Unit 3

Psychology in other parts of the world

Learning outcomes

After you have studied this unit, you should

- be able to distinguish between psychological perspectives from various geographical locations
- understand how Western psychology gained dominance in the non-Western world
- be able to identify the periods in which the different schools of thought were more influential in psychology and the impact they had on African societies

3.1 Introduction

Psychology is as old as the human species. In the olden days, people accounted for dreams, mental illness, emotions and fantasies – they had a way of dealing with them without calling it psychology. Psychology is portrayed as a Western intervention that started with Plato. This portrayal is incorrect. Psychology was not created. Thinking, perceiving, experiencing, understanding and behaviour all existed before theories about these processes were formulated. People learnt about themselves and the world around them without naming the process, or if they named the process, it was culture specific.

According to the Western perspective, psychology is the scientific study of the mind, mental processes and behaviour (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). The word “psychology” was coined at a time when concepts of soul and mind were not as distinguished; it has experiential roots dating back to the 19th century. Before the 19th century, anyone interested in exploring issues related to the mind did so in a philosophical context. Psychological knowledge was never singular (Robinson, 1986). For instance, physicians, religious scholars, teachers, philosophers and poets made great contributions to psychology. Philosophy has a great legacy in moulding psychology into the type of science it is today. Hence, it is important that when we study psychology, we start from its seminal roots to understand how it came about and how it has transitioned over the years.

3.2 Psychological perspectives from various geographical locations

Psychology can be traced back to Buddha in India, who pondered how sensations and perceptions combined to form ideas. In China, Confucius understood the power of ideas and the importance of an educated mind. His ideologies emphasised the importance of human nature, education, human development and interpersonal relationships. China has a long history of administering tests of ability as part of its education system. For example, in the sixth century AD, Lin Xie carried out an early experiment in which he asked people to draw a square with one hand and at the same time draw a circle with the other (ostensibly to test people's vulnerability to distraction). It has been cited that this was the first psychology experiment, representing the beginnings of psychology as an experimental science.

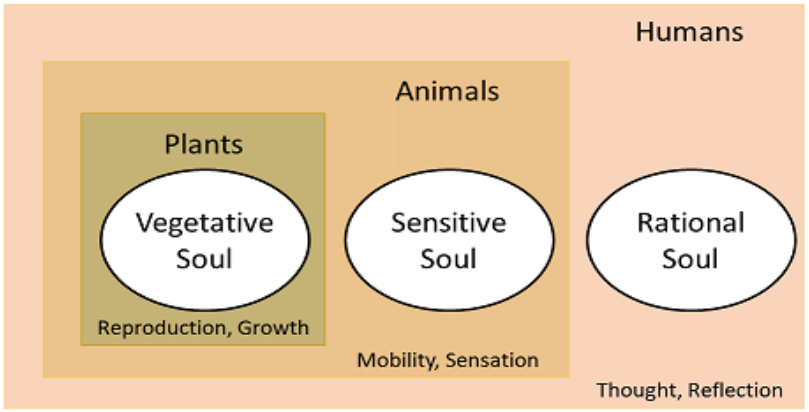
Many cultures throughout history have speculated on the nature of the mind, heart, soul, spirit, brain and so on. For instance, in Ancient Egypt, the Edwin Smith Papyrus, an ancient Egyptian medical text named after Edwin Smith, who bought it in 1862, is known to be the oldest surgical treatise on trauma. This document, which may have been a manual of military surgery, describes 48 cases of injuries, fractures, wounds, dislocations and tumours. Details are provided on the type of injury, the examination of the patient, the diagnosis and prognosis, and the treatment administered in respect of each case. It dates to Dynasties 16–17 of the Second Intermediate Period in ancient Egypt, around 3000 BC. The Edwin Smith Papyrus presents a rational and scientific approach to medicine in ancient Egypt, in which medicine and magic do not conflict. Magic would be more prevalent had the cases of illness, such as internal disease, been mysterious. The vast majority of the papyrus is concerned with trauma and surgery, with short sections on gynaecology and cosmetics. Though other medical documents of ancient times were full of incantations and applications meant to turn away disease-causing demons and to deal with other superstitions, the Edwin Smith Papyrus gives remedies for almost 50 conditions, and only two of these remedies contain incantations to ward off evil. It gives the impression that generic spells and incantations may have been used as a last resort in terminal cases (Stiefel et al., 2006).

Early humans looked upon everything in nature as if it were alive. They did not distinguish between animate and inanimate objects. They believed that all things are living and they attributed human-like qualities to inanimate objects. This view is known as **animism**. There was also a tendency to project human feelings and emotions onto nature; this is called **anthropomorphism**. Early Greek religion was of two main types: Olympian and Dionysiac-Orphic. Olympian religion consisted of several gods whose activities were similar to those of upper-class Greeks, hence it was more popular among the wealthier Greeks. Dionysiac-Orphic religion preached that the soul was a prisoner of the body and

that it longed to be released so that it could once again dwell among the gods. This religion tended to be favoured by the lower-class Greek citizens.

The first philosophers emphasised natural explanations instead of supernatural ones. They sought a primary element, a physis, from which everything was made. For Thales, the physis was water; for Anaximander, the physis was something boundless and indefinite; for Heraclitus, the physis was fire; for Parmenides, the physis was ‘one’ or ‘changelessness’; for Pythagoras, the physis was represented by numbers; for Democritus, the physis was represented by the atom; for Hippocrates and Empedocles, the physis was found in four primary elements: water, earth, fire and air; and for Anaxagoras, the physis was represented by an infinite number of elements. The earliest Greek philosophers were called cosmologists because they sought to explain the origin, structure and processes (cosmos) of the universe.

Socrates (469–399 BC) believed that truth was subjective and that careful examination of one’s subjective experiences would reveal certain concepts that were stable and knowable and that, when known, would result in proper conduct. Socrates’s student, Plato (428–348 BC), as influenced by Pythagoreans, believed that ideas or concepts had an independent existence. Plato believed that the rational power of the mind (rationalism) should be turned inward (introspection) to rediscover ideas that were present at birth (nativism). Aristotle (384–322 BC) was also interested in general concepts instead of isolated facts but, unlike Plato, he believed that the way to arrive at these concepts was to examine nature. Aristotle distinguished between memory (which is spontaneous) and recall (which is an active search to recall past experiences); he explained imagination and dreaming as the pondering images that linger after a sensory experience has ceased. Figure 3.1 below depicts Aristotle’s ideas.



