

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION - PERSPECTIVES AND CULTURES (MCCULLERS)



Psychology of Religion-Perspectives and Cultures

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1.1.1: 3.0 Chapter Introduction

Sigmund Freud is unquestionably the most famous person in the fields of psychiatry and psychology, and one of the most famous individuals in modern history. He is of particular importance for this subject because he was probably the first person to address psychological problems by examining the individual's personal development in detail. As he developed his psychodynamic theory, and the treatment known as psychoanalysis, he attempted to carefully observe and listen to his patients in order to determine not only how and why they had become the person they were, but also whether those developmental processes might be common to all people. This careful approach to studying psychological conditions was likely the result of Freud's substantial scientific research in anatomy and physiology earlier in his career.

But why is Freud so famous? Much of his theory may not seem relevant today, and it's hard to imagine how anyone could ever have come up with the theory of penis envy. And yet Freud remains extraordinarily influential. There are at least three good reasons for Freud's enduring influence and popularity. First, Freud was first! No one before him had established a cohesive theory of the development of personality, especially a theory that attempted to explain both normal and abnormal development. Thus, most theories developed since then have been viewed as extending, modifying, or opposing Freud's psychodynamic theory. Second, key elements of Freud's theory are generally accepted in psychology and psychiatry, such as the existence of unconscious elements of our mind that can affect our thoughts and behaviors and both the normal and abnormal roles of psychological defense mechanisms. The final factor contributing to Freud's lasting influence is somewhat more complicated. Psychodynamic theory was not well received at first. In fact, the emphasis on childhood sexuality was ridiculed and scorned by many in the medical profession. However, Freud was determined, and he did not let the rejection of others deter him from continuing his studies. In addition, there were several very famous and influential individuals who supported his efforts. Thus, Freud found the motivation to persevere, and the rest, as they say, is history.

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1.1.2: A Brief Biography of Sigmund Freud, M.D.

Sigismund Schlomo Freud was born on May 6th, 1856, in the small, industrial town of Freiberg in Moravia (today it is known as Příbor in the Czech Republic). Freud never used the name Schlomo, his paternal grandfather's name, and he shortened his first name while at the University of Vienna. His family life was unusual, and somewhat complicated. His father, Jakob Freud, was 40 years old when he married Freud's mother, Amalia Nathanson. She was 20 years younger than Jakob Freud, and several years younger than Jakob's son, Emanuel, from an earlier marriage. One of Freud's first friends was a nephew who was a year older than Freud!

Jakob Freud was never particularly successful in business. The industrial importance of Freiberg was declining, so the young family left and eventually settled in Vienna, Austria (Jakob's sons from his first marriage, Emanuel and Philipp, emigrated to England). At this point Jakob and Amalia Freud had two children, Sigmund and his sister Anna (a brother born between them, Julius, died at 7 or 8 months of age). Shortly after arriving in Vienna, however, they had five more children during the years 1860-1866: Rosa, Marie, Adolfine, Pauline, and Alexander. This resulted in continued financial difficulties, which appears to have been painful for the young Freud (Gay, 1998). There were also personal difficulties that made it difficult for Freud to enjoy a close relationship with his father. Jakob Freud once told his son a story about being abused by an Austrian Christian, a man who knocked Jakob Freud's hat into the muddy street and then ordered the "Jew" to get off the sidewalk. When Freud asked his father how he had responded, his father said he simply stepped off the sidewalk and picked up his hat. Freud was very disappointed by what he apparently perceived as weakness in his father (Gay, 1998). There was also an embarrassing episode involving his father's brother, Josef. Josef Freud was convicted and sent to jail for trading in counterfeit money. This caused a great deal of concern for Jakob Freud, who might have been involved in the illegal scheme along with his sons, Emanuel and Philipp (Gay, 1998; Jones, 1953).

Still, Jakob Freud did try to be a good father. His children were generally successful, and he remained active and supportive in the lives of his children and grandchildren. The story mentioned above, when Jakob Freud tried to impart some "fatherly" wisdom to his son, may not have had the intended effect, but it demonstrates that he cared about teaching his son some of life's lessons. On Freud's thirty-fifth birthday his father sent his "dear son" a copy of the family's Philippon Bible (this Bible contains the Old Testament, which is the only testament in the Jewish faith), which Freud had often studied as a young child (Gay, 1998; Jones, 1953; Nicholi, 2002). The inscription written by Jakob Freud in the Bible ended with a description of the gift "as a token of love from your old father" (see Jones, 1953; Nicholi, 2002). When Jakob Freud died, Freud wrote to a friend that his father's death had profoundly affected him, leaving him feeling uprooted. He described the death of one's father as "the most important event, the most poignant loss, in a man's life" (see Nicholi, 2002). The death of his father appears to have stimulated Freud's self-analysis, the writing of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900/1995) and the formulation of his theory of the Oedipus complex (Nicholi, 2002). Jakob Freud was also remembered quite fondly by his grandson Martin, the eldest son of Freud (M. Freud, 1983).

Freud's relationship with his mother was also complex. Amalia Freud is described as young (which she was, compared to Jakob), attractive, and energetic. She always took great pride in her son, and was a strong and positive influence throughout his life. Later in life he wrote that "A man who has been the indisputable favorite of his mother keeps for life the feeling of a conqueror, that confidence of success that often induces real success" (see Jones, 1953). During Freud's self-analysis, around the year 1897, he uncovered profound memories from his earliest years. Sometime between the ages of 2 ½ and 4 years old, Freud accidentally saw his mother naked. This event awakened a powerful desire in Freud. Shortly after recovering this memory, he remembered the deep jealousy he had felt when his brother Julius was born, shortly before Freud was 2 years old. So jealous was Freud, that he remembered welcoming the death of his infant brother (see Gay, 1998; Jones, 1953). Each of these incidents certainly had an impact of Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex. Surprisingly, however, during the first 2 ½ years of Freud's life he actually spent very little time with his mother, since he was being raised by a nursemaid. Keep in mind that his mother became pregnant again, then his brother Julius became ill and died, and then his mother became pregnant again, finally giving birth to his sister Anna, all by the time Freud was 2 ½ years old.

Freud's nursemaid has been described as an old and ugly woman, but Freud loved her and dreamed about her later in life (see Gay, 1998; Jones, 1953; Nicholi, 2002). The nursemaid was a devout Roman Catholic, and she regularly took Freud to church with her. Despite his young age (less than 2 ½ years old), Freud would come home from church and preach to his family about God. Even though his family was Jewish, they did not practice their faith with much devotion, and it must have been quite interesting to listen to the sermons of their little boy. Why then, as we will see, did Freud come to reject religion and spirituality? It turns out that this relationship ended abruptly. Freud's half brother Philipp accused the nursemaid of petty theft, and she was sent to prison. At this time Freud's mother was confined with his recently born sister, so Freud was suddenly denied access to both his mother and his nursemaid. It has been suggested that because he was abandoned so suddenly, and at such a critical time (Freud was 2 ½ years old

at this time), by his Roman Catholic nursemaid, that his anger and disappointment led to his ultimate rejection of the spiritual worldview and his antagonism toward the Catholic church (Gay, 1998; Jones, 1953; Nicholi, 2002).

Freud's Early Career in Basic Research (Pre-Psychiatry)

Freud was very successful in school from an early age. At the Gymnasium, which is the term for a preparatory school in countries such as Germany and Austria, he was first in his class for 7 years. This led to a variety of special privileges, including seldom being required to take any examinations (Freud, 1952). It also led to privileges at home. According to his sister Anna, Freud always had his own room to study in, no matter how difficult the family's financial situation (Gay, 1998). As he prepared for college, Freud initially wanted to study law. However, after learning about Darwin's theory of evolution and hearing Goethe's essay on nature, he decided to become a medical student (Freud, 1952).

In 1873, Freud entered the University of Vienna. Initially he suffered greatly from prejudice and discrimination against him because he was Jewish. Believing that he was expected to feel inferior and alien because he was Jewish, he nonetheless persevered. As a result of these experiences, later in life he was prepared for dealing with the considerable resistance that occurred in response to his theories (Freud, 1952). His first research project in medical school came at the suggestion of Professor Carl Claus. Prof. Claus was interested in a report that the Polish scientist Simone de Syrski had identified structures that might represent the testes of the male eel. This was a question that had been studied for centuries without success. After dissecting some 400 eels, Freud appeared to have confirmed Syrski's findings. The research was not definitive, however, and Freud found little satisfaction in the publication of his work (Gay, 1998; Jones, 1953). He was, however, about to find satisfaction, in the physiological laboratory of Ernst Brucke.

Brucke was a renowned physiologist, anatomist, histologist, and more. Freud had great respect for his newfound mentor, referring to him as Master Brucke and describing him as "the greatest authority I ever met." In Brucke's laboratory Freud "found rest and full satisfaction at last" (Gay, 1998; Jones, 1953). The research he conducted under Brucke's guidance was impressive. Brucke put Freud to work studying the anatomy of the spinal cord and its neurons. At that time, the structure of neurons was not understood. Freud modified the histological staining methods being used in Brucke's laboratory, and eventually developed a gold chloride method of staining nervous system tissue around the year 1880 (Jones, 1953). This was one of the first uses of a heavy metal stain on nervous system tissue. The silver nitrate method of staining neurons had been developed by Camillo Golgi a few years earlier, in 1873, but it was not until 1888 that Santiago Ramon y Cajal first reported on the structure of the brain using Golgi's technique. For this research, Golgi and Ramon y Cajal shared the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1906 (Finger, 1994). If Freud had not left basic research for a career in medicine, he might have ended up famous just the same.

Freud did eventually leave the university, however, and began a career in medicine at the General Hospital in Vienna. Part of the reason for leaving and beginning his medical career was that he had met Martha Bernays, the woman who would become his wife, and he needed to begin earning enough money to support a wife and family. First, however, he needed to establish himself in his career. At the General Hospital he met and worked with the eminent Theodor Meynert, who, among other accomplishments, was the first to correctly suggest that Parkinson's disease resulted from abnormal functioning of the basal ganglia (Finger, 1994). This stimulated Freud's continued interest in anatomy and brain function, and in 1891 Freud published a book entitled *On Aphasia*. You may remember from introductory psychology that the two primary speech centers in the human brain are Broca's area (speech production) and Wernicke's area (speech reception), and that damage to these areas results in Broca's aphasia or Wernicke's aphasia. Carl Wernicke had also been a student of Meynert, but Freud's book on aphasia was especially critical of Wernicke (Finger, 1994). This put both men firmly in the middle of the debate on structuralism vs. functionalism as it pertains to the activities of the human brain (see Finger, 1994). Although Meynert suggested that Freud should devote himself to studying the anatomy of the brain, Freud had had enough of this sort of work in Brucke's laboratory. Instead, Freud's interest turned toward the diseases of the brain (Freud, 1952). With the help of a recommendation by Brucke, Freud was awarded a Traveling Fellowship, which allowed him to afford a trip to Paris to study at the prestigious Salpêtrière. He intended to study under Jean-Martin Charcot, one of the world's foremost neurologists of his day, and the man who named Parkinson's disease after the physician James Parkinson (Finger, 1994).

Freud was largely ignored when he arrived at the Salpêtrière, since he was just one of a crowd of foreign visitors. As luck would have it, one day he heard Charcot expressing regret that Charcot had not heard from his German translator in some time, and he wished someone could be found to translate his latest lectures into German. Freud wrote to Charcot, offered to do the job, and was accepted. From that point on he became a member of Charcot's inner circle, and was active in all aspects of the work at the clinic (Freud, 1952). One of the main topics Freud studied with Charcot was the use of hypnosis in the study of hysteria. Freud discussed

the earliest conceptions of his psychodynamic theory with Charcot. Charcot was supportive and agreed with Freud's fledgling ideas, but Charcot's interests remained firmly in the field of neurology, not in psychology or psychiatry (Freud, 1952).

Upon returning to Vienna and settling down as a practicing physician, Freud was finally able to marry Martha in 1886 (he was 30 years old, and she was 25). They had six children: Matilde, Martin, Oliver, Ernst, Sophie, and Anna. According to his son Martin, Freud was a loving and generous father (M. Freud, 1983). He was also very supportive of his children. As Martin became disillusioned with the study of law, he turned to his father for advice:

...It had always been his hope that one of his sons would become a lawyer. Thus he watched, and I think guided, my first faltering steps in my law studies with the greatest concern.

He agreed that my first studies were dull and boring, but he assured me that one day I would find a teacher with an impressive personality, perhaps a man of genius, and that I would become deeply interested and carried away by his lectures...

Father always expressed himself with great clarity and, when advising me at so critical a time in my life, he added to his normal clarity of expression a natural tenderness and concern... (M. Freud, 1983; pg. 161)

Martin did become a lawyer and, after Martin served as an officer in the Austrian army during World War I, his father helped him to establish his practice.

Finally, any discussion of Freud's early research career would not be complete without mentioning what Ernest Jones, Freud's official biographer, called "the cocaine episode" (Jones, 1953). In his last autobiographical book (Freud, 1952; originally published in 1925 in a collection of medical autobiographies) he makes only passing reference to studying cocaine, reporting another near miss in his research career. He had begun studying cocaine while he was away from Vienna, and an opportunity arose to return home for vacation and an opportunity to see his fiancé Martha. As he prepared to leave, he suggested to a couple of colleagues that they examine the effectiveness of cocaine as an anesthetic for use in eye diseases. While Freud was visiting Martha, one of his colleagues, Carl Koller, confirmed the local anesthetic properties of cocaine and became famous for it. Afterward, Freud noted that "it was the fault of my fiancé that I was not already famous at that early age," but he insists that "I bore my fiancé no grudge for her interruption of my work" (Freud, 1952). Something quite fascinating is that Freud's interest in cocaine was initially based on the possibility that its euphoric properties might be used to alleviate the problems associated with withdrawal from morphine. A close and long-time friend, Ernst von Fleischl-Marxow had become addicted to morphine because of the extreme pain of an infection, and Freud hoped that cocaine would help. Freud himself began using cocaine to boost his own mood. He sent some to Martha with the recommendation that she try it (there is no evidence that she ever did), and he even began sending cocaine to friends, colleagues, and his sisters. Eventually, however, Freud realized that cocaine was not helping his friend; indeed von Fleischl-Marxow became addicted to cocaine instead of morphine. Freud eventually deeply regretted his research on cocaine, especially since the one positive result of that research had garnered fame for a colleague while Freud was on vacation (Gay, 1998; Jones, 1953).

Freud's Psychiatric Career

Many people believe that psychoanalysis was developed by Freud during the early years of his medical practice in Vienna. Freud, however, would disagree. He insisted that psychoanalysis was begun by the Viennese physician Josef Breuer (Freud, 1914/1995), a close friend and mentor of Freud. The basis of psychoanalysis lay in a patient that Breuer had seen as early as 1880, and had treated with hypnosis. This case, and the use of hypnosis as part of the "cathartic procedure" developed by Breuer, was the original inspiration for Freud's interest in hypnosis and his trip to Paris to study the technique with Charcot. When Freud returned to Vienna, he asked Breuer to tell him all of the details of this case, which involved a young woman. This famous patient, known as Anna O., was described by Breuer in the book coauthored by the two men (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004). As Freud used Breuer's techniques with his own patients, however, he began to realize that something was lacking. Hypnosis did little to reveal the underlying causes of the hysteria that their patients were experiencing. Since Freud was every bit the scientist, he needed to know more about why he was able to help some patients. He eventually replaced hypnosis with his own techniques of free association (early 1890s) and, eventually, dream analysis (essentially done in 1896, but not published until 1900). This was the point at which psychoanalysis, in the sense that we think of it today, was born (Freud, 1914/1995, 1952).

As Freud's ideas diverged from those of Breuer, the two parted ways. Freud then developed the aspect of psychodynamic theory that led to his near total rejection by the German and Austrian medical communities: the primacy of childhood sexuality. This theory was so difficult for others to accept that Freud spent nearly 10 years working on psychoanalysis in isolation. However, Freud claims that the concept of a sexual etiology for the neuroses was not really his idea, it had been superficially suggested by Breuer,

Charcot, and a highly respected Viennese gynecologist named Chrobak (Freud, 1914/1995). During those years of isolation Freud began to define other major aspects of psychodynamic theory, such as: resistance, repression, conflict, and unconscious impulses.

Around 1902, Freud began to find support for his theories among a select group of physicians. Shortly thereafter a group of psychiatrists in Zurich, Switzerland, which included Eugen Bleuler (the man credited with identifying both schizophrenia and autism as we define them today) and his assistant Carl Jung, began “taking a lively interest in psychoanalysis” (Freud, 1952). In 1909 Freud and Jung were invited to America, where they were warmly received, and psychoanalysis became well-established in America and Canada. By the 1910s it was reported that psychoanalysis was being championed in Austria, Switzerland, the United States, Canada, England, India, Chile, Australasia (the region), France, Italy, Sweden, Russia, Hungary, Holland, and Norway (where the first textbook on psychiatry that included psychoanalysis was written) (Freud, 1914/1995). Germany proved quite resistant, although the renowned Karl Abraham practiced psychoanalysis in Berlin.

Perhaps it was inevitable that all of this success should eventually lead to conflict. Two major groups, whose members differed significantly in their views on psychodynamic theory and psychoanalysis, broke away from the main psychoanalytic groups. They were led by Alfred Adler (see Chapter 4) and Carl Jung (Chapter 3). In his first autobiography, Freud is not exactly kind to these two men. He goes to great length to dismiss Adler’s theories as mistaken, and he flatly rejects Jung’s perspective:

Of the two movements under consideration here, Adler’s is undoubtedly the more important. Though radically false, it is, nevertheless, characterized by consistency and coherence, and it is still founded on the theory of the instincts. On the other hand, Jung’s modification has slackened the connection between the phenomena and the instinctive-life; besides as its critics (Abraham, Firenze, and Jones) have already pointed out, it is so unintelligible, muddled and confused, that ... it is impossible to know how one can arrive at a correct understanding of it... (Freud, 1914/1995; pg. 940).

It is curious to speculate whether Freud’s isolation for so many years may have led to the profound possessiveness he later expressed regarding psychoanalysis as his technique, and his alone, in *The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement*:

...For psychoanalysis is my creation; for ten years I was the only one occupied with it, and all the annoyance which this new subject caused among my contemporaries has been hurled upon my head in the form of criticism. Even today, when I am no longer the only psychoanalyst, I feel myself justified in assuming that nobody knows better than I what psychoanalysis is... (Freud, 1914/1995; pg. 901)

Freud’s Final Years

Freud’s final years were somewhat tumultuous. The Nazis had taken over Germany and Austria, and they were rapidly preparing for World War II. Being Jewish, Freud’s life was in danger; indeed, at least three of his sisters were murdered in the concentration camps, most likely in Auschwitz (M. Freud, 1983). Freud, however, had influential friends, including European royalty and wealthy individuals with ties to the British and American governments. The American secretary of state, Cordell Hull, took word of the situation to President Franklin Roosevelt, and following Roosevelt’s instructions, Hull had the American ambassador to Germany intervene on Freud’s behalf (Gay, 1998; Jones, 1957). Freud also received substantial help and comfort from Marie Bonaparte, H.R.H. the Princess George of Greece, including the payment of a ransom in order to secure permission for Freud to leave Austria (M. Freud, 1983). Finally, in May 1938, Freud, his wife Martha, and their daughter Anna left together for England, along with Freud’s dog. They were all received quite warmly in London, except for the dog. She was quarantined for six months (M. Freud, 1983).

Freud, however, had already been ill for many years, and was suffering a great deal of pain due to cancer. He was also in his eighties. Nonetheless, Freud continued to work, and he completed *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1938/1949) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939/1967) while living in London. But the end was near, and the cancer was progressing rapidly. In September 1939, Freud asked his doctor, Max Schur, to remember an agreement the two had made not to prolong Freud’s life unnecessarily. Freud asked Schur to discuss his condition with Anna Freud. Anna Freud at first resisted, but eventually submitted to the inevitable, and Schur administered a series of morphine injections that proved fatal. Sigmund Freud died on September 23, 1939 (Gay, 1998; Jones, 1957).

In the funeral oration delivered by Ernest Jones, Jones remembered that three qualities had particularly impressed him upon first meeting Freud: first, “his nobility of character;” second, “his direct and instinctive love of truth;” and third, “his courage and inflexible determination.” Jones also said that a “great spirit has passed from the world...for Freud so inspired us with his personality, his character and his ideas that we can never truly part from him...” (Jones, 1957). Prior to the escape from Austria, Freud had expressed a sincere desire to “die in freedom.” He loved England, where he was able to accomplish that goal. In reference to England and the funeral ceremony, Jones said:

He died surrounded by every loving care, in a land that had shown him more courtesy, more esteem and more honor than his own or any other land, a land which I think he himself esteemed beyond all others. (pg. 247; Jones, 1957).

Placing Freud in Context: Connecting Personality Theories

Sigmund Freud was one of the greatest minds of modern times. He was the first person to provide a comprehensive theory of personality and personality development, and he did so in what he considered to be a logical and scientific manner. Since he was first, however, how can we place him amongst the other great psychologists? As I contemplated the importance of Freud to the history of psychology, I looked back at my own graduate school training. The textbook assigned for my graduate history of psychology course was *Theories and Systems of Psychology* by Robert Lundin (1979). In the chapter titles, Lundin mentions only three psychologists by name: Wilhelm Wundt, the founder of experimental psychology; William James, America's preeminent psychologist; and Sigmund Freud. Since Freud's name is also mentioned in the title of the chapter devoted to his followers, Freud actually has two chapters devoted to his influence. I also looked at *A History of Psychological Theories* by Ross Stagner (1988), who was an esteemed faculty member in the psychology department at Wayne State University in Detroit and author of one of the first personality textbooks (Stagner, 1937). Stagner mentions six individuals in the titles of his twenty-two chapters, and once again Freud is among them. In addition, the well-known psychological historian Ludy Benjamin includes a chapter on the correspondence between Freud and Jung in *A History of Psychology in Letters* (1993). There are actually numerous books published on the correspondence between Freud and a variety of other people, and thousands of those letters have been published. These are just a few examples of how deeply Freud is recognized as a major figure in the history of psychology.

Another testament to the legacy of Freud is how enduring some of the issues he addressed have proven to be. In the early years of the twenty-first century there has been a growing conflict between religion and society. In the United States the concept of separation of church and state has been challenged perhaps most aggressively in our schools, with issues such as praying at school sporting events and the teaching of creationism in science classes. In other countries, religious fundamentalists often stand in opposition to the establishment of democratic governments. Increasing globalization does not seem to be bringing people together, but rather bringing people into competition and conflict. Freud used the knowledge he had learned in his studies on psychoanalysis to address such major societal issues. He presented his ideas in books such as *The Future of an Illusion* (1927/1961) and *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930/1961), and he hoped that by advancing our knowledge of the human psyche we could help to continue the development of the human species and civilization. The recognition that problems like these still plague humanity suggests that we have a long way to go. But brilliant men like Sigmund Freud have helped to provide us with a basis for moving forward.

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1.1.3: Basic Concepts

It is not easy to read the earliest writings of Freud on psychoanalysis. Following his years of working in isolation, Freud published four books in a span of 5 years: *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900/1995), *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1904/1995), *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex* (1905/1995), and *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905/1995). Each of these books clearly reflects their author: a genius, educated in Europe, and writing in a style well suited to the late 1800s/early 1900s. Not only are these books intellectually challenging, but even the English translations are sprinkled with lines in German, French, and Latin. In 1917, however, Freud published a series of lectures he had given at the University of Vienna during the years 1915-1917. His *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1917/1966) describes the essential aspects of his theory in neatly organized lectures that are much easier to grasp than his earlier work. Shortly before he died, Freud presented a very brief outline of his theories in the aptly named *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1938/1949). In what seems to be a logical approach to the study of Freud's work, we will begin with the general theory and then address the psychoanalytic method. Keep in mind, however, that Freud actually worked the other way around: first he developed his modifications of Breuer's cathartic method and began treating patients (actually, treating patients contributed to his development of the methods), and then he developed his theoretical perspectives in order to explain what had already proved successful.

Hysteria and Psychic Determinism

The term **hysteria** generally refers to a condition in which psychological trauma or stress is converted into physical symptoms and/or excessive emotional behavior. Today, this condition is typically referred to as a **conversion disorder** (DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Society, 2000). However, Freud meant to use the term in a rather broad sense, and he applied it to a collection of disorders that are not officially recognized today: the **neuroses** (relatively mild mental illnesses, often associated with stress, but which do not result in a loss of contact with reality).

Freud and Breuer (1895/2004) believed that their clinical observations revealed a number of key elements that provided the early framework for **psychodynamic theory** and **psychoanalysis**. In each case, the symptoms exhibited by their patients were connected to some earlier psychological trauma. This connection was not always obvious, however, and often could not be remembered by the patient. When the patient was helped to remember the traumatic event, the symptoms were typically relieved, a process known as **catharsis**. In order to help patients remember, Breuer and Freud (as well as Charcot and a few others) relied primarily on hypnosis. What intrigued Freud and Breuer was the observation that these traumatic memories seemed to last for a very long time without getting weaker, even though they were not conscious memories. What seemed to matter most was whether there had been an energetic reaction to the emotional event when the memory was formed. In order for the trauma to be released, there needed to be a cathartic event strong enough to adequately dissipate the energy associated with the formation of the traumatic memory.

Both Freud and Breuer recognized that this was only the beginning of this new field of clinical research. Although they were somewhat satisfied that they had described the nature of hysterical symptoms, and that they had moved further than Charcot, they recognized that they were no closer to understanding the internal causes of hysteria and the neuroses. This would become the work of Freud alone, at least for a number of years.

The concept of **psychic determinism** arises naturally from these early observations. Freud believed that all behavior and thought is the result of psychological connections created during previous experiences, nothing happens by accident or chance. The fact that we might find it difficult to recognize the connections between some emotion or behavior and a previous incident does nothing to minimize the reality of those connections, it just presents a challenge for the psychoanalyst. In *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud (1904/1995) described how psychic determinism results in many common problems, certainly the most famous of which is the "**Freudian slip**." A Freudian slip is an instance where someone says something wrong, but it actually reflects the person's true feelings. Freud attributed the following example to Dr. Brill:

While writing a prescription for a woman who was especially weighed down by the financial burden of the treatment, I was interested to hear her say suddenly: "Please do not give me *big bills*, because I cannot swallow them." Of course, she meant to say *pills*. (italics in the original, pg. 50; Freud, 1904/1995)

Discussion Question: Consider psychic determinism and what it means for your own life. Do you believe that *everything* you think and do is predetermined by earlier experiences? And what would that mean for your ability to change and grow?

Freud's Theory of Instincts

Freud used the term instinct in a way that does not fit with the technical term instinct as defined by Tinbergen (see Beck, 1978). It has been suggested that the German word *trieb* should not have been translated as instinct, and actually referred to something more like a *drive* or *impulse*. Freud was not concerned with specific behaviors, but rather with general categories of behavior. As a former scientist, Freud never left his interests in biology behind. When Freud referred to the psyche, or mind, he considered both its physical elements, the brain and the rest of the nervous system, and its mental elements, primarily our consciousness (which is made possible by the structure and function of the brain). Given our basic biological nature, and our genetic make-up, we inherit basic instincts essential to our survival: both our individual survival and the survival of our species. In recognition of the general rule in nature that all systems are comprised of opposing forces (attraction and repulsion) Freud hypothesized a life instinct and a death instinct.

Freud gave the life instinct the name **Eros**. Each organism has available to it energy to act within its environment. The energy associated with Eros is called **libido**. Libido has been mistakenly associated with the concept of a sexual impulse. What Freud was really referring to was a general survival impulse, both individual and species survival. While it is true that the survival of our species depends on sexual reproduction, there are many aspects of our behavior that are not directly related to sex. For example, we might have many friends, but our sexual interests are typically limited to only a few (it is our culture that encourages us to limit our interests to only one person). From an evolutionary perspective, of course, friends and others within our social group helped to protect us from predators and enemies. Similarly, the love and care we provide for our children are essential to the survival of our species, but are not usually associated with sexual acts. Incest appears to be one of the most common cultural taboos, and Freud found this to be a fascinating observation amongst primitive societies, which could not be expected to know anything of Western ideas of morality (Freud, 1913/1995). So it becomes apparent that the impulse to survive, Eros and its associated libido, involves many types of behavior, of which sexual intimacy is just one.

Libido is limited. We have only so much energy to devote to the many aspects and responsibilities of our lives. **Cathexis** refers to the attachment of libidinal energy to some psychical phenomenon. This is what Freud and Breuer meant by an energetic reaction to some experience. When we are attracted to someone, we connect some of our libidinal energy to that relationship. That energy is no longer available to us for other relationships, or to deal with the daily stress of our lives. If we have previously connected libidinal energy to some traumatic event, which might require a great deal of libidinal energy, it may prove difficult to maintain the level of energy we desire for our new relationship. As a result, that relationship, indeed all of our relationships, may suffer.

Although the libido is limited, it has the important characteristic of mobility (Freud, 1938/1949). In other words, it can switch from one task to another as necessary. At least, that is how it is supposed to work under normal conditions. Sometimes, however, problems arise, such as the failure to satisfy the needs that occur during a particular **psychosexual stage of development** (see below). When this occurs, the libido can become **fixated** on particular psychological objects. These fixations can last a lifetime, interfering with continued normal development and the individual's ability to live a healthy adult life.

Freud also proposed a destructive instinct, which is sometimes referred to as the death instinct. The energy associated with the death instinct is aggressive, but Freud never gave names to either the death instinct or its associated aggressive energy. This was never an important aspect of Freud's theories, but he did address it in some detail in the book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Freud, 1920/1961). In this book, Freud makes one thing very clear: the life instinct is far more influential than the death instinct. The primary role of the death instinct is protective. This may sound strange, but he considered the developing organism, even well before birth, as a fragile being assailed on all sides by threatening stimuli (both external stimuli and internal psychical stimuli). The death instinct creates a shell of inert tissue (figuratively, if not also literally), which protects the developing organism from harm.

Although Freud did not include the death instinct among his major concepts, other psychologists have. The **neo-Freudian** theorist Melanie Klein found evidence of the death instinct in the aggressive fantasies of children, and Wilhelm Reich's concept of armoring is reminiscent of Freud's description of the theoretical shell protecting the developing organism. Regarding aggression itself, there are many different forms, including predatory aggression, self-defense, defense of one's young, learned aggression, etc. The noted animal behaviorist and Nobel Laureate Konrad Lorenz wrote extensively on aggression, and he proposed a very Freudian perspective in which instinctive aggressive energy builds up and lashes out, unless an opportunity for catharsis arises first (see Beck, 1978).

At first it might seem strange that Freud suggested the role of the death instinct is to create a protective shell around the core of the developing nervous system, but the important question is whether we can find any evidence of it. Daniel Goleman, in *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), suggests a similar theory. The primitive role of emotion is evident in the brain regions devoted to emotion, which are common to many species other than humans. As the mammalian brain evolved, structures were added to the reptilian

brain, culminating in the neocortex of the cerebral hemispheres. The cerebral hemispheres are necessary for the cognitive functions that are characteristic of humans. Still, we retain the emotional structures that developed first, and our rational thoughts can easily be hijacked by emotional reactions (Goleman, 1995, 1998). Perhaps the most important brain region involved in the processing of emotional information is the **amygdala**. Jerome Kagan has suggested that if the amygdala is overly sensitive a child will avoid external stimuli, leading to a life of shyness, and vice versa (cited in Goleman, 1995). The development of brain structures that process emotion and allow for cognitive processing well beyond the primitive and most basic emotions sounds very much like what Freud had proposed regarding the role of the death instinct. This is not to suggest that either the amygdala or some portion of the neocortex is the anatomical location of the death instinct, but the evidence that such functions exist within the brain lends support to Freud's concept. According to Goleman, the ability to work with emotional intelligence is essential to one's well-being in life, and fortunately emotional intelligence can be trained and strengthened (Goleman, 1995, 1998).

Discussion Question: Compare Freud's concept of a life instinct and a death instinct, and consider the choices you make in life. Do you make choices that provide an opportunity to grow and change, or do you get caught up in pointless, even self-defeating, activities? If you make bad choices, where do you think those choices come from?

The Development of Libido and Psychosexual Function

Freud's most controversial theories related to sexual function and its role in personality development. Even more controversial than that initial statement was his suggestion that the sexual life of every person begins at birth. It is important, of course, to remember that Freud did not mean intimate sexual behavior when he talked about sexual impulses, but rather a general life impulse. He made an important distinction between "sexual" and "genital." By sexual he was referring to a wider concept of obtaining pleasure from different regions of the body, whereas genital refers to the act of reproduction, which comes into play following puberty.

Freud was well aware of this controversy during the early days of psychoanalysis, and many of his books make a special point of defending the theory of infantile sexuality. As mentioned in the biography, he actually attributed the initial observations of the role of sexuality in the development of neuroses to Breuer, Charcot, and Chrobak (Freud, 1914/1995). As he reflected on the history of psychoanalysis, Freud described how he and others before him had not intended to address infantile sexuality, but it proved unavoidable after extensive experience with psychoanalysis. In other words, Freud kept encountering infantile sexuality, and eventually he concluded that it was both universal and far too important to ignore. Therefore, he felt he could not allow old prejudices against recognizing or discussing the relevance of sexuality to interfere with the development of psychoanalysis (see Freud, 1938/1949).

Freud also defended his theory of sexuality in logical ways. In his initial work on this topic, *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex* (1905/1995), Freud specifically argued against the prevailing views that sexuality develops at puberty for the purpose of attracting a man and a woman to each other for the ultimate purpose of reproduction. He noted that there are individuals who are attracted to members of their own sex, that there are those who engage in sexual acts that disregard the genitalia (e.g., fetishes), and there are undeniable examples of children who become interested in their genitalia and obtain some excitation from them. Finally, in his *Introductory Lectures...* (Freud, 1917/1966) he declared his position quite clearly:

To suppose that children have no sexual life – sexual excitations and needs and a kind of satisfaction – but suddenly acquire it between the ages of twelve and fourteen, would (quite apart from any observations) be as improbable, and indeed senseless, biologically as to suppose that they brought no genitals with them into the world and only grew them at the time of puberty. (pg. 385).

Levels of Consciousness

From the very beginning of psychoanalysis, Freud and Breuer (1895/2004) recognized that their patients were often unaware of the connections between their symptoms and earlier traumatic events, and they might not even recall the events themselves. And yet, as described above, the memory of those events remained strong. How can a memory be strong but not remembered? The answer lies in the theory that there are different levels of consciousness. Freud described three levels of consciousness: the **conscious**, the **preconscious**, and the **unconscious**.

The conscious mind is our awareness, the knowledge that we exist and are alive. As you read this book you are conscious of it, when you talk to a friend you are aware of what they are saying and how you will respond (unless, of course, you respond with a Freudian slip!). Although the conscious mind is usually identified with our personality, and Freud recognized that people viewed consciousness as nothing more or less than the defining characteristic of the mind, his clinical experience with psychoanalysis made it impossible for him to accept the identification of the conscious mind with the mental mind (Freud, 1917/1966).

The unconscious mind, according to Freud, is the true psychic reality, and all conscious thought has a preliminary unconscious stage. And yet, the unconscious mind is truly inaccessible. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900/1995), Freud wrote about the unconscious mind that:

...in its inner nature it is just as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is just as imperfectly communicated to us by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the reports of our sense-organs. (pg. 510)

How then does the unconscious mind affect our personality? Between the unconscious and conscious minds there is an intermediary: the preconscious. Technically, the preconscious mind is part of the unconscious, but only through the preconscious mind can the impulses arising in the unconscious enter into our conscious awareness. Freud distinguished between the two by theorizing that the unconscious cannot enter into consciousness, but if certain rules are followed, the preconscious can enter into consciousness (but perhaps only after being censored; Freud, 1900/1995).

Freud also made two important points regarding these levels of the mind. First, the unconscious, preconscious, and conscious minds are not located in different regions of the brain. Instead, the level of consciousness of any particular psychical phenomenon depends on the cathexis of libidinal energy (or perhaps energy related to the death instinct) and repression (see *Anxiety* and *Defense Mechanisms* below). If the memory of a traumatic event is significantly repressed, it will remain in the unconscious, if not, it may enter into consciousness through the preconscious. Yet it has remained the same memory within the same memory structure of the brain. Freud also distinguished between the mind and reality, particularly between the unconscious mind and reality. He did, however, remind his readers that they would do well to remember that psychic reality is a special form of existence, though not to be confused with material reality (Freud, 1900/1995).

Figure 1.1.3.1

The levels of consciousness and the structures of the mind, as proposed by Freud. The iceberg analogy should actually be attributed to Theodor Lipps, whose work on the unconscious mind and humor was cited extensively in Freud's early books.

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1.1.4: Structure of Personality

It is no accident that our discussion of the **id**, **ego**, and **superego** follow immediately after our discussion of the levels of consciousness. In *The Ego and the Id* (which also discuss the superego, despite not including it in the title; Freud, 1923/1960), Freud begins with a chapter on consciousness and what is unconscious, then follows with a chapter on the ego and the id, and then a chapter on the ego and the superego. It is difficult to discuss the two concepts, levels of consciousness and the **psychical apparatus** (a term Freud used for the id, ego, and superego), without intertwining them. In addition, these three structures begin as one, the ego develops from the id, and later the superego develops from the ego. As with levels of consciousness, it is inappropriate to think of the id, ego, and superego as actual structures within the brain, rather they are **constructs** to help us understand the psychodynamic functioning of the mind. Freud acknowledged this lack of understanding, and went so far as to say that even if we could localize them within the brain we wouldn't necessarily be any closer to understanding how they function (Freud, 1938/1949).

Id, Ego, Superego

The oldest aspect of the psyche is the id, which includes all that we inherit at birth, including our temperament and our instincts. The only goal of the id is to satisfy instinctual needs and desires; therefore, it acts according to the **pleasure principle**. It knows nothing of value judgments, no good, no evil, and no morality at all. It does not change or mature over time. According to Freud, there is nothing in the id except instinctual cathexes seeking discharge (Freud, 1933/1965). The energy associated with these impulses, however, is different from other regions of the mind. It is highly mobile and capable of discharge, and the quality of the discharge seems to be disregarded. This is a very important point, because it means that the id does not need to satisfy its desires in reality. Instead, they can be satisfied through dreams and fantasy.

Because the id demands satisfaction, and knows nothing of restraint, it is said to operate as a **primary process**. Since it can be satisfied in unreal ways, if we examine phenomena such as fantasies and dreams we can uncover the nature of the id. It was during his studies on dream-work that Freud developed his understanding of the primary process of the id (Freud, 1923/1960). Actually, we can only know the id through psychoanalysis, since it exists entirely within the unconscious mind. Therefore, we need a **secondary process** structure in order for the mind to interact with the external world. This structure is found in the ego.

The ego arises from the id as an intermediary between the id and the external world. The ego functions according to the **reality principle**, and tries to bring the external world to bear on the impulses of the id. In other words, as the id demands satisfaction it is hindered by the reality of our environment, our societal and cultural norms. The ego postpones satisfaction until the time or the circumstances are appropriate, or it may suppress the id impulses altogether (Freud, 1938/1949). Freud believed that the ego is associated with perception (of reality), in the same way that the id is associated with instinct. The id is passionate, whereas the ego represents reason and common sense. But the id has the energy, the libido, to demand its satisfaction in some way, and the ego can only derive its energy from the id. Freud likened the ego to a horseback rider on a horse named id. The rider cannot always control the far more powerful horse, so the rider attempts to transform the will of the horse as if it were the rider's own will (Freud, 1923/1960).

The ego develops in part because it is that portion of the mind impacted by sensory input from the external world. Therefore, it resides partially in the conscious mind, and must serve three tyrannical masters: the id, the external world, and the superego (which we will discuss below). The goals of these three masters are typically at odds with one another, and so the ego's task is not an easy one (Freud, 1933/1965). The ego approaches this task by monitoring the **tension** that exists within the mind. This tension arises from internal and external stimuli making demands upon the mind, lowering this tension is felt as pleasurable, and increasing the tension is unpleasant. The id demands immediate reduction of tension, in accordance with its pleasure principle, whereas the ego seeks an appropriate reduction of tension, in accordance with its reality principle. A key point, of course, is that the ego also seeks pleasure. It does not try to deny the impulses of the id, only to transform or delay them. But why does the ego even bother to do that? There are times when pursuing pleasure can get us in serious trouble, but there are also times when we make choices because they seem right to us. These decisions, based on justice, morality, humanism, whatever term you choose, are mediated by the superego.

According to Freud, the superego is heir to the **Oedipus complex** (which we will discuss below), and arises as the child abandons their intense attachment to their parents. As a replacement for that attachment, the child begins to identify with their parents, and so incorporates the ideals and moral values of their parents and, later, teachers and other societal role models (Freud, 1933/1965). According to this view, the superego cannot fully develop if the child does not resolve the Oedipus complex, which, as we will discuss below, cannot happen for girls (Note: In addition to further discussion below, the issue of a more balanced female

psychology will be discussed again in later chapters). The superego functions across all levels of the conscious and unconscious mind.

The superego takes two forms: an **ego-ideal** and a **conscience**. Freud considered the term ego-ideal as an alternative to the term superego, and it is not until we incorporate the development of conscience that we can recognize ego-ideal and conscience as different aspects of the superego. Indeed, it might be more appropriate, if one reads *The Ego and the Id* carefully (Freud, 1923/1960), to consider the ego-ideal and conscience as consecutive transformations of that portion of the ego that becomes known in general as the superego. The development of the superego is a complicated process, and seems to derive from the development of the ego itself. For an infant, the attachment to the parents and identification with them is not recognized as something different. The ego is weak, and can do little to restrain the id. As the child grows, the erotic nature of the love for the mother is slowly transformed into identification; the ego grows stronger, and begins to become associated with being a love-object itself. When the ego is capable of presenting itself to the id as an object worthy of love, narcissistic libido is generated and the ego becomes fully formed (Freud, 1923/1960). In other words, the child becomes an individual, aware that they are separate from their parents. There is still an intense attachment to the mother, however, which stems from the early days of breast feeding. The child must eventually lose this intense attachment to the mother, and begin to more fully identify with either the father (for boys) or the mother (for girls). As noted above, this final transformation from attachment to identification should occur during the Oedipus complex, and the ego-ideal arises within the context of the child knowing “I should act like my father” (for boys) or “I should act like my mother” (for girls).

Although the ego-ideal could represent the culmination of development, Freud believed that one more step came into play. Because of the difficulty the child encounters during the loss of the intense, erotic desires of the Oedipus complex, Freud felt there was more than simply a residue of those love-objects in the mind. He proposed an energetic **reaction-formation** against the earlier choices. Now, the child incorporates concepts of “I must *not* act like my father or mother.” Under the influences of authority, schooling, religion, etc., the superego develops an ever stronger conscience against inappropriate behavior. This conscience has a compulsive character and takes the form of a categorical imperative (Freud, 1923/1960). This conscience is our knowledge of right and wrong, and early on it is quite simplistic. There is right and there is wrong (as with Kohlberg’s earliest stages of moral development; Kohlberg, 1963).

