Week 2
Readings: McAdams and Pals (2006)

A New Big Five: Fundamental Principles for an Integrative Science of Personality

The Gist: Excerpts from the Abstract
- "…the current article draws on the most promising empirical and theoretical trends in personality psychology today to articulate 5 big principles for an integrative science of the whole person…"
- Personality is conceived as:
    a) an individual's **unique variation on the general evolutionary design for human nature**, expressed as a developing pattern of
    b) **dispositional traits**
    c) **characteristic adaptations**
    d) **self-defining life narratives**, complexly and differentially situated
    e) in **culture and social context**.
- The 5 principles suggest a framework for integrating the Big Five model of personality traits with those self-defining features of psychological individuality constructed in response to situated social tasks and the human need to make meaning in culture.

Principle 1: Evolution and Human Nature
Human lives are **individual variations on a general evolutionary design**.

Principle 2: The Dispositional Signature
Variations on a small set of broad dispositional traits implicated in social life constitute the **most stable and recognizable aspect of psychological individuality**.

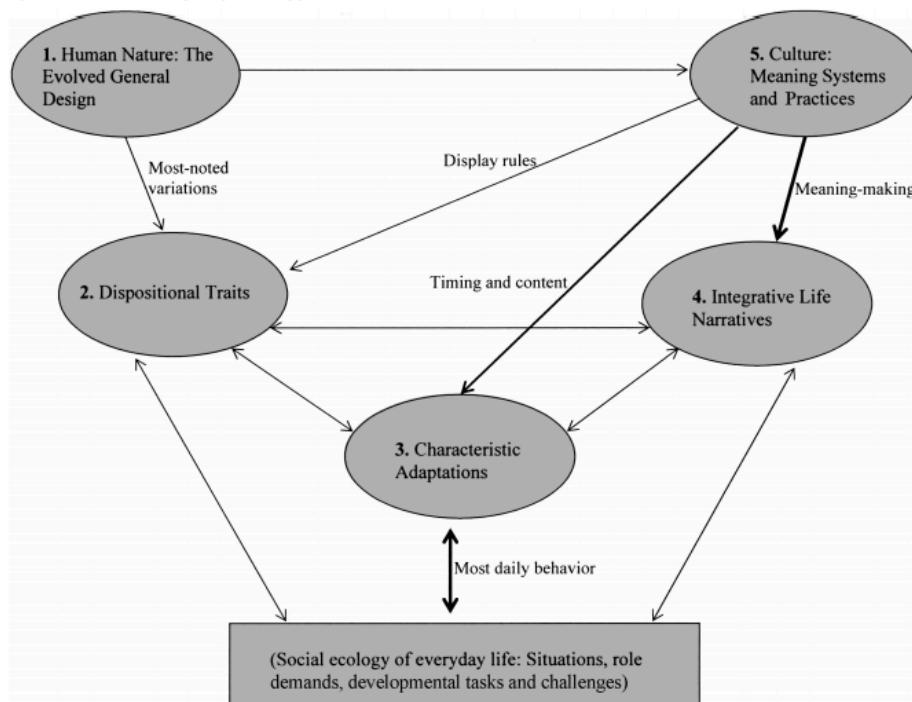Principle 3: Characteristics Adaptations
Beyond dispositional traits, **human lives vary with respect to a wide range of motivational, social–cognitive, and developmental adaptations**, contextualized in time, place, and/or social role

Principle 4: Life Narratives and the Challenge of Modern Identity
Beyond dispositional traits and characteristic adaptations, **human lives vary with respect to the integrative life stories, or personal narratives, that individuals construct to make meaning and identity in the modern world**

Principle 5: The Differential Role of Culture
Culture exerts different effects on different levels of personality: It exerts a **modest effect on the phenotypic expression of traits**; it shows **a stronger impact** on the content and timing of **characteristic adaptations**; and it **reveals its deepest and most profound influence on life stories**, essentially providing a menu of themes, images, and plots for the psychosocial construction of narrative identity.

