



Personality Theories

NINTH EDITION

Barbara Engler

PERSONALITY THEORIES

PERSONALITY THEORIES

An Introduction

NINTH EDITION

Barbara Engler
Union County College



Australia • Brazil • Japan • Korea • Mexico • Singapore • Spain • United Kingdom • United States

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To my sons, Ted and Bill

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PREFACE

Like its predecessors, the Ninth Edition of *Personality Theories: An Introduction* provides accurate and thorough coverage of personality theories in an easily accessible text enhanced by pedagogical features intended to stimulate critical thinking. In this edition, as in earlier ones, I have worked to achieve these four objectives:

1. *To present a clear and concise picture of the major features of each theory.* I have strived to present the material in an approachable style and, wherever possible, to illustrate theoretical points with concrete examples. I have presented each theory succinctly, to allow for adequate coverage of all the theories. Each chapter focuses on one theory or group of related theories. Brief biographies of the major theorists shed light on how they formed their theories.
2. *To focus on significant ideas and themes that structure the content of the theories.* I regularly compare theories to outline the distinctive characteristics and contributions of each theory and to emphasize significant ideas around which the theories are structured. Because many theories have elaborated on, modified, or refuted psychoanalysis, I have devoted substantial space to Freudian theory, providing the reader with a focal point from which comparisons and contrasts may be made.
3. *To provide criteria to guide the evaluation of each theory.* Many of the theories that influence contemporary thought did not develop from strict scientific methods but instead reflect philosophical assumptions. In addition, the application of a theory to a real-life situation such as psychotherapy is a creative act, demonstrating that a personality theory may function as an art. Therefore, the evaluation of a personality theory is best accomplished when the theory is examined from the viewpoints of philosophy, science, and art and judged according to criteria appropriate to each one. Within each chapter, two features—"Philosophy, Science, and Art" sections and "Philosophical Assumptions" boxes—refer students back to the basic philosophical assumptions introduced in Chapter 1, relating parts back to whole and drawing attention to significant ideas that have generated the structure and content of personality theories. The "Conclusion" at the end of the text wraps up the evaluation discussion.
4. *To present activities, informed by the tenets of each theory, that will stimulate critical thinking.* Effective learning is not a passive process; it requires active participation. The fourth objective is accomplished through "Thinking Critically" boxes, which provide activities that foster critical thinking. This feature, introduced in the Third Edition, has proven to be very popular. Activities have been carefully reviewed and revised to provide students with a clearer context for the activity. The "Personal Experiences" feature, created by Thomas Finn of Bentley College, at the end of each chapter introduced in the Eighth Edition, it consists of questions and activities designed to engage students more directly with the theories and to bridge the gap between the theories and students' lives.

Features of the Book

To help students read with a sense of purpose and review important points quickly, each chapter opens with a list called "Your Goals for This Chapter" and ends with a "Summary," whose items are keyed to each goal. Thus the goals listed at the beginning of

the chapter pose questions answered in the numerated summary. Key terms and concepts are boldfaced within the text, and a glossary at the back of the book, and on the student website, provides definitions. The illustration program has been revised to include more figures and tables that help students understand technical concepts and summarize the concepts being presented.

“Thinking Critically” activities appear in each chapter. These boxes ask students to revisit material in the chapter and reconsider it or apply it critically. The “Personal Experiences” feature offers still another opportunity for students to thoughtfully consider the material.

The “Philosophical Assumptions” boxes (with accompanying scale on the inside back cover) give students an opportunity to compare and contrast their own philosophical views with those of the theorist at hand. Actual ratings on the scale are not provided for each theorist, because to do so might foreclose students’ thinking and debate about where each theorist stands on the issues. It would invite focus on the “correct” rating of each theorist and undermine the critical thinking, discussion, and support of students’ own answers, which are the goals of the activity. A timeline on the inside front cover places the theorists in the context of important historical events that occurred during their lifetimes. A table at the back of the text summarizes the theorists’ primary research methods, theoretical orientations, and strengths.

New to the Ninth Edition

My revisions to the book reflect recent developments in the field of personality psychology and feedback that I received from instructors and students who used the previous edition. All content has been updated to reflect the status of current research on each theorist. Throughout, I pay considerable attention to the neurobiological basis of personality a major emerging interest in personality theorizing, as well as the impact of the computer and social media. The text continues to emphasize multicultural, feminist, and postmodern concerns.

Highlights of the changes in the book, by chapter, include the following:

Chapter 1

- Shedler’s metaanalyses of the effectiveness of psychodynamic therapy and ensuing comments.

Chapter 2

- New “Thinking Critically: Identifying Defense Mechanisms.”
- Neuroscientific research and evidence concerning dreams.
- Expanded discussion of the emerging field of neuropsychanalytic research.

Chapter 3

- Reappraisal of some Jung’s concepts in light of neuroscientific research.

Chapter 4

- New research on siblings’ birth order and I.Q.
- Sullivan’s malevolent transformation of personality.

Chapter 5

- New “Thinking Critically: Neurotic Needs, Modes, and Orientations.”
- Neuroscientific research into the attachment process.
- New research on terrorism and terror management theory.

Chapter 6

- Change in McAdams’ theory from levels to layers which unfold developmentally.

Chapter 7

- Discussion of gender based differences and Hyde’s gender similarities hypothesis.
- Neuroscientific research on the “smart vagus” and brain plasticity.
- Use of social media.
- New “Thinking Critically: Serial Testimony.”

Chapter 8

- Skinner’s early contribution to “theory of mind” (ToM).

Chapter 9

- A biological basis for self-regulation and delay of gratification.

Part V

- Change of title to “Dispositional and Biological Basis of Personality.”

Chapter 11

- New research on the Big Five, emotional intelligence, psychological well-being, and work motivation.
- New Section on Implications of the FFM for the new DSM-5.
- Revision of “Thinking Critically: How Abnormal is Abnormal?”
- Expanded sections on the genetic influence on traits and evolutionary psychology theory.
- Effects of the use of new technologies, i.e. social media, on the brain.

Chapter 12

- Implications of Eysenck’s PEN model for understanding psychopathology.
- Discussion of Eysenck’s personality theory and evolutionary theory.
- Research on levels of motivation that influence religion.
- Research on how the PEN model informs PTSD.

Chapter 13

- New biographical material on Rogers from Kirschenbaum.
- Expanded sections on Positive Psychology and Transpersonal Psychology.
- New “Personal Experience: Turning on Happiness.”

Chapter 14

- New section on social media.

Chapter 16

- Beck's Personality Belief Questionnaire.
- Identification of biological correlates of cognitive theory.

Ancillaries

This text is supported by *CengageBrain.com*, which encompasses the interactive online products and services integrated with Cengage Learning Psychology programs. *CengageBrain.com* is available through text-specific student and instructor websites. Many useful materials have been developed to support *Personality Theories 9/e*, emphasizing its role as an integrated teaching and learning experience for instructors and students alike. For more information, visit **CengageBrain.com**.

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For the Student

The book-specific website at *CengageBrain.com* offers students a variety of study tools and useful resources such as *glossaries, flashcards, and quizzes*.

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—B.E.

Introduction: Evaluating Personality Theories

YOUR GOALS FOR THIS CHAPTER

1. Explain why the term **personality** is difficult to define.
2. Define the term **theory**.
3. Discuss the role of personality theory in psychology.
4. Describe three orientations of personality theorists.
5. Identify some of the basic philosophical issues on which personality theorists differ.
6. Explain how to recognize **philosophical assumptions**.
7. Explain how philosophical assumptions are evaluated.
8. Explain how science has its basis in **philosophy**.
9. Explain the characteristics of **scientific statements**.
10. Explain how scientific statements are evaluated, and describe how scientists decide between rival hypotheses.
11. Describe two techniques used to assess personality and three approaches used in research on personality.
12. Identify three goals of **psychotherapy**, and indicate the criteria of evaluation suitable for each goal.
13. Explain why it is important to distinguish among the different orientations of personality theories.

Defining the word *personality* would be a good way to begin a book that considers various theories of personality. However, writing a definition is not that simple. The different answers that people have given to that question have found expression throughout history in various cultural constructs such as philosophy, religion, art, politics, and science. Each one of us begins the search anew; as children seeking identity, and later as adults reflecting upon our identity, we wonder who we are and join fellow travelers on the road in search of the self.

What Is Personality?