Discussion Question: Do you feel that your behavior is being driven by the unconscious impulses of the id? Do you believe that your moral development (your superego) is the result of internalizing your parent’s views of what is right or wrong? How close are your values to those of your parents?

Anxiety

We have already taken a look at the challenge faced by the ego in trying to balance the demands of the id, the superego, and the external world. What happens when the demands of these conflicting elements become too much for the ego to deal with? Simply put, we get scared, we experience fear and **anxiety** as a signal that there is some impending danger. Only the ego can experience anxiety, even if the underlying cause begins with the id or superego. Anxiety arises primarily from libido that has not been utilized. For example, if we are frustrated from fulfilling some id impulse, such as needing to go to the bathroom in the middle of a great movie, the libido cathected to that impulse grows. This creates tension and the corresponding unpleasant feelings. As the id demands satisfaction, but the ego cannot figure out how to satisfy the id (and you really don’t want to miss the good part of the movie), the fear arises that the id will satisfy itself. Most of us would consider the possibility of going to the bathroom in our pants while at a movie a real danger to our self-esteem, and we could be arrested if we simply went to the bathroom right there in the movie theater. As the ego is reduced to helplessness in its inability to find a reasonable outlet for the impulse of needing to go to the bathroom, anxiety serves the useful and important purpose of warning the ego that the impulse *must* be satisfied in order to avoid the danger (Freud, 1926/1959). And in support of Freud’s view regarding our sexual nature, who would deny the great pleasure felt upon finally getting to the bathroom?

Freud described three general types of anxiety. Realistic anxiety involves actual threats to our physical safety. It is similar to fear, in that there is a real and external object that could harm us, but it differs from fear in that we may not be aware of a specific danger. For example, after the famous book *Jaws* (Benchley, 1974) was made into a movie (the kind of movie that you don’t want to miss the good scenes) many people became anxious about swimming in the ocean, even though there were no specific sharks for them to fear. Still, there are sharks in the ocean, so it might be reasonable to experience some anxiety. Sometimes we are anxious about a real danger, but the anxiety we experience is completely out of proportion in relation to the threat. This suggests that there is an element of neurotic anxiety accompanying the realistic anxiety (Freud, 1926/1959).

Neurotic anxiety generally arises from an internal danger, the threat that unacceptable id impulses will break through and be acted on by the individual. The ultimate danger that exists is that we really will be harmed as a result of our actions. Therefore, Freud considered there to be a close association between neurotic and realistic anxiety (Freud, 1926/1959). For example, if we are being harassed by a bully, our aggressive id impulse might be to respond by killing this bully. Of course, that could result in going to prison or having the bully's friends kill us. So the anxiety that our violent id impulse might break out and influence our behavior is associated with the real danger posed by the consequences of that behavior, if it should happen to occur. Therefore, our neurotic anxiety is composed, in part, of our internalized realistic anxiety.

In a similar way, moral anxiety arises from conflict between our ego and the constraints imposed on it by the superego. Since the superego arises from the internalization of our parent's teaching us what is or is not appropriate behavior, we again have an association between the internal threat of the superego and the real, external threat of being punished by our parents. Therefore, as with neurotic anxiety, the precursor to our moral anxiety is realistic anxiety, even if our fears are based on our psychological impressions of a situation as opposed to an actual danger (e.g., the fear of castration; Freud, 1926/1959, 1933/1965). Freud (1933/1965) described the relationships this way:

Thus the ego, driven by the id, confined by the super-ego, repulsed by reality, struggles to master its economic task of bringing about harmony among the forces and influences working in and upon it; and we can understand how it is that so often we cannot suppress a cry: 'Life is not easy!' If the ego is obliged to admit its weakness, it breaks out in anxiety – realistic anxiety regarding the external world, moral anxiety regarding the super-ego and neurotic anxiety regarding the strength of the passions in the id. (pgs. 97-98)

Freud also described an overall pattern to the development and expression of anxiety and its useful role in life. In early childhood we experience traumatic situations in which we are helpless. Remember that Freud believed that psychic reality is every bit as significant as actual reality (Freud, 1900/1995), so the nature of these traumatic events is subject to individual perception. As the child's capacity for self-preservation develops, the child learns to recognize dangerous situations. Rather than waiting passively to be threatened or harmed, an older child or an adult will respond actively. The initial response is anxiety, but anxiety is a warning of danger in anticipation of experiencing helplessness once again. In a sense, the ego is recreating to the helplessness of infancy, but it does so in the hope that now the ego will have at its command some means of dealing with the situation. Therefore, anxiety has hopefully transformed from a passive response in infancy to an active and protective response in later childhood and/or adulthood (Freud, 1926/1959).

Discussion Question: What makes you anxious, and how do you respond to those feelings?

Defense Mechanisms

We will cover **defense mechanisms** only briefly in this chapter. Although Freud talked about a wide variety of defense mechanisms during his career, he left it to his daughter Anna to literally write the book on *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (Anna Freud, 1936/1966). Freud himself discussed primarily two defense mechanisms: **repression** and **regression**. The recognition of these defense mechanisms was essential to the development of psychoanalysis, and they are the only two defenses mentioned by Freud in *The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement* (1914/1995). The purpose of these defense mechanisms is to protect the ego during the early years of life, when the ego has not adequately developed in its ability to control the libidinal impulses of the id. Thus, defense mechanisms serve a useful function at first, but later prove inadequate when the re-animation of the sexual life is reinforced following puberty (Freud, 1938/1949). Similarly, in adult life, defense mechanisms are useful in the short-term, but since they do not deal with problems directly they must eventually prove inadequate.

Freud identified repression as one of the key elements establishing psychoanalysis as unique from the cathartic method he had been working on thanks to the contributions of Josef Breuer (Freud, 1914/1995). Indeed, according to Freud, his own contributions that transformed Breuer's cathartic method into psychoanalysis were repression, **resistance**, infantile sexuality, and dream analysis for the understanding of the unconscious mind. The value of repression cannot be underestimated:

The theory of repression is the pillar upon which the edifice of psychoanalysis rests. It is really the most essential part of it, and yet, it is nothing but the theoretical expression of an experience which can be repeatedly observed whenever one analyses a neurotic without the aid of hypnosis. One is then confronted with a resistance which opposes and blocks the analytic work by causing failures of memory. This resistance was always covered by the use of hypnosis; the history of psychoanalysis proper, therefore, starts with the technical innovation of the rejections of hypnosis. (pg. 907; Freud, 1914/1995)

The resistance Freud is referring to here is the defense mechanism of repression, which is the means by which the ego refuses to associate itself with an unacceptable instinctual impulse generated by the id. The ego is able to keep the "reprehensible" impulse

from entering into the conscious mind (Freud, 1926/1959). But an important question arises: What then happens to this impulse seeking satisfaction? There are several possibilities, and Freud himself considered the answer to be rather complex. One thing that might happen is that the ego attempts to shift the libido cathected to the impulse toward release as anxiety (Freud, 1926/1959). However, anxiety is unpleasant, and the id demands satisfaction in accordance with its pleasure principle. Therefore, this procedure is doomed to failure (and, therefore, the development of neurosis). There are, of course, alternatives that can occur prior to the failure of this initial defense. The ego may find some acceptable alternative to the impulse through the other defense mechanisms, such as **sublimation** or reaction-formation.

Regression can be seen when an individual engages in behavior typical of an earlier stage of development. As Freud and Breuer tried to work out the causes of their patient's neuroses by using the cathartic method, they repeatedly found that they could not help their patients by focusing on the actual event that had led to a crisis. Instead, their patients inevitably made associations between the traumatic event and earlier experiences. Initially, these earlier experiences went back to puberty, and ultimately they went back to early childhood. Although Breuer favored some physiological explanation of this phenomenon, Freud insisted that it was psychological, and he termed the process regression (Freud, 1914/1995). According to Freud:

This regressive direction became an important characteristic of the analysis. It was proved that psychoanalysis could not clear up anything actual, except by going back to something in the past. (pg. 903)

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1.1.5: Psychosexual Stages of Development

Above, we examined the basic development of libido and psychosexual function. Freud also believed that psychosexual function developed in a series of stages that occur in two waves. The first three stages occur during early childhood, from infancy to about the age of 5. Freud referred to this early period as the **pregenital phase** (Freud, 1905/1995). There is then a **latency period**, which lasts until puberty, after which the final stage, the **genital stage**, is realized and the individual is capable of physically mature reproductive functioning. These stages are typically presented as if they are exclusive and sequential. Although it is true that they are sequential, they are not entirely exclusive. Therefore, it is possible for the stages to overlap (Freud, 1938/1949). However, it remains true that during a particular stage one region of the body will be dominant, and most of the libido will be focused on that region (see Jarvis, 2004). For the sake of simplicity, we will treat the stages as if they occur one after another.

The Psychosexual Stages

The first phase of psychosexual development begins at infancy with the **oral stage**. According to Freud, the mouth is the first region of the body to become an **erotogenic zone**, and this lasts for approximately the first year of life. During this time the mouth makes libidinal demands on the mind. In other words, the region of the mouth demands that the mind direct adequate libidinal energy to satisfy the desires of the oral region. Although this serves the purpose of sustaining the infant by satisfying its nutritional needs, Freud believed that the infant's persistent sucking belied a need for satisfaction that was far greater than simply taking care of physiological needs. He believed that the infant needed to satisfy its desire for psychological pleasure independent of nourishment, and this was the basis for arguing that the behavior was sexual (in the larger, life-oriented perspective on sexuality).

Evidence for this stage is easy to see, and such commonplace observances contributed to Freud's thinking. Infants suck almost continuously, even when not being fed. They suck their thumbs, they can be comforted with pacifiers, as they become older they put everything they can get their hands on into their mouths. If they cannot satisfy this need, they may become fixated in the oral stage. As a result of this oral fixation, when an older child or adult becomes frustrated or overwhelmed, they may regress and engage in oral behavior. This occurs because the fixation of libido on the oral region during infancy results in a deficiency of the libidinal energy needed to cope with some stressful period of adulthood. This oral behavior can take many forms, such as: overeating, smoking, drinking too much (of course, this usually refers to drinking alcoholic beverages), or just talking excessively.

During the second stage of psychosexual development, the **anal stage**, the anus becomes the focus of the libido, and the child derives pleasure from the ability to both retain and expel feces. Initially, the pleasure associated with evacuating the bowels is felt within the child, something Freud referred to as the **autoerotic** nature of sexual development (Freud, 1917/1966). Soon, however, the child learns that the world can be an inhibiting place, that greater pleasure can be derived only if the child defecates when and where others consider it to be appropriate. This realization occurs as a result of the most significant parent-child interaction during this stage of development: toilet training. If the parents are either too strict or begin too early the child may develop the traits of an anal character (Jarvis, 2004). These traits include excessive orderliness, stubbornness, and parsimony, each of which results from denial of the child's anal pleasure during toilet training. Orderliness, or tidiness, serves as a denial of taking pleasure in defecating, and stubbornness carries over from the child's assertion of their right to defecate at will (Jarvis, 2004). Parsimony, or being stingy, stems from the child's association of the feces with money. According to Freud (1917/1966):

He feels no disgust at his feces, values them as a portion of his own body with which he will not readily part, and makes use of them as his first 'gift,' to distinguish people whom he values especially highly. (pg. 390)

Freud was by no means unaware of how strange this part of his theory seemed. Immediately following the above quote, he went on to say the following, and remember that his *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* were actual lectures delivered to students at the University of Vienna:

I know you have been wanting for a long time to interrupt me and exclaim: 'Enough of these atrocities! You tell us that defecating is a source of sexual satisfaction, and already exploited in infancy! That feces are a valuable substance and that the anus is a kind of genital! We don't believe all that...' No, Gentlemen. You have merely forgotten that I have been trying to introduce the facts of infantile sexual life to you in connection with the facts ... that for a large number of adults, homosexual and heterosexual alike, the anus does really take over the role of the vagina in sexual intercourse? (pg. 391)

So Freud was simply trying to address very real issues that he, and others, had observed in their clinical practices. His years of working in isolation had prepared him for dealing with disapproval, and he was not going to be shy about studying things that might make others uncomfortable.

The **phallic stage**, in which the libido focuses on the genitalia, represents the culmination of infantile sexuality. Although it typically occurs between the ages of 3 to 5 years old, it sets the stage for adult sexuality. Therefore, it is a very important period. According to Freud (1905/1995), this stage will “leave behind the profoundest (unconscious) impressions in the person’s memory; if the individual remains healthy they determine his character and if he becomes sick after puberty, they determine the symptomatology of his neurosis.” There are two critical aspects of this stage: the first involves the **castration complex** and **penis envy**, and the second is the Oedipus complex. Technically, the Oedipus complex subsumes castration anxiety, but it is important to consider these aspects separately. In *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex* (Freud, 1905/1995), the book that obviously focuses on the sexual aspects of psychoanalysis, Freud discussed the castration complex and penis envy, but not the Oedipus complex. Although he discussed the Oedipus legend in his earlier books, he did not use the term Oedipus complex until 1910 (see Jarvis, 2004). The other reason for considering the major aspects of this stage separately is the difference between boys and girls. Penis envy is obviously something that only girls can experience and, according to Freud, the Oedipus complex is something that only boys can experience. Girls experience something similar to the Oedipus complex, but their efforts are in vain, and this has a permanent, negative effect on their character (Freud, 1938/1949). For more discussion on the latter point, see the section below on Freud’s perspective on the female psyche.

As we begin to address the castration complex and penis envy, it is important to realize that Freud’s phallic stage is entirely focused on the penis, for both boys and girls. As the libido becomes focused on the genitals, a boy begins to manipulate his penis. He experiences no shame, and even enjoys displaying his body (Freud, 1905/1995). As a counterpart to this joy in his own sexuality, children are often curious about seeing other children’s bodies. This creates a very different experience for boys and girls. When boys see a girl’s body, they believe the absence of a penis means that the girl has been castrated. This leads to a fear of the same thing happening to them, and creates castration anxiety, which in adulthood can lead to a castration complex. When girls see a boy’s body they are fully prepared to recognize the penis, and they become envious of it. Indeed, this envy can become strong enough that the girl wishes she was a boy (Freud, 1905/1995). Since she cannot be a boy, she begins to seek an alternative, either her father or a child of her own.

As Freud continued to develop his theory of the phallic stage, he included a broader perspective beyond the castration complex: the Oedipus complex. A boy’s first love object is his mother, the one who feeds him and attends to all of his needs. This is only natural. As his libido becomes focused on his genitalia, however, this takes on the sexual desire that became so controversial. Keeping in mind that Freud did not believe that children understand the adult reality of their desires (much of it is unconscious), he described their behaviors as obvious evidence of their desire: boys talk about loving and marrying their mother, they persistently pursue being in her presence when she is dressing, they want to be in bed with her at night, etc. (Freud, 1917/1966). This eventually leads to conflict with the father, and with it the castration anxiety described above. Since there is no satisfactory resolution, given that the father is much more powerful than the child, the boy is compelled to give up the Oedipus complex, to repress it. In the healthiest condition, the Oedipus complex is completely destroyed in the id, and gives rise to a severe superego (Freud, 1933/1965). This repression, or destruction, of the Oedipus complex allows the boy to transition into the latency period.

For girls, the Oedipus complex takes a very different course. A girl’s first love object is also her mother, since again it is the mother who provides most of the childcare. Once the girl realizes that she does not have a penis she develops penis envy, and she must undertake a change in her love object to her father, the one who can provide her with the desired penis. The mother is then seen as a rival for the father’s penis, and indeed as someone who has already received all that the girl wants from her father. This can intensify feelings of hostility toward the mother. Consequently, she may enter into the Oedipus complex feeling that it is a refuge or safe haven. However, the girl does not fear castration, since she has no penis to begin with, and without the fear of castration leading to repression of the Oedipus complex there is no motivation for the girl to move into the latency period (Freud, 1933/1965). Freud believed that girls remain in the Oedipus complex, and thus the phallic stage, for an indeterminate period of time, and that they cannot ever completely resolve it. Adding one more point of controversy, the only way in which girls can shift from an initially masculine situation (the mother as love object) to a feminine situation (the father as love object) is if they replace their penis envy with the desire for a child, given the ancient symbolic equivalence between the penis and giving birth (Freud, 1933/1965).

Following the oral, anal, and phallic stages there is a period of latency, during which progress is at a standstill. There are, however, some interesting things that happen during this period. The child knows that they are still incapable of procreation (even though this knowledge may be unconscious), so they begin to turn away from their sexual desires. They begin to view sexual impulses with disgust and shame, and to consider them immoral (Freud, 1905/1995). Although their education has much to do with this, Freud believed that it is also a natural occurrence. To compensate, the child (or the child’s mind, as this again may be entirely unconscious) engages the defense mechanism of sublimation: the conversion of the unacceptable sexual impulses into activities

that are socially acceptable (such as school work or sports). Another important consequence of this mental activity is that we forget our infantile sexual impulses, something Freud called **infantile amnesia**. Infantile amnesia is critical to the whole theory of the development of neuroses and the technique of psychoanalysis (Freud, 1938/1949), and it is one of the main reasons that many adults insist upon denying the possibility of infantile sexuality in the first place.

With the onset of puberty, the individual enters the final stage of psychosexual development: the genital stage. If the challenges of the earlier stages have been resolved in a satisfactory way, the individual is finally capable of appropriate and mature intimacy and sexual behavior. All of the psychodynamic processing that has taken place is not gone, however. According to Freud (1938/1949), even normal people have some of the following factors included in their final psychosexual organization: some libidinal cathexes are retained, others are taken into sexual activity as preliminary acts (such as foreplay), and still others are excluded from the organization either by repression or sublimation.

Freud's Perspective on the Female Psyche

I would like to begin this section by being fair to Freud. First and foremost, there were no other theories on the development of personality for Freud to consider as he developed his own theory. Second, most of the patients Freud saw were women, and apparently he needed to explain how it was that so many of his patients were women and not men. There were certainly other possible explanations than those offered by Freud, but it has been easy for others to look back and criticize him with the benefit of new and different ideas. One must also keep in mind that Freud was a basic scientist for many years, and he put a lot of emphasis on details. It is an undeniable, biological fact that men are male and women are female! Freud believed that psychology could never truly understand sex and gender differences unless we could understand why so many species exists as two different sexes in the first place (Freud, 1933/1965). Nonetheless, having acknowledged this, Freud's theory does, unfortunately, describe women as the products of an incomplete and frustrated male development.

Freud believed that the development of the feminine psyche was more difficult and complicated than that of the masculine psyche for two main reasons, neither of which is faced by boys during their development. Initially, there are basic biological differences, both anatomically and in terms of temperament. Girls are typically less aggressive, defiant, and self-sufficient; they also seem to have a greater need for affection, and as a result become more dependent and pliant. However, Freud disregarded these differences, feeling that they were insignificant compared to individual differences between boys and girls (Freud, 1933/1965). Through much of the first wave of infantile sexuality, particularly the oral and anal stages, there is no difference between boys and girls. Even during the early portion of the phallic stage there is no difference between the sensations boys experience via the penis and the sensations girls experience via the clitoris. The first difference, however, arises from the need for girls to shift the focus of their libido from the clitoris to the vagina, particularly with regard to the importance of the latter for sexual activity leading to procreation. The second difference is the need for the girl to shift the focus of her libido from the mother to the father as she enters the Oedipus complex. This shift in the love object is not easy, and the outcome is not pleasant.

Freud proposed that the young girl's attraction to her father at the beginning of the Oedipus complex is not simply a shift in the libido, but involves a rejection of the mother who had been the previous love object. The girl's rejection of her mother is accompanied by hostility, and can end in hate. The hate can be profound and last the girl's entire life, even if it is carefully compensated for later in life (Freud, 1933/1965). The reason for this hostility toward the mother arises from the castration complex and penis envy. Whereas a boy fears being castrated, the girl believes that she already has been, and the mother is responsible. The girl then develops an overwhelming desire to have a penis, the so-called penis envy, but it simply cannot be. Even when a girl is old enough to understand the basic biology of sex differences, she still retains an unconscious feeling of having been wronged and a considerable cathexis of libido remains (Freud, 1933/1965). It is interesting to note that Freud acknowledges that it is difficult to see these processes in action if one simply observes young girls. However, in his clinical practice he saw patients whose neuroses amplified these processes, and following psychoanalysis the underlying basis of this developmental stage seemed evident to Freud.

Table 1.1.5.1: A Summary of the Psychosexual Stages

Stage	Approximate Age Range	Essential Elements
Oral Stage	Birth through the first year	The mouth is the source of erotic pleasure; this helps to obtain nourishment, but babies also put everything else they get their hand on into their mouths

Table 1.1.5.1: A Summary of the Psychosexual Stages

Anal Stage	From age 1 to 3 years old	The anus is the source of erotic pleasure; toilet training is the major task of this stage (and as any parent can tell you, a most interesting experience!)
Phallic Stage	From age 3 to 5 years old	The genitals are the source of erotic pleasure; boys may fear castration, girls develop penis envy; boys resolve the Oedipus complex due to the motivation provided by their castration anxiety; since girls are not motivated by castration anxiety, they lack the motivation to completely resolve the Oedipus complex
Latency Period	From age 6 to puberty	At the beginning of this period infantile amnesia hides our earlier experiences from us; recovering them is the major task of psychoanalysis
Genital Stage	From puberty throughout adulthood	If the earlier stages were resolved successfully, then normal adult life proceeds; if not, a neurosis may develop; according to Freud, women cannot resolve the Oedipus complex, so they must have some psychological deficiencies relative to men

How then is a girl to resolve the Oedipus complex and achieve a healthy, adult personality? As described above, she can't! In Freud's own words:

The girl, after vainly attempting to do the same as the boy, comes to recognize her lack of a penis or rather the inferiority of her clitoris, with permanent effects on the development of her character; as a result of this first disappointment in rivalry, she often begins by turning away altogether from sexual life. (pg. 26; Freud, 1938/1949)

In these circumstances the formation of the superego must suffer; it cannot attain the strength and independence which give it its cultural significance, and feminists are not pleased when we point out to them the effects of this factor upon the average feminine character. (pgs. 160-161; Freud, 1933/1965).

Another important observation that came to Freud in his early psychoanalytic practice was the recognition that almost all of his female patients reported having been seduced by their fathers (which, if true, is an inaccurate way of saying they were sexually assaulted by a child molester). This led Freud to propose a **seduction theory**, which was the basis for first proposing the role of sexual trauma in the development of neuroses. This sexual trauma did not have to be as severe as rape, but it was considered significant nonetheless (see Jarvis, 2004). Later, however, Freud came to the conclusion that these seductions occurred only in the fantasies of the young girls. Indeed, Freud described the fantasy of a young girl being seduced by her father as the typical expression of the Oedipus complex in women (Freud, 1933/1965). Freud was criticized for theorizing that young girls fantasized about being seduced by their fathers, and Breuer ended his pursuit of understanding sexual trauma when faced with the same conclusion (Freud, 1914/1995). Today, however, Freud is criticized more for having turned away from what may have been his most startling discovery, the prevalence of sexual abuse (see Jarvis, 2004).

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1.1.6: Connections Across Cultures- Male

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1.1.6.1: Connections Across Cultures- Male/Female Differences

We don't normally think of men and women as being different cultures, but this has become a more popular approach to understanding their differences (e.g., see Brislin, 2000; Ferraro, 2006a; Haviland, 2005; Matlin, 2004). As we consider gender differences it is, of course, important to avoid stereotyping individuals. Nonetheless, the reality of cultural expectations related to sex and gender, some of which have a basis in the development of the human species, has led to some interesting research in both professional and popular psychology. As mentioned in Chapter 1, psychology has often been portrayed as a discipline focusing on White, European males. However, research on the psychology of women continues to expand, it has begun to address the specific differences of women of color, and it has led to the establishment of specific men's studies as well (Matlin, 2004). The latter point is an important one, since the earlier emphasis on White males was more circumstantial than intentional. For our purposes, I would like us to consider some of the interesting popular work on male/female differences.

In 1992, John Gray first published a very popular book entitled *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus*. This book openly addresses the different ways in which men and women typically communicate and express their emotions. He offers practical advice on how men and women should react, or perhaps not react, to one another in everyday interactions. In his introduction to the paperback edition, Gray (2004) emphasizes how important it is not to try changing your partner. To expect members of the opposite sex to become more like yourself sends a message that they are not good enough as they are. He also notes that not all men or women will fall into the typical gender roles, so it is important not to stereotype. What is important, according to Gray, is that we recognize the general differences that exist between men and women and keep them in mind when we communicate with each other. If we can, then hopefully we can avoid conflicts that need not be inevitable. It might sound simple, but Gray clearly struck a chord in couples and individuals across America. He wrote numerous follow-up books, including *Mars and Venus on a Date* (1997) and the parenting guide *Children are From Heaven* (1999), each of which became #1 New York Times Bestsellers like the original. There is an interesting website (www.marsvenus.com), there are workshops and counseling centers based on Gray's work, and workplace seminars based on *Mars and Venus in the Workplace* (2002). Clearly, relationship problems based on the differences between men and women are of great interest to people in our society today. As harshly as Freud has been criticized for his views on the differences between men and women, he was certainly on to something. Perhaps that's part of the reason why even those who criticize Freud continue to talk about him.

More recently, Norah Vincent (2006) spent 18 months masquerading as a man, and then wrote about her experiences in *Self-Made Man*. Ms. Vincent spent a substantial amount of time working to look and act like a man. She consulted a professional make-up artist (especially to help with her "beard"), a voice coach, and a personal trainer to help her build muscle mass in her arms and shoulders. She even went to a sex shop and purchased a prosthetic penis, just to help make sure that her appearance was as convincing as possible. Using the name Ned, she then traveled around the country, to five different states, and attempted to pass for a man in a variety of settings. She played on a men's bowling team, went to strip clubs with "other" men, spent time in a monastery, got a job as a salesman, and joined a men's group. One of the most interesting aspects of her masquerade involved dating. Curiously, it was not really difficult for her to consider dating women, because she happens to be a lesbian. But she was not prepared for how often she would be rejected when trying to meet women! Maybe that's why she wrote: "It was hard being a guy. Really hard." In fact, she found the entire experience quite disturbing.

As a woman, she had always been viewed as very masculine. But when pretending to be a man, she was seen as very effeminate. She felt that her masculinity was constantly being judged, both by men and women. And the constant pressure to be a “real man” was overwhelmingly stressful. As she concluded her book, talking about the camaraderie of the men on the bowling team, she observed that:

Making this removed comforting contact with men and feeling the relief it gave me as my life as a man went on was not a sign of having joined the overclass, for whom superiority is assumed and bucking up unnecessary. It was more like joining a union. It was the counterpart to and the refuge from my excruciating dates, which were often alienating and grating enough to make me wonder whether getting men and women together amicably on a permanent basis wasn’t at times like brokering Middle East peace.

I believe we are that different in agenda, in expression, in outlook, in nature, so much so that I can’t help almost believing, after having been Ned, that we live in parallel worlds, that there is at bottom really no such thing as that mystical unifying creature we call a human being, but only male human beings and female human beings, as separate as sects. (pgs. 281-282; Vincent, 2006)

As an indication of how popular this topic continues to be, shortly after Ms. Vincent published her book she was interviewed on the popular news/comedy show *The Colbert Report* on Comedy Central. I guess it’s important to keep smiling as we struggle through the many challenges of male/female relationships.

Freud’s perspectives on women have created a great deal of negativity toward him and his theory, particularly among women. But should we judge Freud so harshly? It was common in the society in which he lived to consider women as the “weaker sex.” In his practice, most of the patients he saw were female, so he needed his theory to explain why most of the people with psychological disorders were women (at least, that’s what he thought). Granted he had made fundamental errors by not realizing that men might be avoiding help for psychological problems because of the culture and by not recognizing that women might be suffering from oppression caused by men, but since there were no other theories to compare his own ideas to, it is easy to condemn him. However, those theorists who began to address the cultural issues, like Adler and Horney, had Freud’s theory for comparison. Horney in particular also had a growing body of research on anthropology and sociology to draw on. So as much as Adler and Horney may have disagreed with Freud, he still laid the foundation for their work and the work of many others.

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1.1.7: Psychoanalysis

Most psychologists today make a distinction that Freud seldom, if ever, made. We refer to all theoretical perspectives related to the views of Sigmund Freud as psychodynamic theories, reserving the term psychoanalysis for the therapeutic method developed by Freud. Freud simply referred to both his theories and his therapy as psychoanalysis. This may well have resulted from the fact that Freud began as a therapist, and only developed his theories in order to explain why certain approaches worked and others did not. It may also have something to do with the fact that Freud's personality theories came first, and so there was no need in his mind to distinguish his views from the work of others. Whatever the reason, for our purposes we will use the term psychoanalysis to refer to the therapeutic method developed by Freud, which was uniquely different from the techniques already in use by people such as Breuer and Charcot. I would also like to note that many of the references in this section cite the book co-authored by Freud and Breuer (1895/2004). However, the citations come from a portion of the book written by Freud alone, and in which he takes personal credit for the work. Therefore, we need to acknowledge that although the book is published as the work of both men, it contains mostly each man's individual work, and only the "Preliminary Statement" is co-authored by Freud and Breuer. This point is by no means a small one, because it was at this point in their careers that the two men went their separate ways.

As mentioned above, Freud came to believe that the use of hypnosis, which had been championed by Breuer and Charcot, was unable to get at the root causes of patient's neuroses. He also learned through experience that psychoanalysis could only be effective if he was able to go back into the early childhood of his patients and uncover the unconscious conflicts and repressions that led to their neurotic behaviors. In order to accomplish this goal, Freud relied primarily on **free association** and **dream analysis**. In the history of psychoanalysis, there have been those who believed that psychoanalysis officially began when Freud rejected hypnosis and introduced free association (Freud, 1914/1995). Free association is often used, of course, during the interpretation of dreams, so the two techniques are not mutually exclusive. With regard to the value of interpreting dreams, Freud wrote perhaps his most famous line: "...the interpretation of dreams is the *via regia* [royal road] to a knowledge of the unconscious element in our psychic life." (pg. 508; Freud, 1900/1995).

Free Association – Freud's Therapeutic Breakthrough

Free association grew out of a need that resulted from problems implementing Breuer's cathartic method. The first problem was that many patients could not be hypnotized. With the patients that Freud could not hypnotize, especially those who would not even allow him to try hypnotizing them, Freud tried a technique of pressing them to remember. This technique also came up short, and Freud recognized a need to work around the patient's resistance (which we will examine in more detail below). The first technique that Freud developed involved pressing his hand against his patient's forehead and asking them to say whatever thought, no matter how seemingly irrelevant, came first into their consciousness (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004). Freud himself described this technique as a trick, one that disconnects the patient's attention from his conscious searching and reflecting. However, trick or not, Freud found the technique to be indispensable. The thoughts that came to the forefront of consciousness, those believed to be easily accessible via the preconscious, were likely to be connected to the underlying associations responsible for the neurotic patient's symptoms. Freud used this technique of free association quite successfully. As early as 1892, he treated a patient known as Fräulein Elisabeth von R. by relying entirely on free association (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004).

Still, Freud did make some modifications in the technique. Two other methods used to begin the free association were to have the patient think of a number or a name at random. Of course, Freud did not believe that it was possible for anything in the mind to occur at random, and by continuing the association brought up by that first name or number, Freud could help his patient to arrive at the true unconscious associations that were the root of their problems (Freud, 1917/1966). He also used free association during the interpretation of dreams, and often found it helpful to examine which part of the dream the patient chose to begin making free associations (Freud, 1933/1965). Freud also considered psychoanalysis to be effective with children, but cautioned that a child's lack of psychological development limited their ability for free association. Other psychodynamic theorists worked more extensively with children, however, including Adler, Anna Freud, and Klein.

The Elements of Dream Analysis

For someone who considered dreams to be the royal road to the unconscious mind, it is no surprise that Freud's first book of his own was *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900/1995). The value of this work never diminished, and Freud devoted a chapter to dream interpretation in one of his last books: *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (Freud, 1938/1949). In the latter book, published only a year before Freud died, he wrote:

The only thing that can help us are states of conflict and uproar, when the contents of the unconscious id have a prospect of forcing their way into the ego and into consciousness and the ego puts itself once more on the defensive against this invasion. ...Now, our nightly sleep is precisely a state of this sort, and for that reason psychical activity during sleep, which we perceive as dreams, is our most favourable object of study. In that way, too, we avoid the familiar reproach that we base our constructions of normal mental life on pathological findings; for dreams are regular events in the life of a normal person... (pg. 38)

Freud described our recollection of a dream as a façade, a covering that hides the underlying process of the dream. Thus, a dream has both **manifest content** and **latent content**. The manifest content (or the dream-content) of a dream is what we actually remember when we wake up. The latent content (or the dream-thoughts), however, is the true underlying meaning of the dream, the unconscious material from the id desiring satisfaction. Freud described the process by which the latent content is transformed into the manifest content as the **dream-work** (Freud, 1900/1995). Studying the nature of the dream-work, the way in which the unconscious material from the id forces its way into the ego but is transformed by the ego's opposition to the impulse, allows us to understand what is known as **dream-distortion** (Freud, 1938/1949). The importance of dream-distortion becomes clear when we consider the purpose of dreams. Freud believed that all dreams represent our true desires. Therefore, all dreams can be viewed as wish fulfillment. Although some dreams can be very anxiety-provoking, and certainly do not seem to represent our wishes and desires, this is the result of the distortion. If we successfully analyze the dream and identify its latent content, then Freud believed we would recognize the true wish-fulfillment nature of even anxiety-provoking or frightening dreams (Freud, 1900/1995).

When we sleep, the ability of the ego to repress or otherwise redirect the unacceptable impulses of the id is paralyzed. The id, then, is afforded "a harmless amount of liberty" (Freud, 1938/1949). But the ego is still the seat of consciousness, and still exerts some influence over the expression of the id impulses. And so the dream is distorted, transformed into something less threatening to the ego, particularly into something not threatening enough to wake the person up. To summarize this situation, when we are asleep the ego is less able to restrain the id. Consequently, the impulses of the id intrude in the preconscious and then into the conscious mind. This provokes anxiety and threatens to wake us up. However, the dream transforms the id impulse into the fulfillment of a wish, and we are able to continue sleeping. As Freud described it:

We shall be taking every experience into account if we say that a dream is invariably an attempt to get rid of a disturbance of sleep by means of a wish-fulfillment, so that the dream is a guardian of sleep. (pg. 46; Freud, 1938/1949)

Does it seem reasonable to say that all dreams are wish fulfillment? Certainly some dreams clearly fulfill our wishes and desires, at least through fantasy. Such dreams do not require any analysis. Other dreams, however, seem to make no sense at all. The id and the unconscious mind are not logical at all, contradictory ideas easily coexist side by side, and Freud even referred to the unconscious mind as the "Realm of the Illogical" (pg. 43; Freud 1938/1949). As these latent impulses are transformed into manifest content, it can be very difficult to separate them and make sense of a given dream. The dream-work itself, the very process of distorting or transforming the latent content into the manifest content in order to disguise the meaning of our dreams, involves a variety of factors, including: **condensation**, **displacement**, the use of **symbolic representation**, and **secondary elaboration** (Freud, 1900/1995).

According to Freud, condensation refers to the tendency to create unity out of a variety of dream elements that we would keep separate if we were awake. So, a single element of the manifest content of a dream might represent a number of latent thoughts. Thus, the analysis of a dream could be much longer than the dream itself. Displacement is not unrelated to condensation according to Freud, and refers to the switching of libidinal energy from one object to another, such that the important object of a dream might seem inconsequential, and vice versa. In other words, the apparent focus of the dream is probably not the actual focus of the dream. This does not simply suggest that we might substitute one person for another in a dream, it also happens that we might represent various elements through symbols. Once again, these symbols are employed by dreams to disguise the representation of latent content. As important as Freud considered symbols to be in a dream, he did not support the idea that dream dictionaries can identify universal meanings of dream symbols. It is only through the associations relevant to a specific dreamer that we can make sense of a dream's symbolism (Freud, 1938/1949). Finally, as the dream is actually presented to the conscious mind, the ego ensures that the material is acceptable by performing what Freud termed the secondary elaboration. As with any perception, the ego fills in gaps and connections, but also misunderstands the true nature of the dream. As a result the secondary elaboration can offer little more than a smooth façade for the dream. Also, the secondary elaboration may only be partial, or even absent (Freud, 1933/1965). All of these processes together form the manifest content of the dream, resulting in something that might be difficult to understand, but which is within the reach of a determined psychoanalyst.

Discussion Question: Have you ever analyzed your own dreams? Were you able to discover any revelations after considering a dream in greater depth, even though it made no sense at first?

The Therapeutic Process

Initially, Freud began with a fundamental belief in the effectiveness of catharsis, the discharge of pent-up emotion that follows the recall and re-experiencing of traumatic memories (see Jarvis, 2004). If only a patient can recognize the unconscious association between an early traumatic event and their current symptoms, then the symptoms should be relieved. As Breuer and Freud noted in the introduction to their book:

For we found, at first to our great surprise, that the individual hysterical symptoms disappeared immediately and did not recur if we succeeded in wakening the memory of the precipitating event with complete clarity, arousing with it the accompanying affect, and if the patient then depicted the event in the greatest possible detail and put words to the affect. Remembering without affect almost always fails to be effective... (pg. 10; Freud and Breuer, 1895/2004).

One can see from this description, however, that the process of psychoanalysis is not easy. There must be a clear recognition of the initial traumatic event, in detail, with all of its original emotional impact, and the patient must then be willing to talk about the event in relation to their current problems.

As we have already seen, the first obstacle is resistance, the patient's reluctance to experience the anxiety associated with recovering repressed material. The more severe the symptoms, the more severe the resistance is likely to be. Even when a little trick is successful, such as pressing on the forehead to break the patient's concentration and allow free association, in serious cases the self remembers its intentions (which are often unconscious motives) and resumes its resistance (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004). Because of this challenge, Freud believed that the therapist must be patient. Resistance that has been constituted over a long period of time can only be resolved slowly, step by step. In addition to the intellectual role of the therapist, there is an important emotional role as well. In some cases, Freud found that only the personal influence of the doctor could successfully break down the patient's defense mechanisms.

A large part of the reason that psychoanalysis can be so difficult has to do with how the unconscious mind exists. Freud believed that memory of a traumatic event exists as a pathogenic nucleus within multiple layers of pathogenic psychical material of varying resistance. The outer layers may be easy to uncover, but as one progresses into the deeper layers, resistance grows steadily. Adding to the challenge, the associations between layers do not simply go deeper, they can travel at odd angles, in something of a zigzag fashion, or branch out in multiple ways (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004). Because multiple associations may exist between a patient's neurosis and the underlying traumatic event, it is critical to address all of the psychical material that comes to bear on the current condition of the patient. Even if the therapist rightly knows the basis for the patient's problems:

...there is no point at all in advancing directly to the nucleus of the pathogenic organization. Even if it were possible for us to guess this, the patient would not know what to do with the elucidation given to him and would not be altered by it psychically. (pg. 293; Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004)

As suggested above, a different kind of obstacle arises when the relationship between the doctor and the patient has been damaged somehow. Freud considered this to be a likely occurrence in serious cases of analysis. Freud described three ways in which the doctor/patient relationship can suffer. The first case involves the patient feeling estranged, neglected, undervalued, insulted, or if they have heard negative things about the doctor. Freud considered this problem to be fairly easily handled through good communication, although he noted that good communication can be difficult with hysterical patients. The second situation involves patients who fear that they will become too dependent on the therapist and that they will lose their independence. This can lead to new resistances. As an example, Freud described patients who complained of headaches when he pressed on their forehead, but really they were just creating a new hysterical symptom to mask their aversion to the belief that they were being manipulated or controlled. The final problem that commonly disturbs the relationship between the therapist and the patient is known as **transference** (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004). Transference occurs when the patient reacts as if the therapist were an important figure from the patient's childhood or past, and transfers onto the therapist feelings and reactions appropriate to that person from the past. Although transference can interfere with the therapeutic process, it also offers advantages. The power conferred on the therapist by transference affords him an opportunity to re-educate the patient, correcting the mistakes of the parents, and it leads patients to reveal more about themselves than they might have if they had not developed such a connection to the therapist (Freud, 1938/1949).

Following transference, it is also possible for **countertransference** to occur. Countertransference refers first to an unconscious influence of the patient on the therapist, after which the therapist directs their own emotional states back onto the patient. In Freud's circle of analysts their own psychoanalysis was conducted in large part to eliminate the influence of this distorting effect. Today,

there are some therapists who view countertransference as a useful means to gain a deeper perception about what is going on in their patient's mind (see Jarvis, 2004).

Is Psychoanalysis Effective?

The effectiveness of psychoanalysis as a treatment for psychological disorders has been a source of ongoing debate. In 2006, a select task force, established by the presidents of five major psychoanalytic organizations, published the Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual (PDM Task Force, 2006). Included within the PDM is a section on research, including meta-analytic studies on the effectiveness of psychoanalysis on patient populations in the United States (Westen et al., 2006), the United Kingdom (Fonagy, 2006), and Germany (Leichsenring, 2006). Each of these chapters emphasize the difficulty in empirically evaluating the effectiveness of psychotherapy, and even more so comparing the effectiveness of different psychotherapeutic approaches. Nonetheless, for a variety of psychological disorders, there is evidence supporting the efficacy of psychoanalytic treatments. Both Fonagy (2006) and Leichsenring (2006) identify another area of research that needs to be continued: there is not just one type of psychoanalysis. Thus, continued research on the efficacy of psychoanalytic treatments should address the relative efficacy of different styles of psychoanalytically based therapies.

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1.1.8: Religion and Spirituality

In the last section of this book, we will look at spiritual philosophies that provide positive guidelines for personal development and living one's life. Freud had rather strong feelings about religion, and simply put, he did not approve! Freud actually considered religion to be an obstacle to the further development of civilization, and of the "three powers" that oppose a scientific worldview (art, philosophy, and religion), "religion alone is to be taken seriously as an enemy" (Freud, 1933/1965). In his first and last books reviewing psychoanalysis Freud makes almost no mention of religion (Freud, 1917/1966, 1938/1949), a rather conspicuous absence. In between, however, he wrote two books thoroughly condemning religion and societies depending on it.

In *The Future of an Illusion* (Freud, 1927/1961), Freud describes the role that religion has played in establishing and maintaining inequitable civilizations. According to Freud, the primary purpose of civilization is the gathering of wealth and, then, its distribution. This distribution is almost always unfair, and leads to the establishment of a small group of wealthy elite and a much larger mass of lower classes. The challenge for the wealthy elite is to maintain this unfair distribution, without the unreasonable use of force. The use of force will ultimately fail, since the instinctual demands for pleasure by the masses (driven by their id impulses) will drive them to take whatever they want from each other and from the wealthy. And the masses have power in numbers! Religion has served civilization by providing a controlling force over these instinctual demands, incorporated directly into the psyche of each individual by means of the development of the superego. The problem, however, lies in the fact (according to Freud) that there is no God, it is all an illusion. Thus, in *Civilization and Its Discontent* (Freud, 1930/1961), Freud states that the "religions of mankind must be classed among the mass-delusions..." that are used to provide people with a certain degree of happiness and protection against suffering, in spite of the reality of an unfair and uncertain world.

