1 Introducing persons and the psychology of personhood

Jack Martin and Mark H. Bickhard

This book is about persons. Given what most of us think about when we hear the word "psychology," it is surprising that so much disciplinary psychology over the past 100 to 150 years has had relatively little to say about persons and their lives. Fortunately, this state of affairs has begun to change very rapidly. The purpose of this book is to introduce the seemingly new, yet in some ways long-standing, study of persons in psychology. At this time, the psychology of personhood is being resurrected and transformed through the philosophical, historical, social-developmental, and narrative inquiries of a number of psychologists. What unites these recent developments is their commitment to a psychology of personhood that emphasizes the holistic interactivity of persons within the biophysical and socio-cultural world. The focus of contemporary psychology of personhood is holistic, in the sense that it eschews attempts to reduce persons to their mental lives, behaviors, and/or neurophysiological, biological particulars and parts. It also focuses on the everyday experiences and lives of ordinary people, rather than on exceptional individuals or those afflicted by various pathologies. This book is a collective product of the ideas and contributions of a number of contemporary psychologists who have established reputations for conducting philosophical, historical, social-developmental, and narrative inquiries into what it is to be a person in the usual sense of that term, a sense that is implicit in our ordinary language.

The concept of a person

Although an understanding of personhood is implicit in our everyday linguistic and relational practices, a more explicitly conceptual consideration of personhood is necessary for our purposes. The concept of a person is applicable to human beings understood as social beings who are members of a moral community. Persons are biological in so

far as they are embodied, but their embodiment is enacted within a world that is simultaneously both biophysical and socio-cultural. It is the interactivity of persons within the biophysical and socio-cultural world that is responsible, both evolutionarily and developmentally, for their possession of a distinctive range of powers. These powers constitute a suite of social, psychological capabilities, including the use of language, the creation of culture, self-consciousness, and self-understanding, an agency that includes intentionality and two-way volitional control (to act or refrain from acting), a reasoning intelligence, a moral concern, the ability to take and integrate different perspectives, and the experience of psychological time in which past experiences interact with current circumstances and anticipated futures to afford alternative possibilities for thinking and acting. Persons also may be described in terms of their personalities (unique combinations of temperament and action tendencies), identities (anchored by physical characteristics, social positioning and circumstances, and autobiographical recollections, reflections, and projects), and character (as judged by their conduct and circumstances, using relevant moral and rational criteria of their community). Because of their abilities to internalize norms of conduct, take the perspectives of particular others and social groups, and reason, persons are answerable for their deeds. Thus, the concept of a person has historically been salient in religious, political, legal, and educational contexts, practices, and institutions.

Unlike the members of other animal species, persons are not understood only in terms of their corporeal and adaptive attributes and capacities, but also in terms of their own self interpretations and ascriptions. Because various aspects of persons include or refer to biophysical characteristics, socio-cultural positionings, norms, and self-interpretations, the concept of a person applies across the physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Personhood is a necessarily interdisciplinary subject. Moreover, the concept of the person is an irreducibly holistic one. An adequate psychology of personhood cannot focus on cognitive, biological, social, or cultural aspects of persons in isolation, but must capture all of these dimensions as they have interacted, evolved, and developed over historical, social, and biographical time, and as they continue to interact in the present. To understand persons as the unique biological-cultural hybrids that they are, characterized by the suite of social, psychological, rational, and moral capabilities and concerns described above, requires a focus on their holistic interactivity within the biophysical and socio-cultural world. Perhaps it is the daunting nature of this challenge that explains what only can be

regarded as the peculiar history of personhood within the discipline of psychology.[1]

