

**Chapter: Personality Theories**

Personality: Theories

What Is "Personality"?

Psychologists' Usage of Personality

Elements of Personality

Techniques of Study

Theories of Personality

Trait Theories

Psychoanalytic Theory

Central elements of Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalytic Personality Structure

Instincts in Psychoanalysis

Other Psychodynamic Theorists

(Social-) Learning Theories

Dollard/Miller's Stimulus-Response Theory

B. F. Skinner and Personality as Behavior

Bandura and Social Learning

Self-Growth Theories

Carl Rogers and Person-Centered Theory

Maslow's Holistic Theory

A Modern Theory of Personality: Big Five

USING PSYCHOLOGY: What Determines Your Personality --

Heredity? Environment?

USING PSYCHOLOGY: What Determines Your Personality --

Heredity and Environment

REVIEW

ACTIVITIES

INTERESTED IN MORE?

**Personality: Theories**

WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

"I'm really jealous of my sister. Here I am about to graduate, and I only made it into the Student Association this year. Sis's a freshman -- a frosh -- and she's already been elected."

"Wilma, I know what you mean. My older brother was the same way. You know what your sister and my brother have in common? They've both got a lot of personality. Your sister kind of just radiates charm -- even for a first-year student! And Kirk's the same way: Everywhere he goes, people smile with him. He gushes at the right time, gets serious when he needs to, and always has a good word for everybody. He's just got a

magnetic personality." *How is the term "personality" being used here?*

"I'll never forget that cookie jar. When we were real young, every time we visited my grandmother I used to scheme with my twin sister about how we could get into the jar and get those delicious cookies. Sure we got caught sometimes, but it was well worth it. They were delicious!

"And then all of a sudden one year it didn't seem quite so important to us to get into that jar without anybody knowing about it. Pretty soon we couldn't even bring ourselves to swipe those cookies at all." *How old would you say the twins were when this change in behavior took place? What would Freud say had to happen before it would occur?*

Most people use the term "personality" to identify the most obvious characteristic of a person, or to refer to that person's social skills. Psychologists are mainly interested in personality to (1) explain why people with similar heredity, experience, and motivation may react differently in the same situation; and (2) explain why people with different heredity, past experiences, and/or motivation may nevertheless react similarly in the same situation.

In studying personality, psychologists may use idiographic or nomothetic techniques. The study of personality involves many aspects of human behavior -- almost everything an adult human organism does or can do. Theories of personality organize what we do know, stimulate new research, and formally specify a view of personality. Four groups of such theories have been developed in the past century: trait, psychoanalytic, behavioral or social learning, and humanistic views.

Three types of trait theories have developed: phrenology, typology, and the factor theory. Psychoanalysis is the original modern theory of personality based on the assumption that there are two central elements on which our personality is based: psychic energy (libido) and an unconscious. Starting only with the id, we develop an ego and a superego as the structure of our personality. Life and death instincts show a balance between aggression and a pursuit of pleasure. Both Jung and Adler developed personality theories related to Freud's.

Attempting to express Freud's psychoanalytic theory in terms that could be studied scientifically, several learning-based theories were developed. Dollard and Miller viewed drive, cue, response, and reinforcement as critical elements in personality, which was viewed as a series of learned habits. B. F. Skinner applied the principles of operant conditioning to

explain the development and maintenance of personality. Albert Bandura built on these earlier works to suggest how the interaction of behavior, environment, and our views of self-efficacy could interact to explain personality. The past three decades have seen self-growth theories rapidly gain more adherents. Carl Rogers developed person-centered theory. Abraham Maslow lent even greater emphasis to the wholeness of the person, emphasizing only human needs. Meanwhile, theorists using factor analysis have identified five factors thought to be central to human personality, including: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience. An active area of research now concerns the relation between the environment the person selects and its impact on his or her personality.

### **What Is "Personality"?**

When you talk about someone's personality, what do you really mean? Have you ever heard someone say, 'She's very aggressive' or 'He's so shy -- such an introvert!' or 'My mother is really sweet'? Or how about 'He's very dependent' or 'She's got a terrific personality -- a lot of sparkle!' You may not have heard exactly those words, but you can see what we're suggesting. In contrast to psychologists' use of the term, when the average person uses the term, "personality" has a variety of meanings, each unique to the situation in which it appears.

Many different descriptions are possible, but when most people use the term "personality," they are using it for one of two purposes. In several of the examples we just gave you, personality is labeling an obvious feature. Someone is sweet, or introverted, or shy, or aggressive. Of the many things that a person may be, we often identify him or her in terms of the single characteristic that is most obvious. The impression we make on people may be used by them to label our "personality."

But there's another way in which most of us use the term "personality," and that is to indicate a more general kind of skill in representing ourselves to others. Someone who works as a receptionist or as a telephone operator or in a front office sales job is often thought qualified for the job because he or she has "a lot of personality." What's really being said here? Maybe it's just that such people can get along well with other people. Some of the traditional ads offering courses in personality are really offering little more than help in improving your skills in meeting, greeting, and working with others. And yet it's training identified as "improving your personality" or "allowing you to reach your full potential."

Here personality is being used as a general label for the amount of social skill and finesse.

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**Think About It**

**The question:** The skit that at the start of the chapter described two high school students talking about a sister's and a brother's "personality." What definition of personality were they using in their conversation?

**The answer:** As we've just discussed, "personality" was being used by the high school students to mean "social skill." Both the sister and brother who were being discussed were given credit for achieving various goals because they were popular or easy to get along with. These are uses of "personality" as social skill. It's one possible use of the term, but not one frequently used by psychologists.

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It's easy to appreciate that there are a lot of elements to personality, and the complexity of the subject suggests the need for a variety of techniques of study.

**Psychologists' Usage of Personality**

Why does the fact that most people disagree on how to define personality cause us trouble as psychologists? Because psychologists can't (or don't) agree on exactly what "personality" is either! That's not to say we don't define it. In fact, the problem is exactly the reverse -- too many definitions of personality.

But is there really disagreement? Yes and no. There is a large number of widely differing theories about our human personality. Which personality theory you're discussing largely determines how you define personality, what elements of personality are being emphasized, and what techniques of study will be applied. It's a very complex subject, dealt with and studied in a variety of ways.



involved are the critical factors of inherited and learned behaviors. For example, inherited factors in identical twins can explain their similar behavior. On the other hand, two

But we are not adrift in a sea of confusion. Not only people on the street, but also psychologists show a lot of agreement as to the different uses of the term. What are

people with different living experiences, heredity, and motivation will respond very differently when given the same stimulus. This is to be expected.

However, how are we to explain situations in which people with different inheritance, experience, and motivation respond similarly? How are we to explain when people with essentially identical heredity, experience, and motivation responds differently in identical situations? These are the circumstances that cause psychologists to study "personality." In one sense, personality attempts to account for what we cannot predict from our knowledge of your prior learning and inheritance as they act in combination with your current motivational state.

