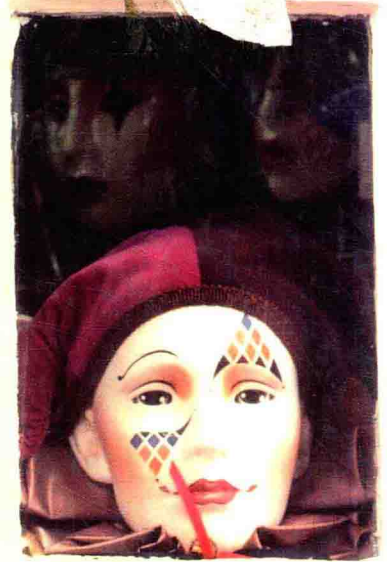


JERRY M. BURGER



P E R S O N A L I T Y

FIFTH EDITION



Personality

Fifth Edition

Jerry M. Burger

Santa Clara University

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Preface



Personality psychology, like all living things, continues to change and grow. As one who has chronicled developments in the field through five editions of this book, I've come to appreciate how these changes demonstrate that personality psychology is a vibrant and healthy field. But I also see that this development is slow and methodical, and that the basic core of the field remains relatively stable over time. In that regard, the discipline resembles the subject matter. Appropriately, this characteristic of personality psychology also is reflected in this book. I've incorporated many changes over the life of the book. But looking back at the five editions, it also is easy to see the same basic textbook with which I began. Briefly, let me outline what's new and what's the same in this edition.

What's New?

Two research topics have been added to this edition, each representing a recently expanding area of personality research. Interestingly, both new topics reflect a renewed interest in psychoanalytic concepts among personality researchers. I've added a section on defense mechanisms to Chapter 4. The research in this section provides an excellent example of how investigators can use rigid empirical methods to study concepts popularized by Freud. You'll also find a new section on cognitive interpretations of psychoanalytic concepts in Chapter 16. I particularly like the way this new section illustrates one of the points I raise in the first chapter—that concepts from different approaches to personality often complement and at times blend with one another.

The changing face of the field also has led me to drop two topics from the previous edition. Research on subliminal psychodynamic activation and cognitive complexity, formerly covered in Chapters 4 and 16, has been omitted. A review of books and articles published during the past several years suggests very few personality psychologists currently are working on or even citing research on these two topics.

Those familiar with previous editions also will find some reorganization this time around. In particular, research on depressive schemas and the attributional model of learned helplessness has been combined into one section in Chapter 16. Similarly, research on gender schema theory has been reduced and included in a section on gender type and gender differences. The section, also in Chapter 16, includes interesting new research on gender differences in memory and cognitive representations of the self. Finally, the book has been updated and rewritten throughout. The Reference section has more than 300 new entries. You'll also find a few new personality tests and some new "In the News" topics.

What's the Same?

The philosophy that guided the organization and writing of the first four editions remains. I wrote this book to organize within one textbook the two approaches typically taken by instructors of an undergraduate personality course. On the one hand, many instructors focus on the great theories and theorists—Freud, Jung, Rogers, Skinner, and so on. Students in these classes gain insight into the structure of the mind and issues of human nature, as well as a background for understanding psychological disorders and psychotherapy. However, these students are likely to be puzzled when they pick up a current journal of personality research only to find they recognize few, if any, of the topics. On the other hand, some instructors emphasize personality research. Students learn about current research on individual differences and personality processes. But they probably see little relationship between the abstract theories they may touch upon in class and the research topics that are the focus of the course.

However, these two approaches to teaching the course do not represent separate disciplines that happen to share the word personality in their titles. Indeed, the structure of this book is designed to demonstrate that the classic theories stimulate research and that the research findings often shape the development and acceptance of the theories. Limiting a student's attention to either theory or research provides an unfortunately narrow view of the field.

Something else that remains from the earlier editions is my belief that students learn about research best by seeing programs of research, rather than a few isolated examples. Twenty-six research programs are covered in the seven research chapters in this edition. In each case I have tried to illustrate how the questions being investigated are connected to a larger theory, how early researchers developed their initial hypotheses and investigations, and how experimental findings led to new questions, refined hypotheses, and ultimately a greater understanding of the topic. Through this process, students are exposed to some of the problems researchers encounter, the fact that experimental results often are equivocal, and a realistic picture of researchers who don't always agree on how to interpret findings.

Finally, I have retained and expanded many of the features of the previous editions in this fifth edition. Each of the theory chapters contains a section on

application and a section on assessment. These sections demonstrate how the sometimes abstract theories relate to everyday concerns and issues and how each approach to understanding personality brings with it unique assumptions and problems when measuring relevant personality variables. I've also retained the personality tests students can take and score themselves. There are now 13 "Assessing Your Own Personality" boxes scattered throughout the book. I've discovered in my own teaching that, for example, discussions about locus of control research mean a lot more to students when they know how they scored on a locus of control test. This hands-on experience not only gives students a better idea of how personality assessment works, but often generates a little healthy skepticism about relying too heavily on such measures. I've also retained the biographies of the prominent personality theorists in this edition. Feedback from students indicates that knowing something about the person behind the theory helps to make the theory come alive. They also enjoy speculating about how the theorist's life affected the development of the theory. Finally, students and instructors tell me they like the "In the News" boxes I introduced in the last edition. Consequently, these also have been retained. Further, they have been extended with links to Infotrac, an online database of 900 journals and magazines.

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