The structure of the souls of plants, animals, and humans, according to Aristotle, with Bios, Zoê, and Psūchê.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul

Figure 3.1: Aristotle's parts of the soul (http://threesology.org/the-devils-advocate-38.php)

Neoplatonism, a renewed interest in Plato's philosophy, appeared in Rome. Plotinus, a Neoplatonist, believed that from the 'One' (God) comes the spirit, from the spirit comes the soul and from the soul comes the physical world. The soul then reflects the spirit and God. Saint Thomas Aquinas attempted to combine Aristotle's work with the Christian religion. It is believed that Aquinas's questions ultimately led to the decline of church authority and the start of the Renaissance.

The Renaissance, dating to approximately 1450–1600, was a period of 'rebirth' when Europe shifted from being God centred to being human centred. Renaissance humanism had four main themes: a belief in the potential of the individual, an insistence that religion be more personal and less institutionalised, an interest in the classics and a negative attitude towards Aristotle's philosophy. This was a period of great curiosity and creativity. Prominent contributors during this time include Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), who successfully argued that, instead of the Sun revolving around the Earth (the geocentric theory), the Earth revolved around the Sun (the heliocentric theory). Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) found that the paths of the planets are not circular but elliptical. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) found that all material bodies fall at the same rate and, using a telescope, he discovered four of Jupiter's moons. He also concluded that the science of psychology was impossible because human thought processes are subjective. Isaac Newton (1647–1727) viewed the universe as a complex, lawful, knowledgeable machine created and set in motion by God.

A French mathematician, physiologist and philosopher, René Descartes (1596–1650), challenged the dualists' view regarding the soul being responsible for everything in a human body. He pioneered the beginning of physiological psychology, stimulus-response psychology, phenomenology and a debate on whether innate ideas exist. After Descartes, British empiricism, German rationalism and French sensationalism gave rise to psychology as we know it today.

In the 19th century, physiology, known as the science of the body's machinery, led to an increased understanding of reflexes, the arrangement of the nervous system (brain and spinal cord) and peripheral nerves that connect the central nervous system to sense organs and muscles. During this era it was believed that all human behaviour occurs through reflexes – even voluntary actions are complex reflexes involving higher parts of the brain.

Russian physiologist Ivan Sechenov demonstrated that stimuli act on a person's sensory receptors, setting in motion a chain of events in the nervous system that culminates in the muscle movements that constitute an action. He significantly contributed to our knowledge of physiology, particularly our understanding of reflexes. Sechenov's work inspired Ivan Pavlov, whose work on reflexes played a critical role in developing behaviourism. At the same time, English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) rejected dualism (i.e., the belief that the human mind and the human body are two entirely separate entities) and argued that the primary motive in human behaviour is the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. He believed that all human activity, including mental activity, can be reduced to atoms in motion, and nothing exists except for matter and energy; this view became known as **materialism** – the philosophical position that everything, including mental events, is composed of physical matter and is therefore subject to the laws of physics. He suggested that conscious thought is purely a product of the brain's machinery, which is subject to these laws. This ideology contributed to the school of thought known as **empiricism**, that is, the idea that human knowledge and thought ultimately derive from sensory experience. James Mill (1773–1836), for example, maintained that all mental events consist of sensations and ideas held together by association. Mill stated that mental events can be reduced to simple ideas, no matter how complex an idea is. His son, John Stuart Mill, disagreed and stated that all complex ideas can be reduced to simple ideas. He proposed a process of mental chemistry according to which complex ideas can be distinctly different from the simple ideas (elements) that constitute them.

John Locke (1632–1704) wrote an essay on human understanding. He believed that the mind is a **tabula rasa** (i.e., the mind in its hypothetical primary blank or empty state before it receives outside impressions) or a blank sheet at birth and that experiences are written

on it. Thought is not a product of free will but reflects one's experiences in the physical world. All the contents of the mind derive from and relate directly to the environment.

Alexander Bain (1818–1903) was the first to attempt to relate known physiological facts to psychological phenomena. He also wrote the first psychology texts and founded the first psychology journal, *Mind*, in 1876. Bain explained voluntary behaviour in much the same way modern learning theorists explained trial-and-error behaviour. He added the law of compound association (which says that most associations are among whole clusters of other associations) and the law of constructive association (which says that we can also actively, creatively, add to our associations ourselves) to the traditional laws of association. **Associationism** is the theory that the mind is composed of elements, referred to as sensations and ideas, which are organised through various associations (Boeree, 2000). The laws of association originally identified by Aristotle include **continuity** (things or events that occur close to one another in space or time tend to get linked together in the mind), **frequency** (the more often two things or events are linked, the more powerful the association between them), **similarity** (if two things are similar, the thought of one will tend to trigger the thought of the other) and **contrast** (seeing or recalling something may also trigger the recollection of something opposite) (Boeree, 2000).

Philosopher Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) saw human beings as complex, physical machines. He saw a need to assume a non-physical mind. Julien de La Mettrie (1709–1751) believed that humans work like machines and differ from animals in complexity. Claude Helvetius (1715–1771) elaborated on the implications of empiricism and sensationalism for education, arguing that people's intellectual development can be determined by controlling their experiences.

The 19th century was the period during which physiology, including neurophysiology, was professionalised and that saw some of its most significant discoveries. Among the leaders in this field were Charles Bell (1774–1843) and François Magendie (1783–1855), who discovered the sensory and motor nerves in the spinal column. The Bell–Magendie law states that sensory nerves carry impulses from the sense receptors to the brain and that motor nerves carry impulses from the brain to the muscles and the glands of the body. Johannes Müller (1801–1855) expanded the Bell-Magendie law by demonstrating that each sense receptor, when stimulated, releases energy specific to that receptor. This finding is called the doctrine of specific nerve energies. Pierre Paul Broca (1824–1880) found that areas of the left frontal lobe of the cortex are specialised for speech production and articulation. Carl Wernicke (1848–1905) discovered an area in the left temporal lobe of the cortex associated with speech comprehension. Ernst Heinrich Weber (1795–1878) was the first to attempt to quantify the relationship between a physical stimulus and the sensation it causes. He determined the two-point threshold for various body parts by

observing the smallest distance between two points of stimulation. Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887) expanded Weber's law by showing that for differences to vary arithmetically, the magnitude of a stimulus must vary geometrically. Gustav Fritsch (1837–1927), Eduard Hitzig (1839–1907) and David Ferrier (1843–1924) localised sensory and motor areas of the brain. One of the principal founders of experimental physiology, Hermann Helmholtz (1821–1894), conducted studies on a wide range of topics that would later be of interest to psychologists – topics like the speed of neural transmission, as well as the nature of sound and colour, and our perceptions of them. The discovery that mental events could be studied experimentally laid the groundwork for the founding of psychology as an experimental science. Table 3.1 traces the origins of psychological knowledge from the period of Plato to the 20th century.

