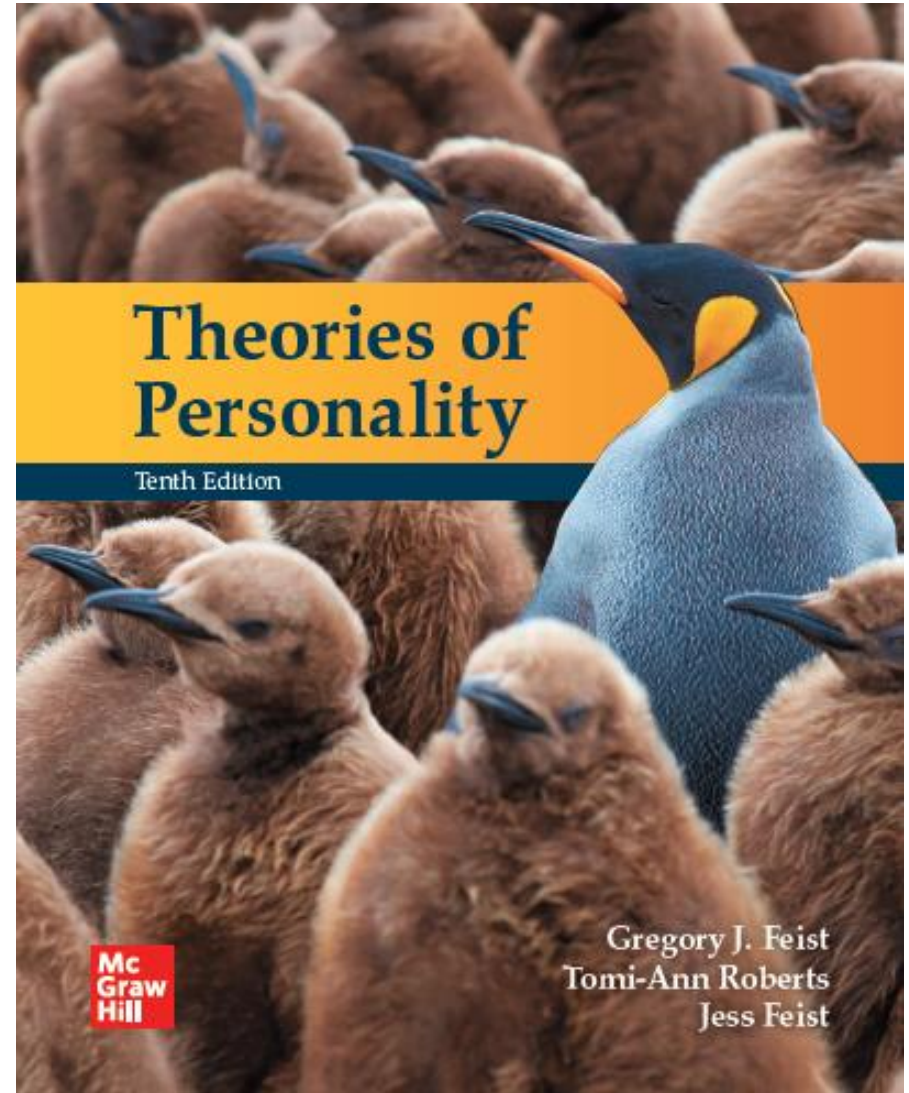


**Buss:
Evolutionary
Theory of
Personality**

Chapter 15



David Buss



Courtesy David Buss

Chapter Outline

- Overview of evolutionary theory of personality.
- Biography of David Buss.
- Evolutionary theory of personality.
- Common misunderstandings in evolutionary theory.
- Related research.
- Critique of evolutionary theory of personality.
- Concepts of humanity.

Overview of Evolutionary Theory

The evolutionary process.

- **Natural** and **sexual selection** and chance.
- Results in three distinct outcomes: adaptations, by-products, and noise.
 - **Adaptations:** Evolved strategies that solve important survival and slash or reproductive problems.
 - **By-products:** Traits that happen as a result of adaptations but are not part of the functional design, and “come along for the ride” of natural or sexual selection.
 - **Noise:** Random effects that occur when evolution produces random changes in design that do not affect function.

Biography of David Buss

- Born on April 14, 1953.
- Buss earned his P h D in psychology, 1981 at University of California, Berkeley.
- He is currently Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas.
- Buss is the author of a number of publications and books in the field of evolutionary psychology.

Principles of Evolutionary Psychology

Evolutionary psychology focuses on four big questions.

- Why is the human mind designed the way it is, and how did it come to take its current form?
- How is the human mind designed; that is, what are its parts and current structure?
- What function do the parts of the mind have, and what is it designed to do?
- How do the evolved mind and current environment interact to shape human behavior?

Evolutionary Theory of Personality

Concerned with how various psychological **mechanisms** promoted fitness in the ancestral environment.

Evolutionary Personality Psychology

Evolutionary psychology is now grappling with ways to incorporate individual differences and species-typical **psychological mechanisms** within a unified conceptual framework.

Common Misunderstandings

- Evolution implies genetic determinism, behavior as set in stone and void of influence from the environment.
- Executing adaptations requires conscious mechanisms.
- Mechanisms are optimally designed.

Related Research

- Evolutionary origins of personality: traits as related to fitness.
- Genetics and personality.
- Animal personality.

Critique of Evolutionary Theory of Personality

Evolutionary theory of personality is:

- Moderate on falsifiability and internal consistency.
- High on organizing knowledge and parsimony.
- Low on guiding action.

Concept of Humanity

Equal weight is given to:

- Pessimism and optimism.
- Free choice and determinism.
- Biological and social influences.
- Uniqueness and similarities.

Unconscious over conscious.

Causality over teleology.



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