Having qualified what we're talking about when a psychologist studies "personality," let's see if we can now define it to your satisfaction. Personality will be considered here as the dynamic organization within an individual of those systems that determine his or her characteristic behavior and thought. That's a complex definition, but so's the concept being defined. First, you'll notice the definition emphasizes that personality is organized (the key word is "organization"). Second, adjustment is also involved. Here the key word is "dynamic," which means active or changing. Third, notice how the uniqueness of each of us is preserved. Specifically, the definition mentions our "individual characteristic behavior and thought." Fourth, stability is implied. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, by referring to "systems," this definition emphasizes that there may be multiple causes of our behavior.

## **Elements of Personality**

Of what benefit is it to us to think in terms of the elements of personality? It organizes our thinking about personality. It allows us to suggest that personality -- as we'll be studying here -- has a number of different components, which impact our overall behavior. Let's review each of them briefly.

When psychologists talk about personality, we are talking about those aspects of each of us that are enduring, constant, stable parts of us. If you're aggressive today, the odds are high you'll be aggressive tomorrow. If you're shy now, you'll very likely still be shy when you wake up tomorrow morning. So we are talking about stable characteristics, and these are what psychologists study using a variety of techniques under the heading of personality.

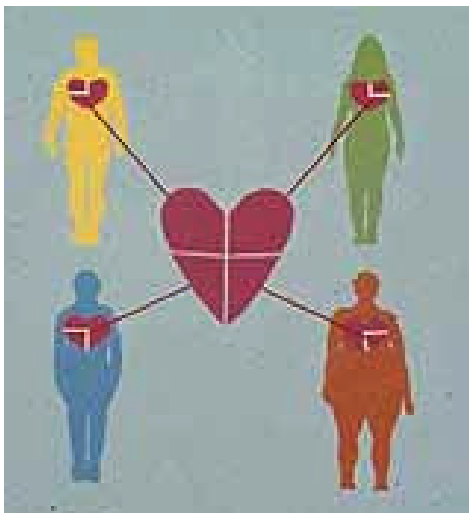
A second aspect of personality, or any trait identified with personality, is that it must occur repeatedly or consistently. The response should occur in a wide variety of circumstances. An aggressive person will tend to be so in many different situations -- in a restaurant, in the classroom, in most social relation -- ships -- essentially everywhere the opportunity arises.

A third important aspect of our personality is that each theory of personality is based on the assumption that we are each unique. We each have a certain amount of aggression, malice, humor, virtue, happiness, poise, and so forth. However, the unique combination that defines you is identifiable. Despite the powers of prediction gained from a knowledge of your heredity, your past experiences, and your current environment, there is still enough that is unique about your response capabilities as to warrant the study of your personality.

## Techniques of Study

Throughout much of this book we talk about how the study of groups is used to reach conclusions about individual behavior. Yet, in our discussion of personality you may have noted that psychologists seem to be concentrating on aspects of the individual -- for both study and understanding. How are the individual aspects of personality studied?

In order for an aspect of personality to be of interest, it must occur widely. Psychologists focus on universal characteristics, yet they do so by studying unique examples in an individual case.



Nomothetic studies are those where a characteristic (such as aggression) is studied in a large number of people who may be similar only in that they share this single trait. There's an obvious problem here. Can we reconstruct a whole personality for any of us simply by reassembling a series of isolated traits or characteristics? The answer is provided by another technique of study.



The idiographic technique involves studying a single individual as a complete, complex, interacting system. Freud's entire theory of psychoanalysis is based on the study of less than a dozen upper-middle class Viennese women. This dual approach shares some similarities with the nature-nurture argument

we discuss in the Psychology: Its Nature and Nurture Chapter. Neither study technique is enough. The idiographic technique identifies what the important variables seem to be for each individual. The nomothetic technique supplies the group-based data. Both techniques of study are used as appropriate.

## Theories of Personality

Why are theories of personality important? The reason we stress the complexity and vagueness of defining personality is because its definition depends upon which theory you are using. Theories are of central importance in studying personality.

Theories serve several purposes. First of all, they organize what is already known or suspected about a total set of data. As new data develop, the theory must often be adjusted. Trait theories of personality are good example of theoretical models constantly subject to revision in light of new data or new analyses performed on that data.

Second, theories also serve what is called a heuristic function. That is, they suggest, by organizing the important facts, exactly what kind of research is needed to fill in missing facts. The (Social-) Learning Theories illustrate this feature of theories well. The theories of Dollard and Miller and Albert Bandura as well as the operant principles developed by B. F. Skinner to explain personality are a source of ideas for research studies.

Third, theories provide a formal statement of the central principles of its subject matter -- here, a view of personality. The psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud formally summarizes his work regarding his core assumptions. The theory also summarizes his views regarding the structure of personality and the role of instincts in psychoanalysis. Theories identify the important aspects of a phenomenon -- for instance as summarized in the derivative psychodynamic theories of Carl Jung and Alfred Adler. Such theories also isolate the unimportant features of

the phenomenon being studied. So theories serve a variety of important functions, not only (or especially) in the study of personality, but also in all areas of psychology.

We spend this entire chapter analyzing the most important of a vast array of personality theories that have been developed in the century since Freud's earliest works. These theories are organized and presented in the Table roughly in the order in which they initially appeared, with the self-growth theories of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow being the last to appear. In the last two decades, theories based on factor analytic statistical techniques have advanced challenging new views as to the primary components of personality, regardless of the theory being applied. Four major types of theories have been developed, some much more successful than others. Each type of theory emphasizes different independent and dependent variables as major determinants in the operation of personality. The types of theories that are covered are presented in Table 1. Also seen in that table are some of the most prominent psychologists associated with each type of theory. We examine a sample or two of each of these broad classes of theories.

