



SECOND EDITION

**INTRODUCTION
TO
PERSONALITY**

Walter Mischel

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**INTRODUCTION
TO
PERSONALITY**

Second Edition

HOLT, RINEHART AND WINSTON

New York Chicago San Francisco Atlanta
Dallas Montreal Toronto London Sydney

To my parents

PREFACE

to First Edition

This book is an introduction to major approaches, methods, and findings in the field of personality. It presents an overview of basic theories, strategies, issues, and conclusions in the psychological study of personality.

Traditionally, students have been introduced to personality psychology by reading about the ideas of major theorists. Theoretical orientations to personality study, in my view, are a necessary beginning but not an end in themselves. To offer a theoretical overview and historical perspective this book begins with a survey of the basic concepts and assumptions that major approaches share, and the fundamental differences between them.

But to go beyond an exposition of the alternative conceptions of personality proposed by different theorists, to move beyond views of man-in-general, also requires attention to

tactics. The transition from abstractions concerning the possible nature of human beings to specific investigations of individuals is, after all, a chief difference between philosophy and psychology. Therefore this book surveys the distinctive tactics for personality study associated with each of the theoretical orientations discussed. A study of the methods that these orientations provide to assess people, and an overview of the results that come from these assessments, in turn should inform us about the strengths and weaknesses of the theories that guide the assessments.

It has long been fashionable to call personality psychology a young field and to profess how little we know about the mysteries of man. While no one can quarrel with modesty, in fact the field is quickly getting older and, fortunately, apologies for its youth and ignorance are becoming less necessary. Indeed, studies that clarify the value and limits of our theories are accumulating rapidly. In recent years empirical findings have been pouring in from many sources as more researchers are studying socially relevant behaviors, gradually illuminating the nature of personality processes and the causes of social behavior. It therefore is becoming possible now to introduce students of personality not only to the hypotheses of authorities but also to some of the findings and conclusions (albeit tentative) that are emerging. This book therefore includes an integration of research on various core topics of the field (such as identification, frustration-aggression, anxiety, defense, self-concepts—to name but a few). These topics are presented not as a catalogue of facts but in the hope of increasing the student's understanding of complex human behavior so that he may learn about its substantive nature and not merely about theoretical speculations. Wherever possible research findings, in turn, are related to the relevant theoretical orientations and methods, as well as to specific case examples, so that their implications for understanding basic issues become evident.

While some theories of personality address themselves to different phenomena and thus may co-exist and even be complementary, other positions are essentially incompatible. Perhaps the most lucid confrontations between theories, and the most dramatic tests of their utility, have come from studies of personality development and change, and of deviance and therapeutic behavior modification. In the context of the growth and modification of personality the theoretical problems of the field become especially meaningful and vivid, and the student can more easily see their implications. Consequently the text also includes some coverage of content often relegated to the fields of socialization and abnormal personality but only when the issues and findings influence basic conceptions of personality.

The four parts of this book are presented in a sequence that I hope will provide a coherent, integrated survey of the field. At the same time, the presentation was deliberately designed to permit the instructor great flexibility in selecting material for the specific objectives of his course. For example, the present progression from personality theories in Part I to personality assessment in Part II can be altered easily. Rather than reading all the theories in Part I first and then studying their associated assessment strategies in Part II the student can be assigned any one theoretical orientation and its relevant strategies as a single unit before he progresses to the next orientation and its methods. To maximize flexibility the parts and chapters were written to serve as self-contained units that can be assigned in almost any pattern, depending on the instructor's goals and the background of the students. For example, while theory-oriented introductions to personality might focus on Parts I and II, more research-oriented and advanced courses might put greater emphasis on the content of Parts III and IV. The accompanying *Instructor's Manual* provides objective and discussion questions to facilitate such a flexible use of the text.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my debt to the many people who helped with constructive comments and careful readings of manuscript drafts. Some of the most valuable criticisms came from Gerald Davison, Rogers Elliott, Joan Grusec, Perry London, Peter Madison, Paul Mussen, Toni Raskoff, David Rosenhan, Carla Senders, and Jack Shaffer. The Instructor's Manual and the subject index for the text were meticulously prepared by Toni Raskoff, who also served as my most helpful assistant throughout this project. I am grateful to Darlene Lapham who performed the work of many secretaries and transformed endless yellow scraps into typed manuscript. My daughter Judith assisted with clerical work. My wife Harriet contributed to many aspects of the writing and, except for her own modesty, would be credited as the text's co-author.

