

## KEY TERMS

Personality	Collective unconscious	Self-concept
Type A	Complexes	Self-esteem
Type B	Archetypes	Self-actualization
Stage theory	Trait theorist	Unconditional positive regard
Freud's psychosexual stage theory	Big five traits	Projective tests—
Oedipus crisis	Factor analysis	Rorschach inkblot test, thematic apperception test (TAT)
Unconscious	Heritability	Self-report inventories—
Id	Temperament	MMPI
Ego	Somatotype theory	Reliability
Superego	Triadic reciprocity or reciprocal determinism	Validity
Defense mechanisms	Self-efficacy	Barnum effect
Womb envy	Locus of control—	
Personal unconscious	internal and external	

## OVERVIEW

*Personality* is a term we use all the time. When we describe people to others, we try to convey a sense of what their personalities are like. Psychologists define *personality* as the unique attitudes, behaviors, and emotions that characterize a person. As you might expect, psychologists from each of the different perspectives have different ideas about how an individual's personality is created. However, some ideas about personality do not fit neatly into one school of thought. An example is the concept of *Type A* and *Type B* personalities. Type A people tend to feel a sense of time pressure and are easily angered. They are competitive and ambitious; they work hard and play hard. Interestingly, research has shown that Type A people are at a higher risk for heart disease than the general population. Type B individuals, on the other hand, tend to be relaxed and easygoing. But these types do not fall on opposite ends of a continuum; some people fit into neither type.

## PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

### Freudian Theory

Sigmund Freud believed that one's personality was essentially set in early childhood. He proposed a psychosexual stage theory of personality. *Stage theories* are ones in

which development is thought to be discontinuous. In other words, the stages are qualitatively different from one another and recognizable, and people move between them in a stepwise fashion. Stage theories also posit that all people go through all the stages in the same order. Freud's theory has four stages: the oral stage, the anal stage, the phallic stage, and the adult genital stage. Between the phallic stage and the adult genital stage is a latency period that some people refer to as a stage. Freud believed that sexual urges were an important determinant of people's personality development. Each of the stages is named for the part of the body from which people derive sexual pleasure during the stage.

During the *oral stage* (birth to one year), Freud proposed that children enjoy sucking and biting because it gives them a form of sexual pleasure. During the *anal stage* (one to three years), children are sexually gratified by the act of elimination.

During the *phallic stage* (three to five years), sexual gratification moves to the genitalia. The *Oedipus crisis*, in which boys sexually desire their mothers and view their fathers as rivals for their mothers' love, occurs in this stage. Some theorists have suggested that girls have a similar experience, the *Electra crisis*, in which they desire their fathers and see their mothers as competition for his love. Both the Oedipus and Electra crises are named after figures in Greek mythology who lived out these conflicts. In the phallic stage, Freud suggests that boys and girls notice their physical differences. As a result, girls come to evidence *penis envy*, the desire for a penis, and boys suffer from *castration anxiety*, the fear that if they misbehave, they will be castrated. Boys specifically fear that their fathers will castrate them to eliminate them as rivals for their mothers. To protect them against this threatening realization, Freud believed that the boys used the defense mechanism of *identification*. The purpose of defense mechanisms, in general, is to protect the conscious mind from thoughts that are too painful. Identification is when people emulate and attach themselves to an individual who they believe threatens them. Identification, according to Freud, serves a dual purpose. It prevents boys from fearing their fathers. It also encourages boys to break away from their attachment to their mothers (usually their primary caregivers) and learn to act like men.

After the phallic stage, children enter *latency* (six years to puberty), during which they push all their sexual feelings out of conscious awareness (repression). During latency, children turn their attention to other issues. They start school, where they learn both how to interact with others and a myriad of academic skills.

At puberty, children enter the last of Freud's stages, the *adult genital stage*. People remain in this stage for the rest of their lives and seek sexual pleasure through sexual relationships with others.

Freud suggested that children could get fixated in any one of the stages. A *fixation* could result from being either undergratified or overgratified. For instance, a child who was not fed regularly or who was overly indulged might develop an *oral fixation*. Such people, as adults, might evidence a tendency to overeat, a propensity to chew gum, an addiction to smoking, or another similar mouth-related behavior. Freud described two kinds of personalities resulting from an anal fixation due to a traumatic toilet training. Someone with an *anal expulsive personality* tends to be messy and disorganized. The term *anal retentive* is used to describe people who are meticulously neat, hyperorganized, and a bit compulsive. Fixation in the phallic stage can result in people who appear excessively sexually assured and aggressive or,

alternatively, who are consumed with their perceived sexual inadequacies. These fixations result from psychic energy, the *libido*, getting stuck in one of the psychosexual stages.

