A history is an interpretation of the past in light of what followed. It is a story about how events and changes led up to a subsequent state of affairs. If that subsequent state of affairs is the current state of affairs, then the historian must make sense of how the past may have led up to the present. The prevailing view of the present, therefore, influences how the past is to be seen. If recent reviews are any indication, there appear to be increasingly positive signs concerning the present health of personality psychology (D. M. Buss, 1991; Craik, 1993; Digman, 1990; McAdams, 1994; Pervin, 1985, 1990; Singer & Kolligan, 1987; Wiggins & Pincek, 1992). This history, therefore, begins with a mildly optimistic perception of the current state of affairs in personality.

When the present is seen in relatively optimistic terms, narratives of the past are likely to manifest themes of either progress or rebirth. Both are apparent in this history, though they are tempered by themes of stagnation and disorganization as well. The theme of progress is a favorite in histories of science, for most people assume that science moves forward, toward greater understanding and truth. From the current vantage point, some progress in the history of personality psychology can be seen, but the progress appears uneven and fitful. Sanford (1963) warns that the research activity of psychologists at any particular time may not accurately reflect main ideas in the field. Other reviewers have noted that the field of personality psychology is especially prone to conceptual and methodological fads (Sechrest, 1976). A challenge for this history, therefore, is to discern broad conceptual trends as they have evolved over time. As such this account is highly selective, passing
over many ephemeral fads as well as many substantive contributions to the field that simply cannot be included in the short space given for such a daunting exposition. Finally, this is a recent history of personality psychology, concentrating on the twentieth century, and it is heavily weighted toward concept trends and developments in America.

I. Personality Psychology’s Unique Features: Holism, Motivation, and Individual Differences

Personality psychology became an identifiable discipline in the social sciences in the 1930s. During that decade a number of separate lines of inquiry came together, culminating in the highly integrative programs for the field generated by Allport (1937), Murray (1938), and Lewin (1935). The first issue of the journal Character and Personality appeared in 1932. The journal aimed to join German studies of character with British and American studies of individual differences in persons, incorporating case studies, correlational surveys, experiments, and theoretical discussions. McDougall (1932) wrote the lead article, exploring various meanings of the terms “character” and “personality.” Early contributors included Adler, Jung, Spearman, Frenkel-Brunswik, Rosenzweig, and MacKinnon.

The publication of Allport’s (1937) Personality: A Psychological Interpretation marked the formal arrival of personality on the scene of social science. Although textbooks on mental hygiene, abnormal psychology, and character and personality had appeared in earlier years (e.g., Bagby, 1928; Bruce, 1908; Jastrow, 1915; Roback, 1927), Allport’s was the first to articulate a grand vision for the field of personality and to place it within the context of historical and contemporary scholarship in the arts and sciences. (Stagner’s [1937] textbook in personality, written from an experimental/behaviorist point of view, appeared in the same year, but its historical influence has not been nearly as great as that of Allport’s.) Allport viewed personality psychology as the study of the individual person. He defined personality as “the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment”—a definition that, short of its sexist language, is still serviceable today. Allport later (1961) changed “unique adjustments to his environment” to “characteristic behavior and thought.”

From the beginning, personality psychology was a dissident field in the context of American experimental psychology (Hall & Lindzey, 1957). Whereas American psychology tended toward the elementaristic, personality was holistic, taking the whole person as the primary unit of study. Whereas American learning theory focused on the relations between external stimuli and publicly observable responses in rats and other animals, personality concerned itself with the problem of human motivation, conceived in terms of unobservable dynamics and promptings from within. Whereas experimental psychologists searched for universal laws applicable to all individuals, personality focused on how people were different from each other as well as how they were alike. In addition, personality psychology invited
collaborations with a wide variety of disciplines lying outside the mainstream of American experimental psychology. These included psychoanalysis and other depth psychologies, German characterology, mental testing, and abnormal psychology.

With its triple emphasis on the whole person, motivation, and individual differences, personality psychology has always held a rather tenuous and ambiguous status in American psychology. On the one hand, some have proclaimed that proper personality theory is (or should be) nothing less than integrative psychological theory at the highest level, placing personality at the center of all of psychology (e.g., G. S. Klein & Krench, 1951; McCurdy, 1965). On the other hand, some have suggested that the discipline is so amorphous that it should be abolished, or allowed to fade away (Blake & Mouton, 1959). Both extremes are problematic in that they fail to affirm a separate identity for the field of personality psychology: it is either nothing or everything (which is also nothing). This historical account affirms an identity for personality psychology as a discipline that has its own distinguishing features. Three of these are the emphases on (1) the whole person, (2) motivation and dynamics, and (3) individual differences.

II. Historical Roots: Before the 1930s

A. The Whole Person

Before Allport, a distinguished group of European scholars championed the whole person as a unit of scientific study. Relatedly, these scholars tended to conceptualize persons themselves as striving toward wholeness, toward unity and purpose in their lives. Comte (1852) envisioned a new science, which he named La morale, dedicated to the examination of the individual person as both “a cause and consequence of society” (Allport, 1954, p. 8). In Comte’s view, the person is more than a biological and a cultural being. The person is a uniquely patterned moral agent existing as a unified and directed whole. La morale could be viewed from either a biological or a social/cultural perspective, but the identity of the new science was also to transcend these two views. Writes Allport (1954), “what Comte was seeking was a science of personality—unfortunately some years before such a science was possible” (p. 8).

Dilthey (1900/1978) argued for a purely human life science, divorced from the objective approaches of the natural sciences. Rejecting virtually all canons of conventional scientific methodology, his psychology of Verstehen set as its goal the empathic understanding of the inner unity of the individual life. Somewhat less radical was the personalistic psychology of Stern (1924), premised on the assumption that the person is a “multiform dynamic unity.” Closer to the mainstream in academic psychology was McDougall’s (1908) view that whereas personality may be seen in terms of a number of different instincts and sentiments, the master sentiment is self-regard, which makes for the unity of self, or what McDougall called character.

Both James (1890) and Freud (1923/1961) left room in their writings for the person’s strivings toward unity and wholeness. For James the self-as-me (the objec-
tive self or self-concept)—in its material, social, and spiritual aspects—encompasses all that the person understands to be "me" and "mine." By contrast, James' self-as-I (the subjective self or ego) is a fleeting state, a person's moment of consciousness, destined to slip instantaneously away into a rushing stream. For Freud, "the I" (das Ich, or ego) is a unifying agent of sorts, working to effect compromises among conflicting forces within the person and between the person and the environment, with the final goal of reducing anxiety and promoting effective, reality-based functioning. When wholeness or unity is destroyed, the person is bound to suffer problems.

B. The Problem of Motivation

Hall and Lindzey (1957) write that personality theorists have traditionally assigned a crucial role to the motivation processes. More than most other fields in the social sciences, personality psychology concerns itself with the internal springs of human action. This orientation is evident even in textbooks written before Allport (1937): "It is surely in the springs of human action, if anywhere, that the key to the problem of personality is to be found" (Garnett, 1928, p. 14).

Conceptualizations of human motivation may be broadly classed into those emphasizing (1) biological constructs such as drives, instincts, and brain rewards, and (2) cognitive processes such as expectancies, values, schemas, and attributions (Geen, Beatty, & Arkin, 1984). In the early years of this century, personality theories tended to draw on the former class, invoking various biological or quasi-biological explanations for why people ultimately do what they do. Therefore, Freud (1905/1953, 1920/1955) argued that biologically anchored drives concerning sexuality and aggression provide the energy and the direction for much of human behavior, though their manifestations are disguised through the defensive machinations of the ego and the generally antagonistic demands of the social world. McDougall (1908) presented a more differentiated theory of motivation, suggesting that human behavior is energized and guided by 12 instincts and five "nonspecific innate tendencies." Major instincts include those concerned with reproduction, food seeking, construction (building things), and gregariousness. Whereas Freud's Eros and death instincts are generally viewed to be irrational and at odds with the demands of social life, McDougall saw instinctive activity as complexly patterned, reality-based behavior that is sustained until some natural goal is achieved. For McDougall, instinctive behavior is socially adaptive and situationally malleable.

