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Aspects of Personality


Principal Features

**Harry Stack Sullivan: Interpersonal Psychiatry**

**Question:** What was Harry Stack Sullivan’s notion of “chumship”?  
(345)

Complete the following:

“For Sullivan, it is of the utmost importance to understand the feelings of anxiety that arise when …

"He thus locates healthy or unhealthy psychological development in the …

**Interpersonal Psychiatry Contrasted with Psychoanalytic Theory**

Complete the following:

“For Sullivan, personality is inextricably tied to …

“Sullivan’s approach is … known as the **interpersonal theory of psychiatry**.  
It focuses on the recurring …

(346)
Interpersonal Psychiatry Contrasted with Psychoanalytic Theory
(Continued)

Complete the following:

“It constituted a major break from …” (346)

“Sullivan’s approach … was heavily influenced by the … Chicago School of sociology and philosophy … particularly by George Herbert Mead …”

“Mead is best known for his intriguing writings about the social self. The social self is the idea that who we are and how we think of ourselves arises from our …

Personality as a Pattern of Interpersonal Interactions

“Edward Sapir, the other key influence on Sullivan, was an anthropologist, best known for his work on language and culture. By studying diverse societies, Sapir saw that behavior was heavily influenced by culture.”

Complete the following:

“Harry Stack Sullivan integrated the work of Mead and of Sapir and concluded that enduring patterns of human relationships—shaped by family and society—form the …

“Sullivan, like Erikson, believed that to understand personality, we must look to recurring patterns of social relations in a real societal context.”

Example: Social relations.
Complete the following:

“For Sullivan, personality is not built around the unconscious impulses of the id, nor is it fixed in early childhood. Rather, it constantly changes as a function of …

**Question:** What is meant by the following statement?

“… we … become ‘different’ people in different social situations!”

**Example:** Social self.

**Question:** What was the **illusion of individuality** insofar as Harry Stack Sullivan was concerned?

Complete the following:

“Since personality is primarily a function of social expectations, Sullivan blames …
Personality as a Pattern of Interpersonal Interactions
(Continued)

Complete the following:

“Society is seen as stifling the …”

(347)

“Anxiety comes from …”

**Question:** What did Harry Stack Sullivan have to say about locking away the mentally ill in mental “sanitariums?”

Complete the following:

“Thus, for Sullivan, the focus of personality study should be on the interpersonal situation, not the …”

Motivation and Goals: Henry Murray

**Question:** How did Henry Murray apply his theories and methods of studying personality to the war effort in World War II?

Complete the following:

“Henry Murray defined personality as the …”
The Personological System

**Question:** Why did Henry Murray refer to his theory as a **personological system**?

**Question:** What is meant by the following statement?

“Murray … emphasized the **environmental press**.”

Example: Environmental press.

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**Table 10.1** Examples of Murray's Needs

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**Thema**

**Question:** What was **thema** insofar as Henry Murray was concerned? (350)

Complete the following:

“(The Thematic Apperception Test) … is an ‘apperception’ test because the person reports not what he or she sees (‘perception’) but rather a …

Example: Thema.

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**The Narrative Approach: Murray’s Influence**

**Question:** What is the **narrative approach** to personality?

Example: Narrative approach to personality.
**Other Influences on Murray’s Approach**

“Murray was influenced significantly by the field theories of social psychologist Kurt Lewin. Lewin, well-known for his proposition that behavior is a function of the person and the environment, believed this, however in the sense of **contemporaneous causation**.”

**Question**: What is the concept of **contemporaneous causation** in personality theory? (351)

**Example**: Contemporaneous causation.

“Also influencing Murray and the move to a more interactionist approach were the behaviorists such as B. F. Skinner.”

