

Where Is Personality Psychology Headed?

Advances in Personality Science

by Daniel P. Cervone and Walter Mischel (Eds.)

New York: Guilford Press, 2002. 338 pp. ISBN 1-57230-737-4. \$45.00

Review by John D. Mayer

Most edited volumes in personality psychology fall into one of several categories. On the one hand, an edited "handbook" volume provides a comprehensive review of the main areas of personality through the eyes of the experts who work within it. A reader looks to a handbook to provide authoritative reviews of the field's mainstream ideas. An edited "topical" volume, on the other hand, is focused on a specific topic or theme in the field such as personality development or personality structure. Other topical books identify cohesive new trends such as computer models of personality. Beyond these better-known categories of edited books are others such as "festschrifts," which are edited in honor of an eminent psychologist; "proceedings," which collect the contributions of a particularly important conference; and "advances" books, which showcase research developments that appear promising to the future of the field.

Cervone and Mischel's *Advances in Personality Science* is of this latter type. In such books, each review is intended to identify and illuminate a critical, if sometimes narrow, portion of the field out of which may grow some new and promising research. Contributions are typically written by the researchers themselves in the given area. An advance's book should have an experimental, risky nature to it to be worthwhile. It is, after all, a picture of the future, and fallible as a consequence. As such, it is common that some chapters may be difficult to decipher; others may proceed blithely toward dead ends, and still others

may seem overly speculative. When all goes well in such a book, however, a reader can catch a glimpse of the future. When evaluating such a volume, some central questions are: "What was the rationale for the book?" "What does the book tell us about personality?" And finally, having considered the book, "Where is the field headed?"

The Rationale for *Advances in Personality Science*

One of the reasons *Advances in Personality Science* was assembled was to mark the inaugural conference of the Association for Research in Personality (ARP), held in San Antonio, Texas, in 2001. As such, this book is both an advances volume and a proceedings, in that it covers many of the contributions to that conference and elaborates on them. Because speakers often draw from their newest ideas in such professional settings, there is a consistency to this approach. Moreover, many of us personality psychologists certainly hope the new ARP does well, and if this commemoration of that first meeting helps, so much the better.

Note that the title of the book specifies a personality *science* rather than a personality *psychology*. Drawing an analogy to the transition from cognitive psychology to cognitive science, the editors suggest in Chapter 1 that personality is becoming an increasingly interdisciplinary field and that practitioners in animal behavior, in sociology, and in other fields will join with personality psychologists to study personalities in a new, more interdisciplinary way.

What Does This Book Tell Us About Personality?

In approaching *Advances in Personality Science*, I wanted to learn about the cutting edge of personality psychology as the editors perceived it. I wondered what the book would tell me about the present and future of research in the area.

Those interested in the biological underpinnings and processes of personality will want to examine the first part of the book, *Biological Bases of Individual Differences: Cortical Activity, Affect, and Motivation*. In Chapter 2, for example, Grigorenko performs a considerable service by pulling together an early review of genetic markers for various functions in the dopaminergic system—a system implicated in the function of intelligence, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and conduct disorder. She provides a cutting-edge model of what such reviews may look like in the future. In Chapter 5, Sutton looks at how underlying biology may influence reactions to threats and punishments. He covers individual differences that will be new to many readers and concludes with some provocative findings concerning the relative reactivity of male and female psychopaths to such reinforcers. As for those hoping to keep current with the considerable literature on biological bases of traits, such as shyness and pleasant-unpleasant affectivity, Chapters 3 and 4 provide updated information in those areas.

Michael Lewis leads off the second section of the book, *Personality Development in its Social Context*, with a theoretical piece that sketches the various models of development presently in use in the field. He considers models that focus on single causes of development, such as trait stability, on the one hand, or environmental

DANIEL P. CERVONE, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois.

WALTER MISCHEL, Department of Psychology, Columbia University.

