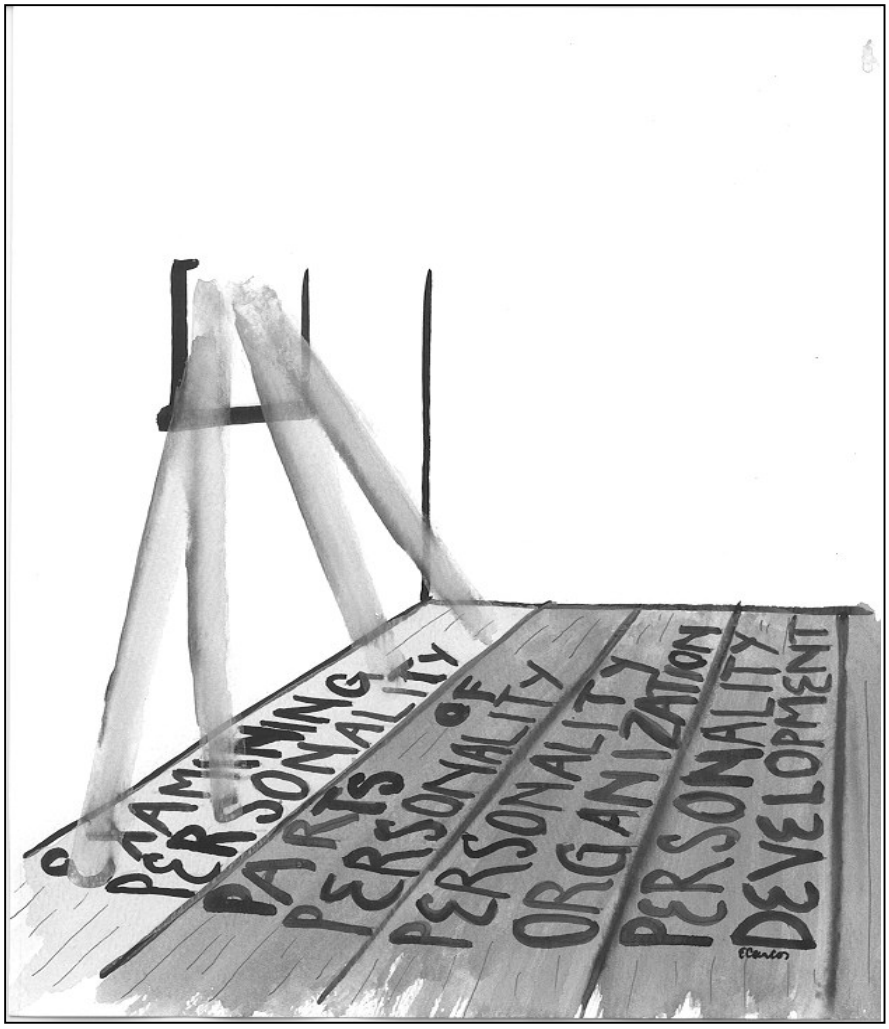
# PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY: PART 1




PART 1: EXAMINING PERSONALITY introduces the personality system and the field that studies it. The personality system is defined and located in relation to other biological and social systems with which it interacts. Many people think about their own and others' personalities, of course. Psychologists, though, bring special methods to their studies of personality that build a scientific basis for their findings. In addition, they have developed important theories that help us focus our understanding of personality.

*The watercolors introducing each of the book's four parts are by Elise Cantor, and are used with permission of the artist.*

# Chapter 1: What Is Personality?

*What is personality? How did the field of personality psychology start and how did it develop? What can be learned from a course in personality psychology? These questions provide a departure point for studying the field. Understanding personality can help us understand ourselves and others.*

## Previewing the Chapter's Central Questions

- **What Are the Fundamental Questions Addressed by Personality Psychology?** "Who am I?" and "What is my future?" are just two of the questions from antiquity that still motivate the field today. These questions can be used to trace some of the intellectual history of the field—and to help identify some of its current concerns.
- **What Is Personality?** Psychologists have defined personality in different ways throughout the field's history, but most psychologists now agree that personality is a system. Specifically, personality is the system that organizes the many psychological parts of our minds—our perceptions, memories, and emotions.
- **What Is the Field of Personality Psychology?** The field of personality psychology is the area of psychology relating to the study of personality. We'll examine how someone becomes a personality psychologist, what such individuals do, and how other people use findings from the discipline.
- **Why Study Personality Psychology?** By studying personality, we learn about ourselves and other people with whom we interact. We will read research that informs us of the scientific basis for our evaluations of other people.
- **How Is This Book Organized—And What Will You Learn?** We'll preview the organization of topics covered in this book: Personality's definition, its parts, its organization, and its development.

## What Are the Fundamental Questions Addressed by Personality Psychology?

### Big Questions and Science

Who am I? What is my future? People have asked these questions since the beginning of written history. They have asked other big questions as well: How did the universe begin? What is life? Over time, many of our greatest scholars turned to the sciences to address these questions. Astronomers examined the universe, biologists examined life, and psychologists examined the mind. As each science took on its modern form, it became a sophisticated field dealing with hundreds of topics. But many of the sciences also retained branches that connected back to the basic questions of philosophy. For example, the area of astronomy called cosmology addresses how the universe began and certain areas of biology deal with the origins of life (Rosenberg, 2000).

Psychology, too, addresses big, fundamental questions. **Psychology** is the scientific discipline concerned with how a person's mind works. Psychologists study such questions as how a neuron works, how the eyes see, the structure of the brain, and how people understand language. **Personality psychology** is a discipline within psychology that asks how our major mental systems—our motives, emotions, and

thoughts—work together as a whole, and what that overall functioning means for a person's life. The personality psychologist's specialty, in other words, is looking at the person comprehensively (e.g., Hall & Lindzey, 1978; Funder, 2004; Little, 2005).

Because personality psychologists take a big-picture perspective when they view the individual, they provide a crucial connection between the science of psychology, on the one hand, and the philosophical questions about who we are and how we live, on the other. Personality psychologists are particularly responsible for addressing fundamental questions such as "Who am I?"

Developmentally speaking, the "Who am I?" question often arises for people as they enter young adulthood (Erikson, 1963; Marcia et al., 1993). Questions such as "Who am I?" also often emerge out of conflicts felt by the individuals who ask them (Alexander, 1942; Woodhouse, 1984, p. 4). Here are some versions of the "Who am I?" question from students who wrote into an advice column called, "*Big Questions* Real Answers,"

> "My school has kids of all different races, but I'm afraid to make friends with them. Am I a racist?"
>
> "I daydream a lot. Does that mean I'm lazy?"
>
> "My older brother is always calling me stupid, a moron, a loser. I try to ignore it, but sometimes it gets to me and I think I am stupid. What can I do?" (Perry, 2001a; 2001b; 2001c).

These questions also reflect an important concern with "Who am I" in the eyes of others?" The answer may vary depending who the others are (Jopling, 2000, p. 166).

## Questions and Inquiry

We can regard questions such as "Who am I?" as generating an intellectual path from antiquity to the present that can help us understand the history behind personality psychology. There are a number of big questions about identity and mental life that personality psychologists have addressed in their research. Three questions in particular help direct the field's investigations (though others are possible): "Who am I?" (and "Why is it so hard to know myself?"), "Why are people different?", and "What is my future?" (Mayer, 2007). Asking and wondering about such questions can organize our learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991, pp. 7-31; Hamilton, 1985). These questions sensitize us to the personal and intellectual quests that helped establish the foundations of personality (Roback, 1928; Winter & Barenbaum, 1999).

# *Who Am I?*

## Knowing Ourselves

> "One rediscovers oneself in others." – Goethe (1749-1832)

Consider: "Who am I?" During the years from 800 to 200 BCE, a temple stood at Delphi, in ancient Greece, erected to the god Apollo (La Coste-Messelière, 1950). At its entrance was the command "Know thyself," carved into a column by Chiron of Sparta (Diodurus, 1935/1960, Book IX, 9. 10). The great philosopher Socrates agreed with the command; he said he was interested in self-knowledge above all other

values (Griswold, 1986, p. 68). Asking "Who am I?" for Socrates was a moral necessity, because self-knowledge was key to understanding how to treat others well (Griswold, 1986, p. 2, 7; Jopling, 2000, p. 1).