Personhood and psychology

At different stages in its history as a distinctive discipline, psychology has been defined as the study of mind, the study of behavior, or the study of cognitive processes and structures. Although not often stated explicitly, and despite protracted excursions into comparative psychological experimentation with other animals and attempts to create artificial, machine intelligence, psychology clearly aims to understand human beings as persons. This aspiration is most obviously evident in the professional arm of disciplinary psychology, where educational, consulting, business, health care, and clinical applications of psychology have consistently targeted individuals understood as persons. Consequently, it is perplexing that relatively little attention within the history of disciplinary psychology has been devoted explicitly to conceptualizing persons and considering the proper manner of their study. The scant and infrequent attention given to such seemingly pivotal matters by most psychologists is even more surprising in recognition of the considerable interest in personhood evident during the first two decades following psychology's emergence as a distinctive discipline.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century, several well-known psychologists endorsed the study of persons within their worldly contexts. William James, James Mark Baldwin, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Mary Whiton Calkins, William Stern, Pierre Janet, Lev Vygotsky, Heinz Werner, and Wilhelm Wundt (especially in his later years) all were concerned with the holistic activity and functioning of persons as uniquely capable psychological beings within their social contexts.[2] However, it was not long before the more speculative, philosophical, moral, and socio-cultural aspects of the work of these giants of the new discipline were expunged or simply overlooked, as the rapidly developing discipline and its adherents

---

[1] Given that the study of the person is of necessity an interdisciplinary project, the fact that most of the contributors to this volume are psychologists might seem inconsistent with this required interdisciplinarity. However, the focus of this book is "the psychology of personhood," and the contributing authors have been selected because they are distinguished psychologists or philosophers who have expertise in the disciplines of philosophy, history, and/or social, developmental, and narrative studies.

[2] J. Valsiner and R. van der Veer, *The Social Mind: Construction of the Idea* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

moved quickly to establish the scientific standing of psychology in ways that would clearly distinguish it from other academic disciplines such as mental philosophy, and from a host of dubious practices such as phrenology, physiognomy, mesmerism, spiritualism, and mental healing.[3] As a science and scientifically based profession, psychology quickly adopted and adapted standards and practices of objectivity, together with techniques of measurement and experimentation, that it borrowed from more established sciences like physics, chemistry, biology, and physiology, frequently without any particularly clear understanding of desired linkages between the subject matters and methods of inquiry of these other sciences.[4] In consequence, the first psychological laboratories tended to focus their resources and energies on the study of components of the mental lives of persons in isolation from the contexts in which persons lived.

Thus, the first wave of scientific psychology was typified by attempts to isolate and study what were considered to be the basic components or elements of consciousness, such as sensations and feelings, with some carefully circumscribed theorizing about how these psychic elements might be organized, analyzed, and/or altered by the mind to yield experiences, emotions, and ideas. Methods such as reaction times and "just noticeable differences" were borrowed from psychophysics with the aim of mathematizing experimental results in ways intended to parallel the objectivity and precision of more established, successful sciences. How exactly such methods and results were to support the applications of the first professional psychologists was mostly ignored, it being deemed sufficient to parade such interventions under the general banner of scientific knowledge and progress. Consequently, it was not long until most psychologists were engaged in activities that could be pursued in the almost complete absence of conceptions of personhood. In fact, setting aside such conceptions and considerations avoided perceptions of the vast gap between early scientific psychology and any credible understanding of the functioning of persons in their everyday lives – a strategy, intended or not, that has continued to manifest in different guises throughout the entire history of psychological science and practice.[5]

The struggles of disciplinary, scientific, and professional psychology to come to grips with its subject matter soon became acutely evident, as experimentation to discern the basic elements of consciousness and

[3] L. T. Benjamin, Jr., *A Brief History of Modern Psychology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).
[4] C. D. Green, M. Shore, and T. Teo, *The Transformation of Psychology: Influences of 19th-century Philosophy, Technology, and Natural Science* (Washington, DC: APA Books, 2004).
[5] K. Danziger, *Naming the Mind: How Psychology Found its Language* (London: Sage, 1997).

processes that could be merged into higher-order thoughts and feelings began to flounder methodologically, theoretically, and practically. Methods of introspection only could be applied to the most basic of sensations without introducing levels of inference that proved to be methodologically intractable in terms of producing comparable and consistent results across different laboratories. Different theories of the compounding of these basic elements into the cognitive and affective experiences of everyday life proliferated without any means of adjudication and applications of psychology far out-stripped any credible empirical basis in the psychological science of the day.