Freud believed that much of people's behavior is controlled by a region of the mind he called the *unconscious*. We do not have access to the thoughts in our unconscious. In fact, Freud asserted that we spend tremendous amounts of psychic energy to keep threatening thoughts in the unconscious. Freud contrasted the unconscious mind with the *preconscious* and the *conscious*. The conscious mind contains everything we are thinking about at any one moment, while the preconscious contains everything that we could potentially summon to conscious awareness with ease. For instance, as you read these words, I hope you are not thinking about your plans for the upcoming weekend; these thoughts were in your preconscious. However, now that I have mentioned these plans, you have brought them into your conscious mind.

Freud posited that the personality consists of three parts: the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*. The *id* is in the unconscious and contains instincts and psychic energy. Freud believed two types of instincts exist: *Eros* (the life instincts) and *Thanatos* (the death instincts). *Libido* is the energy that directs the life instincts. *Eros* is most often evidenced as a desire for sex, while *Thanatos* is seen in aggression.

The *id* is propelled by the *pleasure principle*; it wants immediate gratification. The *id* exists entirely in the unconscious mind. Babies are propelled solely by their *ids*. They cry whenever they desire something without regard to the external world around them. The next part of the personality to develop is the *ego*. The *ego* follows the *reality principle*, which means its job is to negotiate between the desires of the *id* and the limitations of the environment. The *ego* is partly in the conscious mind and partly in the unconscious mind. The last part of the personality to develop is the *superego*. Like the *ego*, the *superego* operates on both the conscious and unconscious level. Around the age of five, children begin to develop a conscience and to think about what is right and wrong. This sense of conscience, according to Freud, is their *superego*. Oftentimes, the *ego* acts as a mediator between the *id* and the *superego*. As you cram for that midterm, the *id* tells you to go to sleep because you are tired or to go to that party because it will be fun. The *superego* tells you to study because it is the right thing to do. The *ego* makes some kind of a compromise. You will study for two hours, drop by the party, and then go to sleep.

Part of the *ego's* job is to protect the conscious mind from the threatening thoughts buried in the unconscious. The *ego* uses defense mechanisms to help protect the conscious mind. Assume that Muffy, captain of the high school cheerleading squad, decides to leave her boyfriend of two years, Biff, the star wide receiver of the football team, for Alvin, the star of the school's chess team. Needless to say, Biff is devastated, but his *ego* can choose from a great variety of defense mechanisms with which to protect him. Some of these defense mechanisms are as follows:

**HINT**

Students frequently confuse the terms *subconscious* and *unconscious*. Freud wrote about the *unconscious*.

**HINT**

Students sometimes confuse the terms 'conscience' and 'conscience.' Freudian theory puts great emphasis on the contents of the unconscious as opposed to the conscious. We are aware of what is in our conscious mind but unaware of what is in our unconscious. The conscience, on the other hand, is our sense of right and wrong and is typically associated with the *superego* in Freudian theory.

## REPRESSION

- Blocking thoughts out from conscious awareness.
- When asked how he feels about the breakup with Muffy, Biff replies, "Who? Oh, yeah, I haven't thought about her in a while."

## DENIAL

- Not accepting the ego-threatening truth.
- Biff continues to act as if he and Muffy are still together. He waits by her locker, calls her every night, and plans their future dates.

## DISPLACEMENT

- Redirecting one's feeling toward another person or object. When people displace negative emotions like anger, they often displace them onto people who are less threatening than the source of the emotion. For instance, a child who is angry at his or her teacher would be more likely to displace the anger onto a classmate than onto the teacher.
- Biff could displace his feelings of anger and resentment onto his little brother, pet hamster, or football.

## PROJECTION

- Believing that the feelings one has toward someone else are actually held by the other person and directed at oneself.
- Biff insists that Muffy still cares for him.

## REACTION FORMATION

- Expressing the opposite of how one truly feels.
- Biff claims he loathes Muffy.