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Conclusion:
Personality is an individual's unique variation on the general evolutionary design for human nature, expressed as a developing pattern of dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and integrative life stories complexly and differentially situated in culture

Table 1
Three Levels of Personality and Their Relations to Culture

Level	Definition	Function	Relations to culture
1. Dispositional traits	Broad individual differences in behavior, thought, and feeling that account for general consistencies across situations and over time (e.g., extraversion, the Big Five). Interindividual differences in traits are relatively stable over time.	Dispositional traits sketch a behavioral outline.	Similar trait labels and systems found across many different cultures and languages. But culture influences how traits are expressed.
2. Characteristic adaptations	More specific motivational, social-cognitive, and developmental variables that are contextualized in time, situations, and social roles (e.g., goals, values, coping strategies, relational patterns, domain-specific schemas, stage-specific concerns). Some characteristic adaptations may change markedly over the life course.	Characteristic adaptations fill in the details of human individuality.	Cultures differ somewhat on their most valued goals, beliefs, and strategies for social life. For example, cultural *individualism* and *collectivism* encourage different patterns of characteristic adaptations, respectively.
3. Integrative life narratives	Internalized and evolving life stories that reconstruct the past and imagine the future to provide a person's life with identity (unity, purpose, meaning). Individual differences in life stories can be seen with respect to characteristic images, tones, themes, plots, and endings. Life stories change substantially over time, reflecting personality development.	Integrative life narratives tell what a person's life means in time and culture.	Cultures provide a menu of stories for the life course and specify how stories should be told and lived. In modern societies, many different stories compete with each other. Persons must choose some stories and resist others.

Figure 1
Five Principles of Personality Psychology: A Schematic

Lecture 2 – Introduction to Personality

Overview of Personality Lectures

- Introduction to personality (now)
  - What is personality?
  - History and measurement
- Personality: Nature and Nurture (week 10)
  - The role of the genes and the environment
  - Evolutionary explanations (also, culture and socialisation)
- Personality and consequential outcomes (week 11)
  - The predictive power of personality
  - Achievement, health, quality of life, social indicators
- Persons and Situations (week 12)
  - The 'person-situation debate'
  - Stability and contextual dependence of personality

Overview for Today's Lecture

- Conceptualising and defining personality
- Personality traits and the Big Five
- Measurement, reliability, and validity
- Aspects of personality beyond traits

Personality in everyday life

The first date

- Your first impression of one's personality.
- Appearance is related to personality
- You may be asked "tell me a little about yourself" on social media e.g. Tinder

An autobiography…

- Perhaps you may be asked to write a brief introduction of yourself and your personality for a magazine article or book.

The stressful experience…

- People react differently to the same situation – dependent on personality.

Another example: Lynn (McAdams 1995)

"She talked loudly and fast; she held people's attention when she described her adventures; she effectively controlled the conversation in the large group."
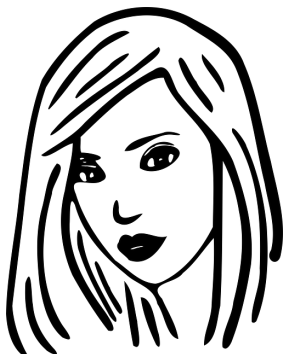
McAdams and his wife went to a party and begin talking about a woman that they met at the party. McAdams realises that the things they are talking about are very similar to what he studies in personality psychology; they are trying to describe her personality, her traits and characteristics. McAdams contended that these descriptions that we might form, are fairly open-ended and idiosyncratic.

What is personality?

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- According to **DeYoung & Gray**, 2009
  - "Regularities in behaviour and experience"
- According to **Pervin**, 1999
  - "A person's typical mode of response"
  - Everyone reacts differently to the same provocation.
- According to **Hogan**, 2008
  - "Our identity and our reputation"
- According to **McAdams & Pals**, 2006
  - "an individual's unique variation on the general evolutionary design for human nature, expressed as a developing pattern of (a) **dispositional traits**, (b) **characteristic adaptations**, (c) **self-defining life narratives** that are complexly and differentially situated in culture and social context".

We can then take these traits outlined by McAdams and Pals and create "levels of traits" according to their depth of personality e.g. Level 1 is fairly superficial and involves generic descriptors whereas level 3 is more unique and engrained in one's personality.