In response, psychology and psychologists shifted focus, away from the basic structures of consciousness to the study of the behaviors of humans and other animals in carefully controlled laboratory contexts. This shift in subject matter from structures of consciousness to functions of behavior often is described as the first revolution in the modern science of psychology. However, it also was a necessary shift in subject matter in response to the lack of progress being achieved by an earlier generation of mentalistic psychologists. And, once again, in a rush to establish the scientific viability of this new science of behavior, standards of objectivity and methodological procedures borrowed from more mature sciences helped to ensure that the latest version of psychological science would steer mostly clear of the everyday experiences and actions of persons in those social, cultural contexts in which they lived and worked.

However, behaviorism did represent certain advances in establishing the possible relevance of psychology to personhood. Despite ignoring most of the obvious differences between human beings and cats, dogs, or rats, the behaviorists did study the holistic activity of animals in carefully controlled environments, and were concerned with how the activity of the animals in these contexts resulted in the learning (or, at least, the habituation) of those various patterns of behavior that were conditioned and reinforced by the experimenters. Additionally, these results did have a direct relevance to the applications of professional behavioral psychologists who began to employ techniques of behavior modification in schools, workplaces, and other social institutions, including prisons and hospitals. Of course, in order to conduct their studies in ways that yielded replicable results, the behaviorists had to greatly restrict the environments within which their research subjects (human and non-human) acted. Consequently, not only was the activity of research subjects restricted to simple behaviors that could be studied and counted objectively, but the contexts within which such behaviors were produced were purposefully sterile, being stripped of any objects other than those used to manipulate the particular behaviors of interest to the experimenters.

Behavioral studies in social psychology that examined the responses of human subjects were no exception.[6] The environments studied were social only in the sense that they included a small number of carefully scripted interactions between research participants and a total stranger or small number of strangers (the experimenter and confederates of the experimenter). Thus, such contexts were minimally, proximately, and simplistically social. They included almost nothing of the broader social, historical, or cultural dimensions, processes, artifacts, practices, or institutions that populate and influence the lives of persons as they do their banking, entertain guests, or struggle with complex family and work situations and dilemmas. Nonetheless, despite its failure to come to grips with the social, cultural embeddedness of persons, and despite almost a complete absence of conceptual focus on persons and their circumstances, behaviorism, as a framework for psychological inquiry, succeeded in achieving a paradigmatic, near consensus among most psychologists by the early 1950s, before the early stirrings of contemporary cognitive psychology, and its subsequent ascendancy during the second half of the twentieth century.

Before considering cognitive psychology's treatment of persons and personhood, it is important not to neglect the development of psychometric methods and personality psychology from the 1920s to the 1950s and beyond. Despite being on the periphery of mainstream behaviorism, the combination of personality theorizing and psychometric methodologies served to replace the earlier focus of psychologists like James, Stern, and Janet on the interactivity of persons in historical, social, cultural, and developmental contexts, with an understanding of persons as bearers or possessors of certain inner personality traits that could be measured by various psychological instruments (mostly paper-and-pencil questionnaires on which subjects self-reported). Although heralded, and still practiced, as the scientific psychology of personality, such an approach effectively reduces personality understood as a combination of the character and action tendencies of persons to personality as ascertained from aggregates of subjects' self-reported ratings on psychologists' carefully prepared questionnaires – ratings that typically are made at a considerable physical, social, and psychological remove from the interactive lives of the persons who make the ratings.[7] Of equal, if not greater,

---

[6] K. Danziger, Making social psychology experimental: A conceptual history, 1920–1970. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* **34** (2000) 329–347.