## Why Is it so Hard to Know Ourselves?

Although at first it seemed that knowing oneself was simply a matter of desiring to do so, later thinkers regarded self-understanding as more tenuous and challenging. By the time of the Middle Ages, an individual's personality seemed driven by all sorts of mysterious forces—even at times by a spirit or devil. In 1775, Father Johann Gassner, an exorcist of the time, claimed that he could cure many illnesses by expelling the devil from people he believed to be possessed. He mounted a number of public demonstrations in which he cured people suffering from tremors, tics, and fatigue (Ellenberger, 1981, pp. 53-57).

As the biological and social sciences grew, however, scientific explanations supplanted the idea that people were possessed. For example, Anton Mesmer discovered "animal magnetism" or "animal gravity"—a means of influencing other people that today we refer to as hypnosis. Mesmer was able to perform cures similar to those of Gassner using animal magnetism. Although Mesmer's animal magnetism was only poorly understood at the time, his attempt to put such cures on a scientific footing opened the door to empirical examinations of suggestibility and the unconscious.

A century later, the philosopher Schopenhauer (1819/1966) portrayed individuals as driven by blind instincts and deluded by their own wills. Furthermore, he said, the will blocks out what is unpleasant to it, and this may be responsible for mental illness. Soon after, Eduard Von Hartmann (1869) published the "Philosophy of the Unconscious," in which he collected together examples of how people deceive themselves, surprise themselves, and otherwise pit non-conscious ideas against the conscious (Ellenberger, 1981, pp. 208-210). Just two decades later, Freud would create an even more comprehensive theory of the unconscious. Still today, contemporary research makes clear that the problem of self-knowing is considerable (e.g., Dunning, 2005; Vogt & Colvin, 2005; Wilson & Dunn, 2004).

## Implicit Personality Theory

As we develop an understanding of ourselves, we construct our own informal and sometimes unstated theory of how people behave. Bruner and Tagiuri (1954) introduced the term **implicit personality theory** to describe our unstated assumptions and ideas about how people feel, think, and behave. Implicit personality theories are often a research topic themselves.

Understanding others is often crucial to our social well-being. Most people recognize different types of people around them—the warm fuzzy type, the nerd, the jock, and so forth—and act differently depending upon whom they are with. Knowing another person closely invites predictions of how the individual will react or behave. "That should make her happy!" we think, just before we tell our jealous friend about her ex-boyfriend's misfortune. Most people's judgments are intuitive—a kind of casual collection of information drawn from personal experience, observation, and the ideas of others.

To help us identify our own implicit theories of personality, Anderson and colleagues suggested answering, "What questions do you sometimes ask yourself when meeting a new acquaintance?" (Anderson, Rosenfeld, & Cruikshank, 1994). The answer to that question—what you consider important to know about someone—may indicate what you think motivates others, or simply what you like and enjoy in others.

In a survey of personality psychology students, Wang (1997) found that students' assumptions about personality varied in a number of important ways. About 53% of the students surveyed believed in the importance of watching actions, rather than listening to what a person says; the remaining 47% was more interested in listening. About 27% of the students thought that people (and their personalities) existed on

earth for a higher purpose. Only 12% of the students thought personality was heavily influenced by genetics. Eighty-five percent believed in unconscious influences before starting Wang's course and about the same percent also believed people were very complex to study. Only about 25% thought personality could easily change.

Even trained psychologists' theories often start with their own implicit ideas (Monte, 1999, p. 26; Wegner & Vallacher, 1977, p. 21). By bringing more formal personality theories to light and studying them using the scientific method, we can improve our theories of people and use our knowledge with greater confidence.

## How and Why Are People Different?

People often ask not only "Who am I?" but also "Who are you?" The answers are different because people differ. The Ancient Greek Theophrastus wondered: "Why it is that while all Greece lies under the same sky and all the Greeks are educated alike, it has befallen us to have characters variously constituted?" (cited in Roback, p. 9). From Theophrastus' question first emerged **characterology**, a literary endeavor to describe the different sorts of individuals who existed. An example of a character description from Theophrastus concerned the flatterer. The flatterer, as Theophrastus defined him, was someone who engaged in a degrading form of companionship that might, however, bring him or her profit.

> The flatterer is a person who will say as he walks with another, "Do you observe how people are looking at you? This happens to no man in Athens but you. A compliment was paid to you yesterday…More than thirty persons were sitting there; the question was started, 'Who is our foremost man?' Everyone mentioned you first, and ended by coming back to your name…" (Cited in Roback, 1928, p. 10)

As writers outlined the different characters, early physicians tried to explain how those differences came about. One early scientific approach to this question involved the study of **temperament**. **Temperament** refers to the physiologically based motivational and emotional styles people exhibit. In the fourth century BCE, the great Greek physician Hippocrates, and later, Galen, developed a four-fold classification of personality, dividing people into **cholerics**, **melancholics**, **phlegmatics**, and the **sanguine**.

In the four-fold system, the choleric type was described as tall, thin, and easily irritated. Such a person easily became enraged and tended to hold grudges as well; this was all a consequence of too much yellow bile. The melancholic type was contemplative in a sad, resigned way; he or she lacked energy and expected the worst in everything; this was a consequence of too much black bile. The best personality type was thought to be the sanguine type. This even-tempered individual was generally cheerful and hopeful and displayed a ruddy complexion. He or she could be assertive but not angry or vindictive. The sanguine type's pleasant disposition was a consequence of more blood than the other types. The phlegmatic type slept too much and was perceived to be dull, cowardly, sluggish, and overweight. This individual suffered from an excess amount of phlegm (think about how you feel when you have a cold!).

Although starting out as purely as a literary endeavor, philosophers carefully examined such works and drew out their implications. For example, Francis Bacon (1561-1626) suggested that some peoples' minds would be better suited to certain occupations than others. Some people, he said, excel at thinking about many matters at once, whereas others' minds are suited to focusing on just a few matters; some people do things very quickly, whereas others are more suited to work on projects that take a great deal of time (Bacon, 1861/2001; Book VII, Chapter 3).

Today, many areas of personality psychology concern individual differences; just these sorts of variations from person to person—and the implications they hold for a person's life.

## What Will My Future Be?

> "Personality can never develop unless the individual chooses his own way, consciously and with moral deliberation." – Carl G. Jung (1875-1961)

Finally, consider, "What will my future be?" Throughout history, philosophers have asked how we can lead our lives to the fullest and act in the best ways possible. In the 5th century BCE China, Confucius worked out a system—the Analects—for instructing people on how to bring about harmony in a socially chaotic world. Aspects of Confucianism involve the importance of learning and education, and overcoming the self (Stevenson & Haberman, 1998, pp. 32-38). There are many other such systems developed throughout the world.

Ancient Athenians and Spartans traveled to the temple at Delphi to have their future foretold. Within the shrine, an oracle—a young woman from the town—sat amidst vapors in a cave-like area. She spoke in tongues, probably under the influence of ethylene, a volcanic gas with hallucinogenic effects (Spiller, Hale & DeBoer, 2002).

Government officials in ancient China were already using mental tests in the 2nd century BCE—using civil service examinations to place people in government positions; a more limited use of mental tests arose in ancient Greece (Bowman, 1989; Doyle, 1974).

In the Middle Ages, newly established European universities awarded degrees and honors to their students on the basis of formal examinations. Psychological testing continued to focus on mental ability through the beginning of the 20th century (Goodenough, 1949). Then, it broadened into tests of attitudes, temperament styles, and personality more generally as the 20th century progressed. Contemporary personality psychologists employ a variety of assessments including mental tests to address these questions of how to live.

People who take personality inventories may receive partial answers to "Who am I?" from their test results. Their test results also speak to "How are people different?"—because scores vary from person to person. Psychologists have also learned to make predictions from test results to a person's future—using the scores to predict the jobs that an individual might thrive at (Lubinski, 2000).

Together, the questions "Who am I?" and "What will my future be?" can also be interpreted as reflecting a more personal desire to be more than one is, to ask, "How shall I make myself more of a person?" (Greenbie, 1932, pp. 1, 21).