McDougall's (1908) concept of sentiment represents an attempt to move toward the cognitive pole of motivational theorizing. Similar in meaning to the contemporary term "value," a sentiment develops when the mental image of an object or activity in the environment becomes associated with one or more instincts. People form sentiments with regard to concrete objects (one's favorite book), collectivities (church, gang), and abstractions (qualities of honesty, courage) (Hogan, 1976). At the most abstract level, Spranger (1928) offered a more thoroughly cognitive ap-
proach to human motivation in positing six central value types in personality. Men and women are primarily motivated by their allegiance to either theoretical, social, political, artistic, economic, or religious values—a typology captured in Allport and Vernon’s (1931) measure, “A Study of Values.” Whereas biological drives seem to “push” behavior in an efficient-cause manner, values seem to “pull” behavior toward certain goal states, suggesting something more of a teleological or final-cause explanation of human motivation (Rychlak, 1981).

C. Differences among People

Western conceptualizations of individual differences in personality can be traced back at least 2,000 years to the ancient typologies of Hippocrates and Galen. The behavioral characterization of the sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic, and choleric has proven an amazingly durable contribution to psychological theorizing, brought forward to modern times by Kant, Wundt, and, in the twentieth century, Eysenck (1973), who reconceptualizes the types along the dimensions extraversion and neuroticism. Posterny has been less kind to the ancient belief that blood, bile, and phlegm are the physiological underpinnings of these behavioral types, but the somatotype theories of Kretschmer (1921) and Sheldon (1940) retain a biological emphasis, as have numerous theories of human “temperament.” Much of the groundwork for differential psychology was laid before the 1930s, extending back to the pioneering work of Galton on mental testing and Binet on intelligence, the invention of correlation and factor analysis, and the emergence of formal test theory and the psychometric movement in the United States and Britain (see Anastasi, 1958, 1976; Jackson & Paunonen, 1980, for reviews). Spurred by the mobilization of large military forces for World War I, psychologists began to invent self-report, multi-item tests to assess individual differences in personality functioning. A forerunner to the MMPI, Woodworth’s (1919) Personal Data Sheet was used to screen out men who were unfit for military service because of personality maladjustment. Berenreiter (1931) developed the first multtrait personality inventory, containing scales to assess neuroticism introversion, dominance, self-sufficiency, confidence, and sociability.

III. The Formation of Systems: 1930–1950

A. Allport’s Psychology of the Individual

Allport’s (1937) vision for personality psychology was a humanistic alternative to the prevailing mechanistic paradigm of stimulus-response psychology in the 1930s. In addition, it was an optimistic antidote to Freudian determinism and the growing emphasis, in clinical writings, on human pathology. In his autobiography, Allport (1968) states that he wished to create a field of study centered on an image of man “that would allow us to test in full whatever democratic and
humane potentialities he might possess” (p. 394). Toward the end of the Great Depression in Europe and America and on the eve of World War II, Allport wrote *Personality* in the spirit of social reform and the hope for a better world. Allport’s text was cosmopolitan, erudite, and steeped in old-world European scholarship. But it was also profoundly American, in its unabashed optimism and egalitarian tone.

Allport presented an eclectic array of concepts and hypotheses, loosely tied to one dominant theme: the person is a unique whole. It is somewhat ironic that in the history of personality psychology the central theme of the seminal textbook in the field has remained the most controversial and hotly disputed aspect of Allport’s legacy, as if the field’s *raison d’être* doubles as its perpetual nemesis. How can a science of the person assume that each person is unique? If science seeks lawfulness across persons (nomothetics), then how can it make sense of, even leave room for, the uniqueness of the individual (idiographics)? Many, if not most, personality psychologists have traditionally objected to Allport’s insistence that personality psychology must focus on the uniqueness of the individual case (e.g., Holt, 1962). But they have been kinder, at least in their rhetoric if not in their research, when it comes to Allport’s insistence that personality psychologists concern themselves with the person’s wholeness.

In Allport’s own theorizing, the person’s wholeness and unity are probably best captured in his concept of self, or the *proprium*. The “proprium includes all aspects of personality that make for inward unity” (Allport, 1955, p. 40). Eight different aspects of the proprium can be identified, each emerging at a particular point in the development of the person. In their developmental order of emergence, these are (1) the sense of bodily self, (2) self-identity, (3) self-esteem, (4) self-extension, (5) self-image, (6) self-as-rational-coper, (7) propriate strivings toward life goals, and (8) a unifying sense of self-as-knower, or the sense of the totality of the person as a process that is continually changing and becoming.

In Allport’s view, both human motivation and individual differences are accounted for by traits. For Allport, a trait is “a neuropsychic structure having the capacity to render many stimuli functionally equivalent, and to initiate and guide equivalent (meaningfully consistent) forms of adaptive and expressive behavior” (1961, p. 347). Allport held that traits are real, causal entities that correspond to as yet unknown neurophysiological structures. They are not mere descriptive categories of functionally equivalent behaviors. Rejecting the distinction between motive and trait, Allport insisted that traits have motivational features, serving to energize, direct, and select behavior. Despite popular misconceptions, however, Allport did not argue that traits make for extraordinarily high cross-situational generality in human behavior (Zuroff, 1986). A single person may be characterized by contradictory traits. Furthermore, behavior is always a function of the situation, in that “the ever changing nature of traits and their close dependence upon the fluid conditions of the environment forbid a conception that is over-rigid or oversimple” (Allport, 1937, p. 212).
B. Murray's Personology

After the death of Prince in 1928, Murray became the director of the Harvard Psychological Clinic, and for the next decade he commanded a remarkable intellectual expedition, rallying together scholars from a wide variety of disciplines under the banner of personology (Robinson, 1992; Shneiderman, 1981; White, 1981, 1987). Like Allport, Murray championed a science of the whole person. But if Allport’s vision was steeped in the Enlightenment, Murray’s personology was born of Romanticism (Shweder, 1984). Whereas Allport viewed the human mind as potentially rational and orderly, Murray focused his attention on that which is relatively irrational, passionate, and laden with conflict and emotion. Murray sought to bring the insights of Freud and (especially) Jung toward the center of academic psychology. His eclectic theory blends psychoanalytic ideas with strands from McDougall and Lewin and themes from the study of literature, mythology, and medicine. While Murray was just as committed as Allport to conceiving persons as integrated wholes, he was less sanguine about the possibility that personality is a unified and self-consistent totality. There is nothing like a proprium in Murray’s personology. Instead a typical personality is

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a \text{flow of powerful subjective life, conscious and unconscious; a whispering gallery in which voices echo from the distant past; a gulf stream of fantasies with floating memories of past events, currents of competing complexes, plots and counterplots, hopeful intimations and ideals . . . . A personality is a full congress of orators and pressure groups, of children, demagogues, communists, isolationists, war-mongers, mugwumps, grifters, log-rollers, lobbyists, Caesars and Christs, Machiavels and Judases, Tories and Prometheus revolutionists.}
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(Murray, 1940, pp. 160–161)

Murray and his colleagues set forth the basic principles of personology in the landmark volume, Explorations in Personality (1938). Among the more influential concepts are need, press, theme, and unity theme. The primary motivational constructs in Murray’s system are the 20 or so psychogenic needs, such as the needs for achievement, affiliation, dominance, play, and succorance. Each need stands for a force “which organizes perception, appreciation, motivation, reaction and action in such a way as to transform in a certain direction an existing, unsatisfying situation” (Murray, 1938, p. 123). A press is an environmental situation that functions as an opportunity for or obstacle to the expression of a particular need. The person’s subjective perception of the situation is termed the “beta press”; the objective nature of the situation is the “alpha press.” A theme is a recurrent need–press interaction. A unity theme is a dominant pattern of related needs and press (plural) which organizes or gives meaning to a large portion of the individual’s life. Ultimately derived from infantile experience, a unity theme may be viewed as the central, organizing motif of a person’s biography.
C. Lewin’s Field Theory

Both Allport and Murray assumed that behavior is a function of the interaction of the person and the environment (Ekehammer, 1974; Zuroff, 1986). But Lewin was more explicit about the interaction. In *A Dynamic Theory of Personality*, Lewin (1935) conceived both the person and the environment as differentiated aspects of an integrated *life space*. The life space contains the totality of possible facts which are capable of determining the behavior of an individual at a given moment. Strongly influenced by the Gestalt theories of Wertheimer and Kohler, Lewin viewed the person-in-the-environment as a contemporaneous gestalt—a field of forces that assumes a characteristic form at a particular moment in time. All of the determinants of behavior at a given moment are in the field at the moment. Thus, Lewin’s approach, in contrast to Allport and Murray, tends to deemphasize developmental constructs. Whereas Murray (1938) said that “the history of the organism is the organism” (p. 39) and Allport (1937) spoke of stages in the development of the proprium, Lewin advocated an ahistorical analysis of person-situation interactions.