## REGRESSION

- Returning to an earlier, comforting form of behavior.
- Biff begins to sleep with his favorite childhood stuffed animal, Fuzzy Kitten.

## RATIONALIZATION

- Coming up with a beneficial result of an undesirable occurrence.
- Biff believes that he can now find a better girlfriend. Muffy is not really all that pretty, smart, and fun to be with.

## INTELLECTUALIZATION

- Undertaking an academic, unemotional study of a topic.
- Biff embarks on an in-depth research project about failed teen romances.

## SUBLIMATION

- Channeling one's frustration toward a different goal. Sublimation is viewed as a particularly healthy defense mechanism.
- Biff devotes himself to writing poetry and publishes a small volume before he graduates high school.

### HINT

Students frequently confuse displacement and projection. In displacement, person A has feelings about person B but redirects these feelings onto a third person or an object. In projection, person A has feelings toward person B but believes, instead, that person B has those feelings toward him or her (person A).

## Criticisms of Freud

One common criticism of Freudian theory is that little empirical evidence supports it. For example, verifying the existence of many of Freud's constructs such as the unconscious, the Oedipus complex, or Thanatos is extremely difficult, if not impossible. Furthermore, psychoanalytic theory is able to interpret both positive and negative reactions to the theory as support. For instance, both the man who is convinced by his analyst's suggestion that his difficulties stem from an unresolved attraction to his mother and the man who vociferously protests this idea can be accommodated by psychoanalytic theory. The former is compelled by the logic of the argument, while the latter's very resistance to the idea is evidence of the threatening nature of a repressed desire.

In addition, Freudian theory has little predictive power. While analysts can use the theory to create logical and often compelling explanations of why an individual acted in a certain way or developed a certain problem after the fact, psychoanalytic theory does not allow us to predict what problems an individual will develop ahead of time.

Psychoanalytic theory is also criticized for overestimating the importance of early childhood and of sex. Much contemporary research contradicts the idea that personality is essentially set by the age of five. Similarly, Freud's almost exclusive focus on sexual motivation led some psychologists to try to broaden the theory.

Finally, feminists find much of Freudian theory to be objectionable. One example is the concept of penis envy. Feminists such as Karen Horney and Nancy Chodorow believe that this idea grew out of Freud's assumption that men were superior to women rather than from any empirical observations. They suggested that if women were envious of men, it was probably due to all the advantages men enjoyed in society. Horney posited that men may suffer from *womb envy*, jealousy of women's reproductive capabilities. Feminists also take issue with Freud's assertion that men have stronger superegos than women.

## Impact of Freudian Theory

Despite its shortcomings, Freudian theory has profoundly affected the world. Many people accept the idea that children are sexual creatures and that our behavior is shaped by unconscious thoughts. Freud's impact on culture is arguably greater than its impact on contemporary psychology. Many of the terms originally invented by Freud have crept into laypeople's language (for example, ego, unconscious, penis envy, denial). Many of Freud's ideas play a prominent role in the arts. Salvador Dali's surrealist paintings are said to depict the unconscious, and Woody Allen's

films frequently feature a character undergoing psychoanalysis and playing out a Freudian drama.

## PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORIES

A number of Freud's early followers developed offshoots of psychoanalytic theory. These approaches are now usually referred to as *psychodynamic* or *neo-Freudian* approaches. Two of the best-known creators of psychodynamic theories are Carl Jung and Alfred Adler. Jung proposed that the unconscious consists of two different parts: the *personal unconscious* and the *collective unconscious*. The personal unconscious is more similar to Freud's view of the unconscious. Jung believed that an individual's personal unconscious contains the painful or threatening memories and thoughts the person does not wish to confront; he termed these *complexes*. Jung contrasted the personal unconscious with the *collective unconscious*. The collective unconscious is passed down through the species and, according to Jung, explains certain similarities we see between cultures. The collective unconscious contains *archetypes* that Jung defined as universal concepts we all share as part of the human species. For example, the *shadow* represents the evil side of personality and the *persona* is people's creation of a public image. Jung suggested that the widespread existence of certain fears, such as fear of the dark, and the importance of the circle in many cultures, provides evidence for archetypes.

Adler is called an ego psychologist because he downplayed the importance of the unconscious and focused on the conscious role of the ego. Adler believed that people are motivated by the fear of failure, which he termed *inferiority*, and the desire to achieve, which he called *superiority*. Adler is also known for his work about the importance of birth order in shaping personality.

