These theorists hold the view that one's personality is a result of the learning that takes place in a social context. John Watson argues that as the children grow up, they internalise the social ethics and norms through the family members, models, peer groups and mass media.

Depending on how one interacts with these social agents of change, the individual can have adequate learning, overlearning or faulty learning of the personality.

Bandura and Walter also stress that social learning takes place through mostly the principles of reinforcement. For example, if children are positively rewarded, they tend to develop those traits and vice versa. They also laid much emphasis on the role of models in shaping one's personality. Lastly they said individuals use self-regulatory behaviour to shape their personalities (see the learning theories).