Table 3.1: The origins of psychological knowledge (adapted from https://www.saylor.org/books/ under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 licence)

Date	Psychologist(s)	Description
428–347 BC	Plato	Greek philosopher who argued for the role of nature in psychological development.
384–322 BC	Aristotle	Greek philosopher who argued for the role of nurture in psychological development.
1588–1679	Thomas Hobbes	English philosopher.
1596–1650	René Descartes	French philosopher.
1632–1704	John Locke	English philosopher.
1712–1778	Jean-Jacques Rousseau	French philosopher.
1801–1887	Gustav Fechner	German experimental psychologist who developed the idea of the just noticeable difference (JND), which is considered to be the first empirical psychological measurement.
1809–1882	Charles Darwin	British naturalist whose theory of natural selection influenced the functionalist school and the field of evolutionary psychology.
1832–1920	Wilhelm Wundt	German psychologist who opened one of the first psychology laboratories and helped develop the field of structuralism.
1842–1910	William James	American psychologist who opened one of the first psychology laboratories and helped develop the field of functionalism.
1849–1936	Ivan Pavlov	Russian physiologist whose experiments on learning led to the principles of classical conditioning.
1850–1909	Hermann Ebbinghaus	German psychologist who studied the ability of people to remember lists of nonsense syllables under different conditions.
1856–1939	Sigmund Freud	Austrian psychologist who founded the field of psychodynamic psychology.
1867–1927	Edward Bradford Titchener	American psychologist who contributed to the field of structuralism.
1878–1958	John B. Watson	American psychologist who contributed to the field of behaviorism.
1886–1969	Sir Frederic Bartlett	British psychologist who studied the cognitive and social processes of remembering.
1896–1980	Jean Piaget	Swiss psychologist who developed an important theory of cognitive development in children.
1904–1990	B. F. Skinner	American psychologist who contributed to the school of behaviorism.
1926–1993	Donald Broadbent	British cognitive psychologist who was a pioneer in the study of attention.
20th and 21st centuries	Linda Bartoshuk; Daniel Kahneman; Elizabeth Loftus; George Miller	American psychologists who contributed to the cognitive school of psychology by studying learning, memory, and judgment. An important contribution is the advancement of the field of neuroscience. Daniel Kahneman won the Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on psychological decision making.
20th and 21st centuries	Mahzarin Banaji; Marilynn Brewer; Susan Fiske; Fritz Heider; Kurt Lewin; Stanley Schachter; Claude Steele; Harry Triandis	American psychologists who contributed to the social-cultural school of psychology. Their contributions have included an understanding of how people develop and are influenced by social norms.

3.3 The dominance of Western psychology in the non-Western world

Eastern psychology perspectives are based on countries or continents along the eastern side of the world. These perspectives should be considered in relation to the concept of orientalism. Orientalism is “a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness” (Said, 2003, p. 6). Engaging with Eastern perspectives means that one must understand the colonial history of Eastern countries. Asian countries experienced colonisation at the hands of European countries. The narratives of colonisation discussed in earlier sections apply to the East. It was therefore essential to negate Western epistemologies, especially psychological theories. Western perspectives were not suitable or adequate for understanding Eastern societies and their cultures, traditions and behaviour (Hwang, et al., 2017) and the pain caused by colonial history. Eastern perspectives are often referred to as indigenous psychology or Asian perspectives. Asian perspectives include perspectives from Chinese, Indian and Aboriginal (native Australian) societies.

Indigenous psychology emerged in the 1970s in countries such as India, Korea, Japan and Taiwan. It developed out of dissatisfaction with the transplantation of Western paradigms. Asian researchers felt that importing Western psychology into Asia was a form of cultural imperialism and perpetuated the colonisation of the mind. In addition, they were met by stereotypes generated by Western researchers. The word “indigenous” often refers to people who are native to specific places or who have specific cultures and traditions. The word is often used by people who were formerly colonised to distinguish themselves from the Western forms of knowledge. Indigenous psychology therefore demonstrates that psychological knowledge is not universal. While Africans often use the term “African psychology” to refer to their indigenous psychological knowledge, people from Eastern countries often use the term “indigenous psychology” to refer to “the study of human behaviour and mental processes within a cultural context that relies on values, concepts, belief systems, methodologies and other resources indigenous to [a] specific ethnic or cultural group” (Ho, 1998, p. 94). Further, indigenous psychology studies natives from their own point of view. This definition is similar to that of African indigenous psychology since it renders local contexts and knowledge systems imperative in understanding the psychology of indigenous communities.

3.3.1 Asian psychology

An overview of Asian psychology is presented below.

- *Filipino culture (the Philippines*): Filipino culture was among the first to advocate Asian psychology, treating culture, as opposed to imported knowledge, as a source of knowledge. This became a political agenda, characterised by a commitment to developing a national identity and consciousness. In Filipino culture, the concept of kapwa is often regarded as a core value of personality. Kapwa is synonymous with the concept of self. Kapwa means that the 'self' and the 'other' cannot be regarded as separate concepts (Ho, 1998). The concept is regarded as key to social interactions and fellowship. The concept of a shared identity is also found in other Asian countries, especially countries where Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism are practised (Ho, 1998).

- *Confucian heritage cultures:* The concept of an individualistic mode of social life has traditionally been deemed unsuitable in non-Western cultures. A collectivistic mode of understanding human behaviour has been deemed representative of Confucian societies. Asian constructs of psychology are based on the relational nature of human existence (Ho, 1998). The term "relational orientation" captures social behavioural patterns in Confucian heritage cultures. Interpersonal relationships are important for character formation and for defining what it means to be human; as such, social existence is relational. In Chinese societies, the family and the individual are classified as a social unit. Japanese concepts such as *amae* or *amaeru* have been well outlined. The word *amae* means to depend on others' benevolence or kindness. Korean concepts such as *woori* ("we", "us" or "group") and *cheong* (human affection) indicate the relational aspect of being in a group, where *cheong* functions as an emotional tool that binds communities together. Another concept is *yuan* (affinity, a predestined relationship or the cause of a predestined relationship), which is rooted in beliefs of predestination and fatalism and represents cultural explanations of how interpersonal relationships are formed.