## Different Kinds of Answers

The exact answer to the question "Who am I (or are you)?" or "How should you live your life?" or any other question will be dependent upon the circumstances in which it is asked and the person who is asked (Gasking, 1946; Hamblin, 1967, p. 49). A friend might tell us that we are kind or caring, or have more strengths than we know. During an argument, however, that same friend may tell us that we are stubborn and thick-headed. Over time, comments from parents, friends, and others lead us to build up a particular view of ourselves. Seeing ourselves as others see us is sometimes referred to as the "looking glass self"—we begin to see ourselves as others see us (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Tice, 1992).

Researchers such as David Funder (1995; 1999) have found that observers are fairly accurate in perceiving readily noticeable traits such as how talkative, lively, and sociable a person is. For more internal sorts of qualities, such as intelligence, however, observers are less accurate.

### Interest in Personality

Psychologists label an interest in who we are and why we do what we do as psychological mindedness. **Psychological mindedness** refers to an interest in understanding relationships among psychological processes and how they influence a person's life (Shill & Lumley, 2000).

Personality psychologists rank high in psychological mindedness—at least that's a fair guess—no one has tested us as a group. Certainly other people view us as contemplating mental life. "One of the downsides of attending dinner parties," my colleague, Dan McAdams, wrote, "is telling people I am a psychologist and then hearing them say things such as, 'I bet you're trying to figure me out,' or 'Oh, good, maybe you can tell me what makes my husband (wife, son, daughter, friend, etc.) tick'" (McAdams, 1995, p. 368).

Personality psychologists including Dan McAdams, myself, and others refrain from analyzing our friends, relatives, and coworkers—that kind of analysis isn't very helpful to day-to-day relationships, nor could we be adequately impartial about what we're thinking.

At the same time, our psychological mindedness can emerge in other ways. Dan McAdams related how his wife and he had met an intriguing woman at a party—she was smart, held an enviable job, traveled a lot, and seemed very confident. On their drive home, McAdams and his wife discussed how they were initially intimidated by their new acquaintance and then reviewed what else they learned about her during the evening, and speculated about how her personality operated. This is similar to our professional pursuits; as McAdams put it: "In the professional enterprise of personality psychology…making sense of persons is or should be the very raison d'être of the discipline." (McAdams, 1995, p. 368). Given that focus, it isn't surprising that many of us want to make sense of people in all the contexts of our lives, not just in professional contexts. Of course, personality psychologists do not have a monopoly on psychological mindedness. People in all walks of life are often psychologically minded and observe, think, and draw conclusions about the people around them much of the time.

If the questions in this chapter—and the types of answers provided by personality psychology—piqued your interest, then the next step is to consider what personality is.

# What Is Personality?

## A System of Systems

In 1887, Wilhelm Wundt founded the first psychological laboratory in Leipzig, and that is often taken as the date modern psychology began. Experimental psychologists of the time addressed such issues as, "What is sensation?", "What is perception?", and "What is learning?" Wundt saw that smaller psychological systems—to which those questions were addressed—built into larger ones in a hierarchy of complexity. For example, at the middle level of complexity were systems such as motivation, emotion, and intelligence. At the global, highest level, for Wundt (1887, p. 26), was the "total development of a psychical personality." For Wundt and others the level of psychical personality was where the answers to the larger personal and social questions would be found.

Scientists often employ a **molecular-molar continuum** to organize what is being studied within a given field, and across fields, as well. The molecular-molar continuum is one that divides smaller objects of

study from larger ones. **Molecular** things are relatively small. Examples of smaller, molecular psychological processes include sensing the color orange, feeling a momentary pang of envy, or thinking that an apricot is a fruit (see Figure 1, bottom row). These mental processes or events are small because they involve individual sensations (e.g., of orange), emotions (e.g., envy), and cognitions (e.g., of an apricot). More **molar** psychological processes are larger and combine smaller processes. For example, feeling envious of a friend who owns a beautiful painting of a bright orange apricot combines the smaller psychological processes just discussed into a larger whole (see Figure 1-1, row 2). The larger whole is molar relative to the individual parts.

Even feeling envious over a painting is still fairly modest in size compared to some larger psychological processes. Consider that the person might momentarily think of taking the envied painting and at the same time experience a moral correction and decide to leave the painting where it is. Together, such a reaction represents the collective action of many psychological subsystems: perception, emotion, motivation, morality, and a sense of self.

For Wundt and those who came after, understanding the combined operation of all the major psychological systems together—the most molar level of psychology—involved the study of personality psychology (Wundt, 1897, pp. 25-26). Figure 1-1 shows how Wundt saw the more molecular psychological processes building into personality psychology. Wundt's definition was a systems definition at a time during which scientists had become increasingly interested in systems (cf. Whitehead, 1929; Laszlo, 1973). And, Wundt concluded that it was the study of personality that would best allow psychology to address the big questions about identity and how to live.

"Observe all men; thy self most." – Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

| *Global trends of psychological systems* | **Personality** *The Collective Function of Major Psychological Systems (e.g., of the combinations of motives, emotions, and cognitions in their various forms)* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Combinations among psychological parts* | **Sensation and Perception** (e.g., recognizing the outline of an orange apricot in a painting) | **Motives and Emotion** (e.g., wanting to behave well and honor one's friend) | **Emotion and Cognition** (e.g., envy of friend's painting of an orange apricot) |
| *Basic psychological parts* | **Sensation** (e.g., of an orange) | **Perception** (e.g., recognizing an orange apricot) | **Memory** (e.g., of a friend's painting) | **Emotion** (e.g., envy) | **Cognition** (e.g., an apricot is a fruit) |

**Figure 1-1** *Wilhelm Wundt's Personality Psychology*
Wilhelm Wundt, one of the founders of modern psychology, saw personality as the global system that integrated other major psychological subsystems.

## What Is a System?

Simply put, a system is any set of interrelated parts. As applied to personality, the parts might be mental mechanisms such as short-term memory, mental models including one's view of oneself, or a trait, such as whether one is sociable. These parts are interrelated: If you are sociable, you'll learn things about

yourself—that you're talkative and like parties, for example—that differ from what you'd learn if you were introverted and preferred solitary activities.

Systems can be simple or complex, rational, or haphazard-seeming. An example of a visible, readily comprehensible physical system is the solar system. The solar system follows many rules—rules that make it possible to construct star charts, to predict such things as eclipses, and to calculate the possibilities for space travel. Other examples of systems include computers, cars, and an electric fan.

## Defining Personality

Wundt's definition of personality as a system that organized psychological systems was the first of a number of similar versions. For example, the psychoanalyst Prince (1921, p. 532) referred to personality as: "...the sum-total of all the biological innate dispositions…and the acquired dispositions and tendencies…." (cf. Allport, 1937, p. 48; Lewin, 1935).

Although the systems definition had the widest currency in personality psychology, there was a loyal opposition of psychologists who wanted to define personality as the study of individual differences. The **individual differences** definition emphasizes that the proper study of personality is the analysis of how people differ from one another. According to this perspective, the personality psychologist should (a) measure differences among people, (b) classify people according to these differences, and (c) predict how these differences will influence a person's behavior at a particular time. This definition has the advantage of describing accurately what a great number of personality psychologists do; it does, however, have certain disadvantages.

One of the drawbacks of this definition is that it reduces personality psychology to a single focus—the study of individual differences. Some personality psychologists, however, are interested in describing consistencies in personality across all individuals (for example, Freud believed most everyone had an ego). In a widely repeated passage, Kluckhohn and Murray (1953, p. 53) noted that each individual is in certain ways:

> …like all other people
>
> …like some other people, and
>
> …like no other people. (Kluckhohn & Murray, 1953, p. 53)

Personality research addresses all three of these possibilities at one time or another. That is one reason that the individual differences approach is incomplete.

Pervin (1990) noted that, in his own textbook, he struggled between using an individual differences approach and a more general systems approach:

> …it is my sense that…[the study of an organization of parts] is what is truly distinctive about the field, and that recognizing this would lead to a greater emphasis in research on the system aspects of personality functioning. (Pervin, 1990, p. 12)

Following this line of thought, let's define **personality** in this way:

> Personality is the organized, developing system within the individual that represents the collective action of that individual's major psychological subsystems.

A more light-hearted definition of personality comes from the mid-century physician and psychiatrist, Karl Menninger, who said that:

> ...it means the individual as a whole, his height and weight and loves and hates and blood pressure and reflexes; his smiles and hopes and bowed legs and enlarged tonsils... (Menninger, 1930, p. 21)

Menninger's description is delightful, but should definitions of personality psychology really include bowed legs and enlarged tonsils? To find out we need to consider more carefully where the personality system is located.