In common speech, the term **personality** usually refers to someone's public image. Thus people say, "Becky has a terrific personality!" or "If only Jeff had a more dynamic personality." This common usage reflects the origin of the word *personality* in the Latin *personae*, which referred to the masks that actors wore in ancient Greek plays. In the Greek theater, there were often more roles in a play than there were actors. Thus actors changed *personae* to let the audience know that they were assuming different roles. The concept of social roles, however, does not include the complications that are involved in the long search to understand the self.

There is little common agreement among personality theorists on the appropriate use of the term *personality* (see Figure 1.1). Gordon Allport described and classified over fifty different definitions. For Allport, personality is something *real* within an individual that leads to characteristic behavior and thought. For Carl Rogers, the personality or "self" is an organized, consistent pattern of perception of the "I" or "me" that lies at the heart of an individual's experiences. For B. F. Skinner, an influential behaviorist, the word *personality* was unnecessary. Skinner did not believe that it is necessary or desirable to use a concept such as self or personality to understand human behavior. For Sigmund Freud, the father of contemporary psychoanalysis, personality is largely unconscious, hidden, and unknown.

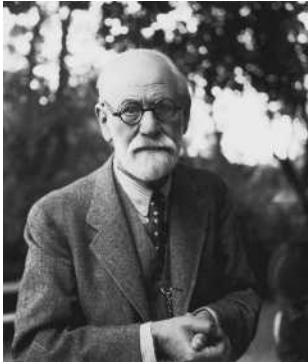
Each theorist presents us with his or her own understanding of the term *personality*. In part, this helps to explain why there are so many different personality theories. Although such a variety of definitions and theories may be confusing and even disturbing, it does not mean that the theories are not useful. Each offers insight into the question of the self, and each can be helpful to us as we develop our own answers.

What Is a Theory?

Since we are referring to theories of personality, the next question is "What is a theory?" Here you may be pleased to see that there is a more definitive answer. The term *theory* comes from the Greek word *theōria*, which refers to the act of viewing, contemplating, or thinking about something. A **theory** is a set of abstract concepts developed about a group of facts or events in order to explain them. A theory of personality, therefore, is an organized system of beliefs that helps us to understand human nature.

Describing a theory as a system of beliefs underscores the fact that a theory is something that we create in the process of viewing and thinking about our world. Theories are not given or necessitated by nature; rather, they are constructed by people in their efforts to understand the world. The same data or experiences can be accounted for in many different ways, and people of all cultures are interested in and have engaged in the scholarly effort to understand themselves, constructing a wide variety of explanations. As we shall see, there are many theories of personality. Historically, a Western focus has dominated the formal discussion of theories of personality, but efforts are being made to attend to other perspectives, such as Asian and Afrocentric.

WHAT IS PERSONALITY?



Sigmund Freud

It is largely unconscious, hidden, and unknown.



Albert Bandura



Carl Rogers

It is an organized, consistent pattern of perception of the “I” or “me” that lies at the heart of an individual’s experiences.



Erik Erikson



B. F. Skinner



Karen Horney

It is an unnecessary construct.



Gordon Allport

It is something real within an individual that leads to characteristic behavior and thought.

FIGURE 1.1 THE MANY VIEWS OF PERSONALITY

“Personality” is not a readily defined concept. Shown here are just some of the views of personality held by different personality theorists. As you proceed through this text and examine the work of individual personality theorists, you will discover many more different views of personality.

SOURCE: Sigmund Freud, Hans Casparius/Hulton/Getty Images; Albert Bandura, Jon Brenneis/Time & LIFE Images/Getty Images; Carl Rogers, © Bettmann/Corbis; Gordon Allport, © Bettmann/Corbis; B. F. Skinner, Bachrach/Archive Photos/Getty Image; Erik Erikson, Ted Streshinsky/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images; Karen Horney, © Bettmann/Corbis

The Role of Personality Theory in Psychology

Because personality addresses that important question “Who am I?” you might imagine that personality is the primary emphasis of psychology. In fact, personality is not the dominant concern in contemporary psychology; it is simply one area of specialization.

The question “What is personality?” takes us back to early human history. As psychology found expression in the early philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, it sought to clarify the essence of a human being and explore what it means to be a person.

By the late nineteenth century the scientific revolution had made great strides in comprehending the physical world, and people were eager to apply scientific methods to the study of human beings. Modern-day psychology emerged from a combination of various movements in philosophy and science. In 1879, Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) established the first psychological laboratory at the University of Leipzig in Germany to explore the experience of consciousness. By combining careful measurement with *introspective observation*, or self-examination, Wundt sought to reveal the basic elements and structure of the conscious mind.

Wundt was successful in establishing a meticulous, systematic method of study based on the experimental method. However, his emphasis on conscious experience was criticized in the 1920s by John Watson (1878–1958), who came to be known as the father of American behaviorism. Watson pointed out that it is almost impossible to observe mental processes directly. Therefore, he suggested that the psychologist should act as if mental processes do not exist and should concentrate on overt behavior. Although few psychologists today agree with Watson's extreme view, and brain scanning equipment depict the brain in action, the behaviorist position that Watson generated became the dominant movement in American psychology throughout most of the twentieth century. Watson was succeeded as leader of the movement by B. F. Skinner, who took the behaviorist position to its logical extreme. Because of Skinner's influence, students of psychology rapidly discovered that, for the most part, they were engaged not in the study of the person but in the study of behavior (usually of rats and pigeons). They were encouraged to adopt a rigorous scientific methodology that emphasized *extrospective observation*, or looking outward. B. F. Skinner's theory is discussed in greater detail in the chapter on experimental analysis of behavior.

Today, psychologists are very interested in the brain and mental processes shunned by Watson and Skinner. Cognitive psychology emphasizes how people receive, process, and react to information from their environment. On the other hand, psychology has retained from the behaviorists an emphasis on rigorous methodology emphasizing extrospective observation.

Not all of the personality theorists that we will consider agree that a rigorous scientific method is the best way to understand personality. In fact, the first theories of personality developed outside the mainstream of academic experimental psychology. While Wundt was at work in his laboratory at Leipzig, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), who was *not* a psychologist—rather a neurologist and physician in private practice in Vienna, was employing introspection somewhat differently in his treatment of patients who were suffering from emotional problems. Instead of using introspection only to examine present phenomena, Freud also taught his patients to employ it retrospectively to examine past experiences. Thus Freud was able to examine phenomena that could not be elicited in a laboratory. Freud found introspection to be a valuable tool for discovering and exploring unconscious processes. On the basis of his clinical observations, Freud developed a theory of personality discussed in the chapter on psychoanalysis. Freud's method was far different from the experimental laboratory research that characterizes much of psychology today.

Some of Freud's followers became dissatisfied with orthodox psychoanalysis and founded their own schools of thought. Although these theorists were all deeply indebted to Freud, they reacted in varying ways against his theory and developed their own positions. The study of personality became a formal and systematic area of scientific specialization in American psychology in the mid-1930s, and it is most often considered to fit somewhere between social and clinical psychology. Some psychologists have recommended that all research in personality be conducted and evaluated along strict scientific guidelines as defined by mainstream academic psychology. The study of personality is the heir of two different approaches: *academic psychology* and *clinical practice* (see Figure 1.2) which have never really merged. Examples of each are found in the theories discussed in this book.

It is also helpful to distinguish between **macro theories** of personality, which seek to be global and which emphasize comprehension of the whole person, and **micro theories**, which have resulted from specific research focused on limited aspects of human behavior. Some of the micro studies can be very narrowly focused; for

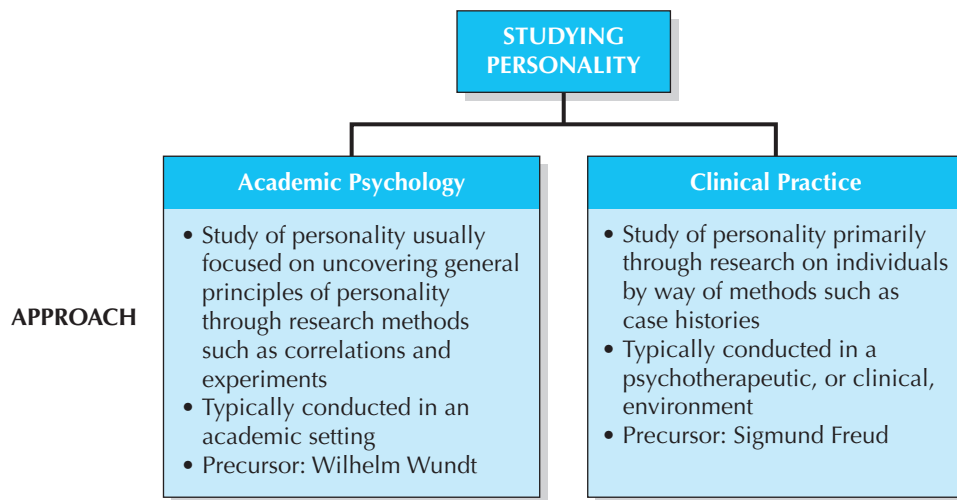


FIGURE 1.2 APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF PERSONALITY

example, one study explores how a specific model of personality might clarify impulsiveness (Whiteside & Lynam, 2001). Courses in personality theories tend to emphasize macro theories, and courses in personality research favor a topical (i.e., micro) approach. In general, but by no means entirely, macro theories are more likely to stem from the tradition of clinical observation, whereas micro theories reflect academic psychology.