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**Table 1**

MAJOR THEORIES OF PERSONALITY		
TYPE OF THEORY	THEORIST/THEORY	BASIC IDEA
Biological (or Trait)	William Sheldon /Constitutional Psychology	Human behavior is traced to the joint effects of the organism's inherited Capabilities and past experience.
	Gordon Allport /Psychology of the Individual	
	Raymond B. Cattell /Factor Theory	
Psychoanalytic	Sigmund Freud /Psychoanalytic Theory of Psychosexual Development	Human behavior is determined by a person's past (childhood) experiences, which color his/her perceptions of current events.
	Alfred Adler /Individual Psychology	



	Erik Erikson /Psychosocial Theory Of Adjustment	
	Carl G. Jung /Analytical Psychology	
(Social) Learning	John Dollard & Neal E. Miller /Reinforcement Theory	Human behavior results from an organism's past learning, current perceptions, and higher- level processes of
organization	Albert Bandura /Social Learning Theory	thinking and
	B. F. Skinner /Radical Behaviorism	
HUMANISTIC	Carl R. Rogers /Person-centered Theory	Human behavior can be understood only in terms of the person's internal perceptions of self and others leading toward personal fulfillment
	Abraham Maslow /Holistic Theory	

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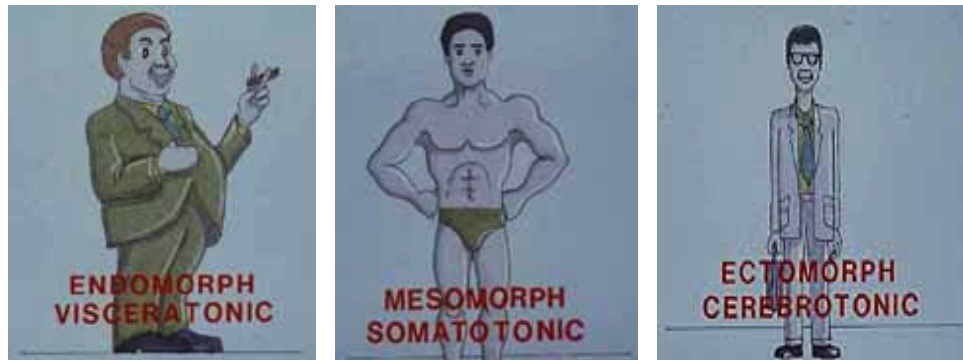
## Trait Theories

Among the various major theories of personality, trait theories are the primary ones labeled specifically in terms of a dependent variable -- traits. Traits are enduring, stable attributes or characteristics of a person. If our behavior changes, does this mean one of our traits has changed, or has our environment influenced our behavior? Trait theorists are still arguing about this point.

You read in the Psychology: Its Nature and Nurture Chapter about phrenology, the study based on the assumption that the lumps on a person's head are related to specific abilities. Although this proved untrue, the notion did introduce the idea that body features might be used to influence and thus predict certain features of personality.

William Sheldon (1899 - 1977), an American medical doctor, first offered in the early 1940s one of the most interesting modern views of such a theory of personality. Sheldon identified three different general forms of human physique, or somatotypes (see drawings). According to Sheldon each of us could be rated on a 7-point scale as to the amount of each form represented in our body. Thus, a pure endomorph would be described as a 7-1-1.

In addition, Sheldon also suggested that there is a close relation between measures of our physique taken from somatotype photographs and our personal temperament (measured by observer ratings). This is, in fact, the single, essential assumption of Sheldon's theory -- that a continuity, or a high correlation, exists between physique and behavior. The three personality types identified by Sheldon are also identified in the illustration.



Sheldon's view is intriguing, but it is limited primarily by an obvious problem. How can you rate someone's personality or behavior without seeing him or her behave? In short, raters of behavior must also see the physique of the body that is behaving. The measures and ratings are thus confounded. The same participants who gave Sheldon his ratings of various body types also provided the ratings of personal behavior. This may account for the high correlations Sheldon reported relating body form and behavior. In essence, the correlations may represent nothing more than commonly held stereotypes. Maybe you and I reward someone for behaving according to certain stereotypes. If we believe that fat people are jolly, we may already be inclined to laugh with them even before they speak. So it's a low-level, common sense kind of theory, and it may be dignifying it a bit to label it a developed theory of personality. Certainly few predictions for therapy have ever been generated from it!

Raymond B. Cattell (1905 - ) has developed a different approach to the description and analysis of personality. He

relies on data collected from three sources: a person's life record, self-ratings, and objective tests. Drawing from people's life records and self-ratings, Cattell identified major personality factors both within individuals and across people in general. These important factors were identified through complex statistical -- primarily correlational -- analyses, and they are listed in common language in Table 2.

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**Table 2***CATTELL'S FACTOR THEORY***MAJOR PERSONALITY FACTORS**

outgoing-reserved  
more intelligent-less intelligent  
stable-emotional  
assertive-humble  
happy-go-lucky-sober  
conscientious-expedient  
venturesome-shy  
tender-minded-tough-minded  
suspicious-trusting  
imaginative-practical  
shrewd-forthright  
apprehensive-placid

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Cattell distinguishes between surface traits, which are observable patterns of behavior, and source traits, which he viewed as underlying, internal traits responsible for our overt behavior. He viewed the source traits as more important. Source traits can be identified only by means of computer analysis of all the collected data. Cattell also distinguishes between general traits -- those possessed by all -- and specific traits -- those typical of only one person.

Indeed, one of the major criticisms registered against these factor-analysis based theories is that by collapsing so many data they lose the individual person in the process. Yet, if you observe carefully, it is possible to trace the increases and decreases in various response styles in a given individual over a period of time. Others -- perhaps rightly -- criticize the factor- and trait-theorists for not being theoretical at all. Rather, they are empirical, or data-oriented. This is true enough but not necessarily bad. Any set of theories

emphasizing precision is not to be faulted only on that basis. Another problem is that once a collection of behaviors are shown to be correlated, researchers are then faced with attaching labels to what are essentially numerical (data) clusters. Whether such a cluster is labeled shyness, introversion, studiousness, or coldness can have an obvious impact on how personality is being analyzed. Despite this factor analytic theories have made substantial progress in the last two decades -- especially the work of H. J. Eysenck detailed elsewhere in the USING PSYCHOLOGY section of this book.

## Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalysis must be understood as both a major theoretical system and a form of therapy. Here we'll discuss it only as a theory, conducting our discussion of psychoanalysis as therapy in the Personality: Therapies Chapter. One sage argued



that humanity has suffered three great blows to its ego in the past millennium. Copernicus' now-demonstrable assertion that the earth is not the center of the universe cost humankind its centrality in the universe in the 1500's. Darwin's Theory of Evolution argued in the mid-1800's that humans are not ultimately likely to be the the supreme form of animal life.



We are simply the most sophisticated, most recently evolved form. That cost us ultimate dominance in the animal hierarchy. And then, in the latter 1800's, here comes Freud arguing that we are not even aware of all the forces controlling our behavior -- we are subject to unconscious urges! The entire psychoanalytic theory is based on only two forms of

observations made by Sigmund Freud.



He studied deviant, or irrational, behavior of a very small number (less than a dozen) of his own medical patients. He also drew observations from everyday life, such as expression of humor and slips of the tongue. Out of these two kinds of observations he developed the single most influential theory of personality yet created. Within this intellectual framework he laid out his

observations of the primary underlying assumptions on which psychoanalysis is based. He also detailed his ideas about the structure of personality and sexual and aggressive drives to which we are subject. Two of his students -- Jung and Adler -- went on to develop substantial psychodynamic theories of their own.

## Central Elements of Psychoanalysis

There are two major elements underlying all of Freud's theory. One of these is his conception of the conscious-unconscious dimension.



