

## FOCUS ON VOCABULARY AND LANGUAGE

### *The Psychoanalytic Perspective*

Page 554: “Freud would be the winner hands down.” Freud is familiar to many people and his name is the one most likely to be given if a person were asked to name a famous historical psychologist (“Freud would be the winner hands down”). His influence can still be seen (*it lingers*) in books, movies, and in the treatment of psychological disorders.

Page 554: He [Freud] had a *prodigious* memory and so loved reading plays, poetry, and philosophy that he once *ran up a bookstore debt* beyond his means. When he was young, Freud was a very serious student with an exceptionally good (*prodigious*) memory and an intense interest in a variety of topics. To satisfy his curiosity about literature and the natural sciences, he obtained many books that he could not afford to pay for (he *ran up a bookstore debt beyond his means*).

Page 554: Freud’s search for a cause for such disorders set his *mind running* . . . Patients came to Freud with strange neurological (*nervous*) disorders that had no obvious physiological explanation. Freud suspected that the problems were psychological in nature, and the questions raised by this theorizing caused him to think (*set his mind running*) in a way that changed how we view human nature.

Page 554: He [Freud] believed he could *glimpse* the unconscious seeping not only into people’s free associations, beliefs, habits, and symptoms but also into *slips of the tongue and pen*. Freud used the technique of **free association** to gain access to the **unconscious**. He also thought he got a fleeting look at (a *glimpse of*) the unconscious in the content of people’s dreams and in the inadvertent verbal mistakes we make in speech and writing (*slips of the tongue and pen*).

Page 555: Someone with an exceptionally strong superego *may be virtuous* yet guilt-ridden; another with a weak superego may be *wantonly* self-indulgent and remorseless. In Freud’s theory, the **superego** (our conscience) develops when, around age 4 or 5, a child incorporates society’s values through identification with the parent of the opposite sex. A person with a well-developed superego may behave in an appropriately moral way (*may be virtuous*) yet still feel ashamed and anxious (*guilt-ridden*); someone with a poorly developed superego may be excessively and willfully (*wantonly*) selfish and aggressive. The superego guides us in determining right from wrong (it is our *moral compass*).

Page 556: “If you can’t beat ‘em [the parent of the same sex], join ‘em” This common expression suggests that if you cannot win against your opponents (*if you can’t beat ‘em*), you would be better off forming an alliance with them (*join ‘em*). According to Freud, the process of **identification** (becoming like the parent of the same sex) follows a similar process and gives rise to our *gender identity* (our sense of being male or female).

Page 556: . . . *uttering biting sarcasm* . . . If there are unresolved conflicts at any of the **psychosexual stages**, the person may become stuck (**fixated**) at that stage. This fixation will directly affect the development of a psychologically healthy personality. People fixated at the *oral stage* may become very dependent or may pretend to be the opposite by acting strong and independent and by using cruel and destructive humor (*biting sarcasm*) to attack the self-respect of others. In addition, this personality type may have an excessive need for oral gratification (smoking, nail biting, eating, chewing on pens, etc.).

Page 556: In such ways, Freud suggested, the *twig of personality* is *bent* at an early age. Freud believed that adult personality was formed during the first 4 or 5 years of life and was a reflection of the way the conflicts of the first three psychosexual stages (*oral, anal, and phallic*) were handled. Just as the shape of the grown tree is the result of how the young tree (*twig*) was twisted (*bent*), adult personality is a reflection of early childhood experiences.

Page 560: Others view it [the Rorschach inkblot test] as a helpful diagnostic tool, *a source of suggestive leads*, or an *icebreaker* and a revealing interview technique. Because of problems in scoring and interpreting the **Rorschach inkblot test**, most researchers question its validity and reliability. Some clinicians use the test to help generate hypotheses about the client's problems (*as a source of suggestive leads*), and others use it as a point of departure to help get the interview under way (*as an icebreaker*).

