



PERSONALITY

The Scientific Study of Complex Human Behavior

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About the Cover

The front and back covers are reproductions of an original work by the New York artist, Pamela Ross. These 15" x 20" etchings are composed of 16 individual zinc plates, each of which was created separately, using a variety of etching techniques, including aquatint and dry point. The individual plates were then arranged and reworked into an overall connecting theme. The composition was inked in both color intaglio and relief roll methods. The title of the work, "Pieces of the Whole," echoing the heading of Part Six of the book, suggests that each of the 16 plates is necessary to make up the entire print, although each can also be viewed and appreciated on its individual merit.

To ILSE

The best is yet to be . . .
Rejoice we are allied—

Robert Browning

*Knowledge comes,
but wisdom lingers.*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1842)

*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy
getting get understanding.*

PROVERBS IV, 7

PREFACE

Psychology is the science of human behavior. Because human behavior has many aspects, its study has led psychologists in many directions. Their research now ranges from the interaction of brain cells to the relations of ethnic groups; from an infant's first words to the incoherent ramblings of a psychotic. In danger of being lost in this diversity is the living human person whose behavior psychologists had set out to investigate. There is only one topic in all of psychology that offers an opportunity to bring the results of this diverse research together. That topic is *personality*.

The study of personality is the study of complex human behavior. That frame of reference guided the preparation of *Personality*. I have attempted to bring together in this book the topics investigated in contemporary research in the area of personality and to present the issues that emerge in the course of these studies. The study of personality is a lively and ongoing enterprise in which investigators are trying to understand one of the most difficult topics of research, our own complex behavior. The results of this research, often tentative and always subject to revision, make up the bulk of this book. This emphasis is what I view as its distinguishing feature.

Some preliminaries are necessary before one can truly understand and fully appreciate the study of personality. The first two chapters therefore introduce the student to the scientific principles that guide personality research and to the problems faced by those who pursue it. These introductory chapters are followed by a review of the historical development of Western thought about personality. It is here that the often stimulating and always provocative contributions of the most prominent personality theorists are accorded their due. Beyond that, theories of personality will occupy little space. I believe with Sechrest (1976) that the field of personality needs to divest itself of fifty-year-old theories. Furthermore, I agree with Carlson (1975) that the field lacks a widely shared, comprehensive theory that can integrate and order available data and pose significant, researchable questions.

After placing personality study in its historical context, the book turns to a presentation of how various scholars and scientists have approached questions about human qualities and human capacities—questions about the nature of human nature. These questions are as fascinating as they are difficult. The speculative nature of most of the answers should whet the reader's appetite for the

empirically based parts of the book that follow. These parts begin with a survey of the principal measures used in assessing individual differences, turn to the genetic and societal sources of these differences, discuss the dual problems of consistency and change in action, cognition, motivation, and emotion, and end with an integration of these aspects of personality around the topic of self-concept.

The twin quotations at the head of this preface reflect a pedagogic principle that has guided me in more than a quarter-century of teaching personality and related courses. Though I do not expect to impart wisdom, I believe that students must come away from a textbook and a course with more than a knowledge of facts; they must also be given understanding. The understanding for which I have aimed here is not of an abstraction called personality, nor is it an understanding of human nature. It is an understanding of the way psychologists go about painstakingly gathering the knowledge of complex human behavior that may eventually help us understand ourselves and one another. Once we have reached that understanding, we may even understand human nature.

With the aim of getting to know some of the psychologists who have contributed to the study of personality, we have included a dozen interviews in which we asked some of the most productive investigators to talk about themselves, their work, and their views on the future of the field of personality study. I am grateful to these women and men for having taken time from their busy schedules to participate in this venture and for permitting me to reproduce their words in these pages.

Some words about the format of *Personality*: Because I believe that it is easier to understand the meaning of a term when it is seen in context, I have combined the Glossary with the Subject Index. There the locations of explicit definitions are indicated by boldface page numbers. On the page where such a definition appears, the term is also highlighted by boldface type so that it is easy to find.

The reader will find that each chapter opens with a preview and closes with a review. Each such review includes ten terms students should know and ten concepts they should understand after having finished the chapter. These twenty questions can be used as a self-examination. Those who are able to answer most or all of these questions correctly will have learned a great deal about psychology as it converges in the field called personality.

Acknowledgments

In the years since I first contemplated taking my somewhat novel approach to a textbook on personality I have had the benefit of collecting both critical and encouraging comments from many psychologists with expertise in this subject area. Some of these colleagues I know to this day only as "Reviewer X." I here acknowledge their anonymous help. Those whose identity was revealed to me and to whose suggestions I am grateful are: Albert Bandura, Stanford University; Andrew Baum, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; Daryl

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I am beholden to Karen Emmons, Maureen Mitchell, Donn Posner, and Joseph Stets for their prompt and competent assistance in preparing the instructor's manual and test bank. The artist whose prints brighten the covers knows how much I appreciate her work. And then there is that enthusiastic and hard-working crew at Holt, Rinehart and Winston to whose efforts I owe the fact that this book is now in your hands. I am deeply appreciative of the cheerful support of Susan Meyers whose infectious optimism is topped only by her skill at persuasive communication. Jane Knetzger worked with dedication on the development of my manuscript and was particularly helpful in arranging the interviews and conducting them with sensitivity and imagination. I am grateful to her and to Herman Makler, my project editor, whose open manner, careful attention to detail, and ready availability made the rushed final phase of the editing process less aversive than it usually is and might have been without his support. Most refreshing of all my experiences with Holt was that for once I encountered a copy editor whose suggestions improved my syntax without doing violence to the meaning I sought to convey. May all authors be blessed with someone like Kristen Camitta Zimet.

A.O.R.

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