He suggested that the mind has three subsystems. The conscious involves thoughts of which you are aware. Thus, your thinking about psychology and Freud's views of our conscious mind are in your conscious mind right now. The preconscious involves thoughts of which you are not

immediately aware. However, they are thoughts you can bring to conscious attention easily and rapidly. Want an example? Who's your best friend of the opposite sex right now? Immediately a picture of somebody flashed into your mind. That person was -- if you've been paying attention and not daydreaming about him or her! -- just in your preconscious.

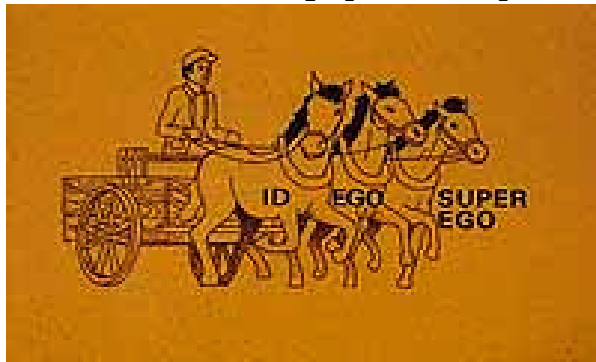
Your unconscious involves the largest source of influences on your overt, conscious behavior, as seen in the diagram. Without our awareness (according to Freud) the conscious becomes

a symbol or vehicle of unconscious urges. Thus, by studying such things as slips of the tongue and dreams, Freud would assert we are able to study unconscious processes.

Remember that psychoanalysis was first developed in the 1800's, just at a time when physics, chemistry, and biology were making great strides as disciplines. Essentially mimicking the theories of physics and physical energy, Freud proposed that each of us is born with a certain amount of psychic energy, or libido. This energy creates inner tensions that we seek to reduce. Freud stressed sexuality in his theoretical statements and analyses, but he used the word "sexual" broadly, as it relates to many different intentions and activities. These concepts of the conscious-preconscious-unconscious dimension and libido operate throughout the structure and motivational systems of the personality. Other psychodynamic theorists -- especially with the issue of unconscious urges -- developed somewhat different concepts.

## Psychoanalytic Personality Structure

As a theorist, Freud's major contribution to our understanding of personality was his development of the concepts of the id, ego, and superego. He viewed them as separate but interacting systems. Freud liked to use analogies when he spoke and wrote about psychoanalytic concepts. He often compared the



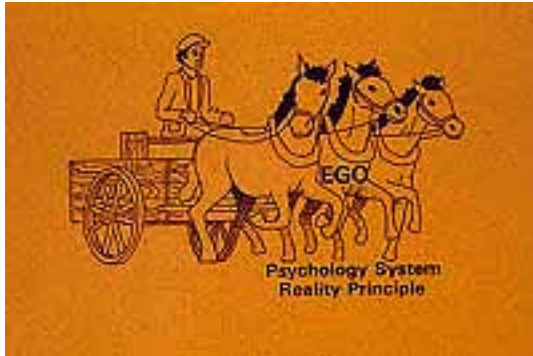
id, ego, and superego to a Russian troika. Success in moving this type of vehicle requires contributions by three horses all hitched abreast, and the same idea applies (Freud asserted) in developing a functioning personality. The id is the initial system present at birth.



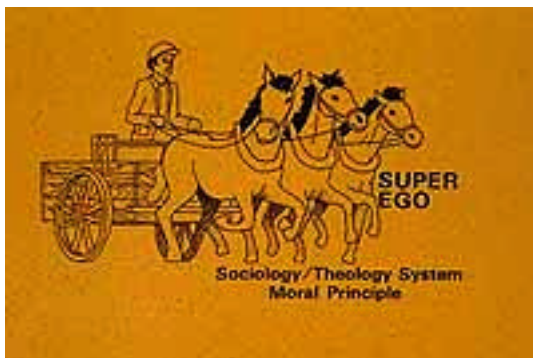
All libidinal energy is deposited there. That is, all the organism's personal activities are at first directed to satisfying the needs of the id. The id has to do with our most basic desires, and it cannot tolerate tension. Functioning completely



unconsciously, the id is said to operate in terms of pleasure principle. It seeks pleasure for itself without any regard for the needs, wants, or concerns of others.



level, mainly in terms of the reality principle. It balances the impulses of the id against the equally real demands of the environment.



parents) and to involve an ego-ideal.

The ego develops to monitor the id and to direct its impulsive desires. At first it serves only to satisfy the id's impulses. The ego stresses rationality and an awareness of the realities of our physical and social environment. It operates at a conscious and preconscious

The superego is the last of the three to develop. It really doesn't begin to make its appearance until as late as the age of six or seven, though Freud was loath to assign age deadlines for developmental processes. The superego is thought to be composed of one's conscience (the values of one's

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### **Think About It**

**The question:** A twin sister described a childhood experience shared with her sister in which they schemed to get into their grandmother's cookie jar at each visit to snatch delicious cookies. Though they were caught sometimes, the penalty never prevented their next attempt to get more cookies. The speaker noted that at some point it became less important to her and her sister to steal the cookies. How old would you say the twins were when this change in behavior took place? What would Freud say had to happen before the change would occur?

**The answer:** It's hard to attach a firm age at which such a change would evolve, because Freud anchored his stages on people's behavior rather than the age at which things were supposed to occur. However, what likely caused the change in the twins' behavior was the development of their superego -- that is, some type of other-oriented conscience. One would expect, typically, such a change in personality to occur sometime during the elementary school years.

The superego is as irrational as the id. However, the id does things impulsively only to serve the organism's own needs, while the superego is concerned completely with the good of society. It also operates the realms of both the conscious and the preconscious, without regard for the good of the individual.

How do these concepts work together, as do the horses of a troika? If you had only an ego and the id, then the id's impulses would always be satisfied. If you had only an ego and superego, then the superego's urgings would always be met. But in fact, most of us -- still according to Freud -- have all three. Thus, the ego serves to balance the demands of the id against those of the superego by realistically assessing the limits imposed by the real world. The ego serves an executive function to maximize the benefits to the whole person. Moreover, these are not the only aspects impacting the operation of the personality. Unconscious urges and libido as well as the forces of life and death also impact our behavior, according to Freud -- though he debated the precise manner of their impact with his students.

## **Instincts in Psychoanalysis**

Important to the operation of our personality are the wealth of instincts with which we are blessed. Freud suggested in his theory of psychoanalysis that our instincts are divided into Life instincts (called Eros) and Death instincts (called Thanatos).