## *Locating the Personality System*

### The Molecular-Molar Dimension

Scientists connect their system of study—a particle in physics, a chemical, the brain, or personality—to other systems of study along organizing dimensions. Wundt used the molecular-molar dimension to describe how personality was a global system made up of smaller psychological subsystems. Let's now extend that molecular-molar dimension to more completely connect personality to other scientific areas of study.

In Figure 1-2, the molecular-molar continuum first shown in Figure 1-1 is extended to include more systems. The lowest level begins with biological processes, which include neurons communicating, the function of brain areas and the like. The middle level shows personality psychology—the study of larger psychological systems. Specific details of individual psychological processes—individual sensations, emotions, and cognitions—are omitted to keep the picture simple. The dimension is also extended upward past personality to larger systems that involve groups of personalities—as would be found in a family, in other small groups, or in a larger community. The larger social groups of which the person is a member are depicted at the top of Figure 1-2.

Personality's location on the molecular-molar dimension tells us that it will be influenced by systems "underneath" or "underpinning" it, including the brain and influences on the brain. It will also be influenced by organizations "above" or "including" it—social systems such as the family and society.

### The Internal-External Dimension

Many sciences also make use of an **inner-outer (or internal-external) dimension** to further distinguish their objects of study (Henriques, 2003; Mayer, 1995a; Singer, 1984). The personality system is internal to the person, inside the skin, with perhaps the innermost part of personality being consciousness itself. The internal personality is joined to the outside world through the sensory-motor boundary. Most signals traveling from personality to the outside world are communicated by the person's motor systems through speech, posture, and actions. Conversely, information from the outside environment must be sensed and converted into symbols before they can reach personality.

Personality's location on the internal-external dimension means that a separate, private internal personality exists within the individual's skin. Outside observers can typically see only our external experiences. Only an individual has access to his or her interior self. Personality operates internally, but it also operates by expressing itself in the external, ongoing social situations in which it finds itself. This internal-external dimension is represented by the horizontal dimension of Figure 1-2.

### The Time Dimension

A third dimension is that of time. Personality develops; it changes over time, from infancy to childhood, from adulthood to maturity. Personality is different during each life epoch, and this too is

important in locating the system. This volume will mostly address adult personality, but it also will refer to how personality develops during childhood.

To sum up, personality is a global system of smaller psychological systems. It is inside the person but expressed outwardly in the situation, and it develops from infancy to maturity.

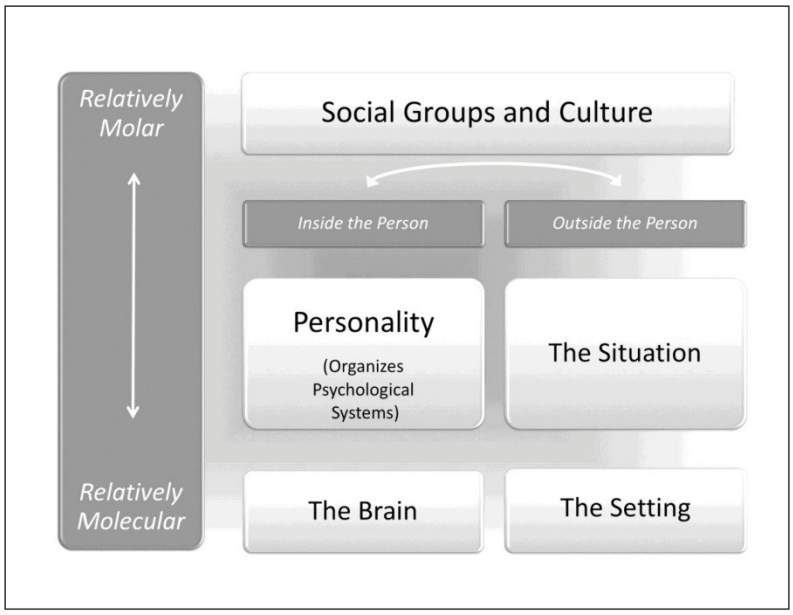



**Figure 1-2** *Personality's Location*

Personality can be viewed amidst its neighboring systems of scientific study. In this diagram, personality is related to those systems according to a molecular-molar dimension (vertical) and an internal-external dimension (horizontal). Biology is molecular relative to personality, the social situation is external, and larger social systems incorporate both personality and the external situation.

# What Is the Field of Personality Psychology?

## What Is a Field of Science?

A field of science consists of an organized group of individuals who study a common topic, and who add to what we know about it. The scientists are recognized as belonging to the field, and educate students about the field. Their students then go on to become the next generation of scientists.

These people are organized and represented within institutions such as colleges and universities, and other research bodies. Most colleges and universities include in their psychology departments one or more psychologists who study personality psychology. Similarly, granting agencies often designate funds for the study of personality. Moreover, professional associations provide a community for such individuals.

Using a variety of scientific methods, these scientists formulate hypotheses and test them, discover relationships, and publish their results in peer-reviewed journals, in chapters in edited books, and in full-length books. Sometimes they translate their findings for the public in magazines and newspapers as well. The next sections describe the emergence of modern psychology to provide a context for the discipline and what the study of personality is all about.

## *The Emergence of Modern Personality Psychology (1890 to 1949)*

Recall that at the close of the 19th century, Wilhelm Wundt had envisioned personality as the study of a person's major psychological subsystems. In the years immediately following Wundt's vision, the first personality psychologists arose. Many of them, like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, and others, attempted to synthesize all that was known at the time into a single, grand theory of personality (Wundt's term "personality" was not yet regularly employed, and Freud and his colleagues employed a number of terms alternative to personality for their studies).

Freud was pre-eminent among those who designed such comprehensive theories. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he synthesized many of the early writings on hypnotism, psychopathology, and case analyses of his patients to arrive at a novel understanding of how personality operated called psychodynamic psychology—how one part of the mind influenced another. Other theorists at work at that time included Carl Jung, who wrote about psychoanalytical psychology and Alfred Adler, who wrote about "individual psychology." These various "psychologies"—views of personality, really—were sometimes published alongside studies of sensation, memory, and other topics without many editorial distinctions among them (e.g., Murchison, 1930).

Among those who helped review and consolidate the field, perhaps the foremost early contributor was Abraham Roback. Roback (1927) noted that by the mid-1920s, in the Boston area, courses in personality psychology were underway on a regular basis. His book, *The Psychology of Character*, became an early textbook in personality psychology (Roback, 1927). To write it, Roback conducted an exhaustive historical review of studies in character, temperament, and mental conflict, and ending in the Freudian era. Another key figure, Gordon Allport, taught a similar personality survey course in 1924 and 1925 at Harvard (Winter & Berenbaum, 1999, p. 10).

Twelve years later, Allport and others published a cluster of new textbooks in the field—Gordon Allport's (1937) *Personality Psychology*, Henry Murray's (1938) *Explorations in Personality*, and Ross Stagner's (1937) *Psychology of Personality,* and with that, the discipline of personality psychology officially began (Craik, 1993). For his volume, Allport collected together dozens of meanings of the term "personality," and took considerable care in explaining why it was a good term for the discipline. Murray's *Explorations* focused on motives—both conscious and unconscious—and Stagner's book focused a bit more on systems and behavior.

Each of these textbooks employed its own language and terminology, and Allport and Murray introduced their own theories as well: Allport introduced a theory of traits, Murray a theory of needs. By the end of World War II, still more new theories emerged. Humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers emphasized the human potential for growth and positive mental health, and described how people could attain it. Social cognitive psychologists examined learning about the world as a part of personality.

The action in the field was taking place at a theoretical level rather than at a level of trying to understand personality through research. This wasn't necessarily a bad thing: there was great intellectual excitement in these diverse, exciting theories.

This and the further background of the field are depicted in the timeline of personality psychology shown in Figure 1-3.

## *Evolving Viewpoints on the Field (1950 to the Present)*

Throughout the latter part of the 20th century, as more and more students were attracted to the area, research blossomed, and the field was rich with both theory and empirical findings. Today, typing the word

"personality" into *PsycINFO*—the database for psychological literature—returns over a quarter-million responses. Hence, a central problem for the field was to develop a good approach to organizing and teaching its expanding understanding.