A review of the Brief Contents at the beginning of the book will give you a good overview of the theories we will consider, most of which would be considered macro theories. We will begin with the theory of Sigmund Freud and then cover some of his early followers, as well as contemporary theorists who continue the tradition of psychoanalytic thought that Freud initiated. Next we will turn to a group of theorists who emphasize the role of learning in the development of human behavior. B. F. Skinner is the most recognized among these behavior and learning theorists. We also will look at a number of other approaches to the study of personality. Gordon Allport, for example, is one of several dispositional theorists who emphasize the importance of long-term characteristics in personality. Research in that area today encompasses biology and genetics. We will discuss humanist and existential theories, which stress the tendency of the human personality toward growth, and cognitive theories, which focus on how people process information about themselves and their world. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow are two representatives of the humanist approach, and George Kelly and Albert Ellis reflect the cognitive approach. We will round out our presentation of personality theories with recognition of the growing importance of non-Western approaches and an in-depth look at Zen Buddhism. A table at the very back of the book summarizes the theorists discussed here.

The Evaluation of Personality Theory

Personality theorists work out of three complementary orientations: philosophy, science, and art. Theories of personality are not just armchair speculations but belief systems that find expression in ways that are designed to help us understand and improve ourselves

and the world. The *art* of personality theory, or its expression in practical application, is much older than the science or even the philosophy behind it. From earliest times, much has been spoken and written about how to live a good life and to understand one another as people have practiced ways of understanding themselves and living together. Before the study of personality became a specialization of academic scientific psychology, questions of personality and the good life were generally included under the broader umbrella of *philosophy*. Even today, many personality theories resemble philosophical investigations rather than scientific studies. As the *science* of personality theory—investigations governed by appropriate rules—has developed, it has provided us with new knowledge, tools, and methods of self-understanding and improvement. Science further demands that scientific theory be empirically validated, or ultimately based on sensory experience. However, the specific mode of study and investigation characteristic of a modern personality scientist arises out of a prior philosophical encounter with the world. Science is an offspring of philosophy and its methods are the fruit of philosophy's labors. The methods of art, science and philosophy are distinguishable but not unrelated; they complement one another and together provide us with a fuller understanding.

Philosophy, science, and art may be seen as three complementary orientations from which personality theorists work. As *philosophers*, personality theorists seek to explore assumptions about what it means to be a person. As *scientists*, they hope to develop a workable set of hypotheses that will help us understand human behavior. As *artists*, they seek to apply what is known about people and behavior to foster a better life. Each activity is conducted according to certain rules with its own criteria for success. The metaphor of games is useful here because even young schoolchildren know that if we want to play a game properly and fairly, we have to understand its rules and follow them. Each activity that personality theorists engage in as philosophers, scientists, and artists may be seen as a distinct game to be conducted according to certain rules with its own methods of play and criteria for success. Just as potential athletes need to become familiar with the rules, equipment, and scoring of their sport, so students of personality theory need to become familiar with the rules that govern how these three distinct facets of personality theory—philosophy, science, and art—work. You will have difficulty understanding a personality theorist unless you can identify the particular activity or approach that the theorist is engaged in and know how to evaluate it.

Philosophical Assumptions

No psychologist or personality theorist can avoid being a philosopher of sorts. All sciences, but particularly the “hypercomplex” social sciences (Wilson, 1999), are influenced by philosophy. The very act of theorizing, or thinking about what we see, which all people—not only personality theorists—do, entails making certain **philosophical assumptions** about the world and human nature. These basic philosophical assumptions profoundly influence the way in which we perceive the world and theorize about it.

The term **philosophy** comes from the Greek *philein*, “to love,” and *sophia*, “wisdom”; it means the love or pursuit of wisdom. Wisdom denotes not merely knowing about something but knowing what ought to be done and how to do it. As philosophers, we make assumptions and judgments about the good life and how to live it.



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Just as potential athletes need to become familiar with the rules, equipment, and scoring of whatever sport they wish to engage in, students of personality theory need to become familiar with the different rules governing personality theories to avoid getting into trouble.

Very few of us have complete and articulate philosophies of life, but our thoughts, statements, and theorizing are informed by our philosophical assumptions. In the same sense, very few, if any, of the personality theorists whom we will consider aim at developing complete philosophical pictures of ourselves and the world. Most consider themselves psychologists rather than philosophers. Nevertheless, in their psychologizing they raise philosophical issues and, in doing so, reflect philosophical assumptions.

BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Many of the differences among personality theories can be attributed to fundamental differences in philosophical assumptions. Some of the common issues about which personality theories disagree are described below. Each issue is presented here as a bipolar dimension. Some theorists agree with one or the other extreme. Others are neutral toward the issue or seek a synthesis.

Freedom versus determinism. Some theorists believe that individuals basically have control over their behaviors and understand the motives behind them. Others believe that human behavior is basically determined by internal or external forces over which individuals have little, if any, control.

Heredity versus environment. Theorists differ over whether inherited and inborn characteristics or factors in the environment have the more important influence on human behavior.

Uniqueness versus universality. Some theorists believe that each individual is unique and cannot be compared with others. Others contend that people are basically very similar.

Proactivity versus reactivity. Proactive theories view human beings as acting on their initiative rather than simply reacting. The sources of behavior are perceived as lying within the individual, who does more than just react to stimuli from the outside world.

Optimism versus pessimism. Do significant changes in personality and behavior occur throughout the course of a lifetime? If an individual is motivated, can genuine changes be effected in personality? Can we help others to change by restructuring their environment? Some personality theories are decidedly more optimistic and hopeful than others concerning these possibilities.



Philosophical Assumptions

Where do you stand on these issues? See the Philosophical Assumptions box “Examining Your Own Philosophical Assumptions” on page 10.

DISTINGUISHING PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS FROM SCIENTIFIC STATEMENTS

Philosophical assumptions may be *explicit* or *implicit*. It is often difficult to identify a person’s assumptions when they are implicit, or not stated clearly. You will find it easier to recognize philosophical assumptions if you understand that philosophy frequently posits a distinction between *what is* and *what ought to be*. Philosophical statements suggest that things are not necessarily what they appear to be. *What is* is not necessarily *what should be* or *what really is*. For instance, the fact that many people are aggressive does not necessarily mean that aggression is right or that aggression represents what it means to be human.

Philosophical knowledge is ultimately an **epiphany** (from the Greek *epiphaneia*, which means “appearance” or “manifestation”), or a perception of essential meaning. The “seeing” of philosophy is a special act of knowing, an extraordinary intuition that transcends everyday experience. Philosophical assumptions, therefore, differ from *empirical statements*, which are based on ordinary observation. The statement “All people seek what is good,” for example, does not refer to something that can be seen in everyday observation. It refers to some kind of ultimate reality that is perceived in a different way. We say that this statement is based on *epiphanic evidence*.

Scientific statements, too, often refer to things that we cannot see in ordinary observation. Many important constructs in science involve imaginary concepts that cannot be seen. However, even these scientific statements are ultimately, even if indirectly, based on empirical observation, and the methods used to test them differ from the methods of philosophy.

How do scientific statements and philosophical assumptions differ? The difference lies in the nature of the observation that gives rise to the construct and in the way in which it is tested. Karl Popper (1902–1994) a philosopher of science, clarified for us that scientific statements must be “open to falsification” (Popper, 1963). Science is required to indicate the conditions under which its statements might be proven incorrect. When an exception is found to a scientific generalization, that generalization must be qualified. In contrast, philosophical assumptions are not tentative hypotheses to be discarded when evidence contradicts them. There is no way to construct an empirical test that would let us falsify a philosophical assumption. If I maintain the philosophy that “all people seek what is good,” I will not permit any ordinary observations to disprove the assumption. On the contrary, I can account for all exceptions and seeming contradictions in terms of my assumption itself.

