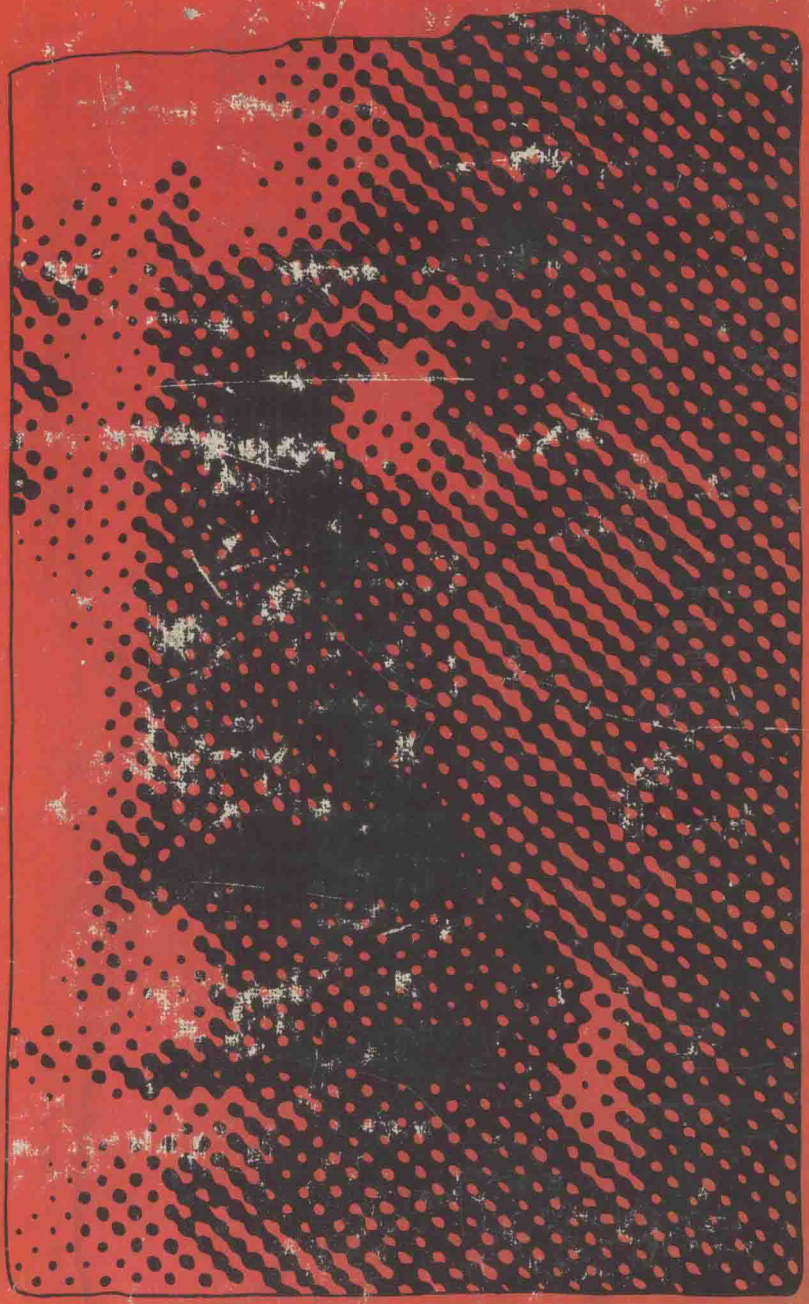
Mark Sherman

PERSONALITY

INQUIRY AND APPLICATION



PERGAMON GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY SERIES

PERSONALITY:
Inquiry and Application

Mark Sherman

Pergamon Press

New York • Oxford • Toronto • Sydney • Frankfurt • Paris

Pergamon Press Offices:

U.S.A. Pergamon Press Inc., Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, New York 10523, U.S.A.

U.K. Pergamon Press Ltd., Headington Hill Hall, Oxford OX3 0BW, England

CANADA Pergamon of Canada Ltd., 150 Consumers Road, Willowdale, Ontario M2J 1P9, Canada

AUSTRALIA Pergamon Press (Aust) Pty. Ltd., P O Box 544, Potts Point, NSW 2011, Australia

FRANCE Pergamon Press SARL, 24 rue des Ecoles, 75240 Paris, Cedex 05, France

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY Pergamon Press GmbH, 6242 Kronberg/Taunus, Pferdstrasse 1, Federal Republic of Germany

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Sherman, Mark.
Personality–inquiry and application.