In his last completed book, *Moses and Monotheism* (Freud, 1939/1967), Freud flatly rejects the entire basis for Judaism and Christianity. Based on archaeological evidence, Freud claims that Moses was not Jewish, but rather an Egyptian. Furthermore, he argues that the monotheistic religion that provides the basis for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (the Abrahamic religions) was a discredited Egyptian religion established by the pharaoh Amenhotep IV. When Amenhotep IV died, and Egyptians who still followed the traditional religion of Egypt came back into power, Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt so that he would have followers to whom he could teach the religion he hoped to maintain. Since Moses was a hero to the Jewish people, Freud claims that they rewrote the story to say that Moses was Jewish and that their one true God had been revealed to them long before they entered Egypt (Freud, 1939/1967).

If religion is nothing more than an illusion, where does it come from, and what is the danger of it? According to Freud, the development of religion is analogous to the development of each individual. Basically, God is symbolic of our relationship with our own father. In his *New Introductory Lectures...* (Freud, 1933/1965), Freud neatly lays out this relationship. Religion serves to provide us with an understanding of the origins of the universe and life, it offers us hope for protection and ultimate happiness, and it lays down moral guidelines for living our lives. Similarly, our fathers give each of us life, they protect us when we are young, and they teach the rules and morality of our culture. Although the establishment of religions by our primitive ancestors may be quite understandable, Freud used rather harsh language when referring to religion. He wrote that "...our wretched, ignorant and downtrodden ancestors..." "...were far more ignorant than we are..." (Freud, 1927/1961). In his opinion, ancient religious books are the product of "fraud" from a time when "man's ignorance was very great..." and he includes the Bible and the Koran in that category (Freud, 1933/1965). He considered religion to be the antithesis of science and art, the two highest achievements of man (Freud, 1930/1961). Even when addressing more modern times, he compares the political oppression by the Russian Bolsheviks, with its prohibition of thought (punishable by death), as "just as ruthless as was that of religion in the past...doubts of its correctness are punished in the same way as heresy was once punished by the Catholic Church" (Freud, 1933/1965). And in anticipation of his views being challenged, Freud wrote that his considerations "will impress only that minority of readers familiar with analytical reasoning and able to appreciate its conclusions" (Freud, 1939/1967). The danger in all of this, according to Freud, is what might happen if people become aware of this illusion and fraud. If people become aware that there is no God, if they discover that no one else believes, then there may be a violent reaction as a result of the inherent hostility toward civilization by the masses (Freud, 1927/1961). Accordingly:

...either these dangerous masses must be held down most severely and kept most carefully away from any chance of intellectual awakening, or else the relationship between civilization and religion must undergo a fundamental revision. (pg. 39; Freud, 1927/1961)

And yet, in spite of such harsh condemnation of religion, Freud was at times fascinated by individuals who expressed deep spiritual experiences. While in college, Freud was profoundly impressed by the religious philosopher Franz Brentano, a former Catholic

priest. Freud wrote to a friend that he could not refute any of Brentano's theistic arguments, and he referred to Brentano as a "remarkable man" (cited in Nicholi, 2002). Much later in life, Freud discussed an alternative to his earlier analysis of the basis for religion. He had sent a copy of *The Future of an Illusion* to a friend who was well versed in traditional Yoga. This friend, named Romain Rolland, described for Freud an "oceanic" feeling, a sense of eternity and limitlessness. Freud was unable to discover such feelings within himself, and expressed a general dissatisfaction with scientific investigations of such phenomena. Today, however, neuroscientists are using real-time brain imaging techniques, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), to study the alterations in brain activity unique to meditative states and, in particular, positive emotions (e.g., see Barinaga, 2003; Goleman, 1988, 2003; Mathew, 2001). Although Freud obviously had no knowledge that such studies would someday be possible, he did acknowledge that experiences like the "oceanic" feeling might form the basis for religious sentiments in the human species (Freud, 1930/1961). Yet another friend encouraged Freud to practice Yoga, particularly meditation, to experience these altered states of mind for himself. It is unclear whether Freud ever attempted to meditate, but he does make mention of his friend's belief that meditation may reveal a primordial state of mind, perhaps even deeper than that of the id and the unconscious with which Freud had occupied his career (Freud, 1930/1961). Freud even went so far as to suggest that if we could somehow achieve a complete reduction, an extinction, of the tension between our instinctual needs and the constraints imposed by reality and the superego that we might achieve "nirvana" (Freud, 1938/1949).

How might we reconcile the seeming contradiction between Freud's harsh attitude toward religion with his apparent fascination with mystical spirituality and deeply spiritual individuals? Freud believed that religion had failed society. Religion has ruled human civilization for thousands of years, and yet, "We see that an appallingly large number of people are dissatisfied with civilization and unhappy in it...In every age immorality has found no less support in religion than morality has..." (Freud, 1927/1961). Also, it is undeniable that death awaits each of us, and Freud was definitely concerned with death. In 1909 Freud met William James (Freud, 1952). James asked Freud to carry the bag James had with him and to walk on; James said he would catch up after dealing with an attack of angina pectoris. James died of heart disease a year later. Freud wrote that "I have always wished that I might be as fearless as he was in the face of approaching death." Freud was also concerned about how his own death might affect his mother, who lived to a ripe old age. Martin Freud noted that "Grandmother Amalia...looked for some time as if she would live forever, and my father was terrified by the thought that she might survive him and, in consequence, have to be told of his death." (M. Freud, 1983). Perhaps we should not be surprised that someone who was so thoughtful regarding death, someone who proposed a death instinct, might be inclined to have some concern regarding what happens after one's life comes to an end.

As gloomy as Freud's perspective may seem at first, he remained hopeful regarding the future of humanity. He considered religion to have been just one step in the development of our species, and that science had reached a point where it could move us ahead another step. When addressing the belief of many people that we were created in the image and likeness of God, a god who must also have created evil and the Devil (other theologians have come to a different conclusion on this point; see, for example, *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis [1952]), Freud suggested that we bow to the deeply moral nature of mankind, which has overcome this difficulty (Freud, 1930/1961). He acknowledged the positive role that religion has played in redirecting and transforming some of our sexual impulses into impulses experienced as love. Indeed, the purpose of civilization itself is to serve Eros, the life instinct, by combining individuals into "families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind" (Freud, 1930/1961). But the natural aggressive instinct, the death instinct manifested as the hostility of the individual for civilization, opposes the establishment of civilizations. Thus, the meaning of the evolution of civilizations becomes clear:

It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of, and the evolution of civilization may therefore be simply described as the struggle for life of the human species. And it is this battle of the giants that our nurse-maids try to appease with their lullaby about Heaven. (Freud, 1930/1961)

Discussion Question: Freud believed that religion has failed to resolve the difficulties that many people face, that it has outlived its usefulness, and that God is only an illusion anyway. Does this fit with your view of the world in which we live?

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1.1.9: Personality Theory in Real Life

The Things We Do Are Not Really Surprising!

It isn't difficult to apply Freud's theories to everyday life. Only a few years after publishing his landmark book on dream analysis, Freud published *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1904/1995). One year later, he published *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905/1995). So Freud clearly intended his theory to address all aspects of life, and he was well aware that jokes and laughter are as much a part of life as any of the darker aspects of psychoanalysis (with concepts such as demanding id impulses and the death instinct).

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the most famous example of a simple, everyday psychopathology is the famous Freudian slip. A very humorous example of a Freudian slip can be found on the Wikipedia website (<http://en.Wikipedia.org>): "Excuse me, but I'm having doubts about your theories, Dr. Fraud." There are, of course, a variety of other mistakes we commonly make when we talk. We often forget names, words, the order of phrases and sayings, and these errors can carry over into reading and writing as well as speaking. Of course, Freud believed that these mistakes are neither random nor just the result of forgetfulness. Rather, they represent psychological processes leading to the expression of one's real feelings and beliefs. An interesting example that often comes to mind is a quote by former Vice-President of the United States Dan Quayle. The Honorable Mr. Quayle intended to quote the slogan of the United Negro College Fund: A mind is a terrible thing to waste. Instead, he said "What a waste it is to lose one's mind." Since "losing one's mind" is slang for becoming mentally ill, it might be argued by some that the vice-president had revealed a negative attitude toward minority groups. We should always be very careful, of course, to avoid analyzing situations with only the bare minimum of information. Without the implication of the slang meaning of "losing one's mind" and some alleged unconscious intentions, Vice-President Quayle's statement seems like nothing more than a simple mistake. Haven't we all made mistakes like this that were very embarrassing at the time? I don't know if it's good or bad, but Vice-President Quayle made a variety of other infamous comments that can easily be found on the Internet, suggesting that his only issue was a penchant for making mistakes in ordinary speech. However, people seem to find such mistakes quite interesting. An Internet search for embarrassing quotes will locate a wide variety of examples like the one above, but they are not always attributed to the same person. Some of the same embarrassing quotes have been attributed to whoever happens to be the current political target of the person posting the webpage. So obviously a lot of people enjoy the embarrassment of others, but be careful about attributing any quote you locate on a random webpage.

Of course, any time a famous person like Vice-President Quayle makes that big a mistake, the late-night comedians are all over it! And that brings us to *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (Freud, 1905/1995). In this early book, Freud discussed jokes and witticisms in great detail. He actually considered wit-work, the process of forming a joke or witty remark, as being essentially the same thing as dream-work. Thus, the examination of how an individual uses humor on a daily basis might reveal a great deal about their personality. The following is one of the jokes Freud included in his book for analysis. It takes a little thought, since it is in a category that Freud referred to as sophisticated faulty thinking (Freud described over 20 types of joke):

A gentleman entered a shop and ordered a fancy cake, which, however, he soon returned, asking for some liqueur in its stead. He drank the liqueur, and was about to leave without paying for it. The shopkeeper held him back. "What do you want of me?" he asked. "Please pay for the liqueur," said the shopkeeper. "But I have given you the fancy cake for it." "Yes, but you have not paid for that either." "Well, neither have I eaten it." (pg. 634)

The next time you think of a really good joke or something really funny to say, or the next time you hear a joke that really makes you laugh, take a minute or two to consider what that laughter might be saying about who you really are.

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1.1.S: A Final Note and Chapter Summary

Freud was the father of modern psychology.

☐ True

☐ False

☒ Check

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2.1.1: Chapter Introduction

Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of Existentialism...For we mean that man first exists, that is, that man first of all is the being who hurls himself toward a future and who is conscious of imagining himself as being in the future...Thus, Existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of what he is and to make the full responsibility of his existence rest on him. (pg. 456; Jean-Paul Sartre, 1947/1996)

Existential psychology is the area within psychology most closely linked to the field of philosophy. Curiously, this provides one of the most common complaints against existential psychology. Many historians identify the establishment of Wilhelm Wundt's experimental laboratory in Germany in 1879 as the official date of the founding of psychology. Sigmund Freud, with his strong background in biomedical research, also sought to bring scientific methodology to the study of the mind and mental processes, including psychological disorders and psychotherapy. Shortly thereafter, Americans such as Edward Thorndike and John Watson were establishing behaviorism, and its rigorous methodology, as the most influential field in American psychology. So, as existential psychology arose in the 1940s and 1950s it was viewed as something of a throwback to an earlier time when psychology was not distinguished from philosophy (Lundin, 1979).

However, as with those who identify themselves as humanistic psychologists, existential psychologists are deeply concerned with individuals and the conditions of each unique human life. The detachment that seems so essential to experimental psychologists is unacceptable to existential psychologists. The difference can easily be seen in the titles of two influential books written by the leading existential psychologists: *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl (1946/1992) and *Man's Search for Himself* by Rollo May (1953). Existential psychology differs significantly from humanistic psychology, however, in focusing on present existence and the fear, anguish, and sorrow that are so often associated with the circumstances of our lives (Lundin, 1979).

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2.1.2: Understanding the Philosophy of Existentialism



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2.1.3: Viktor Frankl and Logotherapy

Viktor Frankl (1905-1997) was truly an extraordinary man. His first paper was submitted for publication by Sigmund Freud; his second paper was published at the urging of Alfred Adler. Gordon Allport was instrumental in getting Frankl's book *Man's Search for Meaning* (Frankl, 1946/1992) published in English, a book that went on to be recognized by the Library of Congress as one of the ten most influential books in America. He lectured around the world, and received some thirty honorary doctoral degrees in addition to the medical degree and the Ph.D. he had earned as a student. He was invited to a private audience with Pope Paul VI, even though Frankl was Jewish. All of this was accomplished in spite of, and partly because of, the fact that he spent several years in Nazi concentration camps during World War II, camps where his parents, brother, wife, and millions of other Jews died.

A Brief Biography of Viktor Frankl

Viktor Frankl was born in Vienna, Austria on March 26, 1905. Although his father had been forced to drop out of medical school for financial reasons, Gabriel Frankl held a series of positions with the Austrian government, working primarily with the department of child protection and youth welfare. He instilled in his son the importance of being intensely rational and having a firm sense of social justice, and Frankl became something of a perfectionist. Frankl described his mother Elsa as a kindhearted and deeply pious woman, but during his childhood she often described him as a pest, and she even changed the words of Frankl's favorite childhood lullaby to include calling him a pest. This may have been due to the fact that Frankl was often asking questions, so much so that a family friend nicknamed him "The Thinker" (Frankl, 1995/2000). From his mother, Frankl inherited a deep emotionality. One aspect of this emotionality involved a deep attachment to his childhood home, and he often felt homesick as his responsibilities kept him away. And those responsibilities began at an early age (Frankl, 1995/2000; Pattakos, 2004).

Even in high school Frankl was developing a keen interest in existential philosophy and psychology. At the age of 16 he delivered a public lecture "On the Meaning of Life" and at 18 he wrote his graduation essay "On the Psychology of Philosophical Thought." Throughout his high school years he maintained a correspondence with Sigmund Freud (letters that were later destroyed by the Gestapo when Frankl was deported to his first concentration camp). When Frankl was just 19, Freud submitted one of Frankl's papers for publication in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, afterward hoping that Frankl would agree and give his belated consent. Despite having impressed Freud, Frankl himself was already impressed by Alfred Adler. Frankl became active in Adler's individual psychology group, and as he began medical school he was urged by Adler to publish a paper in the *International Journal of Individual Psychology*. It is hard to imagine that many people could have come into the favor of both Freud and Adler by such a young age, even before having begun medical school or a career in psychiatry. Despite Frankl's young age and somewhat limited experience, the paper published by Adler was dealing with difficult material, specifically the "border area that lies between psychotherapy and philosophy, with special attention to the problems of meanings and values in psychology" (Frankl, 1995/2000). Eventually, however, Frankl fell out of favor with Adler. Frankl had been impressed with two men, Allers and Schwarz, whose views were at odds with Adler. On the evening when Allers and Schwarz announced to the society that they could not agree with Adler, Adler challenged Frankl and a friend to speak up. Frankl chose to do so, and he defended Allers and Schwarz, believing that a middle ground could be found. Adler never spoke to Frankl again, even when Frankl said hello in the local coffee shop. For a few months Adler had other people suggest to Frankl that he should quit the society. When Frankl did not, he was expelled by Adler (Frankl, 1995/2000; Pattakos, 2004).

Frankl proceeded to develop his own practice and his own school of psychotherapy, known as **logotherapy** (the therapy of meaning, as in finding meaning in one's life). As early as 1929, Frankl had begun to recognize three possible ways to find meaning in life: a deed we do or a work we create; a meaningful human encounter, particularly one involving **love**; and choosing one's attitude in the face of unavoidable suffering. Logotherapy eventually became known as the third school of Viennese psychotherapy, after Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology. During the 1930s Frankl did much of his work with suicidal patients and teenagers. He had extensive talks with Wilhelm Reich in Berlin, who was also involved in youth counseling by that time. As the 1930s came to an end, and Austria had been taken over by the Nazis, Frankl sought a visa to emigrate to the United States, which was eventually granted. However, Frankl's parents could not get a visa, so he chose to remain in Austria with them. He also began work on his first book, eventually published in English under the title *The Doctor and the Soul* (Frankl, 1946/1986), which provided the foundation for logotherapy. He fell in love with Tilly Grosser, and they were married in 1941, the last legal Jewish marriage in Vienna under the Nazis.

Shortly thereafter, the realities of Nazi Germany overcame what little privilege Frankl had enjoyed as a doctor at a major hospital. Since it was illegal for Jews to have children, Tilly Frankl was forced to abort their first child. Frankl later dedicated *The Unheard Cry for Meaning* "To Harry or Marion an unborn child" (Frankl, 1978). Then the entire Frankl family, except for his sister who had

gone to Australia, was deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp (the same camp from which Anna Freud cared for orphans after the war). As they marched into the camp with hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other prisoners, his father tried to calm those who panicked by saying again and again: “Be of good cheer, for God is near.” Frankl’s parents, his only brother, and his wife Tilly died in the concentration camps. Most tragically, Frankl believed that his wife died after the war, but before the liberating Allied forces could care for all of the many, many suffering people (Frankl, 1995/2000).

When Frankl was deported, he tried to hide and save his only copy of *The Doctor and the Soul* by sewing it into the lining of his coat. However, he was forced to trade his good coat for an old one, and the manuscript was lost. While imprisoned, he managed to obtain a few scraps of paper on which to make notes. Those notes later helped him to recreate his book, and that goal gave such meaning to his life that he considered it an important factor in his will to survive the horrors of the concentration camps. It would be difficult to adequately describe the conditions of the concentration camps, or how they affected the minds of those imprisoned, especially since the effects were quite varied. Frankl describes those conditions in *Man’s Search for Meaning*. The book is rather short, but its contents are deep beyond comprehension. Frankl himself, however, might take exception to referring to his book as “deep.” Depth psychology was a term used for psychodynamically-oriented psychology. In 1938 Frankl coined the term “**height psychology**” in order to supplement, but not replace, depth psychology (Frankl, 1978).

After the war, Frankl’s life was nothing less than amazing. He returned to his home city of Vienna, married Eleonore Katharina, née Schwindt, and raised a daughter named Gabriele, whose husband and the Frankl’s grandchildren all lived in Vienna. He lectured around the world, received many honors, wrote numerous books, all while continuing to practice psychiatry and teach at the University of Vienna, Harvard, and elsewhere. He had a great interest in humor and in cartooning. Throughout his life, Frankl steadfastly refused to acknowledge the validity of collective guilt toward the German people. When asked repeatedly how he could return to Vienna, after all that happened to him and his family, Frankl replied:

...I answered with a counter-question: “Who did what to me?” There had been a Catholic baroness who risked her life by hiding my cousin for years in her apartment. There had been a Socialist attorney (Bruno Pitterman, later vice chancellor of Austria), who knew me only casually and for whom I had never done anything; and it was he who smuggled some food to me whenever he could. For what reason, then, should I turn my back on Vienna? (pp. 101-102; Frankl, 1995/2000)

Viktor Frankl died peacefully on September 2, 1997. He was 92 years old. During his life, his work influenced many people, from the ordinary to the famous and influential. “Viktor Frankl, to be sure, leaves a profound legacy” (pg. 24; Pattakos, 2004).

The Theoretical Basis for Logotherapy

While Frankl was in medical school, he considered specializing in dermatology or obstetrics. A fellow student who was aware of Frankl’s wide-ranging interests, however, introduced Frankl to the works of Kierkegaard. This friend had been reminded of Kierkegaard’s emphasis on living an authentic life, and he urged Frankl to pursue his interest in psychiatry. While still in medical school Frankl delivered a lecture to the Academic Society for Medical Psychology, of which Frankl was the founding vice-president, and used the term logotherapy for the first time (a few years later he first used the alternative term existential analysis; Frankl, 1995/2000). The word logos is Greek for “meaning,” and this third Viennese school of psychotherapy focuses on the meaning of human existence and man’s search for such a meaning. Logotherapy, therefore, focuses on man’s **will-to-meaning**, in contrast to Freud’s **will-to-pleasure** (the drive to satisfy the desires of the id, the pleasure principle) or Adler’s **will-to-power** (the drive to overcome inferiority and attain superiority; adopted from Nietzsche) (Frankl, 1946/1986, 1946/1992).

The will-to-meaning is, according to Frankl, the primary source of one’s motivation in life. It is not a secondary rationalization of the instinctual drives, and meaning and values are not simply defense mechanisms. As Frankl eloquently points out:

...as for myself, I would not be willing to live merely for the sake of my “defense mechanisms,” nor would I be ready to die merely for the sake of my “reaction formations.” Man, however, is able to live and even to die for the sake of his ideals and values! (pg. 105; Frankl, 1946/1992)

Unfortunately, one’s search for meaning can be frustrated. This **existential frustration** can lead to what Frankl identified as a **noogenic neurosis** (a neurosis of the mind or, in other words, the specifically human dimension). Frankl suggested that when neuroses arise from an individual’s inability to find meaning in their life, what they need is logotherapy, not psychotherapy. More specifically, they need help to find some meaning in their life, some reason to be. When reading Frankl’s examples of how he helps such people, and Frankl offers many of these examples in his writings, it seems so simple. But it must be remembered that it takes a great deal of experience, knowledge, and maturity, as well as an ability to put oneself in another’s shoes, in order to creatively think of how another person can find meaning in their life. It would be safe to say that many of us find it difficult to find meaning in our own lives, and research has indeed shown that the will-to-meaning is a significant concern throughout the world (Frankl,

1946/1992). In order to make sense of this problem, Frankl has suggested that we should not ask what we expect from life, but rather, we should understand that life expects something from us:

A colleague, an aged general practitioner, turned to me because he could not come to terms with the loss of his wife, who had died two years before. His marriage had been very happy, and he was now extremely depressed. I asked him quite simply: “Tell me what would have happened if you had died first and your wife had survived you?” “That would have been terrible,” he said. “How my wife would have suffered?” “Well, you see,” I answered, “your wife has been spared that, and it was you who spared her, though of course you must now pay by surviving and mourning her.” In that very moment his mourning had been given a meaning - the meaning of a sacrifice. (pg. xx; Frankl, 1946/1986)

The latter point brings us back to Frankl’s discussion of how one can find meaning in life: through creating a work or doing a deed; by experiencing something or encountering someone, particularly when love is involved; or by choosing one’s attitude toward unavoidable suffering. Those of us who have lost someone dear know how easily it leads to deep suffering. Frankl had already written the first version of *The Doctor and the Soul* when he entered the Theresienstadt concentration camp, so his views on how one should choose their attitude toward unavoidable suffering were put to a test that no research protocol could ever hope to achieve! His observations form the basis for much of *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Both his observations of others and his own reactions in this unimaginably horrible and tragic situation are quite fascinating:

...as we stumbled on for miles, slipping on icy spots, supporting each other time and again, dragging one another up and onward, nothing was said, but we both knew: each of was thinking his wife...my mind clung to my wife’s image...Real or not, her look was then more luminous than the sun...A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth - that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: *The salvation of man is through love and in love.* (pp. 48-49; Frankl, 1946/1992)

...One evening, when we were already resting on the floor of our hut, dead tired, soup bowls in hand, a fellow prisoner rushed in and asked us to run out to the assembly grounds and see the wonderful sunset. Standing outside we saw sinister clouds glowing in the west and the whole sky alive with clouds of ever-changing shapes and colors, from steel blue to blood red...Then, after minutes of moving silence, one prisoner said to another, “How beautiful the world *could* be!” (pg. 51; Frankl, 1946/1992)

...The experiences of camp life show that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples, often of a heroic nature, which proved that apathy could be overcome, irritability suppressed. Man *can* preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress.

We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way. (pp. 74-75; Frankl, 1946/1992)

Discussion Question: Frankl considered the most important aspect of survival to be the ability to find meaning in one’s life. Have you found meaning in your life? Are there goals you have that you believe might add meaning to your life? Do you know anyone personally whose life seems to be filled with meaning, and if so, how does it appear to affect them?

Logotherapy as a Technique

Unfortunately, as noted by Frankl, not everyone can successfully accomplish the will-to-meaning. Those who rapidly declined toward death itself had lost the ability to have faith in the future; they could not identify any goal that provided meaning for their future. Such individuals exist in what Frankl called an existential vacuum. We have no instincts that tell us what we have to do, fewer and fewer traditions that tell us what we should do, and we often don’t even know what we want to do. Therein lies the need for logotherapy. As a technique, logotherapy relies primarily on **paradoxical intention** and **dereflection** (Frankl, 1946/1986, 1946/1992). Paradoxical intention is based on a simple trap in which neurotic individuals often find themselves. When a person thinks about or approaches a situation that provokes a neurotic symptom, such as fear, the person experiences **anticipatory anxiety**. This anticipatory anxiety takes the form of the symptom, which reinforces their anxiety. And so on... In order to help people break out of this negative cycle, Frankl recommends having them focus intently on the very thing that evokes their symptoms, even trying to exhibit their symptoms more severely than ever before! As a result, the patient is able to separate themselves from their own neurosis, and eventually the neurosis loses its potency.

Similar to anticipatory anxiety, people often experience a compulsive inclination to observe themselves, resulting in hyper-reflection. For example, people who suffer from insomnia focus on their efforts to sleep, or people who cannot enjoy a sexual relationship often focus on their physical, sexual responses. Because of this intense focus on sleep, or having an orgasm, these very things are unattainable. In dereflection, patients are taught not to pay attention to what they desire. A person who cannot sleep might read in bed, they will eventually fall asleep. A person who cannot enjoy intimate sexuality could focus on their partner, and as a result they should experience satisfaction that they did not expect. In essence, whereas paradoxical intention teaches the patient to ridicule their symptoms, dereflection teaches the patient to ignore his or her symptoms (Frankl, 1946/1986).

Discussion Question: Logotherapy relies on paradoxical intention and dereflection to break the anticipatory anxiety that often leads to failure (and then, more anxiety). Are there situations where you find yourself getting anxious or nervous even before the situation begins? What steps, if any, have you taken to break out of that pattern?

The Search for Ultimate Meaning

Kierkegaard believed that man could never truly be in contact with the infinite and absolute God. Similarly, Frankl talked about a **super-meaning** to life, something that goes far deeper than logic. When Frankl told his daughter that the *good* Lord had cured her measles, his daughter reminded him that the good Lord had given her the measles in the first place. Since children may not benefit from the challenges of suffering as adults might, and even adults find it difficult to find meaning in truly horrible situations like the concentration camps of Nazi Germany or the gulags of the former Soviet Union, the meaning of life in the greater context of human societies is often not readily apparent. But as Frankl says:

This ultimate meaning necessarily exceeds and surpasses the finite intellectual capacities of man; in logotherapy, we speak in this context of a super-meaning. What is demanded of man is not, as some existential philosophers teach, to endure the meaninglessness of life, but rather to bear his incapacity to grasp its unconditional meaningfulness in rational terms. *Logos* is deeper than logic. (pg. 122; Frankl, 1946/1992)

In discussing the value of logotherapy, Frankl offered critiques of other popular fields in psychology and psychiatry. His most serious critique was of the deterministic nature of psychoanalysis. Frankl fervently believed in an individual's freedom to transcend their self and choose to make the best of any situation. And he had plenty of experience to back up his opinion: "...I am a survivor of four camps - concentration camps, that is - and as such I also bear witness to the unexpected extent to which man is capable of defying and braving even the worst conditions conceivable" (pg. 47; Frankl, 1978). He did not, however, reject determinism entirely. Instead, he attributed determinism to the psychological dimension, whereas freedom exists within the noölogical dimension. He acknowledged Freud and Adler for teaching us to "unmask the neurotic." As for behaviorism, Frankl acknowledged that it helped to "demythologize" neurosis, by pointing out that not every psychological problem is due to unconscious forces from early childhood, and he included Pavlov, Watson, and Skinner as great pioneers. Still, both psychoanalysis and behaviorism ignore the essential humanness of the individual.

Despite his emphasis on the individual human, Frankl did not consider logotherapy as belonging within humanistic psychology (or at least not within what he called pseudo-humanism; Frankl, 1978). He believed that humanistic psychology focused so much on the humanity of individuals, that they did not quite appreciate the uniqueness of each person. It is not enough to merely encounter another person. In order to be moved on the personal level there must be an element of love (love for another person, if not a more intimate and personal love as for a spouse or a child). As we will see below, Rollo May also considered love to be of great importance to our lives. The emphasis that Frankl placed on love may have something to do with his deep spirituality. Frankl believed in a spiritual unconscious, separate from the instinctual unconscious described by Freud (Frankl, 1948/2000). In order for an individual to experience an authentic existence, they must determine whether a given phenomenon (thoughts, feelings, impulses, etc.) is instinctual or spiritual, and then freely choose how to behave or respond. Frankl returned to Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, living according to the understanding that one is connected to Being. Although this concept may seem reminiscent of Jung's collective unconscious, nothing could be further from the truth:

...It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that not only is the unconscious neither divine nor omniscient, but above all man's unconscious relation to God is profoundly personal. The "unconscious God" must not be mistaken as an impersonal force operant in man. This understanding was the great mistake to which C. G. Jung fell prey. Jung must be credited with having discovered distinctly religious elements within the unconscious. Yet he misplaced this unconscious religiousness of man, failing to locate the unconscious God in the personal and existential region. Instead, he allotted it to the region of drives and instincts, where unconscious religiousness no longer remained a matter of choice and decision. According to Jung, something within me is

religious, but it is not I who then is religious; something within me drives me to God, but it is not I who makes the choice and takes the responsibility. (pg. 70; Frankl, 1948/2000)

According to Frankl, the most human of all human phenomena is the will-to-meaning. Religion, or spirituality, seeks a **will-to-ultimate-meaning**. Once again, Frankl believed that Freudian psychoanalysis and Adlerian individual psychology had failed to sufficiently credit the self-transcendent quality of individuals who live authentic lives. It is in the study of authentic lives that “height psychology,” as Frankl called it, can address the higher aspirations of the human psyche. In other words, beyond seeking pleasure and/or power, there is man’s search for meaning (Frankl, 1948/2000).

Discussion Question: Frankl was a very spiritual man. He talked about super-meaning and a will-to-ultimate-meaning. Are you a spiritual and/or religious person? If yes, does your faith help to give meaning to your life?

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2.1.4: Rollo May and Existential Psychology

Rollo May (1909-1994) introduced existentialism to American psychologists, and has remained the best known proponent of this approach in America. Trained in a fairly traditional format as a psychoanalyst, May considered the detachment with which psychoanalysts approached their patients as a violation of social ethics. For example, if a psychoanalyst helps a patient to be the best they can be, and the person happens to earn their living in an unseemly or criminal way, it hardly seems proper (Stagner, 1988). On the other hand, who is to decide which values should be preferred in a particular society? In the pursuit of freedom, May suggested that sometimes individuals might reasonably oppose the standards or morality of their society. Politics, a wonderful topic for lively debates, is dependent on opposing viewpoints. Only when an individual lives an authentic life, however, should their opinion be considered valid, and existential psychology seeks to help individuals live authentic lives.

A Brief Biography of Rollo May

Rollo Reese May was born on April 21, 1909, in Ohio, and grew up in Marine City, Michigan. He attended Oberlin College in Ohio, graduating in 1930. Having always been interested in art and artistic creativity, he joined with a small group of artists and traveled to Europe, where they studied the local art of Poland. In order to remain in Europe, May took a teaching position with the American College at Salonika in Greece. When not teaching, he traveled widely throughout Greece, Poland, Romania, and Turkey. He attended the summer school taught by Alfred Adler. Deeply impressed by Adler (as Frankl had been), he nonetheless considered Adler's theories overly simplistic and too general. This may well have been due to his awakening awareness of the tragic side of human life, keeping in mind that much of Europe suffered greatly during the depression between World War I and World War II (Reeves, 1977).

Upon returning to the United States, May worked as a student advisor and the editor of a student magazine at Michigan State University. In 1936, he enrolled at Union Theological Seminary in New York, with the intention of asking, and most likely hoping to find answers to, the ultimate questions about human life. Despite having no particular desire to become a minister, he did serve in a parish in Montclair, New Jersey for a while. While at the seminary, he became a lifelong friend of Paul Tillich, a well-known existential theologian. Tillich, whose classes May regularly attended, introduced May to the works of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. May also met Kurt Goldstein during this time, and became acquainted with Goldstein's theories of self-actualization and anxiety as a reaction by organisms to catastrophic events. Regarding his time as a minister, May reflected that the only events which seemed to include an element of reality were the funerals (Reeves, 1977).

Shortly after graduating from the seminary, May began writing books on counseling and creative living. He worked as a counselor at the College of the City of New York, and trained as a psychoanalyst at the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Psychology in New York. His time at the training institute overlapped with Harry Stack Sullivan being the president of the William Alanson White Foundation, and Erich Fromm as a fellow associate. In 1946, May began a private practice in psychoanalysis, in 1948 he became a faculty member at the institute, and in 1949 he received the first Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Columbia University. His doctoral dissertation was published as *The Meaning of Anxiety* (May, 1950), a book that heavily cites the work of Freud and Kierkegaard on anxiety, as well as Fromm, Horney, and Tillich (May, 1950; Reeves, 1977).

Similar to Viktor Frankl, May's life had taken a dramatic turn during this time, an uncontrollable event that threatened his life: May contracted tuberculosis. At the time, there were no effective treatments for this contagious disease, many people died from it, and like many others May had to spend several years at a sanitarium (Saranac Sanitarium in upstate New York). It was during his time in the sanitarium that May theorized about anxiety and came to one of the most important conclusions in his career. He determined that although Freud had done a masterful job of characterizing the effects of anxiety on the individual, it was Kierkegaard who had truly identified what anxiety is: the threat of becoming nothing. From this point on May could clearly be identified as an existential psychologist. He collaborated with Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Gordon Allport to present a symposium on existential psychology, in conjunction with the 1959 annual convention of American Psychological Association, which led to the publication of a book on the subject (Reeves, 1977).

As May's career continued, he became a supervisory and training analyst at the William Alanson White Institute, and an adjunct professor of psychology in the graduate school at New York University. He gave a series of radio talks on existential psychology on a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation show, he served as a visiting professor at Harvard and Princeton, and he continued writing. His later books include works on dreams, symbolism, religion, and love. He eventually settled in California, where he died in 1994.

Anxiety

May considered **anxiety** to be the underlying cause of nearly every crisis, whether domestic, professional, economic, or political. He described the world we live in as an age of anxiety. Even though May published *The Meaning of Anxiety* in 1950, it is safe to say that his concerns are even more relevant today, particularly with the advent of the depersonalization of our world due to the computer age (Reeves, 1977). May considered a wide range of theories on anxiety, including philosophers, neurologists (Kurt Goldstein), and the major psychodynamic theorists (including Freud, Adler, Jung, Horney, Sullivan, and Fromm). He came to the conclusion that Freud had done the best job of explaining anxiety, but it was Kierkegaard who best understood anxiety. May was particularly impressed by Kierkegaard's idea that anxiety must be understood in the context of an orientation toward freedom. Freedom is the goal of personality development, and although this freedom brings with it anxiety, it is through facing this anxiety that the possibility of freedom arises (May, 1950). In praise of Kierkegaard, May wrote:

...Kierkegaard is proclaiming that "self-strength" develops out of the individual's successful confronting of anxiety-creating experiences; this is the way one becomes educated to maturity as a self. What is amazing in Kierkegaard is that despite his lack of the tools for interpreting unconscious material - which tools have been available in their most complete form only since Freud - he so keenly and profoundly anticipated modern psychoanalytic insight into anxiety; and that at the same time he placed these insights in the broad context of a poetic and philosophical understanding of human experience. (pg. 45; May, 1950)

In defining anxiety, May distinguished between anxiety and fear, and between **normal anxiety** and **neurotic anxiety**. According to May, "anxiety is the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality" (pg. 191; May, 1950). The threat may be either physical or psychological, such as facing death from tuberculosis or being imprisoned in a concentration camp (which, of course, brought the threat of death in addition to the loss of freedom), or the threat may challenge some other value that the individual identifies with their existence or personal identity (such as the loss of a career, a divorce, a challenge to patriotism in time of war, etc.). What differentiates anxiety from fear, is that fear is a reaction to a specific event, whereas anxiety is vague and diffuse. For example, during a robbery you may fear a man with a gun, but in America today many people are anxious about terrorism. No one can tell when or where terrorists may strike, or even whether they will be foreign terrorists (such as in the World Trade Center attacks) or American terrorists (such as the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City or the D.C. sniper killings). May carefully pointed out that using the terms "vague" and "diffuse" to describe anxiety should in no way diminish our understanding of the intensity and painfulness that anxiety can bring. Therein lies the difference between normal vs. neurotic anxiety (May, 1950).

Everyone faces challenges in life, but not everyone sees the same challenges as actual threats. Losing one's job can be an opportunity to begin a new career, perhaps to go back to school to pursue that new career. However, the transition is often difficult, especially when one is used to being the primary wage earner in the family, and also if the family has to cut back on items they can no longer afford. So anxiety would be a reasonable reaction. That anxiety is considered normal if it is 1) not disproportionate to the objective threat, 2) does not involve mechanisms of intrapsychic conflict, and 3) does not require defense mechanisms for its management (May, 1950). Normal anxiety is often overlooked in adults since it is not particularly intense, especially compared to neurotic anxiety, and it can be managed constructively. It does not show itself in panic or other dramatic symptoms. Neurotic anxiety is, simply, the opposite of normal anxiety. It is disproportionate to the objective threat, it does require intrapsychic defense mechanisms, and it results in neurotic symptoms in spite of those defense mechanisms. It is important to keep in mind that we should not consider individuals who suffer from neurotic anxiety as suffering from objective weaknesses, but rather they suffer from inner psychological patterns and conflicts that prevent them from using their powers to cope.

True to his training in psychodynamic theory, May believed that the psychological patterns resulting in the inability to cope have their origin in childhood, particularly due to poor early relations between the infant and its parents, since an infant's essential values arise from the security patterns established between the infant and its caregivers (as in Erikson's first psychosocial crisis: trust vs. mistrust, see Chapter 7). One of the most important factors seems to be the infant's subjective interpretation of rejection by its primary caregiver, and that subjectivity is influenced by expectations that form later in life (e.g., middle- and upper-class children, who expect more support from their parents, are especially prone to react to rejection with neurotic anxiety; May, 1950).

Discussion Question 2.1.4.1

May felt that we must understand anxiety in relation to freedom, or rather, as the fear that we will lose our freedom. He said that some of this anxiety is normal, and only in extreme cases does it become neurotic anxiety. What are some of the situations in your life that make you anxious, and how might they be a threat to your personal freedom? Do you think the level of these anxieties is normal, or is it severe enough to perhaps be considered neurotic?

Culture, Anxiety, and Hostility

May also addressed the effects of culture on anxiety, and the close interrelationship between anxiety and **hostility**. Culture affects both the kinds and the quantities of anxiety experienced by individuals. Beyond the essential relationship between infant and caregiver, the determinants of personality that each of us consider essential to our existence as a personality are largely cultural. Indeed, even the nature of the infant/caregiver relationship is subject to cultural influence. The amount of anxiety most people are likely to experience is determined, in part, by the stability of the culture. For example, if a culture is relatively stable and unified, there will be less anxiety throughout that culture (May, 1950). Today, however, many societies are in dramatic flux, due in large part to the powerful trend toward globalization.

As psychologists have begun to examine anxiety in different groups around the world, a variety of interesting, and sometimes disturbing, results have been found. Keep in mind, however, that these are generalities, and do not necessarily apply to each individual within any group. Generally, Asians are more anxious than Europeans and White Americans, who are more anxious than Black Americans and Africans, and there may be a neurological basis for these relative anxiety levels (Rushton, 1999). However, when looking at the specific form of anxiety related to taking academic tests, Black Americans and Chilean students demonstrate higher levels of test anxiety than White Americans (Clawson, Firment, & Trower, 1981; Guida & Ludlow, 1989). One suggestion for the higher levels of anxiety among Blacks in America is that our society is much less sociocentric than most African cultures. Thus, Blacks in America, even if they have lived here for generations, still experience the effects of their displacement from Africa when the culture they carried with them is at odds with Western cultural expectations (Okeke et al., 1999), and even more so when an individual seems to be at odds with most members of their own cultural group (Copeland, 2006). Indeed, the greater the discrepancy between one's individual cultural expectations and the cultural expectations of the majority of society, the greater the anxiety an individual experiences. This is particularly true during attempts at intercultural communication (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004). Any subsequent breakdown of intercultural communication, which is more likely during periods of high anxiety, can either lead to or enhance pre-existing hostility, prejudice, discrimination, and scapegoating (Whitley & Kite, 2006). One important challenge to intercultural communication in psychology is the need for clinical psychologists to recognize the growing number of anxiety disorders unique to non-Western cultures, such as: **hwa-bung** (Korea), **koro** (Malaysia and Southern China), **nervios** (Latin America), **dhat syndrome** (India), **susto** (Latin America), and **taijin kyofusho** (Japan) (Castillo, 1997).

Culture can influence individuals in a wide variety of ways. May (1950) used the example of competitive individual success in the Western world as his main example, which he considered to be *the* dominant goal in America. There are many negative effects of this competition, including the high incidences of gastric ulcers and heart disease in our society. Less than a decade later, Friedman and Rosenman (1959) published their classic study on the relationship between Type A behavior (studied in highly competitive businessmen) and cardiovascular disease. Subsequent studies have shown that the key component of Type A behavior predictive of heart disease is hostility, which we will discuss in more detail below (Dembrowski et al., 1985; Lachar, 1993; MacDougal et al., 1985). There has also been a great deal of discussion in our society about media influences on body image, the relationship between unreasonable expectations for women to be thin and the incidence of eating disorders in girls and women, and the repression of female sexuality in many cultures. Goldenberg (2005) recently presented an existential perspective on the body itself as a threat. Cultural beliefs often help to overcome fears of mortality by convincing individuals that they are of greater value than other, lower animals. However, despite the beliefs of many that only humans have a soul, our body is still a mortal animal. As a reaction to the anxiety presented by the reality of our mortal body, many people act in a hostile fashion toward their own bodies, ranging from denying themselves healthy physical relationships with others (e.g., sexual repression) to outright self-destructive behavior (e.g., anorexia nervosa). The problem reaches its extreme, however, when one powerful group directs its hostility in an organized fashion toward another group.