Lewin viewed human motivation in terms of energy transformations in a dynamic field. Energy is released when the person attempts to return to equilibrium after the onset of a state of tension. The person experiences *tension* when one part of the inner-personal region is thrown out of balance vis-à-vis other parts. This is caused by the arousal of a need—generally defined as either (1) a physiological condition (e.g., hunger), (2) a desire for something, or (3) an intention to do something. A *valence* is the value of a particular region of the environment for a person. A region of positive valence is one that contains a goal object which will reduce tension when the person enters the region. Therefore, valences become coordinated with needs, in a way not unlike Murray’s characterization of the need—press thema. Lewin’s conceptualizations of energy, tension, need, and valence paved the way for subsequent expectancy-value theories of motivation, as in Atkinson (1964) and Rotter (1954).

D. The Integration of Psychoanalysis and Learning Theory

While Allport and Murray labored on behalf of personality at Harvard and Lewin founded research programs at Cornell (1933–1935) and the University of Iowa (1935–1945), a group of social scientists at Yale’s Institute of Human Relations were working to bring about closer collaboration among the fields of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and anthropology. Hull’s (1943) learning theory served as the overarching conceptual framework while psychoanalysis and social anthropology provided data, ideas, and agendas for empirical research and theoretical syntheses. N. E. Miller and Dollard (1941; Dollard & Miller, 1950) sought to reformulate psychoanalysis in learning-theory terms. They believed that all significant human behavior is *learned* in particular social, cultural, and historical contexts. Learning involves four fundamental factors. First, learning is motivated by *drives*, conceptualized as strong internal stimuli that propel behavior. Learned drives are social needs
that are ultimately derived from primary physiological drives, like hunger and thirst. Second, learning is given direction and guidance cues, which are stimuli in the environment that provide information concerning what the organism should attend to and how the organism should respond. Third, learning involves a response: propelled by drive and guided by cue, the organism acts. Such action leads to a reduction in drive, which in itself is rewarding and thus constitutes reinforcement, the fourth and final component of learning. There can be no reinforcement without some kind of drive reduction.

Miller and Dollard translated a number of classic Freudian ideas into the more objective and operational language of drive, cue, response, and reinforcement. For instance, they substituted for Freud’s “pleasure principle” the principle of reinforcement, understood as the reduction of a primary or learned drive. The psychoanalytic concept of “transference” was seen as a special case of stimulus generalization. “Repression” became inhibition. “Anxiety” was viewed as a learned, secondary drive, acquired through repeated experiences of pain (a primary drive itself) and threatened pain. Psychosocial development was explained according to principles of learning and conditioning applied to the realms of feeding and weaning, cleanliness training, early sex training, and the socialization of a child’s anger. These translations became central concepts in the important longitudinal investigation of child rearing and personality launched by Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) and the cross-cultural studies of Whiting and Child (1953).

E. Factor Theories

Relying on factor analysis, Cattell (1946, 1950) developed a comprehensive system of personality that resembles in various features conceptualizations from McDougall, Freud, Lewin, Murray, and Allport. For Cattell, the central problem in personality psychology is the prediction of behavior. Indeed, he defined personality quite generally as “that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation” (1950, p. 2). If prediction is to be accurate, then the psychologist must obtain quantitative information on a great many variables at many different levels, weigh and scale the information appropriately, and combine the information into a specification equation. The specification equation is a linear combination of quantitative indices of certain traits, roles, and states, each weighted according to its relevance in the present situation. Thus, the interactional nature of behavior— that behavior is a function of the person interacting with the environment—is given mathematical form in Cattell’s specification equation. Like Allport, Cattell viewed the trait as a central personality variable that may be inferred from observable behavior to account for regularity and consistency in behavior. Surface traits represent clusters of manifest variables that appear to go together, source traits are the underlying factors that determine the multiple surface manifestations. Traits may also be divided into three general categories with respect to their content and function: dynamic traits, which set the individual into action to accomplish a goal; ability traits, which concern the effectiveness with which the
individual reaches a goal; and temperament traits, which concern such stylistic aspects of responding as speed, energy, and emotional reactivity.

Other factor theories were developed by Guilford (1959; Guilford & Zimmerman, 1949) and Eysenck (1952). Eysenck’s conceptualization has become increasingly influential over the past 30 years. Eysenck divides personality into three very broad traits, existing as higher order factors in the analysis of responses from thousands of subjects on hundreds of self-report questionnaire items. The three dimensions are extraversion-introversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. Eysenck hypothesizes that all three are grounded in particular neurophysiological patterns and that individual differences in each are substantially influenced by one’s genetic makeup.

F. Dominant Trends in the Grand Systems

Between 1930 and 1950 a number of personality psychologists developed grand systems for understanding the whole person and predicting what the person will do. In addition to Allport, Murray, Lewin, Miller and Dollard, Cattell, Guilford, and Eysenck, broad systems of personality were proposed by Murphy (1947), Angyal (1941), Lecky (1945), and the psychoanalytic ego psychologists such as Erikson (1950) and Hartmann (1939), as well as the neo-Freudian perspectives from Fromm (1941), Horney (1939), Rank (1945), and M. Klein (1948). Amidst the rich diversity, a few consistent trends in these conceptual systems may still be discerned.

First, most of the personality systems created in the 1930s and 1940s were based on the assumption that the person may be seen from many different perspectives and on many different levels. Most of the systems, therefore, proposed multiple constructs organized on multiple levels. For Allport, Murray, and Cattell no single trait, need, attitude, or sentiment is to be seen as the “key” to personality. Rather, various constructs are organized in complex hierarchies (Murray, Cattell) or idiographic patterns unique to the individual (Allport). Despite the plethora of variables and levels, however, many of the systems make a second important claim—that the person may still be viewed as a unified and organized totality. Such constructs as proprium (Allport), unity thema (Murray), and dynamic lattice (Cattell) attempt to account for the potentially integrated and holistic nature of human personality. “Self” and “ego” are parallel constructs proposed by Lecky (1945) and the ego psychologists respectively. Most personality systems from this era are either explicitly or implicitly organismic in that they emphasize the consistency and coherence of normal personality and view the individual organism as an organized and complexly structured whole.

A third trend involves motivation. Many of the systems propose some variation of tension reduction as a theory of human motivation. This is most apparent in Miller and Dollard, but it is also prominent in Cattell’s concept of erg. Lewin’s view of dynamics in the life space, and Murray’s concept of a need as transforming “in a certain direction an existing, unsatisfying situation.” The general view is that organisms seek some sort of equilibrium, drives or needs increase tension, and the
organism is motivated to act upon drives or needs in order to reduce tension, which is ultimately satisfying or reinforcing. The emphasis on tension reduction is most apparent in the work of the two psychologists who, in the overall, were probably the most influential general theorists during this time: Freud and Hull.

Finally, many systems conceived of personality development in terms of learning in society, or what might be termed socialization. The individual begins as an unsocialized and assumedly self-centered creature, but over time he or she learns how to be an effective and relatively cooperative member of a complex social world. With the exceptions of Eysenck and Cattell, the personality systems of the time placed a great deal of stock in Lockeian environmentalism—the person is a product of his or her environment; traits, motives, sentiments, and attitudes are learned in the environment. The most important learning occurs in childhood, especially in the family. Development is continuous and relatively gradual, a product of basic principles of learning that remain pretty much the same across the entire life span.


