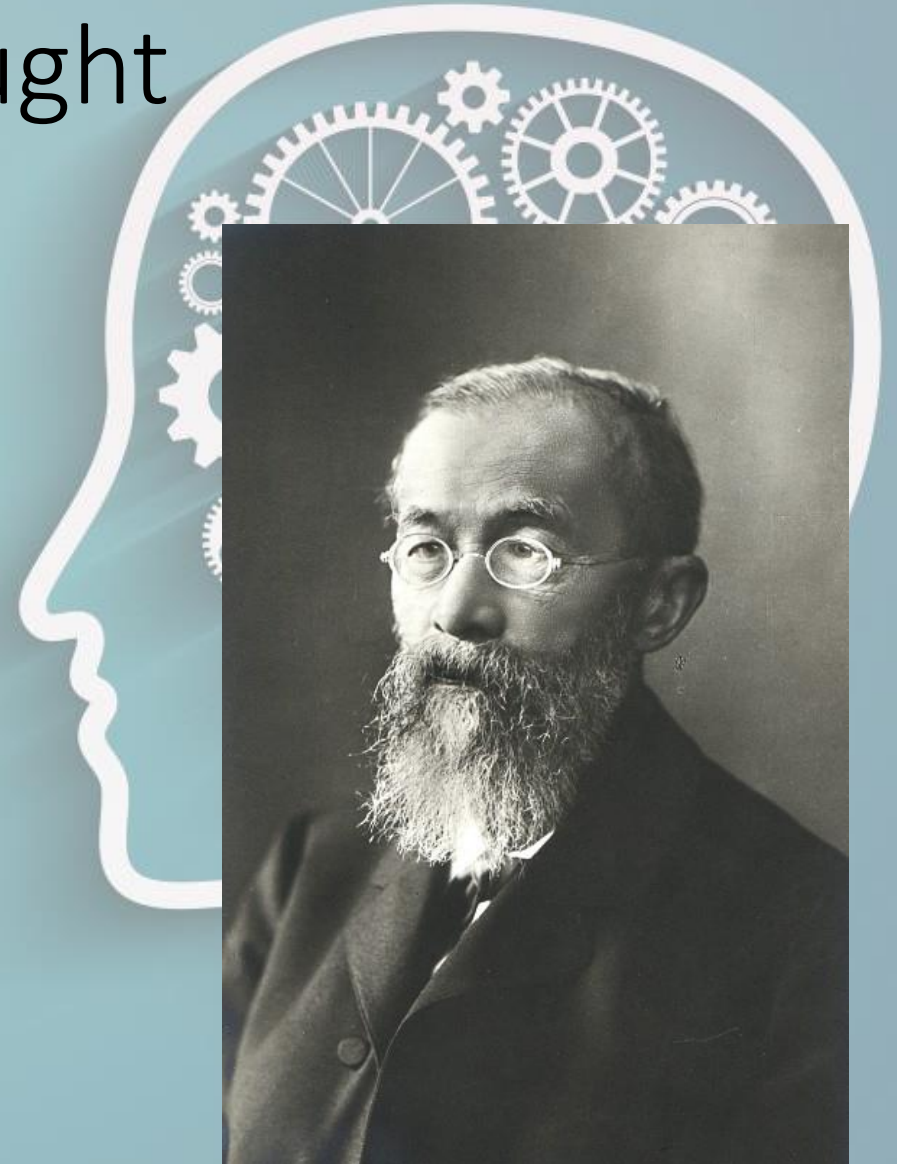
Explaining Objective Sensation and Subjective Feeling

- Objective Sensation Example: Ice is cold
  - It can not be argued, ice is frozen and thus cold

