PART I

Foundation Issues

1 Conceptual issues in personality theory

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The scientific field of personality is generally traced back to the year 1937, when Gordon Allport published *Personality: a psychological interpretation*, Ross Stagner published *Psychology of personality*, and Henry Murray's 1938 book *Explorations in personality* was rising on the horizon. These American developments built upon earlier philosophical and psychiatric, as well as psychological, work in the United States (e.g., William James) and in Europe (e.g., Sigmund Freud, Pierre Janet, Kurt Lewin, and many others) (Lombardo and Foschi 2002).

As it developed, the field of personality changed its conceptualizations. Some themes endured, while others faded. Diverse perspectives have always coexisted, and changes that pleased some were mourned by others. Besides this internal dialogue among personality psychologists themselves, psychologists in other specialties and the public at large influenced and reacted to these developments. As part of a larger intellectual dialogue, the worldviews of various theorists (Freud's pessimistic emphasis on repression and sexual conflict, Maslow's optimism about human potential, Skinner's emphasis on environmental determinism and the possibility of a Utopian community, to name a few), capture diverse worldviews that contribute to their acceptance or rejection, based on their compatibility and perceived usefulness for individual lives (cf. Koltko-Rivera 2004).

A diversity of personality theories

Throughout the history of scientific psychology, diverse approaches to the field have competed. Among the perspectives that each have a distinct history are the psychodynamic perspective, the trait perspective, the learning perspective, the humanistic perspective, the cognitive perspective, and the biological perspective. (See Table 1.1.) Each approach has developed over time with contributions from major theorists and researchers, and while the perspectives have sometimes influenced one another, they have taken different tactics toward a global theory of personality and in guiding the observations that researchers make and the interventions that practitioners implement.

Definitions of personality highlight the distinct concerns of each perspective. Raymond Cattell used traits to predict behaviour, defining personality as 'that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation' (Cattell 1950, p. 2), and later defining a personality trait as that 'which defines what a

Table 1.1 *Major perspectives in personality.*

Perspective	Major concepts	Contributors
Biological	temperament, evolution, adaptation, altruism, sexual jealousy, heredity, neurotransmitter pathways, cerebral hemisphere function	D. Buss, Eysenck, J. A. Gray, C. R. Cloninger, Kagan
Cognitive	expectancy, self-efficacy, outcome expectation, schema, cognitive person variable, personal construct, reciprocal determinism, modelling, constructive alternativism, life narrative	Mischel, Bandura, Kelly, Beck
Humanistic	self-actualization, creativity, flow, spirituality, personal responsibility, freedom, choice, openness to experience, unconditional positive regard, acceptance, empathy, real self, hierarchy of needs, peak experience, positive psychology	Maslow, Rogers, Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi
Learning	reinforcement, punishment, stimulus, response, conditioning, extinction, shaping, discrimination learning, generalization, situation, act frequency, basic behavioural repertoire, labelling, gradients of approach and avoidance	Skinner, Staats, Dollard and Miller
Psychodynamic	libido, conflict, id, ego, superego, defence mechanisms, Oedipal conflict, fixation, repression, attachment, object-relations	Freud, Jung, Adler, Erikson, Horney, Klein, Sullivan, Chodorow, Westen, Kohut, Kernberg
Trait	trait, type, facet, factors, Neuroticism/ Emotional Stability, Extraversion	Allport, Cattell, McCrae and Costa

person will do when faced with a defined situation' (Cattell 1979, p. 14). Behavioural definitions are typically more sparse, focusing on behaviour itself, and the behavioural habits formed by experience. In its early radical form, behaviourism avoided positing concepts that were not observable (Skinner 1950), but later cognitive behavioural approaches include expectations and other cognitions as component parts of personality, theorized to determine an individual's behaviour (Bandura 1986).