Psychologists returned to their university settings at the end of World War II to face what would become the greatest expansion in higher education in the history of American society. Large numbers of war veterans returned to or entered college, many taking advantage of the GI Bill. Universities scrambled to keep up with burgeoning enrollments, building new laboratories, classrooms, and residence halls and enlarging their departments well beyond their prewar size. Like most other university departments, psychology departments grew in size and diversity. Federal funding for psychological research became much more plentiful, stimulating and promoting a multitude of applied and basic research programs across the country. The expansion brought with it increasing specialization. Fewer and fewer psychologists saw themselves as “generalists.” Rather they were now “developmental psychologists,” “social psychologists,” or “physiological psychologists.” Not simply “psychologists.” After World War II, psychology expanded with exuberance into many nonacademic settings, as witnessed by the tremendous growth of clinical psychology and other “applied” subdisciplines, the boom in psychotherapies and various forms of counseling and behavior change, the expansion of psychology into the schools, and the growing professionalization of a field whose primary roots were in academia.

Within academic psychology, certain traditions of scholarship seemed to ride the crest of the general expansion while others risked being washed away. Stimulated by exciting new theories (e.g., Festinger, 1954; Heider, 1958) and bold laboratory simulations (e.g., Asch, 1951; Milgram, 1963), experimental social psychology enjoyed something of a golden age through the mid-1960s. By contrast, personality psychology seemed to flounder. As a whole, personality psychology was generalist by nature in an age of specialization, sympathetic to correlational approaches for research in an era that glorified the experimental method, and interested in differ-
ences among people during a time when social psychology was suggesting that, in some ways, everybody is pretty much the same. And to the extent that people might be "different," they are likely to be different, some seemed to suggest, in ways related to pathology—a province of the growing discipline of clinical psychology. Between 1950 and 1970, personality psychology witnessed a gradual erosion of its identity within psychology as a whole. As one reviewer put it a few years later, personality psychology can be spelled in one of two ways: e-l-i-n-e-a-l or s-o-v-i-a-l (Sechrest, 1976).

After the war, personality psychologists settled down to do hypothesis-testing research. Through conventional hypothetic methods, they sought to articulate some of the key personality constructs embedded in the grand theories. In order to do this, they often had to disembed those constructs. In order to focus on a single personality construct, the researcher might have to pull it out of its theoretical context. Once the construct was out, it was sometimes difficult to fit it back in.

A. The Focus on Constructs and Their Measurement

As World War II was coming to an end, the editorial board of *Character and Personality* announced its first "editorial reorientation" since the journal's inception in 1932. Anticipating the postwar return of psychologists to universities and the coming increase in submissions for publication, the board decided that the journal should shift from its rather eclectic role—incorporating a wide range of articles, from theoretical essays to case studies to research reports—to one focused more exclusively on empirical research. They wrote, "appropriate methodological, historical, and theoretical contributions will continue to be accepted, but the major emphasis will be placed upon reports of original, empirical, and, as far as material permits, significant experimental investigations, without restriction as to technicalities of presentation" (Zener, 1945, p. 1). The journal was also to change its name to the *Journal of Personality*. This editorial change was indicative of a broader shift that became very apparent in the years to come: personality psychology was becoming more self-consciously empirical.

The shift is apparent in one of the early and important postwar textbooks in the field: McClelland's (1951) *Personality*. Like Allport and Murray, McClelland argued that the personality psychologist should be concerned with the whole person. As if to underscore his point, McClelland made good use of an extensive case study—the case of Karl—in the text. However, McClelland's vision for the field of personality psychology in 1951 was quite different from that promoted by the grand theorists a few years before, as is evident in the following passage from the book's Preface:

Working with concrete lives like this [the case of Karl], as they proceed through the theoretical discussions in this book, should prevent students or anyone else from gaining the impression that I am trying to present "a system" or "a theory" of personality. No one knows enough at present to build a theory. Rather what is needed and what I have tried to do is to find a number of constructs in terms
of which we can collect data about personality, perhaps with the ultimate hope of building a theory.

(McClelland, 1951, p. xiv)

The history of personality psychology between the years 1950 and 1970 is aptly foreshadowed in McClelland’s words. The time for building theories was over. Rather, personality psychologists were now to identify key constructs in terms of which data might be collected and analyzed. The promise was that construct elaboration would increase psychologists’ knowledge of different parts of the person. Once psychologists knew more about the parts, they would be able to put together better grand theories about the whole.

Many of the classic contributions to the literature on personality psychology in the 1950s and 1960s concern problems and issues in the measurement of constructs. Cronbach and Meehl (1955) struggled with the question of how personality psychologists might determine the worth and validity of a given measure designed to assess individual differences on such psychologically meaningful but ultimately hypothetical dimensions as “intelligence,” “extraversion,” “ego strength,” and the like. Such dimensions, which are indeed the staple of virtually all personality theories ever invented, cannot be directly observed but exist instead as open concepts (Meehl, 1977) or “constructs” whose workings can be known only by the network of laws in which they occur (Hogan, 1988).

Along with Loevinger (1957), Cronbach and Meehl presented guidelines for the establishment of construct validity in psychological research. The process of construct validation is essentially that of hypothesis testing in science—a dynamic process through which constructs become further defined and articulated as new findings and new measures accumulate over time. Campbell and Fiske (1959) zeroes in on two derivatives of construct validity—convergent and discriminant validity. Different measures of the same construct should be highly correlated whereas measures of constructs that purport to be different should indeed be uncorrelated. Thus measures of constructs should measure what they claim to measure, and nothing else. The emphasis on convergent and discriminant validity reflected a general concern that personality psychologists clarify and make more precise the meanings of their constructs.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the construction and refinement of a number of omnibus personality inventories designed to measure many different constructs at once. The clinically oriented MMPI, whose scales were derived solely from empirical-key coding, remained the most popular self-report inventory. Newer measures for assessing individual differences in normal populations, however, employed more eclectic scale construction strategies, drawing explicitly, in some cases, upon personality theory. Popular inventories developed during this time include the California Psychological Inventory (CPI; Gough, 1957), Cattell’s (1957) Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) and two measures of Murray’s needs: Edwards’ (1957) Personal Preference Schedule (EPS) and Jackson’s (1970) Personality Research Form (PRF).
Amidst the flurry of activity in test construction and validation, two measurement controversies rose to the fore: clinical versus statistical prediction (Meehl, 1954; Sawyer, 1960) and the problem of response styles (Christie & Lindauer, 1963; Edwards, 1957; Jackson & Messick, 1958). The latter preoccupied a great number of researchers for many years, producing a voluminous literature in personality journals and books. At stake was the validity of self-report scales designed to assess individual differences in personality constructs. Do these scales assess the content variables they claim to assess or do they instead tap general test-taking styles that cut across a wide variety of content domains? The controversy was never fully resolved, but some of the most compelling evidence for the content integrity of personality tests was summoned forth by Block (1965), who, for example, demonstrated that the factor structure of the MMPI remained essentially unchanged whether or not one controls for the social desirability of the items. People primarily respond to the content of the items, regardless of their rated desirability. Nonetheless, test developers came to pay closer attention to the potential problem of social desirability and sought to mitigate or control for response bias when possible (Jackson, 1971; Wiggins, 1973).

B. Popular Constructs of the 1950s and 1960s

Four personality constructs that received a tremendous amount of empirical attention during this time are authoritarianism, achievement motivation, anxiety, and field independence. Each of the four attracted creative and dedicated investigators who developed ambitious research programs anchored to specific measurement procedures. Thus, the constructs were generally well conceived, well operationalized, and boldly marketed to the scientific community at large. Each of the constructs generated empirical findings and new theoretical ideas that spoke to central issues and problems in personality functioning. In at least two of the cases (authoritarianism and achievement motivation), psychologists extended their inquiries into the realms of societal structures, economics, and history.

