

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

JEROME KAGAN



PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Jerome Kagan

Harvard University

Irving L. Janis, *Editor*



HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH, INC.

New York

Chicago

San Francisco

Atlanta

© 1969, 1971 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN: 0-15-569750-1

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 77-152581

Printed in the United States of America

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND COPYRIGHTS

The author wishes to thank the companies and persons listed below for permission to use material in this book.

Textual Material

- Chapter 2 Quotes from S. Provence and R. Lipton, *Infants in Institutions*. Copyright © 1962 by International Universities Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.
- 3, 4 Quotes from pp. 107-08, 121-22, 365-66 of *Patterns of Child Rearing* by R. R. Sears, E. E. Maccoby, & H. Levin. Copyright © 1957 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.
- 5 Opening quote: From George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*, by permission of The Society of Authors as Agent for the Bernard Shaw Estate.
- 7 Opening quote: From Rémy de Gourmont, "Dust for Sparrows," translated by Ezra Pound in *The Translations of Ezra Pound*. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation and Faber & Faber Ltd.
- 8 Opening quote: Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons and William Heinemann Ltd. from *Look Homeward Angel*, pp. 66-67, by Thomas Wolfe. Copyright 1929 Charles Scribner's Sons; renewal copyright © 1957 Edward C. Aswell, Administrator, C.T.A., and/or Fred W. Wolfe.
- 9 Opening quote: From Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, translated by J. M. Cohen, by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

Illustrative Material

- Figure 2-1** Lewis, M. Infant attention: Response decrement as a measure of cognitive processes, or what's new, Baby Jane? Paper presented at the meetings of the Society for Research in Child Development, symposium on The Role of Attention in Cognitive Development, New York, March 1967. Courtesy of Dr. Michael Lewis.
- 2-2, 2-3** Gewirtz, J. L. The course of infant smiling in four child-rearing environments in Israel. In B. M. Foss (Ed.), *Determinants of infant behavior*, Vol. 3. Copyright 1965 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York. Figure 24-2 also appears in Gewirtz, J. L. Mahalach hachiyuch aytzel teenokot be'arba sveevot geedul shonot. *Megamot*, 1966, 14, 281-311. Photo by Dr. J. L. Gewirtz.
- 2-5, 2-6, 2-8** Photos courtesy of Dr. Harry F. Harlow.
- 2-7** Rheingold, H. L. The modification of social responsiveness in institutional babies. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 1956, 21(2, Whole No. 63). Copyright 1956 by the Society for Research in Child Development, Inc.
- 5-1** Kagan, J., & Moss, H. A. *Birth to maturity: A study in psychological development*. Copyright 1962 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York.
- 7-1** Sontag, L. W., Baker, C. T., & Nelson, V. L. Mental growth and personality development: A longitudinal study. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 1958, 23, No. 68. Copyright 1958 by the Society for Research in Child Development, Inc.
- 7-2** By permission of Dr. Eugene S. Gollin.
- 7-3** Kagan, J., Pearson, L., & Welch, L. The modifiability of an impulsive tempo. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1966, 57, 359-65. Copyright 1966 by the American Psychological Association, and used by permission.
- 7-5** Stanford University, Publications Service.
- 8-1** Nisbett, R. E. Birth order and participation in dangerous sports. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1968, 8, 351-53. Copyright 1968 by the American Psychological Association, and used by permission.
- 9-1** Schaefer, E. S., & Bayley, N. Maternal behavior, child behavior, and their interactions from infancy through adolescence. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 1963, 28, No. 87. Copyright 1963 by the Society for Research in Child Development, Inc.
- Table 5-1** Kagan, J. The child's sex role in classification of school objects. *Child Development*, 1964, 35, p. 1053, Table 1. Used by permission of the Society for Research in Child Development, Inc.

PREFACE

Interest in the development of the child has increased enormously in the past decade as a result of major advances in our knowledge of perception, language, and cognition. These advances, fostered by the lifelong efforts of Jean Piaget, are forcing wholesale revisions of textbook chapters on cognitive development and are exerting a strong influence on our view of the child's mind. However, a clearer understanding of the motivational and emotional side of the child's progress toward maturity has been delayed. This volume attempts to highlight the major phenomena of personality development within a descriptive and eclectic framework. The book does not attempt to accommodate the basic facts of development to a single consistent set of theoretical ideas because, unfortunately, developmental psychology does not seem ready for theoretical unification. Such an attempt might result, as Peter Medawar notes, in annihilation of the facts.

This book is designed primarily for use in personality and child development courses. Its organization can be simply stated: Each chapter focuses on the central phenomena of a major epoch of development. Hence, I emphasize attachment to a caretaker during the first year, early socialization of exploration and toilet training during the second year, identification and sex typing during the fourth and fifth years, and the shaping role of school and peers during the preadolescent period.