- *Indian psychology:* Indian psychology is based on insight into, and an understanding of, Indian tradition and is guided by values of Indian culture. Paranjpe (2007) states that Indian psychology dates back as far as *Māndūkya upanisad* and Patañjali's *Yoga sūtras* and does not need to be created anew. Understanding Indian psychology goes further than understanding Indian philosophy.

Jadunath Sinha's volumes titled *Indian psychology,* published in 1934, constitute a monumental work (Sinha, 1934). In this work, he provides detailed references to psychological concepts spread throughout the vast expanse of classical Indian scholarship. When Carl Jung visited India in 1936, he was aware of the psychological insights of Indian origin. He may be given credit for introducing Indian psychology to the rest of the world. In 1947 Kolhatkar published an entire volume,

Bhāratīya mānasa-śāstra, in Marathi. It is an exposition of Patañjali's *Yoga sūtras* as the prime source of a distinctly Indian system of psychology. Professor Gardner Murphy, who visited India in the 1950s in connection with a study of Hindu–Muslim tensions sponsored by UNESCO, recognised the importance of psychological thought of Indian origin. He asked Professor Kuppuswamy to write a chapter on Indian contributions to psychology. This chapter was published in a volume called *Asian psychology* (1968), edited by Professors Gardner Murphy and Lois Murphy.

Spirituality (*adhyātma*) is a significant feature of Indian psychology and is regarded as a primary force in knowledge production. It is focused on attaining self-knowledge and self-realisation in higher states of consciousness (Paranjpe, 2007). It involves a comprehensive approach to life and it underlies multiple Indian schools of thought such as the orthodox *darśana*s (schools or viewpoints), along with the heterodox schools of Buddhism and Jainism, which contain full-fledged theories of personality that are on par with the modern theories of personality. The rich contributions by the schools of Nyāya, Advaita and Buddhism in understanding the nature of cognition, as well as ways of understanding emotion in *rasa śāstra* (also spelled *shantarasa*, which is the imaginative experience of tranquility or the emotion of emotionlessness) and its transformation in bhakti yoga, are recognised in Indian psychology (Paranjpe, 1998). Human volition and various determinants of action are well explained in the *karma-siddhānta* (the law of karma) (Paranjpe, 2007). In Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and other traditions, spiritual practices are also therapeutic or healing practices.

3.3.2 The influence of Western psychology

Western psychology is the predominant form of psychology that is practised in most parts of the world, and there is a risk of assuming that its theories and constructs can be applied equally worldwide (Allwood & Berry, 2006). According to Ngaujah and Dirks (2003), the predominant approach within Western psychology is to study the biological, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and interactive aspects of human conditions from a rational, logical and intellectual perspective. Its teaching and practice are primarily based on models that emphasise the American and European mission of civilisation. Nsamenang (2007) notes that psychology was 'transplanted' in the African continent, which had its approaches to dealing with matters about psychological issues. For instance, in many African cultures, indigenous knowledge systems were used to treat psychological manifestations and stressors. According to Beuster (1997), the practice of psychology based on a Euro-American perspective has largely ignored African people's socio-cultural practices and religious beliefs, leading to African patients being misdiagnosed as psychotic and ending up in psychiatric institutions.

3.4 The different schools of thought and their impact on African societies

Psychologists have tried to explain why and how people learn. In this regard, they have conducted many experiments on human and animal behaviour and developed several theories to explain learning processes. Although each theory explains learning from a particular perspective, all the theories are based on the notion that learning takes place under certain conditions.

3.4.1 Structuralism

The origin of psychology dates back as far as 1879, when Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt (1832–1920), a medical doctor and sensory researcher, set up the first psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany (Robinson, 1987). He published a landmark textbook, *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie* (*Principles of physiological psychology*, 1874). Wundt believed that scientific psychology should focus on analysing **consciousness**, that is, a person's subjective experiences of the world and the mind. Consciousness is the state of being aware and it encompasses awareness of the environment around us, bodily sensations, thoughts and behaviour.

Figure 3.2: Wilhelm Wundt (Stock image-H423/0345-Science Photo Library)

Wundt considered psychology to be the study of conscious experience and he developed a school of thought known as **structuralism**, which concerns the analysis of the basic elements that constitute the mind (Feldman, 2003; Schacter et al., 2012**)**. He proposed that psychology has two kinds of elements, namely, sensation and feelings. These elements will merge together into a single experience, but that experience will still include the separate elements (Kalat, 1996).

Structuralism gained prominence under the leadership of Edward Titchener (1867–1927), who revised Wundt's version of psychology. This approach was based on the notion that the task of psychology is to analyse consciousness into its basic elements and to investigate how these elements are related (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). These elements constitute the foundation of mental states, such as perception, consciousness, thinking, emotions and other kinds of mental activities. To understand how the mind works, Wundt and other structuralists used a procedure called **introspection** – the subjective observation of one's own experiences (Schacter et al., 2012). In introspection, people were presented with a stimulus, such as a bright green object or a sentence printed on a card, and were then asked to describe, in their own words, what they were experiencing. Wundt argued that by analysing the reports people offered of their reactions, psychologists could better understand the structure of the mind. Over time, other psychologists challenged structuralism and were dissatisfied with introspection as a method to unlock the fundamental elements of the mind. Therefore, the influence of structuralism gradually faded (Feldman, 2003). The main perspective that replaced structuralism as psychology developed over time was functionalism.

3.4.2 Functionalism

In 1875, William James (1842–1910), the Harvard physiology instructor at the time, opened an experimental psychology laboratory for his courses. Although James agreed with structuralism on some important points, he disagreed with the belief that consciousness can be broken down into separate elements. Therefore, he developed a new approach called **functionalism**, which is the study of the purpose that mental processes serve in enabling people to adapt to their environment (Schacter et al., 2012). Functionalism focused on investigating the function or the purpose of consciousness, rather than analysing its structure (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