The life instincts seek pleasure in a variety of ways. The death instincts show up mainly as aggression. So conflict is central to Freud's views of the human personality. Id and superego are in conflict over life goals, mediated by the ego. Eros and Thanatos are in conflict over how best to achieve pleasure. As we detail

in our discussion of the structure of personality, Freud often used analogies. The developing person must move successfully through five stages of psychosexual adjustment. Freud thought of this as similar to moving an army from oasis to oasis across a desert to fight a battle (life itself) on the desert's far



side. You must use just enough troops (libidinal energy) to defend the oasis (retain skills, pleasures, abilities gained) without over-investing at any stage. And why might an army stay at a particular oasis (stage)? It would stay, for instance, if encountering too big an opposing army frustrated it. An analog in life would be the failure of a child to develop properly as a result of having a parent who was too dominant. Or, in another example, if an army encountered too many pleasures at an oasis - the comforts of easy living and good food, for instance -- then again, it would not be likely to move on. The analogous situation here would be a child raised by too-indulgent parents.

In short, the developing personality cannot gain too much satisfaction or encounter too much frustration at any one stage of development or the development of the personality may be arrested there. These fixations often become the source of severe personality problems in later life. Fixations are the reason Freud so emphasized the childhood formative years in his theory of psychoanalysis. He thought most problems of adult living could be traced back to problems in childhood. Other psychodynamic theorists disagreed with him that childhood was the only source of those influences.

## **Other Psychodynamic Theorists**

There were two other theorists who are traditionally and strongly associated with psychoanalytic theories of personality. One is Carl Jung. Jung believed that we harbor within us not only our own thoughts, but also what he called a collective unconscious. This was viewed as the accumulated memories and urgings of the whole human race, based on certain common elements of our experience. We each have parents, and we each experience a life of sunrises and sunsets, tragedies and celebrations, feasts and deprivations.

And Jung was interested in opposites. His other important contributions were the concepts of introversion (a turning inward, or seclusiveness) and extraversion (a looking outward, outgoing). For Jung, the successful person can bring the opposing parts of his person (inclinations toward introversion and extraversion, among others) together.

The other important person in this group would be Alfred Adler, who assumed that since we have little control over our life in childhood, we grow up feeling inferior. For Adler, the battle to overcome this feeling of inferiority becomes a style of life. Those who fail to master the feelings of inferiority, or who remain overly worried about it even when they have mastered it, are said to have developed an inferiority complex.

And how do we critique these theories? Freud, Adler, and Jung probably put too much emphasis on heredity and too little emphasis on the role of daily experience in determining our behavior. By contrast, perhaps the behavioral and social-learning theorists put too little emphasis on heredity and things which cannot be controlled by children and too much emphasis on the impact of the immediate environment.

### **(Social-) Learning Theories**

Theories of personality developed in more modern times have somewhat different emphases than did the trait theories or the psychodynamic theories. In other chapters we speak about the precision of the scientific methods. After those discussions you may feel slightly uncomfortable as you read about Freud's views of personality. Freud's theory is in many ways his personal statement about how personality may develop and organize itself. In fact, the same observation might be made of the self-growth theories. One of the major criticisms of psychoanalytic thought was that it did not easily lend itself to tests in the laboratory.

While fascinated with Freud's ideas, a group of American psychologists began, in the early 1940's, to develop what became a theory of personality. The earliest attempts of Dollard and Miller were primarily meant to cast psychoanalytic theory in a form that could be subjected to scientific examination and study in the laboratory. More recent theorists have either emphasized the role of observation and its impact on your view of your self-efficacy or they have disavowed theorizing and returned to the direct observation of behavior in the mode of B. F. Skinner.

The behaviorists' early theories shared many things in common with psychoanalysis. Both were trying to explain similar patterns of abnormal behavior. Both observed the person and tried to determine what was occurring within. Yet, the new school -- the behavioral theories -- emphasized a close tie to scientific methods. They included in their general theory only confirmed and confirmable findings from the psychological laboratory. The result was a much less dramatic theory, but one that yields testable predictions.

### **Dollard and Miller's Stimulus-Response Theory**

Translating Freud's theory into concepts and language that could be studied in the laboratory did not turn out to be as hard as you might suspect. Psychologists John Dollard and Neal

Miller developed their theory of personality stressing the importance of learning. It was based on a small number of observable, simple processes and elements.

In their own words ". . . in order to learn one must want something, notice something, do something, and get something. Stated more exactly, these factors are drive, cue, response, and reward." Let's review each of those factors. According to these psychologists, we are born with a set of innate needs -- for food, water, oxygen, and warmth, to name but a few. We would have died if these needs had not been satisfied during our early life, yet now we can perform the necessary responses to obtain them ourselves. Obviously, although the needs may be inherited, the responses to meet them are learned.

Two kinds of drives operate within us. At birth and while young we may be stimulated into action mainly by primary drives such as hunger. As is true of all drives the stronger the deprivation (for example, hunger), the stronger the drive -- within the normal range of drive levels. Moreover, if some stimulus always occurs when a primary drive is operating, then that stimulus may also come to acquire drive-like properties -- it may cause behavior. These are secondary (or learned) drives that develop if a stimulus occurs frequently in association with a primary drive. One example is fear.

Once a drive is aroused, cues guide you. They encourage you to respond; determining when and where you will respond and even which response will be made. How are you called when it's time for a meal? Especially at home, that call or bell or shout is a cue. It guides you to the table, where the appropriate eating responses can be performed.

At birth we have a series of organized (often-reflexive) responses we can make. These can be called our initial response hierarchy. Learning -- which Dollard and Miller view as central to the development of personality -- can lead to changes in that initial response hierarchy. The latest order -- the one you're using now -- is called the resultant hierarchy. Drives accompanied by cues guide the organism to respond in a particular way and place.

The issue of reinforcement is the most controversial portion of this theory, for reasons we discuss in the Learning Chapter. On developing this theoretical model for personality these theorists argued that any response that reduces our drive level is reinforcing; it will tend to occur again. We are likely to do again whatever response reduces our hunger.

Notice how learning is emphasized. You start with an array of organized reflexive responses, but experience and reinforcements soon change that order. These theorists say that

your personality is based on your most recent learning experiences. You change from day to day and month to month.



Your personality, then, is composed of habits -- the learned associations between drives, appropriate cues, and responses. You differ from your friends because your prior experiences differ. Your personality can be expected to change with future experiences.

The structure of Freud's concept of personality -- id, ego, and superego -- is collapsed in this theory into habits. Freud's instincts become drives in this theory. Where Freud emphasizes childhood experiences, the behaviorists stress the effects of more recent experiences. Both emphasize the long-term stability of the consequences of past experience. Unlike psychoanalytic theory, Dollard and Miller's theory is testable. Although based on the study of how animals work, their conclusions have also been found true of humans.

## **B. F. Skinner and Personality as Behavior**

Skinner doesn't have a theory of personality, not even a (social-) learning theory of personality development. Yet the principles of operant conditioning can be applied to the derivation of statements about how personality is formed and how it functions. Dollard and Miller emphasize internal processes such as motivation, drive, drive-reduction, and reinforcement. By contrast, Skinner concentrates entirely on observable behavior -- though not learning by observation as endorsed by Albert Bandura.