The easiest way to recognize whether specific declarations of a theory function as scientific statements or as philosophical assumptions is to ask what evidence would lead the theorist to change his or her position. If empirical evidence does not lead to a revision of the theory, you can be pretty sure that the declaration functions as a philosophical assumption.

The personality theories described in this book represent philosophical points of view as well as scientific investigations. Some of the theories are explicitly philosophical. In others, the philosophical assumptions are not clearly stated, but they are nevertheless present. Carl Rogers openly acknowledged that his view of the self was philosophical and that his primary differences with other theorists, such as B. F. Skinner, were philosophical ones. Sigmund Freud initially conceived of his work as lacking any philosophy but finally admitted that many of his assumptions functioned philosophically. Because personality theories and our own thoughts involve philosophical assumptions, it is important that we recognize and evaluate them as such.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Scientific statements are proven false by the process of perceptual observation. In contrast, philosophical assumptions have criteria that are suitable to the epiphanic vision that underlies them, but we cannot set up a crucial test or experiment that will determine whether or not the vision is justified. Philosophical assumptions have their own criteria or tests.

Here are three criteria for evaluating the philosophical assumptions that underlie personality theories. These three criteria add up to a fourth and final criterion: compellingness.

The first criterion is **coherence**. Are the philosophical assumptions of a personality theory clear, logical, and consistent, or are they riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies? A philosophical system may have apparent inconsistencies, perplexing metaphors, or paradoxes and still be coherent, provided that the contradictions are ironed out within the philosophical stance itself so that the final position represents a clear, coherent whole. A person’s philosophical system may also be unfinished—that is, open to further growth—but to be coherent, it must have a clearly recognizable, consistent thrust.

The second criterion is **relevance**. To be meaningful, a philosophical assumption must have some bearing on our view of reality. If we do not share the philosophical view of reality, we will have considerable difficulty judging the assumption. In our postmodern world, the criterion of relevance further implies that the assumption is compatible with empirical reality as best we can ascertain it; thus, philosophies are invariably reshaped by scientific discoveries. For example, people’s current assumptions regarding the impact of

heredity versus environment have been influenced by recent scientific findings in genetics.

The third criterion is **comprehensiveness**. Is the philosophical assumption “deep” enough? In part, this question refers to scope. Does the assumption cover what it intends to cover? Further, the criterion of comprehensiveness asks whether the treatment of the subject is profound or superficial. A philosophical assumption is superficial if it leaves too many questions unanswered or if it refuses to address them.

These three criteria lead to the fourth criterion: **compellingness**. The final and most important question is “Does the assumption and its underlying philosophy convince you?” A philosophical assumption convinces you if it grabs you in such a way that you find the belief inescapable. It is as if you *have* to believe in it. Actually, it is perfectly possible that a philosophical assumption may strike you as being coherent, relevant, and comprehensive, but in spite of those features it does not compel you to believe it. In such a case, the belief does not move you and you cannot “buy” it.

My language here deliberately describes you as passive: “The philosophical assumption grabs you.” “You are compelled.” This language underscores the fact that philosophical assumptions are not merely subjective opinions that a person has about the world. Rather, they emerge out of a person’s encounter with the world. They entail an active meeting of the person and the world that leads to a position about reality that the person finds inescapable.

The way in which philosophers create their views of the world is similar to, although more formal than, the manner in which each one of us comes up with our own view. We may not have thought as much or written about it, but each one of us, upon reflection, can probably think of a significant incident or period in our lives when we experienced



Philosophical Assumptions

Examining Your Own Philosophical Assumptions

By looking at your own philosophical assumptions, you can better prepare yourself to recognize them in the theories of others. In Table 1.1, each basic issue is presented as a bipolar dimension along which a person’s view can be placed according to the degree of agreement with one or the other extreme. You can rate your own views on a scale from 1 to 5. On each issue, if you completely agree with the first statement, rate the issue with a number 1. If you completely agree with the second statement, rate the issue with a number 5. If you only moderately agree with either statement, a number 2 or 4 would best reflect your view. If you are neutral toward the issue or believe that the best position is a synthesis of the two extremes, rate the issue with a number 3.

The first time you go through the items, rate each issue according to your beliefs. The second time, consider each issue in terms of your actions, the way in which you generally behave.

When you have determined where you stand on each of these major issues, a comparison of your positions can help you assess the importance of these issues to your own understanding of personality. Those assumptions that you feel very strongly about and mark with a 1 or a 5 probably play a very important role in your personal philosophy. If you are not strongly committed to any particular issue, that issue is probably not as important in your thinking about personality.

You should note that even experts differ in their responses to the statements in Table 1.1. The different personality theorists that we shall discuss vary markedly in their position on each of these issues. Each adopts the position that appears most commendable or compelling. Throughout the text, you will be asked to return to these assumptions to consider the stance of specific theorists and to see how your attitudes toward certain theorists are related to your own stance on these five dimensions.

TABLE 1.1 SOME BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

STRONGLY AGREE		IS NEUTRAL OR BELIEVES IN SYN-THESIS OF BOTH VIEWS		STRONGLY AGREE	
1	2	3	4	5	
FREEDOM			DETERMINISM		
People basically have control over their own behavior and understand the motives behind their behavior.			The behavior of people is basically determined by internal or external forces over which they have little, if any, control.		
1	2	3	4	5	
HEREDITY			ENVIRONMENT		
Inherited and inborn characteristics have the most important influence on a person's behavior.			Factors in the environment have the most important influence on a person's behavior.		
1	2	3	4	5	
UNIQUENESS			UNIVERSALITY		
Each individual is unique and cannot be compared with others.			People are basically very similar in nature.		
1	2	3	4	5	
PROACTIVITY			REACTIVITY		
Human beings primarily act on their own initiative.			Human beings primarily react to stimuli from the outside world.		
1	2	3	4	5	
OPTIMISM			PESSIMISM		
Significant changes in personality and behavior can occur throughout the course of a lifetime.			A person's personality and behavior are essentially stable and unchanging.		

something that led us to think about ourselves and our world in a different way. For example, after an illness or accident an individual often perceives life as having a new mission or purpose that was not present before. Such experiences constitute the formative insights that shape our lives.

During the second half of the twentieth century, we moved from a modern view of the world to the postmodern view that no one has a monopoly on "Truth" and that knowledge is a matter of perspective. This is not to say that there is no truth or that all perspectives are equally valuable. Most of our reconstructions of the past reveal a

deliberate ethnocentric Western view of personhood (Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon, 1992). Postmodernism raises a special challenge as we move to develop more globally relevant, multiculturally sensitive explanations appropriate for the twenty-first century.

Scientific Statements

As scientists, personality theorists seek to develop a workable set of hypotheses, or tentative assumptions, that will help us understand human behavior. Scientists confirm their hypotheses by testing them according to generally agreed-upon methods. Thus, science, which comes from the Latin *scire*, “to know,” is a group of methods of acquiring knowledge that are based on certain principles.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF SCIENCE

Science has its origins in philosophy, and, as such, it retains elements of its forebears. Thomas Kuhn (1922–1996), a physicist who has studied the history of science, points this out when he reminds us that the observation on which scientific activity is based is not fixed once and for all by the nature of the world and our sensory apparatus but depends on a prior paradigm. A **paradigm** is a model or concept of the world that is shared by the members of a community and that governs their activities. Everyday observation and perception are shaped through education and are subject to change over time. Your view of the world, for example, is very different from that of a person in ancient Greece or a member of an isolated primitive tribe. Indeed, without some sort of paradigm, we could not draw any conclusions from our observations at all.

Scientific statements, therefore, are statements about the world based on empirical observations arising from currently accepted paradigms, which could also be seen as shared philosophical assumptions. The paradigms are not derived from scientific activity but exist prior to it. For example, the scientific viewpoint that one *should* base conclusions on perceptions that can be shared by others rather than on private, intrinsically unique, perceptions is a value statement that is not mandated by our observations but chosen by the community of scientists as more useful; it is a paradigm.

RECOGNIZING SCIENTIFIC STATEMENTS

The keystone of science is **empirical** observation, and the simplest kinds of statements in science are empirical statements, such as “There is a person in the room.” To know whether or not an empirical statement is valid, an individual has to be shown evidence based on sensory data regarding what has been seen, heard, felt, smelled, or tasted.

Empirical statements may be based on objective data or subjective data. If someone reports, “I see a person,” we can interpret the statement in two ways. The person may be saying, “I see a *person*” or “I *see* a person.” In the first case, we are referring to the object of experience, or **objective data**. In the second case, we are referring to an experience of seeing, or **subjective data**. Both objective and subjective knowledge refer to empirical data. The difference between them lies in the position of the observer. In objective knowledge, the position is I-it: the self is looking outward on the world as object. In subjective knowledge, the position is I-me: the self is looking inward on its own experience as the object.