JOHN D. MAYER, Department of Psychology, University of New Hampshire, Conrad Hall, 10 Liberty Way, Durham, NH 03824. E-mail: jack.mayer@unh.edu

influences, on the other. He contrasts those simpler models with newer models that favor person-situation interactions in one way or another, such as models that take into account the goodness-of-fit between a child and his or her environment or models that look at a person's vulnerability to specific outcomes. Contemporary researchers certainly use one or another of these models, right in this volume, in fact. Costa and McCrae look at trait stability as it has recently been studied in younger people in Chapter 9, "Looking Backwards From 80 to 12." They do a laudable job of both describing their findings about the stability of traits and reevoking the surprise that greeted their 1980 publications on how stable personality is.

A person-environment interactional model is used by Jean Twenge in her chapter (mostly) on depression as a function of birth cohort. Her masterful review describes increases in depression over the century and brilliantly makes the case for understanding personality in light of the historical period during which it develops. The last portion of the developmental section returns us to some theorizing: this time, about how an individual's sense of personal agency—his or her capacity to change the surrounding environment—may bring about desired changes.

A person interested in a more systems-oriented viewpoint on personality might turn to Part III, Personality as a Complex System. There, Shoda and Leetieman review various consistencies in personality, including traits, cycles and rhythms, and "behavioral signatures," the tendency of people to behave in certain ways in specific situations. Alternatively, Carolyn Showers discusses self-models and how they influence functioning. Her interest is in whether we view ourselves as all positive, all negative, or some integration of the two. Using cognitive methods to elicit self-representations, she examines when people's selves are emotionally split and when they are integrated and how that might help them cope. If this seems reminiscent of the psychoana-

lytic concept of splitting, well, she draws the connection.

Finally, if you are ready to study the application of nonlinear dynamical systems to interpersonal synchronization, you will benefit from reading the work of Robin Vallacher, joined by the systems psychologist Andrzej Nowak and physicist Michal Zochowski who provide a rationale and introduction to their ongoing work in these sorts of models.

Where Is Personality Psychology Headed?

The unity the editors see in their own book and that I see in it are somewhat different but not necessarily opposed. As noted earlier, the editors argue in their Introduction that personality psychology may be transforming into personality science, much like cognitive psychology was (partly) transformed into cognitive science (e.g., Davies, 1983). Having recently been sent a book titled *Emotion Science*, I wonder whether we are witnessing a minitrend in renaming many areas of psychology as individual sciences. Even so, I am not sure that we have reached a seamless interdisciplinary organization of the field of personality just yet. All the contributors to this volume, except two, appear to be psychologists by training (judging by their affiliations), and most have backgrounds in personality and developmental psychology. On the other hand, the interests represented in the volume are broad enough to get one seriously thinking about interdisciplinary collaborations. If mammals and robots may be said to have personalities, as well as individual human beings, and if there exist national characters, well then a future field might include comparative biologists and robotic scientists, as well as psychologists, and even political scientists.

Perhaps more definitely, this volume represents to me an advance in the integration of personality psychology. As someone who has been working on a systems framework integration of personality psychology (e.g., Mayer, 1998), I find it rewarding to see the diverse approaches evol-

ing together so naturally here. The book includes those who study traits and those who study other forms of consistency. It includes developmental perspectives and scientifically grounded examinations of core psychoanalytic concepts. It uses an integrated language of personality that can be understood in most places by all contemporary members of the field. For those who have worked toward a more integrated, rational, and cohesive field, such an approach represents a great step forward.