I do not mean to imply by this chronological organization that socialization is restricted to the second year or that the school's influence is limited to preadolescence. Rather, I want to note that certain shaping forces have their major influence on the child's psychological functioning at certain times, and to state the form of that influence as clearly as possible. Therefore, the influence of siblings, for example, is not discussed until Chapter 8 because I feel that the six-year-old is more profoundly influenced by the presence of a brother or sister than the one-year-old.

The major theoretical theme is the idea that the growing child has to deal with different profiles of uncertainty and that his conceptualizations of the world, which vary with culture, age, and time, are the organizing forces that direct the behavioral profile we come to know and try to predict.

This theoretical orientation is embodied in two biases. In the first place, the book's chief concern is with understanding internal processes, such as attachment, identification, motivation, and anxiety, rather than overt behavior. There are two reasons for this attitude: First, any response displayed by a child can reflect many different motives or emotions, and is never an absolutely reliable clue to what the child is thinking or feeling; second, understanding the child's beliefs and wishes will eventually enable us to predict and appreciate the child's future decisions, symptoms, and actions. Perhaps the best illustration of this view is contained in the last chapter, on parent-child relationships, where I emphasize the child's perception of his parents' feelings toward him, rather than the direct effect of their actions on his personality. This attitude leads to an emphasis on sex typing and the child's identification with adult models as important influences on future personality.

The second bias is more subtle and is evidenced in the attempt to make the intellectual barriers between concepts like motive, emotion, and thought less formidable. To this end, Chapter 6 defines a motive as an idea, separate from the strong feelings that often can accompany desire, and the discussion of socialization in Chapter 3 rests on the notion of a standard, which is, in essence, a belief about the rightness or wrongness of an act. I believe that this cognitive view of personality will become more popular in the next few years as psychology develops a more holistic and integrated view of man.

This book was first published as Part III of *Personality: Dynamics, Development, and Assessment* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1969) by Irving L. Janis, George F. Mahl, Jerome Kagan, and Robert R. Holt, under the editorship of Irving L. Janis. I am grateful to my coauthors of that work for their valuable comments and criticisms on the various drafts of my chapters. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Doris Simpson and Mrs. Henriette Salek for their help in preparing the manuscript.

Jerome Kagan

CONTENTS

Preface, vi

1

What Is Personality Development? 3

Personality Development: A Case Study	5
Why Study the Development of Personality?	6
Critical Periods in Development	8
Patterning in Development	10
The Need for Theoretical Terms	11

2

The First Critical Period: Birth to 18 Months, 12

Important Stages in the First 18 Months	14
The Development of Attachment to a Caretaker	21
The Mother-Infant Relationship	32

Behavioral Differences Among Infants	34
How Behavioral Dispositions in the Infant	
Influence Personality Development	37

3

Initial Socialization: 18 Months to 3 Years, 39

Motor Abilities	40
Language Ability	41
Socialization Demands	41
Toilet Training: An Example of Early Socialization	43
The Importance of Rules for the Child	50
The Affect of Anxiety	51
A Review of the Major Processes	54

4

The Period of Identification: 3 to 6 Years, 55

The Concept of Identification	57
Theoretical Views on the Adoption of a Model's Behavior	62
The Role of Identification in Acquisition of Standards	67
Main Trends in Development During the Preschool Years	71

5

Sex Typing During the Preschool and Early School Years, 72

The Sex Role Standard	74
Sex Role Identity	79

6

Major Motive-Behavioral Systems in the Young Child, 90

The Nature of a Motive	92
The Relation Between Motives and Behavior	93
Anger, Hostility, and Aggressive Behavior	95

Anxiety, Affiliation, and Dependent Behavior	102
Sexual Motives and Behavior	107
Effectance Motivation and Mastery Behavior	109
Common Themes	114

7

Personality and Intellectual Development in the School-Age Child, 115

Behavioral and Cognitive Changes	117
The School Situation	122
Intelligence and the Intelligence Test	124
Components of Intellectual Activity	127
How Learning Takes Place	136

8

Peer and Sibling Influences, 139

The Peer Group	140
Siblings	147

9

The Influence of Parents, 154

Modes of Parental Influence	156
Types of Maternal Behavior	156
Cause and Effect Sequences in the Mother-Child Interaction	164
Factors Controlling Maternal Reactions	165
The Importance of the Parental Role	168
Personality Development: An Afterword	169

References, 171

Index, 177

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Every man has three characters: that which he exhibits, that which he has, and that which he thinks he has.

ALPHONSE KARR

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT?