Reports that are concerned with the object of experience, or extrospective data, are relatively simple to verify. We merely indicate the conditions under which the observation may be repeated. If a second observer does not see the reported phenomenon, we suggest that the conditions were not clearly specified—for example, the observer looked

for the person in the wrong room. Or we may suspect that the original observer has a distorted sense of perception. Repeated observations of the same phenomenon under specified conditions lead to **consensual validation**, or agreement among observers.

Reports that are concerned with introspective or subjective phenomena are much more difficult to validate consensually. A certain piece of art may give one person much joy but fail to move someone else. This is because subjective phenomena often occur under complex conditions and are more difficult to describe than objective information. Repeating such subjective observations may require the second observer to undergo extensive training or other experiences in order to duplicate all of the conditions. Undoubtedly, one's joy on seeing a particular piece of art depends not simply on the art itself, but also on one's culture, mood, personal history, and so forth. Considerable effort is needed to duplicate these observations, but it is not impossible (Tart, 1975).

Since reports that are concerned with subjective phenomena are much more difficult to validate, some psychologists have tended to ignore them and invest their efforts in extro-spective or objective findings. As we saw, John Watson recommended that inasmuch as our thoughts, feelings, and wishes cannot be directly observed by another person, the psychologist should ignore them and concentrate on overt behaviors. Few psychologists today would agree with this extreme position. Most personality theorists emphasize that we need to be concerned with both subjective and objective data in order to understand behavior.

When a number of different instances of observation coincide, the scientist may make a **generalization**. A **scientific** (or **empirical**) **generalization** is a conclusion that something is true about many or all of the members of a certain class. Suppose I wanted to test the statement "All aggressive people are controlling." The evidence for this statement could be a number of facts about individual members of the class. I could observe this aggressive person, that aggressive person, and other aggressive persons. If all of them are also controlling, I might conclude that all aggressive people are controlling, even though I have not examined each and every aggressive person.

Because it is impossible for me to examine each and every aggressive person who has existed in the past or might exist in the present or future, I can never know for certain that my empirical generalization is true. Indeed, misleading stereotypes are the result of premature and unwise generalizations. As a scientist, the personality theorist must leave empirical generalizations open to possible falsification.

The scientist also uses **definitions**, statements that are true because of the way in which we have agreed to use words. Some words are easy to define clearly and precisely. Other words are harder to define and subject to more disagreement. To resolve this problem, the social scientist frequently tries to develop operational definitions. An **operational definition** specifies which behaviors are included in the concept. "Stress" might be operationally defined in terms of the rate of one's heartbeat and extent of one's perspiration as measured by polygraph apparatuses, which translate such bodily changes into a printed record. It frequently is difficult to reach agreement on suitable operational definitions, and at times an operational definition distorts or even misses the concept it is trying to describe. For example, "stress" can also be defined as a subjective feeling of intense anxiety. The value of operational definitions lies in giving us a common ground of reference.

The most important statements in science are based on scientific constructs. A scientist uses **scientific constructs**, which are imaginary or hypothetical and cannot be seen with the naked eye or even with sophisticated optical equipment, in order to explain what we observe. The building blocks of nature—protons, neutrons, and electrons—remain visibly elusive by direct observation but are indirectly confirmed by their necessary existence in the construct. Today's atomic models require further inference to even

smaller unseen particles such as quarks, leptons, and hadrons. The difficulty of not being directly observable does not imply nonexistence; rather it has provided for continual progress toward an understanding of what may be real. Another familiar hypothetical construct is that of IQ or intelligence quotient. IQ is an imaginary construct that is used to explain certain behaviors, namely, one's likelihood for academic success. Many of our concepts in science, in fact almost all of the important ones, cannot be directly seen; we can know them only through their effects.

SOME BASIC SCIENTIFIC CONSTRUCTS

Constructs such as trait, reinforcement, and self have been created in efforts to understand personality scientifically. The concept of **trait** refers to a determining tendency or predisposition to respond in a certain way. Examples of traits are emotional stability and introversion versus extraversion. Allport, Cattell, Eysenck, and the theorists who identified five primary personality factors known as the Big Five make extensive use of trait constructs in their theories. The **self** is another useful construct for understanding personality that is present in many contemporary theories. In Carl Rogers's theory *self* refers to those psychological processes that govern an individual's behavior. In Albert Bandura's theory the self is conceived more narrowly in terms of cognitive structures.

Indeed, some personality theorists conceive of the term *personality* itself as a scientific construct. Thus Cattell (1950) defines personality as "that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation." For Cattell, personality is an imaginary construct that permits us to explain and predict behavior. The scientific constructs of a personality theory tie together the empirical findings of that theory and suggest new relationships that will hold true under certain conditions.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SCIENTIFIC STATEMENTS

As already pointed out, there is no one method of validating scientific statements. Personality theorists use a variety of techniques, some of which are very complicated, to evaluate their work. We will be looking at a number of these later in this chapter and in subsequent chapters when we discuss the specific assessment and research procedures used by different personality theorists. However, we can make some general comments about evaluating scientific statements.

In order to qualify as scientific, statements must fulfill the criterion of **verifiability**. They must ultimately be based on empirical observation, and the theory behind them has to specify how they can be confirmed or refuted. Even though scientists may build elaborate theories referring to things that they cannot observe directly, they base their theories on perceptions of human sense organs. It is true that I cannot test the statement "John has an IQ of 110." in the same way that I can test the statement "There is a person in the room." I cannot simply look. The statement must be tested indirectly, but the test is still based on empirical observation, such as looking at John's performance on an IQ measuring device. Given the identical conditions, another person could be expected to share the same perceptions and draw the same conclusions. Scientific statements, therefore, are based on *what is* and *what occurs* in our everyday world as it appears to us through our sense organs.

Second, scientific statements must be *open to falsification*. As a scientist, the personality theorist is required to indicate the conditions under which theoretical statements might be proven incorrect. If an exception is found to a scientific statement, that statement is considered to be false or in need of qualification. The generalization "All aggressive people are controlling," for example, is disproven by pointing to an aggressive person who is not controlling or qualified by indicating the conditions under which an aggressive person will not seek to control others. This helps us to understand why a scientist never claims that the

information produced by scientific methods is ultimately true. Scientific hypotheses are tentative and need to be discarded when evidence contradicts them. Although scientific methods cannot be said to yield ultimate truth, they do provide a wealth of useful information to assist us in living in the everyday world. It is to our advantage, therefore, to act as if the conclusions from our scientific methods are true. Indeed, the final criterion for evaluating scientific constructs is that of **usefulness** rather than compellingness. Usefulness is the ability to generate information that can assist us in living.

In the process of scientific investigations, the personality theorist frequently develops more than one hypothesis. Each one is examined in turn to rule out those that do not stand up under test conditions. Occasionally, the scientist is left with rival hypotheses. Given that both are sound hypotheses, how does the scientist decide between them? In general, three criteria have been used: compatibility, predictive power, and simplicity. Each of these criteria has advantages and limitations.

Compatibility refers to the agreement of the hypothesis with previously well-established information. This criterion is a sensible one since it is a lot easier for us to accept a new hypothesis if it is consistent with findings in other areas. However, it should not be too rigidly applied. There are times in science when a new idea completely shatters earlier theories, forcing us to revise or reconsider them.

Predictive power refers to the range or scope of the statement. Scientists seek not only to explain the phenomena that we observe but also to predict and anticipate them. The more predictions or consequences that we can infer from a theory, the greater is its range and usefulness in generating new ideas. On the other hand, too strict a reliance on this criterion may lead to the notion that the only value of a theory lies in the amount of research and predictions it generates. Some theories express their heuristic value by integrating and encompassing ideas rather than by generating specific predictions and research projects.

The third criterion for deciding between rival hypotheses is **simplicity**, or parsimony.

The preferred theory is the one that adequately accounts for the complexity of material in the simplest way. This criterion comes into play only when rival hypotheses generate *identical* consequences, which is a rare occurrence.

We should note that in the West, theories of personality have often developed within the strict limits of a scientific paradigm. Some of the personality theorists that we will cover (such as Jung, Fromm, Horney, Rogers, Maslow, and May), however, have argued that that paradigm frequently fostered *scientism*, or the exclusive reliance on a narrow conception of science, which is inappropriate for understanding human nature. Some of these, most notably Jung and Horney, have suggested that we turn to the East for a more balanced comprehension.