That is where we are, but where are we advancing to next? Having integrated the field, might that foundation now provide a basis for a new phase of personality research? As Cervone and Mischel point out, the integration of personality permits new forms of interdisciplinary work. Their volume makes a good case for the technical promise of such work and what it can offer the field. At the same time, one of the purposes in studying personality is to help people improve the way they lead their lives. Having examined the parts of personality and their organization, can we now focus on a person's external life? It seems at least possible that the field could better address the connections between a person's internal mental sphere and his or her surrounding environment. To me, one of the promises of today's integration is its potential to promote the applied, "engineering" arm of personality—that portion of the field that helps individuals improve themselves and enhance their lives. Although such applied issues are not dealt with directly in the book, perhaps that is another direction in which personality psychology is headed. One sign of this may be the present-day emphasis on positive psychology (e.g., Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

In the end, the advances one reads into these chapters may be more speculative than some of the chapters themselves. The chapters, and the book itself, make a definite contribution to the field right now. The book is among the best advances volumes I have seen. It successfully brings together many di-

verse, intriguing ideas that few dare tackle. It presents some genuinely important, challenging ideas and cutting-edge research. Moreover, the volume puts its challenging material in a surprisingly and genuinely reader-friendly form. As such, the book is a worthwhile resource in helping the busy personality psychologist (or personality scientist) keep up with the field. □

References

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- Mayer, J. D. (1998). A systems framework for the field of personality psychology. *Psychological Inquiry*, 9, 118-144.
- Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (2002). *The handbook of positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

ular period of time. The articles' topic selection provides information about what leading researchers are working on, how they go about creating results, and what the results are. Along with this is included the implicit overview of questions still unanswered and problems still unsolved. Thus, this volume stimulates the reader not only by presenting methods and data analysis that lead to these results, but also by indicating which questions may be worth asking.

Thus, I conclude that the volume presented by Marcoulides and Moustaki can have great appeal (a) to experienced users of latent variable models, latent structure models, and item response theory, because solutions are proposed to important questions, and (b) to researchers who work to further develop methods in these areas because they are provided with an overview of the state of the art. This overview is selective. It reflects the editors' perceptions of what is of interest—one more reason to consider this volume. □

Progress in Latent Variable Modeling

Latent Variable and Latent Structure Models

by George A. Marcoulides and Irini Moustaki (Eds.)

Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 280 pp. ISBN 0-8058-4056-X. \$69.95

Review by Alexander von Eye

The chapters in this volume represent a selection of the contributions that were presented at a conference on theoretical developments and applications in latent variable and structural equation modeling. Thus, unlike many other edited volumes that are thinly disguised would-be textbooks, the contributions in this volume present original work. Accordingly, the targeted readership explicitly includes experts in the field rather than novices and other greenhorns.

The volume covers a most impressive array of topics. Bartholomew presents an overview chapter that is of interest to every reader. Other chapters address such topics as measurement, estimation, program comparison, model specification, robustness, missing data, estimating latent scores, item response theory, and multilevel modeling. Each of these topics is of great importance. The selection of topics is representative of the areas that are currently most intensively researched. The chapters are presented mostly by well-known authors.

The level of exposition varies widely. Some of the chapters are rather technical in nature. Examples include the chapter by Shi, Lee, and Wei, "On Confidence Regions of SEM Models," and the chapter by van der Ark, Hemker, and Sijtsma, "Hierarchically Related Nonparametric IRT Models." Some of the chapters are presented in a less technical style as in, for instance, Wiggins and Sacker's, "Strategies for Handling Missing Data" by various structural equation modeling and other statistical software packages.

When inspecting a volume that presents a selection of contributions made at a conference, one wonders who can possibly benefit from investing time and money in this product. In the present volume, the selection of topics is wide and the level of exposition varies greatly. Thus, it must be expected that the typical reader can benefit from some of the chapters, but probably not from all of them. Yet, books of this profile and this book in particular provide a unique benefit. They present a snapshot of topics that are hot in a partic-

GEORGE A. MARCOULIDES, Department of Information Systems and Decision Sciences, California State University, Fullerton.

IRINI MOUSTAKI, Department of Statistics, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, London, United Kingdom.

ALEXANDER VON EYE, Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, 129 Psychology Research Building, East Lansing, MI 48824.
E-mail: VONEYE@pilot.msu.edu