Some definitions emphasize integration of personality, specifying what must be integrated. From his personological trait approach (an approach that asserts the importance of traits, but also the integration of the whole person), Gordon Allport (1937) defined personality as 'the dynamic organization within the individual of

those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to the environment' (Allport 1937, p. 48). A definition that gives a modern twist to this personological integration is offered by McAdams and Pals (2006), who define personality as 'an individual's unique variation on the general evolutionary design for human nature, expressed as a developing pattern of dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and integrative life stories complexly and differentially situated in culture' (McAdams and Pals 2006, p. 212). The emphasis on dynamics and development in these two personological definitions reminds us that some theories emphasize function and change, in contrast to the typically more static trait emphasis on description. If commonality is to be found among these diverse definitions, it may be a frequently shared assumption that an individual's personality begins with biologically innate components, both those shared with others and those that are distinct because of heredity or other influences; that over the life course, these innate tendencies are channelled by the influence of many factors, including family experience, culture and other experience; and that the resulting pattern of habitual behaviours, cognitions, emotional patterns, and so on constitutes personality.

The detailed history of the exploration of the various personality perspectives would be exciting and informative, but the task of this chapter is to stand back and look at a broader picture in order to take stock of where we have been and what might guide future explorations in personality.

The grand theorist approach

Historically, personality theory was taught from a 'grand theorist' approach in which selected theories proposed by individuals were presented separately. Many of these theorists (Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Gordon Allport, Carl Rogers, to name a few) have become well known and are cited in most introductory psychology texts. (See Table 1.2.) This telling of our discipline's history has the advantage of presenting comprehensive theories that have an internal logic, but the disadvantage of omitting or understating more recent advances that seldom fit this model. The classical grand theories often reflected the professional and life experience of their originators (Monte 1977), and their fundamental assumptions (Skinner's belief in environmental determination; Maslow's optimism; Freud's assumption of conflict) are not universally shared. This particularity fosters fragmentation in the discipline of personality. Followers of each grand theorist adopted, applied and revised the competing theories in relative isolation, only occasionally reaching across their separate schools of thought to find a common language. As the history of personality theory is generally told, diverse theoretical paradigms as they were described by philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn (1970) have coexisted, and the field – like the early physical sciences that Kuhn described – has not agreed upon a shared paradigm that would foster cooperation and steady incremental scientific growth. Instead, it is divided by conflict among paradigms. Others describe the competition but doubt that the combatants have

Table 1.2 *Milestones in the history of personality.*

1890	William James publishes *Principles of psychology* (with sections on the self and other personality-related issues)
1900	Sigmund Freud publishes *The interpretation of dreams*
1907	Alfred Adler publishes A study of organic inferiority and its psychical compensation
1908	Mary Calkins describes the self (in several papers)
1910	Carl Jung publishes The association method (research on complexes)
1923	Sigmund Freud publishes *The ego and the id* (structures of personality)
1927	Gordon Allport publishes Concepts of trait and personality
1935	Henry Murray publishes the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)
1936	Anna Freud publishes *The ego and the mechanisms of defence*
1937	Gordon Allport publishes *Personality: a psychological interpretation*
1937	Karen Horney publishes *The neurotic personality of our time*
1938	B. F. Skinner publishes *The behaviour of the organisms*
1938	Henry Murray publishes *Explorations in personality*
1939	John Dollard and Neal Miller publish *Frustration and aggression*
1943	Abraham Maslow publishes A theory of human motivation
1950	Erik Erikson publishes *Childhood and society*
1951	Carl Rogers publishes *Client-centered therapy*
1952	Hans Eysenck publishes *The structure of human personality*
1954	Abraham Maslow publishes *Motivation and personality*
1955	Lee Cronbach and Paul Meehl publish Construct validity in psychological tests
1955	George Kelly publishes *The psychology of personal constructs*
1957	Lee Cronbach publishes The two disciplines of scientific psychology
1961	The *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* begins
1961	Albert Bandura and collaborators describe learning of aggression through modelling (Bobo doll study)
1962	Founding of the Association for Humanistic Psychology
1967	Hans Eysenck publishes *The biological basis of personality*
1968	Abraham Maslow publishes *Toward a psychology of being*
1968	Walter Mischel challenges the trait model in *Personality and assessment*
1971	B. F. Skinner publishes *Beyond freedom and dignity*
1973	Albert Bandura publishes *Aggression: a social learning analysis*
1976	Richard Dawkins publishes *The selfish gene*
1978	Mary Ainsworth describes attachment in young children
1987	McCrae and Costa present data on the Five-Factor trait Model
1987	Daniel Schachter describes implicit memory (alternative view of unconscious cognition)
1989	David Buss describes cross-cultural universals in the evolution of mating behaviour
2000	Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi publish Positive psychology: an introduction

matured sufficiently to be labelled paradigms in the Kuhnian sense. In either case, personality is a fragmented discipline.