(Pergamon general psychology series: 74)
1. Personality–Research. 2. Personality assessment. 3. Personality. I. Title.
BF698.S5153 1979 155.2 78-13540
ISBN 0-08-019585-7

Printed in the United States of America

PERSONALITY:
Inquiry and Application

(PGPS #74)

PERGAMON GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY SERIES

Editors: Arnold P. Goldstein, *Syracuse University*
Leonard Krasner, *SUNY, Stony Brook*

TITLES IN THE PERGAMON GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY SERIES
(Added Titles in Back of Volume)

Vol. 1. J. WOLPE–*The Practice of Behavior Therapy, Second Edition*
Vol. 2. T. MAGOON *et al.*–*Mental Health Counselors at Work*
Vol. 3. J. McDANIEL–*Physical Disability and Human Behavior, Second Edition*
Vol. 4. M.L. KAPLAN *et al.*–*The Structural Approach in Psychological Testing*
Vol. 5. H.M. LaFAUCI & P.E. RICHTER–*Team Teaching at the College Level*
Vol. 6. H.B. PEPINSKY *et al.*–*People and Information*
Vol. 7. A.W. SIEGMAN & B. POPE–*Studies in Dyadic Communication*
Vol. 8. R.E. JOHNSON–*Existential Man: The Challenge of Psychotherapy*
Vol. 9. C.W. TAYLOR–*Climate for Creativity*
Vol. 10. H.C. RICKARD–*Behavioral Intervention in Human Problems*
Vol. 11. P. EKMAN, W.V. FRIESEN & P. ELLSWORTH–*Emotion in the Human Face: Guidelines for Research and an Integration of Findings*
Vol. 12. B. MAUSNER & E.S. PLATT–*Smoking: A Behavioral Analysis*
Vol. 14. A GOLDSTEIN–*Psychotherapeutic Attraction*
Vol. 15. F. HALPERN–*Survival: Black/White*
Vol. 16. K. SALZINGER & R.S. FELDMAN–*Studies in Verbal Behavior: An Empirical Approach*
Vol. 17. H.E. ADAMS & W.K. BOARDMAN–*Advances in Experimental Clinical Psychology*
Vol. 18. R.C. ZILLER–*The Social Self*
Vol. 19. R.P. LIBERMAN–*A Guide to Behavioral Analysis & Therapy*
Vol. 22. H.B. PEPINSKY & M.J. PATTON–*The Psychological Experiment: A Practical Accomplishment*
Vol. 23. T.R. YOUNG–*New Sources of Self*
Vol. 24. L.S. WATSON, JR.–*Child Behavior Modification: A Manual for Teachers, Nurses, and Parents*
Vol. 25. H.L. NEWBOLD–*The Psychiatric Programming of People: Neo-Behavioral Orthomolecular Psychiatry*
Vol. 26. E.L. ROSSI–*Dreams and the Growth of Personality: Expanding Awareness in Psychotherapy*
Vol. 27. K.D. O'LEARY & S.G. O'LEARY–*Classroom Management: The Successful Use of Behavior Modification, Second Edition*
Vol. 28. K.A. FELDMAN–*College and Student: Selected Readings in the Social Psychology of Higher Education*
Vol. 29. B.A. ASHEM & E.G. POSER–*Adaptive Learning: Behavior Modification with Children*
Vol. 30. H.D. BURCK *et al.*–*Counseling and Accountability: Methods and Critique*
Vol. 31. N. FREDERIKSEN *et al.*–*Prediction of Organizational Behavior*
Vol. 32. R.B. CATTELL–*A New Morality from Science: Beyondism*
Vol. 33. M.L. WEINER–*Personality: The Human Potential*
Vol. 34. R.M. LIEBERT, J.M. NEALE & E.S. DAVIDSON–*The Early Window: Effects of Television on Children and Youth*
Vol. 35. R. COHEN *et al.*–*Psych City: A Simulated Community*
Vol. 36. A.M. GRAZIANO–*Child Without Tomorrow*
Vol. 37. R.J. MORRIS–*Perspectives in Abnormal Behavior*

To Enid

Foreword

In many ways, this book has been ten years in the making. It reflects what I have learned after a decade of teaching undergraduate *Personality* to over 3000 starry eyed and bleary eyed college students.