- Subjective Feeling Example: Winter is better than summer
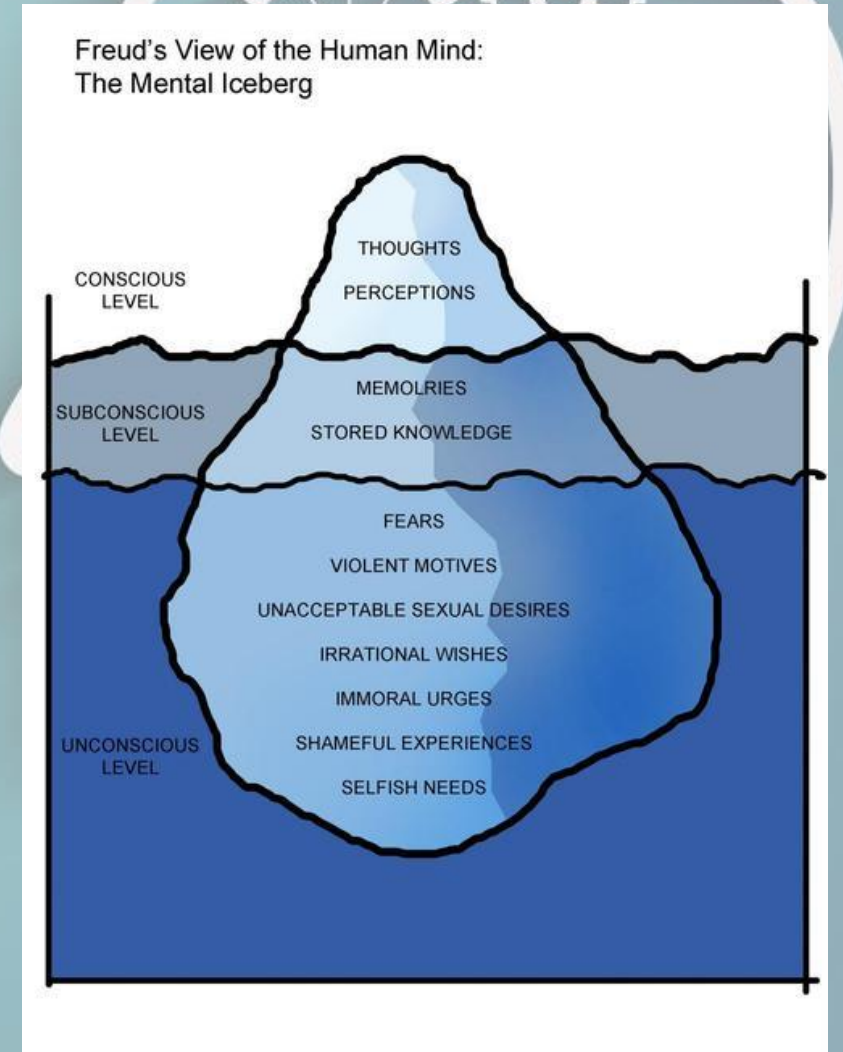 - Can be argued, perception varies from one person to another