For Skinner, nobody is "neurotic" -- you simply show a variety of ineffective modes of escape. You are not "frustrated" -- you are simply replacing one response with another. According to Skinner, much of our behavior -- especially in the company of others -- involves freely emitted "operants" (see the Learning Chapter) or responses. If an operant is reinforced, Skinner asserts, we will be more likely to emit that operant in a similar situation.

Thus, two important concepts for Skinner are generalization and discrimination. We must learn stimulus generalization so that we will emit responses to a variety of similar, if not identical, situations. For instance, you can eat a hamburger whether sitting in McDonald's or in Burger King. Likewise, we must learn to discriminate when to and when not to emit certain

responses. Talking in class is all right, but not when your professor has asked for quiet. Talking in church is all right, but not when the preacher is preaching.

And what assures that all these operants will be reinforced? Skinner emphasizes the importance of generalized reinforcers -- such things as money and social approval. They are often associated with primary goal objects such as food and water. Yet, on occasion, we can even be controlled by a smile.

Skinner simply rejects Freud's concept of unconscious urges as excess baggage -- unnecessary to explain ongoing human behavior. He has even argued in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* against the existence of free will as a factor in governing human behavior. Thus, by implication he is also rejecting the main tenets of self-growth theories, again because of too much appeal by these theorists to internal, not-directly-observable processes.

## **Bandura and Social Learning**

Research in the 40's, 50's, and much of the 60's was concerned mainly with animals. Summarizing that work, you can smile at animals, but that doesn't usually reinforce them. Food does reinforce a hungry animal; water does reinforce a thirsty one. For humans, however, it is the effects of reinforcement that are crucial.

Bandura has a very different view. He maintains that even by observing models (any person) perform a response for which he or she is rewarded, learning will occur. Bandura's is a theory with three primary components: (1) your behavior, (2) the environment in which you behave and observe others' behavior, and (3) self-efficacy -- your beliefs about your ability to perform the behaviors required to achieve the outcomes you desire. Bandura believes that gaining a reinforcer determines whether or not a response is performed, not whether it is learned. So novel behaviors can be acquired just by looking.

Ranging across the trait theories, psychoanalysis, and the behavioral theories of personality covers a lot of territory. Notice that the trait theories emphasize how each person is a collection of constant traits, abilities, or responses. Thus different people may respond differently in the same situation because of different traits. Yet Bandura and those endorsing a social-learning analysis are saying that the behavior of each of us in the same situation may differ because of differing past experiences in similar conditions. If your aunt kisses you, you're peeved; if your mother does, you're tolerant; if your boyfriend or girlfriend does, you're happy.

Summarizing the impact of the behavioral theories, the theories do offer testable predictions. They offer a lengthy continuity with animal research going back over 70 years; they're simple, and they generate some immediate and applicable suggestions for therapy, as we discuss in the Personality: Therapies Chapter.

## **Self-Growth Theories**

As one pair of psychologists has observed, psychoanalysis seems to paint a bleak picture of humans. Yet, learning theorists seem to picture us as robots passively reacting to environmental stimuli we don't control. Neither statement applies to the self-growth theorists. As theorists of personality these humanists value our human "growth potential," or striving for self-betterment. That shift in emphasis led to substantial growth in both the popularity and impact of self-growth theories of personality.

Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow assume that we cannot understand a person by examining his or her environment or actions within it. Rather, we must analyze how the person perceives both the environment and his or her role in it. Their emphasis was on the healthy person and his or her attempts to adapt to the world as he or she perceives it.

These self-growth theories really began to have an impact in the 1960s -- consistent with the feel-good philosophy, which was so much a part of the current social scene at that time. Some have suggested the popularity is what generated the array of criticisms registered against self-growth theories. In the context of social learning and psychoanalytic theories, the self-growth theories are descriptive, but not analytic. They do not yield to precise prediction or test. Another problem is the extent to which the self is emphasized -- ala Ayn Rand -- as opposed to having a broader social, interactive, other-centered focus. The self-growth theories are couched in very positive assumptions about innate human goodness, even in the face of world-wide evidence suggesting substantial evil in human behavior -- from destruction of our environment to acts of violence, so much a part of today's world. Despite those criticisms, self-growth theorists have had a major impact on the modern form of psychotherapy and the assumptions upon which it is based.

These theories have shortened the many years required for psychoanalysis to very short-term efforts designed to solve immediate problems. Although the major concepts are defined, the definitions tend to be abstract, and thus subject to a rich

variety of interpretations! The change in approach provided by stressing the person's perspective of his or her environment is interesting intellectually. But Rogers' concepts such as the phenomenal field are difficult to measure in the laboratory; there is so much emphasis on current views of and needs from the environment. Both Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow pay little attention to childhood experiences or unconscious determinants of behavior.

## **Carl Rogers and Person-Centered Theory**

Carl R. Rogers presents a very different theory of personality than any of his predecessors. Along with Abraham Maslow he established the self-growth theories of personality. The resulting movement advanced the study of personality well beyond reliance on the traditional psychodynamic or learning-based theories of personality. According to Rogers, ". . . behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived." Two aspects of the person are essential to understanding Rogers' theory: the organism and the self. The organism is the focal point of all experience. This experience, defined from the person's own point of view, involves everything that could (not is, could) be experienced. It changes from moment to moment. The total of this experience is called the phenomenal field.

As a person grows from infancy to adulthood and gains experience, what eventually emerges, as part of the phenomenal field, is the self. For you it is composed of all the things you can say or know about "I" or "me," and your relations with your environment and the people who are part of that environment. In addition to self, there is also an ideal self - what you would like to be.

Rogers assumes we each possess an inherited urge or need for self-actualization. This is thought to be a tendency to develop and utilize all of our potential. Self-actualization is a single goal toward which we all strive.

And how do we know when we are advancing toward self-actualization? We assess everything we do and assign a value, positive or negative, to it. If it feels good when we are doing it, or even thinking about it, then it is good and should be done. Now the naive might use that as a justification for engaging in almost anything. But remember that in striving toward self-actualization, the value is attached positively only to those activities the self believes are advancing it toward actualization.



those around it, but also from the self.



The final concept that is important in Rogers' theory is termed unconditional positive regard, or acceptance. It causes us to seek acceptance, warmth, and love from the valued people in our life. If we don't get it, we are not advancing. The organism needs positive regard not only from

Thus, if you feel anger toward a friend, you will tend to deny its existence since you know that in good friendships anger shouldn't exist. In short, we learn to seek positive regard - we try to do things that gain us praise. When we find it, what follows is an improvement in self-regard.