Page 561 (margin note): . . . *linguistic flip-flops [spoonerisms]*. Professor Spooner became well known because of his habit of inadvertently twisting and distorting his sentences (*linguistic flip-flops*). For example, instead of saying, "lighting a fire in the quadrangle" he said, "fighting a liar in the quadrangle." "You missed my history lecture" came out as, "you hissed my mystery lecture" and "you have wasted two hours" became, "you have tasted two worms." Psychoanalysts call these "slips of the tongue" (*Freudian slips*) and believe they represent unconscious motives and desires seeping through.

Page 562: They are *seared onto the soul*. Traumatic events are likely to be remembered very well; they can occur as unwanted, persistent, and intrusive memories (*flashbacks*) that appear often (*they haunt survivors*). In a sense, they are indelibly impressed in memory (*seared onto the soul*).

Page 563: Psychologists also criticize Freud's theory for its *scientific shortcomings*. For a theory to be considered scientifically acceptable, it must be able to explain observations and provide testable hypotheses. Freud's theory fails on this account. In addition, his theory offers explanations only *after* the events or behaviors have occurred (*after-the-fact explanations*). Freud's theory does not meet acceptable or desired scientific standards (it has *scientific shortcomings*).

### **The Humanistic Perspective**

Page 565 (caption): . . . *crippled spirits*. Abraham Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, studied healthy, motivated, creative people and came to the conclusion that once our basic needs are met, we all seek **self-actualization**. He believed that any theory of personality and motivation must be based on more than the study of psychologically impaired individuals (*crippled spirits*); rather, it should also include those who have achieved or fulfilled their innate potential (*self-actualized people*).

Page 565: Unless *thwarted* by an environment that inhibits growth, each of us is like an *acorn*, *primed* for growth and fulfillment. Carl Rogers, another pioneer in humanistic psychology, believed that we are born with an innate striving (we are *primed*) for achieving our potential. Like the seed (*acorn*) of an oak tree, we will grow and develop unless we are blocked (*thwarted*) by an uncaring and unaccepting environment. As Rogers puts it, genuineness, acceptance, and empathy are the water, sun, and nutrients that enable people to grow like vigorous oak trees.

Page 567: The *prominence* of the humanistic perspective *set off a backlash of criticism*. Humanistic psychology has been popular because it is consistent with *individualism*, which encourages one to trust and act on one's feelings, to follow one's beliefs and ambitions (*to be true to oneself*), and to develop one's full potential (*fulfill oneself*). The high status (*prominence*) of the humanistic viewpoint has elicited a strongly adverse and disapproving reaction (*it set off a backlash of criticism*) from its critics. They have said that this perspective could lead to self-centeredness, egocentrism, and the weakening of moral inhibitions (*erosion of moral restraints*).

### **The Trait Perspective**

Page 568: . . . *blind date* . . . When a social outing (*date*) is arranged with a person you have never met or seen before, the meeting or appointment is called a *blind date*. The person you

are going out with is also called your *blind date*. Having the person (your *blind date*) ranked or assessed by a **personality inventory** (for example, by the *Big Five Personality Factors*) would reveal quite a bit about the person's character and personality.

*Page 570:* Nevertheless, people have had fun *spoofing* the MMPI with their own *mock* items . . . Some items on the **Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory** (MMPI) may appear nonsensical (*sound silly*), but because they differentiate, say, depressed from nondepressed people, they have been retained in the inventory. Some people have created humorous but false (*mock*) items for a personality test that is a parody (*spoof*) of the MMPI.

*Page 571:* A slightly expanded set of factors—*dubbed* the Big Five—does a better job . . . The Eysencks used two prime personality dimensions or factors—*extraversion–introversion* and emotional *stability–instability*—to describe personality. Other researchers offer an additional three dimensions (*openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness*). These bring the total to five factors, which they named (*dubbed*) the Big Five. The Big Five may not be the definitive description of (*may not be the last word on*) personality **traits**, but at the moment it provides the closest estimate (*approximation*) of the basic trait dimensions.