Thinking Critically

How can you evaluate personality theories? See the Thinking Critically box "Evaluating Personality Theories" on page 16.

The Art of Personality Theories

If theories of personality have their origin in philosophy and seek to validate their constructs through scientific methods, they also culminate in some form of art or practical application. Personality theories have found application in many ways, and the criteria for evaluating each way are varied. In this section we introduce three applications of personality theory: assessment, research, and psychotherapy.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a major area in the application of personality theories to everyday life. **Assessment** refers to evaluation or measurement. You have probably been touched by assessment to a greater degree than you realize. In education, for example, assessment

Thinking Critically

Evaluating Personality Theories

As you review the personality theories in this text, you can use the following criteria to determine how successfully each theory functions as a philosophy and as a science.

First you need to determine which assertions function as *philosophical assumptions* and which function as *scientific statements*. Look at the major tenets of the theory, and determine whether each is based on epiphanic or empirical evidence. Philosophical assumptions are based on a vision of ultimate reality, whereas scientific statements are based on empirical observation.

Then, ask *how well the philosophical assumptions fulfill the criteria of philosophy*. The following criteria can be used to evaluate the assumptions you identify:

Coherence: Is the philosophical position clear, logical, and consistent?

Relevance: Does the theory deal with issues that are important and meaningful to us today?

Comprehensiveness: Does the theory encompass a wide array of phenomena, inclusively covering aspects of the subject it claims to deal with?

Compellingness: Does it convince you?

Then, ask *how well the scientific statements fulfill the criteria of science*. The following criteria can be used to evaluate scientific statements:

Verifiability: Are the statements ultimately based on empirical observation, and does the theory clearly specify how they can be confirmed and refuted?

Compatibility: Does the theory build on, and is it consistent with, other well-established information?

Predictive power: How successful has the theory been in generating new ideas and research?

Simplicity: Does the theory adequately account for the complexity of material in the most economical way?

Usefulness: Does the theory provide useful information to assist us in living in the everyday world?

Note: Some texts present a single list of criteria combining aspects of both philosophy and science (e.g., a good theory should have empirical support, refutability, comprehensiveness, heuristic value [the ability to generate new ideas and research], applied value, and parsimony). This text reflects my conviction that the philosophic and scientific aspects of personality theorizing require different criteria of evaluation.

is used to measure progress and to evaluate learning disabilities. Psychologists in industries and organizations use assessment to assist in job placement. Prior to deciding on a course of counseling, a clinician needs to assess the individual in order to evaluate the nature of his or her problem.

What makes for a good personality assessment? The most important criterion is **validity**, the quality of measuring what a construct is supposed to measure (Ozer, 1999). This is often a difficult criterion to meet. For example, nearly all psychologists agree that certain intelligence tests are valid measures for predicting school performance. They are not at all certain, however, that these tests are valid measures of that elusive quality “intelligence.” In developing assessment techniques appropriate to their concepts,

personality theorists need to show how the construct fits within the theory and also show that the assessment situation effectively measures it. A response “false” to the statement “I like most people” is probably more indicative of hostility than the response “true” to the statement “Red is my favorite color.”

Reliability, or consistency of scores over time, is also important. A thermometer must register the same degree each time for the same amount of heat in order to be a consistent and useful measuring tool. The measurement of personality, however, is not that simple. A change in measurement may indicate not unreliability of the measure but growth and change in light of other events such as therapy. **Objectivity**, or the avoidance of subjective bias, is also prized in assessment. Objectivity is easier to obtain if responses are clearly delineated. In a true-false test, each response clearly indicates a certain factor. It is more difficult, but nevertheless possible, to develop objective criteria for scoring protracted written or verbal responses. Such criteria provide objectivity in evaluating interviews, written essays, projective techniques, and so forth.

Although it is very difficult to develop and evaluate appropriate assessment techniques, the wise and judicious use of assessment can be invaluable in developing individual and group potential. However, as scientific tools, assessment techniques must remain open to falsification, and our use of them needs to reflect that fact.

The personality theorists discussed in this book have developed specific ways of assessing personality that are informed by and also inform their theories. These procedures range from the interpretation of dreams to statistically sophisticated and elaborately constructed tests. We will discuss each theorist’s particular method, but first some general words about two important approaches to assessing personality: psychometric tests and projective tests.

Psychometric Tests

Psychometric tests measure personality characteristics by means of carefully designed questionnaires developed with theoretical and statistical techniques. Psychometric testing had its origin in the psychological laboratories established at the end of the nineteenth century.

One of the most carefully researched questionnaires is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), first published in 1942 and most recently revised in 1989. The MMPI is made up of over 550 self-report items or printed statements to which the participant answers “true,” “false,” or “cannot say.” Designed to measure tendencies toward pathology or abnormal behavior, the MMPI is employed as an aid in the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders and is widely used in personality research.

Psychometric measuring devices and techniques have not been used without controversy (Buchanan, 2002). Many individuals view such tests as an invasion of personal privacy and are wary of the use to which the test results may be put.

Projective Tests

Some psychologists, particularly in a clinical setting, also employ projective techniques. The participant is presented with a deliberately ambiguous stimulus. In responding to the stimulus, the participant expresses personal attitudes, values, needs, and feelings. Two of the best-known projective techniques are the Rorschach Inkblot Test and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), which are derived, respectively, from the theories of Carl Jung and Henry Murray.

The main advantage of projective techniques is that they disguise the purpose of the assessment. Because the stimuli are ambiguous and the participant is free to respond in any way, it is difficult for the participant to know what would be an appropriate answer

and to fake a “correct” response. The difficulty with projective tests is that they are very hard to score in an objective manner that avoids subjective bias and the projection of the scorer.

RESEARCH

Personality theorists also differ widely in the type of research methods that they use. Some follow very strict scientific guidelines in their work. Here the interface between science and application is very clear. Others encourage the use of a wider range of acceptable methodologies, making use of interdisciplinary and eclectic approaches. Indeed, restraints on creative and productive research may occur when the area of personality inquiry is too narrowly demarcated. Three research approaches commonly used by personality theorists are the clinical approach, the psychometric approach, and the experimental approach. It is difficult to be specific about the evaluative criteria here because they vary according to the specific activity and its canons of research.

The Clinical Approach

Many of the personality theories that we will be considering originated in the clinical setting. The clinician conducts research through intensive interviews and observation of the participant. Clinical methods of research may also include the analysis of dreams and/or early memories. A clinician may further structure the observations by asking questions or giving one or more tests. Frequently there is considerable overlap between a theorist’s methods of research and methods of assessment.

A primary tool in the clinical approach to personality is the development of a *case history*, a carefully drawn biography of an individual. Sigmund Freud developed psychoanalytic theory largely on the basis of case histories (including his own). Unlike most other research methods, the case history entails studying one individual or a small number of individuals in great depth rather than large numbers of subjects. Freud and Erik Erikson also developed case histories of prominent historical figures such as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Martin Luther, and Gandhi.

The Psychometric Approach

The use of mathematical and statistical tools to measure personality characterizes the psychometric approach to research. **Psychometrics** has been facilitated by the growth of new and powerful mathematical techniques for analyzing and synthesizing vast quantities of clinical data. The expansion has been accelerated by the ready availability of inexpensive computer hardware and software programs. The **correlation** is a major statistical tool used by psychometricians.

In a *correlational study*, events or variables are systematically observed as they naturally occur to see the extent to which they covary, or occur together. Events that covary are said to be correlated. Correlations are expressed by a number that ranges from +1.00 to –1.00. The plus or minus sign tells us if the relationship is positive or negative. The numeric value tells us the extent of the relationship. The closer the numbers are to +1.00 or to –1.00, the higher is the frequency with which the two events occur or do not occur together.

It is important to remember that a correlation does not imply that one variable caused the other. For example, there is a high correlation between brown hair and brown eyes. This is not to say that brown hair causes brown eyes but rather that a great many people who have brown hair also have brown eyes. Nevertheless, when two variables have a high correlation, it is reasonable to hypothesize that one caused the

other or that a third variable caused both. However, such a hypothesis would have to be subject to further testing. We are not permitted to draw that conclusion simply on the basis of a correlational study. Cattell and Eysenck make considerable use of a sophisticated correlational procedure, *factor analysis*, in developing their theories.