## TRAIT THEORIES

Trait theorists believe that we can describe people's personalities by specifying their main characteristics, or traits. These characteristics (for example, honesty, laziness, ambition) are thought to be stable and to motivate behavior in keeping with the trait. In other words, when we describe someone as friendly, we mean that the person acts in a friendly manner across different situations and times.

Some trait theorists believe that the same basic set of traits can be used to describe all people's personalities. Such a belief characterizes a *nomothetic* approach. For instance, Hans Eysenck believed that by classifying all people along an introversion-extraversion scale and a stable-unstable scale, we could describe their personalities. Raymond Cattell developed the 16 PF (personality factor) test to measure what he believed were the 16 basic traits present in all people, albeit to different degrees. A number of contemporary trait theorists believe that personality can be described using the *big five* personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability (or neuroticism). Extraversion refers to how outgoing or shy someone is. Agreeableness has to do with how easy to get along with someone is. People high on the conscientiousness dimension tend to be hardworking, responsible, and organized. Openness to new experiences is related to one's creativity, curiosity, and willingness to try new things. Finally, emotional stability has to do with how consistent one's mood is.

One might wonder how psychologists can reduce the vast number of different terms we use to describe people to 16 or five basic traits. *Factor analysis* is a statistical technique used to accomplish this feat. Factor analysis allows researchers to use correlations between traits in order to see which traits cluster together as factors. If a strong correlation is found between punctuality, diligence, and neatness, for example, one could argue that these traits represent a common factor that we could name conscientiousness.

Other trait theorists, called *idiographic* theorists, assert that using the same set of terms to classify all people is impossible. Rather, they argue, each person needs to be seen in terms of what few traits best characterize his or her unique self. For example, while honesty may be a very important trait in describing one person, it may not be at all important in describing someone else.

Gordon Allport believed that although there were common traits useful in describing all people, a full understanding of someone's personality was impossible without looking at their personal traits. Allport differentiated between three different types of personal traits. He suggested that a small number of people are so profoundly influenced by one trait that it plays a pivotal role in virtually everything they do. He referred to such traits as *cardinal dispositions*. Allport posited that there are two other types of dispositions, central and secondary, that can be used to describe personality. As their names indicate, *central dispositions* have a larger influence on personality than *secondary dispositions*. Central dispositions are more often apparent and describe more significant aspects of personality.

The main criticism of trait theories is that they underestimate the importance of the situation. Nobody is always conscientious or unfailingly friendly. Therefore, critics assert, to describe someone's personality, we need to take the context into consideration.

#### HINT

Today, the most popular trait theory contends that personality can be described with the big five traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and emotional stability.

## BIOLOGICAL THEORIES

Biological theories of personality view genes, chemicals, and body types as the central determinants of who a person is. A growing body of evidence supports the idea that human personality is shaped, in part, by genetics. Although many people associate traits with genetics, traits are not necessarily inherited. Thus far, little evidence exists for the *heritability* of specific personality traits. Heritability is a measure of the amount of variation in a trait in a given population that is due to genetics. For instance, some traits, like height, are highly heritable; over 90 percent of the variation in Americans' height is thought to be due to genetic factors. Other traits, like intelligence, seem less strongly linked to genetic factors; estimates are that the heritability of intelligence is in the 50–70 percent range.

Conversely, much evidence suggests that genes play a role in people's *temperaments*, typically defined as their emotional style and characteristic way of dealing with the world. Psychologists and laypeople alike have long noticed that infants seem to differ immediately at birth. Some welcome new stimuli whereas others seem more fearful. Some seem extremely active and emotional while others are calmer. Psychologists believe that babies are born with different temperaments. A

child's temperament, then, is thought to influence the development of his or her personality.

One of the earliest theories of personality was biological. Hippocrates believed that personality was determined by the relative levels of four humors (fluids) in the body. The four humors were blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. A cheerful person, for example, was said to have an excess of blood. While Hippocrates' theory has obviously turned out to be untrue, he is thought to be one of the first people to recognize that biological factors impact personality.