Psychoanalysis

- Developed by Sigmund Freud (Czech)
- Connected to the idea of psychodynamic thinking
  - Most of what really exists in humans' minds exist in the unconsciousness, and conflict with our conscious mind
    - Our impulses, urges, and wishes are restrained by our consciousness. Only by examining the unconscious mind can we see what humans really want
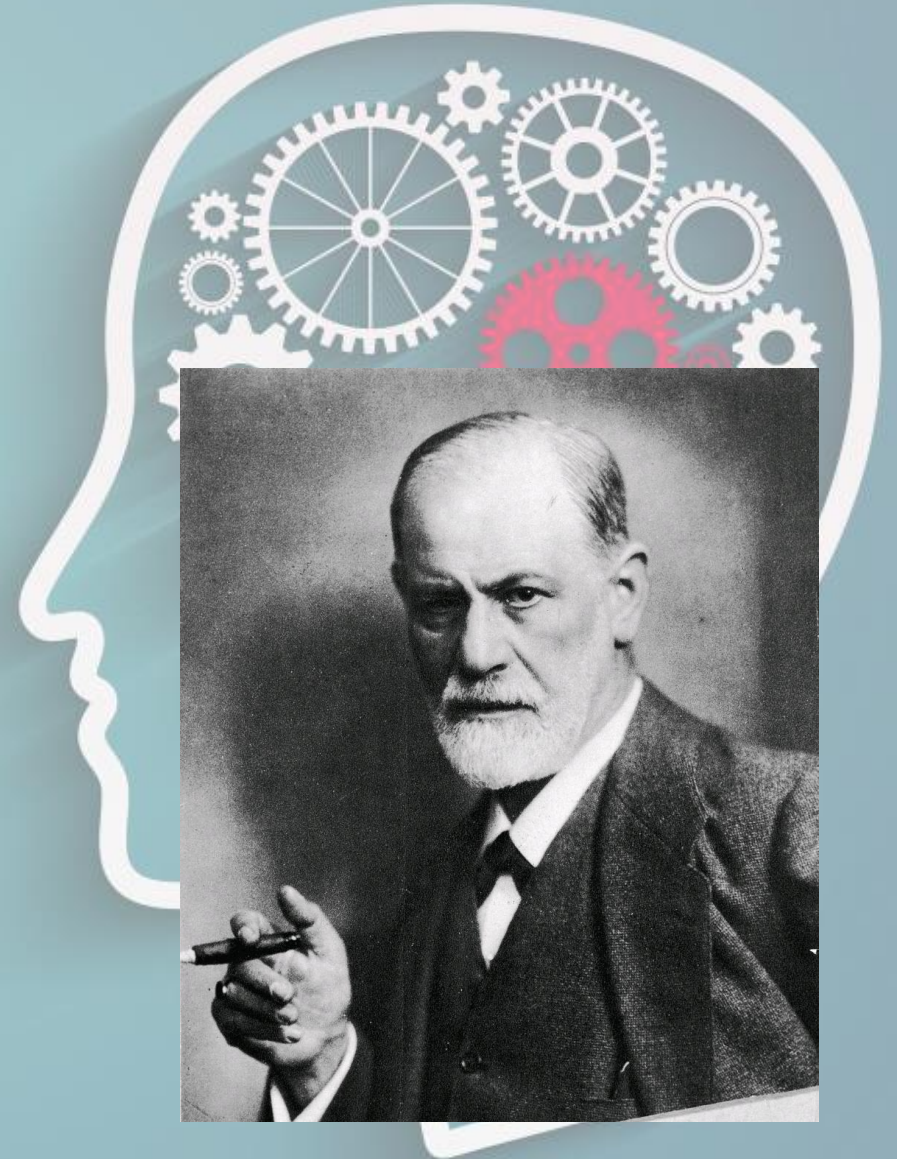
The Freudian Slip

- Essentially a "Freudian Slip" is when you say one thing, but mean another
  - An unintentional error that reveals subconscious thoughts
  - Freud used this to theorize that humans had very little free will and are subject to the unconscious mind
- Developed "psychoanalysis" to study unconscious parts of our mind