The Experimental Approach

Many psychologists favor an experimental approach because it permits them to infer a cause-and-effect relationship between two factors. In its simplest form, a researcher systematically varies the presence of one factor, the *independent variable*, while keeping all other variables constant. The researcher can then determine whether or not changes in the independent variable have any effect on a particular behavior, the *dependent variable*. If they do, it is assumed that the changes in the independent variable caused the changes in the dependent variable. For example, after students are provided with either positive or negative feedback following their performance on a memory test, they could be given a depression questionnaire to test for a change in mood. The two levels of feedback would serve as the independent variable, and the score on the depression questionnaire would serve as the dependent variable. Experiments can be very complex, with several independent and dependent variables.

The experimental method is considered the most precise method of psychological research. It has the advantage of permitting the experimenter to posit a clear cause-and-effect relationship, but it has limitations. To limit the findings of personality explorations to those that can be demonstrated only within the experimental laboratory would be to circumscribe the study of personality to merely those aspects about the person that can be studied by manipulation. Because of this constraint, many questions about the ultimate meanings, purposes, and goals of human living—questions that traditionally have been and could be included in the study of personality—would be ruled out of inquiry. A wider range of acceptable methodologies is necessary (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992).

Multiple approaches and methodologies are needed to understand the whole person. In general, the field of personality inquiry is broadening in scope (McCrae, 1996). Since Sarbin (1986) suggested that narrative might be considered a root metaphor for understanding human behavior and experience, the integrative life story has emerged as a significant vehicle for expressing and understanding personality (McAdams, 1993). Narrative thought has emerged as a primary form of cognition and self-understanding that qualitatively varies from abstract proportional or scientific thinking (Mueller & Tingley, 1990) and that further enables us to understand moral development (Greenberg, 1995). In general, the growing openness of personality theorists to more effective methods contrasts with the perpetuation by some other psychologists of a narrow view of science.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

The art of **psychotherapy** is the effort to apply the findings of personality theory in ways that will assist individuals and meet human goals. The word *therapy* comes from the Greek *therapeia*, which means “attending” and “healing”; however, psychotherapists are not interested only in healing sick people. They are also interested in understanding “normal” people, learning how they function, and helping them to function more creatively. Although in many respects psychotherapy is the flowering of personality theory, it is also the seed of it, because the desire to help people has fostered and nourished the development of personality theories. The two have gone hand in hand. Many theories

of personality cannot be adequately understood without understanding the theory of psychotherapy that led to them.

Goals of Psychotherapy

Joseph Rychlak (1968) points out that psychotherapy has three major motives or goals: the scholarly, the ethical, and the curative.

The *scholarly* motive considers therapy as a means of understanding the self and human nature. Psychoanalysis, for example, was seen by Freud as a tool for discovering truths about human nature. His goal was to help the individual acquire self-understanding and to develop a comprehensive theory of human nature. He developed psychoanalysis as a method of research aimed at these ends.

The *ethical* motive considers therapy a means of helping the individual to change, improve, grow, and better the quality of life. Carl Rogers's work is an example of the ethical motive. His emphasis is on a climate created by the therapist that permits change to occur within the client rather than on cognitive understanding or the manipulation of behavior.

The *curative* motive aims directly at eliminating troublesome symptoms and substituting more suitable behavior. Most behavior therapists, for example, consider that they have been hired to do a job and seek to do it as effectively and quickly as possible. From this point of view, the therapist is responsible for creating changes, removing symptoms, and controlling behavior.

Most people enter therapy with the expectation that they will be cured or helped to improve. In this respect, the curative motive is most consistent with the popular view of psychotherapy. Because of this expectation, many people have difficulty, particularly at the beginning, in undergoing psychoanalysis or other forms of "insight" therapy. If they stay with it, however, their reasons for being in therapy change, and they begin to appreciate the value of the other motives. Obviously, the reasons for entering, continuing in, and practicing psychotherapy are many and mixed. This is why the evaluation of therapy is a difficult issue.

Evaluating Psychotherapy

How does one go about evaluating psychotherapy? What criteria are appropriate? In 1952, Hans Eysenck stunned the therapeutic community with a report on treatment outcomes indicating that various forms of psychotherapy are no more effective than providing a placebo or merely waiting for the condition to get better on its own (cf. Eisner, 2000). Eysenck's report created a flurry of research and comment, as *meta-analyses** of psychotherapy outcome studies were conducted showing that various forms of psychotherapy are consistently beneficial (Smith & Glass, 1977; Landman & Dawes, 1982). Eysenck's criterion for improvement focused on "symptom remission." Eysenck (1994a, 1994b, 1994c) continued to reaffirm his position but acknowledged that the problem is a paradigm conflict in which different criteria are used. Eysenck was an advocate of the behaviorist position. Differences in theory lead to differences in therapy. Symptom remission may be an appropriate criterion for therapies governed by the curative motive but not necessarily for those that are conducted for other purposes.

If the proportion of cures were the only criterion by which psychotherapies were to be judged, psychoanalysis and other insight therapies would have long since disappeared from the scene with the arrival of more efficient and less costly curative techniques.

*A meta-analysis is a comprehensive analysis of several studies.

This, however, has not been the case. If one's criterion rests on scholarly grounds, psychoanalysis emerges a clear winner. No other method of therapy has provided us with such a wealth of information about the complexity and depth of the human personality.

In brief, each method of psychotherapy must be evaluated in terms of its own goals and purposes. Behavior therapists, who aim at curing clients, are particularly interested in discovering the proportion of cures associated with various techniques. Ethical theorists, who aim at creating a suitable climate for therapeutic change and life improvement, have stimulated the study of those conditions that foster personality change and their effects. Freudian psychoanalysis asks to be evaluated in terms of its effectiveness as a method of research aimed at understanding human nature. Meta-analyses of the efficacy of psychotherapy continue to support the effectiveness of psychodynamic and other therapies (Shedler, 2010) while also continuing the discussion of appropriate evaluation for psychotherapy (Shedler, 2011). Figure 1.3 summarizes the evaluation of psychotherapy and the other main points of the chapter.

The Challenges of Evaluation

I have suggested that personality theorists may function as philosophers, scientists, and artists. The use of this threefold approach allows us to recognize each activity as it arises and gives us a better idea of how personality theories in general, and specific personality theories, work. It is important to identify the different hats (of philosophy, science, and/or art) that personality theorists are wearing as they make their statements because each activity has its own rules and procedures for establishing information, and each has its own criteria for judging the worth of its findings.

No theory is simply philosophy, science, or art; every theory combines elements of all three. Nor are we trying to establish a model that all personality theories must follow. The fact is there is no one scientific method, philosophical approach, or psychotherapeutic strategy that would serve as an adequate model for all others.

Scientific studies of personality rely on paradigms that can be established only philosophically and that generally culminate in some form of art or practical application. The desire to be scientific reflects itself in an effort to test constructs by validating evidence rather than by relying on the gut-level feeling of illumination that everyday language calls "understanding something" (Perrez, 1991).

Some psychologists have attempted to narrow the possible activity of a personality theorist to one function or interpretation of science, such as an objective experimental methodology, and have ignored the philosophical assumptions on which all scientific work is based. Others have assumed that the compelling character of philosophical assumptions is sufficient to establish their credibility as scientific findings about personality. Either position is unnecessarily limiting. It is important that we distinguish among the different kinds of functions that personality theories entail so that we can recognize them and evaluate them accordingly. Part of the current problem in personality theorizing is that the theorists are not always clear about what hat they are wearing or what activity they are engaged in.

As we discuss the major personality theorists in the following chapters, we will try to clarify the function of philosophy, science, and art in each theory. This should enable you to see how the theories fit into the overall framework of personality theories as philosophy, science, and art. As you will see, there is a wide variety and diversity of personality theories, providing you with a rich selection from which to choose or develop your own theory of personality.