Level 3: Life Narratives
- the story we have constructed about who we are
- highly/completely individualised

Level 2: Characteristic Adaptations
- concerns an individuals particular life circumstances
- highly contextualised
- e.g., specific goals, social roles, educational aspirations

Level 1: Dispositional Traits
- broad descriptions of patterns of behavior and experience
- relatively decontextualised
- e.g., shy, bold, warm, aloof, disciplined, impulsive, etc

(DeYoung, 2015; McAdams & Pals, 2006)

We will mainly be talking about dispositional traits as this seems to be the main unit of analysis for personality psychology.

Dispositional Traits

Definition: Personality traits that are probabilistic descriptions of regularities in behaviour and experience arising in response to very broad classes of stimuli and situations (relatively decontextualized).

Very early use of dispositional traits
The first known attempt of describing someone's personality using dispositional traits was "The Characters of Theophrastus" (c. 371 – c. 287 BC).

Theophrastus was a philosopher who was puzzled by the notion that people differed so much despite their shared Grecian environment. He constructed a catalogue of 30 kinds of people that he encountered whilst walking around Greece.
e.g.
- The flatterer
- The reckless man
- The chatty man
- The gossip

- The surly man
- The distrustful man
- The mean man

<u>Early use of dispositional traits</u>
Allport and Odbert (1936), formed the 'Lexical Hypothesis' – the notion that important characteristics and salient differences between persons will, over human history, be coded in language. They thus collected an exhaustive list of personality descriptors – about 18,000 terms (e.g., sociable, aggressive…).

This was a very tedious process and whilst useful for rating personality, it is very unwieldy, more of a 'laundry list' than a system.

The question then arose; "What is the number and nature of basic trait "domains" required to describe the structure of personality?".

The answer was Factor Analysis.

<u>Factor Analysis for Dispositional Traits</u>
Factor analysis is a **statistical method** developed by **Spearman and Thurstone** that reduces several correlated variables to much fewer composite variables or factors. Spearman and Thurstone came up with this method originally to explore the structure of mental abilities.

Cattell (1943) adopted Spearman and Thurstone's factor analysis technique (see below) in an attempt to condense Allport and Odbert's 18,000 traits. This eventually resulted in **16 factors** which can be seen below. Each of the words in bold represents a trait domain that can be broken down into different degrees.

1. **Warmth** (kind, sociable <u>vs</u> impersonal, detached)
2. **Reasoning** (abstract thinker <u>vs</u> concrete thinker)
3. **Emotional Stability** (calm, non-reactive <u>vs</u> moody, reactive)
4. **Dominance** (forceful, bossy <u>vs</u> deferential, submissive)
5. **Liveliness** (animated, energetic <u>vs</u> restrained, cautious)
6. **Rule-Consciousness** (confirming <u>vs</u> rebellious)
7. **Social Boldness** (venturesome, uninhibited <u>vs</u> shy, timid)
8. **Sensitivity** (refined, aesthetic <u>vs</u> objective, down-to-earth)
9. **Vigilance** (skeptical, critical <u>vs</u> trusting, gullible)
10. **Abstractedness** (creative, imaginative <u>vs</u> grounded, practical)
11. **Privateness** (discrete, political <u>vs</u> forthright, unpretentious)
12. **Apprehension** (guilty, worried <u>vs</u> self-assured, confident)
13. **Openness to change** (liberal, flexible <u>vs</u> conservative)
14. **Self-Reliance** (individualistic <u>vs</u> dependent, collectivistic)
15. **Perfectionism** (self-disciplined, compulsive <u>vs</u> lax, flexible)
16. **Tension** (highly strung <u>vs</u> tranquil, easy-going)