*Page 572 (Thinking Critically):* . . . *scoff* . . . This means to have a contemptuously mocking attitude toward something. Astronomers who study the universe scientifically *scoff* at astrologers who believe that the planets and stars determine human affairs.

*Page 572 (Thinking Critically):* . . . *suckering methods* . . . To get *suckered* means to be easily fooled and exploited. Psychologists, such as Ray Hyman, show us how astrologers, palm (*hand*) readers, *graphologists* (who allegedly analyze handwriting to reveal personality), and others fool and exploit people by use of a few simple techniques (*suckering methods*).

*Page 572 (Thinking Critically):* . . . "*stock spiel*" . . . A "*stock spiel*" is a well-rehearsed and glib story. Astrologers, horoscope writers, and such often use statements that are generally true of almost everybody (their "*stock spiel*"), and most people find it hard to resist believing the flattering descriptions of themselves. As a result, many view astrology as an authentic art.

*Page 575:* If we remember such results, says Mischel, we will be more cautious about *labeling* and *pigeonholing* individuals. Research has shown that some behavior can be context specific (i.e., determined by the situation and not by the personality) and that personality test scores are poorly correlated with people's actual behavior on any particular occasion. For this reason, Mischel warns that we should be careful about classifying individuals (*labeling*) and concluding that they belong in one particular slot (*pigeonholing*).

*Page 575:* I have repeatedly *vowed to cut back* on my *jabbering and joking* during my noontime pick-up basketball games with friends. Alas, moments later, *the irrepressible chatterbox inevitably reoccupies my body*. When playing basketball with friends, Myers does a lot of talking, often about funny or unimportant things (*jabbering and joking*). Despite efforts to reduce these constant verbal utterances (*he vows to cut back on them*), he typically does not succeed because his natural tendency to be talkative reasserts itself (*the irrepressible chatterbox mentally reoccupies my body*). This illustrates the stable and persistent nature of some personality traits.

### ***The Social-Cognitive Perspective***

*Page 577:* If we expect someone to be angry with us, we may *give the person a cold shoulder, touching off* the very anger we expect. The way we are (our personalities) may influence how we are treated by others. If we believe that someone has hostile intentions toward us, we may ignore that person and treat him with indifference (*give the person a cold shoulder*). This in turn may cause (*touch off*) the angry behavior we predicted or expected from that person. As Myers notes, we are both the results (*products*) and the creators (*architects*) of our environments.

Page 579: Later placed in another situation where they *could* escape the punishment by simply *leaping a hurdle*, the dogs cowered as if without hope. In Seligman's experiments, dogs learned that nothing they did had any effect on what happened to them (**learned helplessness**). Consequently, they would not make even a minimal effort, such as jumping over a small barrier (*leaping a hurdle*), to escape being shocked. Similarly, people who feel they have no control over what happens to them may become depressed and feel hopeless and helpless (*passive resignation*).

Page 583: . . . so many low-scoring students are *dumbfounded* after doing badly on an exam. People are often most *overconfident* when most *incompetent*, mainly because it is difficult for them to recognize their own incompetence without having competence in the first place. Consequently, many students who do not recognize that they are having problems are often astounded (*dumbfounded*) when they find they are not in the top half of their class. (As Myers notes, like pride, illusory or blind optimism may precede a negative outcome or fall.)

Page 583 (Margin note): *Most didn't, out of the blue, "just snap."* The best means of predicting future behavior is to look at a person's past behavior patterns in similar situations. Most who engaged in uncontrolled violent and deadly behavior (*rampage murders*) had, in the past, frequently demonstrated outbursts of rage (*exploded in anger*) or indicated a deliberate intention to cause harm or injury (*threatened violence*). Most did not suddenly and without indication (*out of the blue*) create havoc and mayhem (*snap*). As Myers notes, past aggressiveness is the best predictor of future aggressiveness.