The most important reasons for the popularity of these four, however, may reside in the nature of American society in the 1950s and 1960s. Each of the four constructs reflects prevalent concerns and preoccupations among middle-class Americans of the day. Fresh from the great victory of World War II, Americans moved optimistically forward as the world's preeminent role models of economic and technological success driven by individual know-how and dedicated teamwork. Democracy had triumphed over authoritarian dictatorships. The community of free-thinking individualists had proven stronger, more efficient, and more flexible than the rigidly hierarchical systems that oppressed the many for the (short-term) benefit of the few. Yet these optimistic assessments of America's role and destiny lived alongside more pessimistic viewpoints that decried mindless conformity and rigid authoritarianism and warned of a smoldering cultural uneasiness in the 1950s (Sarason, 1988). A central cultural tension was that between the individual and the group. In The Lonely Crowd, Riesman (1950) explored the intractable problems of group
life among the “inner directed” and the “outer directed” members of American postwar society. Kenniston (1963) wrote to youth’s alienation from the traditional groupings and institutions of America on the eve of the social upheavals of the late 1960s. Erikson (1959) spoke of identity crises in modern industrial societies, imploring youth to live boldly within a dialectic between conformity and rejection of the status quo.

Within the cultural context of middle-class America in the 1950s and early 1960s, the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) represented an idealized type—a character syndrome personifying German Nazism, over which free-thinking American individualists had assumedly triumphed, only to encounter again in the guise of American bigotry and racism, portrayed as increasingly stark relief as the civil rights movement grew. By contrast, the need for achievement (McClelland, 1961; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953) enjoyed middle-class society’s unambivalent blessing in the 1950s as Americans worked hard to consolidate their position as the number-one economic power in the world. A personality construct that celebrated entrepreneurship and innovation resonated well with the values and goals of corporate America.

Anxiety was the price Americans had to pay for living in a postwar, newly nuclearized age. Although this third personality construct is traditionally found at the center of many different systems and theories of personality, both ancient and modern, its salience as a research topic in the 1950s and 1960s (e.g., Sarason & Mandler, 1952; Spielberger, 1966; Taylor, 1953) may have reflected some of the cultural concerns captured in the verse of W. H. Auden, when he christened the middle part of the twentieth century “the age of anxiety.” Finally, the construct of field independence (Witkin, 1950) considers the perceptual problem of individual figure and ground. To what extent can the individual divorce the embedding context from the embedded phenomenon? Those who are able to interpret reality in a decontextualized, inner-directed manner are deemed field independent. By contrast, those who view phenomena in context—those whose perceptions are more outer directed—are considered field dependent. The polarities of individual and group, figure and ground, and self and context reflect a cultural tension that, in America, is probably as old as de Tocqueville’s nineteenth century appraisal of American life. Yet the tension seemed to grow stronger and more salient after World War II, subtly influencing the questions asked and answers sought by American personality psychologists.

C. Conceptual Trends

Three general trends may be discerned in the history of personality psychology between approximately 1950 and 1970. These are (1) the splitting of the whole person into decontextualized dispositional constructs, (2) the downfall of tension reduction as an organizing idea in human motivation, and (3) the emergence of cognitive approaches to understanding the person. With respect to the first, postwar personality psychologists borrowed liberally from the grand theories of the previ-
ious generation to identify important individual-difference variables for hypothesis-testing research. But, with few exceptions, they abandoned the spirit of those earlier integrative attempts. To paraphrase McClelland’s (1951) text, “nobody knew enough” yet to conceptualize the whole person within a single meaningful framework. By the end of the 1960s, Allport, Murray, and Lewin were generally viewed as heroic but rather naïve pioneers, and their quests to understand the whole person were considered anachronistic in an era of precise measurements, no-nonsense factor analysis, and tough experimental designs (Fiske, 1971). There was reason to believe, furthermore, that the general concept of a “whole person” might itself be an anachronism. Sociologists like Goffman (1959) argued that much of life is mere role playing and impression management in response to situational demands and that no unifying and unified core of the person need be considered in understanding what people do and think. Similarly, many social psychologists and social-learning theorists were beginning to suggest that the nature of situations, not the person, is the primary determinant of how a person will behave.

By the end of the 1960s, the stage was set for an ideological battle between the “trait psychologists” and the “situationists.” The former sought to account for behavior in terms of personality constructs, like achievement motivation and field independence; the latter focused on the exigencies of the environment. For both camps, however, the whole person was no longer a factor to be considered, for the first group had split him into little pieces and the second had disregarded him completely. Of course, there were important exceptions to this trend. White (1952, 1965) and his colleagues carried on the personological tradition of Murray in their biographical “studies of lives.” Block (1971) and others at the University of California (Barron, 1969; MacKinnon, 1965) sought to discern individual differences in patterns of traits in the same person evolving over time.

One of the unifying themes in the grand theories of the 1930s and 1940s was the central role of tension reduction in human motivation. In the 1950s, however, the concept received a series of fierce blows from a number of different directions. While no single knockout punch was ever delivered, by 1970 the referee was about to call the fight. Research on animals began to suggest that motivation often does not involve any detectable decrease in tension or drive. For instance, Sheffield, Wolff, and Backer (1951) reported that male rats would cross an electric grid to copulate with a receptive female even though they were always interrupted before orgasm so there was no drive reduction. Harlow, Harlow and Meyer (1950) found that rhesus monkeys would work to disentangle a mechanical puzzle even in the absence of primary drive reduction. Closer to home, White (1959) composed a devastating critique of tension reduction in human behavior and argued for a reconceptualization of motivation along the lines of mastery and competence. Bowlby (1969) substituted cybernetics and modern ethology for oral libidinal discharge to explain the development of mother–infant attachment. Psychoanalysis began to disregard Freud’s “metapsychology” for its outdated emphasis on erotic and aggressive drives, energy transfers, and cathexis (Eagle, 1984; Guntrip, 1971).
As many observers have noted, psychology as a whole was beginning to experience the cognitive revolution. The gradual erosion of the doctrine of tension reduction was part of a larger transformation in American psychology from a mechanistic, drive-oriented, stimulus–response viewpoint to a more cognitive model of human behavior and experience emphasizing information processing, image making, and the subjective construction of meaning (Singer & Singer, 1972). Kelly’s (1955) personal construct psychology was a harbinger of cognitive things to come. For Kelly, the person is a quasi-scientist seeking to predict and control his or her world. Each person seeks to make sense of reality through the use of bipolar cognitive categories, or personal constructs. To know the whole person is to comprehend the vicissitudes and nuances of his or her construct system; to comprehend individual differences is to compare and contrast the structures, and to a lesser extent contents, of different persons’ construct systems. In a somewhat similar vein, G. A. Miller, Galanter, and Pribram (1960) employed the language of cybernetics to explain how behavior is rather more guided by rational plans and goals than driven by blind instinct. In the 1960s, more and more personality psychologists were beginning to couch their explanations for human behavior in cognitive terms.

V. **Doubt and a Renewal of Confidence: 1970 to the Present**

In 1951, McClelland claimed that personality psychologists did not “know much” yet, but the tenor of his text was extremely hopeful, and the reader was still able to conclude that greater knowledge might be just around the corner. Sears’s (1950) chapter on personality in the first *Annual Review of Psychology* is similarly cautious but optimistic, as is true of MacKinnon (1951), Bronfenbrenner (1953), and Nuttin (1955). Signs of discontent, however, began to appear in the mid-to-late 1950s as reviewers seemed to become increasingly frustrated about contradictory empirical results, nagging pecadillos in personality measurement, and the field’s overall lack of coherence. By the late 1960s, personality psychology was being called “a disconcerting sprawl” (Adelson, 1969; Sanford, 1963) of “well controlled studies that are virtually irrelevant to the questions they are supposed to answer” (Rorer & Widiger, 1983), yielding results that are “inconsequential, trivial, and even pointless” (Schvaneveldt, 1976).