The phenomena of growth fall into two patterns: enlargement and change. The leaf expands as it grows, but it does not alter its essential form. The butterfly, on the other hand, passes through dramatically different stages of change en route to adulthood. Man illustrates both kinds of development. Bone, muscle, and fat become larger and heavier, but like the leaf they retain essentially the same structure throughout life. Man's psychological processes and overt actions bear a closer kinship to the butterfly, for they undergo major changes during the first dozen years of life. The development of an individual personality furnishes a classic example of how *changes* in organization characterize the growth process.

Personality can best be conceptualized, in terms of mental processes and overt actions, as the relation between thinking, wishing, and feeling on the one hand and behavior on the other. Both the child and the adult have expectancies of events that might happen, beliefs about the world, motives and wishes, standards, emotions, anxieties, and defenses against unpleasant feelings. Each person also has a large collection of responses designed to maintain beliefs, gratify motives, express or inhibit emotion, and protect himself against anxiety. The task of a theory of personality de-

velopment is to trace the connections between the personality of the child and that of the adult—to understand how the adult organization of psychic processes and behaviors was derived from that of the child. In other words, how does the butterfly emerge from the caterpillar? A look at the case of a moderately disturbed personality will help to illustrate the nature and complexity of the problem.

Personality Development: A Case Study

Louise was a member of a research group that had been studied since birth. At 22, when she appeared for an interview with the author, she was attractive, unmarried, and recently graduated from college with a major in biology. She was initially cooperative and superficially relaxed, but bursts of inappropriate laughter and hostility eventually began to punctuate the interview. Louise was often unable to answer questions directly, and she became entangled in long strings of tangential associations that had little to do with the original question. She was excessively preoccupied with danger and with the integrity of her body. When asked about her major area of study in college, she replied:

I had gone up with my zoology professor and seven other girls, and we went through the lab and saw the medical technologists at work. At the hospital up there I saw the apparatus and understood that there are three or four different fields of medical technology, and I was always worried about my eyesight a little bit because I always heard there was quite a bit of microscopic work and, ah, then I talked to my optometrist about that and he said that I needn't have to worry—he wore glasses—and that if I ever go into a hospital that I planned to work on for any, any length of time that they grind the top lens for you according to your eyes and so, ah, that sort of abolished that and I felt free to go into the field as far as my eyesight was concerned.

Louise showed a deep suspicion of others. She spoke repeatedly about the jealousy of other women and said that she maintained a wall between herself and the social environment. As the interview progressed, she became increasingly icy and hostile to the interviewer until she suddenly turned on her heel and left without a comment.

During the two days of assessment, she had shown serious disorganization in her thinking, a tendency to attribute hostility to others, and generally inappropriate behavior. She was easily threatened, and the subsequent anxiety disrupted her behavior and thinking. How had this personality structure developed? In search of an answer, let us look briefly at Louise as a child.

Observations on Louise and her mother during the first 10 years revealed that Louise was an extremely irritable baby. During the first 2 years of her life, she had wild tantrums, which her mother did not know how to handle. The mother was cold and critical and as early as 2 years of age placed excessive demands on Louise's development. Louise's irritability subsided after age 2; by the time she was 5 she was described as a shy, withdrawn, and frightened child. It was

sometimes difficult to understand her speech, and she appeared suspicious of adults and other children. However, after she entered elementary school her behavior changed markedly. The school situation seemed to provide Louise with a way to contain her basic conflicts. She became more friendly, seemed happier, and was less concerned with potential danger than she had been during the prekindergarten years. She was an excellent pupil, highly motivated to do well. She got A's and B's, and her teachers regarded her as a relatively mature, intelligent, self-contained child who was not conspicuously different from her peers. Louise's behavior remained essentially the same until she went to college, when the stress of leaving home and adjusting to new people began to reveal itself in open signs of anxiety and behavioral disruption. The time of the interview was a relatively anxious period, for she had just graduated from college and now faced the problem of deciding what to do with her life.

Louise was an irritable infant, a shy, withdrawn 5-year-old, a composed and motivated 10-year-old, and an anxious, suspicious adult. How did she get to be that way? How are we to explain the changes? These are the questions that a theory of personality development attempts to answer.

Why Study the Development of Personality?

There are three reasons why the gradual establishment of adult personality deserves close attention. First, understanding how a structure develops aids in understanding how the structure functions in its mature form. This is true in spite of the fact that the laws that govern the functioning of an organism, group, or institution are often different from the laws that explain the gradual growth or establishment of that organism, group, or institution. For example, the sociological laws that describe the functioning of contemporary American cities are not the same as the laws that describe how these cities grew to their current size. An understanding of the current social problems of Detroit is facilitated if one knows that part of the labor market in Detroit is composed of migrants from Southern cities.