Cattell's 16 Personality Factors

18,000 descriptors
⬇
Sorted into 160 clusters of synonyms/antonyms
⬇
Discarding near-identical descriptors
⬇
Final list of 171 descriptors
⬇
100 participants rate 1-2 friends on the 171 descriptors
⬇
Factor Analysis
⬇
16 Personality Factors
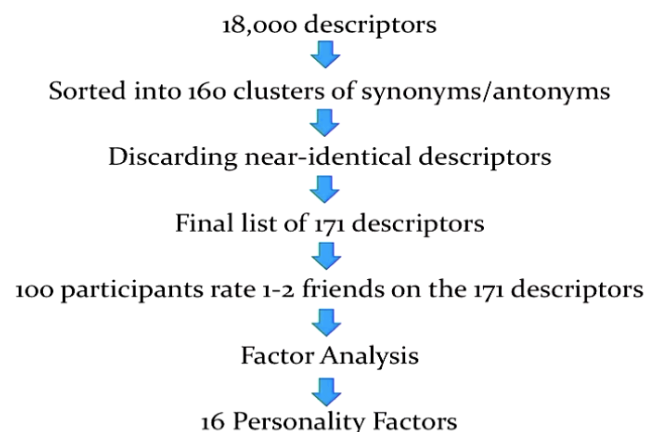
Cattell's Process of Factor Analysis

Cattell essentially brought us towards a form of taxonomy – a framework for organising the ways in which we can describe people.

If we went back to McAdams (1995) Lynn example, we could rephrase his description of her in terms of Cattell's 16 trait factors e.g. Dominance, liveliness, social boldness.
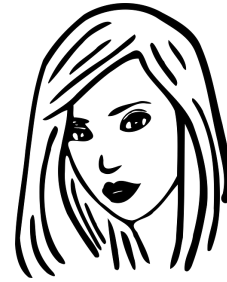
Problems with Cattell's 16 Personality Factors
1. **Subjectivity**:
   - Different people reach a different reduced set of Allport & Odbert's descriptors
2. **(Poor) Replicability / Reproducibility:**
   - Using Cattell's 171 personality descriptors, many people failed to obtain his same 16 factors
3. **Redundancy**:
   - Many of his factors correlated too highly for them to really be 'different' traits

What happened after rejecting Cattell?
In the 1950s-1980s, many psychologists plugged away at this problem of factor analysis, with some describing the era as "a bewildering array of personality scales... with little guidance and no organising framework" John, Naumann, & Soto (2008)

Fortunately, towards the end of this era, some consistencies began to emerge in everyone's findings:
4. Most replicable factor structures suggested 3-6 trait domains
5. Very similar traits appear in these taxonomies
6. A **Five Factor Model** seemed to interface best with the various solutions

The Big Five
This five-factor model, coined The Big Five by Digman (1990). Conceptually, when you look at the details of everyone's different models, you can see a lot of similarities and can understand how they arrived at The Big Five model.

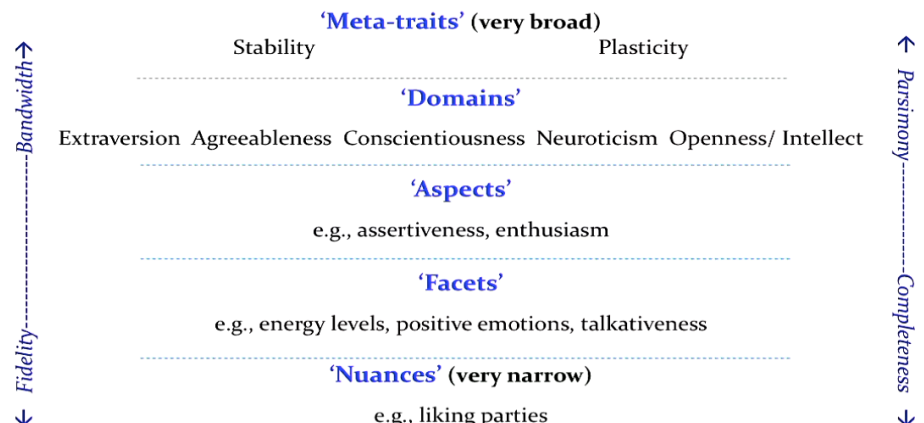| Big Five		Eysenck	Tellegen	Hogan
Extraversion	Enthusiastic, outgoing, talkative	Extraversion	Positive Emotion (Agency)	Sociability
Agreeableness	Warm, friendly, kind, soft-hearted	(low) Psychoticism	Positive Emotion (Affiliation)	Likability
Consientious-ness	Hard working, organized, disciplined	(low) Psychoticism	Constraint / Self Control	Prudence
Neuroticism	Tense, volatile, emotional	Neuroticism	Negative Emotionality	Adjustment
Openness/ Intellect	Curious, creative, interested in ideas and aesthetics	---	Absorption	Intellectance

Hierarchal structure of traits

Personality traits now show a hierarchy, where we can think from very broad domains, e.g. The Big Five, through to very specific nuances.