The rising tide of discontent culminated in the publication of a few extraordinarily influential critiques of the field—Carlson (1971), Fiske (1974), and Mischel (1968, 1973)—and the spread of a general view that personality psychology was experiencing a major crisis. In the 1970s some even suggested that the field was dead. Outside academia, furthermore, certain social and cultural changes seemed to create a less than hospitable scene for personality psychology. Social upheavals in the late 1960s and early 1970s cast serious doubt on the adequacy of traditional frameworks for identifying “types” of people and stable individual differences. Both in clinical work and in the study of normal persons, personality diagnosis and assessment could be viewed as mere “labelling” by an unempathic and out-of-
touch establishment (Goffman, 1961; Rosenhan, 1973). The antiwar, civil rights, and women's movements all sensitized Americans to the pervasive influence of culture and environment on human behavior and experience—influence experienced in the contexts of family, class, ethnicity, race, and nation-state. The implicit message was this: The person is a product—even a victim—of social context; therefore, one should focus on context rather than person—on social influence rather than individuality. In addition, some came to see traditional personality psychology as dominated by an Anglo-masculine world view. One could reasonably argue in 1970 that the only whole persons whom personality psychologists ever studied anyway were upper middle-class, white males.

A. The Decade of Doubt

In an article entitled “Where is the Person in Personality Research?” Carlson (1971) suggested that personality psychology had lost its center. Sampling 226 articles published in two major personality journals in the late 1960s, Carlson found not a single study that fulfilled the promises of Allport and Murray concerning personality's commitment to the investigation of the whole person. Rather, the prototypical study was a contrived laboratory experiment or a simple correlational investigation of a large group of college men, about whom the researchers collected only a few pieces of information and with whom the researchers spent, on the average, less than an hour. Virtually abandoned were inquiries into (a) the organization of personality, (b) the stability of personality, (c) problems of the mature individual, (d) psychosexuality, (e) striving for personal goals, and (f) the development and power of friendship or love. She concluded:

"Personality psychology would seem to be paying an exorbitant price in potential knowledge for the security afforded by preserving norms of convenience and methodological orthodoxy. Must these important, unanswered questions be left to literature and psychiatry?"

(p. 207)

Carlson implied that personality psychologists had lost their way during the era of construct elaboration. Research and theorizing had become so narrow that personality psychologists were no longer able to address the central questions of the field posed by the grand theorists. By contrast, Fiske (1954) suggested that personality psychology had gone about as far as it could go. From Fiske's even more pessimistic outlook, personality psychology had begun to reach the limits of what a scientific study of the person could conceivably achieve. The constructs of personality are inevitably linked to the conventions of everyday language, Fiske claimed. Meanings are bound to be ambiguous, like language. No truly cumulative knowledge base can be built on the shifting sands of personality conceptualizations.

The most influential critique, however, was delivered by Mischel. In *Personality and Assessment* (1968), Mischel's highly selective review concluded that personality dispositions, typically measured via paper-and-pencil tests and questionnaires,
account for very little of the variance in human behavior. For the most part, there is very little cross-situational generality in behavior, Mischel argued. Instead, human action tends to be dictated by situationally specific factors. Individual differences in situations are more effective predictors of behavior than are individual differences in traits. Mischel raised the possibility that the only place that traits may truly exist is in the mind of the personality psychologist. Thus, personality psychologists may be guilty of committing a fundamental attributional error by imposing broad categories concerning internal dispositions to explain (and predict) the behavior of others, when in fact that behavior is better explained by factors specific to the situation.

The critiques of Carlson, Fiske, and Mischel ushered in a decade of doubt in the history of personality psychology. Many personality psychologists began to doubt the credibility of the entire enterprise of studying persons; others seemed to become highly defensive, hastily dismissing the critiques as overly simplistic or idealistic lamentations. Over the course of the decade, an increasing number of journal articles considered the mounting crisis of confidence. It is important to note, however, that there was more than one crisis during this time, for the critiques are very different from each other. Neither Fiske nor Mischel seems especially concerned with the question, “Where is the person?” And Carlson seems to suggest that personality psychologists could recapture the prize of the whole person if they would only summon up the will of yesteryear and thereby release the creative energies that lie trapped beneath the norms of methodological orthodoxy.

It is also interesting to note that only one of the critiques was ever seriously addressed by personality psychologists during the 1970s and 1980s. Mischel’s indictment of trait psychology ultimately met with a barrage of countercriticism, stimulating a lengthy “debate” about the relative contributions of traits and situations in the prediction of behavior (Aller, 1972; D. J. Ben & Allen, 1974; Block, 1977; Bowars, 1973; Chaplin & Goldberg, 1984; Check, 1982; Ekehammer, 1974; Endler & Magnusson, 1976; Epstein, 1979, 1984; Funder & Ozer, 1983; Hogan, DeSoto, & Solano, 1977; Kenrick & Stringfield, 1980; Lauther, 1981; McClelland, 1981; Mischel & Peake, 1982; Ozer, 1986; Rushton, Bramer, & Pressley, 1983; Snyder, 1983; West, 1983). What is intriguing to note here is that personality psychologists sought to settle the debate on primarily empirical grounds, much in the spirit of Mischel’s original critique. This is to say that researchers designed new studies and collected new data to determine (a) the extent to which individual differences in traits and situations are able to predict behavior and (b) the extent to which people’s behavior can be seen to be consistent over time and across different situations. Like Mischel, they proceeded in a pragmatic and empirical fashion.

In an effort to improve the predictive power of traditional trait measures, certain personality psychologists have championed (a) moderator variables and (b) aggregation. With respect to the first, D. J. Ben and Allen (1974) and others have suggested that predictions of behavior can be enhanced when assessments of a person’s level on a given trait measure are coupled with assessments of the extent to which the given trait is relevant, salient, or important for the person. The latter assessment is conceived as a moderator variable. The argument suggests that only
when a trait is relevant, salient, or important for the person may individual differences in the trait be predictive of behavior. In other words, personality psychologists can predict some of the people some of the time. A number of other moderator approaches have been developed, such as Snyder's (1983) position that the personality variable of self-monitoring serves as a general moderator. According to Snyder, individual differences in personality traits are especially predictive of behavior among persons who are low in self-monitoring. These are the people who are relatively oblivious to the demands of situations and, therefore, more likely to act in accord with inner dispositions. Epstein (1979, 1984) has championed the judicious use of aggregation in personality studies to increase predictive power. In Epstein's view, trait measures are bound to do a poor job in predicting the single act because the single act is not a reliable index of behavioral trends. When functionally similar acts are aggregated over time and across situations, reliability is enhanced and personality trait measures are able to do a better job of predicting behavior.

The trait–situation debate appeared to die down in the 1980s as many psychologists settled on a compromise position that most of them suggested they had advocated all along. Though major differences in emphasis are still apparent, many personality psychologists now seem to agree that behavior is a function of both traits (or internal dispositional variables in general) and situations: that the person and the environment interact to produce behavior. Though interactionism is nothing new (see Lewin, 1935), the perception among many reviewers is that personality psychologists are now more explicitly interactionist in their thinking and in their research designs (Kenrick & Funder, 1988). The less sanguine view, however, is that a lot of time and energy have been wasted marshalling empirical support for various ideological positions. Rorer and Widiger (1983) assert that a “great deal of nonsense has been written on the trait–situation topic, and as far as we can tell all the data that have been collected are irrelevant to solving the problem, which is conceptual” (p. 446).

This is not to suggest that the trait–situation controversy has been a mindless exercise in number crunching. Many of the contributions have been well conceived and ingeniously designed. But the controversy has not directly produced the broad conceptual advances in personality psychology that some observers of the field believe are needed (Carlson, 1984; Helson & Mitchell, 1978). Furthermore, the empirical activity has tended not to speak directly to the concerns raised by Carlson's (1971) and Fiske's (1974) critiques, which were much more conceptual in nature and, it is probably fair to say, more challenging.