The relationship between anxiety and hostility, according to May, involves a vicious circle. Anxiety gives rise to hostility, and hostility gives rise to increased anxiety. But which comes first? May believed that it was anxiety that underlies hostility, and the evidence can be found in clinical cases involving repressed hostility:

Granted the interrelation between hostility and anxiety, which affect is generally basic? There is ground for believing that, even though hostility may be the specific affect present in many situations, anxiety is often present below the hostility...For one example, in some of the psychosomatic studies of patients with hypertension...it has been found that the reason the patients repressed their hostility was that they were anxious and dependent...The hostility would not have to be repressed in the first place except that the individual is anxious and fears counter-hostility or alienation... (pg. 223; May, 1950)

In Reeves' analysis of May's theory (1977), Reeves discusses one of the most important social issues to have faced the United States: the civil rights movement of the 1960s. When an individual's sense of selfhood is challenged by dramatic changes in society, it can be a very painful experience. And one is likely to resent those responsible for those changes. While it is true that many White people in America supported the civil rights movement, White people in the Deep South (and elsewhere, of course) turned their anxiety, and its associated hostility, toward Blacks. It should not be necessary here to describe the many terrible acts of violence that followed. Suffice it to say that the federal government had to use military troops to intervene in some of the worst cases. Today, we face a similar problem in the war on terrorism. Given the often unequal and unfair manner in which globalization brings vastly different cultures into conflict, and the ease with which so many people can travel the globe, perhaps we should not be surprised at the dramatic level of terrorism in the world today.

Connections Across Cultures: Terrorists and Terrorism

Since September 11, 2001, when agents of the terrorist organization Al Qaeda destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City and killed some 3,000 people, the United States has been involved in what has been called an international war on terrorism. As the war on terrorism developed, it had two main goals: to capture Osama bin Laden, leader of Al Qaeda and mastermind of the World Trade Center bombings, and to overthrow Saddam Hussein, the dictator of Iraq (for his alleged role in supporting international terrorism). To date, this war has lasted much longer than World War II, we have spent hundreds of billions of dollars, and thousands more young American men and women have died fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many Iraqi and Afghan civilians, as well as additional coalition military personnel, have also died. Saddam Hussein was removed from power in Iraq; he was also tried, convicted, and executed. It took nearly 10 years, but Osama bin Laden was finally tracked down and killed in a raid in Pakistan by U.S. Navy Seals. However, Al Qaeda is still committing acts of terrorism, Iraq is descending once again into bitter sectarian violence (rising to the level of civil war), and Americans continue to die fighting in Afghanistan as our intended date for withdrawal slowly draws near (after 13 years!). One thing that will not be addressed in this section, because it does not exist, is an easy answer to these problems.

Please allow me to share a little personal history here. When the Iranian revolution under Ayatollah Khomeini overthrew the Shah of Iran, and the revolutionaries captured the American embassy in Tehran and took sixty-six people hostage (fifty-two of those hostages were held for well over a year before being released), I was in the United States Marine Corps Reserve. I received a phone call at 2:00 a.m. on a Friday morning at my apartment in Cambridge, MA. By midnight, that same day, my reserve unit was in Camp Lejeune, NC, with full combat gear, ready to go to war in Iran. We spent the weekend preparing, though President Carter ultimately chose not to send us overseas. Approximately 10 years later, when the first Gulf War erupted after Iraq invaded Kuwait, my sister took part in Operation Desert Storm. As an Air Force nurse, she was sent to England to help prepare a hospital for wounded military personnel being evacuated from the Middle East (fortunately casualties were minimal). I considered re-enlisting in the Marine Corps at that time, since I certainly wasn't going to sit at home while my own sister "fought" for our country and our allies. Thankfully, that first Gulf War was brief and, seemingly, simple. So I have followed events in the Middle East carefully ever since, and when Al Qaeda attacked us in New York, I saw it as the latest in a continuation of events in my own life since 1979. For people in the Middle East, however, it was a continuation of events that have lasted for thousands of years.

What I believe matters most for Americans today is to begin to make an honest effort to understand terrorism, its causes, its goals, and how best to deal with it around the world. First, we must dispense with misconceptions. Terrorism and Islam are **not** one and the same. In an insightful and easily readable book entitled *Islam versus Terrorism*, Firooz Zadeh (2002) discusses how Islam opposes violence and murder, especially of innocent women and children. He also attempts to identify what is and is not terrorism, and in that effort he identifies eight types of terrorism: state terrorism, religious terrorism, criminal terrorism, terrorism by those who are mentally sick, political terrorism, oppositional terrorism, copy cat terrorism, and victim terrorism. According to Zadeh, the highest cost to society results from state terrorism. When the United States supports corrupt, terrorist governments in other parts of the world, our credibility as a nation fighting terrorism is suspect at best. Has this been the case? Yes, and in the worst possible way: we switch sides as it serves our political and economic interests. The United States helped to train Osama bin Laden and the Taliban fighters in Afghanistan when we wanted them to fight the Russians. Now we call them enemies. We provided weapons and training to Saddam Hussein's army when they were fighting the Iranians, because of the hostages taken in Tehran. Now we have deposed Hussein. We also sold weapons to Iran, and used the money to help support the Contras (freedom fighters or terrorists, depending on your point of view) trying to overthrow the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua. Zadeh proposes that people in the Middle East cannot trust the United States, except in one area: our support of Israel. And since other Middle Eastern countries see Israel as the one obstacle to a Palestinian homeland, they disapprove of that support. It does not matter whether the actions of the United States were right or wrong, whether they really were in our best interests or not. What matters is how the rest

of the world sees us now, and whether our top government officials are willing to consider how we are viewed globally and to act responsibly in terms of foreign policy in order to ensure what is best for all people around the world. In addressing the Middle East in particular, Fathali Moghaddam wrote:

Islamic communities in many parts of the world are experiencing a profound and historic identity crisis, one tragic manifestation of which is terrorism. In order to understand and avert this destructive trend, we must come to grips with the monumental crisis of identity that is paralyzing moderate movements but energizing fanatic forces in Islamic communities.

...Why do we need to understand how the terrorists see the world? Because this is the best way for us to find an effective means to end terrorism...Seeing the world from the terrorists' point of view does not mean condoning terrorism; rather, it means better understanding terrorism so as to end it. (pg. ix; Moghaddam, 2006)

As mentioned above, there are many different forms of terrorism, so it is difficult to define exactly what it is. Nevertheless, in an effort to do so, Moghaddam (2005) defines terrorism as "politically motivated violence, perpetrated by individuals, groups, or state-sponsored agents, intended to instill feelings of terror and helplessness in a population in order to influence decision making and to change behavior." Moghaddam suggests that psychologists need to play an important role in understanding terrorism for two main reasons: the basis for terrorist actions is typically subjectively interpreted values and beliefs, and the actions of terrorists are designed to cause specific psychological experiences, i.e., terror and helplessness. Moghaddam (2005, 2006) proposes a metaphor for how one becomes a terrorist, based on climbing a staircase, in which options are perceived to become more and more limited as one climbs the stairs. The most significant factor is the condition in which many people live on the ground floor, before they even consider climbing that staircase. Many people in this world live in abject poverty, under repressive governments that are unjust. When individuals see no hope within the system, and they lack any political means to effect change, then a path toward terrorism becomes perhaps the only reasonable possibility. Still, very few people are likely to become suicide bombers.

Individuals living in desperate conditions may move to the first floor on the staircase toward terrorism, where they evaluate their perceived options to fight unfair treatment. If there appear to be no options for justice within one's society, no opportunity to be heard, and no opportunity for personal mobility, the individual may then move to the second floor. Here the individual begins to displace their aggression. This often involves education/propaganda that identifies a clear target, for example the United States, also known as the "Great Satan." This is the important beginning of an us-versus-them mentality. On the third floor, individuals become morally engaged with the terrorist organization. While we may see terrorists as immoral, they are beginning to believe that they are fighting for a just cause, against the immoral repression of their chosen target. As they move to the fourth floor, they solidify their categorical thinking (the us-versus-them mentality) and begin to see the terrorist organization, and terrorist acts, as legitimate. At this point there is little chance that they can leave the terrorist organization alive. For specific individuals, the training necessary to carry out a terrorist act takes place, often very quickly. Not only does a terrorist need to learn about weapons and tactics, they must also be trained to sidestep the natural, biological inhibition against killing other human beings. Two factors in helping to prepare people to kill are the intense indoctrination in the belief that their actions are for a greater good and secrecy. If an attack is done suddenly and without warning, victims have no opportunity to submit or to beg for mercy. The act occurs before the terrorist might become compassionate as he or she faces their intended victims (Moghaddam, 2005, 2006). Based on this model, Moghaddam proposes four steps that are necessary to stop terrorism by interrupting the formation of new terrorists. First, there must be prevention. Unfortunately, our government has a long history of choosing short-term fixes, rather than long-term preventative measures. Case in point: America's failure in the war on drugs. Aggressive responses aimed at individuals only provide an opening for someone new to step in and continuing using and/or selling drugs, and the same is true of terrorists. We need to work toward eliminating the pathway to terrorism, so we will not need to use the military and/or FBI to track down individuals (except, of course, in extreme cases such as terrorism that results from psychological disorder - e.g., consider the case of Theodore Kaczynski, the Unabomber). In addition, Moghaddam suggests supporting contextualized democracy, educating against categorical thinking, and promoting interobjectivity and justice. In order for there to be a long-term solution, there must be international dialogue and improved intercultural understanding (Moghaddam, 2005).

Returning to the misconception in the minds of many Americans that terrorism is synonymous with Islam, let's examine where known terrorist organizations are located around the world. Fairly notorious organizations have come from Northern Ireland (e.g., the Irish Republican Army and the Ulster Defense Association), throughout mainland Europe (e.g., the Red Army Faction in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy, and Action Directe in France), throughout the Middle East (e.g., Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Palestinian group Hamas, the Stern Gang that fought for the establishment of Israel, and Al Qaeda), Africa, Asia, Latin America, Canada, and the United States (e.g., the Animal Liberation Front, Aryan Nations, the Black Panthers, and the Ku Klux Klan). As of 1999, at least twenty-eight well-organized terrorist groups existed, and when one takes into account factions within those groups

and smaller, yet still identifiable, groups, as many as eighty-three terrorists groups have been identified around the world (Henderson, 2001). Some are primarily political, and some are primarily religious. Some are global, and some are more local. They include people and cultures of great diversity: Black, White, Asian, Latin, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Hindu, etc. Although terrorism appears to arise out of poverty and desperation, terrorists themselves, or at least the leaders, tend to be better educated than most and they are well versed in propaganda and well trained in weapons and tactics (Moghaddam, 2005; Zadeh, 2002). The only characteristic that all terrorists seem to share is an extreme commitment to violence, which arises out of desperation and perceived injustice, and is viewed as the only means to be heard and to effect change.

So can terrorism effect change, is terrorism effective? One can easily find authors who argue that it does indeed work (Dershowitz, 2002) or that it always fails (Carr, 2002). Alan Dershowitz (2002) argues that the very reason terrorism works is everything we have looked at so far: an effort to understand the root causes of terrorism and the terrorists themselves. Accordingly, he says:

We must take precisely the opposite approach to terrorism. We must commit ourselves *never to try to understand or eliminate its alleged root causes*, but rather to place it beyond the pale of dialogue and negotiation. Our message must be this: even if you have legitimate grievances, if you resort to terrorism as a means toward eliminating them we will simply not listen to you, we will not try to understand you, and we will certainly never change any of our policies toward you. Instead, we will hunt you down and destroy your capacity to engage in terror. (pp. 24-25; Dershowitz, 2002)

As a case in point, Dershowitz cites the awarding of observer status at the United Nations to the Palestinian Liberation Organization only after Palestinian terrorists began hijacking commercial airliners. Prior to the hijackings, 20 years of pleading their case to the United Nations had little effect. Dershowitz then offers a timeline that appears to clearly establish an effective relationship in which terrorism became more and more effective over time (from 1968-1999) in eliciting international recognition and support for the Palestinian cause. In contrast, Caleb Carr (2002) views terrorism entirely within the discipline of military history. He considers today's terrorism to be nothing more than a modern permutation of warfare against civilians in order to break their support for either leaders or policies that the terrorists oppose, the origins of which are as old as human conflict itself. Viewing terrorism as warfare has certain interesting implications. Throughout history, those who wage war against civilians ultimately defeated themselves by turning sentiment against them. On 9/11, Al Qaeda attacked civilians to a degree that has not been seen in ages:

...In so doing, the organizers, sponsors, and foot soldiers of every terrorist group involved in the September 11 attacks have unwittingly ensured that their extremist cause will be discredited among many of their sympathizers, disowned by most of their former sponsors, and finally defeated by their enemies: two thousand years of the lessons of terror dictate that this is the ultimate fate that awaits the attackers, no matter how many noncombatants they manage to kill along the way. (pp. 223-224; Carr, 2002).

Carr also addresses the other most important implication of treating terrorism as warfare: it must be met with warfare, but that warfare must not be excessive, such that it might also be viewed as terrorism. If our response to terrorism is excessive military might, then the tide of public opinion can swing back in favor of Al Qaeda, especially in Muslim countries where the United States is not trusted.

Echoing Carr's concerns about the extent and nature of our military actions in the war on terror, one way in which terrorism might work against us, without seeming to have gained what was intended (if we can even know what was intended), is if our fundamental democratic principles change. In *The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of Terror*, Michael Ignatieff (2004) argues that terrorism must be met with force, and that such force is a lesser evil than the terrorism that necessitated the response. The danger lies in succumbing to the greater evil of seeking revenge. Dershowitz (2002) provides a compelling case for how an amoral society could control and possibly eliminate all terrorism, but America is not an amoral society. Our responses are constrained by the constitution and by the political debate that forms the very basis of our democracy. When we respond to terrorist acts, we must consider what we want that response to accomplish:

Terrorism requires us to think carefully about who we are as free peoples and what we need to do in order to remain so. When we are confronted with terrorist violence, we cannot allow the claims of national security to trump the claims of liberty, since what we are trying to defend is our continued existence as a free people. Freedom must set a limit to the measures we employ to maintain it. (pg. 145; Ignatieff, 2004)

Finally, can the ultimate answer to terrorism be found in promoting democratic governments in every nation? The war on terror has led us to depose both Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan, and to replace them with democratically elected governments. Only time will tell whether those governments will survive, but there is reason for caution. Religious turmoil continues in the Middle East. In America, our constitution provides for separation of church and state, and that separation has

become an important tradition. But for Muslims, the idea of a secular democracy, one that is not guided by Allah, is simply inconceivable. They are not opposed to democracy per se, indeed it has been argued that Islam is likely to eventually lead to pluralist democracies (Aslan, 2005). But to pressure Islamic countries into accepting the secular democracy that we hold so dear is, according to Robert Sheddinger (2004), equivalent to declaring war on Islam. So what appears to be essential to promoting stability in the Middle East, and elsewhere, is an effort to support contextual democracy, that is, forms of democracy that fit with the culture of the people who will create and participate in that democracy (Aslan, 2005; Moghaddam, 2005, 2006; Sheddinger, 2004; Zadeh, 2002).

Integration and the Human Dilemma

In the preface to *Man's Search for Himself* (May, 1953), May presents the existential philosophy that there is meaning to be found in challenges and suffering, and that psychologists in particular may find a special opportunity in such circumstances:

When our society, in its time of upheaval in standards and values, can give us no clear picture of "what we are and what we ought to be,"...we are thrown back on the search for ourselves. The painful insecurity on all sides gives us new incentive to ask, Is there perhaps some important source of guidance and strength we have overlooked?...How can anyone undertake the long development toward self-realization in a time when practically nothing is certain, either in the present or the future?...The psychotherapist has no magic answers...But there is something in addition to his technical training and his own self-understanding...This something is the wisdom the psychotherapist gains in working with people who are striving to overcome their problems. He has the extraordinary, if often taxing, privilege of accompanying persons through their intimate and profound struggles to gain new integration. (pg. 7; May, 1953)

Integration, according to May, is similar to Heidegger's concept of Dasein (being-in-the-world). As conscious, free, and responsible beings our goal should be to separate ourselves from the conformist, automaton masses (the en-soi, according to Sartre) and progressively integrate with others in freely chosen love and creative work (May, 1953), or as Clement Reeves puts it: "To understand and elucidate the specific, distinguishing characteristics of the human being, and to grasp what it is to achieve courageous, decisive, integrated response to the challenge inherent in existence..." (Reeves, 1977). The process of integration is lifelong, and should be appropriate for whatever age each one of us happens to be right now. May suggests that a healthy child of eight, who is fulfilling his capacity of self-conscious choice for a child of eight years old, is more of a person than a neurotic adult who is 30 years old. Likewise, a person who can face death courageously at the age of thirty is more mature than someone 80 years old who "cringes and begs still to be shielded from reality" (May, 1953). Thus, it is important to live each moment with freedom, honesty, and responsibility. If each of us lives within the present moment, working to fulfill our potential, being true to whom we are and the situations within which we live, May proposes that we will experience joy and gratification:

...Does not the uncertainty of our time teach us the most important lesson of all - that the ultimate criteria are the honesty, integrity, courage and love of a given moment of relatedness? If we do not have that, we are not building for the future anyway; if we do have it, we can trust the future to itself. (pg. 276; May, 1953)

One of the challenges to living an integrated life is seen in what May described as the **human dilemma** (May, 1967). Are we the subject of our lives, or are we an object in our world? When we become absorbed in the details of our responsibilities and actions, when we allow ourselves to be controlled and directed in order to accomplish our assigned tasks, when we become slaves to the clock, doing this and that, going here and there, as others expect us to, we are viewing ourselves as objects. This is reminiscent of what Karen Horney called the tyranny of the should. On the other hand, when we consider our feelings, wishes, and desires, when we are true to ourselves, or living authentically, then we are viewing ourselves as subjects, as active participants in our own lives. According to May (1967), the human dilemma arises out of our capacity to experience ourselves as *both* subject and object at the same time. But how can opposite poles of the human experience both be true? It is in the process between the two poles that development of human consciousness develops, both deepening and widening that consciousness. This is essentially the same idea, though in different form, used by Heidegger and Sartre in describing the unique nature of human beings. For Heidegger this nothingness was the undefined distinction between Being and beings, for Sartre it was the shell that surrounded the pour-soi.

May believed that existential psychology occupied a space somewhere between the two extremes that existed, and continue to exist, in psychology: behaviorism vs. humanism. May rejected Skinner's arguments that all human behavior can be understood in terms of stimuli and responses, declaring that there is ample evidence in both clinical practice and everyday life of people being active participants in their view of, actions in, and reactions to their world. He was equally critical of Carl Rogers, believing that humanistic psychologists no longer recognized very real irrational behavior, as well as aggression and hostility (May, 1967). He believed that psychology had become trapped in a misguided desire to define everything scientifically, and according to rules that

then determined each psychologist's view of the world and their patients. As a caution to those psychologists who cannot see beyond their theories, May wrote:

Now I am certainly aware, if I may say so without sounding patronizing, that the compelling need for honesty is one of the motives which leads psychologists to seek quantitative measures...I am also aware that research in our day has to be carefully set up so that the results are teachable and can be built upon by others. The compelling drive to get at the truth is what improves us all as psychologists, and is part and parcel of intellectual integrity. But I do urge that we not let the drive for honesty put blinders on us and cut off our range of vision so that we miss the very thing we set out to understand - namely, the living human being. (pg. 14; May, 1967)

✓ discussion question 2.1.4.2

May suggested that we need to separate ourselves from the conformist masses, and then integrate ourselves with others in free and responsible ways. Are you a follower, or a leader? Either way, do you consciously choose the role you play, thereby living an authentic life?

Love and Intentionality

Love was a very important topic for May. Simply put, "To be capable of giving and receiving mature love is as sound a criterion as we have for the fulfilled personality" (May, 1953). He was certainly not alone. Harry Harlow, best known for his studies on **contact comfort**, described love as "a wondrous state, deep, tender, and rewarding," and Abraham Maslow said "We *must* understand love; we must be able to teach it, to create it, to predict it, or else the world is lost to hostility and to suspicion" (Harlow, 1975; Maslow, 1975). However, there are "a million and one" types of relationships that people call love, so it remains a perplexing issue (May, 1953).

May talked about four types of love in Western tradition: **sex**, **eros**, **philia**, and **agape** (May, 1969). Sex and eros are closely related, but they are different. Sex is what we also call lust or libido, whereas eros is the drive of love to procreate or create. As changes in society allowed the more open study of sex, prompted by the work of people like Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Reich, May noted three particular paradoxes. First, our so-called enlightenment has not removed the sexual problems in our culture. In the past, an individual could refrain from sexual activity using the moral guidelines of society as an explanation. As casual sex became common, even expected, individuals had to face expressing their own morality as just that: their own! This also created a new source of anxiety for some, namely the possibility that their personal relationships might carry an expectation of sexual activity, and that if they did not comply they might not be able to continue dating someone they liked. The second paradox is that "*the new emphasis on technique in sex and love-making backfires*" (May, 1969). Emphasizing technique (or prowess) can result in a mechanistic attitude toward making love, possibly leading to alienation, feelings of loneliness, and depersonalization. This can lead to the anticipatory anxiety described by Frankl. Finally, May believed that our sexual freedom was actually a new form of Puritanism. There is a state of alienation from the body, a separation of emotion from reason, and the use of the body as a machine. Whereas in the Victorian era people tried to be in love without falling into sex, today many people try to have sex without falling in love.

Philia and agape are also related to one another, as with sex and love. Philia refers to feelings of friendship or brotherly love, whereas agape is the love devoted to caring for others. Friendship during childhood is very important, and May believed it was essential for meaningful and loving relationships as adults, including those involving eros. Indeed, the tension created by eros in terms of continuous attraction and continuous passion would be unbearable if philia did not enter into the equation and allow one to relax in the pleasant and friendly company of the object of one's desires. Harry Harlow, once again, showed that the opportunity to make friends was as essential in the development of young monkeys as it appears to be in humans (cited in May, 1969). In the West, however, given our highly individualistic and competitive society, deep, meaningful friendships seem to be something of the past, especially among men. May cautions, however, that since the evidence shows the importance of friendship during development perhaps we should remember the value of having good friends.

Finally we have agape, a selfless love beyond any hope of gain for oneself. May compared this love to the biological aspect of nature in which a parent will fight to the death in defense of their offspring. With agape, we run the risk of being like God, in the sense that we know others never act without some degree of their own interests in mind. Similarly, we don't want to be loved in an

ethereal sense, or on the other hand only for our body. We want to be loved completely. So, all true love involves some element of the other types of love, no matter how little or how obscured it may be (May, 1969).

Figure 2.1.4.1

Agape is exemplified in the bond between a parent and their child.

In the foreword to *Love and Will* (May, 1969) May acknowledged that some of his readers might find it odd that he combined the two topics in one book, but he felt strongly that the topics belong together. He considered both love and will to be interdependent, they are processes in which people reach out to influence others, to help to mold and create the consciousness of others. Love without will is sentimental and experimental, whereas will without love is manipulative. Only by remaining open to the influence of others can we likewise influence them, so love must have an honest purpose, and purpose must be taken with care.

Will, or **will power** as it is more commonly known, was one of the earliest subjects in American psychology, having been examined in detail by William James as early as 1890 (see James, 1892/1992) and again in 1897 in *The Will to Believe* (James, 1897/1992). May considered Sigmund Freud's greatest discovery to be the uncovering of unconscious desires and motives. Although many people may believe themselves to be acting out of higher ideals, most of us are, in reality, acting according to psychologically determined factors of which we are unaware. Nonetheless, May considered this to be one of the most unfortunate results of Freud's work. By accepting determinism, we undermine the influence of will and making decisions. As May put it, Freud's theory suggests that we are "not *driving* any more, but *driven*" (May, 1969).

The suggestion that we are no longer in charge of our own lives, that we are driven by psychological determinism, seems strange to those who believe that never before have people had such power, both in terms of individual freedom and in the collective conquest of nature. But May referred to a **contradiction in will**, the contrast between our feelings of powerlessness and self-doubt and the societal assurances that we can do anything we set our minds to. May believed that we exist in a "curious predicament," in that the technical wonders that make us feel so powerful are the very same processes that overwhelm us (May, 1969):

Thus, the crisis in will does not arise from either the presence or absence of power in the individual's world. It comes from the contradiction between the two - the result of which is a paralysis of will. (pg. 189; May, 1969)

Will alone is not the driving force that leads us to responsible and authentic lives. Underlying will is something May called **intentionality**. Intentionality is the structure that gives meaning to experience, it is both how we perceive the world and how the world can be perceived by us. In other words, through our perceptual processes we influence the world around us; we affect the very things that we perceive. Intentionality is a bridge between subject and object (May, 1969). Compare this once again to the nothingness between beings and Being (à la Heidegger), or between the en-soi and the pour-soi (à la Sartre). Still, our ability to reach and form the very objects that we perceive, in other words, to participate actively in our lives, can be dramatically curtailed by the problem addressed by May early in his career, anxiety:

Overwhelming anxiety destroys the capacity to perceive and conceive one's world, to reach out toward it to form and re-form it. In this sense, it destroys intentionality. We cannot hope, plan, promise, or create in severe anxiety; we shrink back into a stockade of limited consciousness hoping only to preserve ourselves until the danger is past. (pp. 244; May, 1969)

✓ discussion question 2.1.4.3

Consider the different loves in your life. How do they differ? How have they brought meaning to your life? Has your view of what love is changed during your life, in either good or bad ways?

The Daimonic: Source of Violence and Creativity

The **daimonic**, according to May, is "any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person" (May, 1969). It can be either destructive or creative, and is often both. In this way it is similar to Jung's concept of the shadow, and May himself made that comparison (May, 1991; see also Diamond, 1996, Reeves, 1977). In fact, it is the mixture of good and evil in the daimonic that protects us from the dangers of excess, whether excess good or the passivity of feeling powerless. When May did not know whether he would live or die from tuberculosis, he realized that his feelings of helplessness were turning into passivity, and that this was sure to lead to his death (as he had seen with others). He described this experience as the product of his innocence, and that because he was innocent he allowed the bacteria infecting his body to do violence to him. However, when he chose to fight the

disease, when he asserted his will to live, he began to make steady progress and, indeed, he recovered. In this sense, May had chosen to allow the daimonic to take over his self in the interest of self preservation. In each instance, how one allows the daimonic to take over is influenced by personal responsibility (Reeves, 1977).

When the daimonic takes over without one having made a responsible choice, however, it can lead to violence toward others. Our lives often involve conflict between those who have power and those who do not. When a person feels powerless, helpless, insignificant, they can lash out under the control of the daimonic. According to May, violence is bred in impotence and apathy (May, 1972). This can be particularly important for those who have little or no advantage in our society. In *Power and Innocence* (May, 1972), May described a patient who was a young, Black woman. Being both Black and female, born before the civil rights movement, she was about as powerless as one could be in America. Her stepfather had forced her to serve as a prostitute for years. Although quite intelligent, and successful in school and college, she felt so helpless that May described her as having “no active belief that she deserved to be helped.” An important aspect of therapy for this patient was to get in touch with her anger, to get in touch with the violence that had been done to her and that she wished to do to others.

In considering the case of this young woman, May concluded that we must not simply condemn all violence and try to eliminate even the possibility of it. To do so would be to take away a part of full humanity. In this context, May criticizes humanistic psychology and its emphasis on fulfilling self-actualization, an emphasis that May felt moved toward greater moral perfection. However, the recognition that we are not perfect, that each of us has good and evil within, prohibits us from moral arrogance. Recognizing this leads to the restraint necessary for making forgiveness possible.

Our ability to achieve good is dependent on who we are, and who we are is based partly on our own **creativity**. Since humans are not simply driven by instinct and fixed action patterns, in contrast to every other creature on earth we must create ourselves. This creation must take place within the world that exists around us, and must take into account all of the emotions and predispositions that we do carry with us as biological organisms.

Art - and creative activities of all kinds - can provide comparatively healthy outlets for the constructive expression of anger and rage. Creativity cannot, however, always substitute for psychotherapy. Nevertheless, creativity is at the very core of the psychotherapeutic project: The patient is encouraged to become more creative in psychologically restructuring his or her *inner* world, and then to continue this creative process in the *outer* world, not only by accepting and adjusting to reality, but, whenever possible, by reshaping it...

“Creativity” can be broadly defined as *the constructive utilization of the daimonic*. Creativity is called forth from each one of us by the inevitable conflicts and chaos inherent in human existence... (pp. 255-256; Diamond, 1996)

Pursuing this creativity is not easy, however. We live in a world that is rapidly changing. Since May’s death in 1994 change in the world has probably even accelerated. May asked whether we would withdraw in anxiety and panic as our foundations were shaken, or would we actively choose to participate in forming the future (May, 1975). Choosing to live in the future requires leaping into the unknown, going where others have not been, and therefore cannot guide us. It involves what existentialists call the anxiety of nothingness (May, 1975). Making this bold choice requires **courage**. One of the reasons we need to be courageous is that we must fully commit ourselves to pursuing a responsible creation of the future, but at the same time we must recognize that sometimes we will be wrong. Those who claim they are absolutely right can be dangerous, since such an attitude can lead to dogmatism, or worse, fanaticism (May, 1975).

Finally, not only must we accept that we might make bad choices, we must also recognize that our creativity is limited. In *The Courage to Create* (May, 1975), May described having attended a conference where the introductory speaker declared that there is no limit to the possibilities of the human being. Following this statement, the discussion at the conference was a flop. May realized that if there is no limit to what we can accomplish, then there really aren’t any problems any more, we only need to wait until our potentiality catches up with our situation and the problem solves itself. May offered a rather amusing example to clarify this point:

...it is like putting someone into a canoe and pushing him out into the Atlantic toward England with the cheery comment, “The sky’s the limit.” The canoer is only too aware of the fact that an inescapably real limit is also the bottom of the ocean. (pg. 113, May, 1975)

Another inescapable limit is our death. There is no creative act that can change the fact that we will die someday, and that we cannot know when or how it will happen. May believed, however, that these limits are valuable, that creativity itself needs limits. He proposed that consciousness arises from our awareness of these limits, and from the struggle against these limits. May compared this concept to Adler’s theory that much of what we as individuals, and also society as a whole, arises from our

efforts to compensate for inferiority. Thus, our limits lead to what May called a **passion for form**. In its passion for form, the mind is actively forming and re-forming the world in which we live (May, 1975).

✓ discussion question 2.1.4.4

May believed that creatively taking charge of your life required courage. Have you ever had to make a really difficult decision? Did you take the easy way out, or the safe path, or did you make a bold decision that offered great opportunity?

The Cry for Myth

As a practicing psychoanalyst I find that contemporary therapy is almost entirely concerned, when all is surveyed, with the problems of the individual's search for myths. The fact that Western society has all but lost its myths was the main reason for the birth and development of psychoanalysis in the first place. (pg. 9; May, 1991)

The preceding quote is how May began *The Cry for Myth*, the last book of his career (May, 1991). According to May, the definition of a **myth** is quite simple: it "is a way of making sense in a senseless world." In addition, myths give substance to our existence. In a healthy society the myths provide relief from neurotic guilt and excessive anxiety, and so a compassionate therapist will not discourage them. In the twentieth century, especially in Western culture, we have lost our myths, and with them we have lost our sense of existence and our direction or purpose in life. The danger in this is that people are then susceptible to cults, drugs, superstition, etc., in a vain effort to replace that purpose (May, 1991).

As we pass through the experiences of our lives, our memory is dependent mainly upon myth. It is well accepted today that human memory is constructive, and influenced by our expectations of memory. As May describes it, the formation of a memory, regardless of whether it is real or fantasy, is molded like clay. We then retain it as a myth, and rely on that myth for future guidance in similar situations. For example, an infant is fed three times a day and put to bed 365 days a year, and yet they remember only one or two of these events from their years of early childhood. For whatever reason, good or bad, these specific events take on mythic proportions and greatly influence the course of our lives. May acknowledges the contribution of Alfred Adler in recognizing the value of these early memories, describing Adler as "a perceptive and humble man, he was gifted with unusual sensitivity for children" (May, 1991). As we have seen, Adler considered the basis for neurosis to be a lack of social interest. In therapy, Adler focused on the "guiding fiction" of a child's life, something May considered to be synonymous with a "myth." Since "memory is the mother of creativity," and memory depends upon myth, May believed that the myths that form the identity of our culture are essential for the formation of our self.

May ends his final book with a chapter entitled *The Great Circle of Love*. Having covered a variety of famous myths in the book, including Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Marlow's *Faust*, Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*, and Poe's *The Raven*, May concludes:

In each of these dramas the liberation of both woman and man is possible only when each achieves a new myth of the other sex, leading to a new significant psychological relationship. They are both then liberated from their previous empty and lonely existence. The woman and the man find their true selves only when they are fully present to each other. They find they both need each other, not only physically but psychologically and spiritually as well. (pg. 288; May, 1991)

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2.1.5: Existential Psychotherapy

Existential psychotherapy is not so much a technique as it is an overall approach to understanding the nature of the human being. By asking deep questions about the nature of anxiety, loneliness, isolation, despair, etc., as well as about creativity and love, existential psychotherapists seek to avoid the “common error of distorting human beings in the very effort of trying to help them” (May & Yalom, 1995). May believed that American psychology has had both an affinity for and an aversion to existential psychotherapy. The affinity arises from an historical place in American psychology that was very similar to existentialism: William James’ emphasis on the immediacy of experience, the importance of will, and the unity of thought and action. The aversion arises from the Western tendency to dehumanize people through strict adherence to scientific principles of research, i.e., to reform humans in the image of machines (May, 1983).

An essential aspect of existential psychotherapy is to help individuals realize their own being, their own role in choosing the form that their life will take. This is known as the **“I-Am” experience**. It is all too common for us to associate ourselves with external factors: I am a professor, I am a student, I work at a store, I run a business, etc. We repress our own sense of being. To use an example similar to a case described by May: I am a professor, but that is not really who I am. I am a father and a husband, but that isn’t all that I am. I have a family and a career, but that isn’t quite it either. What is left, or what is common in each of these statements? I am! And as May put it, if I am, I have a right to be (example cited in May & Yalom, 1995). This realization is not the solution to my problems, but it is a necessary precondition to finding the courage to pursue the rest of my life.

Once an individual finds the courage to recreate their life, the existential therapist will address a variety of issues. As discussed above, May placed a great deal of emphasis on anxiety. Guilt is also an important issue to be addressed, since we may feel guilty about poor ethical choices or instances when we failed to be responsible with our actions. As with anxiety, guilt can be normal (after actually doing something bad) or neurotic (when we fantasize some transgression). Both anxiety and guilt affect how we experience Kierkegaard’s concept of being-in-the-world. Our world can be viewed in several different ways, however. There is the **Umwelt** (the world around), the **Mitwelt** (the with-world), and the **Eigenwelt** (the own-world). The Umwelt is the world around us, the natural environment. It encompasses our biological needs, and the unavoidable reality that we will die one day. The Eigenwelt refers to our self-awareness and our ability to relate to our selves, and it is uniquely human (May & Yalom, 1995).

The Mitwelt bears a special relationship to another important concept in existential psychotherapy: **time**. Because we tend to think about ourselves spatially, as objects within our life, we tend to focus on the past. In other words, we focus on what we have become, as opposed to what we might be. Moments when we truly encounter ourselves are rare, but it is only when we grasp the moment that we truly experience life. Those moments can be positive, such as the experience of love, or negative, such as the experience of depression, but they are real nonetheless. The Mitwelt contains the inner meaning of the events that occur in our lives. Individuals who suffer from brain damage often cannot think in terms of abstract possibilities, they become trapped in concrete time. In order to be fully healthy, and something essential to the growth of humans, is our ability to transcend time:

If we are to understand a given person as existing, dynamic, at every moment becoming, we cannot avoid the dimension of transcendence. Existing involves a continual emerging, in the sense of emergent evolution, a transcending of one’s past and present in order to reach the future. (pg. 267; May & Yalom, 1995)

Although the content described above might seem very different from the type of psychoanalysis described by Freud, the general process of existential psychotherapy is similar to psychoanalysis. It is accepted that the client experiences anxiety, that some of this anxiety is unconscious, and that the client is relying on defense mechanisms in order to cope with the anxiety. A fundamental difference, however, is the focus of the therapy. Rather than digging into the deep, dark past, the existential psychotherapist strives to understand the meaning of the client’s current experiences, the depth of experience in the given moment. For this reason, the therapist-client relationship remains important, but the emphasis is not on transference. Rather, the emphasis is on the relationship itself as fundamentally important (May & Yalom, 1995).

Discussion Question: Have you ever had an “I-Am” experience?

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2.1.6: Buddhism and Existentialism- The Completion of a Circle

Buddhism is by far the oldest theory of psychology that we will cover in this book. Applied existentialism, particularly the work of Rollo May, is one of the more recent developments in psychology. And yet, these two approaches share a great deal in common, a fact readily acknowledged by May:

...The likenesses between these Eastern philosophies and existentialism go much deeper than the chance similarity of words. Both are concerned with ontology, the study of being. Both seek a relation to reality which cuts below the cleavage between subject and object. Both would insist that the Western absorption in conquering and gaining power over nature has resulted not only in the estrangement of man from nature but also indirectly in the estrangement of man from himself. The basic reason for these similarities is that Eastern thought never suffered the radical split between subject and object that has characterized Western thought, and this dichotomy is exactly what existentialism seeks to overcome. (pp. 58-59; May, 1983)

In Japan there is a form of psychotherapy, known as **Morita**, which emphasizes the treatment of anxiety. The treatment consists of acceptance, reattribution, dereflection, and active engagement. The dereflection mentioned is the same technique developed by Viktor Frankl. The active engagement continues this effort at distracting the client from their anxiety, hopefully breaking them out of the circle of anticipatory anxiety and subsequent failure described by Frankl. This procedure has proven both successful and, consequently, influential amongst Japanese psychotherapists. A second Japanese technique, **Naikan**, combines a more traditional Buddhist approach with elements of existential psychology. The client is directed to reflect intensely on their past relationships, and then to consider what they have done for others, what others have done for them, and the difficulties they have caused for others. The goal is to help the client recognize the interdependence of humans, and to appreciate whether or not they, as well as others, have acted responsibly within the relationships. By confronting feelings of guilt and unworthiness, it is hoped that the client will realize that they have been loved and appreciated nonetheless (Walsh, 1995).

Belinda Siew Luan Khong (2003) has examined the role of responsibility in a particular form of existential psychotherapy known as **daseinsanalysis** (developed by the Swiss psychiatrist Medard Boss and grounded in the philosophy of Heidegger) and compared it to Buddhist practice in the Theravadan tradition. She found that daseinsanalysis and Buddhist practices share much in common, and that both have something to offer to each other:

...An integration of these two disciplines will make their ideas and practices more accessible to communities outside their traditional domains. The daseinsanalytic and Buddhist perspectives relating to personal and social responsibility provide us with valuable philosophical and psychological insights into this very important human phenomenon and show us practically how individuals can be assisted in taking responsibility for every moment of their existence, and to develop a sense of responsibility to different situations. (pg. 158; Khong, 2003)

Stephen Batchelor, a former Buddhist monk turned author and teacher, has presented existentialism as an interesting approach to the primary problem facing Buddhism in America today (Batchelor, 1983). According to Batchelor, Buddhism in the west is split between those who wish to follow a traditional path (emphasizing meditation and practice) and those who insist upon an academic approach to the analysis and understanding of Buddhism. Between the two approaches lies a great chasm. As we have seen, existentialism draws its deepest and most meaningful philosophy from nothingness, be it the distinction between Being and beings (Dasein, according to Heidegger) or the shell separating the pour-soi from the en-soi (as proposed by Sartre). Drawing primarily from his Buddhist training and the philosophy of Heidegger and Tillich (see below), Batchelor contrasts **being-alone** and **being-with**. We are essentially alone at birth and at death, in that we cannot share the experience with others, and this leads to unavoidable anxiety throughout our lives (though not necessarily overwhelming anxiety for most people). As we will see in the next chapter, the first noble truth of Buddhism is that human life is suffering. But just as much as we are alone, we are unavoidably linked to others as well. What matters then, is that we experience authentic **being-with-others**, and the root of authentic being-with is concern for others (as opposed to the inauthentic distortion of self-concern; Batchelor, 1983).

The genuine welfare of man, of both oneself and others, is found in the optimum actualization of the potentialities of his being. To exist in the fullest possible way in our aloneness as well as in our relations with others is the fulfillment of the inner aim of human life...(pg. 88; Batchelor, 1983)

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2.1.7: Some Final Thoughts

Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943) is considered the defining text of modern existentialism. Sartre was an atheist, so the brief introduction to existentialism in this chapter went in the direction of atheism. However, Frankl and May were not atheists, and one of May's most influential mentors, as well as a close personal friend, was Paul Tillich. Tillich remains a well-known and respected existential philosopher in the spiritual tradition. May went so far as to say that Tillich's book *The Courage to Be* might be the best and most understandable presentation of existentialism as an approach to life that has been written in English (May, 1983).

It is also interesting to note that both Frankl and May were significantly influenced by Alfred Adler. Frankl worked closely with Adler for a time, and May took a summer course with Adler. Both cite Adler regularly in their writings. Adler's focus on the childhood struggle against one's own inferiority, his emphasis on social interest as a responsible means to superiority, and his recognition of the dangers inherent in seeking superiority at the expense of others, all fit well with the existential perspective on making responsible choices in living one's life. This point emphasizes, once again, the profound influence that Adler has had on psychology, and that he is in all probability the most under-recognized figure in the history of psychology.

In 1897, William James published an essay entitled *Is Life Worth Living?* (James, 1897/1992). James begins by describing how some people see the value in life, indeed they fully enjoy life, no matter what happens to them or around them. However, for most people this is not the case, and there is no magic way to give everyone such an optimistic point of view. So, James presents a series of arguments that one might use with suicidal people (that is the term he uses) in order to convince them that life is worth living. He relies heavily on religious faith, though not on any particular religion, but also leads into a discussion of existential thought. Approximately a decade before Frankl and May were even born, James wrote the following words:

...Suppose, however thickly evils crowd upon you, that your unconquerable subjectivity proves to be their match, and that you find a more wonderful joy than any passive pleasure can bring in trusting ever in the larger whole. Have you not now made life worth living on these terms?...This life is worth living, we can say, *since it is what we make it, from the moral point of view*, and we are determined to make it from that point of view, so far as we have anything to do with it, a success...These, then, are my last words to you: Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact. (pp. 501-503; James, 1897/1992)

The challenges that we all face in trying to live authentic lives, the challenges of making responsible and ethical choices that are true to who we ourselves are, can be difficult. In a fascinating book entitled *Not a Genuine Black Man*, Brian Copeland (2006) talks about his family's racial struggles during the civil rights movement and the difficulties he faces today as a Black man who has adopted many so-called "White" cultural values. Copeland insists, however, that we cannot so easily claim that any given value or personal interest belongs only to one group of people:

...When all is said and done, I AM indeed a Genuine Black Man - because I am resilient. That's what being black in America is truly about: resilience...I stayed on my feet through taunts and harassment, through police intimidation and bigoted nuns, through schoolyard bullies and Sylvester, through my mother's death and bouts of sometimes crippling depression. I am still standing.