The measurement of the Big Five that we will use in the Laboratory Report is called the Big Five Inventory version 2.

This version distinguishes between domains (blue in the image), and 3 facets for each domain.

Another version of the Big Five breaks the trait domains into aspects.

'Meta-traits' (very broad)

Stability   Plasticity

← Bandwidth →

'Domains'

Extraversion Agreeableness Conscientiousness Neuroticism Openness/ Intellect

'Aspects'

e.g., assertiveness, enthusiasm

'Facets'

e.g., energy levels, positive emotions, talkativeness

'Nuances' (very narrow)

e.g., liking parties

← Parsimony --------- Completeness →

↓ Fidelity --------------- ↓

e.g., the **Big Five Inventory V.2**— trait domains and facets:

Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Negative Emotionality	Open-Mindedness
Sociability	Compassion	Organisation	Anxiety	Intellectual curiosity
Assertiveness	Respectfulness	Productiveness	Depression	Aesthetic sensitivity
Activity Level	Trust	Responsibility	Emotional Volatility	Creative imagination

e.g., the **Big Five Aspects Scales** — trait domains and aspects:

Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness/ Intellect
Assertiveness	Compassion	Orderliness	Withdrawal	Openness
Enthusiasm	Politeness	Industriousness	Volatility	Intellect

The Big Five Themes – How we can distinguish between the five trait domains

Some big five traits seem to describe how people respond to:

1. **Interpersonal situations**
   - An extraverted person is: bold and assertive, talkative and sociable, not necessarily "nice" or "kind".
   - An agreeable person is: kind, warm-hearted, caring, cooperative and trusting , not necessarily a "people person".
2. **Achievement settings**
   - A conscientious person is: concerned about finishing things, doing things properly, being thorough, precise and careful.
   - A neurotic person would be concerned, reflect anxiety, worry about getting things wrong and messing things up.
3. **Emotional responses**
   - An extraverted person: experiences positive affect and energy
   - A more neurotic person: experiences worry and mood swings
   - An open person: experiences interest and curiosity

Going back to McAdams (1995) descriptions of Lynn, we could describe her as perhaps high in Extraversion, particularly in the assertive aspect.

Measuring Personality

How do we do it?

Most personality measures involve quizzes and questionnaires because, despite their limitations such as the social desirability response bias, nothing else can compete with self-reports for measuring personality.

The measure that we use in our laboratory report is The Big Five Inventory 2 which uses a combination of trait adjectives and elaborated descriptions.

The Big Five Inventory-2 Self-Report Form and Scoring Information

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who *likes to spend time with others?* Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree strongly	Disagree a little	Neutral; no opinion	Agree a little	Agree strongly

I am someone who . . .

1. __ Is outgoing, sociable
2. __ Is compassionate, has a soft heart
3. __ Tends to be disorganized
4. __ Is relaxed, handles stress well
5. __ Has few artistic interests
6. __ Has an assertive personality
7. __ Is respectful, treats others with respect
8. __ Tends to be lazy
9. __ Stays optimistic after experiencing a setback
10. __ Is curious about many different things
11. __ Rarely feels excited or eager
12. __ Tends to find fault with others
13. __ Is dependable, steady
14. __ Is moody, has up and down mood swings
15. __ Is inventive, finds clever ways to do things
16. __ Tends to be quiet
17. __ Feels little sympathy for others
18. __ Is systematic, likes to keep things in order
19. __ Can be tense
20. __ Is fascinated by art, music, or literature
21. __ Is dominant, acts as a leader
22. __ Starts arguments with others
23. __ Has difficulty getting started on tasks
24. __ Feels secure, comfortable with self
25. __ Avoids intellectual, philosophical discussions
26. __ Is less active than other people
27. __ Has a forgiving nature
28. __ Can be somewhat careless
29. __ Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
30. __ Has little creativity

