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PART ONE

Introduction to Personality Psychology

CONTENTS OF PART ONE

Prologue. Personality Psychology as an Integrative Discipline
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PROLOGUE

Personality Psychology as an Integrative Discipline

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Psychology is as difficult as any other science. Its subject matter is of the greatest complexity. There are enormous practical and ethical constraints on research. Even an apparent advantage is a double-edged sword. People may have better intuitions about other people than about subatomic particles, cells, or stars, but by being both investigator and subject matter, those people who also are psychologists are prone to personal biases and subject to social pressures that are uncommon in other disciplines.

The study of personality is as difficult as any branch of psychology. Unlike colleagues in other parts of the field, the personality psychologist cannot be content with studying isolated aspects of psychological functioning (motivation, emotion, memory, etc.). The personality psychologist must tackle the entire beast. The subject matter is the whole person. The discipline addresses questions of reason and passion, human universals and cultural variability, idiosyncratic uniqueness and systematic individual differences. An astute observer of the field, after much reflection on the diverse, conflicting challenges it faces, aptly summed up the state of affairs: "Personality theory is hard" (Bem, 1983, p. 575).

To make matters worse, personality psychologists may have made things harder than they need to be. In 1957, Hall & Lindzey observed that "personality theory has never been deeply embedded in the mainstream of academic psychology" (p. 4). Psychoanalytic, phenomenological, and factor-analytic theories had made little contact with the rest of the field. Although Hall and Lindzey's statement does not apply as strongly today, it still contains a kernel of truth. The contemporary discipline has not fully capitalized on advances in the study of development, social structure, culture, and cognition. Improved solutions to the problems of personality psychology will require greater attention to the concepts, methods, and findings provided by other branches of psychology as well as by neighboring academic disciplines.

Conversely, other areas of psychology may benefit from attending to the issues confronted by the personality psychologist. Recent years have witnessed considerable

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advances in psychology's understanding of cognitive, affective, and motivational processes. Work in these areas, however, commonly lacks an integrative view of the psychological functioning of the whole person. Personality psychology can serve as a forum within which to integrate knowledge of the psychological functioning of the individual in a manner that benefits the entire discipline.

This volume addresses the unique set of scientific problems that defines the field of personality psychology. We review the empirical findings and theoretical perspectives that at present provide the best solutions to these problems. This primarily leads us to review the scientific literature in the discipline of personality psychology per se. However, we do cast a somewhat wider net. We freely draw on ideas and findings from throughout psychology and its neighboring disciplines that illuminate questions of personality functioning. In so doing, we hope to promote the growth of personality psychology as an integrative discipline.

DETERMINANTS, DYNAMICS, AND POTENTIALS

Determinants and Dynamics

Our net is wide in two other respects. Throughout much of its history, personality psychology has been concerned with individual differences in what might be termed "surface tendencies," that is, observable variations in styles of behavior, affect, and cognition. Investigators have posited trait or dispositional constructs to capture the consistent individual differences that are observed. They have sought to establish a universally applicable structure of observable, or "phenotypic," individual differences. We devote much coverage to this important research tradition. However, we do not limit ourselves to it. One ultimately must go beyond the mere mapping of surface-level tendencies; one must identify underlying causal processes. Much of our volume analyzes cognitive and affective mechanisms that causally contribute to personality functioning. We explore the biological, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors that contribute to the development of these cognitive and affective systems. Our goal here is to direct the reader's attention to the fundamental scientific problem of identifying the determinants of both individual differences and intraindividual coherence in personality functioning.

Use of the terminology of determinants does not imply a deterministic view of human nature. Personality can be thought of as a complex, dynamic system of psychological elements that reciprocally interact with one another. The functioning of any such complex system cannot be fully understood through simple chains of cause and effect, and its development cannot be perfectly predicted from knowledge of its initial state. Personality psychology must seek determinants of personality functioning – i.e., factors that causally contribute to the psychological functioning and psychosocial adjustment of the individual – but it cannot embrace a deterministic scientific stance in which human actions are seen as the inevitable consequences of prior events and forces. Distinctions among alternative explanatory frameworks are considered in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Similarly, although we speak of psychological mechanisms throughout the text, the use of this term does not imply a mechanistic view of persons. People are more than a sum of their psychological parts. The specification of underlying mechanisms can explain complex human phenomena without explaining them away. Just as the study of biological mechanisms illuminates the wondrous complexity of the human organism, study of the psychological mechanisms of personality functioning illuminates the complex network of characteristics and capabilities that makes individuals unique. Dennett (1978) captures the spirit in which we use these terms when declaring that: "mechanism is here to stay, unlike determinism" (p. 233). He explains how an analysis of psychological mechanisms can coincide with the recognition that individuals are intentional, purposive agents with a capacity