[7] See, for example, Danziger, *Naming the Mind*, S. Greer, Is there a "self" in self research? Or, how measuring the self made it disappear. *Social Practice/Psychological Theorizing* **1** (2007) 51–68, and I. A. M. Nicholson, *Inventing Personality: Gordon Allport*

conceptual significance with respect to personhood is the highly debatable understanding that such personality assessments actually measure personality as an inner possession (set of personality traits) of individuals. This understanding assumes that most of the determining sources of one's personhood reside in deeply interior psychological structures and processes within individuals that nonetheless can be unproblematically accessed, "observed," and reported by the individuals themselves, using methods and item formats that psychometricians and personality psychologists borrowed initially from public opinion polls in the US. To complicate matters even further, applications of psychometric, personality psychology came to trade more and more on the logically dubious idea that it was possible to extract knowledge of the personalities of individuals from studies of differences between groups of individuals on traits such as extroversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness.

With the dawn of cognitive psychology, it seemed possible that psychology's return to the study of mental or cognitive structures and processes – albeit with newly minted computational models and neurophysiological theories – might afford an opening for the study of important aspects of personhood such as reasoned and intentional action, moral concern, self-consciousness, self-understanding, and first-person experience, even if the integrated study of the embodied, situated interactivity of persons in full historical, socio-cultural context was not immediately in the cards. After more than fifty years into psychology's so-called second revolution (the first being the shift from mentalism to behaviorism), the cognitivist reign certainly differs from the behaviorism that preceded it, with respect to a proliferation of research and applications in areas related to personhood such as self-esteem, self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-regulation, all rendered in the language of inner cognitive processes and structures. However, a closer look at psychological theory and research in these areas reveals little conceptual sophistication concerning what the self is and how exactly it relates to conceptions of persons as much more than their psychological interiors.[8] Moreover, cognitive psychology has tended to adopt conceptions of human beings as information processing machines or neural networks that have largely reduced persons to the inner workings of metaphorical processes of computation (e.g., encoding, storage, retrieval, and application) or patterns of cerebral activity (e.g., activation, excitation, and inhibition in the cortex and elsewhere,

and the Science of Selfhood (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Books, 2003).

8 R. Harré, *Cognitive Science: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Sage, 2002).

discernible through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRIs) and other imaging and recording techniques). It now is not unusual to read and listen to a new generation of cognitive neuroscientists attributing the thoughts, experiences, and actions of persons to different areas of their brains, and forgetting that it is persons interactive within the biophysical and socio-cultural world who make decisions, exercise self-control, or feel good about themselves.[9] Obviously, bodies are required for the worldly activity of persons. However, so too are interactivity within social, cultural practices and experiential biographical histories, neither of which is reducible to the inner workings of our brains and/or cognitive, computational systems (whatever the ontological status of the latter might be).

In sum, the history of disciplinary psychology is a history of successive attempts to reduce persons – first, to basic operations and structures of their minds understood in mentalistic, componential terms, then to their behaviors as studied mostly in highly restricted micro-environments, and finally to internal cognitive, computational, and neurophysiological structures, processes, and patterns of activation. In addition, since the early years of the twentieth century, various attempts have been made to construct a psychological science of personality that makes extensive use of psychometric measures and statistical techniques that utilize self-report ratings of individuals concerning their understandings and evaluations of themselves in ways that lend themselves to interpreting such ratings as scientifically valid data about personality traits such as extroversion and neuroticism, and social-psychological attributes such as self-concept, self-regulation, and personal identity. One of the things that all of these reductive strategies share is an attempt to grossly simplify the complex lives of persons understood as embodied, rational, and moral agents interactive within evolutionary and developmental trajectories that include histories of constantly unfolding socio-cultural and biographical traditions, practices, artifacts, and identifications. Recognizing the constancy of this basic reductionism across shifts in the focus and methods of psychological science and professional practice over time does not mean that disciplinary psychology as practiced thus far is entirely irrelevant with respect to understanding persons, nor does it mean that personhood has been entirely ignored by all psychologists. However, it certainly does imply that most mainstream psychological theory, research, and practice are not optimally targeted at informing our understanding of ourselves as persons.