Personality: Inquiry and Application includes a carefully selected array of topics on personality assessment, research, and theory. The material chosen and its manner of presentation have been guided by an interest in reaching a middle ground on two pedagogical issues. First, an effort was made to cover an appropriate range of major topics. Presenting too many content areas in an academic semester creates confusion, while introducing too few denies the student the opportunity to gain a comprehensive sense of the overall picture. Thus, the selection of the particular personality assessment approaches discussed in Part II was dictated more by what is deemed important and representative than by an attempt to be exhaustive. Similar considerations influenced the organization of Part III. The personality theories presented therein reflect major trends which currently prevail in the field. The focus of each chapter is on the particular theorists who best exemplify the orientation in question, and their numbers have been kept to a minimum. Such a strategy allows the chosen theories to be presented in sufficient detail for the studious reader to become well informed.

The second concern, clearly related to the first, is that of difficulty level. The goal was to provide the student with an opportunity to confront successfully some of the complex core issues relevant to personality assessment, research, and theory. In order to assure mastery, material is frequently presented in considerable detail; the logic or conceptual underpinnings of a method or an idea is spelled out in stepwise fashion. In this way, a thorough, lasting understanding is established, instead of a soon-to-be-forgotten superficial acquaintanceship. This strategy was most important to the development of Part I, in which research design, interpretation, and ethics are presented with the degree of emphasis I believe they deserve in a broad band course in personality.

While I am the sole author of this text and therefore bear full responsibility for what follows, I do not presume to deserve complete credit. This "personality," willing and able to undertake the enterprise of textbook writing, was given its direction by caring, intelligent, creative, and responsible parents. I found similar qualities in my mentors at the University of Connecticut, particularly Amerigo Farina and Julian Rotter, who were highly influential in guiding my early development as an academician.

There are many I have come to know more recently who have been instrumental in helping me shape this book. My students, both undergraduate and graduate, who have asked the right questions and who have made insightful comments have been very important. I must especially single out Deborah Woodford, whose assistance in the role of researcher, proofreader, and reviewer was invaluable. The quality work of Leona Catlin and Lorna Ber, who typed the manuscript and indices into the night and on weekends, must be acknowledged as well.

I am also indebted to John G. Allen for his thorough reading of an earlier manuscript. His thoughtful suggestions concerning the form and substance of the book were of enormous benefit.

A sincere "thank you," one deeply felt, is directed to my most admired colleague and "best friend," Arnold P. Goldstein. He has been a constant source of help and inspiration — for this project as he has been for others before it and, will be, I hope, for others yet to come.

Anyone who labors countless hours on a serious task, no matter how devoted to it, must have his moments of pause and refreshment. My daughters, Cori and Julie, provided these blessed distractions. I only wish we could have been together more, for nothing can replace time away from a child growing up — which is indeed what they did while I was writing in my "dungeon."

Finally, no expression of gratitude to my wife, Enid, can adequately communicate what I feel. I could never have asked her to put up with what she did and come through it all, still my loving wife. If I failed her for not asking, or for putting her through it, she did not fail me. It is to her that this book is dedicated.

Contents

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

The purpose of this book is to provide the college undergraduate with an understanding of *personality* as a sub-area of psychology and to acquaint him with the principal methods of inquiry responsible for the acquisition of knowledge relevant to personality. This domain of study is sometimes referred to as *personology*. But what is it that personologists investigate? What is personality?

DEFINITION

Undoubtedly, we all have an intuitive sense of the meaning of *personality*. It has to do with people, the way they come across to others, the image they present, their social facade. In fact, the term "personality" derives from the word *persona*, which referred to the masks worn by actors in ancient Roman theater. These persona permitted audiences to identify easily the various roles enacted by the players and they facilitated understanding of the stage characters. Later, the roles themselves would be called persona. Of course, today people do not go around wearing masks in order to advertise their persona. Nevertheless, what a person is about — his personality — still is manifested to others through verbal and nonverbal behaviors. These expressions may lead others to characterize an individual's personality as "intellectual," "crude," or perhaps as "just plain great."

On a more formal level, in 1937 Gordon Allport presented a lengthy list of already-published definitions of personality. Since that time many more have been suggested, leading us to conclude, along with Allport, that "Everyone, it seems, knows what personality is, but no one can precisely define it." (1961, p. 22). Our own best effort is the following: *Personality is the characteristic pattern of behaviors, cognitions, and emotions which may be experienced by the individual and/or manifest to others.*

This definition specifies several essential points. It includes *behaviors* (actions), *cognitions* (thoughts), and *emotions* (feelings) as the basic content of personality. Behaviors, cognitions, and emotions may be collectively referred to as person-events.