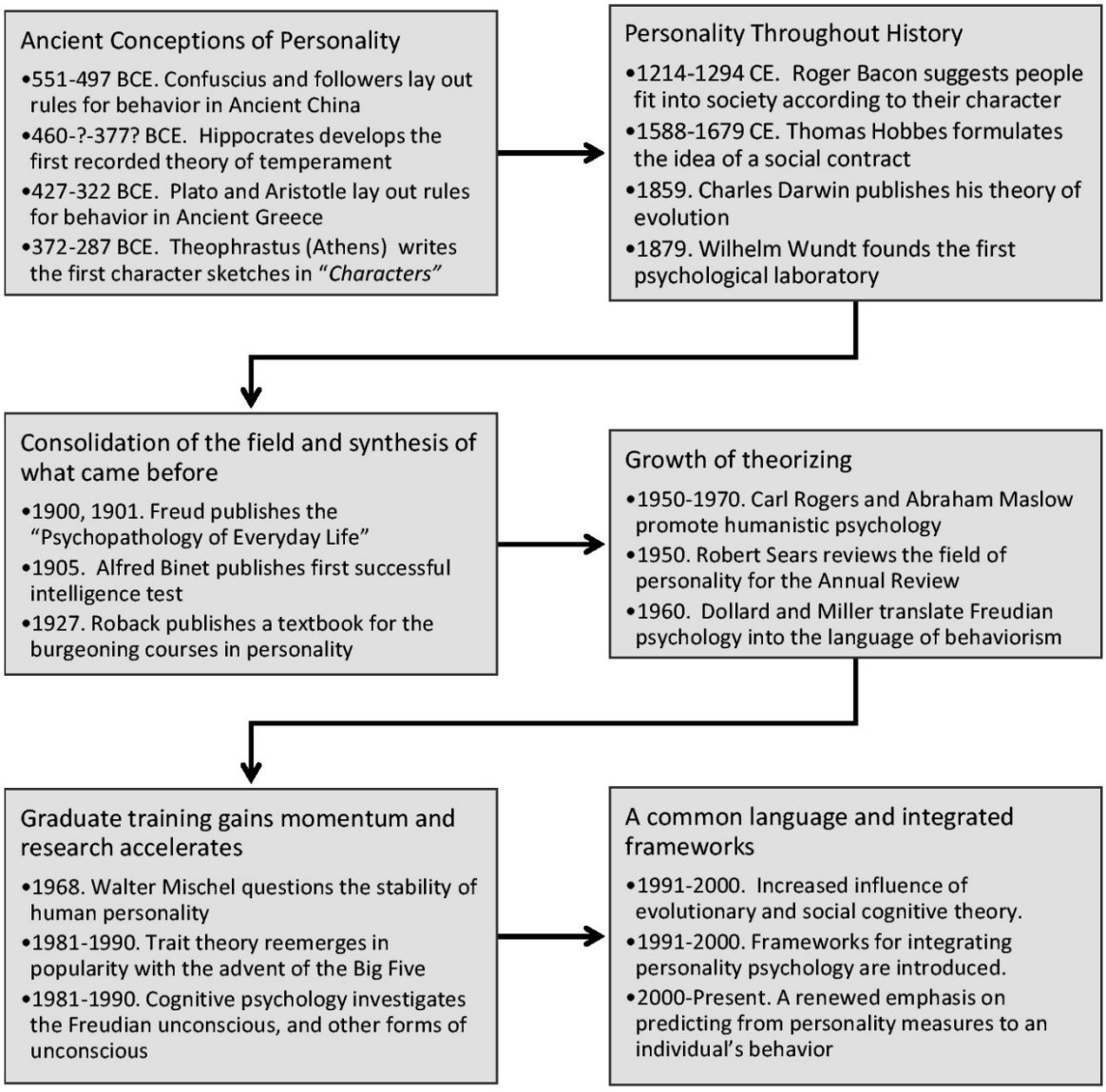



**Figure 1-3** *A Timeline of the Development of Personality Psychology*

The way a field of science understands itself—the lens through which it understands its own work—can be referred to as a discipline's fieldwide framework. The framework of a field is important because it is employed to understand what the field ought to be studying and explains and organizes the research in the field. Of considerable importance to those taking a course in personality psychology, the framework also is used to organize textbooks in the area. In a sense, the framework represents a field's identity (Mayer, 1993-1994; 1998).

During the middle of the 20th century, the major framework for the field was a theory-by-theory approach. Calvin Hall and Gardner Lindzey (1957) introduced a personality textbook that presented, in

historical order, a balanced coverage of the global psychological theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, and many other theorists. Each chapter focused on presenting a theory, and then concluded with an evaluation of the theory, and any research evidence for it. Several generations of students were exposed to this approach to personality psychology and it is still used today. Descriptions of prominent early members of the discipline appear in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1: Examples of Important Personality Psychologists of the 20th Century**

| *Theorist* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| Sigmund Freud (Major works 1890-1939). | Freud was a Viennese physician who developed the first modern, comprehensive personality theory. He provided descriptions of the unconscious aspects of mental life, and integrated ideas of the unconscious both with brain functions (as understood then) and a sophisticated view of social and cultural influences. |
| Carl Rogers (Major works 1940-1979). | Rogers was a clinical psychologist whose first professional job was at a Rochester, NY, guidance clinic. There, he outlined some of the basic processes of personality change in therapy. His work contrasted with Freud's in emphasizing more positive aspects of personality and the potential to develop an authentic self. |
| Albert Bandura (Major works 1960-2000s). | This Stanford psychologist first gained prominence for a study that demonstrated how children learned aggressive behavior from watching a video of other children interacting aggressively with a life-size doll. Later in his career, Bandura developed broader theories of social learning and motivation. |
| B. F. Skinner (Major works 1930-1989). | Skinner was raised on the East Coast, studied in the Mid-West, and then moved to Harvard University where he spent much of his career understanding how reinforcements could control an organism's behavior (chiefly, rats and pigeons). A colorful and provocative writer, he argued that people's behaviors could be understood in the context of the patterns of reinforcement around them, and that it was unnecessary to delve into any inner workings of a person's mind. |
| Gordon Allport (Major works 1930-1959). | This psychologist began his career at Dartmouth and later moved to Harvard and wrote an early influential textbook on personality. He transplanted much European thinking about traits to the United States and discussed how personality traits such as generosity, honesty, and aggression influenced human behavior. |
| Karen Horney (Major works 1930-1969). | This Berlin physician was a follower of Freud's. Ultimately settling in New York, Horney practiced psychoanalysis and then set about revising Freud's theory. Compared to Freud, Horney emphasized the critical nature of interpersonal relationships and interpersonal strategies to a person's mental health. She also introduced what she referred to as feminine psychology into the psychoanalytic establishment, criticizing earlier characterizations of women and constructing a new and more constructive view of women's mental lives. |

*Key figures identified in Mayer & Carlsmith (1998).

Over time, the number of theories increased, and textbooks gradually evolved to discuss broader theoretical perspectives rather than individual theories. For example, theories that emphasized a biological approach were grouped together, as were trait theories, and theories with a psychodynamic orientation that stemmed from Freud's work. Clustering individual theories together this way exposed students to the early 20th century theories of personality in some depth and retained a philosophical orientation that focuses on big

questions. By grouping individual theorists together, textbooks in the field still conveyed some of the flavor of original theorists of the field, while making room for incorporating more of the new burgeoning research relevant to each perspective. There is, however, a considerable amount of research in the field today that does not pertain to one theoretical perspective or another. For example, emotions are an important part of personality and research on the emotions system is central to the discipline, but no personality theory of the time focused specifically on emotion. Second, textbooks organized around different theories left their readers (and the professors who used them) wondering which theory was best. The answer, of course, is that each one (or at least most of them) contributes to a different understanding of personality. Still, psychologists and their students often hope for a more integrated approach.