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for self-control (Dennett, 1978, 1984). Relatedly, Searle (1998) explains that an understanding of human behavior requires an analysis of the intentions of actors. Such an analysis yields a causal explanation ("intentional causation"), yet this explanation is not deterministic in the sense in which an analysis of nonintentional physical systems may be deterministic, with causes following in an inevitable manner from effects.

The study of surface tendencies and of underlying determinants and mechanisms does not always converge. This critical point recurs throughout our volume. A variety of factors preclude a one-to-one mapping between surface profiles and underlying psychological systems. Different systems may give rise to superficially similar observable tendencies. People might fail to act in a "responsible" manner because they lack self-regulatory skills or because they are rebelling against authority. Further, a single psychological system may yield different behavioral tendencies in different contexts. People's goal of advancing within a competitive business organization might lead them to act submissively toward superiors and dominantly toward peers. Acts that seemingly should be grouped within the same behavioral category may actually arise from different underlying systems. People's "inhibited" behavior in response to novel objects versus social peers may be mediated by different physiological systems, which would explain why individuals who are inhibited in one context commonly are relatively uninhibited in another (Kagan, 1998b; Rubin, Hastings, Stewart, Henderson, & Chen, 1997). Such considerations force one to question whether global dispositional constructs are a sufficient basis for a science of personality (Cervone & Shoda, 1999a). If one wants to arrive at underlying causal systems, a map of global, surface-level tendencies might not get one there.

In discussing the determinants of personality functioning, we commonly speak of "dynamics." Personality factors function as elements of dynamic systems that develop over time. Specifically, the term dynamics highlights a number of issues that are critical to an understanding of personality. These include the within-person organization among the dynamically interacting elements that constitute personality; the ways in which these elements and their organization change over the course of development; the fact that such changes may be internally driven rather than externally imposed – dynamic systems have the capacity for internally generated change (Nowak & Vallacher, 1998); and, finally, the term calls attention to the motivational dynamics that guide thought, emotion, and action and that often involve conflicts between goals that are in opposition to one another.

Potentials

People are not inert beings who are merely predisposed to react in a particular way when confronted with a particular stimulus. People select, interpret, and influence the situations they encounter. They are causal agents who contribute to the course of their development. Personality psychology, then, includes the study not only of habitual dispositions, but also of individual potentials (Caprara, 1999). Personality psychologists have the responsibility to address the personal and social processes that can contribute to the full expression of human capacities.

The inclusion of potentials in the domain of personality psychology has four implications. First, it expands on the discipline's traditional focus on personality dispositions. Although it is important to assess what people typically are like, it is of equal importance to explore what they can become. Society demands that personality psychology contribute not only to the assessment of individual differences but to the development of individual potentials. Boykin (1994) compellingly advances this point in discussing the educational attainments of African-American youth: "We must shift from a preoccupation with talent assessment . . . [to] a commitment to talent development . . . [This] will require a fundamental change in . . . how we conceptualize the individual" (p. 119). His

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point applies not only to the study of intellectual capacities but also to the study of the whole person.