### **Exploring the Self**

Page 585: *Even after a blunder . . . we stick out like a sore thumb less than we imagine.* A person who *sticks out like a sore thumb* is someone who is very noticeable to everyone as odd or different. If we make a clumsy mistake (*a blunder*), we think that everyone is paying attention to us (*we stick out like a sore thumb*), but this is often not the case. For example, students who had to wear a very unfashionable T-shirt with the picture of a lounge singer (had to *don Barry Manilow T-shirts*) thought that many people would notice their odd attire (*dorky clothes*), but very few did. This is a good illustration of the **spotlight effect**.

Page 585: Those who are *negative about themselves* also tend to be *thin-skinned* and *judgmental*. People who have low **self-esteem** (*are negative about themselves*) are more likely to be anxious, depressed, insecure, and very sensitive to criticism (*thin-skinned*). In addition, they are also more likely to disparage and be critical (*judgmental*) of others.

Page 586: Athletes often privately credit their victories to their own *prowess*, and their losses to *bad breaks*, *lousy officiating*, or the other team's exceptional performance. Athletes, like the rest of us, want to feel that desirable outcomes are due to their own abilities (*prowess*), and that failures are due to factors beyond their control, such as poor luck (*bad breaks*), unfair refereeing (*lousy officiating*), or their opponents' unexpectedly outstanding efforts. This is called the **self-serving bias**.

Page 587: The world, it seems, is Garrison Keillor's *Lake Wobegon* writ large—a place where "all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average." *Lake Wobegon* is a fictional but ideal community satirized by comedian Garrison Keillor. Most abilities follow a bell-shaped distribution (a normal curve), so approximately half the population will be below average and half above average on any given trait (e.g., strength, looks, or intelligence). *Self-serving bias*, which prompts most of us to rate ourselves as above average, appears to be almost universal. Thus, the world is a magnified reflection of the *Lake Wobegon* community.

Page 587: Self-serving bias *flies in the face of pop psychology*. One claim of pop psychology is that we all have inferiority complexes. As is often the case, scientific psychology has clearly demonstrated that the opposite is actually true and that empirically based research findings contradict or refute the popular beliefs (*they fly in the face of pop psychology claims*).

Page 588: Moreover, *pride . . . does often go before a fall*. Our conceit and self-important attitudes (*pride*) often precede a harsh reality lesson (*a fall*). As Myers notes, it was “Aryan pride” (the conceited, nationalistic belief that the Aryan race was superior) that facilitated and fostered (*fueled*) the growth of the Nazi movement and legitimized their inhumane and cruel deeds (*atrocities*).

Page 588: Similarly, an adolescent or adult with a *swelled head* that gets deflated by insult is *potentially dangerous*. Overly self-confident people with high self-esteem (*swelled heads* or *large egos*) do more than retaliate in kind when criticized, insulted, or rejected. Instead, they are more likely to react violently and aggressively (*they are potentially dangerous*). Researchers suggest that this negative aspect (*dark side*) of self-esteem is the result of threatened egotism rather than low self-esteem. Baumeister concluded that arrogant, vain, self-satisfied people become spiteful and malicious (*turn nasty*) toward those who question their inflated self-image (*they puncture their bubbles of self-love*).

Page 588 (*margin*): The enthusiastic claims of the self-esteem movement mostly range *from fantasy to hogwash*. The popular belief that having high self-esteem is essential to being a happy, well-adjusted, caring person is not supported by the research. Baumeister (1996) suggests that the claims of the self-esteem movement vary from being imaginative, wishful thinking (*fantasy*) to sheer nonsense (*hogwash*)—that the effects of self-esteem are not very large or important.

Page 588: Sometimes *self-directed put-downs are subtly strategic*: They elicit *reassuring strokes*. When people disparage themselves with criticisms aimed at themselves (*self-directed put-downs*), they sometimes have an insidious or hidden purpose (*they are subtly strategic*). They may want to have people reassure them that the opposite is true (*they want reassuring strokes*). Or, they may want to prepare for the worst possible outcome so that they have a rationalization for failure ready, just in case. In addition, self-ridicule or self-mocking is often concerned with past bad behavior, not with how the present **self** is perceived (*they were chumps yesterday, but champs today*).