I am black because, as my friend Mr. Wilkins once told me, people should be called what they *want* to be called. I have the right and the ability to determine my identity regardless of what other blacks or whites say. I am not an "oreo," nor am I "still a nigger." I am a man. I am a black man.

No one person or group of individuals holds the monopoly on what in this society is the "true" black experience. My world is as "black" as that of Malcolm X, Colin Powell, Snoop Dogg, Jesse Jackson, Usher, Bill Cosby, or Diddy. As their experiences in America are unique, mine is unique - yet it is the same. It is as valid as that of the poor African American living in "the 'hood," the rich black rapper balancing a lifestyle of fame and violence, and the black scholar working to better this world through academic dissertation. It is as authentic as the experiences of those who marched with Dr. King for civil rights and those who defy the black community by arguing the conservative point of view.

It is the "true" black experience because it is my experience... (pp. 243-244; Copeland, 2006)

? discussion question 2.1.7.1

Brian Copeland talked about how difficult it can be to live an authentic life when you don't meet the expectations of others. Have you ever gone against the advice of family or friends?

Did it prove to be the right decision, or did it at least help you to feel better about your own confidence in yourself?

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2.1.8: Personality Theory in Real Life

The Application of Frankl's Theories to the Workplace and Everyday Life

In 1989, Stephen Covey published *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Covey's book became very popular, selling millions of copies on the way to becoming a #1 New York Times bestseller. If you were to read the first chapter of that book now, it would seem very familiar. Covey presents a very existential approach to understanding our lives, particularly with regard to the problems we experience every day. Perhaps it should not be surprising, then, that in the chapters describing the first two of these seven habits he cites and quotes Viktor Frankl numerous times. Indeed, Covey cites Frankl's first two books as being profoundly influential in his own life, and how impressed Covey was having met Frankl shortly before Frankl's death (see Covey's foreword in Pattakos, 2004).

The first two habits, according to Covey, are: 1) be proactive, and 2) begin with the end in mind. He briefly describes Frankl's experiences in the concentration camps, and refers to Frankl's most widely quoted saying, that Frankl himself could decide how his experiences would affect him, and that no one could take that freedom away from Frankl! People who choose to develop this level of personal freedom are certainly being proactive, as opposed to responding passively to events that occur around them and to them. It is not necessary, of course, to suffer such tragic circumstances in order to become proactive in one's own life:

...It is in the ordinary events of every day that we develop the proactive capacity to handle the extraordinary pressures of life. It's how we make and keep commitments, how we handle a traffic jam, how we respond to an irate customer or a disobedient child. It's how we view our problems and where we focus our energies. It's the language we use. (pg. 92; Covey, 1989)

Covey compares his habit of beginning with the end in mind to logotherapy, helping people to recognize the meaning that their life holds. Covey works primarily in business leadership training, so the value of working toward a greater goal than simply keeping a company in business from day to day is clear, especially for those who care about employee morale and quality control (see also *Principle-Centered Leadership*; Covey, 1990). When employees share a sense of purpose in their work, they are likely to have higher intrinsic motivation. Think about it for a moment. Have you ever had a job you didn't really understand, and didn't care about? Have you ever been given that sort of homework in school or college? So, how much effort did you really put into that job or assignment?

Covey's remaining habits are: 3) put first things first, 4) think win/win, 5) seek first to understand, then to be understood, 6) synergize, and 7) sharpen the saw. At first glance these principles seem reasonably straight forward, emphasizing practical and responsible actions. However, what does "sharpen the saw" mean? Sharpening the saw refers to keeping our tools in good working order, and we are our most important tool. Covey considers it essential to regularly and consistently, in wise and balanced ways, to exercise the four dimensions of our nature: physical, mental, social/emotional, and spiritual. By investing in ourselves, we are taking care to live an authentic life.

More recently, Covey has examined his principles beyond the business world. In 1997 he published *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, a book in which he applies the same 7 habits to family life. Covey

certainly has solid credentials as a family man, as father of 9 and grandfather of 43 children, and he won the 2003 Fatherhood Award from the National Fatherhood Initiative. Drawing in large part on his own extensive, personal experience, Covey uses many stories, anecdotes, and examples of real-life situations to help provide context to the challenges of raising a family and how we might best work with them. But first, he introduces a simple process: have a clear vision of what you want to accomplish, have a plan of how you might accomplish it, and use a compass (your own unique gifts that enable you to be an agent of change in your family). In essence, Covey is recommending that you prepare yourself to develop the seven habits. We all know how difficult it is to establish a new habit or break a bad habit; how is your New Year's resolution going?

Just as families change, so does the world we live in. Recently, Covey addressed this change by proposing an eighth habit (Covey, 2004). He says that this was not simply an important habit he had overlooked before, but one that has risen to new significance as we have fully entered the age of information and technology in the twenty-first century. As communication has become much easier (e.g., email), it has also become less personal and meaningful. Thus the need for the eighth habit: find your voice and inspire others to find theirs. According to Covey, "voice is unique personal significance." Essentially, it is the same as finding meaning in one's life, and then helping others to find meaning in their own lives. It is through finding a mission or a purpose in life that we can move "from effectiveness to greatness" (Covey, 2004).

Whereas Covey presented an approach to personal and professional effectiveness (and later to greatness as well) that parallels the principles set forth by Viktor Frankl, Alex Pattakos very directly applies Frankl's theories to both the workplace and one's everyday life in *Prisoners of Our Thoughts: Viktor Frankl's Principles at Work* (with a foreword by Stephen Covey; Pattakos, 2004). Frankl himself urged Pattakos to publish his book during a meeting in 1996. Pattakos, like Covey, has been profoundly influenced by Frankl's writings throughout Pattakos' career. According to Pattakos, we are creatures of habit, and we prefer a life that is both predictable and within our comfort zone. As the world is changing in the twenty-first century, so the conditions under which we work are changing. Pattakos believes there is a need for humanizing work. More than just balancing one's personal life and career, humanizing work is an attempt to honor our own individuality and to fully engage our human spirit at work. Simply put, it is an effort to apply Frankl's will-to-meaning in our workplace (Pattakos, 2004).

Like Covey, Pattakos presents seven core principles. They are similar to Covey's seven habits, but in keeping with Pattakos' intentions they are aligned more directly with the principles of logotherapy and existential psychology described by Frankl. The seven core principles are: 1) exercise the freedom to choose your attitude, 2) realize your will-to-meaning, 3) detect the meaning of life's moments, 4) don't work against yourself, 5) look at yourself from a distance, 6) shift your focus of attention, and 7) extend beyond yourself. These principles include not only the ideas of personal freedom and will-to-meaning, but also dereflection (principles 4 and 6) and the will-to-ultimate-meaning (principle 7). Clearly Pattakos has accomplished his goal of applying logotherapy to the workplace, but how well does this application work in real life?

Pattakos describes the case of a probation officer with the state department of corrections. Rick, as Pattakos identifies him, was raised in foster care and orphanages. However, rather than developing a sense of caring and concern for others who have difficulties in their lives, Rick refers to his clients as “maggots.” Rick has become insensitive and unforgiving, he has also become deeply depressed and anxious. Overall, he feels lost, unhappy, and unfulfilled, and he doesn’t know what to do about it. According to Pattakos, he has become a prisoner of his own thoughts, and only he has the key to his own freedom. Very simply put, he needs to find a new job or find meaning in the one he has now. One possibility is for Rick to consider his own life circumstances in relationship to his clients:

...Whenever we stop long enough to connect to ourselves, to our environment, to those with whom we work, to the task before us, to the extraordinary interdependence that is always part of our lives, we experience meaning. Meaning is who we are in this world. And it is the world that graces us with meaning. (pg. 157; Pattakos, 2004)

By making a responsible choice to seek meaning in our lives, to not work against ourselves, we can put ourselves on a path we had not seen before:

When we live and work with meaning, we can choose to make meaning, to see meaning, and to share meaning. We can choose our attitudes to life and work; we can choose how to respond to others, how to respond to our jobs, and how to make the very best of difficult circumstances. We can transcend ourselves and be transformed by meaning. We can find connection to meaning at work, in the most unusual places and with the most unexpected people. Meaning is full of surprises. (pg. 159; Pattakos, 2004)

And finally, it does not matter what sort of job we have. It is our choice, our freedom:

No matter what our specific job might be, it is the *work* we do that represents who we are. When we meet our work with enthusiasm, appreciation, generosity, and integrity, we meet it with meaning. And no matter how mundane a job might seem at the time, we can transform it with meaning. Meaning is life’s legacy, and it is as available to us at work as it is available to us in our deepest spiritual quests. We breathe, therefore we are - spiritual. Life is; therefore it is - meaningful. We do, therefore we work.

Viktor Frankl’s legacy was one of hope and possibility. He saw the human condition at its worst, and human beings behaving in ways intolerable to the imagination. He also saw human beings rising to heights of compassion and caring in ways that can only be described as miraculous acts of unselfishness and transcendence. There is something in us that can rise above and beyond everything we think possible... (pg. 162; Pattakos, 2004)

✓ discussion question 2.1.8.1

Stephen Covey and Alex Pattakos have applied Frankl's theories to both the workplace and our everyday lives. How well do you think the principles of existential psychology can address the problems that you face at work, home, school, etc.? Is it ever really as simple as applying one's will and choosing to act responsibly? Do you live an authentic life?

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2.1.S: Chapter Summary

Review of Key Points

- Existentialism focuses on an individual's subjective "truth." The freedom and responsibility that come with personal truth lead to anxiety, but they can also elevate the individual to lead an authentic life.
- Heidegger believed that all creatures are connected, but that only humans can become aware of this connection. Dasein, the realization of this connection, allows us to connect with Being. Awareness of our impending death, however, leads to anxiety, but if we accept that truth we can live an authentic life.
- Sartre believed that humans were unique, something he called en-soi. Awareness of the nothingness that separates the en-soi from the pour-soi is what drives some individuals to make something significant of their lives. For those who cannot, Sartre expressed a need for existential psychoanalysis.
- Viktor Frankl developed his ideas for logotherapy (an existential psychoanalysis) during his impressive early career. He had an extraordinary opportunity to put his ideas to the test while imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camps.
- Recognized as the third Viennese school of psychotherapy, logotherapy focuses on one's will-to-meaning, the desire to find meaning and purpose in one's life.
- People who cannot find meaning experience existential frustration, which can lead to a noogenic neurosis.
- Logotherapy itself relies primarily on the techniques of paradoxical intention and dereflection. These techniques are designed to break the cycle of anticipatory anxiety and failure that plague individuals who suffer from existential crises.
- Going beyond ordinary, everyday life, Frankl proposed a super-meaning to life, and he suggested that there is also a will-to-ultimate-meaning that can be pursued through religion or spirituality. In this light, Frankl referred to logotherapy as "height psychology" (in contrast to depth psychology, another term for psychoanalysis).
- Rollo May believed that anxiety underlies nearly every crisis. He proposed that anxiety must be understood in terms of freedom, and he distinguished between normal anxiety and neurotic anxiety.
- Culture has significant effects on the nature and amount of anxiety that people are likely to experience in their lives. Since anxiety can lead to hostility, these cultural factors are, and have been throughout history, very important issues (e.g., opposition to the civil rights movement in the United States, and the recent dramatic rise in international terrorism).
- A critical factor in life, according to May, is our ability to integrate into our world. One of the challenges to integration is the human dilemma: whether we are the subject or the object in our lives. As self-aware beings we can know that we are both subject and object, and so, in psychological terms, we exist in a world between either behaviorism or humanistic psychology.
- There are different types of love, all of which are very important to our lives. Love can give meaning to our lives, but it must be honest and responsible love.
- Through will and intentionality we can give structure to our lives and meaning to our actions. However, overwhelming anxiety can destroy our ability to participate actively in our own lives.
- The daimonic is any function that can take over the whole person. It can be a source of violence, but also a source of creativity. We can choose how the daimonic takes over, and whether that choice is responsible or not determines whether our actions are violent or creative.
- Being creative requires that we live in the future and actively participate in shaping our lives. Such bold choices require courage, especially in light of the inescapable reality that we will die.
- May felt that myth provides an important cultural framework within which we can form our lives. Unfortunately, the Western world has lost many of its myths, making people susceptible to cults, drugs, superstition, etc.
- According to May, the primary goal of existential psychotherapy is to help the client realize their own being, to have an "I-Am" experience. Time is an important aspect of this procedure. The client must be helped to shift their focus from the past to the future, and even more so, to transcend time altogether.
- Although existential psychology is younger than most other schools of psychology, it has much in common with ancient Eastern philosophies, such as Yoga, Buddhism, and Taoism.
- Terrorism is not the result of Islam. Terrorists are found all over the world, from many different races, religions, and nationalities. Islam opposes violence and murder.
- Terrorism is based on psychological factors (a perception that there are no alternatives, and that terrorism is legitimate), and seeks to cause psychological effects (feelings of terror and helplessness). Thus, psychologists have an important role to play in understanding and eliminating terrorism.

- One can easily find those who believe that terrorism either never works or always works. Some believe that we must respond with understanding to eliminate the root causes of terrorism, whereas others believe we must use force (but not too much force, lest we become terrorists as well). Clearly there are no easy answers for dealing with terrorists themselves or terrorism in general.

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3.1.1: Chapter Introduction

Erik Erikson is one of the few personality theorists from a Western perspective who addressed the entire lifespan. He shifted from Freud's emphasis on psychosexual conflicts to one of psychosocial crises, which have unique manifestations through adulthood and old age. Erikson's theory has always been popular, but as our society has become increasingly older the need has grown to understand the aged individual, making Erikson's perspective even more valuable and relevant today than it was when he first proposed it. If, indeed, Erikson's perspective on the personality changes occurring in adulthood and old age do become more relevant with time, it may result in an interesting change in Erikson's place in psychology. Although most personality textbooks devote a chapter to Erikson, and he is typically covered in lifespan developmental texts as well, he is not mentioned in most history of psychology textbooks, and those that do mention him do so only briefly. As popular as he is with students of psychology, and most psychology faculty as well, becoming a common topic in the history of his field would be a distinct honor.

It is also important to note that Erikson was first, and foremost, a psychoanalyst, and a child psychoanalyst at that. He did not neglect the importance of childhood as he pursued the psychosocial changes that accompany aging:

One may scan work after work on history, society, and morality and find little reference to the fact that all people start as children and that all peoples begin in their nurseries. It is human to have a long childhood; it is civilized to have an ever longer childhood. Long childhood makes a technical and mental virtuoso out of man, but it also leaves a lifelong residue of emotional immaturity in him. (pg. 12; Erikson, 1950)

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3.1.2: Brief Biography of Erik Erikson

The most curious aspect of Erik Erikson's life is certainly that his name was not Erikson. No one alive today knows the name of his real father, and he never learned it either. He implored his mother to tell him who his father was, as did his wife Joan, but Erikson's mother had promised her second husband, Theodor Homburger, the man who raised Erikson and whose name Erikson had been given, that she would never reveal the truth. And she kept that promise. When Erikson and his family moved to the United States, their son Kai was taunted by schoolmates, who called him "hamburger, hamburger." So, Erikson and his wife turned to the Scandinavian tradition of naming a son after his father, and they called their son Kai Erik's son, or Kai Erikson. They then adopted the surname themselves, becoming Erik and Joan Erikson. It is also surprising to note that Joan Erikson's name was not Joan. Her first name was Sarah, and as a child she was called Sally. According to her daughter Sue, she hated both names, and eventually chose to be called Joan (Sue Erikson Bloland, 2005).

Erik Homburger Erikson was born Erik Salomonsen on June 15, 1902, near Frankfurt, Germany. His mother, Karla Abrahamsen, was from a wealthy Jewish family in Copenhagen, Denmark. She had married a man named Valdemar Salomonsen, but her husband left Europe within a day of their marriage and went to North America; she never saw him again and he seems to have had no further relationship with her. A few years later she became pregnant, and in order to avoid scandal, she either left or was sent away from Denmark to Germany, where she would be near relatives. She settled near Frankfurt, and raised Erikson alone. Shortly after Erikson was born, they received word that Valdemar Salomonsen had died, making Erikson's mother a widow. When, at about the age of 3, Erikson became ill, his mother took him to the local pediatrician, Theodor Homburger. Karla Abrahamsen and Theodor Homburger fell in love, got married, and Homburger helped to raise Erikson as his own son. Erikson was 8 years old when he learned the truth that Homburger was not his father, but he still grew up as Erik Homburger, since his mother never revealed the truth about his actual father's name (Bloland, 2005; Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

As a child, Erikson was never secure in his relationship with his mother. They were close, and his mother delighted in his intelligence and sensitivity. She shared her passion for philosophy and art with her son, but she had to pay special attention to her new and very proper husband Dr. Homburger. Erikson himself was, by all accounts, deeply traumatized by his mother shifting her attention to this new husband, and by the deception he eventually learned about regarding the fact that Homburger was not his father. Although he was eventually adopted by Homburger, it was more about proper appearances than any close relationship between step-father and step-son. Later in life, Erikson rarely ever mentioned him (Bloland, 2005; Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

Erikson attended a primary school for 4 years, and then went to a very traditional *Gymnasium*. He studied Latin and Greek, German literature, ancient history, and art. He was not a particularly good student, but he excelled at history and art. Since the Homburger family was rather prestigious, and given his mother's interest in art, their home was often entertained by many regional artists. Erikson sought formal training as an artist, and was considered quite talented. So, rather than attending college, he spent a year wandering through Europe living a Bohemian lifestyle. However, he was still deeply troubled by his sense of having no identity, no heritage, and by his own account was marginally functional at best. He was able to make ends meet only because his mother secretly sent him money, something his step-father would have been very angry about, because Homburger was becoming openly intolerant of Erikson's avoidance of social and financial responsibility. After a year, Erikson returned home and entered an art school, and then went to Munich to study at another art school. After 2 years in Munich he moved to Florence, Italy, where he spent most of his time wandering around and studying people. He also made friends with other wandering artists, including a writer named Peter Blos, who had actually been in his graduating class at the *Gymnasium* and who later became a well-known child psychoanalyst. Eventually, however, Erikson realized he would not be successful as an artist, and he returned home, caught in the grip of a deep depression (Bloland, 2005; Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

Then, in 1927, something most important happened in Erikson's life. His friend Peter Blos had been privately tutoring the children of Dorothy Burlingham, a wealthy American who had come to Vienna for psychoanalysis and to meet Sigmund Freud. Blos had been living with the Burlinghams, and he also came to know the Freud family well, but he had decided that the time had come to move on. However, Mrs. Burlingham and her close, personal friend Anna Freud did not want to lose a teacher they were so fond of. So, they offered Blos the opportunity to establish a school of his own, and he invited Erikson to help him develop the curriculum and to teach art and history. Blos and Erikson were given a free hand to develop a progressive curriculum, and the two men flourished. The results were astounding. The children had great freedom, and with Erikson they studied art, music, poetry, German history, ancient history, geography, they read about Eskimos and American Indians, and they made tools, toys, and exhibits. The environment in what came to be known as the Hietzing School also provided much food for thought for Anna Freud, as she was just developing her ideas on the psychoanalysis of children (Bloland, 2005; Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

Through his relationship with the Burlingham family and Anna Freud, Erikson became well acquainted with the entire Freud family. He greatly impressed Anna Freud with how quickly he bonded with the children in the Hietzing School. So, he was accepted into psychoanalysis, both as a patient and a psychoanalyst in training. Since his interests in the school had shifted from teaching to studying and observing the children as they lived their lives, Erikson, like Anna Freud, was already interested in becoming a child psychoanalyst. As he pursued his psychoanalytic training, he also pursued training in the Montessori approach to education. He actually became one of only two men in the Vienna Montessori Women's Teacher Association. As if all this wasn't enough, in 1929 Erikson met Joan Serson. Born in a small town in Ontario, Canada, she had moved to Vienna to pursue her own studies (she had a Master's degree in Sociology, and had been working on a Ph.D.). The two met at a masked ball at a palace in Vienna, and before long were living together, and Serson was teaching at the Hietzing School with Erikson and Blos. In the spring of 1930, Serson went to Philadelphia, where her mother was very ill. While there she learned that she was pregnant. She returned to Vienna, only to find that Erikson balked at marrying her. However, a number of his friends urged him to avoid the mistakes of his own father, and that he should not abandon the woman who was carrying his child, let alone the child itself. So, Joan and Erik Erikson were married in 1930. She joined the faculty of the Hietzing School, and there were clearly some happy times:

After our marriage we lived on the Kueniglberg, above the school. When our son Kai was born (after some time out for Joan) we daily carried him between us in a laundry basket to the tiny schoolyard or the Rosenfelds' back porch. It became routine that the children would tell us during class when he was crying ("Kai weint"), and in the intermission some watched him being nursed. It was enriching for us all to share this experience. (pg. 5; Erikson & Erikson, 1980).

In 1932, however, the Hietzing School closed, in part because some of the children returned to America with their families, and in part because of different opinions on how the school should be run between Mrs. Burlingham and Anna Freud on one hand and Erikson and Blos on the other. Not only did it seem appropriate that Erikson move on from the school in Vienna, the climate in Europe was becoming increasingly hostile as the Nazis took over Germany and the surrounding areas (including Austria). Erikson was concerned about his family (they had two sons by that point). So Erikson moved his young family to America, in order to escape the dangerous conditions brewing in Europe (Bloland, 2005; Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

Considering his illustrious credentials, having been an acquaintance of Sigmund Freud and trained by Anna Freud, Erikson was welcomed into the American psychoanalytic community, despite never having graduated from college (let alone medical school). The Eriksons never really settled anywhere, in many ways his career was one of unending research and clinical experience. In 1933, the Eriksons moved to Boston, Massachusetts, and Erik received appointments at the Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital, and the Judge Baker Guidance Center. He was associated with the Harvard Psychological Clinic, and came to know Henry Murray. In 1936, he accepted a position at Yale University's Institute of Human Relations, where he met John Dollard. Dollard encouraged Erikson's interests in cross-cultural research and in extending Freud's theories to the entire lifespan. Indeed, Dollard may have had a significant influence on Erikson's eight-stage theory of development (Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

In the summer of 1938, the year that his daughter was born, Erikson joined anthropologist Scudder Mekeel on a trip to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota to study the children of the Sioux Indians. He was able to make extensive observations of mother-child interactions, and to talk with employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1939 the Eriksons moved to California. Erikson practiced psychoanalysis in San Francisco, taught at the University of California, and continued his studies on Native Americans by visiting the Yurok tribe in Northern California. During this time he consolidated his major interests into his most significant book, *Childhood and Society* (Erikson, 1950), which includes sections on the influence of social life, culture (based on his Native American studies), the use of toys and playing when studying children, the evolution of identity, and the eight stages of development. Erikson also became an American citizen (Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

In 1944, however, a disturbing and tragic event befell the Eriksons, one that they kept secret as much as possible. They had a fourth child, named Neil. When she went to deliver the child, Joan Erikson had been heavily sedated, because of a surgical procedure that had been planned ahead of time (as a result of an earlier pregnancy). Erikson was summoned by the doctors, who told him that his newborn child was a "Mongolian Idiot" (known today as a Down Syndrome child). The case was considered severe, and he was told it was unlikely that the child would live more than a year or two. The medical staff recommended having the child institutionalized. Erikson was not used to making such decisions, it was Joan who ran the household and supported him while he worked. He called a close friend, Margaret Mead. She assured him that the medical staff was right. Another friend, Joseph Wheelwright (a respected Jungian analyst) agreed. Erikson signed the necessary papers, and Neil Erikson was transferred before his mother ever woke up. The decision tormented both of them. Joan felt that she had never been given a chance to participate in the decision, but she also never made any effort to bring Neil home. They told their children that he had died, and many of their

friends never knew he had even existed (no mention is made in the 1970 biography by Robert Coles). After a year or two they did tell their oldest son, Kai, but he was strictly forbidden to mention Neil. Making the situation even more tragic was the fact that Neil lived to be 21 years old. Since much less was known about mental retardation at the time, and this occurred well before the prevailing attitude had begun to change, what else might the doctors have been wrong about (Bloland, 2005; Friedman, 1999)?

In 1949, Erikson was appointed as a professor at the University of California at Berkeley. Within a year, however, as McCarthyism gripped America, Erikson refused to sign a loyalty oath. Erikson protested publicly, his statement was read at conferences and published in the journal *Psychiatry*. He was not a communist, and had never had any interest in communism, but he felt that signing the oath would have made him a hypocrite, as well as being a betrayal of junior colleagues who had refused to sign the oath and were promptly dismissed. Although the tenure committee recommended that he be allowed to remain at the University of California, due in large part to the dismissal of junior colleagues, Erikson resigned his position. He was quickly offered a position at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

Erikson was something of a celebrity in Stockbridge. He spent 10 years in Stockbridge, during which he published *Young Man Luther* (Erikson, 1958), an historical/psychoanalytic biography that brought together two of Erikson's academic strengths, and that brought him a certain amount of acclaim. He also taught a graduate seminar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, using *Young Man Luther* as a model for the course. He was subsequently offered a professorship at Harvard, but not without some controversy. One of the faculty who protested Erikson's appointment, claiming that he came at too high a price (literally), was David McClelland. Others supported Erikson, and he was eventually appointed as a professor with no particular department. It proved to be a good decision. Erikson used his influence and personal connections to invite renowned guest speakers, ranging from pediatrician Benjamin Spock to anthropologist Margaret Mead and Beat poet Allen Ginsberg. He inspired students such as Howard Gardner, Carol Gilligan, and future congressman, senator, and Vice President of the United States Albert Gore, Jr. (Gore wrote a biography of his father for Erikson's class). Erikson also continued his interest in historical biography with the publication of *Gandhi's Truth* (Erikson, 1969), following a 3-month visit to India in 1962/1963. *Gandhi's Truth* won a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Always afraid that he would not be recognized for his accomplishments, Erikson hoped that he would also win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and he was disappointed when it did not happen (Bloland, 2005; Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

Erikson retired in 1970, and he and Joan returned to California. Erikson continued writing for a number of years, focusing on issues related to personality changes that accompany old age. Eventually, however, time began to catch up with him. In 1987, as his health deteriorated, he and Joan returned to Cambridge, Massachusetts to live with two young professors who could help Joan care for her husband. He died in 1994 (Bloland, 2005; Coles, 1970; Friedman, 1999).

Joan Erikson missed her husband terribly, but managed to spend some time on her own writing. She wrote several chapters that were added as an addendum to *The Life Cycle Completed*, in which she proposed a ninth stage of development (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). She spoke to their daughter Sue regularly as Sue followed her father's footsteps and became a psychoanalyst. Sue Erikson Bloland was deeply concerned, however, since Lawrence Friedman was about to publish his biography on Erikson, which included extensive coverage of the Erikson's son Neil. Fortunately, perhaps, Joan Erikson died in 1997, and never had to face the public reaction to Friedman's biography (Bloland, 2005).

Special Biographical Note: While preparing his biography on Erikson, Lawrence Friedman tried his best to identify Erikson's father. He went to Copenhagen to review historical documents and interview relatives, particularly in the Abrahamsen family. There was a persistent rumor that Erik Erikson had been named after his real father, who had been a court photographer. According to historical records of the appropriate time period, there were two court photographers in Copenhagen named Erik: Erik Strom and Erik Bahnsen. However, little evidence supports that either of these men could have been Erikson's father. Thus, Friedman concluded that this mystery will never be solved (Friedman, 1999).

✓ discussion question 3.1.2.1

Erikson never knew who his father was, so he never knew his heritage (at least on one side of his family). What do you know of your heritage? In what way, if any, has it influenced your personal development?

Placing Erikson in Context: Psychodynamic Challenges Across the Lifespan

Erik Erikson is well-known and popular, and he was highly respected by most of his colleagues. He knew Sigmund Freud personally, and he was trained in psychoanalysis by Anna Freud. And yet, it is difficult to place Erikson in context. He believed

that he had remained true to Freud's theories, but his shift from psychosexual stages to psychosocial crises, and his extension of them throughout the lifespan, was something that Anna Freud found objectionable, and she dismissed his work as "not much... designed to make my father's work palatable to Harvard freshman" (cited in Bloland, 2005). Erikson was always bothered by this rejection, even when the importance of his place in psychoanalytic theory was assured by others.

Erikson also stands apart from most other theorists with his emphasis on the continuation of psychodynamic processes throughout the lifespan. Although Jung had discussed the importance of middle age, his theorizing was based on Eastern perspectives, not on psychodynamic theory. A number of other analysts emphasized sociocultural factors in adulthood, including Adler and Horney, but only Erikson proposed a continuous, single theory from birth to old age, a theory based on traditional psychodynamic perspectives.

Erikson was not unique in his emphasis on cross-cultural studies, but other theorists typically looked to confirm their psychodynamic theory after the fact. Erikson's studies on the childhood of the Sioux and the Yurok helped him form his psychosocial theory, since those studies were part of his experience during the time his theory was forming in his mind.

And finally, Erikson was one of the few theorists who addressed personality changes in old age. As life expectancy continues to rise in America, there are many more elderly people today than ever before. And they are healthier at older ages as well. Thus, our understanding of the unique aspects of the elderly person will become increasingly more relevant, not only to psychology, but to all of society as well.

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3.1.3: Basic Concepts Underlying the Study of Development

Erikson is well known for his theory on the eight stages of development. He did not simply theorize these stages, of course. He drew upon Sigmund Freud's basic theories, Anna Freud's explorations in the psychological development of children, and his own experience as a teacher and, later, as a child psychoanalyst. In addition, he attempted to repeat many of his observations in different cultures, particularly in two Native American tribes, the Sioux and the Yurok. These basic principles and observations form the foundation upon which Erikson built his stage theory of development.

The Epigenetic Principle and Psychosocial Crises

Epigenesis is a biological term referring to the development of an embryo, and ultimately an adult organism, from an undifferentiated egg. Similarly, Erikson viewed psychological development as a series of predictable stages in each individual. We begin life without having faced or resolved any of these stages. Only the experience of our life can result in moving us along. This aspect of Erikson's theory is identical to Freud's. Where they differ, however, is on the matter of what are the critical factors that drive the process of these stages. For Sigmund Freud, it was psychosexual development, and each stage is based on the region of the body from which the child gains sexual satisfaction (first the mouth, then the anus, then the genitals, etc.). In contrast, Erikson proposed that the underlying framework for the developmental stages is a series of **psychosocial crises**. Erikson used the term psychosocial crises to refer to turning points, or crucial moments, in a person's development, which contain within them the potential for abnormal development and the failure to reach one's development.

In other words, we face predictable, yet critical, developmental tasks as we move through our lives. We cannot experience one aspect of a crisis without also experiencing the opposite aspect. Our goal, or task, is to achieve a greater degree of the favorable aspect of the crisis (such as being more trusting than distrusting; see below), within the context of our social and cultural environments (Erikson, 1950, 1954, 1968a).

Observing Children at Play

Erikson borrowed Freud's famous line regarding dreams as the royal road to the unconscious mind, saying instead that **play** is the royal road to understanding the young child's ego and identity development (Erikson, 1950). With very young children there is a unique challenge for both experimental psychologists and therapists: the child's limited language development. Not only does observing play allow for insight into ego development, it can also show us the capacity for the ego to find recreation and to cure itself, if necessary. This makes play useful in the therapeutic setting, as we saw when examining the contributions of Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott.

Erikson studied childhood play extensively, publishing articles that included clinical notes on how and why children build things or choose the toys they play with (Erikson, 1937), psychological factors behind and effects of disruptions in play (Erikson, 1940), gender differences in play (Erikson, 1955), and ethnic, racial, nationality, and socioeconomic status differences in play (Erikson, 1972). Ultimately, Erikson published *Toys and Reasons* (Erikson, 1977), in which he argued that childhood play provides a basis for ritualizing our life experiences, and that ritualization continues throughout the stages of life. Whether play serves to help master and resolve traumatic experiences, or provides catharsis for pent-up emotion or surplus energy, or whether it has a functional role in which a child can exercise new faculties and potentials in preparation for the future, Erikson argued that play is an act of renewal and self-expression, one that can be an expression of inventiveness and abandon. Play provides a means for connecting with others, in order to cope with the challenges of life (Erikson, 1977).

? discussion question 3.1.3.1

Have you ever watched children play? What has it told you about the individual child, and is it always consistent with who you think that child is? What sort of games or sports do you like to play, and do you like to play with children?

The Value of Cross-Cultural Studies

The value of studying other cultures was summarized rather succinctly by Erikson in an interview with Richard Evans:

The interesting thing was that all the childhood problems which we had begun to take seriously on the basis of pathological developments in our own culture, the Indians talked about spontaneously and most seriously without any prodding. They referred

to our stages as the decisive steps in the making of a good Sioux Indian or a good Yurok Indian...And “good” meant whatever seemed “virtuous” in a “strong” man or woman in that culture. I think this contributed eventually to my imagery of basic human strengths. (pg. 62; Erikson cited in Evans, 1964)

So, it was actually on the basis of cross-cultural comparisons that Erikson felt confident in proposing his eight stage theory of psychosocial development.

Erikson was deeply indebted to two anthropologists, H. Scudder Mekeel and Alfred Kroeber, who introduced him to the Sioux and Yurok tribes they had been studying. Through their introductions, Erikson was able to gain the confidence of the individual Sioux and Yurok who provided Erikson with invaluable evidence on their traditional ways of life and their child-rearing practices. But it is important to note that Native Americans were not the only other cultural groups that Erikson studied. He studied the childhood myths of Hitler and the Bolshevik myth of Maxim Gorky’s youth, in an attempt to understand the terrible political events that occurred in Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. He also examined the factors influencing Black identity in America. He suggested that one of the greatest struggles for Blacks in this country, after the Civil War had ended slavery, was the mostly false promise of a better life in the North. As they left behind their successful identity as slaves (Note: successful only means that it was a clear identity, not that it was moral or justified) for a fragmented identity of supposedly free people, though prejudice and discrimination were still rampant, even in the North. Erikson made some interesting comparisons between Blacks and Native Americans in terms of their attempts to identify their place in American society:

I have mentioned the fact that mixed-blood Indians in areas where they hardly ever see Negroes refer to their full-blood brothers as “niggers,” thus indicating the power of the national imagery which serves to contrast the dominant ideal images and the dominant evil images in the inventory of available prototypes. No individual can escape this opposition of images which, in a great variety of syndromes, is all-pervasive in the men and in the women, in the majorities and in the minorities, and in all the classes of a given national or cultural unit. (pg. 215; Erikson, 1950)

Individuals try to resolve their identity crises in as simple and straightforward a way as possible. Every group within a society is somewhat familiar with the stereotypical identity attributed to other groups, and these factors play an important role, even when they are expressed in negative ways, such as mixed-blood Native Americans calling full-blooded Native Americans “niggers.” Erikson later noted that full-blooded Sioux on the Pine Ridge Reservation turn around and call their half-blooded brothers “white trash” (Erikson, 1980a). These factors also tell us something about the place different groups occupy in the minds of members of other groups, and how that might influence the individuals within those groups. We will return to the concept of identity after examining Erikson’s stages of development.

? discussion question 3.1.3.2

Erikson believed that his theories had been confirmed in different cultures, such as the Sioux and the Yurok. Do you think his theories apply to all cultures? If not, what problems do you see with his work?

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3.1.4: Erikson's Eight Stages of Development

Many people are familiar with Erikson's eight stages of life, but what is less well known is that each stage is tied to specific, basic social institutions and is also associated with a particular strength, which Erikson believed gave the individual a "semblance of instinctive certainty in his social ecology" (Erikson, 1968a; see also Erikson, 1950). Each stage can also be viewed as awakening a specific sense of estrangement, which can become the basis for psychopathology. As we are about to see, the first stage is basic trust vs. basic mistrust. If a child develops basic trust, they will also develop the basic strength of hope. Then, as they progress through life, they will likely encounter situations in which people cannot be trusted, but the person can remain hopeful. In contrast, hopelessness is a term closely identified with depression, and it is easy to see how a person who learns from the beginning of life that the people around them, indeed the whole world (as they perceive it), is a threatening and untrustworthy place. As each of the eight stages is introduced, the title will begin with the general age at which the stage occurs, the psychosocial crisis experienced during that stage, and finally, the primary human strength that is associated with the successful resolution of the crisis.

Infancy - Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust - Hope: The primary relationship (or social institution) of this first stage is the mother. The infant needs to be fed (and traditionally this was only breast-feeding), comforted, and protected. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the child does not necessarily recognize that the mother is a separate person, so the bond between them is extraordinarily intimate. It is inevitable, however, that the child will experience discomfort and pain, and that the mother will not be able to immediately attend to every need. In such times of distress, the child who mostly trusts in the care of their mother will be able to hope that the care is coming.

Figure 3.1.4.1

As a young child develops a sense of autonomy, they begin to do more for themselves.

Early Childhood - Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt - Will: At this stage, both parents become the primary social institution. As young children develop the ability to walk and talk they begin to do many things for themselves. However, their actions often lead to restrictions, as they experience the categorical rules of "yes and no," "right and wrong," or "good and bad." Shame is the consequence of being told that one is bad or wrong. Doubt arises when the child is unsure. As they develop their will power, i.e., their exercise of free will, they may not be sure what to do in a certain situation. A child who has been supported in exercising their autonomy will develop the will power to restrain themselves without experiencing shame or doubt. For example, they will learn not to run out into the busy street, and even feel good about their ability to take care of and protect themselves. It is often fascinating to watch a young child demonstrate this protectiveness when they interact with an even younger child. One can easily see the satisfaction in understanding rules and guidelines as, say, an eight-year old looks after a two-year old cousin.

Play Age - Initiative vs. Guilt - Purpose: The entire family (e.g., siblings, grandparents, etc.) provides the social context for this developmental stage. As the child of age three or four years old becomes able to do much more, and to do so more vigorously, they begin to realize something of what is expected of them as adults. So, they begin to play with other children, older children, and to play games that mimic things done by adults. This helps them to develop a sense of purpose, and to pursue valued goals and skills. Excessive initiative, especially when combined with autonomy, can lead to problems such as rivalry and jealousy, especially with younger siblings. It can also lead to aggressive manipulation or coercion. Consequently, the child can begin to feel guilty about their actions, especially if they are punished.

Figure 3.1.4.2

As children grow a little older, they begin to mimic what they see being done by older children and adults.

School Age - Industry vs. Inferiority - Competence: The social institutions relevant to this stage now move outside the family, including the neighborhood, community, and schools. It is one thing to play adult roles, such as in the previous stage, but in this stage the child actually begins the process of preparing to be a caretaker and provider for others, such as their own children. In all cultures, according to Erikson, at this age (beginning at 5 to 6 years old) children receive some form of systematic training, and they also learn eagerly from older children. Unfortunately, some children are not as successful as others, particularly in the restrictive learning environment of schools. Keep in mind that Erikson was trained in the Montessori style of education, which emphasizes free exploration and active learning, at each child's own pace (Lillard & Jessen, 2003; Spietz, 1991). If children are indeed successful, if they are given the freedom to learn, they will develop a sense of competence, which will help them to persevere when faced with more challenging tasks.

Adolescence - Identity vs. Role Diffusion, Confusion - Fidelity: The family finally loses its place of primacy as a social institution, as peer groups and outgroups become the most significant social institutions. According to Erikson, childhood comes to

an end when a person has developed the skills and tools to proceed into adulthood. First, however, there is the period in which one's body changes from a child to an adult: **puberty**. Known psychologically as adolescence, it is a period in which each person must determine how they will fit their particular skills into the adult world of their culture. This requires forming one's identity. The fidelity that Erikson speaks of refers to the ability to remain true to oneself, and to one's significant others. This period is easiest for children who are gifted and well trained in the pursuit of clear goals, and also for children who receive a good deal of affirmation from their peers.

The pursuit of one's identity can be quite challenging, and we will examine identity in more detail in the next section. But first, one way to cope with the challenge of forming one's identity is to stop doing it for a while, something Erikson called a psychosocial **moratorium** (Erikson, 1959). A moratorium is a break that one takes in life before committing oneself to a career. Some people serve in the military or the Peace Corps before coming home and taking their place in the community. Some travel, and try to "see the world," before starting college. Erikson considered the moratorium to be a natural and, in many cases, quite productive activity. To cite one of Erikson's examples, a young Charles Darwin, who had been training for the ministry, left England on a 5-year voyage on a ship called the Beagle in order to participate in geological studies (he was also studying geology). It was during that trip that he made the initial observations of animals and fossils that ultimately led to his theory of evolution.

Young Adulthood - Intimacy vs. Isolation - Love: With the onset of adulthood, the most significant social factors become partners in friendship, sex, competition, and cooperation. Once an individual has consolidated their own identity, they are capable of the self-abandonment necessary for intimate affiliations, passionate sexual unions, or inspiring encounters. According to Erikson, sexual encounters prior to fulfilling this stage are of the identity-confirming kind, rather than the truly intimate sexual relationships based on love. Love is the mutual devotion of two people. Individuals who are unsuccessful in making intimate contacts are at risk for exaggerating their isolation, which brings with it the danger of not making any new contacts that might lead to the very intimate relationship they are lacking.

Adulthood - Generativity vs. Stagnation, Self-Absorption - Care: The family household, including divided labor and shared household duties, becomes the primary social institution of adulthood. Erikson also referred to adulthood as **maturity**, and he considered this stage to be reciprocal. A mature person needs to be needed, and it is their very maturity that guides them to care for the needs of others. So, generativity is the concern with helping to establish and guide the next generation. It is psychosocial because it includes productivity and creativity, not just procreation. When the potential enrichment to be found in generativity fails, the consequences are often seen in the estrangements of the next generation. In other words, the children of stagnant, self-absorbed parents may have great difficulty forming their own identities and achieving intimacy in their relationships.

Old Age - Integrity vs. Despair - Wisdom: The social concerns for those approaching the end of life include "Humanity" and "Family." Wisdom allows one to maintain and convey the integrity of one's lifetime of experience, despite the gradual physical decline of the body. Wise people are able to pass on an integrated heritage to the next generation. For those who have failed to integrate their life's experiences, despair arises as the fear of death, death being the time limit on their opportunity to achieve integrity. Erikson described wisdom as "a detached and yet active concern with life in the face of death" (Erikson, 1968a).

Is there a ninth stage? After Erikson died, Joan Erikson wrote a few short chapters that were added to *The Life Cycle Completed* (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). Erikson had suggested that his wife was an important contributor to all of his theories, throughout his career, so it was not surprising that she offered these additions after his death. Indeed, they are most likely the result of her observations regarding his death, something he could then no longer write about.