Walter Mischel
Stanford, California

PREFACE to Second Edition

In addition to taking account of the many new developments in the area, the second edition of *Introduction to Personality* includes some significant organizational changes. These changes are intended to increase the effectiveness and coherence of the presentation while retaining the basic structure of the first edition.

Part 1 still presents an overview of the theoretical conceptions provided by each of the major approaches to personality. Part 2, however, has been expanded substantially to survey more broadly the important applications associated with each theoretical approach. In the first edition, Part 2 was limited to the assessment strategies of each approach while

the topics of deviance and personality change were relegated to a separate section at the end of the book (Part 4). The current edition, instead, integrates material on adaptation (the "healthy, fully functioning personality"), deviance, and personality change into Part 2 insofar as it fits with other applications of each of the theoretical approaches with which it is associated. Materials central to personality psychology from Part 4 of the first edition have been incorporated into Part 2 wherever relevant and Part 4 no longer exists as a separate section. This reorganization is intended to integrate more closely the links between theoretical conceptions of personality and their important applications, while avoiding overlap with abnormal psychology courses.

Part 3 (Personality Development and Basic Processes) continues to offer a systematic overview of major current research issues and findings. Changes throughout Part 3 reflect the vigorous growth of research in the field, including new developments in such topics as genetic antecedents, sex bias and sex-role stereotypes, aggression and televised violence, self-control (including biofeedback and moral behavior), and attribution theory. There also has been a flood of theoretical and empirical developments dealing with the role of the environment, the analysis of situations, the conceptualization of individual differences, and the interaction of the person with specific conditions. The growth of interest in these topics has been so great that a completely new chapter has been added to treat them in detail (Chapter 21, The Interaction of Person and Situation). In that chapter I also try to be explicit about my own theoretical preferences so that readers interested in the author's orientation can identify it easily.

The sequence of chapters can be adapted readily to emphasize even more the specific links between each theoretical approach and the research most relevant to it. For example, the following chapter sequences group the conceptions and applications of each theoretical approach with research closely connected to it:

APPROACHES				
	TRAIT	PSYCHODYNAMIC	BEHAVIORAL	PHENOMENOLOGICAL
Conceptions	2	3, 4	4, 5	6
Applications	7, 8	9	10, 11	12
Research	14, 15, 17, 20	15, 16, 17, 18, 19	13, 15, 16, 19	19, 20

The introduction (1) and the final chapter (21) cut across issues relevant to all the approaches. Of course, each of the research chapters also has some bearing on all the approaches, making conceptual overlap inevitable in Part 3, and permitting alternative groupings of that material.

Readings in Personality (edited by Harriet N. Mischel and Walter Mischel, published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston) provides readings from original sources in a sequence that parallels the present text's organization. The text is also supplemented by a new *Instructor's Manual* for the second edition, developed by Professor James Calhoun.

Preparation of the second edition was greatly helped by the thoughtful, detailed comments of many reviewers. Especially useful were the analyses of the manuscript by James Calhoun, Kent Houston, Robert Kaplan, James D. Laird, Alan Marlatt, Paul Mussen, and Susan Pepper. Susan Arbuckle prepared the index with diligence and care. The publisher's

staff did much to facilitate the production of the work; Deborah Doty and Elyce Misher were consistently attentive and deeply involved in the manuscript's transformation into book form.

My wife Harriet remains a major force behind the book. She contributed continuously and significantly at every point in the work's development, from the first general conception of the organization to the last specific summary point.

Walter Mischel
Stanford, California

**INTRODUCTION
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Second Edition

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

Most thoughtful people have asked the question, “What is personality?” but few agree on an answer. The term “personality” has many definitions, but no single meaning is accepted universally.

MANY DEFINITIONS—LITTLE CONSENSUS

In popular usage, personality is often equated with social adroitness and effectiveness. In this usage, personality is the ability to elicit positive reactions from other people in one’s typical dealings with them. For example, we may speak of someone as having “a lot of personality” or a “popular personality,” and advertisements for glamour courses promise to give those who enroll “more personality.”

Less superficially, personality may be taken to be an individual’s most striking or dominant characteristics. In that sense a person may be said to be a “shy personality” or a “neurotic personality,” meaning that his most dominant attribute appears to be shyness or neurosis.