A new major framework for the field—the one used here—has emerged to address such issues. It is called the personality systems framework for personality psychology (Mayer, 2005; 2015). The systems framework for personality is a new outline for the field that focuses directly on the personality system itself (as opposed to theories). Its four major topics of study are: (1) The identification and location of personality; (2) the parts of personality; (3) personality organization; and (4) personality development. Each major topic has been carefully defined over a series of reviews, and subsidiary divisions under each topic also have been developed. This new approach is one among several that have been developed to integrate the study of personality psychology (Cervone, 2004; Henriques, 2003; Pervin, 1990; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2001). It is this new framework that, in part, makes this new textbook possible (Mayer, 1993-1994; 1995a; 1995b; 1998; 2005). As new as this framework is, its mission is still to address, in part, the questions that began this chapter: "Who am I?", "How are people different?", and "What is my future?"

Although this framework is new, it draws on a long intellectual tradition in the discipline, beginning with Wundt's founding vision of personality as organizing a person's psychology (e.g., Pervin, 1990; Sears, 1950; Mayer, 2005). It also owes its existence to a small but intrepid group of psychologists who translated the terminology of one major theoretical perspective to another—thus building unity into the contemporary discipline. Such psychologists translated Freudian dynamics into behavioral terms (e.g., Dollard & Miller, 1950), or cognitive terms (Erdelyi, 1982), with many variations (Mayer, 1995; Westen, 1990). Many others experimented with alternative frameworks of note (e.g., Maddi, 1972; McAdams, 1996).

## *Training and Research in Personality Psychology*

By the 1960s, graduate study in psychology had become popular. Government agencies such as the National Institutes of Mental Health and private foundations such as the Ford Foundation funded research in psychology. Graduate students were trained, and then hired as new professors—or went to work in business, education, and government.

The first several decades of training in personality psychology, from the 1940s to the 1970s, were often allied with clinical programs (programs that train psychotherapists), which made sense because many personality theories of the time had important implications for how to assess an individual, and how to conduct psychotherapy. Over the years, however, graduate training programs in personality have become more closely allied with social psychology (e.g., Swann & Seyle, 2005). Both personality and social psychology address normal personality, use similar research methods, and are concerned with how people behave in social situations. Social psychology, however, studies people's attitudes toward the world, and the world's influence on the individual and social groups. Personality, as we have seen, is concerned with how the personality system operates and its implications for a person's life.

Professors of personality psychology taught undergraduates and trained graduate students, some of whom became the next generation of professors. This training and research cycle has resulted in an explosion

of research in personality psychology and related disciplines. Each year, hundreds of studies are carried out in the discipline and more data is collected related to how personality operates.

**Table 1-2: Career Paths of People Who Study Personality Psychology**

| *Career Path* | *Description* |
|---|---|
| A professor of personality psychology | Most professors who teach personality psychology began by earning an undergraduate degree in psychology or a related field. They then go on to obtain a graduate degree (Ph.D.) concentrating in personality or personality and social psychology. As faculty members, these individuals teach a variety of courses, and conduct research in personality psychology and areas related to it. |
| A clinical psychologist who studies personality psychology | Some clinical psychologists also work in the area of personality psychology. Most began by earning an undergraduate degree in psychology or a related field. They then obtain a professional degree related to conducting psychological assessment and psychotherapy (a Ph.D. or Psy. D.). They may work solely in private practice, hold an appointment at a college or university, or both. Such individuals draw on their clinical experience with patients to inform their theorizing and research in personality psychology. |
| A psychiatrist who studies personality psychology | Psychiatrists receive medical training and after obtaining their MDs may go on for further training in psychotherapy. Psychiatrists often bring insight into healthy and unhealthy personality functioning to the field, from their experience treating people with mental disorders and from observing their patients in therapy. |
| A human resources officer who studies personality psychology in an organization | Human resource officers typically work in larger business, governmental, or educational settings. Although those in human resources deal with a variety of issues, some focus on selection and development of personnel. Such individuals have typically earned a bachelor's degree, and possibly an MBA in organizational behavior, or they have psychological training at the undergraduate or graduate level. They are often certified to give psychological tests measuring personality. Such individuals may select tests for the purposes of hiring or development of staff, administer tests, and conduct institutional and sometimes more basic research, related to such activities. They also engage in coaching employees to make them more effective. |

Figure 1-4 shows the number of articles mentioning the term "personality" by decade, as indicated by a search of PsycINFO—one of the field's central databases. There were 192 such articles between 1901 and 1910, and a gradual rise over the decades of the 20th century, to near 100,000 such articles in the first decade of the 21st century.

Today, every fall and early spring, undergraduates apply to graduate programs in psychology or related fields throughout the world. In the United States and Canada, about 55 graduate programs train students specifically in personality psychology (American Psychological Association, 1996).

If you are interested in a career in psychology—and perhaps in personality psychology—you can visit the American Psychological Association's website at www.apa.org, or the American Psychological Society's at www.psychologicalscience.org. Both sites contain a great deal of information for students who are thinking about becoming psychologists. The American Psychological Association also publishes regularly updated books such as *Careers in Psychology* and *Graduate Study in Psychology*. More specific information about the field of

personality psychology can be found at the website for the *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*: www.spsp.org, and the *Association for Research in Personality*: www.personality-arp.org.

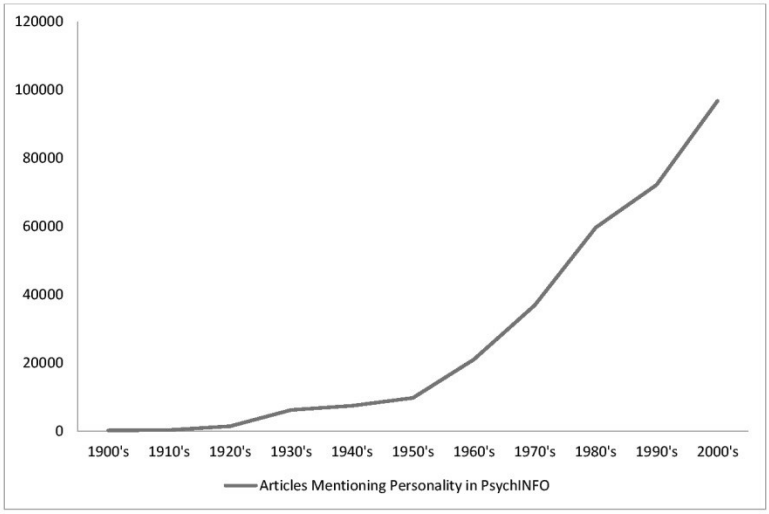



**Figure 1-4** *Rising Research Levels in Personality Psychology*

# Why Study Personality Psychology?

The discipline of personality psychology's task is to catalog, unify, and organize information from the rest of psychology and to apply it to questions of individual uniqueness and human nature. Whereas many sub-disciplines of psychology concern one psychological system—emotions or cognition—personality psychology is devoted to providing an overview of them all. As one of the broadest of the sub-disciplines of psychology, personality provides a bridge from psychology to philosophy, and between personality and other sciences such as the brain sciences, education, robotics, and sociology.

## The "Who Am I?" Question—A Part of Scientific Inquiry

Returning to the question, "Who am I?"—some have argued that understanding one's self and others is a value in and of itself—knowledge for knowledge's sake (Jopling, 2000, p. 3). Personality psychology as a science provides us with tools to analyze ourselves: methods for measuring our mental features, a sophisticated language for the parts of personality and their organization, and procedures for studying our lives over time. Rather than just describing ourselves as shy and intelligent, we may develop a richer way of thinking about who we are. For example, we might learn we are "introverted" rather than shy. There is a subtle difference between the two: Shy people want to be with others but are socially avoidant; introverts often prefer being alone. We might realize that, along with other introverts, we love to read and watch videos, and seem somewhat more sober than our more sociable friends. Our more precise language about ourselves can improve our self-knowledge (Christiansen et al., 2005; Mayer, 2014).

## The "How and Why Are People Different?" Question—Asked in Personality Assessment

The question "How and why are people different?"—particularly *how we differ*— is a central question addressed by clinical psychologists who carry out **personality assessment**. Personality assessment refers to

the "sizing up" people—something clinicians do to help their clients (Kleinmuntz, 1982, p. 1). We all "assess" the people in our lives for the purpose of relating with them sensibly: we notice a new friend values her privacy and we don't pry too much into her life; we respect our supervisor's talkativeness. In a clinical setting, a trained psychologist adds to this art of sizing up people by employing techniques of observation, conducting interviews, and administering and interpreting psychological tests.