Another relatively early biological theory of personality was William Sheldon's *somatotype theory*. Sheldon identified three body types: endomorphs (fat), mesomorphs (muscular), and ectomorphs (thin). Sheldon argued that certain personality traits were associated with each of the body types. For instance, ectomorphs were shy and secretive, mesomorphs were confident and assertive, and endomorphs were friendly and outgoing. Sheldon's findings have not been replicated, and his methodology has been questioned. In addition, his research shows only a correlation and therefore, even if it were found to be reliable and valid, it does not show that biology shapes personality.

## BEHAVIORIST THEORIES

Radical behaviorists like B. F. Skinner take a very different approach to personality. In fact, these theorists argue that behavior is personality and that the way most people think of the term personality is meaningless. According to this view, personality is determined by the environment. The reinforcement contingencies to which one is exposed creates one's personality. Therefore, by changing people's environments, behaviorists believe we can alter their personalities. Radical behaviorists are criticized for failing to recognize the importance of cognition. Today, many psychologists call themselves cognitive-behavioral or social-cognitive theorists. Their ideas about personality are described below.

## SOCIAL-COGNITIVE THEORIES

Many models of personality meld together behaviorists' emphasis on the importance of the environment with cognitive psychologists' focus on patterns of thought. Such models are referred to as social-cognitive or cognitive-behavioral models.

Albert Bandura suggested that personality is created by an interaction between the person (traits), the environment, and the person's behavior. His model is based on the idea of *triadic reciprocity*, also known as *reciprocal determinism*. These terms essentially mean that each of these three factors influence both of the other two in a constant looplike fashion. Look at an example. Brad is a friendly person. This personality trait influences Brad's behavior in that he talks to a lot of people. It influences the environments into which he puts himself in that he goes to a lot of parties. Brad's loquacious behavior affects his environment in that it makes the parties even more partylike. In addition, Brad's talkativeness reinforces his friendliness; the more he talks, the more friendly he thinks he is. Finally, the environment of the party reinforces Brad's outgoing nature and encourages him to strike up conversations with many people.



Bandura also posited that personality is affected by people's sense of *self-efficacy*. People with high self-efficacy are optimistic about their own ability to get things done whereas people with low self-efficacy feel a sense of powerlessness. Bandura theorized that people's sense of self-efficacy has a powerful effect on their actions. For example, assume two students of equal abilities and knowledge are taking a test. The one with higher self-efficacy would expect to do better and therefore might act in ways to make that true (for example, spend more time on the test questions).

George Kelly proposed the *personal-construct theory* of personality. Kelly argued that people, in their attempts to understand their world, develop their own, individual systems of personal constructs. Such constructs consist of pairs of opposites such as fair-unfair, smart-dumb, and exciting-dull. People then use these constructs to evaluate their worlds. Kelly believed that people's behavior is determined by how they interpret the world. His theory is based on a *fundamental postulate* that essentially states that people's behavior is influenced by their cognitions and that by knowing how people have behaved in the past, we can predict how they will act in the future.

Some of the ideas put forth by social-cognitive theorists, including Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, are almost like traits that describe an individual's characteristic way of thinking. A final example is Julian Rotter's concept of *locus of control*. A person can be described as having either an internal or an external locus of control. People with an *internal locus of control* feel as if they are responsible for what happens to them. For instance, they tend to believe that hard work will lead to success. Conversely, people with an *external locus of control* generally believe that luck and other forces outside of their own control determine their destinies. A person's locus of control can have a large effect on how a person thinks and acts, thus impacting their personality.

A number of positive outcomes has been found to be associated with having an internal locus of control. As compared with externals, internals tend to be healthier, to be more politically active, and to do better in school. Of course, these findings are based on correlational research, so we can't conclude that locus of control causes such differences.

## HUMANISTIC THEORIES

Many of the models of personality already discussed are deterministic. *Determinism* is the belief that what happens is dictated by what has happened in the past. According to psychoanalysts, personality is determined by what happened to an individual in his or her early childhood (largely during the psychosexual stages). Behaviorists assert that personality is similarly determined by the environment in which one has been raised. Neither theory supports the existence of *free will*, an individual's ability to choose his or her own destiny. Free will is an idea that has been embraced by humanistic psychology. This perspective is often referred to as the *third force* because it arose in opposition to the determinism so central to both psychoanalytic and behaviorist models.

Humanistic theories of personality view people as innately good and able to determine their own destinies through the exercise of free will. These psychologists

stress the importance of people's subjective experience and feelings. They focus on the importance of a person's *self-concept* and *self-esteem*. Self-concept is a person's global feeling about himself or herself. Self-concept develops through a person's involvement with others, especially parents. Someone with a positive self-concept is likely to have high self-esteem.