Second, the study of human potentials contrasts with psychology's traditional focus on psychological vulnerabilities. It surely is true that some inherited characteristics, early life experiences, or socially learned cognitive tendencies make people vulnerable to psychological distress. However, as Bandura (1999), Kagan (1998b), and others recently have emphasized, a more striking feature of human nature is people's capacity to overcome adversities. Many individuals lead productive, well-adjusted lives despite profoundly traumatic experiences early in their development. The relatively positive life outcomes of children who were orphaned by World War II but later were adopted by middle-class families (Gardner, Hawkes, & Burchinal, 1961) attest to the "self-righting tendencies" (Werner & Smith, 1982) of psychological development. Research in developmental psychopathology and life-span development similarly speaks to the resilient qualities of the individual (Garmezy, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Staudinger, Marsiske, & Baltes, 1995). A great many of the elderly, for example, experience the demands and setbacks of aging without any loss of psychological well-being (Brandtstädter, Rothermund, & Schmitz, 1998). The capacities that enable people to overcome adversities and contribute productively to their development deserve personality psychology's utmost attention (see Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Third, the notion of potentials draws attention to the fact that personal qualities develop and express themselves through dynamic interactions between persons and their sociocultural environment. People's psychological qualities cannot be gauged simply by counting up their typical behaviors in the settings they typically encounter. People may possess capacities that can only be realized within particular environments, which may or may not be part of their daily life. Kagan (1998b) provides an apt analogy. A rock lying at the bottom of a lake belongs to the category of potentially dangerous object. Its dangerousness is not an inherent, isolated property of the rock itself (as is its mass or hardness). Instead, dangerousness is a relational quality. It describes the relation between the rock and particular settings (e.g., being thrown indoors). Similarly, many psychological qualities are not inherent properties of isolated minds/brains. Instead, they are relational in that the expression of the quality requires a social setting that elicits, supports, or requires the quality in question. One cannot be "sociable" by oneself. Many readers of this text are potentially great parents, although that quality may not yet have expressed itself. These considerations naturally expand one's conception of personality psychology's goals. The field thus must explore a range of issues beyond the charting of typical behavioral tendencies.

Finally, potentials are inherent not only in persons, but in environments. Many environmental settings contain challenges, resources, and opportunities that foster personal growth. Choosing to attend college, get married, become a parent, change careers, or engage in programs of physical or spiritual development challenges one's abilities and forces one to develop new skills. People who make these choices encounter other individuals with shared goals who provide social support and model valuable coping skills. Meeting the challenges provides experiences of personal mastery, which can alter people's sense of self (e.g., Weitlauf, Smith, & Cervone, in press). The key point with respect to the notion of potentialities is that these experiences are chosen. The environments generally are not imposed on people (although there are significant exceptions). They are selected. People reflect on their values, goals, and abilities and choose the settings that comprise their personal and professional lives (Bandura, 1997; Snyder & Ickes, 1985). Prior to such choice, the environments – powerful though they may be – are mere potentialities. Indeed, even once one enters into a setting, many of its opportunities and resources will remain latent in the absence of active choice. College, for example, provides enormous opportunities for personal and intellectual growth and for the develop-

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ment of lasting friendships and professional networks. These opportunities, however, do not impose themselves on individuals but must be actively pursued. The expanded economic opportunities and greater access to information experienced in many nations of the world broaden the opportunities and resources available to individuals and thereby accentuate the role of personal choice in personality development.

The three points raised here – that personality psychology must be an integrative discipline that encompasses study of determinants and dynamics of personality functioning as well as of the development of human potential – are interlocking. Personality psychologists have long been interested in actualizing human potential. Maslow (1954) built his personality theory on a potentialist view of human nature. Murphy (1958) and Rogers (1961) similarly emphasized the human potential for self-directed change. Allport (1950) wrote of people's inherent potentialities for self-development. However, contemporary personality psychologists can draw upon bodies of knowledge in the behavioral, cognitive, and social sciences that are dramatically more extensive than those available in Maslow's, Murphy's, Rogers', and Allport's day. This is a critical advantage. The surest route to maximizing human potentials is first to understand the determinants and mechanisms of personal functioning. With this understanding, one can identify psychological processes that are subject to change and psychosocial factors that might change them for the betterment of individual welfare. Humanistic goals are best served by the scientific study of psychological mechanisms and the factors that shape them. The "hard" and "soft" sides of the discipline can proceed hand in hand.

OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

This volume consists of five parts. Part One introduces the field of personality psychology. We discuss the aims of the field in Chapter 1 and review its history in Chapter 2. Recent developments in cultural psychology pose a challenge to many historically accepted views; these challenges also are addressed in our second chapter.

Part Two takes up the dual tasks of description and explanation. Personality psychology must characterize personal qualities and the differences among individuals and also must identify the causes of these qualities and variations. These tasks can be addressed in different ways. One strategy, discussed in Chapter 3, is to search for psychological dimensions that capture individual differences in psychological tendencies, or dispositions. These individual-difference dimensions then might serve as the basis both for describing persons and for explaining the psychological tendencies that are observed. A second strategy, discussed in Chapter 4, is to ground an explanation of personality functioning in the study of cognitive and affective mechanisms and of interactions between psychological mechanisms and the sociocultural environment. An analysis of affective and social-cognitive systems speaks to questions of individual differences while also directing one's attention to individual uniqueness and the within-person coherence of personality functioning.