## **Maslow's Holistic Theory**

Since we discuss aspects of Maslow's efforts in the Motivation Chapter, we won't go into full detail here. But Maslow clearly objected -- as did Carl Rogers -- to studying only a portion of humans, preferring instead to consider humans as whole, complete, healthy, growing organisms. Consistent with our discussion of the cyclical nature of motivation, Maslow didn't believe humans often reached a state where they had no needs. And if they did, it was only for a very short time.

In effect, Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs -- basic needs and what some have called "metaneeds." The basic needs, displayed in the Table, (and described in the Motivation chapter, Figure are arranged in a hierarchy in which more basic physiological needs must be satisfied before one can cater to more high-level needs. These are the needs of hunger, affection, security, self-esteem, and self-actualization -- the deficiency needs.

Metaneeds refer to needs for goodness, order, unity, justice, and so forth. Clearly more than one of the metaneeds may be operating at any given time. Although these are growth needs, serving mainly to enrich the person and the world, they are, according to Maslow, as inherent as the basic needs.



One of Maslow's major contributions was to suggest that healthy people might not simply be the opposite of sick people. He studied a number of people whom he considered to be fully self-actualized in the richest sense of the term -- fully effective, mature human beings, some alive when he studied them, some long dead. Listed in Table 3 are some of the things he found healthy, self-actualized people to exhibit. It's an interesting list.

---

**Table 3**

*Abraham Maslow's List Of Behaviors  
Indicating Self-Actualization*

**Self-actualizing people will be:**

oriented toward reality  
accepting of self, of others, and of nature  
more spontaneous  
problem-centered (not self-centered)  
more detached from others and desire more privacy  
self-sufficient and independent  
more appreciative and intensely emotional  
more likely to have mystical experiences  
more identified with humankind  
involved in rich interpersonal experiences  
more democratic in attitude  
markedly more creative  
aware of needs for improvements in their culture

---

Are you self-actualized yet? How many of the items on this list accurately describe you? The seeming impossibility of leading a life this "good" has been the source of some of the criticism directed at Maslow's theory.

## **A Modern Theory of Personality: Big Five**

Among the earliest theories of personality to appear were those based on traits which attempted to establish a linkage between features of the body and personality. The early attempts came up dry, but with perseverance and the aid of factor analysis and computers, some encouraging, consistent results have begun to emerge.

Factor analysis is based on analyzing data such as personality test data or personality checklists -- (Which of the following adjectives describe you?). The logic is straightforward: Are there features of personality -- such as introversion and shyness -- which tend to co-occur in humans? The answer turns out to be yes. Theoretically, you could start with large numbers of adjectives and ask people to describe themselves by checking those adjectives, which apply to them more often than not. Factor analyzing the results to determine which adjectives tended to be checked when others were checked would allow you to identify clusters of traits -- such as happiness, optimism, and extraversion -- which tend to occur together. In turn is there an underlying trait of personality to which all of these adjectives might relate -- such as friendliness? If so, are there a limited number of such basic traits that might be used to describe our personality?

Hans Eysenck followed this logic and identified three primary factors which he asserts describe human personality: (1) psychoticism -- marked like Dr. XXX in *Presumed Innocent* -- by being cruel, cold, and hostile; (2) introversion-extraversion -- marked in one of two ways. Extraverts are outgoing, other-oriented, risk-taking, excitement-seeking persons; introverts are reclusive, thoughtful, and quiet. And (3) emotionality-stability (or neuroticism) -- also marked in one of two ways. Emotionality is marked by negative emotions such as being moody or anxious; stability is marked by an even temper, calm existence.

Eysenck's well-researched findings spurred the look for basic personality traits. In the last two decades, considerable consistency has been demonstrated across an array of studies of widely varying types of tests of personality -- from adjective checklists to peer ratings. Modern research continues to suggest that a five-factor -- often called the Big Five -- model of personality identifies the basic components of personality. These factors are agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Some of the adjectives associated with each factor are listed in Table 4.

The last decade has yielded a widening array of studies in various cultures suggesting the stability of these factors in measures of personality from cultures all across the world.

**Table 4**

<b>Factorial Dimension</b>	<b>Associated Adjectives</b>
Agreeableness	
Conscientiousness	
Extraversion	
Neuroticism	
Openness to experience	

### **USING PSYCHOLOGY: What Determines Your Personality -- Heredity? Environment?**

Starting around 1885, theoretical descriptions of personality progressed from type theories through psychoanalysis and behaviorism to self-growth theories of personality.



This represents a progression from theories with primary emphasis on heredity as that impacts personality (trait and psychoanalytic theories) to behavioral and self-growth theories emphasizing environmental effects and

and nurture. These shifting bases of description retrace the steps on a path also traveled in the developmental chapters. There we move from infancy with its emphasis on heredity impacting behavior through the elder years with its greater emphasis on self-determination,

The trait theories, and to a very real extent the psychoanalytic theories, give heaviest emphasis to things that we as individuals can't control. Our body shape is largely determined by genetic messages passed on by our parents. Freud made room for learning experiences in childhood in his views of the developing personality. Even so, the person (child) involved did not control the nature of that relationship. Much was determined by heredity, by accident of birth. By contrast,

the social learning and behavioral views of personality are not much concerned with developmental factors. Some have even suggested that Skinner's views would tend to make us robots. In short, in theories developed in the 1930's to 1950's, environment received much emphasis, while the effects of heredity were largely (or completely) ignored.

Now, starting in the 1960's, look at how the humanistic theorists have responded. Their theories concentrate again on free will and the desire or need to achieve as much as we are capable of achieving -- self-actualization. What we do with our life is largely up to our own individual initiative. This grants us a chance to improve upon the genetic base we inherited and sidestep the manipulation of the environment. Self-growth theories offer us the hope that we can be masters of our own fate. And the factor analyses suggesting five factors descriptive of personalities around the world hint at the universal aspects of the study of personality.

### **USING PSYCHOLOGY: What Determines Your Personality: Heredity and Environment**

There is a question about personality that may bother you as we study theories of personality. Our definition of personality clearly identifies it as an attribute of each individual, even though a concession is made in recognition of the impact of the environment. Where is personality located? At least three views seem possible. One suggests that each of us is a unique collection of traits. We all are aggressive to a certain extent, sad, humorous, achievement-oriented, and so forth. Thus, personality tests assess the aspects of the individual, which will function wherever the individual goes. You can find out which traits apply to you by taking these tests. Psychoanalytic theory also clearly assumes personality is an aspect of the individual -- impacted by experience, but an attribute of each of us. If so, then perhaps you can make a conscious effort to modify those traits of which you're not particularly proud.