Two of the most influential humanistic psychologists were Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Both of these men believed that people are motivated to reach their full potential or *self-actualize*. Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs that you read about in the motivation chapter. Self-actualization sits atop this hierarchy. Rogers created self-theory. He believed that although people are innately good, they require certain things from their interactions with others, most importantly, *unconditional positive regard*, in order to self-actualize. Unconditional positive regard is a kind of blanket acceptance. Parents that make their children feel as if they are loved no matter what provide unconditional positive regard. However, parents who make their children feel as if they will be loved only if they earn high grades or have the right kind of friends, send their children the message that their love is conditional. Just as Maslow believes one needs to satisfy the needs lower on the hierarchy in order to move upward, Rogers believes that people must feel accepted in order to make strides toward self-actualization. Humanistic theories of personality are criticized for putting forth an overly optimistic theory of human nature. If people are innately good and striving to do their best, it is difficult to explain the number and range of truly terrible acts that people commit.

## ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

As with any other kind of testing, *reliability* and *validity* are a concern in personality assessment. Reliability is often likened to consistency; reliable measures yield consistent, similar results even if the results are not accurate. Validity, on the other hand, means accuracy; a valid test measures what it purports to measure. See the testing chapter for a more detailed discussion of these issues.

Not surprisingly, psychologists' methods of assessing people's personalities differ depending upon their theoretical orientation. Some of the most common ways of measuring personality are described below along with the types of psychologists most likely to use them.

*Projective tests* are often used by psychoanalysts. They involve asking people to interpret ambiguous stimuli. For instance, the *Rorschach inkblot test* involves showing people a series of inkblots and asking them to describe what they see. The *thematic apperception test (TAT)* consists of a number of cards, each of which contains a picture of a person or people in an ambiguous situation. People are asked to describe what is happening in the pictures. Since both the inkblots and TAT cards are ambiguous, psychoanalysts reason that people's interpretations reflect their unconscious thoughts. People are thought to project their unconscious thoughts onto the ambiguous stimuli. For instance, someone who is struggling with his or her unconscious aggressive impulses may be more likely to describe violent themes. Scoring projective tests, however, is a complicated process. For instance, the Rorschach test looks not only at the content people describe but also the way they hold and turn the card and whether they focus on the whole inkblot or just a portion of it. Many

people believe that projective tests are particularly unreliable given that they rely so extensively on the therapists' interpretations.

A far simpler and more widespread method of personality assessment is to use *self-report inventories*. Self-report inventories are essentially questionnaires that ask people to provide information about themselves. Many different kinds of psychologists, such as humanistic psychologists, trait theorists, and cognitive-behavioral psychologists, might use self-report inventories as one means by which to gather data about someone. These kinds of tests are often referred to as objective personality tests since people's scores are determined simply by their answers and are thus unlikely to be affected by evaluator bias. An interview, on the other hand, is a subjective assessment. Although such subjectivity decreases reliability and opens the door to bias, some believe that subjective measures yield richer and more valid data.

The *Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory (MMPI-2)* is one of the most widely used self-report instruments. A potential problem with such inventories is that people may not be completely honest in answering the questions. Some tests have "lie scales" built in to try to detect when people are not being honest.

Radical behaviorists would reject all the above methods, arguing instead that the only way to measure people's personality is to observe their behavior. Again, a number of other kinds of psychologists, particularly cognitive-behavioral ones, would utilize observations of a person's behavior as one way to gather data.

People are naturally curious about what various personality assessments will say about them. Unfortunately, this curiosity makes people susceptible to being deceived. Research has demonstrated that people have the tendency to see themselves in vague, stock descriptions of personality. This phenomenon, the *Barnum effect*, is named after the famous circus owner P. T. Barnum, who once said "There's a sucker born every minute." Astrologers, psychics, and fortune-tellers take advantage of the Barnum effect in their work. Personality has proved difficult to define, much less measure, so be skeptical when confronted with people who offer you quick, pat descriptions of your life or future.

---

## Practice Questions

---

**Directions:** Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. According to Freud, which part of the mind acts as a person's conscience?
  - (A) Eros
  - (B) ego
  - (C) libido
  - (D) superego
  - (E) id