---

[9] M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

Nonetheless, the historical record is not all bad news for a credible psychology of personhood. As already mentioned, there was an impressive first wave of what might be considered a promising psychology of personhood during the founding years of disciplinary psychology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Additionally, despite the subsequent succession of highly popular, but mostly reductive systems of psychological science – from mentalism to behaviorism to cognitivism – small pockets of psychologists, who pursued less reductive approaches to psychological inquiry and practice, continued to understand and study persons in more holistic, contextualized, and integrative ways. Indeed, the ideas of the first generation of psychologists of personhood (i.e., James, Dewey, the later Wundt, Janet, Mead, Vygotsky, Stern, and others) continued to garner small numbers of supporters and advocates throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.[10] Within American psychology, examples included Gestalt psychology (as imported from Germany before and during the second world war), post-war humanistic psychology (including phenomenological, existential, and hermeneutic approaches to the study of persons), more social forms of psychoanalytically informed psychology (especially as developed by Adler, Sullivan, and their colleagues), and a growing wave of social, historical, and cultural psychology that belatedly hit the US and Canada in the late 1960s, stimulated by the works of Lev Vygotsky and other Russian psychologists.

In addition, several prominent personality psychologists who had become enamored of more robustly holistic conceptions of persons and who had begun to adopt biographical and narrative methods for understanding persons and their lives began to meet together on a regular basis under the banner of "personology," a term linked to the ideas of earlier personality theorists (like Henry Murray and Gordon Allport, and to an even longer-standing, interdisciplinary commitment to the understanding of persons) who envisioned a personality psychology that went well beyond personality assessments alone.[11] Moreover, in some of psychology's most popular subdivisions like developmental psychology (influenced by the activity and interactivity foci of Baldwin, Werner, Piaget, and others) concern for the holistic activity of persons in social, developmental context always had resisted the more excessive forms of behaviorism and cognitivism that achieved such wide-spread popularity at different times in the history of mainstream psychology.

---

[10] Valsiner and van der Veer, *The Social Mind*.

[11] I. E. Alexander, *Personology: Method and Content in Personality Assessment and Psychobiography* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

Consequently, with the development of more theoretically informed discourses (e.g., social constructionism, discursive psychology, neoconstructivism) in psychology during the last two decades of the twentieth century and into the first decades of the twenty-first century, the stage was set for a revival, or second wave of the psychology of personhood, one which attempts to use theoretical and historical frameworks, and methods of qualitative, narrative inquiry, and social-developmental theorizing to conceptualize and study persons in holistic, contextualized ways as interactive, communal agents. However, although this new wave of psychological focus and inquiry has now been underway for at least twenty years, it is only recently that a growing number of psychologists who have participated in this second wave of the psychology of personhood have begun to identify themselves explicitly as psychologists of personhood, and to write directly about personhood and the challenges and opportunities it poses for disciplinary psychology. Consequently, the time is right for a volume that explores and examines the psychology of personhood, with an emphasis on philosophical, historical, social-developmental, and narrative dimensions of this important, and increasingly, if somewhat belatedly, recognized area of psychological scholarship.

The psychology of personhood: contents and themes

This book is organized into four parts to reflect the salience of philosophical, historical, social-developmental, and narrative thinking and inquiry in the contemporary psychology of personhood. This organization reflects the major dimensions of recent work in the psychology of personhood as described above. In addition, the ordering of these four parts introduces conceptual and broader philosophical concerns with respect to personhood, before persons are considered in historical and social-developmental contexts within which they are constituted as the unique beings that they are. Ending with narrative perspectives in the psychology of personhood provides more concrete illustrations of the ways in which a psychology of personhood can enhance our general understanding of the nature of persons and their lives, and enrich our particular understanding of specific persons, their circumstances, and their accomplishments.

All of our authors strongly reject the notion of persons as encapsulated individuals that has dominated disciplinary psychology from its beginnings. Their positive proposals exploring this relatively new theoretical space, however, are at times divergent. Consequently, this volume by no means offers a unified understanding of the person that is devoid of disagreements and uncertainties concerning the limits and nature of our

understanding of ourselves and others. Nonetheless, despite such differences and challenges, all those who have contributed to this volume consistently advocate the importance of the person as a concept that is necessarily central to the development and maintenance of any viable psychology.