31. __ Is sometimes shy, introverted
32. __ Is helpful and unselfish with others
33. __ Keeps things neat and tidy
34. __ Worries a lot
35. __ Values art and beauty
36. __ Finds it hard to influence people
37. __ Is sometimes rude to others
38. __ Is efficient, gets things done
39. __ Often feels sad
40. __ Is complex, a deep thinker
41. __ Is full of energy
42. __ Is suspicious of others' intentions
43. __ Is reliable, can always be counted on
44. __ Keeps their emotions under control
45. __ Has difficulty imagining things
46. __ Is talkative
47. __ Can be cold and uncaring
48. __ Leaves a mess, doesn't clean up
49. __ Rarely feels anxious or afraid
50. __ Thinks poetry and plays are boring
51. __ Prefers to have others take charge
52. __ Is polite, courteous to others
53. __ Is persistent, works until the task is finished
54. __ Tends to feel depressed, blue
55. __ Has little interest in abstract Ideas
56. __ Shows a lot of Enthusiasm
57. __ Assumes the best about people
58. __ Sometimes behaves irresponsibly
59. __ Is temperamental, gets emotional easily
60. __ Is original, comes up with new Ideas

Please check: Did you write a number in front of each statement?

Can we trust self-reports?

In order for a measure to be good, it needs to have high reliability and high construct validity.

How do we estimate reliability?

The rationale behind reliability is that a reliable measure is a repeatable measure and one should be able to verify the score. Thus, one should ensure that the measure has high:

1. **Test-retest reliability**
   - Correlation between Time 1 and Time 2 scores
   - Measures temporal stability (e.g. rank-order and mean-level stability)
   - N.B. not applicable to all psychological phenomena.
2. **Split-half reliability**
   - Correlation between score from one half of the scale and another half
   - Internal consistency
3. **Cronbach's alpha (α)**
   - Average of all possible split halves
   - Internal consistency
   - Most widely reported measure of reliability
   - Scales with α < .60 generally not considered reliable
   - N.B: We will use this in our assignment

How is stability relevant to personality?

Caspi, Roberts & Shiner, 2005; Costa & McCrae, 1994

Stability is integral to the concept of personality because we don't tend to generalize based on a single occasion e.g. someone who is momentarily angered by provocation is not necessarily an 'angry' person, or high on 'trait anger'.

There are however, two kinds of stability involved in personality:
1. Rank-order – relative position in a sample e.g. the most extraverted people are still the most extraverted.
2. Mean-level – average of the sample/population e.g. everyone's mean extraversion level has dropped since mid-semester break.

Mean-level stability is **relatively low** as:
   a) Personality has a **developmental trajectory**
- Changes over the lifespan:
- **more** agreeable and conscientious from adolescence
- **less** neurotic and open to experience throughout adulthood
- Extraversion fairly stable (but slight increase in dominance)
   b) Personality changes in response to **significant life events**
- Transitions to the workforce
- Travel e.g. it has been said that travel broadens the mind i.e. openness to experience increases.
- Clinical therapy

Rank-order stability is **relatively high** as:
- **Test-retest correlations** over 20 years: r ~ .65
- If you are above average on a trait at age 30, you have an 83% chance of being above average at 50
- Traits become **more stable as we age**:
- Average test-retest: r = 0.41 in childhood, 0.55 at age 30, and 0.70 between ages 50 and 70.

N.B. Rank order stability does not vary by trait

How do we estimate validity?
   a) **Face validity**
- Does the questionnaire appear valid at 'face value'?
- Not very useful and hardly used.
   b) **Content validity**
- Is the relevant content sampled among the items?
- Usually performed by expert judges
   c) **Criterion-related validity**
- Does the measure show sensible correlations with other measures?
- **Concurrent validity**
- Convergent validity – does it correlate significantly with related measures?
- Divergent validity – does it show weak or zero correlations with unrelated measures e.g., does a measure of extraversion correlate with a sociability scale but not an anxiety scale?
- **Predictive validity**
- Does it predict expected outcomes, or behaviours? e.g., does a measure of extraversion predict going to parties?

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What is there apart from dispositional traits?
The scope and limits of traits
- Can you really get a 'complete picture' of someone's personality from their traits?
- Are people with the same scores on Big Five indistinguishable from one another?
- Traits are somewhat generic descriptors, and relatively decontextualized
- But much of our personality is highly contextualised…

So now we will talk about the two other things that make up personality according to McAdams & Pals (2006); **characteristics adaptations** and **life narratives**.