**Question**: In what ways was Henry Murray's theory of personality influenced by the ideas of B. F. Skinner?

Complete the following:

“For Henry Murray, the individual brings needs and motivations to …” (352)
Modern Interactionist Approaches Begin

Complete the following:

"(The) psychologist Walter Mischel … stirred up significant interest in the interactionist approaches by arguing that a person’s behavior varies so much from situation to situation that it simply does not make sense to think in terms of …

Mischel’s Critique

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“Mischel looked at the size of the relations between a person’s behavior across situations, and their variability.”

Example: Walter Mischel’s view of personality.

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“Mischel relied on the correlation coefficient r.”

Complete the following:

“Two problems weaken this analysis. First, it assumes a …
Mischel’s Critique

(Continued)

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“The second limitation on Mischel’s analysis is the assumption that a correlation between personality and behavior of ‘only’ $r = 0.30$ or $0.40$ is small.”

Complete the following:

“The argument that personality is not a valuable concept because it is not highly correlated with behavior across situations has the implicit assumption that it is more important to …

“However, if we examine the influence of the situation on behavior, we find that situations are …

“… Mischel’s work served a highly useful purpose in drawing further attention to the …

Mischel’s Theory

Question: What is the notion of delay of gratification in Walter Mischel’s theory?

Question: What is the notion of strategies, or styles, in Walter Mischel’s theory?
Mischel’s Theory
(Continued)

Complete the following:

“In particular, Mischel has discussed four personality variables:

“competencies”—the person’s …

“encoding strategies”—the schemas and mechanisms one uses to …

“expectancies, including …

“… and plans. His studies demonstrate that personality is not merely an internal condition that pushes the individual toward behavior regardless of the situation, nor is the individual simply at the …

“Instead, an individual’s actions, like delay of gratification, are the result of both …

“All in all, this work supports the basic tenet that the person and his or her behavior and the environment are continuously …

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“… people identify situation-behavior relationships that become behavior signatures of their personalities.”
Implicit Personality Theory

Attributions

“Attribution theories in the field of social psychology have examined the ways we draw inferences about other people’s behavior. They often find that we have biases and make errors when judging others.”

Example: Attribution

“Relatedly, people are willing to fall back on stereotypes to help simplify how they see the world.”

Examples Attribution and stereotyping.

Validity

Question: What does it mean to say that there is “good evidence for validity” of personality judgments based on attributions?
The Power of Situations

Complete the following:

“One reason that personality is sometimes a weak predictor of behavior is that the power of the situation is sometimes so strong that it …” (357)

Examples: The power of situations. (357-358)

Trait Relevance

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“Modern personality work sometimes tries to attend directly to trait relevance.” (358)

Consistency within Situations

Question: Why is “consistency within situations” a key problem for the interactionist approach to personality?
The “Personality” of Situations

“How can we systematically classify situations? One way is to place people into a carefully controlled situation and see who behaves as expected.”

Examples: The personality of situations.

“Some psychologists try to focus directly on how each individual evaluates, interprets, and reacts to the different situations he or she encounters.”

Example: Individual evaluation of situations.

“An additional complication is the fact that no two situations are ever exactly alike; the world changes over time.”

Example: Situations are not alike.
Consistency Averaged across Situations

Complete the following:

“Consider a situation in which Sue, a highly extroverted woman, attends a lively party but sits by herself and hardly talks to anyone. How can this be? When personality tests fail to predict behavior in a specific situation, two faults can be argued.”

“First, is the issue of …

“Second, there is the question of the …

Complete the following:

“A way to deal with both of these issues is to gather information …

“We would observe Sue at …

“Her behavior could then be seen as her …

Personal versus Social Situations

" … one of the first things a child learns is to separate the self from others."
“… although we develop a social self, the social self is more prominent in certain people, or at certain times, or in certain situations. One of the first theories of this psychosocial, differentiation involved what is called “field dependence versus field independence.”

**Question:** What is field dependence versus field independence in personality theory?

“… whole cultures also vary in the degree to which they are *individualistic* or *collectivistic*.”

**Question:** What is the difference between *individualistic* and *collectivistic* cultures insofar as personality development is concerned?

“Some people are especially motivated and able to read the demands of others.”