Part I of our book contains two chapters that discuss important philosophical perspectives on persons and how they might be understood. The first task of any sensible approach to personhood, in psychology or any other subject, is to become as clear as possible about what concepts such as person, personhood, and personality entail. In the first of these chapters, Chapter 2, Michael Tissaw examines the concepts of person and personality, and considers the ontology of persons from the perspective of Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophical, grammatical analysis, especially as practiced currently by Peter Hacker, and applied within the discursive psychology of Rom Harré. Tissaw's dual foci are on what we mean when we use words like person and personality, and what a psychology of personhood, informed by an appropriate grammatical investigation into these terms and their uses, might look like. Tissaw's philosophical, grammatical analysis reveals several common confusions in the ways in which psychologists and others talk about and understand persons, highlights ways in which both persons and talk about persons are embedded in moral discourses and ways of living, and challenges the idea that persons are composed of psychological parts that cause thinking, behavior, and social interactivity.

The second chapter, by Charles Guignon (Chapter 3), also is concerned with philosophical matters in the psychology of personhood, but employs understandings of hermeneutic phenomenology, as elaborated in the works of Martin Heidegger, to describe persons as they appear in ordinary, everyday life. From this perspective, persons live in a world of meanings within which they imbue their existence with significance and concern. Eschewing a substance ontology of personhood, Guignon understands personhood as a narrative self-interpretation that unfolds between birth and death. A person, on this account, is an individual who constantly assesses, implicitly and explicitly, their primary desires in terms of higher-order desires and significations. Guignon, like Tissaw, but from a different philosophical perspective, emphasizes the person as a socially and culturally situated moral agent. For Guignon, such an agent is indebted to the historical traditions of a community, within and through which the agent's self-interpreted life narrative makes possible a kind of freedom that enables meaningful choice.

Part II of our book consists of three chapters that approach personhood in psychology from different historical perspectives. In the first of these,

Chapter 4, historian of psychology Kurt Danziger provides a history of the person that reveals our contemporary psychological conceptions of the person to be of relatively recent historical origin. Danziger argues and demonstrates that understandings of the person that are specifically psychological have been superimposed on rich layers of alternative and historically earlier meanings of the concept. Among the most salient and influential of these are legal and moral conceptions of the person that arose in ancient Greece and Rome and carried over to Medieval Europe. Other early uses of the "person" concept were grammatical and theological. Only very gradually, during the Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Romantic periods, did more individualistic conceptions of personhood emerge, and eventually become associated with ideas concerning private personal experience and uniqueness. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that conceptions of the person as possibly abnormal and requiring medical intervention emerged. All of these various conceptions paved the way for early psychologists to conceptualize the person in terms of ego, self, and personality. Danziger provides an informative chronology of these conceptions, replete with illustrations and elaborations of their most significant aspects.

In the second historical chapter, Chapter 5, Jeff Sugarman describes and elaborates "historical ontology," as it has been developed and applied by Ian Hacking and Nikolas Rose, both of whom have drawn inspiration from the historical theories and studies of Michel Foucault. Historical ontology is an approach to historical inquiry in psychology that examines the ways in which the language, research, interventions, and institutionalized practices of disciplinary psychology contribute to the "making up of persons," who act under the various descriptions, and in accordance with the theoretical and institutional frameworks, advanced by psychologists and others. Sugarman, following Hacking and Rose, demonstrates that the scientific and professional practices of psychologists have created possibilities for acting out features and ways of being persons that are notable for their subjective, internal emphases, foci that fit especially well with liberal democratic values and modes of governance. He is especially interested in the ways in which psychology has theorized human agency. With Foucault, he concludes that "we have the capacity not only to adopt and wield psychological descriptions, but also, to react to them, to revise them and to transform them." In this way, he links what can be learned from historical ontology to our ongoing quest for freedom. However, he makes it clear that this is a freedom that must recognize the inescapable historical and socio-cultural roots of our personhood.

