


PERSONALITY

Definition Types

- ✓ **MASK DEFINITIONS** focus on the external stimulus value of the person as he or she presents him or herself to the world. Skinner's **behaviorist** view that personality is nothing more than behavior and ancient and modern physiognomy's emphasis on external appearance or Sheldon's **somatotyping** are examples.
- ✓ **SUBSTANCE** or **ESSENCE DEFINITIONS** focus on the theory that true personality is connected to some essential inner entity or quality that makes us uniquely human. The idea here is that there is something special inside all of us that make our personality what it is. **Psychoanalytic** emphasis on constructs such as the id, ego, and superego, the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind, the instincts, psychic energy and such is an example of such an approach.
- ✓ **OMNIBUS** or **HOLISTIC DEFINITIONS OF PERSONALITY** approach  defining who we are and what our personality is by total inclusion. Omnibus definitions do so by summing up all that there is to know about our past, present, and future as a person. Holistic definitions, especially those associated with **humanistic** and/or **phenomenological** influences, go beyond that to also suggest that we are all so unique that personality "science" will never be able to acquire a universally applicable theory allowing us to understand all people.
- ✓ **TRAIT DEFINITIONS**, the most highly researched and most empirically based of the definitions, define personality according to a list of personality characteristics most often expressed as adjectives and as opposing pairs spread across continuums such as *introversion versus extroversion*, *neurotic versus stable*, *optimist versus pessimist*, *submissive versus dominant*, or *shy versus bold*. Several of these theories, such as that of Raymond Cattell, have developed personality tests which can be administered to persons and produce personality profiles along multiple dimensions, 16 in Cattell's case. These personality profiles can then be interpreted for the individuals or they can be compared with those of others in some specified group, e.g., occupational groups such as pilots, writers, educators, and others.