Some personologists focus upon one class of person-events more than upon others. As we will see, Sigmund Freud spends considerable time discussing emotion; other workers, such as B.F. Skinner, emphasize behavioral phenomena; cognitively oriented personologists are well represented by Carl Rogers. Most personality theorists, however, talk about the complete human being and, in so doing, deal implicitly with all three classes of person-events.

The word *characteristic* in our definition suggests that person-events are specific to particular people. This specificity sets each individual apart from all others. Thus, every person acts, thinks, and feels somewhat differently. In addition, these characteristic person-events are not random occurrences but rather emerge in *patterns*; person-events are related to each other in that the presence of one event tends to be associated with the presence (or absence) of others. For example, we know that ideas of high self-esteem ("I'm a great person") are more likely associated with good feelings and smiling behaviors than are ideas of low self-esteem. Also, patterning has a temporal aspect in that person-events are related to other previous or subsequent events. Our knowledge that feelings of anger often precede aggressive behaviors is one example of such temporal patterning. These patterns and their repetitions make for the apparent stability of personality.

The word *may* in our definition implies three important things. First, some person-events *may* not be *experienced* by the person himself but are nevertheless *manifest* to others. That is, the individual may not consciously know the reasons for, or even the content, of his behavior. An example of this is the person others accurately perceive as hostile but who honestly does not think of himself in that way. Second, a person *may* indeed *experience* certain aspects of himself of which others are unaware; these are not *manifest* person-events. For instance, we often have evaluative thoughts about people ("She is one boring person") which we are loathe to reveal and can, in fact, successfully hide. Third, some person-events are neither *experienced* by the person himself, nor are they *manifest* to others. In this vein, Freud pointed out that humor may serve to conceal angry feelings. Neither the perpetrator of a practical joke nor the person who serves as its object may realize that their "playful" interaction really involves the expression of hostility in a disguised form.

METHODOLOGY

At an informal level, once we arrive at some initial definition of another's personality, we are prone to engage in a variety of inferential activities, many of them ill-founded. We speculate about why the person is the way he is and what we might expect from him in a given situation. Perhaps we even theorize about human nature in general.

In many respects, personologists do much the same thing. The main difference is that their inferential activities are presumably conducted in a manner which is acceptable to the scientific community. Unfortunately, scientific acceptability is as difficult to define as personality itself.

Some psychologists assert that personology could best be advanced by adopting a *nomothetic* orientation. This nomothetic approach dictates that relatively narrow aspects of large numbers of people be studied in the service of discovering general principles. Several research strategies, such as experimentation and correlational studies, are well suited to the nomotheticist's preferences. These will be discussed in later chapters. Other personologists argue that the most viable route to understanding personality is by way of intensive investigation and assessment of single cases — the *idiographic* approach. Probably the best exemplar of this school of thought was Freud who, on the basis of a relatively small number of individual psychotherapeutic encounters, developed a systematic statement about personality development and processes which he maintained was universally applicable.

Nomotheticists criticize the idiographic approach as being too "clinical" and insufficiently scientific. They claim that the idiographic position is one which, in practice, cannot be followed. The assertion is made that an in-depth assessment of a given personality can only be made if at least implicit normative comparisons are drawn. For example, nomotheticists say that it is impossible to judge someone as "sexually constricted" on the basis of an intensive personality analysis unless there is some normative standard held regarding the nature of sexual expression in general. The argument is further made that these normative standards ought to be explicitly acknowledged and used in the most rigorous, scientific fashion possible.

In actual practice psychologists tend to operate within both nomothetic and idiographic frameworks, with the approach being emphasized at a given time dependent on the psychologists' purposes. Clinical work usually demands a relatively idiographic examination of matters; research activity requires a more nomothetic perspective.

Regardless of whether a personologist chooses group (nomothetic) or individual (idiographic) investigative methods, the problems and goals remain fairly constant. Like the casual observer, personologists are interested in trying to understand the functioning of personality, to gain knowledge of its antecedents, and to acquire the capacity to predict accurately the way it will manifest itself on future, specified occasions.

PROSPECTUS

There are four basic methods of inquiry associated with personology. Three of these are research, individual personality assessment, and theory construction. Each of these strategies will be given primary attention.