Similarly, understanding the personality of an adult is facilitated if one knows how that personality was formed. Consider two women, similar in temperament, both of whom have decided to become professional economists. One woman is the daughter of a famous statesman who has encouraged her to enter the field of economics ever since she was in elementary school. Her father spent many evenings reading to her and often took her on trips with him. He led his daughter to believe that if she became a scholar in economics he would be very pleased with her. As the daughter approached maturity, she realized that if she became an economist she would retain her father's affection; since she wanted this goal, she was highly motivated to succeed in graduate school. Her desire to be an

economist was based primarily on her desire to please her father and thus to retain his affection.

The second woman initially wanted to be a physicist because a teacher suggested early in her adolescence that she would be good at physics. Her parents were neither pleased nor displeased with this choice. However, after two years of college she decided that physics was too difficult a study to pursue and shifted her interest to economics. She had no strong desire to be an economist but chose this area because it held some interest for her, and it allowed her to capitalize on her background in mathematics.

These two life histories give us valuable information for predicting the future behavior of the two women. The first woman should be expected to persist more strongly in her studies than the second in the face of unusual hardship or frustration, because economics was a primary choice, closely linked with her family relationships. The second woman's choice was a compromise and is, therefore, potentially less stable. We must, of course, know the history of the two women's choices of career in order to understand their different behaviors.

A second rationale for the study of development is that the organization of motives, beliefs, fears, skills, and defenses is different at different ages. Psychological development is not like the growth of muscle, during which a strand merely becomes stronger and larger with time but never changes its basic structure. At 4 years of age anxiety over possible loss of parental affection is usually the most intensely felt fear. At 1 or 18 years of age, however, this fear is weak in relation to other sources of anxiety. The 1-year-old is most afraid of strange situations; the 18-year-old is anxious over his self-image. In order to understand why a child of a given age behaves as he does, it is necessary to know the specific organization of motives and fears that exists at different ages.

A third reason for inquiry into development is born of the practical need to predict adult personality—and personality disturbance—from knowledge of the child's life experiences and personality. A basic assumption of developmental psychology is that the child is father to the man, that responses learned early in childhood guide and direct the adoption and practice of future behavior, thus giving a sense of continuity to human behavior. Although boys do not seriously select a vocation until late adolescence, they typically begin to adopt sex-typed interests and traits between 5 and 10 years of age. If the boy fails to adopt traditional masculine characteristics during this early stage, he is less likely than those of his peers who do develop these characteristics to select the traditionally masculine vocations of medicine, law, engineering, professional athletics, or business when he is 18. The adoption of one set of responses at age 10 reduces the chances of selecting a new set of responses at age 18. It is often of practical importance that we be able to predict occupational choice, performance in high school and college, or future creativity from behavior displayed during the early school years.

The prediction of adult behavior is also important for prevention of

adult personality disturbances. Most of the psychological ills that plague man and, in turn, society as a whole are difficult to modify in the adult. Schizophrenia, suicidal depression, drug addiction, criminality, and alcoholism are each the result of a long history of specific experiences. Many psychologists assume that the critical events that predispose the adult to develop any one of these disorders occur at different stages in childhood. During various critical—or sensitive—periods in human development, specific psychological processes are developing most rapidly. An intrusion during one of these periods is most likely to alter the course of a particular pattern of behavior developing at that time. It is during the critical periods that patterns that lead to psychological disturbances in the adult may best be altered.

Critical Periods in Development

The term “critical period,” then, refers to those time periods during which a particular type of environmental event has its most dramatic influence on a specific developing organ, physiological process, or behavior. During each critical period, the effect of a particular event or experience on a behavior is maximal.

It is common knowledge among students of biology that changing the location of a few cells of a recently fertilized egg will have one effect during the early hours after fertilization and a much different effect 48 hours later. Castration of a newborn male rat during the first 5 postnatal days leads to the display of female mating behavior in adulthood, because the presence of testicular androgens during the first 5 days is necessary if the hypothalamus of the rat is to take on normal male functioning. Castration of the male rat *after* the fifth day minimizes the likelihood of female mating responses in adulthood, because the androgens have had a chance to masculinize the central nervous system (Young, Goy, & Phoenix, 1964).

Examples of critical-period phenomena in human development are not so easily isolated as they are in animal development. One example comes from information on the child's physical growth. The first 3 years of life constitute the period of most rapid growth in stature; it is also at this time that quality of diet exerts its maximal effect on the adult's final height. In fact, improved diet is probably one reason that second-generation American children are taller, on the average, than their parents. Thus, there is a clear relation between the time during which a particular attribute—in this case, stature—is developing most rapidly and the time when it is most vulnerable to environmental processes—in this case, diet.

Another example of the critical-period phenomenon in human physiological development involves a rare form of mental deficiency called phenylketonuria. The child with this disease lacks an enzyme that is necessary for normal physiological functioning of the brain. In effect, the child becomes poisoned because he cannot metabolize certain substances that are in most