Freud's View of the Human Mind: The Mental Iceberg

CONSCIOUS LEVEL

THOUGHTS
PERCEPTIONS

SUBCONSCIOUS LEVEL

MEMOLRIES
STORED KNOWLEDGE

UNCONSCIOUS LEVEL

FEARS
VIOLENT MOTIVES
UNACCEPTABLE SEXUAL DESIRES
IRRATIONAL WISHES
IMMORAL URGES
SHAMEFUL EXPERIENCES
SELFISH NEEDS

Functionalism School of Thought

- Founded by William James (American)
- Focused on how mental processes help organisms adapt to their environment
  - Wanted to show how the function of the mind is to help us adapt to our environment
- Focused on practicality of psychology instead of treating it as pure science
  - Wanted to understand more than explain
 - Stressed the importance of free will
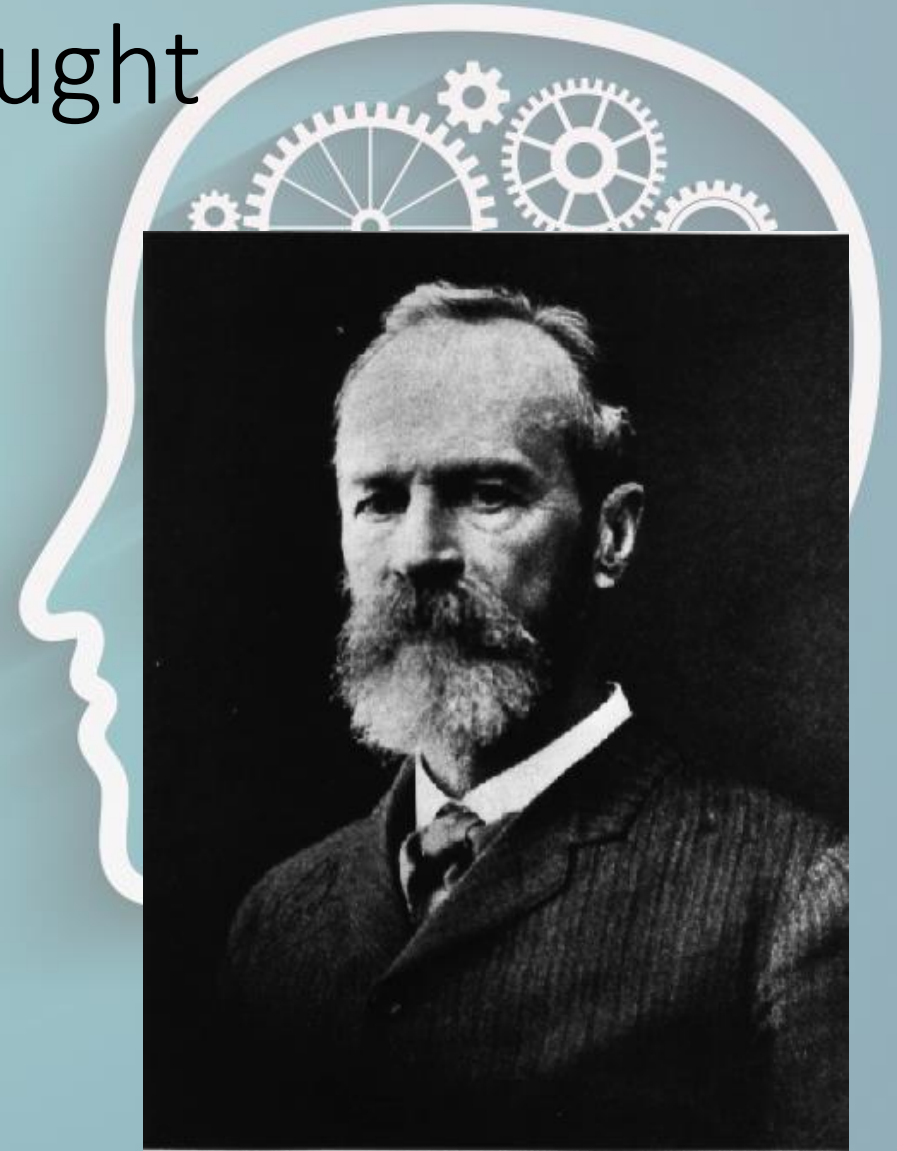
Functionalism and Free Will

- James was depressed by that idea that almost all human actions could be broken down to consciousness
  - Structuralism stated that all human actions were connected to science
  - James instead said that consciousness serves as a function to adapt
    - The choices **we** make allow us to live in our environment