Characteristic adaptations
In simple, this element of personality is how you adapt, in a characteristics way, to your environment.

McAdams and Pals' (2006) conceptualisation of "characteristic adaptations"
- Motivational, social-cognitive, and developmental adaptations, contextualized in **time**, **place**, and/or **social role**.
- Also called "Personal Concerns"
    - Time – Stage of Life – e.g. Extraverted toddler vs. teenager vs retiree
    - Place – Specific Situation – e.g., at work, with friends,
    - Role – a Function or Duty – e.g., mother, Buddhist, cyclist.

DeYoung's (2015) conceptualisation of "characteristic adaptations"
- Relatively stable **goals**, **interpretations**, and **strategies**, specified in relation to an individual's particular life circumstances (DeYoung, 2015)
    - Goals – desired future states – e.g., aspirations to be a psychologist
    - Interpretations – appraised current states – e.g., perceived statistical ability
    - Strategies – plans and actions to move between states – e.g., study routines, degree choice

Going back to McAdams (1995) Lynn – Characteristic adaptations
"She enjoys her work as a free-lance writer; she claimed to be a pacifist and to have compassion for the poor; she 'wished she could believe in something'; she expressed a strong interest in 'new age' psychology…"
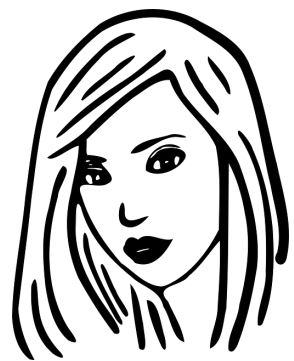
Life Narratives
McAdams (1995)
- Life narratives are the richest level of personality description
- **Narrative Identity:** The internal, dynamic life story that an individual constructs, to make sense of his or her life.
- The unity and purpose of the self

- A 'personal myth'
    - We have a story. We try to make the story coherent, we try to keep the story 'going', but the story is <u>not</u> a verbatim record
- As seen in personology, psychotherapy, (auto)biography

How do we study life narratives: McAdams (1993)?
- **Interview** focusing on:
    - 8 key events in your life (e.g., a high point, a low point, an important adolescent memory, turning point)
    - Significant people (characters in the story)
    - The future script (where is your life going)
    - Stresses and problems (current, ongoing)
    - Personal ideology (religious beliefs and political views)
    - Life theme (what is your life about)

How can we use these interviews of life narratives? – McAdams (1993); McAdams et al. (2001)
**Studying life narratives:**
- Focus of content analyses:
    - Tone (Positive/optimistic/utopian, negative/pessimistic/dystopian)
    - Themes (Preoccupations with certain problems, goals etc.)
    - Form (Stability? Change? Slow vs. rapid progress? Inertia?)

Common Life Narratives
- 'Redemption Sequences'
    - Significant episodes whose form goes from worse to better (overcoming adversity, undergoing a transformation etc.)
- The 'Growth Story'
    - Personal development, or 'becoming' as a central theme

Going back to Lynn, McAdams (1995): What is Lynn's story?
- "My wife and I could say little of substance about how Lynn creates identify in her life. We left the party without but a few promising hints as to what her story might be about."
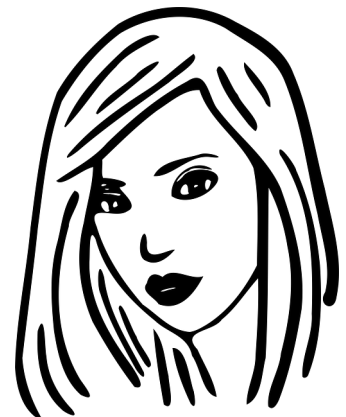
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Summary – The Three Levels of Personality Description

Level	Content	Strengths	Limitations
Life Narratives	Personal Story, unity and purpose of self	Highest resolution description of a person	Idiographic, no predictive value
Characteristic Adaptations	Goals, interpretations, strategies	Captures individual circumstances (e.g., time, role and place)	Unclear scope and structure
Dispositional traits	Broad, coherent patterns of behaviour and experience	Universal structure, high predictive value	Lowest resolution description of a person