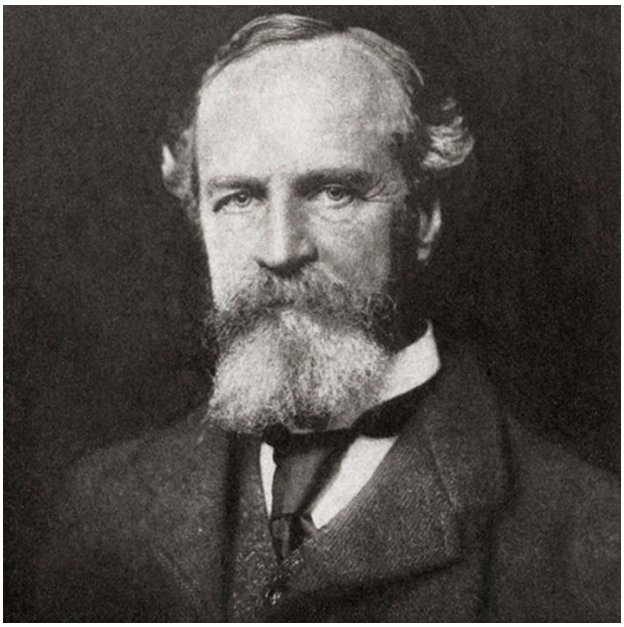


Figure 3.3: William James (https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fen.wikipedia.org%2Fwiki%2FWilliam_James&psig=AOvVaw3QuOd0CybYqCz4ztw-IVR1&ust=1677603730719000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CBEQjhxqFwoTCJC3soWXtv0CFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE)

James argued that consciousness has an evolutionary function, otherwise it would not have been naturally selected in humans. Rather than focusing on the components of the mind, functionalism concentrated on what the mind *does* and how behaviour operates. Functionalists, whose perspective became prominent in the early 1900s, were interested in the role of behaviour in enabling people to adapt to their environment better. Therefore, they examined how behaviour allows people to satisfy their needs. John Dewey, an American educator, used functionalism to develop the field of school psychology, proposing ways to best meet students' educational needs (Feldman, 2003).

3.4.3 Behaviourism

The rise of behaviourism was motivated by the struggle to understand how introspection played a role in stimulating behaviour because both structuralism and functionalism were focused on studying the mind. Not all human behaviour can be understood through dissecting elements of the mind and examining physiological processes that take place in the mind. This view was held by behaviourists, who proposed that the mind can be understood by observing the actions and behaviour of individuals (Kowalski & Westen, 2011).

John Broadus Watson was the first person to study how the process of learning affects behaviour, and he formed the school of thought known as **behaviourism** in the early 20th century. The original focus of Watson, Skinner and many other behavioural theorists was for psychology to centre around the study of behaviour (what people *do* rather than what they *experience*) because behaviour can be observed by anyone and it can be measured objectively. Watson believed that private experiences are too idiosyncratic and vague to be the objects of scientific study (Schacter et al., 2012; Ciccarelli & White, 2017). Therefore, the central idea behind behaviourism is that only observable behaviour is worthy of research since mood and thoughts are too subjective (Cherry, 2022).

Figure 3.4: John Broadus Watson was the founder of behaviourism in the early 20th century (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_B._Watson)

Three assumptions are held to be true in behaviourism. Firstly, observable behaviour rather than internal cognitive processes should be the focus of study. If learning has occurred, then some sort of observable external behaviour should be apparent. Secondly, the environment, not the characteristics of the individual, plays a vital role in shaping learning and behaviour. Lastly, the principles of contiguity and reinforcement are central to explaining the learning process (http://www.lifecircles-inc.com/Learningtheories/learningmap.html).

Behaviourism focuses on the relation between observable behaviour and environmental events or stimuli. The environment plays a key role in shaping behaviour. Behaviourists believe that the human mind is a 'black box' into which stimuli are sent and from which responses are received. They argue that there is no point in trying to determine what happens in the box because we can successfully predict behaviour without knowing what

happens inside the mind. Furthermore, behaviourists believe that it is possible to develop laws of learning that can explain all behaviours (Kowalski & Westen, 2011).

According to behaviourism, science requires replicable, objective measurements of the phenomena that are accessible to all observers. Therefore, the goal of scientific psychology should be to predict and control behaviour in ways that benefit society (Schacter et al., 2012). When Watson moved on to greener pastures, Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904–1990) became the new leader in the field of behaviourism. Skinner developed the theory of how voluntary behaviour is learnt, called operant conditioning. In his theory, behavioural responses that are followed by pleasurable consequences are strengthened or reinforced, whereas behaviour that is followed by unpleasurable consequences is punished (Ciccarelli & White, 2017).

3.4.4 Gestalt psychology

Since behaviourism dominated the field of psychology in the early 20th century by focusing on observable behaviour, other psychologists became interested in how the mind influences behaviour. Soon after the 1960s, an interest in **cognition** – the mental events that take place inside a person's mind while behaving – began to dominate experimental psychology and the cognitive learning theories that were developed. Many behavioural psychologists could no longer ignore that mental processes (such as perceptions, thoughts, feelings, insight and expectations) clearly seem to influence observable behaviour (Ciccarelli & White, 2017). **Gestalt psychology** is a psychological approach that emphasises that people perceive the whole rather than the sum of its parts (Schacter et al., 2012). Gestalt, loosely translated, means "whole" and deals with the fact that although a sensory experience can be broken down into individual parts, the way in which those parts relate to one another as a whole is often what the individual responds to in perception. By the mid-20th century, Gestalt theorists such as Wertheimer, Köhler, Koffka and Lewin provided competition to behaviourism as the only accepted theory of learning (http://www.lifecircles-inc.com/Learningtheories/learningmap.html).

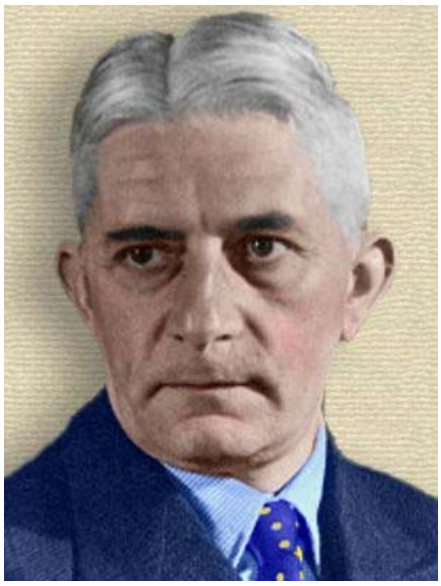


Figure 3.5: Wolfhang Köhler, one of the pioneers in the field of cognitive learning (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Köhler)

The main focus of Gestalt psychology is how perception is organised in the human mind. Instead of considering the individual parts that make up thinking, Gestalt psychology concentrates on how people consider individual elements together as a unit or a whole. The credo of Gestalt psychology is that the whole is different from the sum of its parts. This means that, when considered together, the basic elements that compose our perception of objects produce something greater and more meaningful than those individual elements alone (Feldman, 2003). Today, Gestalt ideas are part of the study of cognitive psychology, a field focusing on issues such as perception, learning, memory and thinking (Ciccarelli & White, 2017). Gestalt psychology was important in the foundation of humanistic psychology, which emphasises the wholeness of individual experiences.