Very Old Age - Despair vs. Gerotranscendence: Unlike the earlier stages, Joan Erikson felt that the negative aspect of this stage should be placed first. People who make it to 90 years old, and beyond, are close to death. Their bodies are steadily deteriorating, most, if not all, of their friends have died, some of their children may have died, their spouse has likely died, and the despair they face is quite real. The despair experienced in the eighth stage involves looking back at one's life, but in the ninth stage it involves looking squarely at one's present reality, and passing once again through life's stages. People who are very old can no longer trust their own capabilities, and they may need to be cared for, thus losing some of their autonomy. Their sense of purpose is dulled, and they lose the urgency and energy necessary to be industrious. Likewise, their identity may become unclear once again, and they can become isolated and self-absorbed. However, some very old people hold a special place in their families and/or communities, and may withdraw only by choice, in order to contemplate and be at peace with their life. Joan Erikson refers to this choice as a dance with life:

With great satisfaction I have found that "transcendence" become very much alive if it is activated into "transcendence," which speaks to soul and body and challenges it to rise above the dystonic, clinging aspects of our worldly existence that burden and distract us from true growth and aspiration.

To reach for gerotranscendence is to rise above, exceed, outdo, go beyond, independent of the universe and time. It involves surpassing all human knowledge and experience. How, for heaven's sake, is this to be accomplished? I am persuaded that only by doing and making do we become. (pg. 127; Erikson & Erikson, 1997)

? discussion question 3.1.4.1

Joan Erikson proposed a ninth stage, when death is imminent. Do you agree with this stage; do you hope it is possible to achieve gerotranscendence? Have you known anyone who was very old and facing death, and what was it like for them?

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3.1.5: The Importance of Identity

The developmental crisis that Erikson focused much of his career on was that of developing one's identity. From the beginning of publishing his theories, he emphasized that a lot of the psychological distress and pathological symptoms seen in childhood can be interpreted as the child expressing their *right* to find an identity in the world, and neurosis typically results from the loss of one's identity (Erikson, 1950). Erikson returned to this theme repeatedly in books such as *Identity and the Life Cycle* (Erikson, 1980a; originally published in 1959), *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (Erikson, 1968b), and *Dimensions of a New Identity* (Erikson, 1974). He also published *A Memorandum on Identity and Negro Youth* at the height of the Civil Rights Movement in America (Erikson, 1964). The importance of identity, and the stage of identity vs. role-diffusion and confusion, is that only upon completion of the first four stages of life is the ego fully mature, the point at which a person is ready to be an adult. But the entire period, the entire psychosocial crisis, is a critical time of transition:

Adolescents have always been especially open to conversion or to what is now called consciousness-expansion in the direction of physical, spiritual, and social experience. Their cognitive capacities and social interests are such that they want to go to the limit of experience before they fit themselves into their culture and fit their culture to themselves. (pg. 37; Erikson cited in Evans, 1964)

A General Definition of Identity

Since Erikson labeled his fifth stage of development identity vs. role diffusion and/or confusion, it is common to think that identity formation is something that occurs during adolescence. Actually, identity formation begins at birth, and continues throughout the lifespan. It is only in adolescence that the individual finally has the material around which to form an integrated identity that can remain somewhat stable, hence the psychosocial crisis that arises during that process of integration and more stable identity formation. Thus, a child will have some sense of self, but it is not until adolescence that it becomes a crisis. So what is that sense of self that forms the identity? Erikson himself turned to two great men, whom he described as “bearded and patriarchal founding fathers of the psychologies on which our thinking on identity is based:” William James and Sigmund Freud (Erikson, 1968).

A man's character is discernible in the mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says: “*This is the real me!*” (pg. 19; William James in a letter to his wife, cited in Erikson, 1968)

Moving beyond James' very personal description, Freud spoke of his Jewish identity as something that provided a cultural context in which he lived his life, even though he was never religious, and openly despised religion. He felt that he shared a Jewish cultural nature, which offered an explanation for, as well as a justification for, aspects of his personality that defied any other obvious explanation.

Based on these perspectives by James and Freud, Erikson described identity as a process rooted in the core of the individual, yet also rooted in the core of their communal culture. This complicated process involves both judging oneself in light of how others judge you, as well as judging the judgments others make about you. Eventually, the interplay between psychological and social factors results in an identity based on **psychosocial relativity** (Erikson, 1968). In other words, one's identity is very much influenced by where a person sees themselves fitting into their world. Consequently, a person may develop a healthy identity, or they can just as easily develop a negative identity (see below).

The term **identity crisis** was first used by Erikson during World War II, to describe a particular psychological disorder. They encountered patients, who had been fighting in the war, who had become severely disturbed. However, they could not be described in the typical ways, such as being “shell-shocked” or just faking mental illness to escape combat. Instead, they had lost a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity. Erikson proposed that they had lost the central control over that part of their self that psychoanalysts could only describe as the ego. Thus, he described these patients as having lost their “ego identity.” Since World War II, Erikson felt that he and his colleagues were observing the same fundamental disorder in many severely conflicted young patients. These disturbed individuals were, in a sense, waging a war within themselves and against society. An identity crisis of this sort can affect groups as well as individuals (Erikson, 1968). In an interesting, and somewhat amusing example of group identity crisis, we can look at the reaction of the psychoanalytic community to the theories of Carl Jung. In Erikson's view, the psychoanalytic community reacted to Jung's proposal of the collective unconscious and archetypes as a threat to scientific approach advocated by Freud. Consequently, the majority of the psychoanalytic community ignored Jung's reasonable observations as well as his somewhat less scientific interpretations (Erikson, 1980a).

Obstacles to the Development of Identity

Erikson talked about two obstacles to the development of identity: **ratio** and **negative identity**. Ratio refers to the balance between the opposite poles of each psychosocial crisis: trust vs. mistrust, autonomy vs. shame, etc. Although it may be best for the ratio to favor trust, autonomy, and so on, it is unreasonable to expect a person to develop without any experience of trust being misplaced or without any feelings of shame. This helps to ground the person in the real world, particularly as it is appropriate to the customs of their culture (see Evans, 1964). Indeed, Erikson felt that identity could be viewed as being that subsystem within the ego that is closest to social reality, based on the integrated self-representations formed during the psychosocial crises of childhood. Thus, identity:

...could be said to be characterized by the more or less *actually attained but forever-to-be-revised* sense of the reality of the self within social reality; while the imagery of the ego ideal could be said to represent a set of *to-be-strived-for but forever-not-quite-attainable ideal* goals for the self. (pg. 160; Erikson, 1980a)

Negative identity is often expressed as an angry and snobbish rejection of the roles expected by one's family, community, or even society. It is a profound reaction to the loss of identity that typically arises when identity development has lost the promise of wholeness that one expects to obtain from their identity. The consequences can be severe, for both individuals and groups of young people. Erikson worked with young people who were beginning to make choices in life that could easily lead them toward their vindictive fantasies of becoming prostitutes or drug addicts (an extreme way of rebelling against their parents). As such disturbed young people gather together, they can form gangs, drug rings, sex clubs, and the like (Erikson, 1968b, 1980a). Society, according to Erikson, often makes the mistake of enhancing this maladaptive behavior:

If, for simplicity's sake or in order to accommodate ingrown habits of law or psychiatry, they diagnose and treat as a criminal, as a constitutional misfit, as a derelict doomed by his upbringing, or indeed as a deranged patient a young person who, for reasons of personal or social marginality, is close to choosing a negative identity, that young person may well put his energy into becoming exactly what the careless and fearful community expects him to be - and make a total job of it. (pg. 196; Erikson, 1968b)

Erikson believed that women and minorities (indeed, oppressed people in any situation) face special problems in the formation of their identity. Erikson considered men and women to be fundamentally different, but more importantly, he believed that only women could ensure the future of humanity. According to Erikson, men try to solve problems with "bigger and better wars." And now, with the advent of nuclear bombs, men have nearly reached the limit of their ability to destroy each other. The future, therefore, requires the feminine aspects of personality, including realistically caring for the home, responsibly raising the children, being resourceful in peacekeeping, and devotion to healing:

The question arises whether such a potential for annihilation as now exists in the world should continue to exist without the representation of the mothers of the species in the councils of image-making and decision. (pg. 261; Erikson, 1968b)

For Blacks in America, the identity crisis has been one of being separated from their African heritage, and yet also separated from the White American heritage that surrounds them. Erikson recounts both clinical examples and folklore that emphasize the value placed on being White by Blacks themselves (Erikson, 1950, 1964, 1968, 1980a). The result is often psychological distress and depression, such as that seen in the classic study by Kenneth and Mamie Clark, in which Black children considered identification with their race as bad. Using Black and White dolls, some of the young Black children actually cried when asked to point to the doll they looked most like (Clark & Clark, 1947). Perhaps the most dramatic example of Erikson's theory in action occurred during the 1960s. Disenfranchised Blacks adopted a negative identity and opposed many aspects of the American society that had oppressed Black's for so long (Note: Negative identity is used here only as Erikson's term, not to imply that the fight for racial equality was, in any way, something negative). With Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, and Huey Newton and the Black Panthers, some young Black men opposed both the Christianity and the Democracy that formed so much of the American national identity. Those who did not, found themselves at odds with their own people, as we will see with Brian Copeland, author of *Not a Genuine Black Man* (see Chapter 16; Copeland, 2006). It should be noted, however, that the seemingly contradictory perspective of rejecting a society that gives one the very right to oppose it is not alien to the African psyche:

...the African gods south of the Sahara always had at least two heads, one for evil and one for good. Now people create God in their own image, what they think He - for God is always a "He" in patriarchal societies - what He is like or should be. So the African said, in effect: I am both good and evil; good and evil are the two parts of the thing that is me... (pg. 24; Huey Newton, recorded in Kai Erikson, 1973)

The idea that Black Americans might have been adopting a negative identity was more than just an academic theory for Erikson. In 1971, both Erikson and Huey Newton (who was then known as Supreme Commander of the Black Panther Party) presented talks to

the students of Yale University. A short time later, they met again for a series of conversations in Oakland, California, which also included the Black sociologist J. Herman Blake and Erikson's son, Kai Erikson, also a sociologist (see K. Erikson, 1973). Among many topics, Newton described the revolutionary actions of Black activists at that time as a process, a contradiction between old ways and new ways. Any change, he argued, might be viewed as revolutionary at a particular point in time. Newton went on to describe how the Black community expected him to hate all White people, and how the Black community rejected many of its own because they had too many Caucasian features (such as relatively light skin). He rebelled against this discrimination, just as he did against the oppression that was so inherent in American society. Erikson, for his part, talked mostly about just how difficult it is for people of different backgrounds to understand each other's perspective. Most important, however, is the act of searching for some basis for understanding one another (K. Erikson, 1973).

In his autobiographical book *Revolutionary Suicide* (the preparation of which was assisted by J. Herman Blake; Newton, 1973), Newton begins with a tribute to a comrade who was killed in a shootout with the police, while seeking nothing more than what Newton considered the right of all men: dignity and freedom. He then offers a poem, which sounds very much like Taoist philosophy, as well as a search for a greater identity:

By having no family,
I inherited the family of humanity.
By having no possessions,
I have possessed all.
By rejecting the love of one,
I received the love of all.
By surrendering my life to the revolution,
I found eternal life.
Revolutionary suicide.

Huey P. Newton, in *Revolutionary Suicide* (1973)

? discussion question 3.1.5.1

Erikson described the adoption of a negative identity as a serious rejection of one's expected place in life. Has there been a time in your life when you adopted a negative identity? Do you feel that sometimes it is necessary to adopt a negative identity in order to change the world we live in?

Identity and the Role of the Family - Perspectives from Around the World

Identity is not merely a personal phenomenon, it develops within a cultural context that is passed on through the family. The most important social institutions of the first three stages of development are the mother, then both parents, and finally, the family as a whole. As adults, individuals face not only their own psychosocial crises, but they serve as the parents of the next generation, as their children face the early development crises. Thus, it is important to consider the role that the family plays in general, and the perspectives that can be offered by **family psychology**.

It is difficult to define the word **family**, since it includes nuclear families (two-generations, with married parents and their own children), extended families (three or more generations), foster and adoptive families (which may be multi-racial and/or multi-cultural), single-parent families, gay or lesbian couples with or without children, remarried/step families, and others (Kaslow, 2001). Further complicating matters is the role the family plays as a microsystem of a given culture, especially when that culture is dramatically altered. For example, when the former Soviet Union collapsed, the entire economic and political structure of countries like Russia, Poland, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia were wiped out. When Yugoslavia broke apart, ancient ethnic hatred led to brutal, local wars. The role that women play in many cultures has changed in recent years, whereas in some cultures the patriarchal authority has aggressively retained its domination of the culture. The Nobel Peace Prize for 2006 was awarded to Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank for developing micro-credit loans, most of which go to poor women in oppressive societies, in an effort to help these women and their children rise out of poverty.

Family psychology addresses issues as complex as families themselves, including male-female relationships, domestic violence, child-rearing and socialization practices, divorce, the search for identity in a dysfunctional family setting, spirituality, drug addiction, war, crime and violence, homelessness, kidnapping, immigration, etc. (Kaslow, 2001). When the members of a family face any of these problems, or perhaps a number of them, family psychologists can help the individuals to retain their own sense of identity, in part by focusing on reconstructing the social structure of the family (as opposed to focusing on diagnosing individual disorders). Unfortunately, the problems facing families are common throughout the world. However, since the family is the basic social structure within communities across all cultures, family therapy can play an important role in helping to solve these problems. For example, family therapy has been used to study and treat a variety of problems in different countries: conduct disorder in youth from the U.S. Virgin Islands (Dudley-Grant, 2001); community disasters, war stress, and the effects of immigration on Israeli families (Halpern, 2001); and the refusal of some children in Japan to attend school (Kameguchi & Murphy-Shigematsu, 2001). In each of these cultures the family is considered to play a particularly important role in identity formation.

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3.1.6: Adulthood

Many theories on personality and cognitive development end with adolescence. As one enters into adulthood, it is assumed, one has accomplished all of the tasks necessary to be an adult, including one's identity. And yet, if adolescence ends sometime in the late teens, many people can reasonably expect to live another 60 to 80 years. Does it really make any sense to propose that nothing meaningful happens during those years? Of course, Erikson described development stages throughout adulthood and old age, but what about other psychologists? Srivastava, et al. (2003) examined changes in the Big Five personality traits across the years of adulthood. They found that conscientiousness and agreeableness increased through early and middle adulthood, whereas neuroticism decreased in women, but not in men. In other words, both men and women become more responsible and cooperative as they grow through adulthood, and women become more stable. One can speculate that these changes fit well within Erikson's model, in which most adults take on the tasks involved in raising a family. Self-esteem rises steadily throughout adulthood, before dropping sharply in old age (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005). Similarly, the ability to integrate cognitive and affective components of the self, in order to maintain positive self-development, increases steadily during adulthood until beginning to decline with old age (Labouvie-Vief, 2003). Thus, adulthood does appear to be a time of personality change.

Adulthood, however, means different things in different cultures. In *Adulthood* (Erikson, 1978), Erikson brought together a collection of authors who examined adulthood from a variety of cultural perspectives. For a Christian adult, growth occurs primarily through social experiences. One encounters Christ in service to others, or in other words, by loving your neighbor. Christ himself serves as the model for adulthood (Bouwmsa, 1978). Adulthood in Islam carries with it responsibility for the religious commands and obligations of Islam. One must reconcile the reality of the world with one's place in it, as willed by Allah. Adulthood then becomes an expression of the inner peace achieved by living in the world in accord with the divinely revealed reality (Lapidus, 1978). In the Confucian tradition, adulthood is the complete process of becoming a person. In this patriarchal model, first a man comes of age, then he marries and has children, then he begins a career as a scholar-official, and that career is expected to be served with distinction (Wei-Ming, 1978). In Japan, adulthood is a time of social responsibility, discipline, and perseverance, in preparation for the integrity and respect typically associated with old age (Rohlen, 1978). India presents a particularly difficult challenge, and it is not really possible to speak of a single adulthood model. The caste system inherent in the India of the past created vastly different life conditions for the people of India (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1978). The problems of language and multicultural populations create unique difficulties for understanding adulthood in Russia and America (Jordan, 1978; Malia, 1978). What is clear across cultures is that adulthood is a time of continued development, it can vary quite dramatically (even within a culture), and it often involves an aspect of anticipating old age. The anticipation of old age, however, can vary dramatically, based on individual and cultural attitudes about old age, as we will see in the next section.

Adulthood can be the most productive and, in some ways, most gratifying years of life. Some of the unique challenges of adulthood have become popular topics in psychology, such as the **midlife crisis** and the **empty nest** syndrome. And yet, adulthood is the least studied period of life. One possible explanation for this neglect, according to Smelser (1980a), is that most research is done by adults, and they tend to be more interested in stages of development other than their own. In a second collection of articles, entitled *Themes of Work and Love in Adulthood* (Smelser & Erikson, 1980), Smelser and Erikson brought together a variety of perspectives on what they viewed as two of the most important life phenomena that dominate the adulthood years. Sigmund Freud is alleged to have said that maturity is to be found in the capacity to love and to work. Throughout one's life, both of these phenomena follow certain paths, typically involving a period of growing interest and ability, followed by a fairly stable level (which typically lasts for decades), followed by a gradual (as in work) or sudden (as in the death of a spouse) decline (Smelser, 1980a). In examining the relationship between Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, evident in their letters to one another, Erikson (1980b) found distinctly adult content related to such topics as mutual regard, confidence, affection, intimate concern for their families, both good and bad observations regarding their professional colleagues, and an ongoing debate regarding the important issues in psychodynamic theory and the psychoanalytic movement. There are similarities, but some interesting contrasts, between these letters and the ones Freud had written to Wilhelm Fliess years earlier. In that younger period of adulthood, Freud seemed more in need of a close friend, particularly since he was in the process of creating the field that was becoming well-established by the time Freud met Jung. Perhaps due to Freud being older when he met Jung, it seems that he interacted with Fliess and Jung in different ways: when Freud was young he interacted with his colleague Fliess as a colleague, but when he was older he interacted with Jung in a much more father-son type relationship (and Jung had lost his father years earlier).

Work and love interact, or don't, depending on the nature of individual cultures. For example, in America we compartmentalize our lives. We tend to have clearly defined career paths, and our personal relationships exist primarily outside of the workplace (Smelser, 1980b). In contrast, the Gusii in Kenya have not traditionally had "careers," but rather a domestically based economy.

They also practice polygyny (each man having many wives, but not vice versa). Thus, a husband must balance the resources at his command between his different wives and their children. As such, although love plays some role in marriage, it can actually become a problem for that man who cannot maintain fair and equitable treatment of each wife and her children. This is handled by maintaining a certain distance from each wife, including having his own house, and visiting each wife on a rotating schedule that is acceptable to everyone (LeVine, 1980). Such a concept of love and marriage is extraordinarily alien to the symbolic and mythic nature of the love ideal that lies at the foundation of American culture: a man and a woman committed to one another in a way that ennobles and transforms them both (Swidler, 1980).

However, the romantic vision of love in American culture is not without its drawbacks. The romantic, passionate, committed love that Americans envision completes one's identity. In Erikson's terms, it stands in opposition to isolation. However, it is all too common that most marriages, as well as other long-term relationships, eventually come to an end. What then happens to each person's identity? Love also provides a basis for rebellion, such as when a person "marries for love" in spite of the objections of one's family and/or friends. Love can also lead to conformity, such as one sees in the term "settling down" or when women, in particular, are expected to take on the primary responsibility for the household as an expression of their love, even if they also have a job outside of the home as their husband does. When one partner, more so than the other, must engage in self-sacrifice, what happens to their opportunities for self-realization? If it is possible to find fulfillment through the love of another, then self-sacrifice can be self-realization (Swidler, 1980). If not, we might see high divorce rates. And a high divorce rate is the reality in America today.

So, whether love and work are intermingled or separate, whether simple or complex, whether fulfilling or a necessary social expectation, they dominate the years of early and middle adulthood. No one period in adulthood is more likely than another to result in change, as different stressors impact each age differently. Work related stress is particularly likely for the young adult, but older adults face the challenge of preparing (both financially and psychologically) for retirement, and unexpected changes can occur at any age. Love, particularly as it relates to marriage, causes stress throughout adulthood, but in different ways. Younger couples are more likely to experience separation and/or divorce, middle-aged adults experience their children leaving home and possible career transitions, and older couples are more likely to experience illness, disabilities, and perhaps the loss of a spouse. Each of these different forms of stress brings with it a need for coping mechanisms, and if those coping mechanisms fail, the likelihood for psychological distress becomes very real (Pearlin, 1980). Perhaps the most challenging stressor in our lives, one that ultimately cannot be overcome, but that may be transcended and accepted, is old age and our inevitable death.

Connections Across Cultures: Glorifying Youth vs. Valuing the Elderly

We hear a lot in our society about how we value youth, and consider the elderly to be of little worth. The obsession with youth and appearance is such that plastic surgery has become the subject of numerous television shows. But is our society really different than other societies, and if so, what factors might have contributed to the difference? The matter is particularly important today, since the world's older population is the fastest growing group. One estimate has suggested by the year 2020 the total population of people over 65 years of age will be 690 million (Hillier & Barrow, 1999). Thus, it won't be long before there are a billion people over the age of 65. But is 65 years old a valid point for declaring someone as old?

Old age can be defined functionally, as in whether or not a person can still do the things expected of them in their culture, it can be defined formally by some external event, such as the birth of the first grandchild, or it can be determined chronologically, as it typically is in the United States (we traditionally use the age of 65 years). Each measure has its advantages and disadvantages, but regardless, when a person is viewed by others as old, the question becomes one of how they will be treated. Generally speaking, the more industrialized a society is, the less likely it is to treat its elderly with respect and dignity. In non-industrialized societies, the elderly play a number of important roles in the traditions and ceremonies emphasized by such cultures, since they know the most about those traditions and ceremonies. Older members of the community function as historians, vocational instructors, and often as doctors and ministers. In agrarian societies they continue to work as long as they are able. As a result, the elderly are still vital, contributing members of the community, and as such, they are naturally treated with the respect they deserve (Hillier & Barrow, 1999).

There are, however, variations even within non-industrialized societies. For example, nomadic societies have few resources, and often live in harsh climates. Their geographic mobility favors youth and vigor, as well as individual autonomy, all elements that fade with advanced age. Even with minor advances in technology, the important roles that elders played in many cultures have faded with time. Among the Aleuts in Northern Russia there were always one or two old men who educated the children. However, the availability of printed material has largely eliminated the need for this type of education. In places such as Turkey and Nepal, the elderly have lost their place in the workforce with the urbanization and industrialization of the country. The Igbo of Nigeria

once held their elders in high regard, but mass migrations have diminished their authority, and formal education in schools has supplanted their spiritual roles (Hillier & Barrow, 1999). Many more examples can be found of changes in how communities, societies, and cultures treat the elderly more poorly than they have in the past.

As a result, many older people want to look and feel younger. Studies have shown that one's attitude about their body image is positively correlated with their self-esteem, and that this holds true throughout the lifespan. In other words, people with high self-esteem feel good about their bodies, but people with low self-esteem feel bad about their bodies. People who are treated without respect or dignity, who feel that they are being discarded by society, are likely to experience lowered self-esteem, and with it a lower regard for their body image. These people become easy targets for fraudulent cures for arthritis, cancer, weight-loss, and sexual aids. It is estimated that Americans spend as much as \$27 billion dollars a year on quack medical products or services (Hillier & Barrow, 1999). There are also many products that do help people look younger, so even more money is spent in a vain effort to pretend that people are younger than they actually are.

Consider your own relationships with people who are much older, or if you are a bit older yourself, with people who are younger than you. Do you even have relationships with people of different ages, or do such relationships tend to make you uncomfortable? How do you feel about the efforts of some people to try looking younger? Has there been an older person in your life, perhaps a grandparent, who has had a dramatic, positive influence on who you are today? Try to imagine your life at 60 or 70 years old, and how your children and grandchildren, or perhaps co-workers and friends, might treat you. Remember, your attitudes and actions toward older people today might have a significant effect on how your family and friends act toward you when the roles are reversed.

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3.1.7: Old Age and Death

In Western culture most people seem to focus on youth. Old age and death are to be avoided, even feared. And yet, both are inevitable, unless we die young, something that is even less desirable than eventually dying of old age. What is most curious, however, is that there is nothing in our culture to suggest that death is something bad. Most people believe in life after death, and that good people go to Heaven. So why would we want to avoid that? In many other cultures, death is not viewed with the same finality as it is in Western culture, and ancestors are revered, and even worshipped. Even within Western culture, there are those who embrace the later years in life, and who do not fear death. These are the perspectives we will examine here.

Growing Old: Or Older and Growing?

The title for this section was taken from an essay written by Carl Rogers (1980). Rogers was 75 years old at the time, and he was looking back on the previous 10 years of his life. Rogers was experiencing a number of physical problems associated with the natural deterioration of his body due to advanced age, such as some loss of vision and arthritis in his right shoulder (making it impossible to enjoy playing Frisbee), but he still enjoyed 4 mile walks on the beach and felt physically strong in many ways. As for his career, from the age of 65 to 75 years old he had been very productive, publishing numerous books and articles. He also led many workshops and encounter groups, including some that required him to travel around the world. Professionally he began to take many risks, experimenting with his theories and workshops in ways he might never have considered earlier in his career. As it became necessary for him to rely on others for help, due to his slowing down with age, he also found that he was able to form far more intimate relationships with those colleague/friends who helped him. Even as his wife approached death during those years, he found that the struggle and pain led him to realize just how much he had loved her. Ten years later, as he turned 85 years old, Rogers wrote another essay, *On Reaching 85* (Rogers, 1989). Once again, he had been very productive during the 10 years between being 75 and 85 years old, most notably leading a number of peace conferences that led to his nomination for a Nobel Peace Prize. He felt deeply privileged to have lived long enough to see the great international influence of his work. There can be little doubt that when his life ended, which was actually before this essay was published (he wrote the essay, turned 85, and died 1 month later), he had experienced integrity and wisdom:

I hope it is clear that my life at eighty-five is better than anything I could have planned, dreamed of, or expected. And I cannot close without at least mentioning the love relationships that nurture me, enrich my being, and invigorate my life. I do not know when I will die, but I do know that I will have lived a full and exciting eighty-five years! (pg. 58; Rogers, 1989)

Erikson, in contrast, knew something of the despair that contrasts the integrity one hopes for in old age. Never having known his own father, which resulted in an unending identity crisis, he struggled with feelings of having been an inadequate father himself. As famous as he was, he desired the ultimate recognition of a Nobel Prize, and was disappointed that *Ghandi's Truth* only won a Pulitzer Prize. He was also very sensitive to criticism in any form. As his own daughter pointed out, it is a tragic irony that individuals such as Erikson do not accept the vast majority of approval as commentary on their real self, but they do experience every shred of criticism as being very real (Bloland, 2005). Erikson himself said that even when a person developed a clear identity following adolescence, significant life events later on can precipitate a renewal of the identity crisis. One can only imagine the terrible psychological burden of sending away their baby Neil to die alone and secretly in a hospital, only to have him live for 21 years. Under such circumstances, Erikson described the search for a new identity as frantic (Evans, 1964).

One of the most interesting, important, and potentially enjoyable consequences of old age is the likelihood that one has grandchildren. All too often in American culture there are challenges to the relationships between grandparents and grandchildren. Families move across the country, they are broken apart by divorce, and, in general, our culture does not place value on the experiences of the elderly. However, only the elderly can provide generational continuity, which can be an important aspect of one's identity. For the grandparents, they can play a vital role in supporting the emotional development of their grandchildren, especially following a traumatic event such as divorce. They can provide adolescents with hope for continued development and purpose throughout life, a prospect that might seem quite difficult for an adolescent to comprehend on their own. And perhaps most importantly, they can simply spend quality time with their grandchildren, without the burden of being responsible for the day-to-day raising of the child (Erikson, 1959; Erikson & Erikson, 1997; Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1986). As shared by Joan Erikson, a grandmother and her grandchild can congratulate themselves for doing a marvelous job picking blueberries, while experiencing the reality of the life cycle:

After a while I did need to sit down on a rock and rest a bit, but not he. He continued for a moment or so and then stood up very straight in front of me to clarify essentials. "Nama," he said, "you are old and I am new" - an unchallengeable pronouncement. (pg.

Figure 3.1.7.1

Healthy relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren can benefit everyone in the family. In particular, grandparents provide a generational link that can help young people form their own identities.

While Carl Rogers and Joan Erikson seemed to accept old age and achieve integrity, Erik Erikson struggled with despair, despite his international acclaim and many obvious accomplishments. Thus, it should become clear that an individual's point of view is an important aspect of one's identity. In *Still Here* (Ram Dass, 2000), Ram Dass, a former Harvard University psychologist turned renowned guru of Bhakti Yoga and Kirtan (see Chapter 17), acknowledges the challenges of old age: physical problems, illness, loneliness, embarrassment, powerlessness, loss of role/meaning, depression, and even senility. The suffering associated with these conditions is, however, self-induced, and one can choose mindfully to *not* suffer. Whether or not one suffers, therefore, and whether or not one approaches the end of life with relative integrity or despair, is in many ways a choice. And that choice will have a dramatic effect on the final stage of life: death.

Death and Dying

It is important to begin by distinguishing between **death** and **dying**. Death is the end of life, and as far as scientific psychology is concerned, no one alive has been able to study death itself. Dying is a process that occurs when death is imminent, but does not come immediately. The dying process begins either with old age or the diagnosis of a terminal illness. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross is well-known for her research on the dying process, as are the five stages that she described in *On Death and Dying* (1969): **Denial and Isolation; Anger; Bargaining; Depression; and Acceptance**. When diagnosed with a terminal illness, most people naturally respond with the common defense mechanism of denial, but there is more to it. Many psychology textbooks do not address the second aspect of this first stage: isolation. Denial is usually temporary, but the dying person may still not be ready or even able to talk about their death, so they isolate themselves psychologically. Unfortunately, hospital staff members often foster this isolation, because of their own fears and discomfort regarding death. Kubler-Ross and her colleagues found it quite difficult to stop hospital staff members from encouraging the isolation of patients clinging to denial, including such simple tasks as keeping the patient's door open so that people passing by could look in and vice versa. The final stage of acceptance, according to Kubler-Ross, is one that many patients do not achieve. Many people fear death, and Western culture, due in part to its emphasis on science and medicine, and its movement away from religion, encourages people to challenge death. But for those who fight, struggle, and hope to the very end, even they eventually "just cannot make it anymore" (Kubler-Ross, 1969).

There are, however, many people who do come to accept the inevitability of death, either as a result of illness or old age. Erikson seemed to finally be at peace at the very end of his life, smiling whenever he recognized his wife or daughter:

I was deeply touched on one visit to Dad when a flash of pleasure crossed his face as I entered the room, and he said faintly to himself, *Meine Tochter* ("my daughter" in his native tongue). (pg. 204; Bloland, 2005)

Carl Rogers was largely unconcerned about death, he seldom thought about it. He was, however, quite interested in the work of Kubler-Ross, particularly after he experienced his wife's dying process. One night, when his wife was near death, he told her that she should not feel obligated to live, all was well with her family, and that she should feel free to live or die, as she wished. After Rogers left that evening, his wife called for the nurses, thanked them for all they had done, and told them she was going to die. By the next morning she was in a coma, and by the next day she was dead (Rogers, 1980). This experience was profoundly moving for Rogers, and awakened a deep spirituality in him, but with a decidedly unscientific aspect to it. Kubler-Ross joined Carl Jung in believing in synchronicity and the possibility of out-of-body experiences, life after death, and the like (see Kubler-Ross, 1983, 1997). Rogers also came to believe in such possibilities. Helen Rogers reported seeing evil figures and the Devil by her hospital bed, as well as a white light that would come and begin to lift her from the bed. Earlier the two of them had attended sessions with a medium who claimed to be able to contact the dead. Rogers was thoroughly convinced that the medium's abilities were real, and that she had contacted Helen's deceased sister, and later Helen Rogers herself. According to Rogers, each event was "an incredible, and certainly non-fraudulent experience" (Rogers, 1980).

For the individual who is, indeed, about to die, what remains of life? Kubler-Ross, Joan Erikson, and Ram Dass all see death itself as a final stage of growth. For Joan Erikson, when hope and trust can no longer sustain the individual, "to face down despair with faith and appropriate humility is perhaps the wisest course," and one may then strive for gerotranscendence. Indeed, the ninth stage of development proposed by Joan Erikson seems quite similar to the stage of acceptance proposed by Kubler-Ross (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). Ram Dass talks about the different perspective on death in India, and how it helped him to believe that although the body and the mind, as well as their reflection in the ego/self, could die, the soul was something that would exist forever.

Accordingly, it is more common in India, and in many other cultures, to prepare for death. The failure to do so in America can have painful consequences:

When I was in my 30s, my mother was diagnosed with a terminal blood disorder. I went to visit her in the hospital, and all the people around her were saying things like, “You look great!” “You’ll be home in no time!” But she looked terrible, and it was likely she’d never come home again. No one - not my father, her sister or the rabbi - would tell her the truth. In that moment I saw just how isolated she was. She was dying and no one would talk to her about death. We spoke about it, Soul to Soul, and she began to relax. (pg. 149; Ram Dass, 2000)

Kubler-Ross examined a variety of cultural perspectives on death, in a collection of essays entitled *Death: The Final Stage of Growth* (Kubler-Ross, 1975). Among Alaskan Indians the time of death was a choice. As death approaches, if it does not come suddenly, the dying person would call together relatives and friends for a time of storytelling and prayer. The dying person’s life would be celebrated, and their death would be accepted as an inevitable matter of fact (Trelease, 1975). In the Jewish faith, tradition holds that the dying process should be met with efforts to alleviate distress as much as possible, but that death must also be accepted as the decree of human mortality by the Eternal and Righteous Judge (Rabbi Heller, 1975). In Hindu and Buddhist traditions, there is no death, but rather a common belief in rebirth. The circumstances of one’s rebirth, however, are determined by how one lived their most recent life (based on karma). So, one’s life, as well as the preparations preceding the death of one’s body in this life, is an important factor in determining the nature of the next life. Of course, one can transcend this cycle of death and rebirth by attaining enlightenment. Thus, it is common in countries like India and China to practice Yoga or Buddhist meditation, as well as other spiritual practices, in order to either attain nirvana or, at least, a more favorable circumstance in the next life (Long, 1975). Each of these traditions, as well as others, considers death to be an important transition between this life and something beyond. It is in anticipation of something beyond that death and dying should be approached, both in terms of one’s actions and one’s state of mind. In conclusion:

There is no need to be afraid of death. It is not the end of the physical body that should worry us. Rather, our concern must be to *live* while we’re alive - to release our inner selves from the spiritual death that comes with living behind a façade designed to conform to external definitions of who and what we are. ...when you fully understand that each day you awaken could be the last you have, you take the time *that day* to grow, to become more of who you really are, to reach out to other human beings. (pg. 164; Kubler-Ross, 1975)

? discussion question 3.1.7.1

People who have experienced the dying process often report strange occurrences, such as out-of-body experiences, visions of spirits (including angels and demons), or white lights shining down from above and beyond. Do you believe in any of these phenomena? Why do you think they only seem to occur with people who are, indeed, close to death?

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3.1.8: Personality Theory in Real Life- ...and in Death!

Arthur Benjamin Niemoller was a fine example of a man who had achieved integrity in old age, which is not to say that his later years were entirely easy. As he prepared to travel from Ohio to Massachusetts for the first graduation of one of his grandchildren from college (me), his wife lapsed into a coma due to a serious blood infection. Knowing it was unlikely that she would survive, or that she would even know if he was there, he chose to attend my graduation. After the ceremony was over, and everyone returned to my mother's house for a party, the call had come from the doctor. My grandmother had died. I spent the next week in Ohio, helping my grandfather make the funeral arrangements for my grandmother. We had a service in Montgomery, Ohio where they had lived for many years, and then another in Putnam, Connecticut, where there is an old family graveyard. My grandfather made it very clear that he was glad he had attended my graduation, because he was proud of his family and wouldn't have wanted to miss it.

Figure 3.1.8.1

Arthur Benjamin Niemoller (1912-1998) lived a long and full life. He exemplified dignity during his final years of life.

But the story doesn't end there. I attended graduate school at Wayne State University in Detroit, which isn't too far from the Cincinnati area, where Montgomery is located. I began visiting my grandfather regularly, which was quite interesting because I'd had very little contact with him before that (my family has never been close). He was a very active man. He was a Sunday school teacher and church council member at the local Presbyterian church, he belonged to a retired men's club, he had season tickets to the opera, and he regularly attended the symphony. He had many friends, some of whom had also lost their spouses to old age. Most surprising, however, was that in his late 70s he joined two other men in forming a new company. He was responsible for developing the computer programs that calculated the materials needed and the cost of those materials for building an isolated phase bus (something for carrying industrial strength electrical currents in power plants, I never really understood what he did). He was very proud of his work, and always eager to show me his new computer programs. I was just as proud of him, and I am very pleased to be able to say that he is the only person who attended all three of my college graduations (B.S., M.A., and Ph.D.). We developed a relationship I will always treasure.

The last time I saw my grandfather, he had been given 3 weeks to live. He had been suffering from dementia for several years, and typically wasn't sure who was visiting him. He thought I was his son Donny, and it didn't help that my wife and my aunt are both named Donna. On that last day I saw him, he was not the excited man of 80 years old who had a new computer program to show me. In fact, it took a while for me to convince myself he was actually still alive. It is frightening to see what can happen to the human body as a result of what is simply a natural process (old age, that is, dementia is certainly not a given with old age). Before I left, I prayed to God, deeply and sincerely, that my grandfather would finally just die. I was the last person in our family to see him alive. It is even more frightening, though merciful nonetheless, to think that my prayer was answered. I was satisfied that his life had been a good one, and content that his suffering was ended.

Has there been anyone in your life who meant a great deal to you but who has died? Were you able to participate in their dying process, and if so, how difficult was it? Imagine what it might be like to face death yourself, and think about how you might want others to treat you. Do your feelings and expectations fit within the cultural expectations and/or traditions of your family and community?

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3.1.S: Chapter Summary

Review of Key Points

- Erikson never knew who his father was, and his relationship with his mother was never secure. This challenge to his own identity led him to focus much of his career on the development of identity.
- Erikson's theory was epigenetic, in that he believed people progress through a predictable series of psychological stages.
- At each stage, there is a unique and critical psychosocial crisis.
- Play is the royal road to understanding the young child's ego, according to Erikson.
- Before fully developing his theory, Erikson confirmed many of his observations in distinct cultures, including two Native American tribes (Sioux and Yurok).
- Erikson described eight stages of development: trust vs. mistrust; autonomy vs. shame/doubt; initiative vs. guilt; industry vs. inferiority; identity vs. role diffusion/confusion; intimacy vs. isolation; generativity vs. stagnation/self-absorption; and integrity vs. despair.
- Each of the eight stages is associated with a particular strength: hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, wisdom.
- Sometimes young adults will take a moratorium during their search for an identity.
- Joan Erikson proposed a ninth stage of development when death is imminent: despair vs. gerotranscendence.
- Identity develops in relation to one's environment and culture. Thus, it involves psychosocial relativity.
- Individuals who lose a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity may face an identity crisis.
- Both the ratio of where one falls on each continuum of a psychosocial crisis and the possibility of adopting a negative identity are challenges to healthy identity formation.
- Erikson believed that the significant challenges faced by young Blacks trying to find an identity in America, their disconnection from both their African heritage and the White majority in America, led them toward adopting a negative identity. Evidence can be found in the movement of some young Blacks toward the Nation of Islam and the Black Panthers during the 1960s.
- The family is an integral social institution in all cultures. Thus, family psychology can play an important role in helping individuals to recover from identity crises.
- Adulthood is a time of continued psychological development, with its own unique psychosocial crises. The form of these crises, however, varies dramatically from one culture to another.
- In all cultures, the primary activities of adulthood, around which the psychosocial crises revolve, are work and love.
- Very old individuals can still be productive and creative. Old age is also an important time for grandparents to communicate a sense of continuity, a generational link, to their grandchildren.
- Kubler-Ross described five stages that occur during the dying process: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Unfortunately, many people never reach the stage of acceptance.
- When faced with death itself, those who have achieved acceptance can transcend life, and die in peace. Many non-Western cultures have different attitudes regarding death, and are able to facilitate acceptance much more readily.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

4.1: Carl Jung

Carl Jung brought an almost mystical approach to psychodynamic theory. An early associate and follower of Freud, Jung eventually disagreed with Freud on too many aspects of personality theory to remain within a strictly Freudian perspective. Subsequently, Jung developed his own theory, which applied concepts from natural laws (primarily in physics) to psychological functioning. Jung also introduced the concept of personality types, and began to address personality development throughout the lifespan. In his most unique contribution, at least from a Western perspective, Jung proposed that the human psyche contains within itself psychological constructs developed throughout the evolution of the human species.

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4.1.1: Prelude to Carl Jung

Jung has always been controversial and confusing. His blending of psychology and religion, as well as his openness to different religious and spiritual philosophies, was not easy to accept for many psychiatrists and psychologists trying to pursue a purely scientific explanation of personality and mental illness. Perhaps no one was more upset than Freud, whose attitude toward Jung changed dramatically over just a few years. In 1907, Freud wrote a letter to Jung in which Freud offered high praise:

...I have already acknowledged...above all that your person has filled me with trust in the future, that I now know that I am dispensable like everyone else, and that I wish for no one other or better than you to continue and complete my work. (pg. 136; cited in Wehr, 1989)

In 1910, hoping that others would also support Jung, Freud wrote to Oskar Pfister:

I hope you will loyally support Jung, I want him to acquire the authority that will entitle him to leadership of the whole movement. (pg. 136; cited in Wehr, 1989)

However, in a dramatic shift just three years later, Freud wrote to Jung:

I suggest to you that we completely give up our private relationship. By this I lose nothing, since for a long time I have been bound to you emotionally only by the thin thread of previously experienced disappointments. ... Spare me the supposed “duties of friendship.” (pg. 136; cited in Wehr, 1989)

Later, in 1922, Freud thanked Oskar Pfister for his help in trying to eliminate Jung’s influence on the psychoanalytic community:

With your ever more thorough and ever more clearly demonstrated dismissal of Jung and Adler, you have for a long time given me great satisfaction. (pg. 136; cited in Wehr, 1989)

Who was this man who inspired such profound confidence from Sigmund Freud, only to later inspire such contempt? And were his theories that difficult for the psychodynamic community, or psychology in general, to accept? Hopefully, this chapter will begin to answer those questions. As evidence of his character, and in contrast to Freud, Jung did not turn his back on his former mentor. Following Freud’s death in 1939, and later in 1957, Jung wrote the following:

[Freud’s work was]...surely the boldest attempt ever made on the apparently solid ground of empiricism to master the riddle of the unconscious psyche. For us young psychiatrists, it was a source of enlightenment... (pg. 29; cited in Wehr, 1989)

...Despite the resounding censure I suffered at the hands of Freud, I cannot, even despite my resentment toward him, fail to recognize his importance as a critical analyst of culture and as a pioneer in the field of psychology. (pg. 39; cited in Wehr, 1989)

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4.1.2: A Brief Biography of Carl Jung

At the beginning of his autobiography, entitled *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung (1961) described his life as “a story of the self-realization of the unconscious.” Jung believed that our personality begins with a collective unconscious, developed within our species throughout time, and that we have only limited ability to control the psychic process that is our own personality. Thus, our true personality arises from within as our collective unconscious comes forth into our personal unconscious and then our consciousness. It can be helpful to view these concepts from an Eastern perspective, and it is interesting to note that “self-realization” was used in the name of the first Yoga society established in America (in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda).