**Question:** What is the difference between high self-monitors and low self-monitors insofar as personality development is concerned?

“Issues of shyness, self-consciousness, performance anxiety, and so on may also be relevant to this distinction (of self-monitoring).”

Complete the following:

“Some people are so tied to social roles that, almost chameleon-like, they …
Personal versus Social Situations
(Continued)

Example: High self-monitoring behavior.

“On the other hand, other people are so unable to play social roles that they find social situation very uncomfortable.”

Example: Low self-monitoring behavior.

 Seeking and Creating Situations

Question: What is meant by the following statement?

“We seek out situations that reinforce our self-conceptions.”

Examples: Seeking and creating situations.
**Time: The Importance of Longitudinal Study**

**Question:** What is a **longitudinal study** of personality? (363)

Example: Longitudinal study of personality.

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**The Life Course Approach**

**Question:** What is a **life course approach** to the study of personality? (364-365)

Example: Life course approach to the study of personality. (365)

“… individuals to some extent create their own person-situation interactions by varying how they interpret situations, by eliciting reactions from others, and by seeking out certain situations.”

Example: Individuals create their own person-situation interactions. (366)
The Life Course Approach
(Continued)

**Question:** What is the **prospective design** approach to the study of personality? (366)

**Illustrations:** Prospective design approach to the study of personality. (366-368)

**Readiness**

**Question:** What is the notion of **readiness** in the study of personality? (368)

**Examples:** Readiness and personality development. (368-369)
Complete the following:

“Psychologists who have analyzed the interactions of people in small groups have often shown that the types of interactions that occur can be categorized along two basic, independent dimensions:

(1) an affiliation dimension of …

and

(2) an assertiveness dimension of …

**Circumplex Model**

“Personality researchers have found it useful to arrange these dimensions into a circle, or circumplex model.”

**Figure 10.2**  The Circumplex Model of Personality

[Page 343]
Circumplex Model
(Continued)

Example: Circumplex model.

Ego Development

Question: What is the ego development approach to the study of personality?

Complete the following:

“… ego development involves a notion of …

Example: Ego development.

Question: What are the indications of ego development as one ages?
Ego Development (Continued)

“… person-situation interactionist approaches endeavor to take into account the many ways personality ‘is realized in,’ or ‘unfolds in,’ or ‘interacts with,’ the situational context.”

Summary and Conclusion

Complete the following:

“How can we talk about personality if people change their behavior from situation to situation?”

“Interactionist approaches to personality explicitly attempt to consider the …” (374)

Complete the following:

“For (Harry Stack) Sullivan, personality is …” (375)

“To a personality psychologist like Sullivan who believes in the social self, we actually become …

“In a sense, we may have as many ‘personalities’ as we have …

“Henry Murray viewed personality as the study of human lives across time, and so he observed and analyzed the interactions of individuals and the …

“For Murray, typical combinations of needs and presses are termed …
Summary and Conclusion (Continued)

Complete the following:

“As a modern proponent of Murray’s approach, psychologist Dan McAdams studies the intimacy motive—the need to …”

“… the psychologist Walter Mischel (argued) … that a person’s behavior varies so much from situation to situation that it simply did not make sense to …

“Mischel also criticized the size of the simple relations between …

“Research suggests that although biases do sometimes cause us to overattribute to personality and overemphasize its importance, there is good reason, converging from multiple sources, to believe that …

“Sometimes the situation is so strong that it …

“Sometimes we can classify situations or focus directly on how each individual …
**Summary and Conclusion**

(Continued)

Complete the following:

“… the social self can be found to be more prominent in … (375)

“Some people may be less motivated to conform to …

“Such people have a less ‘social’ and a more …

“Sometimes personality elicits and provokes certain behavior in others, and in some cases that consistency of response results in part from our …

“Although an ‘honest’ personality who is always honest or a ‘cheating’ personality who is always dishonest has not been found, psychologists today have a much clearer understanding of the … (375-376)

END