Nonetheless, personality psychology appeared to move through the 1980s and into the 1990s with a renewed optimism and vigor (Hogan & Jones, 1985; Maddi, 1984; West, 1983). Although the serious doubts raised in the previous decade had not been put to rest, researchers and theorists in the field seemed to have found a new confidence and credibility. Signs of renewal are increasingly manifest in many different places today. With respect to research methodology, personality psychologists appear to be employing a wider range of approaches, including naturallistic strategies for experience sampling (Hornuth, 1986), behavioral genetic methods
(Plomin, 1986), structural equation models (Judd, Jessor, & Donovan, 1986), and various qualitative methodologies (Helson, 1982; Mendelsohn, 1985; Runyan, 1982; Wrightsman, 1981). With respect to research topics, personality psychologists have broadened their inquiries to incorporate important issues in health psychology (Jemmott, 1987; Kobasa, 1985; Suls & Rittenhouse, 1987) and life-span development (Eishorn, Clausen, Haan, Honzik, & Mussen, 1981; Wrightsman, 1988; Zucker, Rabin, Aronoff, & Frank, 1982), and they have made important contributions in studies of the quality of personal relationships (Duck, 1986; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), loneliness and shyness (Briggs, 1985; Shaver & Rubenstein, 1980), gender and sex roles (S. L. Bem, 1981; Cook, 1995; Franz & Stewart, 1994), optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1982; Privette, 1983), adaptation to life changes (Stewart & Healy, 1985), and the biological bases of personality (A. H. Buss & Plomin, 1984; D. M. Buss, 1984, 1991; Revelle, 1995). An increasing number of research projects integrate perspectives from both personality and social psychology (Blass, 1984). And within psychology in general today interest in individual differences in persons appears to be increasing.

B. The Whole Person

A renewed emphasis on the whole person in contemporary personality psychology is perhaps most evident in the burgeoning theoretical and research literature on the self (Honts & Yardley, 1987; Lapsley & Power, 1988; Loevinger & Knoll, 1983; Schlenker, 1985; Shaver, 1985). The concept of self has traditionally served as a rallying point for those psychologists inclined to view persons as wholes and disposed to ask questions about how persons find unity and coherence in their lives. In recent years, the self has been rediscovered in a number of new guises, including those of "schema" (Markus, 1977), "prototype" (Kuiper & Derry, 1981), "theory" (Berzonsky, 1988; Epstein, 1973), and "story" (Gergen & Gergen, 1983; McAdams, 1985). In psychoanalytic circles, the emergence of Kohut's (1977) self-psychology is an important conceptual development.

Some of the most fruitful theorizing about the self comes from the interface of cognitive developmental psychology and personality (Loevinger, 1987). Blasi (1983), Damon and Hart (1982), and Kegan (1982) have formulated developmental theories of the self that draw on the tradition of structural developmentalism as epitomized in the writings of Piaget and Kohlberg. These stage theories seek to chart the self's development from a simple and undifferentiated structure to increasing autonomy, differentiation, and integration. Compared to the developmental formulations of the 1930s and 1940s, these tend to place less emphasis on basic principles of learning and the socialization of the individual in a particular cultural system.

The most influential scheme of this kind for personality psychology is Loevinger's (1976) conception of ego development, which has been carefully operationalized through a sentence completion test. For Loevinger, the ego is one's overall framework of meanings for interpreting experience, encompassing aspects of character development and impulse control, interpersonal style, conscious preoccupations,
and cognitive complexity. In the earliest (immature) stages of ego development, the person adopts a simplistic, global, and egocentric framework for understanding experience: the impulsive and self-protective stages. In the middle stages, one's framework of meaning is more differentiated and integrated and less egocentric, but reality is now apprehended in stereotypic, banal, and highly conventional ways: the conformist and conformist/conscientious stages. At the highest stages (conscientious, autonomous, or integrated), one comes to question the simple dictates of convention, and one's understanding of a range of issues becomes more highly differentiated and integrated so that contradiction and ambiguity become tolerable and the individuality of others is accepted, even "cherished." Persons at the highest stages manifest a rich inner life and complex understanding of self as an evolving whole in a social and historical context. Few people reach the highest stages; most "stop" developing somewhere in the middle. In Loewinger's developmental typology, one's terminal stage of ego development is the major individual difference variable of personality.

Although some theories of the self provide integrative frameworks for viewing the person as a unified and unifying whole, others suggest a multiplicity in self and identity. Horowitz (1979) presents a clinically anchored scheme of multiple selves or "states of mind." Markus and Nurius (1986) conceptualize the person in terms of a wide assortment of "possible selves," each functioning as a semiautonomous structure containing information concerning what the person believes he or she might be or fears to be. Similarly, Higgins (1987) has developed a theory of "self-discrepancy" in which various "actual selves," "ideal selves," and "ought selves" coexist in a confederacy of me's. Rosenberg and Ganu (1985) have underscored the multiplicity of personal identity. Borrowing from deconstructionist literary theory, Sampson (1985) suggests that psychologists should consider the possibility that the self need not be unified or coherent. Instead, he argues for a "decentralized, nonequilibrium ideal, whose very being hinges on continuous becoming" (Sampson, 1985, p. 1203). In somewhat similar vein, Shotter and Gergen (1989) have suggested that the self is to be viewed as a set of dynamic texts that are constructed and negotiated through social interaction, no single text serving as an integrative core.

McAdams (1985, 1995) also views self in textual terms but argues that, beginning in late adolescence or young adulthood, a person strives to create unity and purpose in life through the conscious and unconscious formation of a single, integrated life story, or personal myth, that integrates one's reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future while situating the person in a social niche and in historical time. The motivational content of a person's self-defining life story is organized along the "thematic lines" of agency (power/achievement/autonomy) and communion (love/intimacy/care) (Bakan, 1966; Wiggins, 1991). The story displays a characteristic "narrative tone" (ranging from comic or romantic optimism to tragic or ironic pessimism), a unique quality of personal "imagery," pivotal scenes (called "nuclear episodes"), main characters in the guise of idealized self-personifications (called "imagos"), and an anticipated story ending that serves to "leave something behind" for the next generation.
McAdams' narrative conception of the self draws from Adler's (1927) concept of the "guiding fiction" and Sartre's notion of the "true novel" (Charmer, 1984) in human living, and it connects to a growing literature on the importance of narrative in human lives and personality (e.g., Baumeister, Stilwell, & Wotman, 1992; Bruter, 1986, 1990; Gregg, 1991; Hermans, Kempen, & van IJou, 1992; Howard, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1988; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992; Sarbin, 1986; Spence, 1982).

C. Motivation

Recent years have continued the trend away from tension-reduction theories of human motivation and toward cognitive approaches for understanding the dynamics of action. In the 1970s, Weiner reconceptualized achievement motivation in cognitive attributional terms (Weiner, 1980). Depression and learned helplessness have been interpreted from the standpoint of dysfunctional attributional styles (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) and faulty schemata (Beck, 1976). More recently, personality psychologists have proposed a host of cognitive variables to account for the goal-directed, inner-motivated features of human behavior (see Cantor & Kihlbrink, 1985), "personal strivings" (Enmons, 1986), and "personal projects" (Park & Little, 1983). Deci and Ryan (1985) have developed a "cognitive evaluation theory of intrinsic motivation" positing a basic human desire to feel competent and self-determining. Carver and Scheier (1981) have sought to explain motivation in terms of a hierarchy of control systems and feedback loops.