In the third and final historical chapter, Chapter 6, James Lamiell revisits and reinvigorates the "critical personalism" of German psychologist and philosopher, William Stern. Stern's distinction between persons and things emphasized that persons, in direct opposition to things, are unitary, self-activated, and goal-oriented beings. The person as *unitas multiplex*, as a goal-directed entity, acts within the world in ways that are afforded and supplemented by the world itself. For Stern, dispositions of a person are not fixed causal forces, but mere potentialities that unfold within a worldly context that supports particular actions. Rather than being fully determinate of a person's actions, dispositions always must be supplemented by the world, especially within interactivity with others. On these and related theoretical ideas, Stern proposed a differential psychology that distinguished clearly between knowledge of aggregate variables and knowledge of individuals, making it clear that the former in no way supplies or applies the latter. Lamiell's project in re-discovering and interpreting Stern in the context of contemporary personality psychology is to point clearly to the misunderstandings so prevalent in personality psychology that stem from a wide-spread failure to understand and abide by Stern's critical distinction. Yet, despite the fact that knowledge of individual differences carries absolutely no implications whatsoever for knowledge of individuals, personality psychology continues to trade on exactly such logically impossible connections, veiled by a plethora of statistical methods and conceptual elisions. Lamiell provides specific historical details about how Stern's work and ideas have been ignored and misunderstood, and in doing so, creates a powerful case study of some of the ways in which psychology has tended to reduce and erode personhood.

Part III of our book contains four chapters that explore social-developmental and evolutionary perspectives on persons and personhood. The first, Chapter 7, by John Barresi, Chris Moore, and Raymond Martin, provides a rich and nuanced consideration of developmental and evolutionary theory and research that fits nicely within their own approach to the psychology of personhood. Adopting aspects of Peter Strawson's non-dualistic account of persons, Barresi, Moore, and Martin's "intentional relations theory (IRT)" offers a conceptually coherent and empirically supported account of how, both ontogenetically and phylogenetically, it is possible for human beings to accomplish one of the most central and defining capabilities of personhood – understanding and integrating the intentional activities of themselves and others. Their core idea is that humans are uniquely able to do this because they recognize matches between their own and others' actions in the context of shared

interactions with others and objects. In both evolution and development, the result of such joint engagements, especially when accompanied by communicative and linguistic exchanges, is an understanding of self and other as persons, embodied agents capable of engaging in intentional relations that are object or goal directed. Using their four-level framework for the social understanding of intentional relations, Barresi *et al.* distinguish the intentional relations engaged by persons from those engaged by other animals. They argue that it is only human persons who are capable of representing mental phenomena of self and other in a common format that enables complex forms of reciprocal altruism among unrelated members of a group.

The next social-developmental chapter, Chapter 8, is by Jack Martin and Alex Gillespie, who outline their "position exchange theory (PET)." This perspective on the development of self and other understanding and perspective taking in many ways complements the perspective taken by Barresi *et al.* However, Martin and Gillespie want to emphasize that direct participation with others in historically evolved and socio-culturally embedded and sanctioned practices of interactivity is a necessary precursors to more abstracted, psychological ways of understanding persons and taking their perspectives. In particular, they focus on how we occupy different social positions within routine sequences of everyday interactivity, such as giving and receiving objects, and childhood games such as peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek. Such exchanges gradually enable developing persons to understand and integrate the perspectives associated with different positions within these conventional sequences of interactivity. When children are able to physically and socially occupy a position such as that of "giver" or "seeker," and simultaneously recall, anticipate, and understand the perspectives associated with both the position occupied and its complementary, related position, they achieve a basic, physically and socially supported form of perspective taking. With the acquisition of enhanced communicative capabilities, more advanced forms of perspective taking enable older children to distance themselves from their immediate surroundings and take more abstracted perspectives that afford them a greater range of possibilities for acting in ways that are, at least in part, self-determined. Martin and Gillespie supply several examples, drawn from both social-psychological experimentation and everyday observations, of the ways in which position exchange enables greater self–other understanding and higher levels of perspective taking and problem solving.