Yet, there's also a second view. Perhaps, our behavior -- and thus our personality -- is totally determined by where we are at the moment. You have undoubtedly felt the swellings of pride, as you were able to help a younger brother, sister, or friend solve a problem where you had the experience needed. Yet another time you stood around with your hands in your pockets, clearly in over your head in a conversation -- hoping no one would notice you, right? So this second view suggests that personality factors which are supposed to be "constant" -- that

is, present in all of us -- are not there. Rather, our behavior is determined by the situation in which we find ourselves, and the extent to which our past experience (learning) impacts how we behave.

A dilemma? Yes, but a third view seems to offer a rational answer. Perhaps the degree to which our behavior is constant (meaning true to alleged "traits" we carry with us) is not fixed. Nor may our behavior vary with each situation in which we find ourselves (meaning that the environment, not us, would be determining our behavior). Rather, behavior may be markedly influenced by even broader social and cultural variables in our environment. The five-factor model of personality suggests some potentially universal constants in all personalities. And it can get even more complex -- what if traits and environment interact to determine your behavior jointly? To take a specific example, suppose the tendency toward being an introvert were inherited. Such a person would seek quiet, serene, peaceful, even lonely environments in which he or she could enjoy solitude. At what point does the type of environment usually sought by an introvert itself become a factor encouraging that person -- through past experience -- to seek that type of environment? There seems to be a great likelihood that both heredity and environment act jointly, interactively to determine our ultimate behavior.

Someone with a well-developed sense of self and self-worth -- to use Rogers' terminology -- may well be honest (for example) in all situations; someone without that sense may be "honest" in some situations, but not in others -- that is controlled by the environment. The critical question, then, becomes what is the nature of the environment -- familial, social, and cultural -- that will foster your sense of self? It is this topic that is a focus in the Personality: Mental and Behavioral Disorders and the Personality: Therapies chapters.

## REVIEW

### WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

1. In what ways do people usually define the term "personality"?
2. Why are psychologists interested in the study of personality?
3. Should personality best be viewed as an independent, an intervening, or a dependent variable? Defend your answer.
4. Name and explain the elements of personality.
5. Describe the two approaches frequently used to study

personality.

#### THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

1. Why are theories of personality important?
2. Name four types of personality theories.

#### TRAIT THEORIES

1. Describe three trait theories of personality. What do they have in common?
2. What are some major objections to Cattell's theory?

#### PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

1. What assumptions did Freud make about personality?
2. Describe the development of personality according to Freud.
3. Name and give examples of the basic human instincts proposed by Freud.
4. Name two personality theorists who based their theories on Freud's. What important contributions did they make?

#### (SOCIAL-) LEARNING THEORIES

1. How and by who was Freud's theory modified so that it could be studied scientifically? What was the new theory called?
2. Describe the important elements of the theory you just named.

#### SELF-GROWTH THEORIES

1. How do the self-growth theories of personality differ from the psychoanalytic and learning theories?
2. Describe the important elements of Rogers' person-centered theory.
3. How does Maslow's theory differ from Rogers' theory?

#### FIVE-FACTOR THEORY AND USING PSYCHOLOGY

1. Name the five most commonly demonstrated factors of human these five factors?
2. What changes in emphasis have taken place in personality theory over the last 100 years?

### **ACTIVITIES**

1. In terms of the definition of personality that is offered here in this text, write an essay about yourself. Identify those parts of your publicly observable behavior that are organized. Show also how you adjust to your environment.

Identify what is unique (that is, without equal) about you. Finally, include in your essay as many factors in your heredity or environment as you can find that affect your daily behavior and thought.

2. If you did the essay in #1 above, ask a friend to write a similar essay about you. Once your friend has finished, compare your own essay (the answer sheet!) with that of your friend. How are they similar? How do they differ?

3. If both you and a friend did the essay suggested in #1 above, then compare your essay about yourself with a friend's essay about him- or herself. How many parts of your essays are similar and how many are different? What factors do you both mention as influencing your personality?

4. "Slips of the tongue" happen all the time. Tapes have even been made of some of the funniest slips of the tongue that occurred back in the early days of radio and television when the broadcasts were "live" and errors couldn't be deleted. Either get a copy of such a tape and listen to it, or keep a list of your own of slips of the tongue, or slips that you have heard in the past or that you hear during your daily activities. Freud thought such slips were revealing subconscious urges. If that is correct, can you identify from the circumstances of the Slip (whether on the tape or from your own experience) what might be revealed about the unconscious of the person who made the slip? Is there any way to confirm your guesses?

5. One of the major elements of Carl Jung's theory of personality was the introversion-extraversion dimension. What is it? Do you think you are introverted or extraverted? In defending your answer, keep a list of your own behaviors for a day or a week when around others. Use that list to identify examples of you behaving as an introvert and/or as an extravert. For interest, compare your own list with friends who were present at the time mentioned on your list. Did they see you as behaving as an introvert or an extravert? Do they agree with your own analysis?

6. Many college counseling centers offer noncredit seminars that aim at developing a student's self-confidence, feelings of self-worth, and personal assertiveness. Such assertiveness training may also be conducted by various women's groups in the community. Consider enrolling in one of these groups to assess the class on techniques used and training required to teach you to function more assertively.

7. Carl Rogers' person-centered theory is based partly on the concept of an "ideal self" and how similar it is to the "actual self." How about you? Write an essay in which you identify how you would ideally like to be. What friends would you have? How would you behave? Then write another (brief) essay about your actual self. Now compare the two essays. If the description of the ideal self is realistic, but not the same as your ideal, then it should be possible for you to change toward your ideal. Analyze your behavior for the past 24 hours, especially those situations when you did not behave as your ideal self would have. What caused the less than ideal behavior? How can you change so as to behave more and more like your ideal? Compare your answers with trusted friends.

### **INTERESTED IN MORE?**

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DiCaprio, N. S. (1983). *Personality Theories: A Guide to Human Nature*, 2nd ed. Holt, Rinehart, Winston. Provides expanded coverage of each of the theorists discussed in this chapter, and also discusses a number of related theorists. Well illustrated; written in an engaging, educational style.

Hall, C. S. (1978}. *A Primer of Freudian Psychology*. New American Library. A good review of Freud's work, analyzing the impact of psychoanalysis on more modern theories of personality.

Hall, C. S. & Lindzey, G. (1978). *Theories of Personality*, 3rd ed. John Wiley. A classic reference that devotes a separate chapter to each major personality theory. Includes a look at the influence of Eastern philosophies on theory. Tough reading.

Maslow, A. (1968). *Toward a Psychology of Being*. D. Van Nostrand. A well-known psychologist emphasizes the importance of creating and maintaining mental health.

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Nye, R. D. (1981). *Three Psychologists: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers*, 2nd ed. Brooks/Cole. Analyzes the human personality in terms of psychodynamic, behavioral, and trait theories.

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Szasz, T. S. (1961). *The Myth of Mental Illness*. Harper & Row. Argues that many of the attempts to diagnose and treat mental disorders are aimed at protecting society rather than helping individuals solve their "problems in living."

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