Carl Gustav Jung was born on July 26th, 1875, in the small town of Kesswil, Switzerland, into an interesting and notable family. His grandfather of the same name had been a physician, and had established the psychiatric clinic at the University of Basel and the “Home of Good Hope” for mentally retarded children. At an early age he had been imprisoned for over a year, for the crime of having participated in a demonstration supporting democracy in Germany. Rumored to be an illegitimate son of the great Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, though there is no convincing evidence, the elder Carl Jung died before his namesake grandson ever knew him. Nonetheless, Jung was greatly influenced by stories he heard about his grandfather. His maternal grandfather, Samuel Preiswerk, was the dean of the Basel (Switzerland) clergy and pastor of a major church. He was one of the first people in Europe to suggest a restoration of Palestine to the Jews, thus establishing himself as a forerunner to the Zionists. Samuel Preiswerk also believed that he was regularly surrounded by spirits (or ghosts), something that likely had quite an influence on Jung’s theories (Jaffe, 1979; Wehr, 1989).

Jung’s father, Johann Paul Achilles Jung, married Emilie Preiswerk in 1874. Johann Jung was a scholar of Oriental languages, studied Arabic, and was ordained a minister. In addition to being a pastor at two churches during Jung’s childhood, Johann Jung was the pastor at Friedmatt, the insane asylum in Basel. During Jung’s early childhood he did not always have the best of relationships with his parents. He considered his mother to be a good mother, but he felt that her true personality was always hidden. She spent some time in the hospital when he was three years old, in part due to problems in her marriage. Jung found this separation from his mother deeply troubling, and he became mistrustful of the spoken word “love.” Since his father was a pastor, there were often funerals and burials, all of which was very mysterious to the young Jung. In addition, his mother was considered a spiritual medium, and often helped Jung with his later studies on the occult. Perhaps most troubling of all, was Jung’s belief that his father did not really know God, but rather, had become a minister trapped in the performance of meaningless ritual (Jaffe, 1979; Jung, 1961; Wehr, 1989).

An only child until he was 9, Jung preferred to be left alone, or at least he came to accept his loneliness. Even when his parent’s guests brought their children over for visits, Jung would simply play his games alone:

...I recall only that I did not want to be disturbed. I was deeply absorbed in my games and could not endure being watched or judged while I played them. (pg. 18; Jung, 1961)

He also had extraordinarily rich and meaningful dreams, many of which were quite frightening, and they often involved deeply religious themes. This is hardly surprising, since two uncles on his father’s side of the family were ministers, and there were six more ministers on his mother’s side. Thus, he was often engaged in religious discussions at home. He was particularly impressed with a richly illustrated book on Hinduism, with pictures of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (the Hindu trinity of gods). Even at 6 years old, he felt a vague connection with the Hindu gods, something that once again would have an interesting influence on his later theories. These dreams led Jung into deep religious speculations, something he considered to be a secret that he could not share with anyone else (Jaffe, 1979; Jung, 1961; Wehr, 1989).

Jung’s school-age years were a mixture of experiences. He enjoyed school, in the sense that it was easy for him and he found other children to play with. However, he also began studying Latin with his father and taking divinity classes. He found the classes on religion terribly boring, and the more he got to know his father, the less he believed that his father understood either God, religion, or spirituality. It didn’t help that he was well-aware of the continued turmoil in his parent’s marriage. In a cave in the garden he tended a fire that he meant to keep burning forever, and although he allowed other children to help gather the wood, only Jung himself could tend the fire. At the age of 11 he began attending the Gymnasium in Basel (something like an advanced high school). The other children were quite wealthy, and Jung became aware of how poor they were. Although this led him to feel some compassion for his father, the Gymnasium created a number of problems. Jung simply did not understand mathematics, his divinity classes became unbearably boring, and so, school itself became boring. This led to a severe neurosis at the age of 12 (Jaffe, 1979; Jung, 1961; Wehr, 1989).

Jung had been knocked down by another boy on the way home from school. He hit his head on a rock, and was nearly knocked out. He was so dizzy that others had to help him, and he suddenly realized that he did not have to go to school if he was ill. Consequently, he began having fainting spells any time he was sent to school or to do his homework. He missed 6 months of school due his psychological problems, and Jung loved the opportunity to spend his days exploring the world in any way he wished. He was eventually diagnosed with epilepsy, though Jung himself knew the diagnosis was ridiculous. One day he heard his father expressing great fear to a friend about what would become of Jung if he were unable to earn his own living. The reality of this statement was shocking to Jung, and “From that moment on I became a serious child.” He immediately went to study Latin, and began to feel faint. However, he consciously made himself aware of his neurosis, and cognitively fought it off. He soon returned to school, recognizing “That was when I learned what a neurosis is” (Jaffe, 1979; Jung, 1961; Wehr, 1989).

As he continued through school, his personal life continued to be quite strange. He began to believe that he was two people, one having lived 100 years earlier. He also had heated religious debates with his father. Fueling his courage during these debates was his belief that a vision had led to his understanding of true spirituality:

One fine summer day that same year I came out of school at noon and went to the cathedral square. The sky was gloriously blue, the day one of radiant sunshine. The roof of the cathedral glittered, the sun sparkling from the new, brightly glazed tiles. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the sight, and thought: “The world is beautiful and the church is beautiful, and God made all this and sits above it far away in the blue sky on a golden throne and ...” Here came a great hole in my thoughts, and a choking sensation. I felt numbed, and knew only: “Don’t go on thinking now! Something terrible is coming, something I do not want to think, something I dare not even approach. Why not? Because I would be committing the most frightful of sins. What is the most terrible sin? Murder? No, it can’t be that. The most terrible sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost, which cannot be forgiven. Anyone who commits that sin is damned to hell for all eternity. That would be very sad for my parents, if their only son, to whom they are so attached, should be doomed to eternal damnation. I cannot do that to my parents. All I need do is not go on thinking.” (pg. 36; Jung, 1961)

However, Jung was not able to ignore his vision. He was tormented for days, and spent sleepless nights wondering why he would have to think something unforgivable as a result of praising God for the beauty of all creation. His mother saw how troubled he was, but Jung felt that he could not dare confide in her. Finally, he decided that it was God’s will that he should face the meaning of this vision:

I thought it over again and arrived at the same conclusion. “Obviously God also desires me to show courage,” I thought. “If that is so and I go through with it, then He will give me His grace and illumination.”

I gathered all my courage, as though I were about to leap forthwith into hell-fire, and let the thought come. I saw before me the cathedral, the blue sky. God sits on His golden throne, high above the world - and from under the throne an enormous turd falls upon the sparkling new roof, shatters it, and breaks the walls of the cathedral asunder. (pg. 39; Jung 1961)

Jung was overjoyed by his understanding of this vision. He believed that God had shown him that what mattered in life was doing God’s will, not following the rules of any man, religion, or church. This was what Jung felt his own father had never come to realize, and therefore, his father did not know the “immediate living God.” This conviction that one should pursue truth, rather than dogma, was an essential lesson that returned when Jung faced his dramatic split with Sigmund Freud.

When Jung decided to enter medical school, he did not leave his interest in strange spiritual matters behind. His cousin Helene Preiswerk led séances in which she would fall into a trance and channel strange spirits. The climax of these trances was often a mandala (a mandala is a geometric figure that represents wholeness, completeness, and perfection), which she would dictate to Jung, and then attempt to translate what was told to her by the spirits. Eugen Bleuler urged Jung to publish his studies on occult phenomena (remember that Bleuler defined schizophrenia), which Jung did, under the title *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-called Occult Phenomena*. Another important event that occurred early during Jung’s medical training was the death of his father. The church had no provisions for the family of a deceased minister, but one of his uncles loaned Jung the money he needed to continue his studies. Upon completing medical school, he joined Dr. Bleuler in Zurich at the Burgholzli Mental Hospital, and soon became the first assistant physician. The Burgholzli clinic was a renowned institution. Bleuler was considered one of the two most influential psychiatrists of the day, and the clinic had come to prominence under his predecessor Auguste Forel, who was the first person to formally publish the theory that neurons communicate through synaptic junctions (though just how was not well understood at the time; Finger, 1994). Jung worked hard at Burgholzli, as Bleuler expected nothing less. He also spent some time in France, at the internationally recognized Salpêtrière hospital, where he met Pierre Janet. Janet is a curious figure in the history of psychoanalysis. He claimed that he developed everything good in psychoanalysis, and that everything Freud developed was bad. Janet also apparently suggested that only the corrupt city of Vienna could be the source of a theory that traces the development of

personality to sexual urges (Freud, 1914/1995). Jung spoke favorably of what he learned from Janet; Freud soundly rejected Janet's claims, but did grudgingly acknowledge that Janet did some important work on understanding neuroses (Freud, 1914/1995; Jung, 1961).

In 1906, Jung sent Freud a copy of his book *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox* (an earlier term for schizophrenia), which Freud found quite impressive. The two met in February, 1907, and talked for nearly 13 straight hours. According to Jung, "Freud was the first man of real importance I had encountered...no one else could compare with him." Very quickly, as evidenced in the letters quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Freud felt that Jung would become the leader of the psychoanalytic movement. In 1909, Jung's psychoanalytic practice was so busy that he resigned from the Burgholzli clinic, and he traveled to America with Freud. During this trip the two men spent a great deal of time together. It quickly became evident to Jung that he could not be the successor that Freud was seeking; Jung had too many differences of opinion with Freud. More importantly, however, Jung described Freud as neurotic, and wrote that the symptoms were sometimes highly troublesome (though Jung failed to identify those symptoms). Freud taught that everyone was a little neurotic, but Jung wanted to know how to cure neuroses:

Apparently neither Freud nor his disciples could understand what it meant for the theory and practice of psychoanalysis if not even the master could deal with his own neurosis. When, then, Freud announced his intention of identifying theory and method and making them into some kind of dogma, I could no longer collaborate with him; there remained no choice for me but to withdraw. (pg. 167; Jung, 1961)

Clearly Jung could not accept a dogmatic approach to psychoanalysis, since he believed that God Himself had told Jung not to follow any rigid system of rules. Even worse, this was when Jung first published his "discovery" of the collective unconscious. Freud wholly rejected this concept, and Jung felt that his creativity was being rejected. He offered to support Freud in public, while extending honest opinions in so-called "secret letters." Freud wanted none of it. Almost as quickly as their relationship had grown, it fell apart (Jaffe, 1979; Jung, 1961; Wehr, 1989).

The loss of his relationship with Freud, following the loss of his father, led Jung in a period of personal crisis. He resigned his position at the University of Zurich, and began a lengthy series of experiments in order to understand the fantasies and dreams that arose from his unconscious. The more he studied these phenomena, the more he realized they were not from his own memories, but from the collective unconscious. He was particularly curious about mandala drawings, which date back thousands of years in all cultures. He studied Christian Gnosticism, alchemy, and the *I Ching* (or: *Book of Changes*). After meeting Richard Wilhelm, an expert on Chinese culture, Jung studied more Taoist philosophy, and he wrote a glowing foreword for Wilhelm's translation of the *I Ching* (Wilhelm, 1950). These extraordinarily diverse interests led Jung to seek more in-depth knowledge from around the world. He traveled first to North Africa, then to America (to visit Pueblo Indians in New Mexico), next came East Africa (Uganda and Kenya), and finally India. Jung made every effort to get away from civilized areas, which might have been influenced by other cultures, in order to get a more realistic impression of the local culture, and he was particularly successful in this regard in meeting gurus in India (Jaffe, 1979; Jung, 1961; Wehr, 1989).

Through it all, he continued his work in psychology. He had developed his concept of psychological types, one of his most significant contributions, and published his work shortly after the break with Freud. He continued to develop his own form of psychoanalysis. Jung's family was also an important part of his life. He had married Emma Rauschenbach in 1903. They had four daughters and one son, followed by nineteen grandchildren and many great-grandchildren. Emma Jung was very supportive of her husband, especially during the more turbulent periods of his career (including the break with Freud), and she was no stranger to his work. She had done some analytical work with Freud herself, she wrote essays on Jung's concept of *anima* and *animus*, and she was the first president of the Psychological Club of Zurich. When his wife Emma died in 1955, Jung wrote in a letter that the loss had taken a lot out of him, and that at his age (80 years old) it wasn't easy to recover. Yet two years later, he began dictating his autobiography to Aniela Jaffe. Looking ahead to the end of his life, Jung said:

The world into which we are born is brutal and cruel, and at the same time of divine beauty. Which element we think outweighs the other, whether meaninglessness or meaning is a matter of temperament. If meaninglessness were absolutely preponderant, the meaningfulness of life would vanish to an increasing degree with each step in our development. But that is - or seems to me - not the case. Probably, as in all metaphysical questions, both are true: Life is - or has - meaning and meaninglessness. I cherish the anxious hope that meaning will preponderate and win the battle.

When Lao-tzu says: "All are clear, I alone am clouded," he is expressing what I now feel in advanced old age. Lao-tzu is the example of a man with superior insight who has seen and experienced worth and worthlessness, and who at the end of his life desires to return into his own being, into the eternal unknowable meaning. The archetype of the old man who has seen enough is eternally true. (pp. 358-359; Jung, 1961)

Carl Jung died at home in 1961, in Kusnacht, Switzerland, at the age of 85. As psychologists today examine more deeply the relationship between Eastern and Western perspectives, it may be that Jung's legacy has yet to be fulfilled.

? discussion question 4.1.2.1

Even as a child, Jung had vivid dreams that he believed were giving him insight and guidance for the future. Have you ever had dreams so vivid, dreams that left such a powerful impression on you, that you felt they must have some special meaning? How did you respond, and what consequences, if any, followed your responses?

Placing Jung in Context: A Psychodynamic Enigma

Carl Jung holds an extraordinary place in the histories of psychiatry and psychology. Having already been an assistant to the renowned psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler, he went to Vienna to learn more about the fledgling science of psychoanalysis. He became Freud's hand-picked heir to the psychoanalytic throne, and was one of the psychiatrists who accompanied Freud to America. Later, however, as he developed his own theories, he parted ways with Freud. Freud eventually came to describe Jung's theories as incomprehensible, and Freud praised other psychiatrists who also opposed Jung's ideas.

The most dramatic contribution that Jung made to psychodynamic thought was his concept of the collective unconscious, a mysterious reservoir of psychological constructs common to all people. Jung traveled extensively, including trips to Africa, India, and the United States (particularly to visit the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico), and he studied the cultures in those places. He also observed many basic similarities between different cultures. Those similarities led Jung to propose the collective unconscious. How else could so many significant cultural similarities have arisen within separate and distant lands? Jung did not reject the concepts already developed by Freud and Adler, including the dynamic interaction between the conscious mind and the personal unconscious, but he extended them in order to connect them with his own theory of our underlying collective unconscious. As strange as this theory seemed to Freud, and Freud wondered whether it even made sense to Jung, such a concept is not difficult to understand from an Eastern perspective.

Initially Jung's theories had more influence on art, literature, and anthropology than they did on psychiatry and psychology. More recently, however, cognitive-behavioral theorists have begun to explore mindfulness as an addition to more traditional aspects of cognitive-behavioral therapies. As psychologists today study concepts from Yoga and Buddhism that are thousands of years old, Jung deserves the credit for bringing such an open-minded approach to the modern world of psychotherapy. Many famous and influential people admired Jung's work, including psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, psychologist Erich Fromm, the authors Hermann Hesse and H. G. Wells, and Nobel Laureate (Physics) Wolfgang Pauli (for a number of interesting testimonials see Wehr, 1989). In addition, Jung's discussion of how the libido has transformed throughout the evolution of the human species sounds very much like sociobiology, which was not an established field until the 1970s. Clearly Jung did not simply dabble in a wide range of ideas, but rather, he had an extraordinary vision of the complexity of the human psyche.

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4.1.3: Basic Concepts

In order to distinguish his own approach to psychology from others that had come before, Jung felt that he needed a unique name. Freud, of course, had chosen the term “psychoanalysis,” whereas Alfred Adler had chosen “individual psychology.” Since Jung admired both men and their theories, he chose a name intended to encompass not only their approaches, but others as well. Thus, he chose to call his approach **analytical psychology** (Jung, 1933).

Analytical psychology, as presented by Jung, addresses the question of the psyche in an open-minded way. He laments the overly scientific approach of the late 1800s and efforts to explain away the psyche as a mere epiphenomenon of brain function. Curiously, that debate remains with us today, and is still unanswered in any definitive way. Jung did not accept the suggestion that the psyche must come from the activity of the brain. This allowed him to consider the possibility of a collective unconscious, and fit well with his acceptance of the wisdom of Eastern philosophers. Indeed, Jung suggests that psychology will find truth only when it accepts both Eastern and Western, as well as both scientific and spiritual, perspectives on the psyche (Jung, 1933).

Dynamic Psychic Energy

Jung believed in a dynamic interaction between the conscious and unconscious minds, in a manner quite similar to that proposed by Freud. However, as we will examine below, his concept of the psyche included elements of an unconscious mind that transcends the individual, and may be considered a combination of the spirit, or soul, and one’s thoughts and sensations. This inner psychic realm is capable of affecting the brain and its functions and, therefore, can influence one’s perception of external reality. In addition, Jung thought of the libido somewhat differently than Freud. Although Jung considered sexuality to be an important aspect of the libido, primarily he thought of libido as a more generalized life energy (Douglas, 1995; Jarvis, 2004). Jung believed that as the human species evolved, the nature of sexual (or survival) impulses transformed. For example, early in human evolution we needed, as do other species, to be able to attract mates for procreation. Over time, these attraction behaviors generalized to behaviors such as art or music. Thus, a Freudian might say that creating music is a sexual act, but according to Jung “it would be a poor, unaesthetic generalization if one were to include music in the category of sexuality” (Jung, 1916/1963).

An important element of Jung’s conception of the psyche and libido is found in the nature of opposites. Indeed, all of nature is composed of opposites:

...The concept of energy implies that of polarity, since a current of energy necessarily presupposes two different states, or poles, without which there can be no current. Every energetic phenomenon...consists of pairs of opposites: beginning and end, above and below, hot and cold, earlier and later, cause and effect, etc. The inseparability of the energy concept from that of polarity also applies to the concept of libido. (pg. 202; Jung, 1971)

...opposites are the ineradicable and indispensable preconditions of all psychic life... (pg. 170; Jung, 1970)

In accordance with this view, Jung felt that the psyche sought balance, much like the concept of **entropy** from the field of physics. Entropy, in simple terms, is a thermodynamic principle that all energy within a system (including the universe) will eventually even out. Jung applied this principle to motivation, believing that we are driven forward through our lives in such a way that we might reduce the imbalance of psychic energy between opposing pairs of emotions (such as love and hate; Jarvis, 2004; Jung, 1971). Borrowing concepts from physics was certainly not a strange thing for Jung to do. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Freud’s theories were motivated in part by advancements in science and Darwin’s theory of evolution. Jung was personally acquainted with the Nobel Prize winning physicist Wolfgang Pauli, and the two published essays blending psychology and physics in a book entitled *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* (Jung & Pauli, 1955). However, entropy and motivation are focused forward in time. Such an orientation toward the future marks another distinction between the theories of Freud and Jung.

Jung did not simply study symbolism, such as that in dreams, to uncover evidence of past repression. Jung believed that dreams could guide our future behavior, because of their profound relationship to the past, and their profound influence on our conscious mental life. Jung proposed that dreams can tell us something about the development and structure of the human psyche, and that dreams have evolved with our species throughout time. Since consciousness is limited by our present experience, dreams help to reveal much deeper and broader elements of our psyche than we can be aware of consciously. As such, dreams cannot easily be interpreted. Jung rejected the analysis of any single dream, believing that they belong within a series. He also rejected trying to learn dream analysis from a book. When done properly, however, dream analysis can provide unparalleled realism (see Jacobi & Hull, 1970; Jung, 1933):

...I cannot prove in every case that dreams are meaningful, for there are dreams that neither doctor nor patient understands. But I must regard them as hypothetically meaningful in order to find courage to deal with them at all...We must never forget in dream-

analysis, even for a moment, that we move on treacherous ground where nothing is certain but uncertainty...When we take up an obscure dream, our first task is not to understand and interpret it, but to establish the context with minute care. What I have in mind is not a boundless sweep of “free associations” starting from any and every image in the dream, but a careful and conscious illumination of those chains of associations that are directly connected with particular images. (pp. 11-12; Jung, 1933)

In the final analysis, there is a particular challenge to understanding what dreams point to, and that is the situation under which a therapist typically learns of someone’s dreams: in therapy. Jung suggested that if therapists could continue to observe the journey of one’s dreams after therapy was successful, then the therapist, and possibly the client as well, might begin to more clearly understand the meaning and direction of the dreams. Still, dreams themselves are about both health and sickness, in keeping with Jung’s principle of opposites. As such, Jung wrote that “dreams are the natural reaction of the self-regulating psychic system.” The theory of entropy allows for an imbalance of energy in a closed-system. We may think of our conscious mind as just such a closed system. When we dream, however, the ongoing effort of our psyche to balance itself takes over, and the dreams counteract what we have done to imbalance our psychological selves. Thus, it is within the context of dreams, not the details, that meaning is to be found (Jung, 1959a, 1968).

? discussion question 4.1.3.1

Jung believed that the source of our motivation was a psychological drive to achieve balance (the effect of entropy on the psyche). Have you ever felt that you were being pushed or pulled in the wrong direction, or in too many directions at once, and simply wanted to achieve some balance in your life? In contrast, have there been times that your life was unfulfilling, and you needed something more in order to feel whole?

The Unconscious Mind

Perhaps Jung’s most unique contribution to psychology is the distinction between a **personal unconscious** and a **collective unconscious**. The personal unconscious is not entirely different than that proposed by Freud, but is more extensive. In addition to repressed memories and impulses, the personal unconscious contains undeveloped aspects of the personality and material arising from the collective unconscious that is not yet ready for admission into conscious awareness. The personal unconscious is revealed through clusters of emotions, such as those resulting in a particular attitude toward one’s father or other father figures, which Jung referred to as a **complex** (Douglas, 1995; Jarvis, 2004). In this sense, a complex is not synonymous with a psychological problem, as the term is often used today, but rather any general state of mind common to certain situations. In this context, it is quite similar to the **schemas** discussed by cognitive theorists.

Jung arrived at his theory of complexes as a result of his research into schizophrenia, under the direction of Dr. Bleuler. Bleuler had assigned Jung the task of studying the **Word Association Test**, a test in which a list of 100 words is read to the patient, and the therapist watches for evidence of emotional arousal, such as pauses, failures to respond, or physical acts. In addition, Jung noticed that even with schizophrenic patients, the patterns of word association were often centered on a particular theme. That theme could then be regarded as a complex (which, again, could be either positive or negative). Sometimes, complexes remain unresolved, such as one’s feelings about parents, if the parents have died. In relatively healthy individuals, these unresolved complexes could result in dreams, visions, or similar phenomena pertaining to the object(s) of the unresolved complex. These complexes might even become personified. In the extreme situation of personified complexes, such as in a person suffering from schizophrenia, the patient cannot distinguish the personification of the unresolved complex from the seeming reality of being another person. Hence, the schizophrenic “hears” voices in their head, “spoken” by someone else. As Jung further investigated the nature and themes of complexes in psychiatric patients, he found common themes that could not always be attributed to the patient’s personal history. And so, he began to form his concept of the collective unconscious (Douglas, 1995; Jarvis, 2004; Jung, 1959b, 1961; Storr, 1983).

...from the standpoint of the psychology of the personality a twofold division ensues: an “extra-conscious” psyche whose contents are *personal*, and an “extra-conscious” psyche whose contents are *impersonal* and *collective*. The first group comprises contents which are integral components of the individual personality and could therefore just as well be conscious; the second group forms, as it were, an omnipresent, unchanging, and everywhere identical *quality* or *substrate of the psyche per se*. This is, of course, no more than a hypothesis. But we are driven to it by the peculiar nature of the empirical material...

Whereas the contents of the personal unconscious are acquired during the individual’s lifetime, the contents of the collective unconscious are invariably archetypes that were present from the beginning. (pp. 7-8; Jung, 1959c)

Thus, according to Jung, the collective unconscious is a reservoir of psychic resources common to all humans (something along the lines of psychological instinct). These psychic resources, known as **archetypes**, are passed down through the generations of a culture, but Jung considered them to be inherited, not learned. As generation after generation experienced similar phenomena, the archetypal images were formed. Despite cultural differences, the human experience has been similar in many ways throughout history. As such, there are certain archetypes common to all people. According to Jung, the most empirically valid archetypes, and therefore the most powerful, are the **shadow**, the **anima**, and the **animus** (Jung, 1959c).

Jung described the shadow as “the inferior and less commendable part of a person,” and “a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality” (Jung, 1940, 1959c). It encompasses desires and feelings that are not acceptable to society or the conscious psyche. With effort the shadow can be somewhat assimilated into the conscious personality, but portions of it are highly resistant to moral control. As a result, we tend to project those thoughts, feelings, or emotions onto other people. When they have moved beyond one’s control, such as when we lose our temper, these projections isolate the individual from their environment, since they are no longer approaching situations realistically. Jung described the circumstance as tragic when people continue to ruin their lives, and the lives of others, because they cannot see through the illusion of how their shadow has been projected, and consequently interfered with their ability to live a healthy life (Jung, 1959c).

The shadow is not, however, entirely evil. Rather, Jung described it as un-adapted and awkward, much like a child trying to function in the company of adults. Trying to entirely suppress the shadow is not the appropriate solution, since the shadow is driving us forward in our efforts to achieve balance between the unconscious and conscious realities. In other words, just as a child may act inappropriately while trying to grow up, the shadow may cause inappropriate behavior in opposition to the accepted rules of society. Nonetheless, it is important for us to have that driving force pushing us toward self-development (and the development of the human species), so that we don’t simply live a life of passivity and/or reaction to outside events. It is the shadow that pushes us forward (Jacobi & Hull, 1970; Jung, 1961).

Although many people emphasize the differences between men and women, psychologically their common traits can readily be observed. Jung described the anima as the female aspect of the male psyche, and the animus as the male aspect of the female psyche. Jung intentionally addresses this difficult concept in mythological terms, but he also makes it clear that this is a natural phenomenon for each person, and not a substitute for one’s mother (in the case of the anima) or father (in the case of the animus). While the presence of a feminine aspect within the male psyche and the presence of a masculine aspect within the female psyche have some positive benefits, such as making it possible for men and women to relate to one another, the unfortunate reality is often the opposite. In 1959(c), Jung described the difficulties that men and women have relating to family and friends of the opposite sex, due to fundamental differences in style. Although men may contain the anima, they are still primarily masculine, whereas women, despite the animus, are still primarily feminine. As with the shadow, relationship problems can arise from the anima or animus when we allow our archetypal image to be projected onto others. As Jung himself noted, many men project a desired image onto a woman that would require her to be a sexually vivacious virgin, something of a contradiction in terms. Thus, over time, such a man’s relationships may suffer as a result of his learning more about the real life of his companion, even though she has done nothing but be herself (Jung, 1940, 1959c).

Jung did not place a limit on the number of possible archetypes, and he described quite a few in his writings. It did not matter to Jung whether archetypes were, in fact, real. In a perspective quite similar to cognitive theorists, he wrote that “insofar as the archetypes act upon me, they are real and actual to me, even though I do not know what their real nature is” (Jung, 1961). One of the more important archetypes is the self, which represents the integration of the whole personality. Indeed, Jung described the self as the goal of all psychic development. A special type of image often associated with the self, and with Jung himself, is the **mandala**. A mandala is a geometric figure that represents wholeness, completeness, perfection (Jung, 1958). They also tend to be symmetrical, representing the natural balance of opposites. Although they typically have religious or spiritual significance, it is not required. Jung was very interested in mandalas, and from 1916 to 1918 he drew a new one every morning (Wehr, 1989). Mandalas can appear in dreams as an image of wholeness, or in times of stress they may appear as compensatory images (Douglas, 1995). Their potential healing ability stems from their connection between the uniqueness of our present consciousness and the depths of our primordial past:

...The psyche is not of today; its ancestry goes back many millions of years. Individual consciousness is only the flower and the fruit of a season, sprung from the perennial rhizome beneath the earth; and it would find itself in better accord with the truth if it took the existence of the rhizome into its calculations. For the root matter is the mother of all things. (pg. xxiv; Jung, 1956)

It is important to note that archetypal images are considered to be ancient. Although we talk about them as if they are still forming, and that may well be possible, the fact is that there were countless human generations long before recorded history. Jung has

referred to archetypes as primordial images, “impressed upon the mind since of old” (Jung, 1940). Archetypes have been expressed as myths and fables, some of which are thousands of years old even within recorded history. As the eternal, symbolic images representing archetypes were developed, they naturally attracted and fascinated people. That, according to Jung, is why they have such profound impact, even today, in our seemingly advanced, knowledgeable, and scientific societies.

Table 4.1.3.1: Common Archetypes in Jung’s Theory of the Collective Unconscious*

Self	Integration and wholeness of the personality, the center of the totality of the psyche; symbolically represented by, e.g., the mandala, Christ, or by helpful animals (such as Rin Tin Tin and Lassie or the Hindu monkey god Hanuman)
Shadow	The dark, inferior, emotional, and immoral aspects of the psyche; symbolically represented by, e.g., the Devil (or an evil character such as Dracula), dragons, monsters (such as Godzilla)
Anima	Strange, wraithlike image of an idealized women, yet contrary to the masculinity of the man, draws the man into feminine (as defined by gender roles) behavior, always a supernatural element; symbolically represented by, e.g., personifications of witches, the Greek Sirens, a femme fatale, or in more positive ways as the Virgin Mary, a romanticized beauty (such as Helen of Troy) or a cherished car
Animus	A source of meaning and power for women, it can be opinionated, divisive, and create animosity toward men, but also creates a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge; symbolically represented by, e.g., death, murderers (such as the pirate Bluebeard, who killed all his wives), a band of outlaws, a bewitched prince (such as the beast in “Beauty and the Beast”) or a romantic actor (such as Rudolph Valentino)
Persona	A protective cover, or mask, that we present to the world to make a specific impression and to conceal our inner self; symbolically represented by, e.g., a coat or mantle
Hero	One who overcomes evil, destruction, and death, often has a miraculous but humble birth; symbolically represented by, e.g., angels, Christ the Redeemer, or a god-man (such as Hercules)
Wise Old Man	Typically a personification of the self, associated with saints, sages, and prophets; symbolically represented as, e.g., the magician Merlin or an Indian guru
Trickster	A childish character with pronounced physical appetites, seeks only gratification and can be cruel and unfeeling; symbolically represented by, e.g., animals (such as Brer Rabbit, Wile E. Coyote or, often, monkeys) or a mischievous god (such as the Norse god Loki)

*For more information read *The Integration of the Personality* (Jung, 1940), *Aion: Researches Into the Phenomenology of the Self* (Jung, 1959c), and *Man and His Symbols* (Jung, et al., 1964).

? discussion question 4.1.3.2

What is your impression of the concept of archetypes? Think about mythic heroes and gods, or concepts of motherhood or being a father. Can you identify commonalities between

different cultures, now or throughout time, which seem to suggest themes that are common to all people?

Connections Across Cultures: Symbolism Throughout Time and Around the world

Near the end of Jung's life, he was asked to write a book that might make his theories more accessible to common readers. Jung initially refused, but then he had an interesting dream, receiving advice from his unconscious psyche that he should reconsider his refusal:

...He dreamed that, instead of sitting in his study and talking to the great doctors and psychiatrists who used to call on him from all over the world, he was standing in a public place and addressing a multitude of people who were listening to him with rapt attention and *understanding what he said*... (pg. 10; John Freeman, in his introduction to *Man and His Symbols*, Jung et al., 1964)

Jung then agreed to write the book that became known as *Man and His Symbols*, but only if he could hand-pick the co-authors who would help him. Jung supervised every aspect of the book, which was nearly finished when he died. Written purposefully to be easily understood by a wide audience, the book presents an astonishingly wide variety of symbolism from art, archaeology, myth, and analysis within the context of Jung's theories. Many of the symbols were represented in dreams, and symbolic dreams are the primary means by which our unconscious psyche communicates with our conscious psyche, or ego. It is extraordinary to see how similar such symbolism has been throughout time and across cultures, even though each individual example is unique to the person having the dream or expressing themselves openly.

Symbols, according to Jung, are terms, names, images, etc. that may be familiar in everyday life, but as symbols they come to represent something vague and unknown, they take on meaning that is hidden from us. More specifically, they represent something within our unconscious psyche that cannot ever be fully explained. Exploring the meaning will not unlock the secrets of the symbol, because its meaning is beyond reason. Jung suggests that this should not seem strange, since there is nothing that we perceive fully. Our eyesight is limited, as is our hearing. Even when we use tools to enhance our senses, we still only see better, or hear better. We don't comprehend the true nature of visual objects or sounds, we only experience them differently, within our psychic realm as opposed to their physical reality. And yet, the symbols created by our unconscious psyche are very important, since the unconscious is at least half of our being, and it is infinitely broader than our conscious psyche (Jung et al., 1964).

Jung believed that the symbols created in dreams have a deeper meaning than Freud recognized. Freud believed that dreams simply represent the unconscious aspects of one's psyche. Jung believed, however, that dreams represent a psyche all their own, a vast and ancient psyche connected to the entire history of humanity (the collective unconscious). Therefore, dreams can tell a story of their own, such as Jung's dream encouraging him to write a book for a common audience. Thus, his dream did not reflect some underlying neurosis connected to childhood trauma, but rather, his unconscious psyche was pushing him forward, toward a sort of wholeness of self by making his theories more readily accessible to those who are not sufficiently educated in the wide variety of complex topics that are typically found in Jung's writings. By virtue of the same reasoning, Jung considered dreams to be quite personal. They could not be interpreted with dream manuals, since no object has any fixed symbolic meaning.

What makes the symbolism within dreams, as well as in everyday life, most fascinating, however, is how common it is throughout the world, both in ancient times and today. In their examination of symbols and archetypes, Jung and his colleagues offer visual examples from: Egypt, England, Japan, the Congo, Tibet, Germany, Belgium, the United States, Bali, Haiti, Greece, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Cameroon, Java, France, Kenya, India, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Australia, China, Hungary, Malaysia, Borneo, Finland, the Netherlands, Rhodesia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Ireland, Brazil, Monaco, Burma, Bolivia, Cambodia, Denmark, Macedonia, and Peru, as well as from Mayan, Celtic, Babylonian, Persian, Navaho, and Haidu cultures. There are also many Biblical references. It would be safe to say that no one else in the history of psychology has so clearly demonstrated the cross-cultural reality of their theory as is the case with Carl Jung.

Of course, as with dreams, many of these symbols are unique to the culture in which they have arisen. Therefore, it takes a great deal of training and experience for a psychotherapist to work with patients from different cultures. Nonetheless, the patterns represent the same basic concepts, such as self, shadow, anima, animus, hero, etc. Once recognized in their cultural context, the analyst would have a starting point from which to begin working with their patient, or the artist would understand how to influence their audience. One important type of art that relies heavily on cultural images and cues is advertising. Cultural differences can create problems for companies pursuing global marketing campaigns. Jung's theory suggests that similarities in how we react to certain archetypal themes should be similar in different countries, but of course the images themselves must be recognizable, and we may still be a long way from understanding those fundamental images:

...Our actual knowledge of the unconscious shows that it is a natural phenomenon and that, like Nature herself, it is at least *neutral*. It contains all aspects of human nature – light and dark, beautiful and ugly, good and evil, profound and silly. The study of individual, as well as of collective, symbolism is an enormous task, and one that has not yet been mastered. (pg. 103; Jung et al., 1964)

Personality Types

One of Jung's most practical theories, and one that has been quite influential, is his work on **personality types**. Jung had conducted an extensive review of the available literature on personality types, including perspectives from ancient Brahmanic conceptions taken from the Indian Vedas (see below) and types described by the American psychologist William James. In keeping with one of Jung's favorite themes, James had emphasized opposing pairs as the characteristics of his personality types, such as rationalism vs. empiricism, idealism vs. materialism, or optimism vs. pessimism (see Jung, 1971). Based on his research and clinical experience, Jung proposed a system of personality types based on **attitude-types** and **function-types** (more commonly referred to simply as attitudes and functions). Once again, the attitudes and functions are based on opposing ways of interacting with one's environment.

The two attitude-types are based on one's orientation to external objects (which includes other people). The **introvert** is intent on withdrawing libido from objects, as if to ensure that the object can have no power over the person. In contrast, the **extravert** extends libido toward an object, establishing an active relationship. Jung considered introverts and extraverts to be common amongst all groups of people, from all walks of life. Today, most psychologists acknowledge that there is a clear genetic component to these temperaments (Kagan, 1984, 1994; Kagan, Kearsley, & Zelazo 1978), a suggestion proposed by Jung as well (Jung, 1971). Of course, one cannot have an orientation to objects without consciousness, and consciousness cannot exist without an **ego**. For Jung, the ego is a complex, so it is associated with both the conscious psyche and the personal unconscious. According to Jung, "it is always in the center of our attention and of our desires, and it is the absolutely indispensable centre of consciousness" (Jung, 1968).

Jung's four functions describe ways in which we orient ourselves to the external environment, given our basic tendency toward introversion or extraversion. The first opposing pair of functions is **thinking vs. feeling**. Thinking involves intellect, it tells you *what* a thing is, whereas feeling is values-based, it tells what a thing is *worth* to you. For example, if you are trying to choose classes for your next semester of college, perhaps you need to choose between a required general education course as opposed to a personally interesting course like *Medical First Responder* or *Interior Design*. If you are guided first by thinking, you will probably choose the course that fulfills a requirement, but if you are guided by feeling, you may choose the course that satisfies your more immediate interests. The second opposing pair of functions is **sensing vs. intuition**. Sensing describes paying attention to the reality of your external environment, it tells you that something *is*. In contrast, intuition incorporates a sense of time, and allows for hunches. Intuition may seem mysterious, and Jung freely acknowledges that he is particularly mystical, yet he offers an interesting perspective on this issue:

...Intuition is a function by which you see round corners, which you really cannot do; yet the fellow will do it for you and you trust him. It is a function which normally you do not use if you live a regular life within four walls and do regular routine work. But if you are on the Stock Exchange or in Central Africa, you will use your hunches like anything. You cannot, for instance, calculate whether when you turn round a corner in the bush you will meet a rhinoceros or a tiger - but you get a hunch, and it will perhaps save your life... (pg. 14; Jung, 1968)

The two attitudes and the four functions combine to form eight personality types. Jung described a so-called cross of the functions, with the ego in the center being influenced by the pairs of functions (Jung, 1968). Considering whether the ego's attitude is primarily introverted or extraverted, one could also propose a parallel pair of crosses. Jung's theory on personality types has proven quite influential, and led to the development of two well-known and very popular instruments used to measure one's personality type, so that one might then make reasoned decisions about real-life choices.



Figure 4.1.3.1

Jung proposed a “cross of the functions,” in which the ego sits at the center of the opposing pairs of functions (Jung, 1968). When the attitudes of introversion and extraversion are included, one can represent Jung’s view as parallel crosses of the functions.

? Discussion question 4.1.3.3

Jung described two attitudes (introversion-extraversion) and four functions (thinking-feeling, sensing-intuition) as the primary basis for psychological types. Think about yourself and/or some of your close friends and family members. Can you use the eight types described by Jung to get a reasonable impression of the people you know, or does Jung’s theory seem to fall short?

In 1923, Katharine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers learned of Jung’s personality types and became quite interested in his theory. After spending 20 years observing individuals of different types, they added one more pair of factors based on a person’s preference for either a more structured lifestyle, called **judging**, or a more flexible or adaptable lifestyle, called **perceiving**. There were now, according to Briggs and Myers, sixteen possible personality types. In the 1940s, Isabel Myers began developing the **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator** (MBTI) in order to help people learn about their personality type. To provide just one example of an MBTI profile, an individual who is extraverted and prefers sensing, thinking, and judging (identified by the initials ESTJ) would be described as: “Practical, realistic, matter-of-fact. Decisive, quickly move to implement decisions. Organize projects and people to get things done...Forceful in implementing their plans” (Myers, 1993; Myers & McCaulley, 1985; see also the website for the Myers & Briggs Foundation, at www.myersbriggs.org). While it is relatively easy to find shortcut tests or variations of the MBTI online, if one plans to make any meaningful decisions based on their personality type they should consult a trained MBTI administrator. What sort of decision might one make? The MBTI has become a popular tool for looking at career choices and workplace relationships. A number of popular books, such as *Do What You Are* (Tieger & Barron-Tieger, 2001) and *Type Talk at Work* (Kroeger, Thuesen, & Rutledge, 2002), are available that provide information intended to help people choose satisfying careers and be successful in complex work environments. In addition to its use in career counseling, the MBTI has been used in individual counseling, marriage counseling, and in educational settings (Myers, 1993; Myers & McCaulley, 1985; Myers & Myers, 1980). Another popular instrument, based once again on Jung’s theory and compared directly to the MBTI, is the **Keirsey Temperament Sorter**. David Keirsey uses plain language in an effort to make personality types easy to comprehend. Setting aside introversion vs. extraversion, he has identified eight character portraits: mentors, organizers, monitors, operators, advocates, engineers, conservators, and players. When Keirsey adds extraversion and introversion back into the mixture, he can identify one’s personality type even more clearly: monitors become either supervisors (E) or inspectors (I), players become performers (E) or composers (I), engineers become inventors (E) or designers (I), etc. As with the MBTI, Keirsey provides concrete recommendations regarding how one might use the results of his temperament sorter to make decisions about one’s choices in life (Keirsey, 1987).

Table 4.1.3.2: Jung’s Eight Personality Types*

Introverted Thinking	Focused on own internal thoughts and ideas, do not communicate well, can be highly conflicted and will lash out at critics, generally stubborn and do not get along well with others
Introverted Feeling	Tend to be silent, inaccessible, and melancholy, have deep emotions but hide them and appear cold and reserved on the surface, tend to be suspicious of others, most are women
Introverted Sensing	Guided by subjective impression of real-life objects, often express their sensations through artistic endeavors, the objective world may seem make-believe and comical

Table 4.1.3.2: Jung's Eight Personality Types*

Introverted Intuitive	Tend to be peculiar and lack contact with reality, may be completely misunderstood even by those who are close to them, may seem like a mystical dreamer and seer on one hand but just a cranky person on the other, may have vision but lack convincing power of reason
Extraverted Thinking	Seek intellectual conclusions based on objective reality, seek to influence others, suppress emotion, can be rigid and dogmatic (tyrannical when others penetrate their power province)
Extraverted Feeling	Feelings harmonize with objective situations, can be highly emotional, will avoid thinking when it proves upsetting, most are women
Extraverted Sensing	Immersed in realism and seek new experiences, whole aim is concrete enjoyment, most are men
Extraverted Intuitive	Always seek new opportunities, may seize new opportunity with enthusiasm and just as quickly abandon it if not promising, has vision, often found among business tycoons and politicians, but have little regard for welfare of others

*For more information read *Psychological Types* (Jung, 1971).