The conceptual breadth of each of the grand theories and their implications for practice and research contributed to their historical importance. Additionally,

social factors elevated their influence, including many theorists' professorships at prestigious institutions, such as Harvard University, where they influenced the next generation of personality psychologists. Hall and Lindzey's (1957) influential personality textbook gave enduring recognition to many of these theorists (including Freud and Jung), adding others with new editions (e.g., Eysenck, Bandura and Kelly in the 1978 third edition). Even its fourth edition (Hall, Lindzey and Campbell 1998) continues the 'grand theorist' organizational structure, which has been adopted by many others (e.g., Ewen 2003; Feist and Feist 2001; Schultz and Schultz 2005). To be sure, these 'grand theorists' are grouped to show shared perspectives (e.g., psychoanalytic, humanistic, behavioural or learning, and so on), and the underlying assumptions of the theories (such as Rogers' assumption that people have, at core, a tendency toward self-actualization) can be elaborately compared across theories (Maddi 1996, 2006). Sometimes the great names are omitted from all or at least some chapter titles to call attention to the underlying theoretical perspectives or to acknowledge the difficulty of selecting a single seminal founder of a particular perspective (Carver and Scheier 2008; Cloninger 2008; Magnavita 2002). Explicit discussion of future trends that build on, but go beyond, these grand theories may be added briefly as a final chapter (Ryckman 2004). This provides some sense of theoretical progress over time, both within these perspectives, and in the historical waxing and waning of the various perspectives. Nonetheless, both the grand theorist approach and the competing perspectives organization of this approach portray the field of personality as fragmented.

Another approach is to focus on the content areas in which personality research is conducted – a *topical organization* of the field (Cervone and Pervin 2008; Larsen and Buss 2008). Connections with historical grand theories remain (as is to be expected) in some areas, but the focus shifts to particular areas of research and limited domain theories, instead of the broad comprehensive theories of the past. This strategy avoids undue preoccupation with affirming or challenging the fundamental assumptions of a theory, and avoids defending or attacking the theorist or accusing revisionists of disloyalty or personal pathology – a non-professional sort of discourse that has made its way even into scholarly journals. The topical approach facilitates research progress in particular content areas, though it lacks the integrative vision of a comprehensive theory.

Could the prevailing fragmentation of personality theory be overcome? The effort has been made to portray an integrated field of personality, combining contributions from various theorists (Lester 1995), but in general, consensus is missing in describing the theoretical connections among the fragments in sufficient detail to guide researchers and practitioners. Personality remains split.

Psychology's two disciplines

Throughout the history of psychology, observers have noted a dichotomy between those who emphasize rigorous scientific methods, on the one hand, and those who

are more open to subjective experience and a holistic study of the person: what William James (1902) called the 'tough-minded' and the 'tender-minded'. This dichotomy has been variously called the 'two disciplines of scientific psychology', experimental and correlational (Cronbach 1957) and the 'two cultures', scientific and humanistic (Kimble 1984). It reflects a broader intellectual rift between science and humanism, impacting both the content and methods of personality theory and research. As James indicated, the two poles arguably reflect the personalities of those on each side of the dichotomy (Conway 1992; Feist 2006).

The founder of American psychology, William James (1890), included 'tender-minded' topics such as consciousness and religion from a viewpoint that embraced both psychology and philosophy. Gordon Allport, often credited with the founding of personality as a separate field, himself 'found a way to exploit the value in each [of these] perspective[s]', the science and the art of psychology (Gifford 2004). The 'tough-minded' pole, well represented in experimental laboratories modelled after that of Wilhelm Wundt, found its influence in personality through behaviourism, with the work of John B. Watson and, later, B. F. Skinner. The other pole, the tender-minded or humanistic, persisted as well. For example, during the 1950s, Gardner Murphy took a more integrative stance, and a humanistic psychology movement grew, marking its entry by the establishment of the Association for Humanistic Psychology in 1962, with Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Rollo May among the founding members. Today, we feel the tension between those who would emphasize the physical basis of personality and those who tend toward thoughts and consciousness. Bridges are being forged, however, as theorists and researchers try to apply rigorous empirical methods to the 'big picture' issues like consciousness, religion and free will that early psychology left to the tender-minded (e.g., Greenberg, Koole and Pyszczynski 2004; Rychlak 1997).