Part Three of the text explores the development of personality. Our developmental coverage is somewhat broader in scope than is typical. We consider not only theoretical and metatheoretical models of development (Chapter 5), but also genetic influences and brain systems on development (Chapter 6), the role of interpersonal relations in the development of the individual (Chapter 7), and the socially and culturally constructed contexts in which persons develop across the life span (Chapter 8).

Part Four on "The Dynamics of Personality," explores knowledge structures (Chapter 9), affective experience (Chapter 10), unconscious and conscious processes (Chapter 11), and motivation and self-regulation (Chapter 12). The ideas discussed in these chapters are highly overlapping, and common themes emerge. As we will see, enduring knowledge about the world and the self contributes to peo-

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ple's interpretations of the world, affective states, conscious experiences, motivation, and capacity for self-regulation. Similar processes, then, come into play across these diverse phenomena. Another theme is that the study of cognitive–affective dynamics enhances our understanding of personality consistency and coherence. Cognitive mechanisms and cognition–emotion interactions contribute to stable individual differences and to the within-person consistency and variability of personality functioning. Finally, although we focus heavily on basic research, the work we review in this part of the text has applied implications. The cognitive structures of personality have social foundations. People acquire beliefs, competencies, and standards for self-evaluation through their interaction with others. An understanding of social-cognitive systems, then, can inform applied efforts to enhance people's capacity to control their actions and emotions in the service of their personal development.

Part V is an epilogue that looks ahead to the future of the field. Foresight is particularly important in personality psychology. The discipline has the potential to contribute mightily both to the sciences and to society at large. In the past, it has not always achieved this potential. Doing so in the future will require judicious choices among alternative scientific methods, research topics, and theoretical views of the person.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Domain of Personality Psychology

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Personality psychology's history is a contentious one. In different eras, the merits of alternative world views, scientific methods, and psychological theories have been fiercely debated. To the present day, personality psychology can be profitably studied as a collection of competing theories, as the discipline's textbooks and college courses commonly attest.

Three factors in particular have fanned the flames of debate. The first is the diversity of philosophical traditions that are precursors to contemporary theory. Current psychological beliefs and practices have long, disparate philosophical roots. We consider the foundations of the contemporary field in detail in chapter 2.

The second factor is the difficulty of defining the field's object of study. Several ideas appear, alone and in combination, in the modern use of the word personality. These ideas include human being, person, the quality or fact of being a person, the quality or fact of being a particular person, individuality, patterns of habit, biophysical and mental activities that express themselves in qualities and habits, the sum of such qualities as they impress themselves on other persons, factors that make an individual conspicuously different from others, and attributes or dimensions according to which all individuals can be compared. Definitions, explicit and implicit, guide theory and inquiry. Divergent definitions foster debate. When the divergent definitions are acknowledged only implicitly, debate is particularly difficult to resolve. Progress can be slow when a field's "terminology alone is a mass of ambiguities" (Harré, 1998, p. 1).

A third source of contention throughout the field's history derives from the influence of sociohistorical and political factors on scientific inquiry. Scientific investigations must be understood in their historical context. Social trends draw scientists' attention to some top-

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ics and deflect it from others. For example, those who lament a breakdown of morality in contemporary society would not be surprised that personality psychologists currently devote less attention to questions of "character" than they have in the past. Further, political regimes often have suppressed forms of scientific inquiry that interfere with their aims. Both subtle and blatant influences may foster disagreement among scientists who live in different regions of the world or who are differentially influenced by the sway of social fashion or the rule of an authoritarian government.

Despite this diversity, today one can identify common themes in the discipline and common assumptions that guide the activities of most investigators. We begin this chapter by outlining these themes and assumptions. We then turn to an issue on which there is not commonality of opinion. In both its past and present, inquiry in personality psychology has not been guided by a single theoretical framework but by alternative conceptions of personality structure and functioning. We introduce the conceptual issues involved in this chapter and return to them at a number of subsequent points in the book. We close by briefly considering some methodological issues that the personality psychologist must confront.