Mark Bickhard follows with Chapter 9, offering a succinct summary of the interactivist approach to the development of persons, a social-developmental perspective he has developed and defended over the past

two decades. Central to Bickhard's account is the ontological and normative emergence of persons as agents. This emergence occurs as individuals develop as social beings in co-constitutive interaction with the social and cultural realities within which their development occurs. As complex agents, persons interact with each other in myriad social situations that pose what Bickhard refers to as coordination problems that require joint activity with others – others that individuals recognize as complex agents like themselves. The upshot is a uniquely human form of co-constitution in which "socio-cultural processes create, via development, the persons who constitute the emergence base for those socio-cultural processes." In this model, language is a particularly important socio-cultural tool system for constructing, maintaining, and changing situation conventions. Social development intrinsically involves the development of initially implicit, and increasingly explicit, understandings of others' views of one's self, views that become embedded in one's being, and being accepted as, a social agent. In this way, the social ontology of persons is intrinsically normative. Persons have an existential and ethical stake in being the social-ontological person that they have become. In sum, "a person's existence as a social being presupposes their general legitimacy and acceptance as a socio-cultural agent. A refusal on the part of others to accept that legitimacy can constitute a challenge to their being as a person."

The final chapter (Chapter 10) in the social-developmental section of our book is by Anna Stetsenko. Stetsenko takes what she refers to as a "transformative activist stance (TAS)" toward persons and their development. TAS is a historical, socio-cultural approach that is grounded in Stetsenko's interpretation of the works and goals of Lev Vygotsky. TAS takes a deeply relational view of humans as interactive agents who constantly create their lives and nature as they simultaneously transform their world. This collaborative, transformative interactivity is the ontological foundation of human development, one that incorporates and supersedes both adaptation and relationality. By taking a forward-looking stance on their lives that involves social, collective commitments, persons exist as transformative agents. "Persons are agents not only for whom things matter but *who themselves matter in history, culture, and society* and, moreover, who come into Being as unique individuals exactly through and to the extent that they matter in these processes by making a contribution to them."

The final part of *The Psychology of Personhood*, Part IV, contains two chapters that describe narrative perspectives. The first, by Amia Lieblich and Ruthellen Josselson, Chapter 11, explores the concepts of "narrative" and "identity" as they apply to persons. In so doing, Lieblich and

Josselson provide a history of work that has linked these concepts, a history that culminates in a description of the contemporary narrative psychology of personhood. This is a psychology that demonstrates how "personal narratives are woven by the threads of identity that constitute personhood." Testimony to the success of narrative psychology includes the facts that few contemporary psychologists would deny the importance of life narratives in the study of personhood, and that most current conceptions of persons make reference to life narrative and/or autobiography.

The second chapter that takes a narrative perspective, and which also concludes our volume, Chapter 12, is by Mark Freeman. In it, Freeman integrates what he regards as "fundamental ingredients of narrative identity" into "a comprehensive image." Freeman begins by explaining why the idea of identity requires narrative. He then elaborates the centrality of "temporality" and "otherness" to narratives of personhood and self-understanding. In so doing, Freeman also demonstrates how the spheres of temporality and otherness can be put together to provide a model of narrative identity and its formation. In the closing sections of his chapter, Freeman illustrates some of the interpretive richness of his approach by drawing from his personal life and relationships to demonstrate how "the idea of narrative identity and the idea of personhood are intimately related to one another."

The essays that make up this book provide both an introduction to the psychology of personhood, and an invitation to participate in it. As a possible first step, we encourage readers to engage with the chapters that follow, with a view to exploring and developing further their own thinking about persons and how they might be understood and studied within a more holistic, integrative, and methodologically open psychology. Although this book has been organized to encourage readers to work through its various chapters in the order in which they are presented, some readers may find it more congenial to their interests and backgrounds to determine their own paths through the subsequent chapters, perhaps choosing to begin with material that most intrigues them or with which they are already somewhat familiar. But, however it is navigated, we hope that our volume will occasion critical reflection on the fragmentation and narrow specialization that typify so much contemporary psychology, and offer an alternative way of thinking about what we believe is the necessarily central subject matter of psychology – the person as embodied and interactively embedded within the constantly evolving biophysical and socio-cultural world.