Behaviorism and Reinforcement School of Thought

- Behaviorism developed by John B. Watson (American)
- Theorized psychology was the study of observable behavior
  - People can be conditioned by external events
    - Free will is an illusion
  - Believed humans had three basic emotions
    - Fear, Rage, and Love
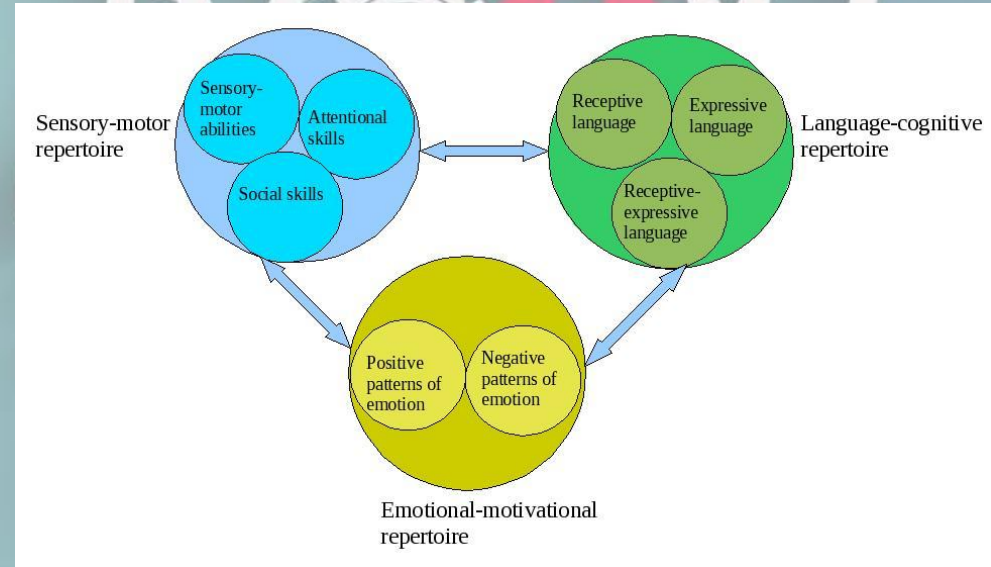
Reinforcement

- Added on to Watson's theory by B.F. Skinner (American)
- Tested theory that positive reinforcement will encourage repeated action
  - Action -> Reward
  - Tested theory with animals
    - Trained rats to perform an action (press a button) by giving them a reward (food)

This is brilliant! Every time I press this button I get a reward.

Cognitive Psychology

- Developed by Jean Piaget (Swiss)
- Studied mental processes including how people think, perceive, remember and learn.
  - Led to advances in understanding of information processing, memory, perception, and language
- Applied to developmental psychology
  - People's brains work differently at different stages of life
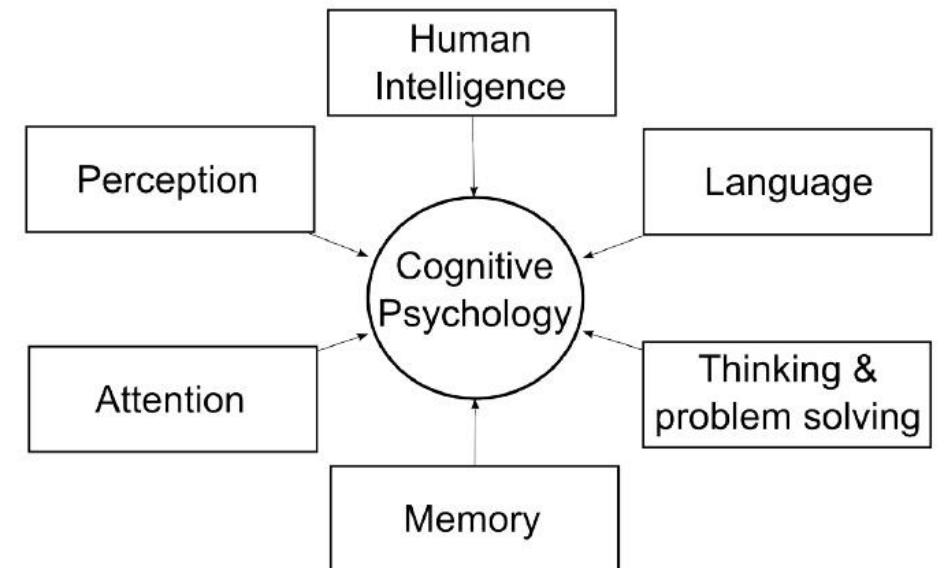
Gestalt School of Thought

- Developed by Max Wertheimer (Czech)

- Mostly focused on Perception
  - Emphasized the study of objects and experiences as a whole, instead of looking at each individual part
    - The Whole ≠ The Sum of its Parts

Gestalt and Movies

- We perceive motion where there actually is none
  - Movies are sequences of flashing lights and still pictures
  - The pictures are tied together and shown in quick succession so that it appears they are moving
- To understand the movie you cannot look at just one frame, rather you have to examine the movie as a whole