COMMON THEMES

Despite this history of debate over questions of theory, methods, and definitions, today one can identify significant agreement about the domain of investigation. Personality psychologists know where they want to go even if they do not all agree on how to get there or exactly how to describe the place. Phenomena examined by the contemporary field include:

- Interindividual differences, that is, the habitual behavioral tendencies, dispositions, or traits that characterize the individual and distinguish people from one another
- Intraindividual coherence, that is, how distinct psychological processes function as coherent systems, how people achieve a coherent sense of self, and how social and self-referent beliefs develop into an integrative system that expresses itself in the individual's distinctive patterns of experience and action
- The interplay of biological and cultural factors that guides the course of personality development, setting constraints yet also providing opportunities for individual growth
- The psychological process and mechanism that, across the course of life, interact with biological and social processes to sustain a continuous sense of personal identity and individuality
- Interpersonal relations that provide a critical context for personality development and that mediate the influence of social structures on the individual

This is a vast territory, in which numerous issues converge, including the study of personality stability and change, developmental growth and decline, affect and cognition, well-being and suffering, intimate relationships, and bonds with one's community.

The breadth of phenomena that the field addresses should not be seen as a burden. Instead, it potentially gives the discipline an integrative character. Personality psychology stands at the crossroads of multiple disciplines in the social, behavioral, and biobehavioral sciences. It confronts questions of human nature that have often been the province of philosophy. This places the personality psychologist in a special position with regard to other sciences such as biology or anthropology. On the one hand, personality psychology cannot mature in ignorance of the developments in these domains of knowledge. On the other hand, because of its broad scope, the field may serve as an ambassador of psychological knowledge to other fields.

Personality psychologists must devote themselves not only to the accumulation of scientific knowledge but also to the solution of

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social problems. The application of knowledge is not a choice but an inevitability. Psychological theories guide social practices. Scientific conceptions determine whether societies view a given aspect of human nature as subject to change and whether they employ biological, psychological, or social factors to change it. The society-wide spread of psychological knowledge is accelerated by the growth of higher education and the dissemination of scientific information through the media and the Internet. Today, psychological theories reach far beyond the walls of the academy. This makes the critical evaluation of psychological theory more crucial than ever.

Among the pressing social problems of the day, personality psychology can speak with particular force to questions involving the recognition of human individuality and the actualization of human potentials. As but one example, consider questions about race and ethnicity (cf. Montagu, 1999; Rushton, 1995). The discipline can contribute to society's recognition that notions of race, as traditionally construed, no longer have reason to exist (Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi, & Piazza, 1994). Owing to the interchange of genetic material between populations, which is accelerated by the contemporary breakdown of geographic barriers, races are mixtures rather than pure groups. "The concept of race at the human level," then, "has absolutely no meaning; it is merely a social construction" (Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998, p. 1107). Society's understanding of cross-cultural or ethnic differences in personal beliefs, attainments, and patterns of behavior, then, cannot be grounded in biology. Diversities reflect the influence of cultural systems and socioeconomic factors that are largely mediated, at the individual level, by the psychological systems we call personality.

A population's cultural history, then, partly resides in the minds of its individual members. After a period of dormancy that followed some promising beginnings (Kluckhohn, Murray, & Schneider, 1953), the study of personality and culture has reemerged as a common theme in personality psychology in recent years. It has become increasingly apparent that cultural meaning systems shape people's beliefs, decisions, and actions. Further, they partly determine the nature of the interpersonal relationships, family arrangements, and work experiences within which people develop. Culture provides not only static beliefs but also dynamic potentialities. Cultural knowledge and practices are tools that individuals can use to adapt to the physical and social world. Culture contributes to the individual's social knowledge and sense of self. These personal factors, in turn, give individuals the capacity for self-direction. Culture also can constrain individual development in that a cultural system may promote some developmental pathways and discourage others (Cervone & Rafaeli-Mor, 1999). Individuals often benefit from using the wisdom of their culture to realize their potential in a manner that is supported by the members of their society.

As nature and culture coevolve (Durham, 1991), technological innovations enhance our control over the conditions of life. These conditions, in turn, are destined to affect our very biological makeup. The study of personality contributes to our understanding of how individuals can seize the opportunities their culture makes available to them and how they establish stable personal identities in a rapidly changing world.

DEFINITIONS, AIMS, AND ASSUMPTIONS

By personality, we refer to the complexity of psychological systems that contribute to unity and continuity in the individual's conduct and experience, both as it is expressed and as it is perceived by that individual and others.

As is apparent from this definition, the notion of personality can be viewed from different perspectives. From the perspective of the individual, one's own personality is the collection of one's attributes and inclinations. These enduring personal qualities convey a sense of identity (me), wholeness (thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are all part of me), and uniqueness (I am). From the perspective of

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