3.4.5 Humanism

A perspective within psychology that emphasises the potential for good that is innate to all humans emerged during the early 20th century. This school of thought, which incorporated the principles of Gestalt psychology, developed in reaction to behaviourism and psychoanalysis (Cherry, 2020a). Carl Rogers (1902–1987) and Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) were among the prominent theorists who had an influence on humanism.

Figure 3.6: Abraham Maslow made a valuable contribution to the humanist perspective on learning (https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/e/e0/Abraham_Maslow.jpg)

From a humanistic perspective, behaviour is determined primarily by people's capacity to choose how to think and act. People's choices are not driven by instinct, biological processes or reward and punishment but rather by their unique perception of the world (Bernstein et al., 2012).

Contrary to behaviourism, humanism rejects the notion that the environment determines learning. Humanists believe that human beings are inherently good, desire a better world for all and can control their own destiny. Individual behaviour is a consequence of choice; people are active agents in their own learning and lives, not helpless respondents to forces that act upon them. Humanists also believe that motivation, choice and responsibility influence the process of learning and that life experiences are the central arena for learning (http://www.lifecircles-inc.com/Learningtheories/learningmap.html).

Humanism focuses on the study of conscious experiences and the wholeness of human nature. It places emphasis on the whole individual and incorporates concepts such as **free will** (people's freedom to choose their own destiny) and **self-actualisation** (the achievement of one's full potential) (Ciccarelli & White, 2017; Cherry, 2020a). This implies that people have the ability to reach their potential and to become fully functioning individuals of their own accord. They have great freedom in directing their future, a large capacity for achieving personal growth, a considerable amount of intrinsic worth and enormous potential for self-fulfilment (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011). Humanism is

rooted in the idea that people have a responsibility to lead lives that are personally fulfilling while, at the same time, contributing to the greater good of all humanity (Cherry, 2020a). Today, humanism exists as a form of psychotherapy aimed at enhancing self-understanding and self-improvement (Ciccarelli & White, 2017). Furthermore, many humanistic ideas have been incorporated into approaches to counselling and psychotherapy (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011).

3.4.6 Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) was the first person to systematically study the workings of the unconscious mind. As a physician, Freud (1856–1939) presumed that all behaviour and mental processes have physical causes somewhere in the nervous system (Schacter et al., 2012). **Psychoanalysis** is a psychological theory that is based on the belief that mental or emotional forces developing in early childhood affect adult behaviour and mental states through unconscious processes. Freud compared the mind to an iceberg, theorising that people are only aware of a small amount of their mind's activities and that most of these activities remain hidden in the unconscious mind. The information in the unconscious mind affects behaviour, although people are unaware of it (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

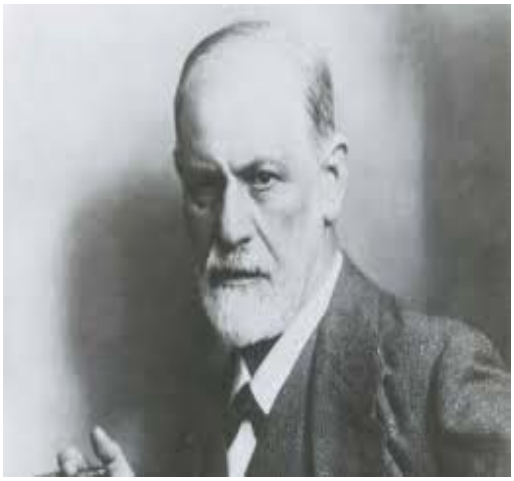


Figure 3.7: Sigmund Freud (britannica.com)

After Freud had encountered several patients who displayed a variety of physical ailments that had no apparent physical causes, he was convinced that their physical problems were the result of deep-seated psychological problems that they had pushed out of their consciousness. He eventually maintained that all behaviour – from everyday slips of the tongue to severe forms of mental disorder – is motivated by psychological processes, especially by mental conflict that occurs without people's awareness, that is, on an unconscious level (Bernstein et al., 2012).

Freud argued that behaviour (or personality) is an outcome of an ongoing series of internal conflicts between the three personality structures he called the **id**, the **ego** and the **superego**. The ego, as part of the conscious mind, mediates between the impulsive demands of the id, the moralistic demands of the superego and the outside world (Cherry, 2020). Freud believed that the relationships established among these personality structures during the preschool years set the stage for adult personality (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). These structures are presented in figure 3.8.

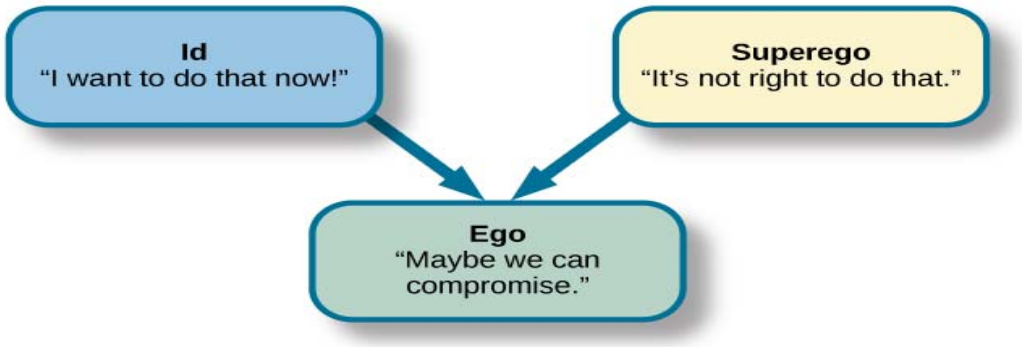


Figure 3.8: Freud's personality structures – the job of the ego (or the self) is to balance the aggressive, pleasure-seeking drives of the id with the moral control of the superego (Psychology, Personality | OER Commons)

- *Id: the pleasure seeker.* The id is the primitive part of the self that operates according to the **pleasure principle**. It contains the raw biological urges (eating, sleeping, sex, etc) that energise human behaviour (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). Its goal is to pursue pleasure and to satisfy the two main biological drives for sex and aggression in an immediate fashion and it dominates human behaviour (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011).