The assessment setting may be a medical complex, a psychologist's office, or an assessment center—a specially constructed environment (typically, offices) in which a person is asked to perform various tasks and sometimes interact with others in simulations of on-the-job behavior. Children are sometimes assessed at school. Personality psychologists help develop assessment procedures in university laboratory settings.

Using data from the observations, interviews, and tests, the psychologist composes a narrative description of the personality under study, discussing personality's parts, organization, and development and, typically, answering specific questions about the individual. The questions about the person typically depend on the setting. In a legal setting, the tests may indicate something about whether the person had moral capacity at the time of committing a crime. In an organizational setting, the assessment may deal with the strengths that an individual can bring to a job. In a clinical setting, psychological assessments may deal with why a person is experiencing life difficulties, and the areas in which a person can improve (Butcher, 1995).

## The "What Is My Future?" Question—Prediction, Selection, and Change

### *Prediction and Selection*

Personality psychology also serves a predictive or forecasting purpose. When we ask a personality psychologist, "What's my future?" we're asking about the likely path someone like us will follow. Personality psychologists can, in fact, learn about our traits and, from those traits, make statistical forecasts of what's more likely for us relative to others. A person higher in extraversion is likely to be less bothered by health concerns (although she may have a similar number of health issues as her introverted friend); a person who is higher in intelligence is more likely to escape poverty, and so forth (Mayer, 2014).

People have probably been making decisions about the people around them from the time human beings first evolved (Buss, 1991; Haselton & Funder, 2006). Our ancient ancestor's choice of a good hunting partner was probably a life or death decision in some instances (Buss, 1991).

Admissions officers at colleges and human resource professionals at businesses often employ personality tests to assess applicants for positions. Using those measures, they're able to make statistical predictions about who is most likely to perform well at a school or on the job.

Consider the selection and training of police officers. Dayan, Kasten, and Fox (2002) examined candidates for the police force in an assessment center setting. In the assessment center, the police candidates went through simulations of on-the-job encounters—everything from handing out a traffic citation to searching a suspect. The candidates' performance was observed and assessed by their peers and by trained evaluators. The observers' evaluations turned out to be highly valid for predicting the candidates' subsequent on-the-job performance (Dayan et al., 2002). In addition, part of the candidates' assessments involved taking psychological tests, which are known to predict on-the-job performance. People who earn higher scores on tests of general cognitive ability and on tests of conscientiousness generally perform better on the job (Black, 2000; Cortina et al., 1992; Dayan et al., 2000). In one study, candidates for the police force who scored low on scales of maturity, low on commitment to values, and low on self-control were found to be at greater risk for serious breaches of trust on the job such as the use of undue force, and likelihood of corruption (Hargrave & Hiatt, 1989). When organizations use psychological assessments, they can meaningfully increase the quality of

their workforce. These tests can also identify members of the workforce who can benefit from training so as to raise their skills in particular areas such as understanding emotion—or understanding personality itself. The widespread use of psychological assessment, careful selection, and targeted training can help members of occupations function in a more competent and professional manner.

### *Applications to Personality Change*

A final reason to study personality is to gain knowledge so as to change oneself, others, or one's relationships. Personality psychology highlights areas a person might want to change, whether because a part of one's own personality is causing the person problems, or because personality psychologists hold out models of optimal functioning, and some people aspire to make themselves better if they can.

After studying the constructive and destructive patterns of couples over many years, Gottman and Silver (1999) made a number of recommendations to help people better handle their interactions in relationships, modeling their recommendations on what successful couples did. Simple routines such asking your partner about her day, and reminding your partner that you notice his positive qualities were important to maintain a good relationship. The researchers' other recommendations included doing things together during good times, and being sure to talk to one another during bad times. They recommended focusing on the relationship itself—"What is good for us?"—separately from focusing on each other as individuals. When couples argue, Gottman and Silver explained, they should proceed gently, repair hurt feelings, and not let emotion take over. And if you can't do all this? Well, personality psychology has also contributed to the methods we use to improve ourselves. None of us are perfect, after all.

These are some of the applications and contributions that personality psychology has made within the discipline.

# How Is This Book Organized—And What Will You Learn?

## Some Cautions, and a Beginning

"Who am I?" "What is my future?"—We now have an idea of some of the questions that emerged in our distant intellectual past—and that the field of personality psychology addresses. Personality psychology is not the only discipline that addresses these questions, of course. If you ask a biologist "Who am I?" you're likely to hear about how human beings are both similar and different from other primates, and of our evolutionary development. If you ask "Who am I?" of a theologian, you may hear about the relationship between an individual and a spiritual force or supreme being (e.g., Heschel, 1965, pp. 91-92). Ask an ethicist "How shall I live?" and she'll tell you about what is good and right to do (Marinoff, 1999).

## Personality Psychology's Answers

To a personality psychologist, "Who am I?" opens an inquiry into our mental qualities—including our traits and identity. Asking "Who am I?" gets into issues of "How does a mind work?" (Marinoff, 1999). If we ask a personality psychologist "How should I lead my life?" she may answer in part by saying, "Well, you're an extravert—talkative, sociable and lively," and then tell us the strengths and weaknesses of extraverts, the occupations they like, and how they do over time (both extraverts and introverts do well, by the way). Most centrally, personality psychology addresses: "How does a person's psychology work—and what implications does it have for the individual's life?"

To address those questions, this book is organized into four topics: What (and where) is personality? What are the system's parts? How is personality organized? And, how does personality develop? These topics are known as the general outline of the **personality systems framework**—one contemporary model for organizing the study of the field (Mayer, 2015). To provide you with a sense of how these four topics will work, let's take a look at the coverage of the book in brief.

## *Identifying Personality*

Part 1 of this book—and the first part of the systems framework—concerns defining and identifying personality. In this chapter, we've already defined personality and examined its location amid other systems of study (the brain and body, the setting, situation, and social groups).

We'll learn in Chapter 2 that we can study personality in a variety of ways. We can use a case study method, examine multiple people in a method referred to as "observationism," use correlational studies or experimental techniques.

Chapter 3 examines theories of personality. Theories direct our attention to particular aspects of a person's psychology. Trait theories, for example, focus us on a person's psychological and behavioral consistencies such as his happiness or sociability. Humanistic theories draw our attention to how individuals grow and attain their potential.

Overall, the first part of the book provides you with a foundation to understanding personality, its study, and some of the major theories in the field.

## *Parts of Personality*

The second part of the book focuses on the parts of peoples' personalities: their motives, emotions, relationships, and other qualities. A **personality part** or **component** is a discrete mental quality or area of mental function within a person (Mayer, 1995b, p. 828).

Some parts of personality concern motivations—such as the need to achieve or to be with people. Other parts of personality concern mental abilities. Cognitive intelligence is crucially related to a person's occupational and marital status. Other parts of personality concern self-control and a sense of personal choice or agency.

Chapter 4 examines the motivational and emotional parts of personality. Chapter 5 examines a person's mental models (e.g., how people form representations of themselves and the people around them). Chapter 6 examines intelligences and other mental abilities. Finally, Chapter 7 examines consciousness, will, agency, and related parts of personality.

The second part of the book provides you with knowledge about many varied parts of personality. You'll be able to recognize and label many different aspects of your own personality and the personalities of others in ways you haven't been able to before.

## *Personality Organization*

The third part of this book considers how the parts of personality are organized. Are there sensible ways to divide up personality so we can ensure we have an overview of its most important functions? Beyond that, how do the parts function and act together to bring about personality dynamics?

Chapter 8 examines the structural organization of personality—the ways that psychologists "divide up the mind" to make sense of it. **Structural organization** refers to the long-term basically stable divisions of

the personality system. Knowing these makes it easier to think about the personality system piece by piece. **Dynamic organization** refers to the major causal pathways that bring about important consequences of mental functioning. Chapter 9 covers the dynamics of action: How a person moves from being motivated, to acting on a motive. Chapter 10 examines the dynamics of self-control: How a person manages her own mental life and what forms of self-control may be particularly effective.

At this stage of the text, you will have learned powerful ways of putting personality together—that is, by looking at personality through the lens of its structure and by examining personality dynamics. These concepts allow us to integrate what we know about a person's specific parts of personality—and to understand something of how they may act.