Tomkins' (1987) script theory represents an ambitious attempt to integrate certain cognitive themes within a theory of motivation and personality that places prime emphasis on affect. Tomkins identifies approximately 10 primary affects, such as joy, excitement, sadness, and anger. Izard (1977) has articulated a very similar view. Each of these affects has served an adaptive function throughout human evolution, and each is associated with a particular physiological response, including a corresponding set of facial expressions. In Tomkins' view, affects are the primary motivators of human behavior, amplifying biological drives and providing life's goals with the emotional coloring that makes them worthy of pursuit. Tomkins views the person as a playwright who fashion his or her personal drama from the earliest weeks of life. The most basic component of the drama is the "scene," which is viewed as an idealized recollection of a specific happening or event in one's life which contains at least one affect and one object of that affect. A "script" is a set of rules for interpreting, creating, enhancing, or defending against a family of related scenes (Carlson, 1988). The process of connecting scenes into a meaningful pattern is called "psychological magnification"—a process that works differently for different sorts of scripts and affect patterns. Understanding the unique patterning of human motivation in an individual's life involves an intensive analysis of the recurrent affects, critical scenes, scripts, and different modes of psychological magnification that the person manifests across the life span.
The evolutionary theme in Tomkins' script theory is developed more fully in Hogan's (1987) socioanalytic theory of personality. Socioanalytic theory ties together strands of evolutionary biology, psychoanalysis, and sociological role theory. Human beings have evolved to live in small groups that are variously organized into status hierarchies. In this context, the two central motivational tendencies in human behavior are toward seeking acceptance and seeking status in social groups. As Hogan puts it, "getting along and getting ahead are the two great problems in life that each person must solve" (Hogan, Jones, & Cheek, 1985). The two great problems are always addressed and resolved in the context of ritualized social interaction. Following Mead (1934) and Goffman (1959), Hogan views social behavior as an elaborate game, governed by rules and conventions, scripted into roles and routines, and mastered by the most skillful managers of impressions. Through role playing and impression management the individual finds a part to play in society, a social identity that specifies a recognized niche in the community. This is not to trivialize social behavior. Rather, the striving for status and acceptance through ritualized social interaction is an unconscious, central, genetic tendency for all human beings:

... self-presentation and impression management are not trivial party games. They are fundamental processes, rooted in our history as group-living animals. They are archaic, powerful, compulsive tendencies that are closely tied to our chances for survival and reproductive success.

(Hogan et al., 1985, p. 187)

Tomkins' script theory and Hogan's socioanalytic theory are indicative of the growing interest in personality psychology today in the concepts of affect and instinct. Zajonc (1980) and Ryckhals (1989) have argued that the first step in the apprehension of any event or experience is a basic affective judgment—that emotional preferences precede and are more basic than, cognitive inferences. Other theorists have sought to integrate cognitive and affective approaches (Lizard, 1977; Singer & Kolligan, 1987). The concept of biological instincts has attained a new respectability, as expressed in ethological conceptions like Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory—which has been expanded in creative ways to organize research and theory on human love and adaptation (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1987)—and in provocative speculations about the application of sociobiological viewpoints to personality and social psychology (D. M. Buss, 1984; Cunningham, 1981).

B. Differences among People

Personality psychologists have come back to traits. Now that the trait-situation controversy has subsided, a steady stream of research findings have documented impressive longitudinal consistency in a number of important individual difference variables (e.g., Conley, 1985; Costa, McCrae, & Arenberg 1980). New ways of understanding traits have also been proposed. In their "act-frequency approach" to personality, D. M. Buss and Craik (1984) conceive of traits as summary categories containing discrete and representative behavioral acts. Different act members of a
trait family differ in their "prototypicality." Those closest to the "center" of the family are "best examples" of a given trait, as the act "talking to a stranger" might function as an especially prototypical example for extraversion. Those acts on the periphery are less representative and likely to shade into other adjacent trait categories.

In the 1980s, personality psychologists expressed a great deal of interest in formulating a single systematic taxonomy for personality traits. Such a framework might identify a finite set of central, most salient, or highest-order personality traits under which various traits fall into a conceptually appealing order. Expanding upon the early work of Leary (1957), Wiggins and Broughton (1985) refined a circumplex model of traits organized according to the orthogonal axes of strength (e.g., dominant-submissive) and warmth (e.g., agreeable-quarrelsome). Eysenck (1973) has proposed his own circumplex, organized according to extraversion-introversion and neuroticism-stability. Covering the same conceptual space as Eysenck, Gray (1987) suggests that anxiety and impulsivity represent two primary and physiologically grounded orthogonal dimensions in personality, each tilted 45° to Eysenck's pair. Another increasingly influential system for conceptualizing individual differences comes from the longitudinal investigations of Block (1971, 1993, Funder, Parks, Tomlinson-Keasey, & Widaman, 1995) employing the California Q Set. Two major dimensions underlying the various personality types and developmental trajectories identified by Block and his colleagues are ego resiliency and ego control.

At the current time, the most influential formulation of individual differences in personality is the "Big Five" trait taxonomy. Building on the early work of Fiske (1949), Norman (1963), and Tupes and Christal (1961), a number of personality psychologists have proposed that the universe of trait dimensions can be reduced to approximately five basic bipolar categories (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1981, 1993; John, 1990; McCrae, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1987). Different factor-analytic studies have cut the pie in slightly different ways, but a representative breakdown is that of McCrae and Costa (1987), who identify the five as (1) extraversion—introversion (E), (2) neuroticism (N), (3) openness to experience (O), (4) agreeableness—antagonism (A), and (5) conscientiousness—undirectedness (C). Goldberg's painstaking lexical analyses suggest that these five dimensions are encoded in language. At least in the case of English, these five may serve as the grand organizing dimensions with respect to which virtually all trait labels for describing general nonconditional individual differences in human behavior and experience can be construed.

VI. CONCLUSIONS: PROGRESS AND STAGNATION

In conclusion, the history of personality psychology in the twentieth century may be broadly viewed from the standpoint of conceptual progress and stagnation. The field of personality has traditionally emphasized the study of the whole person, the dynamics of human motivation, and the identification and measurement of individu-
ual differences among persons. How much conceptual progress has been made in each of these three areas?

First, significant progress may be seen in the conceptualization of human motivation. The decline of general drive-reduction theories and the emergence of highly differentiated cognitive–affective approaches to understanding the dynamics of action appear to represent a major conceptual advance. The recent formulations of Tomkins (1987), Izard (1977), Hogan (1987), McClelland (1985), and Bowlby (1969) draw upon some of the best ideas from modern cognitive psychology while grounding motivational theory in human evolution and emotional dynamics. These theories do not simply "leave room for" the less-than-rational emotions and instinctual tendencies. Rather they portray human motivation in complex cognitive–affective–instinctual terms and, in the cases of Tomkins and Hogan, provide a very compelling sociocultural context within which to understand the dynamics of human behavior and social interaction.

In the area of individual differences, moderate progress may be observed. The empirical elaboration of personality constructs beginning in the 1950s, the subsequent trait–situation debate, and the recent flurry of research on broad personality dispositions have combined to enrich and broaden psychologists' understanding of key personality traits while underscoring their limitations and their situationally specific manifestations. Those who complained that the only good way to organize the plethora of possible personality traits was that provided by the alphabet (London & Exner, 1978) may now take heart in the emergence of circumplex models and the Big Five as compelling organizing schemes. Although the efforts to order trait dimensions deserve resounding applause, one begins to be concerned in this area about creeping conceptual imperialism. Psychologists should not be too quick to assimilate every conceptual scheme under the sun to the Big Five framework. Simply reducing the person to five trait scores will not satisfy those who seek a more differentiated portrait for comprehending individual differences. Furthermore, the Big Five dimensions do not directly address many issues with which personality psychologists have traditionally been concerned—issues such as personality dynamics, personality development, life changes, life histories, identity and the development of self, and the relation between the person on the one hand and society, culture, and history on the other (McAdams, 1992).

Finally, it is disappointing to note that little progress appears to have been made in the conceptualization of the whole person. The reemergence of the self as a viable construct in personality psychology is surely a positive development in this regard. But with the possible exception of Loevinger's theory of ego development, self theories have yet to provide the breadth and depth necessary to integrate disparate conceptual strands in comprehending the whole person. The hope of Allport and Murray that personality psychology would someday provide a coherent way of understanding the whole person has not yet been realized. The grand theories of the 1930s and 1940s have not proven adequate to the task, though they continue to provide insights and guidelines. More recent theorizing about the person has been more limited in scope, with the possible exception of Tomkins (1987), whose
multifaceted theory still needs to be systematized and fleshed out before it can expect to gain wide appeal. The field of personality still suffers from the lack of a pervasive integrative framework for understanding the person as a differentiated and integrated dynamic whole living in a complex social context. It was largely the generation of such encompassing frameworks in the 1930s and 1940s that established personality psychology's reputation as that of a dissident field. As the grand theories came to be rejected, the field of personality seemed to become more conventional, losing its unique status as the dissenting champion of the whole person. Perhaps any integrative conceptual framework for comprehending the whole person is doomed to be rejected sooner or later. But until the field of personality begins again to generate such candidates for rejection, it will fall somewhat short of fulfilling the promise of its pioneers.

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