- *Ego: the executive negotiator.* The ego is the conscious, rational and decision-making component of the personality that operates according to the **reality principle**. The goal of the ego is to find and to negotiate for safe and socially acceptable ways of satisfying the id's desires and the superego's prohibitions (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011; Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

- *Superego: the regulator.* The superego is the moral component of personality that incorporates social standards about what is right or wrong, good or bad (Cherry, 2022). Its goal is to apply societal moral values in satisfying one's wishes (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011). In some people, the superego can become irrationally demanding in its striving for moral perfection, in which case people are plagued with excessive feelings of guilt (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

In short, the id and the superego are in constant conflict because the id wants instant gratification, regardless of the consequences. The superego tells people to behave in socially acceptable ways. The ego's job is to find the middle ground; it helps satisfy the id's desires in a rational way that will not lead to feelings of guilt. According to Freud, therefore, a healthy personality develops when the ego balances the demands of the id and the superego. A failure to maintain this balance may result in **neurosis**, that is, a tendency to experience negative emotions or anxiety disorders or to engage in unhealthy behaviour. Freud believed that feelings of anxiety result from the ego's inability to mediate the conflict between the id and the superego. When this happens, the ego seeks to restore balance through various protective measures known as defence mechanisms.

- ***Defence mechanisms***

According to Freud, people use unconscious protective behaviours to deal with negative feelings. These protective behaviours, called **defence mechanisms**, are listed in figure 3.9.

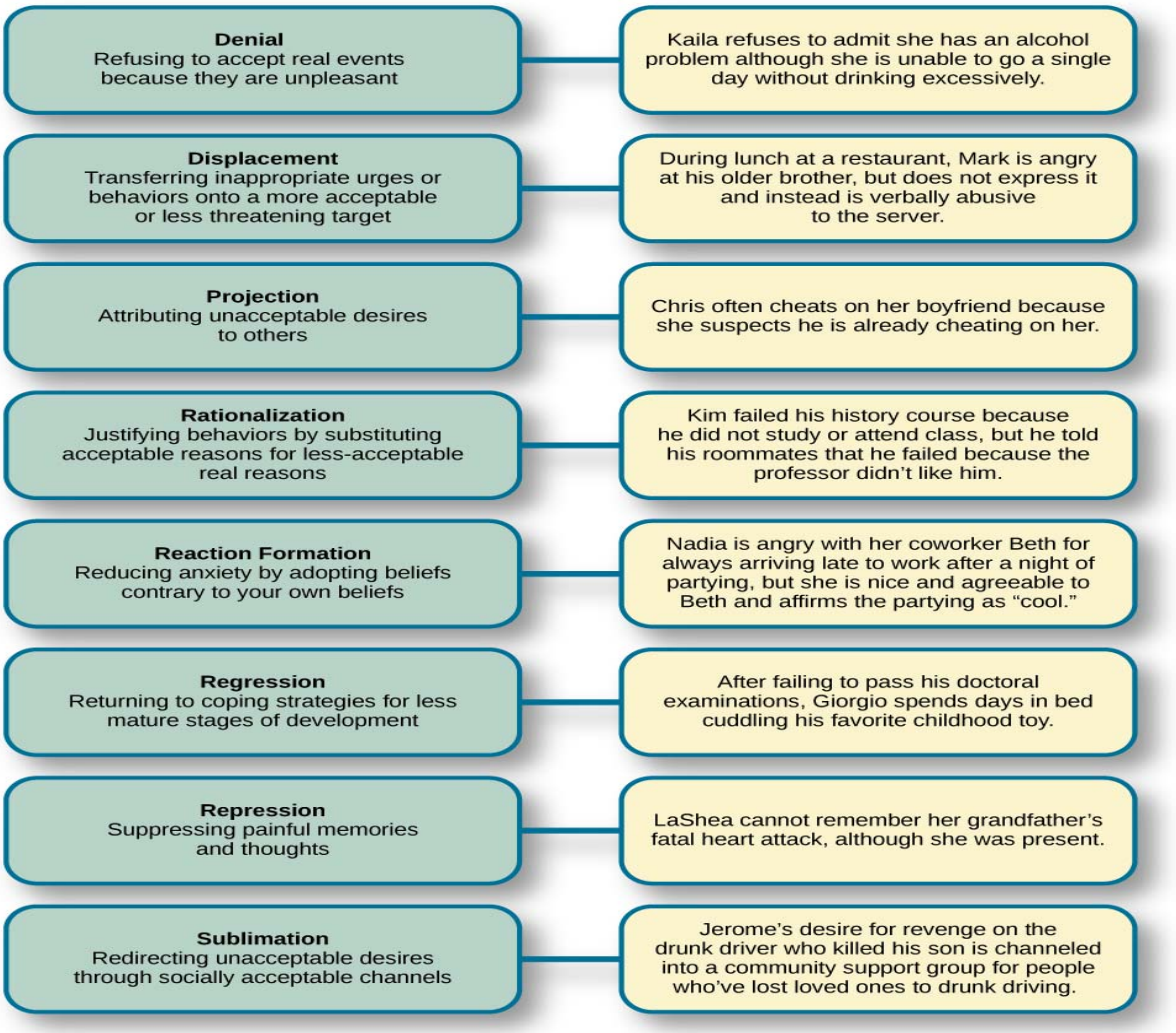


Figure 3.9: Defence mechanisms are unconscious protective behaviours that work to reduce anxiety (Psychology, Personality | OER Commons)

According to Freud, if a memory is too overwhelming to acknowledge, a person may use a specific defence mechanism to deal with it. However, this memory might cause negative symptoms in other areas.

- ***Psychosexual stages of development***

Freud believed that human development occurs in five psychosexual stages. The manner in which the challenges encountered in each stage is handled supposedly shapes personality (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). If parents or caregivers strike an appropriate balance of permitting neither too much nor too little of children's basic needs in each stage, then the children grow into well-adjusted adults who have the capacity for mature sexuality and investment in family life.

The process of **fixation** plays an important role in this regard. Fixation relates to a failure to move forward from one stage to another in an appropriate manner. Fixation can be caused by an excessive gratification of needs in a particular stage or an excessive frustration of needs. Either way, fixation left over from childhood affects adult personality (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). The psychosexual stages are presented in table 3.2 and are briefly discussed below.

- *Stage 1: oral stage (birth to one year).* During this stage, the mouth is the centre of pleasure and conflict. This stage involves behaviour such as chewing and sucking as a source of pleasure (Carnevale, 2021). Freud attributed considerable importance to the manner in which a child is weaned from breastfeeding or bottle feeding. Fixation at this stage could lead to behaviour such as overeating, child-like dependence (Bernstein et al., 2012) or smoking later in life (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). Personality traits associated with the oral stage include, among other things, depression, a lack of trust, envy and being demanding (Schacter et al., 2012).