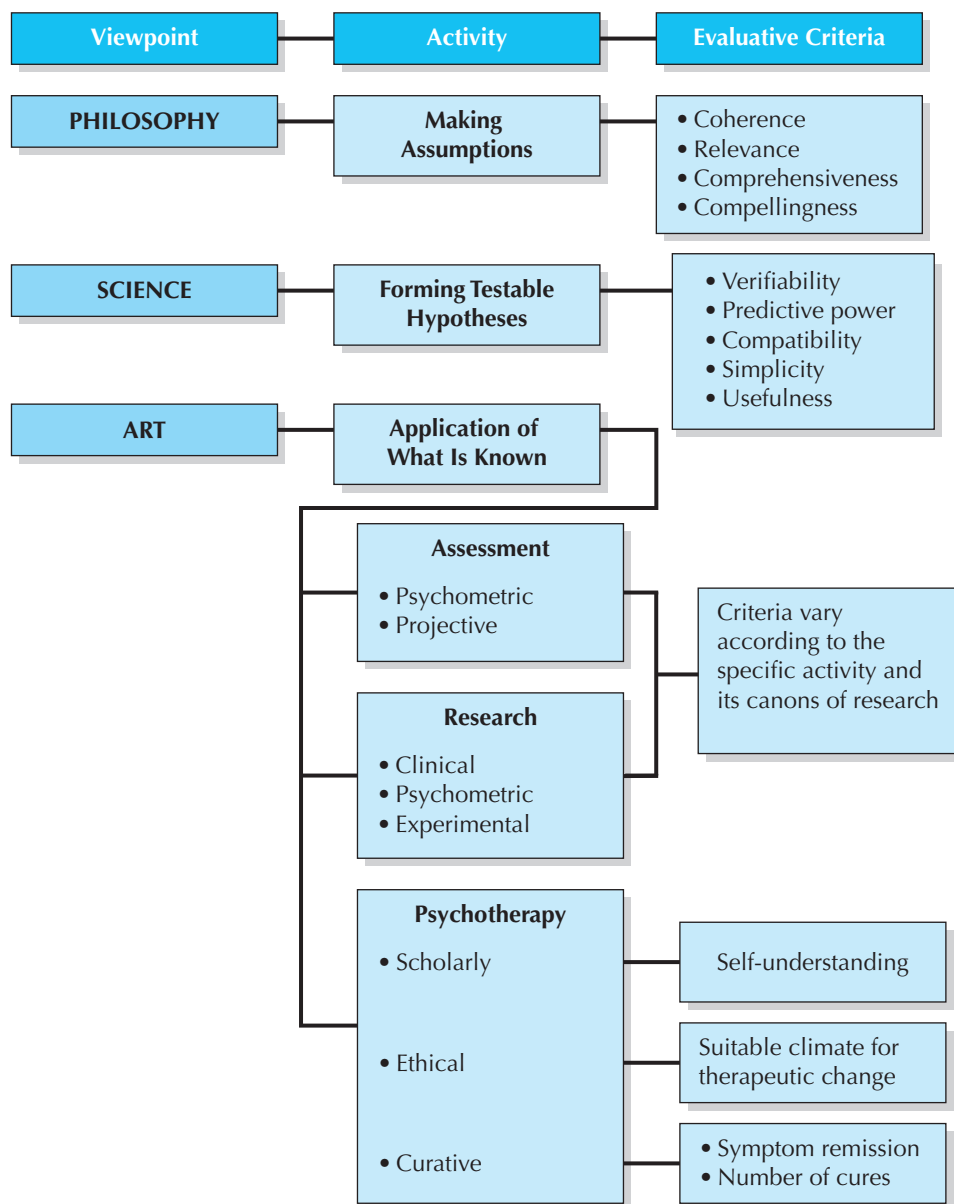


FIGURE 1.3 VIEWPOINTS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND EVALUATING PERSONALITY THEORIES

Shown here are three complementary orientations of personality theorists. Each viewpoint entails different activities that contribute to personality theory, and each activity must be evaluated according to its own criteria.

Summary

1. The term **personality** (p. 2) is difficult to define because there is little common agreement on how the term should be used. In everyday speech it usually refers to someone's public image. Different personality theorists present their own definitions of the word based on their theoretical positions.

2. A **theory** (p. 2) is a set of abstract concepts that we make about a group of facts or events in order to explain them.
3. Two traditions inform contemporary theories of personality. One stems from psychological laboratories and academic research. The other stems from psychoanalysis and clinical psychology. The study of personality became a formal and systematic area of specialization in American psychology in the mid-1930s, but the two traditions have never fully merged.
4. Personality theories may function as philosophy, science, and art. As scientists, personality theorists develop hypotheses that help us understand human behavior. As philosophers, they explore what it means to be a person. As artists, they seek to apply what is known about human behavior to make a better life.
5. Some of the basic philosophical issues on which personality theorists differ are **freedom versus determinism** (p. 8), **heredity versus environment** (p. 8), **uniqueness versus universality** (p. 8), **proactivity versus reactivity** (p. 8), and **optimism versus pessimism** (p. 8).
6. **Philosophical assumptions** (p. 6) suggest that things are not necessarily what they appear to be. They are based on a special **epiphanic** (p. 8) vision, which goes beyond the ordinary perception of our sense organs. Philosophical statements tend to be global and do not allow for any exceptions. They often are implicit rather than explicit.
7. Philosophical assumptions are evaluated by criteria appropriate to the special act of knowing that underlies them. The criteria are **coherence** (p. 9), **relevance** (p. 9), and **comprehensiveness** (p. 10), all of which add up to a final criterion, **compellingness** (p. 10).
8. Science has its basis in **philosophy** (p. 6) because the ordinary observation on which science relies depends on a prior **paradigm** (p. 12) that is established philosophically. The values and standards of science also function as philosophical commitments.
9. The simplest kinds of **scientific statements** (p. 12) are **empirical** (p. 12), based directly on observation. The data on which these statements are based may be **objective** (p. 12) or **subjective** (p. 12). When a number of different observations coincide, a scientist may make a **generalization** (p. 13). Scientists also use **operational definitions** (p. 13), which specify the behaviors included in a term, and **scientific constructs** (p. 13), which use imaginary or hypothetical concepts to explain what we observe.
10. Scientists use a variety of techniques to evaluate their work. All of these techniques are ultimately **verifiable** (p. 14)—that is, based on observation, the ordinary perceptions of our sense organs—although some statements can be tested only indirectly. Scientific statements must be open to falsification; a scientist must indicate the conditions under which a statement might be proven false. Scientists do not claim that the information produced by their methods is ultimately true. Scientific statements should be judged for their **usefulness** (p. 15) rather than their truth. When scientists end up with more than one hypothesis, the criteria they use to decide between rival hypotheses are **compatibility** (p. 15), **predictive power** (p. 15), and **simplicity** (p. 15).
11. Personality theories have found application in assessment and research. Two major approaches to assessing personality are psychometric and projective techniques. Three primary research approaches used in personality are the **clinical**

approach (p. 18), the **psychometric approach** (p. 18), and the **experimental approach** (p. 19).

12. The three major goals of **psychotherapy** (p. 19) are the **scholarly** (p. 20), **ethical** (p. 20), and **curative** (p. 20) motives. Scholarly therapies should be evaluated on the basis of their contributions to the understanding of the self and human nature. Ethical therapies should be evaluated in terms of the suitability of the climate they create for fostering change and life improvement. Curative therapies should be evaluated on the basis of symptom remission and number of cures.
13. It is important to distinguish among the different orientations of personality theories so that we can recognize each viewpoint and use appropriate methods to evaluate each theory.

Personal Experiences

1. You use theories in your personal life all the time—theories about the fastest way to get from home to the mall, theories about how to attract and keep a boyfriend or girlfriend, theories about how to get what you want from your parents, theories about how to get an A in this class. Each theory needs evidence to support and legitimate it. Discuss a theory you've come up with in the past year or so, perhaps a theory about love or a theory about how to achieve success after college. What prompted you to come up with this theory, how have you been testing it, what kinds of evidence have you used, and how is your theory holding up?
2. To better understand theories that you develop in your own life, you need to better understand your own philosophical assumptions. Review Table 1.1, and recall where you fell on the scale of each of the criteria. Having evaluated your philosophical assumptions, try to determine how they may have impacted the theory you discussed in question 1.
3. Although this text focuses exclusively on theories as they pertain to personality, many of the same principles of evaluation and assessment hold true for all theories. Look at the Thinking Critically box "Evaluating Personality Theories," and use the assessment list provided there to evaluate your theory in question 1. How is your theory measuring up? Is it more a philosophy or a scientific statement? Is there any tweaking you could do to your theory to make it fit into one category or the other?

The Psychoanalytic Approach

Of all the giants of intellectual history, Sigmund Freud emerges as an unquestionable and controversial leader in helping us to understand human nature. Many of the other theories that we will study were developed as efforts to elaborate on, modify, substitute for, or refute the concepts of Freud. The systematic study of personality may be said to have begun with Freud's development of psychoanalysis at the end of the nineteenth century. Not only did Freud revolutionize psychology, but his influence has also been felt in all the social sciences, as well as in literature, art, and religion. Salvador Dali's artwork and Alfred Hitchcock's movies are just two of the many areas Freud's work has influenced. Over the years, Freud's ideas have been in and out of favor. But Freud continues to haunt us. We dismiss him at our own peril. Somewhat surprisingly, today's advanced neuroscientific research gives credence to many of Freud's insights and hunches.