Part I is devoted to a thorough examination of personality research. It is felt that an understanding of this area is crucial for an appreciation of personality as a scientific discipline. Experimentation, as one research method, is covered in two chapters. The first of these deals with basic experimental designs; the second discusses sources of error which may render the results of an experiment uninterpretable. Two chapters on non-experimental research present the design, assets, and liabilities of correlational,

single subject, and case study investigations. Finally, the inclusion of a separate chapter on professional ethics accords this topic its due emphasis.

Part II covers personality assessment. Individual chapters are devoted to issues which transcend any particular procedure, such as interpersonal factors which interfere with the accurate assessment of others, and instrument characteristics which severely limit the usefulness of a test as a tool for the prediction and understanding of human behavior. Although attention is given to some of the statistical conceptions which underlie personality test construction and utilization, the material presented is designed for students who do not have prior coursework in statistics. A brief chapter which discusses the main dimensions of personality assessment procedures is followed by four chapters in which selected instruments and approaches are presented in detail.

Part III is concerned with the presentation of personality theories. The section begins with an overview in which the nature and criteria of adequate personality theory are presented. These criteria are then used to help evaluate each theory as it is presented. The next two chapters attend primarily to the personality theories of Freud and Rogers as representative of the psychodynamic and phenomenological viewpoints, respectively. This is followed by chapters in which the principles of classical and operant conditioning are detailed, and their application to human behavior acquisition, maintenance, and change reviewed. The final chapter reflects the current trend toward cognitive-learning personality theorizing. In particular, it contains descriptions and applications of the ideas of prominent psychologists in this movement. Bandura's socio-behavioristic approach with its emphasis upon observational phenomena, Rotter's Social Learning Theory, Mischel's cognitive reconceptualization of personality and transactional personality theory as elaborated by Endler and Magnusson are all examined.

The reader should be forewarned that this tripartite discussion is for instructional convenience only. In reality, the assessment, research, and theory-building enterprises are mutually interdependent. The particular aspects of personality one chooses to assess and the areas of research the personologist pursues are usually dictated by his theoretical understanding of personality. In turn, that theoretical understanding emerges in part from the findings of individual assessments and research.

Psychotherapy is a fourth important strategy of inquiry. While psychotherapy is typically thought of as being primarily concerned with treatment, it may well be the single most important source of ideas regarding the nature of personality. After all, no other vehicle permits one to gain such intimate knowledge about the behavior, ideas, and feelings of another human being. These insights may then serve as a basis for modifying and extending existing personality theory, as a focus of personality assessment and/or as an impetus for research. Because psychotherapy, in all its forms, is so entwined with the other inquiry strategies, no attempt has been made to deal with it separately. Instead, material relevant to clinical practice is discussed throughout, both in the context of it being a source of new knowledge and as a major endeavor to which personality assessment, research, and theory are applied.

PART I

Personality Research

CHAPTER 2
Personality Research: An Overview

THE NATURE OF SCIENCE

The purpose of science is to gain knowledge about our universe. This goal, of course, is not unique to scientific inquiry. A variety of vehicles have been proposed to obtain such knowledge. Plato said that the essence of an event is known prior to birth. If one wishes to discover what a tree is about, one must reflect upon what makes a tree a tree. In this way, accurate prenatal concepts regarding the essence of a tree will be captured. *Reminiscence,* then, was seen by Plato as the route to basic knowledge.

The sensory experiences associated with encountering specific events, vision and touch, were thought by Plato to be inferior ways of attempting to gain knowledge. This rejection of reliance upon direct observation was later advocated by Descartes and Spinoza who, as *rationalists,* believed that truth could be acquired through reason.

Modern scientific approaches to the acquisition of knowledge about the universe depend heavily upon *empiricism.* In this context, empiricism means a "reliance upon observation as opposed to dependence upon interpretation, speculation, and subjective judgement" (Shontz, 1965, p. 87). Thus, observation lies at the very core of empirical science.

The emphasis on observation as the route to knowledge holds with it a basic but often forgotten assumption. Namely, that what is observed exists apart from the observer. That is, the universe is assumed to be more than just the collection of an individual's perceptions. Events are thought to have permanency which transcends the act of perceiving them. Thus, the New World existed long before it was "discovered" by Columbus and continued to exist after he and his crew departed for home. Similarly, the observed behavior of a rat in a learning maze is more than just an awareness on the observer's part of his own visual sensations. There is a reality which consists of a real rat running through a real maze.

A basic requirement of empirical science is that its assertions about the nature of the universe correspond to the external reality which is assumed to exist. When scientific statements meet this standard, they are said to have *transcendent truth.* The lack of a correspondence between assertion and observed reality may mean that the