Major issues in personality theory

What questions should personality theory address? What data should be collected, using what methods?

First person or third person: the experience of the self or observers

Some of the grand theorists, we know, drew on their own subjective life experience in developing their formal theories. Should a theory be a formalized version of personal insights that come from one's own experience, or does science require greater distance? Should personal experiences of research participants be data for theory validation? We know that, whether conceptualized as a defence mechanism or a cognitive deficit, people's self-understanding is error-prone (McKay, Langdon and Coltheart 2005), and so those reports should not necessarily be taken at face value. Nonetheless, people's first person experiences have proved a useful

concept throughout the history of psychology and personality theory. Approaches that emphasize people's subjective experience and the stories of their lives have a personal, lively appeal that cannot be matched by more abstract theories or comprehensive organizing schemes (cf., Loevinger 1996). Aside from their value for psychologists, such ideas also appeal to popular audiences.

The introspectionist methods of early scientific psychology, at the beginning of the twentieth century, studied the mind by subjective observation, relying on subjects' verbal reports for data. The historical descriptions of introspectionism are often exaggerated and the usual version of a subsequent behavioural revolution and then a cognitive revolution in psychology is overly simplified (Costall 2006). Subjective experience, especially experience of ourselves, not of external stimuli, has been an important theme throughout the history of personality theories. Over a century ago, William James (1890) wrote thoughtfully on the self, retaining the idea of a 'spiritual me' from the era when scientific constraints had not yet strengthened their veto voice over such a soul-like idea, supplementing the spiritual self with a variety of selves (material, social, and so on) more appealing to a secular audience. Historians note that James' descriptions of the self resemble an earlier French publication by Paul Janet (Lombardo and Foschi 2003). With the rise of scientific psychology laboratories, the self received less attention, until its re-emergence with the personological emphases of Gordon Allport, Henry Murray, and others in the late 1930s (Coon 2000). Among therapists, Carl Rogers (1961) claimed that progress in psychotherapy requires attending to a person's experience of self. In this tradition, Bohart (2006) interprets diverse findings from psychotherapy research as evidence that it is the clients themselves, not their therapists, who are the most important change agents in psychotherapy.

Self-reflection is an implicit basis for using self-report questionnaires to measure personality. It is explicit in some theoretical formulations, such as those popular in recent decades that describe life stories or narratives as important aspects of identity and functioning (e.g., McAdams 1996), and those that emphasize self-concept and identity (Loevinger and Knoll 1983). In terror management theory, self-esteem provides a buffer against the anxiety caused by awareness of mortality (Greenberg, Pyszczynski and Solomon 1986; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon *et al.* 2004). The theoretical concept of possible selves demonstrates the power of self-reflective cognition to change behaviour, at least when the social context provides needed support and opportunity (Oyserman, Bybee and Terry 2006). Self-referent cognitions are obviously developed with experience, and so these concepts provide a place for theorists to link the influence of family and culture on personality.

Social and cultural factors

Since personality is presumably learned in a familial and societal context, theory should elaborate on these processes. So far, progress is slow. The historical

theories have proposed influences of the family (Freud, Adler), of gender (Horney), and of social class (Dollard and Miller), but all of these in a Euro-American context, and assuming the values and expectations of an individualistic society. More recently, cross-cultural investigations of personality measures report similarities in the factor structure of personality tests across cultures, but there are differences too, and much theoretical and empirical work remains (Cahan and White 1992; Fung and Ng 2006; Norenzayan and Heine 2005; Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott *et al*. 2000; Sedikides, Gaertner and Vevea 2005).