## *Personality Development*

The fourth part of the book examines how personality develops. **Personality development** concerns how the personality system grows and changes over the course of a lifetime. Chapter 11 surveys life-span development, with a focus on children and adolescence. Chapter 12 considers areas of emerging adulthood, adult development, and maturity, examining what is stable and what changes over a person's life span.

At the conclusion of the book, you should have a complete overview of how to envision a personality—from its location, to its parts, to its organization, through its development.

The personality course provides students with the opportunity for increased self-understanding, the potential for predicting our own and other people's thoughts and feelings, and some tools for changing ourselves. It's fair to ask whether the questions personality psychology addresses are worth understanding, whether the field has applications of importance, and whether we can better understand ourselves and each other through a study of the discipline. We personality psychologists believe, and I hope this book will show, that the answer is yes.

# Reviewing Chapter 1

The primary goal of this chapter is to introduce you to the field of personality psychology. It covers contemporary issues such as how people become personality psychologists, and it is designed to help you understand a bit of the field's history. Finally, the chapter is aimed at providing you with an overview of what will come next in the book. To help ensure that you have learned the more important points of the chapter, please review the following questions, which are arranged according to the major sections of the chapter:

## *Questions About "What Are the Fundamental Questions Addressed by Personality Psychology?"*

1. Questions Addressed by Personality Psychology: One way to get the big picture of a field is to understand the sorts of questions that motivated its creation. "Who am I?" is a basic question that in part organizes and motivates personality psychology. What are some related questions?
2. An Early Typology of Human Personality: The early temperament theory of personality—the four-fold classification of humours worked out by Hippocrates—is important to our contemporary understanding of personality (as we will see later). Can you describe each of the four personality types: sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic?

3. Understanding of Unconscious Processes: Before Sigmund Freud and modern psychology came on the scene, a number of individuals had studied phenomena related to the unconscious. These included studies of animal magnetism (mesmerism). What has become of the research today?

## *Questions About "What Is Personality?"*

4. Definition(s) of Personality: Definitions of personality tend to stress the fact that it is an organized system of parts. Who was the first to suggest such a definition? How could personality psychology contribute specifically to the field of personality? Note how personality is defined specifically in this textbook. There exist other definitions of personality as well, including those that stress individual differences, and those that stress behavioral consistency. What are some of the drawbacks (if any) of these alternative definitions? What are some of their advantages?
5. Locating Personality: The personality system does not exist in isolation. Rather, it is embedded in other surrounding systems. Personality is "located and identified" amidst other systems of scientific study in this chapter. It is distinguished from its biological bases and from more complex systems such as social groups. Two of these dimensions are the molecular-molar dimension and the internal-external dimension. Can you explain what these are? What is yet another dimension?
6. Personality's Neighboring Systems: Using some of the dimensions to arrange personality amidst its neighbors, what are the various systems that can be arranged around personality, and where can they be placed in a dimensional system?

## *Questions About "What Is the Field of Personality Psychology?"*

7. The Establishment of Modern Personality Psychology: In 1890, Wilhelm Wundt recommended the establishment of the discipline. Between that time and the 1920s, two trends occurred: consolidation and synthesis. Consolidation involved collecting what was then known about personality psychology. Synthesis concerned integrating what was known into grand theories. Do you know the roles of Sigmund Freud, Arthur Roback, and Gordon Allport in such activities?
8. Views of the Field: How was personality psychology taught in the mid-20$^{th}$ century? Gradually, the field has become more integrated across theories. This has depended upon several lines of work including translating the language of one theory into another, increasing research, and better defining the central topics of personality psychology. Do you know the first major translation of one theory into another?
9. Increased Research: After World War II, more Americans than ever decided on obtaining a college education. Psychology became an important major on campus. A number of foundations began funding psychological research in general and personality research in particular. Today, graduate students often apply to psychology departments to study personality psychology. Do you know to what area(s) of specialization they apply? Also, what happened to theorizing during this time of increased research?
10. Training in the Field: The training of personality psychologists varies; early personality psychologists came from a variety of disciplines, but personality training programs are increasing in importance. What are some characteristic career paths of personality psychologists today?

## *Questions About "Why Study Personality Psychology?"*

11. Reasons for Studying Personality Psychology: Anyone can study personality psychology simply to seek knowledge for its own sake. In addition, personality psychology has a number of applied uses: for

personality assessment, selection, and prediction. Can you give an example of how personality assessment works? What about selection and prediction?

## *Questions About "How Is This Book Organized—And What Will You Learn?"*

12. Limits of Personality Psychology: Can personality psychology really answer questions such as "What is the best way to live?" or "Who am I?" Even if those questions could be answered, what are the limits involved in studying a complex system? Although these limits exist, studying personality can still be a rewarding, exciting experience, and personality psychology has important practical applications.
13. Personality Components: How are personality components defined? The section on personality parts will examine motives and emotions; mental models of the self, world, and relationships; thinking with those models; and the more mysterious parts of personality including free will and consciousness.
14. Personality Organization: Personality organization refers to how the parts of personality are related to each other. Organization can be divided into two parts. Structural organization refers to the stable, long-term arrangement of personality's parts. Can you define dynamic organization?
15. Personality Development: Personality development refers to how the parts of personality and their organization change over time. Personality development is often divided between personality origins and growth in childhood and development in adulthood.

# Chapter 1 Glossary

## *Terms in Order of Appearance:*

**Psychology:** A scientific discipline that studies how the mind works.

**Personality Psychology:** A scientific discipline that addresses the questions, "Who am I?" and "Who are others?" Personality psychology involves the study of a person's mental system, with a focus on its largest, most important parts, how those parts are organized, and how they develop over time.

**Implicit Personality Theory:** The informal, often unnoticed or unconscious system of beliefs an individual holds about how his or her own personality operates, and how the personalities of other people operate.

**Characterology:** A literary tradition in which an author writes a series of short descriptions about the different character types he or she has recognized. Each description of a type is designed to bring forth a definite feeling of recognition in the reader that he or she has seen an example of that type of person as well.

**Temperament:** The study of people's innate, motivational and emotional styles.

**Choleric:** One of four ancient personality types. The choleric type is quick to action, has a short temper, and is lean.

**Melancholic:** One of four ancient personality types. The melancholic type is slow to move, self-preoccupied, and most distinctly, unhappy and depressed.

**Phlegmatic:** One of four ancient personality types. The phlegmatic type has little energy, is prone to eating too much, and is somewhat indifferent in disposition.

**Sanguine:** One of four ancient personality types. The sanguine type is cheerful, lively, and easygoing.

**Psychological Mindedness:** A person's trait or predisposition to analyze one's own and others mental characteristics, and how those mental characteristics lead to a person's behaviors.

**Molecular-Molar Continuum (or Dimension):** A dimension or continuum along which various scientific systems of study can be located, from those that are smallest to those that are largest.

**Molecular Systems:** Systems of scientific study that are relatively small, such as atoms and molecules.

**Molar Systems:** Systems of scientific study that are relatively large, such as the economy or the ecosphere.

**Individual Differences:** A topic of scientific study that addresses the questions of how one person differs from another. Some people use this as an alternative definition of personality psychology.

**Personality:** Personality is the organized, developing, psychological system within the individual that represents the collective action of that individual's major psychological subsystems.

**Inner-Outer (Internal-External) Dimension:** As applied to personality psychology, a dimension or continuum that separates the internal parts of personality ("beneath the skin") from the external aspects of personality (behavior, environment).

**Personality Systems Framework:** The systems framework is an outline of the field of personality psychology that divides it into the study of (a) the definition and location of personality, (b) personality parts, (c) personality organization, and (d) personality development.

**Personality Components (or Parts):** Individual instances of personality function, content, or processes are known as personality's parts or components. These components or parts may be biological mechanisms such as a *need for water* in the case of thirst, or learned contents such as the *multiplication tables*, or thematic ways of feeling, thinking, and acting, such as *shyness*, among others.

**Structural Organization:** This aspect of personality organization refers to the relatively long-term, stable positioning of one part of personality in relationship to another.

**Dynamic Organization:** Personality dynamics involve trends of causality across multiple parts of personality; in other words, how the parts of personality influence one another. For example, dynamics of action describe how a person's urges end up being expressed in the individual's actions.

**Personality Development:** Personality development concerns how the personality system develops over the individual's life span.