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4.1.4: Personality Development

Jung believed that “everyone’s ultimate aim and strongest desire lie in developing the fullness of human existence that is called personality” (Jung, 1940). However, he lamented the misguided attempts of society to educate children into their personalities. Not only did he doubt the abilities the average parent or average teacher to lead children through the child’s personality development, given their own personal limitations, he considered it a mistake to expect children to act like young adults:

It is best not to apply to children the high ideal of education to personality. For what is generally understood by personality - namely, *a definitely shaped, psychic abundance, capable of resistance and endowed with energy* - is an adult ideal...No personality is manifested without *definiteness, fullness, and maturity*. These three characteristics do not, and should not, fit the child, for they would rob it of its childhood. (pp. 284-285; Jung, 1940)

This is not to suggest that childhood is simply a carefree time for children:

No one will deny or even underestimate the importance of childhood years; the severe injuries, often lasting through life, caused by a nonsensical upbringing at home and in school are too obvious, and the need for reasonable pedagogic methods is too urgent...But who rears children to personality? In the first and most important place we have the ordinary, incompetent parents who are often themselves, all their lives, partly or wholly children. (pg. 282; Jung, 1940)

So, if childhood is a critical time, but most adults never grow up themselves, what hope does Jung see for the future? The answer is to be found in midlife. According to Jung, the middle years of life are “a time of supreme psychological importance” and “the moment of greatest unfolding” in one’s life (cited in Jacobi & Hull, 1970). In keeping with the ancient tradition of the Vedic stages of life, from Hindu and Indian culture, the earlier stages of life are about education, developing a career, having a family, and serving one’s proper role within society:

Man has two aims: The first is the aim of nature, the begetting of children and all the business of protecting the brood; to this period belongs the gaining of money and social position. When this aim is satisfied, there begins another phase, namely, that of culture. For the attainment of the former goal we have the help of nature, and moreover of education; but little or nothing helps us toward the latter goal... (pg. 125; Jung, cited in Jacobi & Hull, 1970)

So where does one look for the answers to life? Obviously, there is no simple answer to that question, or rather, there are many answers to that question. Some pursue spiritual answers, such as meditating or devoting themselves to charitable causes. Some devote themselves to their children and grandchildren, others to gardening, painting, or woodworking. The answer for any particular individual is based on that person’s **individuation**.

Individuation is the process by which a person actually becomes an “individual,” differentiated from all other people. It is not to be confused with the ego, or with the conscious psyche, since it includes aspects of the personal unconscious, as influenced by the collective unconscious. Jung also described individuation as the process by which one becomes a “whole” person. To some extent, this process draws the individual away from society, toward being just that, an individual. However, keeping in mind the collective unconscious, Jung believed that individuation leads to more intense and broader collective relationships, rather than leading to isolation. This is what is meant by a whole person, one who successfully integrates the conscious psyche, or ego, with the unconscious psyche. Jung also addresses the Eastern approaches, such as meditation, as being misguided in their attempts to master the unconscious mind. The goal of individuation is wholeness, wholeness of ego, unconscious psyche, and community (Jung, 1940, 1971):

Consciousness and the unconscious do not make a whole when either is suppressed or damaged by the other. If they must contend, let it be a fair fight with equal right on both sides. Both are aspects of life...It is the old play of hammer and anvil: the suffering iron between them will in the end be shaped into an unbreakable whole, the individual. (pg. 27; Jung, 1940)

Figure 4.1.4.1

Jimmy Carter was a successful farmer, Governor of Georgia, and President of the United States. As president he brokered a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel that earned him a Nobel Peace Prize nomination. Despite such an illustrious life to that point, he has, perhaps, done even more good since then. After devoting himself to a wide variety of social and political activities focusing on peace and justice, including personally building houses with Habitat for Humanity, the Honorable Mr. Carter received a well-earned Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

? discussion question 4.1.4.1

Jung identified the first half of life as a time to take care of the biological needs of the species (e.g., raising children). It is in the second half of life, according to Jung, that one looks within oneself for the guidance and motivation to fulfill the needs of society and one's culture.

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4.1.5: Jungian Analysis

Jung was deeply moved by his ability to help patients, and he took the process of analysis very seriously. This is not to say, however, that he considered a specific process to be necessary. He was suspicious of theoretical assumptions, he focused on each individual in therapy, and was just as likely to adapt Adlerian techniques as he was to adapt Freudian techniques. In fact, he considered general professional experience to be an important aspect of one's ability to be a good analyst. He did consider training to be very important, and that it should include medical training. He was not opposed to lay analysts (those with a Ph.D., rather than an M.D.), but felt that they should be supervised by a psychiatrist (Jung, 1961).

He built his general system of psychotherapy on four tenets: the psyche is a self-regulating system, the unconscious has creative and compensatory components, the doctor-patient relationship is crucial, and personality growth takes place throughout the lifespan. In addition, the process of psychotherapy involves four stages: **confession**, **elucidation**, **education**, and **transformation** (see Douglas, 1995). The confession and elucidation stages involve the patient recounting elements of their personal history, dreams, and fantasies, followed by the analyst bringing attention to symptoms, transferences, and attempting to help the patient gain insight on both intellectual and emotional levels. The education stage then involves moving the patient into the realm of an individual, hopefully as an adapted social being. Education focuses mostly on the persona and the ego, whereas confession and elucidation serve the role of exploring the personal unconscious. The education stage also involves trying to provide the patient with realistic options for changing their behavior. The final stage, transformation, was described by Jung as being similar to self-actualization. Also like self-actualization, not every patient (or person) makes it to this stage. Addressing the archetypal image of the self, the image of wholeness, requires working with the whole range of the conscious, personal unconscious, and collective unconscious psyches. The final goal is to inspire the patient to become a uniquely individual self without losing a sense of responsible integrity (the collectiveness inherent in the collective unconscious; see Douglas, 1995).

Since Jung did not want to be tied to any specific technique(s), he incorporated a variety of techniques as appropriate for each patient. Like Freud, Jung experimented with hypnosis early in his career, but discarded the technique as ineffective. He used dream analysis regularly, but did not consider each dream to be necessarily important. Instead, he looked for patterns in dreams over time, particularly recurring dreams. Jung taught his patients to get in touch with their own unconscious psyche through an active imagination technique. This meditative imagery procedure is somewhat similar to that of the Buddhist mindfulness techniques taught by Gotama Buddha some 2,600 years ago, but involves much more active cognition. Jung's active imagery technique was also extended into actual physical activity. Jung found it helpful, especially with particularly withdrawn patients, to have them act out their thoughts and feeling. Jung would even mimic their movements to help himself better understand what his patients were trying to communicate (Douglas, 1995). The importance of physical states, as reflective of psychological states, was developed in more detail in the somatic psychology theories of Wilhelm Reich. In addition, Jung extended his therapeutic approach to group therapy, family and marital therapy, art therapy, child therapy, and the recurrent nightmares of patients suffering from post-traumatic stress. Through it all, Jung paid special attention to complexes, as representative of the psychic processes of the patient. Once an analyst understands both the symptoms and the complexes of the patient, Jung believed, the analyst has found the key to treatment (Douglas, 1995).

Like Freud, Jung felt that analytical psychology could serve a greater purpose beyond just helping individuals, so he turned his attention to society in several of his books. In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (Jung, 1933), Jung addressed the spiritual problems of our times. A modern person, according to Jung, is one who is whole, aware of their conscious psyche and their unconscious psyche (both personal and collective). Though such people are few and far between, Jung believed he saw evidence of a need for understanding the unconscious psyche. One obvious piece of evidence was the rise of psychology as a discipline at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, in contrast to Jung's personal preference, psychology has largely moved away from spiritual pursuits, with its preference for a scientific evaluation of the human mind. Religion, in Jung's opinion, has also moved away from spirituality, in favor of the dogma of human rules and regulations. Jung believed that we can learn a great deal from Yoga and Buddhism in terms of blending psychology and spirituality in order to understand the whole nature of human beings. In *The Undiscovered Self* (Jung, 1957), Jung continues this argument in a more personal way. He suggests that modern psychological approaches to "self-knowledge" are at best superficial, and don't address the real psychic processes that lead to individuality. As a general condemnation of our obsession with science, he questions any theory based on statistical averages, since those averages say very little at all about the unique units being studied, whether they are people or some other object. In *Civilization in Transition* (Jung, 1964), the tenth volume of Jung's collected works, he addresses the problems of American psychology, and what all Westerners can learn from the ancient wisdom of India about studying our own unconscious psyche. The importance of understanding the true and complete nature of our psyche is that until we do we cannot live our lives to the fullest:

Our souls as well as our bodies are composed of individual elements which were all already present in the ranks of our ancestors. The “newness” in the individual psyche is an endlessly varied recombination of age-old components...Once the past has been breached, it is usually annihilated, and there is no stopping the forward motion. But it is precisely the loss of connection with the past, our uprootedness, which has given rise to the “discontents” of civilization and to such a flurry and haste that we live more in the future and its chimerical promises of a golden age than in the present, with which our whole evolutionary background has not yet caught up. (pp. 235-236; Jung, 1961)

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4.1.6: A Final Note on Carl Jung

It can be something of a challenge to view Jung's work as psychological. It lends itself more readily to, perhaps, the study of the humanities, with elements of medieval pseudo-science, Asian culture, and native religions (an odd combination, to be sure). With titles such as *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self* (Jung, 1959c) and *Mysterium Conjunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy* (Jung, 1970), Jung is not exactly accessible without a wide range of knowledge in areas other than psychology. **Alchemy** was of particular interest to Jung, but not in terms of turning base metals into gold (alchemy is a strange mixture of spirituality and chemistry). Rather, Jung believed that psychology could find its base in alchemy, and that it was the collective unconscious that came forth in the ongoing human effort to understand the nature of matter (Jaffe, 1979; Jung, 1961; Wehr, 1989). He even went so far as to write about flying saucers, the astrological seasons of time, and the prophecies of Nostradamus (Jung, 1959c; Storr, 1983).

And yet, Jung addressed some very important and interesting topics in psychology. His theory of psychological types is reflected in trait descriptions of personality and corresponding trait tests, such as Cattell's 16-PF and the MMPI. The value Jung placed on mid-life and beyond, based largely on the ancient Vedic stages of life, suggests that one is not doomed to the negative alternative in Erikson's final psychosocial crises. So Jung's personal interests, and his career as a whole, straddled the fence between surreal and practical. He may always be best-known for his personal relationship with Freud, brief as it was, but the blending of Eastern and Western thought is becoming more common in psychology. So perhaps Jung himself will become more accessible to the field of psychology, and we may find a great deal to be excited about in his curious approach to psychodynamic theory.

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4.1.7: Personality Theory in Real Life

Synchronicity - Coincidence or an Experience with Mystical Spirituality?

Many people are deeply religious and many others consider themselves to be just as deeply spiritual, though not connected to any specific religion. As important as religion and spirituality are in the lives of many people, psychology has tended to avoid these topics, primarily because they do not lend themselves readily to scientific investigation. Jung certainly did not avoid these topics, and he studied a wide range of spiritual topics. For example, he wrote the foreword for Richard Wilhelm's translation of the *I Ching* (Wilhelm, 1950), he wrote psychological commentary for a translation of *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* (Evans-Wentz & Jung, 1954), he discussed the psychology of evil in *Answer to Job* (Jung, 1954), he wrote about Gnostic traditions at length (see Segal, 1992), and one of the volumes of his collected works is entitled *Psychology and Religion: West and East* (Jung, 1958). In addition to his varied spiritual interests, Jung became interested in psychological phenomena that could not be explained in scientific terms. Such phenomena do not necessarily require a spiritual explanation, but in the absence of any other way to explain them, they are often thought of in spiritual terms. One such topic is **synchronicity**.

Jung uses the term synchronicity to describe the "coincidence in time of two or more causally unrelated events which have the same or a similar meaning" (Jung & Pauli, 1955). In particular, it refers to the simultaneous occurrence of a particular psychic state with one or more external events that have a meaningful parallel to one's current experience or state of mind. I would like to share with you two experiences of synchronicity from my own life. Having a Ph.D. in physiological psychology, and having spent a number of years conducting biomedical research, it seems rather strange to be sharing experiences that can be classified as extrasensory perception, or ESP. Jung also found it difficult to address this topic:

...If I have now conquered my hesitation and at last come to grips with my theme, it is chiefly because my experiences of the phenomenon of synchronicity have multiplied themselves over the decades...As a psychiatrist and psychotherapist I have often come up against the phenomena in question and could convince myself how much these inner experiences meant to my patients. In most cases they were things which people do not talk about for fear of exposing themselves to thoughtless ridicule. I was amazed to see how many people have had experiences of this kind and how carefully the secret was guarded. So my interest in this problem has a human as well as a scientific foundation. (pp. 5-6; Jung, in Jung & Pauli, 1955)

Synchronicity Experience #1: In February, 1992, our first son, Mark David Kelland, Jr., died at birth. Later that year, I was traveling across the country, taking a whole week to get to a neuroscience convention in California, and I decided to hike up Wheeler Peak, the highest point in New Mexico (13,161 feet). I arrived a little late in the day, but decided I had enough time to make the climb and get back down off the ridge before dark. I just made it, but still had a few miles to go on the jeep trail down to the parking lot. Along the way, I stopped and looked back up at Wheeler Peak. I turned off my flashlight, and in the dark I could just make out the outline of the mountain against the night sky. I prayed to God for a sign that our son was in Heaven. The instant I said "Amen," a brilliant shooting star streaked across the sky and descended behind Wheeler Peak! I took it to be the sign I had asked for.

Synchronicity Experience #2: While growing up, we lived next door to Bill and Jackie O'Reilly, who co-owned the corner drugstore in the center of Foxborough, MA. When I was young I mowed their lawn in the summer and shoveled their driveway in the winter. When I was old enough to get a regular job, I asked Mr. O'Reilly for a letter of recommendation for a job at the local newspaper. He declined, saying he wanted me to work at their drugstore. But he didn't say anything else, until Mrs. O'Reilly told him to give me a job. So, I worked at the drugstore from the age of 15 to 20 years old. I even began college at the same school they had attended: the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy. Although I changed schools and switched my major to psychology, I was always hopeful that the O'Reilly's would be proud of me. Unfortunately, Bill O'Reilly died a week after I graduated from college. Jackie O'Reilly retired and sold their building, and the old corner drugstore in the center of town ceased to exist.

Eventually I moved away, pursued my career in psychology, got married and had children, and visits to Massachusetts became few and far between. One night, about 25 years after I had worked at the drugstore, I had a very vivid and moving dream. I was standing in the center of Foxborough, looking at the building where the drugstore had been. I was overwhelmed by a profound sense of sadness, sad that things must change with time and cannot remain the same, no matter how much we may long for the past. I awoke from that dream astonished by its sense of reality and its emotional impact. The next morning my mother called me, and told me that Jackie O'Reilly had died during the night! Was it merely a coincidence that I dreamt about O'Reilly's Pharmacy and felt the sadness of watching time pass away, while Jackie O'Reilly was in reality passing away, or was it something more? There can be no scientific explanation. I searched my mind for anything that might have coincidentally caused me to think about the

drugstore the day before, but nothing came to mind except for an alternative explanation, which was not at all scientific. Had Jackie O'Reilly's spirit passed by and said goodbye, on her way to the great beyond?

In the quote cited above, Jung wrote that he was amazed by how many people have had experiences of synchronicity. The questions I would pose to you are quite simple. Have you ever experienced synchronicity? If you have not, do you consider it possible that such events occur as something more than simple (if improbable) coincidence?

Before dismissing synchronicity as non-scientific, keep in mind the circumstances that led Jung to this theory. In addition to personally knowing Wolfgang Pauli, Jung also knew Nils Bohr and Albert Einstein (both of whom, like Pauli, had won a Nobel Prize in physics). Although these men are considered among the greatest scientists of modern times, Einstein perhaps the greatest, consider some of their theories. For instance, Einstein proposed that time isn't time, it's relative, except for the speed of light, which alone is always constant. In recent years, experimental physicists have exceeded the speed of light, broken Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle (which, by definition, couldn't be broken), and proposed that it might be possible to get something colder than absolute zero. How can we accept things that cannot be observed or proved as scientific, while rejecting something that Jung and many others have observed time and time again? Jung was impressed by the possibility of splitting atoms, and wondered if such a thing might be possible with the psyche. As physics suggested strange new possibilities, Jung held out the same hope for humanity (Progoff, 1973).

Regardless of whether the strangest of Jung's theories are ever proven right or wrong, at the very least they provide an opportunity for interesting discussions! There also happens to be another well-known person in the history of psychology who has experienced synchronicity and who talked about many of her patients having had out-of-body and near-death experiences: Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. In her book *On Children and Death* (Kubler-Ross, 1983), Kubler-Ross describes even more serious concerns than Jung about discussing this topic, but as with Jung, she has also met many, many patients who have had these experiences:

...I have been called every possible name, from Antichrist to Satan himself; I have been labeled, reviled, and otherwise denounced...But it is impossible to ignore the thousands of stories that patients - children and adults alike - have shared with me. These illuminations cannot be explained in scientific language. Listening to these experiences and sharing many of them myself, it would seem hypocritical and dishonest to me not to mention them in my lectures and workshops. So I have shared all of what I have learned from my patients for the last two decades, and I intend to continue to do so. (pg. 106; Kubler-Ross, 1983)

? discussion question 4.1.7.1

Jung studied and wrote about topics as diverse as alchemy, astrology, flying saucers, ESP, the prophecies of Nostradamus, and synchronicity. Does this make it difficult for you to believe any of his theories? If you don't believe anything about any of these topics, are you still able to find value in other theories proposed by Jung?

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4.1.S: Chapter Summary

Review of Key Points

- As a child, Jung was introduced to a wide variety of cultural and religious perspectives from around the world. As a result of these experiences, he was open to many different perspectives throughout his career.
- Jung had extremely vivid dreams, many of which he interpreted as visions (or unconscious communications) intended to guide his actions.
- Jung called his approach “analytical psychology” in order to distinguish it from Freud’s “psychoanalysis” and Adler’s “individual psychology.”
- An important starting point for Jung’s theories was the concept of entropy, which proposes an eventual balance of all energy. Jung applied this concept to the psychic energy present in the conscious and unconscious psyches.
- Jung proposed two distinct realms within the unconscious psyche, the personal and the collective.
- According to Jung, the personal unconscious is revealed through its complexes.
- Jung advanced the Word Association Test as a means of examining the complexes contained within the personal unconscious.
- The collective unconscious communicates through archetypal images. Jung believed the most readily observed archetypes are the shadow, the anima, and the animus.
- Another important archetype is the self, the representation of wholeness and the completed development of the personality. The self is often symbolically represented by mandalas.
- Jung developed a framework for recognizing particular personality types. He proposed two attitudes, introversion and extraversion, and four functions, thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuition.
- Jung’s type theory provided the basis for some practical personality tests. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Keirsey Temperament Sorter are both well-known in the field of psychology.
- Jung believed that everyone’s ultimate goal is to fully develop the potential of their personality. Jung called this process individuation.
- Development during the first half of life involves the natural aims of survival and procreation. The second half of life offers the opportunity to seek cultural development and the fulfillment of one’s self.
- Jungian analysis follows a basic series of stages, involving confession, elucidation, education, and transformation. However, Jung suggested it was better to avoid being locked into a rigid procedure. As a result, he utilized many different techniques, based on each individual patient.
- As Freud had before him, Jung developed a grand vision of how analytical psychology might help society as a whole. One unique proposition was that the Western world had much to learn from Eastern cultures.
- Jung’s interest in topics such as alchemy and extrasensory perception did not sit well with colleagues seeking to establish psychology as a scientific discipline. This opposition to Jung remains quite strong today, though Western psychology is broadening its perspective.

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5.1.1: Chapter Introduction

To suggest that there is such a thing as an African personality may be misleading. Africa is the second largest continent, with just over 1 billion people spread out among over fifty different countries. It has been the target of extensive colonization over the centuries, and the struggle for liberation from European countries has surely left an indelible mark on the nature of the people there. In addition, the Sahara Desert creates a significant natural division of the people in the north from those in the south. The people of **North Africa** are primarily Arab-Berber Muslims, with ready access to southern Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. This region can rightly be viewed as an extension of Western Asia, in terms of culture, spirituality, and race/ethnicity (Chatterji, 1960; Senghor, 1971). In contrast, the Black Africans live south of the Sahara Desert, and they are the people usually referred to when we think about Africans. Indeed, for the remainder of this section I will use the term African to refer to Blacks living in **Sub-Saharan Africa**. Though many people in Africa identify themselves in terms of their unique ethnicity, history, and geography, this book would be incomplete if *no* effort was made to address the people of this continent. Keep in mind, however, that there is a great deal more work to do regarding our understanding of indigenous people around the entire world.

In 1999, James Lassiter wrote a very helpful article covering many of the historical problems that have affected the study of personality in Africa. Unfortunately, many studies sought to identify the nature of personality among Africans in terms of Western ideals, values, and socioeconomic and technological advancement. This biased view created a very negative attitude toward the people of Africa, a negative attitude that the people of Africa often adopted themselves. Thus, the study of personality fell into disrepute, and largely came to a halt. However, a number of professionals from other disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology, continued to examine whether or not there were characteristics common to the people of Africa, a unique and valuable personality distinct from other regions of the world. Though some controversy remains, and the definitions of what personality is from an African perspective are quite different than those we might recognize in traditional Western psychology, this work has led to some interesting insights. Fundamentally, these perspectives are summarized by the following simple proverb:

Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person through other persons)

- Xhosa proverb (cited in Lassiter, 1999 and Tutu, 1999)

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5.1.2: The African Worldview and Spirituality

For many authors, a common African personality derives from a common African **worldview**.

According to Khoapa (1980), an African's existential reality is one of collective being, they seek to understand the world through their intersection with all aspects of the world and other people. This worldview is holistic and humanistic, and it focuses on interdependence, collective survival, harmony, an important role for the aged, the oral tradition, continuity of life, and rhythm. In addition, there is a fundamental belief in a metaphysical connection between all that exists within the universe, through an all-pervasive energy or "**spirit**" that is the essence of all things (Chatterji, 1960; Grills, 2002; Grills & Ajei, 2002; Khoapa, 1980; Mwikamba, 2005; Myers, 1988; Obasi, 2002; Parham et al., 1999; Senghor, 1965, 1971; Sofola, 1973).

At the center of the African worldview is spirit, or life itself, a vital force that animates the universe and that imparts *feeling* to all things from God down to the smallest grain of sand. Although this spirit pervades all things, there is a distinct hierarchy among the things that make up the universe. At the top of the hierarchy is God, followed by the ancestors (including the founders of the tribes, aka the "god-like ones") and the living. Then come the animals, plants, and minerals. Being in the center, humans hold a privileged position. As living beings, people are able to increase their **being** (using this term in the same context as in existentialism). The source of spirit, and the **spiritness** within each person, is divine, and transcends both the physical universe and time. Thus, it can connect us to any person, place, or thing. This is part of the basis for African veneration of their ancestors. In order for the ancestors to avoid becoming "completely dead," they must devote themselves to strengthening the lives of the living. As a result, they can still participate in life. When a person recognizes that through spirit all things become one, and if they adhere to this realization, they lose all sense of individual ego/mind. Instead, they experience the harmony of collective identity and a sense of extended self that includes ancestors, those not yet born, all nature, and their entire community (Busia, 1972; Grills, 2002; Grills & Ajei, 2002; Jahn, 1972; Myers, 1988; Obasi, 2002; Parham, 2002; Parham et al., 1999; Senghor, 1965).

Based on the previous paragraph, it should be clear that religion and spirituality are very important to Africans. We share a biological connection with animals, and an inherent spiritual connection with plants and minerals, but our privileged position at the junction of spirit and nature allows us to participate in a spiritual life that separates us from the animals, plants, and minerals. This is how Africans believe they are able to increase their being. According to Khoapa (1980), we link the universe with God, we awaken it, we speak to it, listen to it, and try to create harmony. This leads to a profound connection with the rhythm of the universe. Senghor (1965) describes rhythm as the "architecture of being...the pure expression of the life-force." Rhythm has become an important aspect of African life, particularly in art, music, and poetry (also see Busia, 1972; Chatterji, 1960; Jahn, 1972; Mwikamba, 2005; Senghor, 1971; Sofola, 1973).

African music, like sculpture, is rooted in the nourishing earth, it is laden with rhythm, sounds and noises of the earth. This does not mean that it is descriptive or impressionist. It expresses feelings. (pg. 86; Senghor, 1965)

As noted above, the transcendent aspect of spirit leads to connections between past, present, and things that have not yet happened. This has led to a distinct relationship to time, one that differs dramatically from the Western world. Africans believe there is a rhythmic, cyclical pattern to life set in place by God, and God knows what is right. This includes the seasons, the rising and setting of the sun, and stages of life (birth, adolescence, adulthood, old age, and death). Events in the past are typically referred to in terms of reference points, such as a marriage or a birth. As for the future, in most African languages there is no word for the distant future, and plans for the near future are once again typically made around events rather than a specific time on a clock. Accordingly, time is something to be shared with others, there isn't really any such thing as wasting time. Tribal elders are respected for the wisdom they have accumulated over a lifetime, and the "living" dead are kept alive by the tribe's oral historian (Jahn, 1972; Parham et al., 1999; Sofola, 1973; Tembo, 1980).

? discussion question 5.1.2.1

The African worldview focuses on the universe and all the people within it as an interconnected whole, and seeks harmony and rhythm. Do you see life in a holistic way, do you try to relate to others as if we are all part of one creation? Do you think the world would be a better place if everyone tried to relate to others in this way?

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5.1.3: Family and Community

For Africans, the basic unit is the **tribe**, not the individual. Since the tribe seeks collective survival, cooperation is valued over competition and individualism. Since close, personal interconnections are so fundamental, aggression toward others is considered an act of aggression against oneself, and the concept of alienation doesn't exist. This concern for the community is reflected in the family structure. For Africans, family includes parents, children, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc. All relatives have the responsibility to care for one another, and when parents become old it is the responsibility of their children to care for them (Khoapa, 1980; Kithinji, 2005; Lambo, 1972; Parham et al., 1999).

According to Khoapa (1980), Westerners are surprised when they observe Africans in normal conversation. There is a great deal of spontaneity, laughter, and the conversation goes on and on. They do not wait to be introduced before engaging in conversation. No reason is necessary for someone to drop by and engage in a conversation. Every gathering is an extension of the family, so there is no reason for inhibiting one's behavior. Simply being together is reason enough to engage others. Khoapa suggests that the "deafening silence" observed when traveling in the Western world is very strange and confusing to Africans.

The cultural institution of marriage provides an interesting example of these principles in action. Marriage is a unifying link in the rhythm of life: past, present, and future generations are all represented. Having children is an obligation, and marriage provides the accepted opportunity to fulfill that obligation. Indeed, since the purpose of marriage is to have children, a marriage is not considered complete until children have been born (Khoapa, 1980; Kithinji, 2005; Lambo, 1972; Parham et al., 1999; Wanjohi, 2005). Marriages can also be a profound source of connection between people that goes far beyond the basic family unit (two parents and their children). The spirit that underlies and provides energy for the fulfillment of being experienced in a family unites that family with other families around the world. In a more practical sense, when a man and a woman from different tribes are married, the members of each tribe see themselves as all becoming one extended family through that marriage (Parham, et al., 1999; Samkange & Samkange, 1980).

The belief that we are all interconnected extends beyond one's family and tribe to all people. **Hospitality** is an important characteristic that Africans expect will be extended to all visitors, including strangers. Different than in the West, however, is the expectation that hospitality will precede asking any questions. Thus, when a visitor is met at the door, they will be invited in, offered something to eat and/or drink, and friendly conversation may ensue, all before asking anything about the visit or even who the person is (if they aren't known). Being benevolent to everyone is seen as a sign of good character or good reputation. African myth and folklore often includes stories about gods or spirits who travel in disguise, rewarding people in kind for how the god or spirit is treated. Selfishness does not promote the well being of the tribe, so a selfish person is likely to be held in contempt and stigmatized. The responsibility for becoming caring people begins with the family (Kithinji, 2005; Lambo, 1972; Sofola, 1973).

Every Yoruba, the stranger inclusive, is expected to demonstrate that he was well brought up by his parents whose emblem he carries about by the virtue of his existence and former socialisation. A good home to the Yoruba African is a place where good training and nurturing in character and good behaviour including good mode of addressing people are imparted to the young...The good child is supposed not only to accept and show good character in the home but should show the glory of the home outside through his own good behaviour... (pp. 97-98; Sofola, 1973)

? discussion Question 5.1.3.1

In African culture, marriage and family are very important. How important are they to you? How has your personal history affected your feelings about marriage and family?

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5.1.4: Ubuntu

The traditional African concept of **ubuntu** is one that encompasses the best that the people of Africa have to offer in terms of social harmony. It has come into play several times during difficult periods of nation building as African countries have gained independence and moved toward democracy. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, served as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as the nation of South Africa transitioned from Apartheid to democracy. Rather than seeking revenge and the punishment of those who had supported Apartheid, or attempting to achieve some sort of national amnesia through blanket amnesty, the South Africans chose a third alternative. Amnesty would be granted only to those who admitted what had been done in the past. While some were concerned that such an option would allow crimes to go unpunished, the deep spirit of humanity that is ubuntu can lead to being magnanimous and forgiving.

Ubuntu...speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, “*Yu, u nobuntu*”; “Hey, so-and-so has *ubuntu*.” Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, “My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours.” We belong in a bundle of life. (pg. 31, Tutu, 1999)

Samkange and Samkange (1980) discuss how extensively *ubuntu* (aka, *hunhu*, depending on the language) is intertwined with life amongst the people of Zimbabwe. It leads to a sense of deep personal relationship with all members of different tribes related by the marriage of two individuals. It has influenced the development of nations as they achieved freedom from colonial governments, and it encourages amicable foreign policies. *Ubuntu* can help to guide judicial proceedings, division of resources, aid to victims of war and disaster, and the need to support free education for all people. The special characteristic that *ubuntu* imparts on African people can also be seen among the African **diaspora**, those Africans who have been displaced from their homeland. For example, Black Americans typically have something unique that distinguishes them from White Americans, something called “**soul**.” According to Samkange and Samkange (1980) “soul is long suffering (“Oh Lord, have mercy”); soul is deep emotion (“Help me, Jesus”) and soul is a feeling of oneness with other black people.” As a result of the Black American’s experience with slavery, we now have **soul food**, **soul music**, and **soul brothers**.

? discussion question 5.1.4.1

It has been suggested that the essence of personality among African people has given something special to members of the African diaspora known as “soul.” However, this may be a characteristic of all dispossessed people. Have you seen examples of this sort of “soul?” If yes, what was the experience like, and how did it affect your own views of life?

Although *ubuntu* is uniquely African, the peace and harmony associated with it can be experienced by all people. According to Archbishop Tutu it is the same spirit that leads to worldwide feelings of compassion and the outpouring of generosity following a terrible natural disaster, or to the founding of an institution like the United Nations, and the signing of international charters on the rights of children and woman, or trying to ban torture, racism, or the use of antipersonnel land mines (Tutu, 1999). Though *ubuntu* itself may belong to Africa, the essence of it is something shared by all dispossessed groups around the world (Mbigi & Maree, 1995). It embodies a group solidarity that is central to the survival of all poor communities, whether they are inner city ghettos in the West, or poor rural communities in developing countries. According to Mbigi and Maree (1995), the key values of *ubuntu* are group solidarity, conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity, and collective unity. They believe that African organizations need to harness these *ubuntu* values as a dynamic transformative force for the development of African nations and the African people. Samkange and Samkange share that view:

...*ubuntuism* permeates and radiates through all facets of our lives, such as religion, politics, economics, etc...Some aspects of *hunhuism* or *ubuntuism* are applicable to the present and future as they were in the past...It is the duty of African scholars to discern and delineate *hunhuism* or *ubuntuism* so that it can, when applied, provide African solutions to African problems. (pg. 103; Samkange & Samkange, 1980)

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5.1.5: Negritude and Nigrescence

Leopold Senghor (1965) has defined **Negritude** as “the awareness, defence and development of African cultural values...the sum total of the values of the civilization of the African world.” For Senghor this is not a racial phenomenon, but a cultural one, based primarily on cooperation. He distinguished this cooperation from the collectivist idea we typically associate with Asian cultures by focusing more on a communal perspective. In other words, collectivist cultures may be seen as an aggregate of individuals, but in the truly communal society, whether in the family, the village, or the tribe, there is a connection from the center of each person in their heart (see also Grills, 2002; Senghor, 1971). This is what Senghor believes has always been held in honor in Africa, and it ultimately encourages dialogue with others in Africa (the White Africans, the Arab-Berbers in North Africa) and beyond, so that we can assure peace and build the “Civilization of the Universal.”

Negritude, then, is a part of Africanness. It is made of human warmth. It is democracy quickened by the sense of communion and brotherhood between men. More deeply, in works of art, which are a people’s most authentic expression of itself, it is sense of image and rhythm, sense of symbol and beauty. (pg. 97; Senghor, 1965)

Abiola Irele has discussed the history of Negritude as a literary and ideological movement among Black, French-speaking intellectuals in Africa. It was initially a reaction to, and in opposition to, the colonial oppression of the African people. As such, it has been criticized by some as its own form of racism (see, e.g., Irele, 1981, 2001; Tembo, 1980), or as something unique to intellectuals, as opposed to more common people in Africa. However, as noted above, Negritude is about culture, not race per se. In addition, a small but nonetheless interesting study by Tembo (1980) provided evidence that scores on an **African Personality Scale** did not differ based on sex, marital status, having been educated in rural or urban schools, or whether they wished to pursue higher education in Africa or England. Irele compared Senghor’s view of Negritude to that of the existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre viewed Negritude as a stage in the development of Black consciousness, a stage that would be transcended by the ultimate realization of a human society without racism. In contrast, according to Irele, Senghor’s Negritude is an inner state of Black people. It is a distinctive mode of being, which can be seen in their way of life, and which constitutes their very identity (Irele, 1981). Irele finds value in the concept of Negritude “insofar as it reflects a profound engagement of African minds upon the fundamental question of the African being in history...”

At a time when Africans are trying to experiment with new ideas and institutions, adapt them to their needs in the light of their traditional value systems, there is the need for a sustained belief in oneself, and this belief can be generated and kept alive by an ideology. This has been, and still is, the function of Negritude. (pg. 86; Ghanaian scholar P. A. V. Ansah, cited in Irele, 1981)

Although the concept of Negritude is not without its critics, if one accepts its premise there are important implications for people of the Black diaspora (Irele, 2001). **Nigrescence** has been described as the process of converting from Negro to Black, i.e., rejecting the deracination imposed by Whites and embracing traditional African values and a Black identity (Parham, 2002; Parham et al., 1999; Tembo, 1980). This process of searching for one’s identity can be very powerful, leading perhaps to a positive self-identity or, at least, serving as a buffer against racism and oppression (Parham & Parham, 2002). For additional information on the importance of identity formation and the development of negative identity, I refer you back to the discussion of negative personality development among Black Americans in the chapter on Erik Erikson. But what triggers this critical search for one’s identity?

For people of African descent in places such as the United States, the process of nigrescence seems to follow four stages: **pre-encounter**, **encounter**, **immersion-emersion**, and **internalization** (Parham, 2002; Parham et al., 1999). In the pre-encounter stage, the individual views the world from a White frame of reference. They think, act, and behave in ways that devalue and/or deny their Black heritage. Then, however, they encounter personal and/or social events that do not fit with their view of society. Muhammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay) described in vivid and shocking detail how he was refused service at a restaurant because he was Black, after he had won the Olympic gold medal in boxing and been given the key to the city by the mayor of Louisville, Kentucky (Ali & Ali, 2004)! The individual then becomes immersed in Black culture. This can be a psychologically tumultuous time. For some, everything of value must reflect some aspect of Black and/or African heritage. They withdraw from contact with other racial/ethnic groups, and strong anti-White attitudes and feelings can emerge. Eventually, however, the individual internalizes their Black identity and becomes more secure. The tension, emotionality, and defensiveness of the previous stage is replaced with a calm and secure demeanor. The individual becomes more open minded, more ideologically flexible, and although Black values move to and remain at the forefront, there is a general trend toward being more pluralistic and nonracist, and anti-White attitudes and feelings decline (Parham et al., 1999; see also Mbalia, 1995).

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5.1.6: Some Issues for Modern Africa

In a fascinating book entitled *Education for Self-Reliance*, Julius Nyerere (1967) discussed the importance of building the post-colonial educational system in Tanzania. A fundamental premise, according to Nyerere, is that the educational system needed to serve the goals of Tanzania (see also Gichuru, 2005; Khoapa, 1980). Therefore, they had to decide what kind of society they were building. He said their society was based on three principles: equality and respect for human dignity, sharing of resources, and work by everyone and exploitation by none. Interestingly, these principles do not focus on academic content. The successful community life of the village was more important. Social goals, the common good, and cooperation were all emphasized over individual achievement. Nyerere considered it particularly important to avoid intellectual arrogance, so that those who became well educated would not despise those whose skills were non-academic. “Such arrogance has no place in a society of equal citizens” (pg. 8; Nyerere, 1967).

The aim of education in Tanzania became one in which students were to realize they were being educated by the community in order to become intelligent and active members of the community. Since education is provided at the expense of the community, the community is well within its rights to expect those students to become leaders and innovators, to make significantly greater contributions to the community than if they had not received an education (Bennaars, 2005; Sanyal & Kinunda, 1977). To this end, the training of teachers places ideology ahead of content. Student-teachers are taught: 1) the true meaning of the Tanzanian concept of *ujamaa* (familyhood and socialism; a basis for planned, self-contained villages), 2) to be dedicated and capable teachers who understand and care for the children in their charge, and 3) to deepen the students’ general education. Since colonial rulers exploited, humiliated, and ignored the people of Africa for so long, it was believed that teachers should be of sound mind and sound body. Thus, admission into a teacher training program requires a good academic background, sound character, physical fitness, and a good all-around background (Mmari, 1979). Thus, teachers were trained to be good role models for the development of Tanzania and her people (see also Bennaars, 2005; Mbalia, 1995).

? discussion question 5.1.6.1

In post-colonial Africa, some countries trained their teachers to educate children in being good citizens, and to be role models for how children should live their lives. Do you agree that teachers should play such an intentional role in helping to raise children? If not, does it seem that this was necessary for a time, given the history of colonization in Africa?

Although most of the work covered in this section has been done by writers, anthropologists, and sociologists, is there a role for more formalized personality testing in Africa? While this may not be the ideal approach for studying personality in African, it would allow us to compare this work with our Western concepts of personality (which constitutes the large majority of this book). There is preliminary evidence that the Five-Factor Model applies well when measuring the personality traits of Africans in Zimbabwe and South Africa (McCrae, 2002; Piedmont et al., 2002). Tembo (1980) developed an African Personality Scale on which Zambian college freshman did indeed demonstrate pro-African personality views (as opposed to anti-African personality views that would have indicated negative effects as the result of colonization; see, however, Mwikamba, 2005). Thomas Parham (2002) has used two personality tests designed to focus more specifically on the concept of an African personality: the **Racial Identity Attitude Scale** (RIAS; which Parham helped develop) and the **African Self-Consciousness Scale**. The RIAS measures the nigrescence construct, whereas the African Self-Consciousness Scale is grounded in Afrocentric theory (closer to the concept of Negritude). However, Parham has come to the conclusion that both of these tests fall short of measuring the core elements of what might be a common African personality, particularly spiritness and the potential biogenetic nature of African people (Parham, 2002). Thus, if this is an appropriate field of study, there certainly needs to be further investigation to determine whether Western concepts of personality assessment apply to the essence of African personality.

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5.1.7: A Final Thought

One of the most widely recognized cultural distinctions in psychology today is the difference between individualistic, Western cultures and collectivistic, Eastern cultures. In Western societies, such as the United States of America, the individual not only has the freedom to seek purely personal advancement, it is expected of them. In contrast, the individual in countries such as China is expected to subordinate their own desires and ambitions for the good of the family and their community. With regard to a broad view of the African personality, we find a middle ground. There is significant individual freedom, but individuals are expected to serve their family and community. As a result, the individual also benefits from the overall success of the family and community. Thus, there is an ongoing interplay between the value of the individual and the values of family and community.

When this system works to its best potential, the results are people who flourish and can be proud of themselves. In the words of Dr. J. A. Sofola:

...the philosophy, the world-view, values and thought-patterns that form the ingredients or the building-blocks of the African Personality are live-and-let-live; the emphasis on wholesome human relations; the belief of the universality of man and communality of the people in the community; the historic sense of the unity of the human society as consisting of the ancestors, the living and the future generations yet unborn; spiritual attitude to life and attachment to communal life with communal responsibilities; a keen sense of rhythm; the conception of man as one roaming spirit in the chain of spirits in the universe... This is the personality which in its expression of an inward peace and stillness maintains an external composure and gait, head and chin raised high, and with deliberate, calculated dignified steps proclaims to the world: "Black is beautiful" and "I am black and proud of being so." (pp. 143-144; Sofola, 1973)

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5.1.S: Chapter Summary

Review of Key Points

- Roughly speaking, African can be divided into two distinct regions: North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Black Africans are the people of sub-Saharan Africa.
- The African worldview focuses on interdependence, rhythm, harmony, and spirit.
- Religion and spirituality are very important to Africans, and humans hold a privileged position at the junction of spirit and nature.
- Time is part of the cyclical rhythm of life, set by God, who knows what is right.
- The tribe is the basic unit of life, not the individual. The family includes a broad range of relatives, and caring for one's family, especially the aged, is an important obligation.
- Marriage is an important institution, providing a rhythmic link between past, present, and future. A marriage is only complete when the couple has children.
- Hospitality to all people, including strangers, is expected, and a sign of good character.
- *Ubuntu* encompasses the social harmony that is valued in African life.
- Among the people of the African diaspora, *ubuntu* may be seen in action as the soul referred to in soul food, soul music, and soul brothers.
- Negritude represents the active claiming of those best elements of a common African personality by the people of Africa.
- Nigrescence is the process of converting from Negro to Black among the people of the African diaspora. It appears to follow four stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization.
- In post-colonial African countries, educational systems were developed based on the ideals of the new nations. Teachers were trained to embody those ideals.
- There is some evidence for the usefulness of traditional approaches to studying personality in Africa with formalized testing. However, significantly more work needs to be done.
- Common elements of personality across Africa seem to represent a middle ground between the individualistic personalities seen in the West, and the collectivistic personalities seen in the East.

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