Studying the individual or comparing people: idiographic and nomothetic approaches

Should we emphasize intensive study of individuals, or comparisons between people? On the one hand, understanding a personality suggests knowing the details of the individual: his or her history, actions in various settings, thoughts and emotions, and so on. Personality from this point of view is a scientific version of a biography or autobiography, a life story. On the other hand, a compelling argument can be made for emphasizing comparisons among individuals, which we do in everyday life (Who is more assertive? Who is more responsible?) and which is useful for such practical purposes as deciding whom to hire for a particular job.

Idiographic approaches study individuals, while *nomothetic* approaches seek generalizations and make comparisons based on the study of many people. This distinction, proposed by the German philosopher Wilhelm Windelband in 1892, was discussed by American personality psychologist Gordon Allport (1937), who argued that idiographic traits that resided within individuals were the 'real' causes within personality. Windelband's idiographic approach was what he called a 'historical science' in that it emphasized the history of one person (Maher and Gottesman 2005). This approach requires considerable investigation of one person and so is suitable to psychohistorical investigation and to clinical applications.

European psychiatrists in the nineteenth century, whose work influenced later American personality psychology, reported individual case studies. Therapy traditions such as that begun by Freud (Bornstein 2005) use idiographic approaches. Early publications in the American *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* also featured a majority of idiographic reports until its transformation to become the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* under the American Psychological Association, when nomothetic methods prevailed; and from the 1920s to the 1930s, other publications reflected a rise in nomothetic trait research (Lombardo and Foschi 2003).

Idiographic approaches produce understanding and offer intervention insights for particular individuals, whether through psychotherapy or behaviour modification. They are particularly useful for studying personality dynamics, that is, how motivated processes occur over time in an individual. Without additional evidence from other people, though, we cannot assume that what is found in one individual

will also apply to others. Freud's claim that the Oedipus conflict that he found in himself and a few patients was universal to all men, without nomothetic research validation, went beyond his observations. Nomothetic approaches, such as the Five-Factor Model, provide evidence for generality of concepts across the populations studied and are suited for studying individual differences, that is, identifying how one person compares with others. Nomothetic research is more often quantitative, expressed in mathematical measures, but some idiographic research (including behaviour modification reports and Cattell's P-technique) goes beyond qualitative descriptions to include quantitative counts of behaviour. The two approaches complement one another, and the study of personality needs both.

Individual differences

Personality theory has been persistently concerned with the description of individual differences. In principle, if there are naturally existing categories, we may speak of *types*, of natural categories. Though the word 'type' has been used to refer to types of temperament (Kagan 1994), and attachment (Ainsworth *et al.* 1978), for example, the underlying determinants (such as anxiety) that produce these categories are continuous. However convenient for descriptive and even analytical purposes, these are not types in the sense of discrete, natural categories; nor are the popular Jungian types, measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Continuous dimensions (traits and factors) are far easier to find.

Allport (1937) argued that traits are a central concept in personality, building on European research and theory (Matthews and Deary 1998). The question 'What units shall we employ?' had no easy answer when Allport (1958) asked it, and the choices have become even more bewildering since then (Ozer 1996). Researchers have measured a variety of specific traits, such as field dependence, sensation-seeking and achievement motivation, predicting specific behaviours from domain-specific personality tests. The trait concept suffered a setback when Walter Mischel (1968) pointed out that situations were more influential than traits in predicting behaviour. This *situational challenge* to the trait paradigm came with the rise of social psychology and decline of personality psychology, as sub-fields in psychology. But the issue itself was oversimplified. The impact of personality on behaviour requires more sophisticated theory and analysis than a simple correlation (Epstein 1980, 2007). Mischel himself later offered a conceptually more sophisticated, interactionist version of trait theory in which the effect of a person's trait depends upon the situational context of behaviour (Mischel and Shoda 1995).

Along with this advance in trait theory, Mischel and other cognitive behaviourists (Bandura 1986) emphasized a person's cognitions as refined trait concepts: no longer defined in terms of the observable behaviour alone, but the person's thoughts or beliefs about the situation, his capabilities, her probable outcomes, and so on. The proliferation of measures of self-efficacy expectations in many domains of behaviour attests to the impact of this cognitive reconceptualization of trait concepts.