- *Stage 2: anal stage (two to three years).* The behaviour of children changes, and their pleasure is centred around the eliminative function. Toilet-training is crucial at this time (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). A potential source of conflict is when a child's desire to expel faeces immediately comes up against the parents' attempts to train him or her to wait to use the toilet. Individuals who encounter difficulties during this stage may develop a rigid personality and remain preoccupied with issues of control of others, themselves and their emotions. Such individuals may be preoccupied with their possessions, money, submission and rebellion, and concerns about cleanliness versus messiness (Schacter et al., 2012). The genital anxiety derived from severe toilet training could evolve into anxiety about sexual activity later in life (Weiten & Hassim, 2016).

- *Stage 3: phallic stage (three to six years).* During this stage, children discover that their own genitalia provide them with a sense of pleasure. Children experience **complex**, that is, sexual desire for their opposite-sex parent, accompanied by feelings of hostility towards the same-sex parent (Keenan, 2009; Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2011). For example, a little boy may develop sexual desire **(Oedipus complex)** towards his mother and feel hostility toward his father, whom he views as a competitor for his mother's affection. Similarly, a little girl may develop sexual desire and attachment **(Electra complex)** to her father. During this time, girls also notice that boys have different genitals and supposedly develop **penis envy**. A little girl may feel hostility towards her mother and blame her mother because she (the girl) does not have a penis. In Freud's view, healthy psychosexual development hinges on the

resolution of Oedipal and Electra conflicts because continued hostility towards the same-sex parent may prevent a child from identifying adequately with that parent (Weiten & Hassim, 2016; Keenan, 2009).

- *Stage 4: latency stage (six years to puberty).* During this stage, a child's sexuality is largely suppressed and becomes latent. The most important event during this stage involves expanding social contacts beyond the immediate family, as the child starts to focus on developing his or her intellectual, creative, interpersonal and athletic skills (Schacter et al., 2012). Freud believed that the most significant aspects of personality development occur during the first three psychosexual stages (that is, before the age of five) and, therefore, he did not refer to any form of fixation during the latency stage. With the onset of puberty, a child progresses into the genital stage.

- *Stage 5: genital stage (from puberty onwards).* This is the time of coming together of the mature adult personality with a capacity to love, to work and to relate to others in a mutually satisfying and reciprocal manner (Schacter et al., 2012). During this stage, sexual urges reappear; the focus is on the genitals again. Adolescents look for appropriate peers to direct their sexual drives (Weiten & Hassim, 2016). According to Freud, the quality of relationships and the degree of fulfilment experienced during this stage are influenced by the manner in which intrapsychic conflicts were resolved during the earlier stages of development (Bernstein et al., 2012).

Table 3.2: Freud's psychosexual stages of development (adapted from Schacter et al., 2012)

Stage	Age	Erotogenic zone	Areas of conflict with carer	Associated personality features
Oral	0–18 months	Mouth	Feeding, weaning	Talkative, dependent, addictive, needy
Anal	2–3 years	Anus/urethra	Toileting	Orderly, controlling, disorganised, sloppy
Phallic	3–5 years	Penis/clitoris	Masturbation (Oedipus conflict)	Flirtatious, vain, jealous, competitive
Latency	5–13 years	–	–	–
Genital	Adulthood	Penis/vagina	Adult responsibilities	Authentic investments in love and work; capacity for healthy adult relationships

Although Freud's ideas are by no means universally accepted, he was a groundbreaker whose theories have had a significant influence on psychology and many other fields (Bernstein et al., 2012).

3.5 Summary

Psychology is as old as the human species. In ancient times, people accounted for dreams, mental illness, emotions and fantasies – they had a way of dealing with them without calling it psychology. In this unit, we discussed psychology from other parts of the world, mapping out the path on which other cultures understand psychology and how people in those cultures make sense of their lives. We also traced the development of psychology up to its present state and explored the different schools of thought and how they influenced the practice of psychology throughout the world.

3.6 Glossary

animism: the belief that all things are living, which coincides with attributing human-like qualities to inanimate objects

associationism: the philosophy that the mind is composed of elements, referred to as sensations and ideas, that are organised using various associations

behaviourism: the philosophical position that psychology should focus on the study of observable behaviour (rather than mental processes) because behaviour can be observed and measured objectively

cognition: the mental events that take place inside a person's mind while behaving

consciousness: a person's subjective experiences of the world and the mind

continuity: the process whereby events that occur close to one another in space or time tend to get linked together in the mind

contrast: seeing or recalling something may trigger the recollection of something opposite

defence mechanisms: the unconscious psychological operations that function to protect a person against anxiety-producing thoughts and feelings related to internal conflicts and outer stressors

ego: a part of a person's personality that is experienced as the self and that is in contact with the external world through perception

empiricism: the school of thought that believes that human knowledge and thought ultimately derive from sensory experiences

fixation: a failure to move forward from one stage of development to another in an appropriate manner

frequency: the more often two things or events are linked, the more powerful the association between them

Gestalt psychology: a school of thought that focuses on understanding the whole as opposed to individual elements

humanism: a philosophy that stresses the idea that people have an ethical responsibility to live personally fulfilling lives and to contribute to the greater good of all people

id: the personality component made up of unconscious psychic energy that works to satisfy basic urges, needs and desires

introspection: the subjective observation of one's own experiences

materialism: the philosophical position that everything, including mental events, is composed of physical matter and is therefore subject to the laws of physics

neurosis: a tendency to experience negative emotions or anxiety disorders or to engage in unhealthy behaviour

penis envy: the process whereby a girl child feels hostility towards her mother and blames her mother because she (the girl) does not have the penis

pleasure principle: the driving force of the id that seeks immediate gratification of all needs, wants and urges

psychoanalysis: the psychological theory according to which mental or emotional forces that develop in early childhood affect adult behaviour and mental states through unconscious processes

psychology: the scientific study of the mind and behaviour

reality principle: the regulatory mechanism that represents the demands of the external world and requires the individual to modify instinctual gratification or to postpone it to a more appropriate time

similarity: when two things are similar, the thought of one will tend to trigger the thought of the other

superego: the component of personality that suppresses the biological, primitive urges of the id and tries to make the ego behave morally

tabula rasa: a hypothetical primary blank or empty state of the mind before it receives outside impressions

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