

**BOOK REVIEW**

## Child Temperament: New Thinking About the Boundary Between Traits and Illness

David Rettew (2013), W.W. Norton & Company, New York, NY. 288 pp. ISBN 978-0-393-70730-4  
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doi:10.1017/thg.2013.78

Although this book on temperament is written primarily for an audience of clinicians and interested teachers and parents, researchers in the field of behavioral genetics are likely to take interest in the book as well, as it provides an easy-to-read overview of temperament and personality research and shows how research findings can be applied in clinical practice.

The book starts with a short overview of the different frameworks that have been employed in temperament and personality research. This is followed by a description of the neurobiology and genetics of temperament, personality, and psychopathology. Then the connection between temperament and personality on the one hand, and psychopathology on the other is discussed, and several models are introduced that account for the relationship between the two. In the second part of the book, the author explains how the information presented in the first part of the book can be applied in practice, thereby providing helpful and practical suggestions for clinical settings, parenting, education, and medical treatment.

The author's ability to describe research findings in a clear, appealing yet accurate manner and connect them in a plausible way to everyday settings is the main strength of the book, although this sometimes means sacrificing nuance

for readability; especially the sections on candidate gene and candidate gene interaction studies could have benefited from a more critical appraisal of the available literature. Yet the book succeeds in describing and bringing together a large body of research findings without losing the larger perspective, and the first part of the book can thus be a valuable starting point and a good reference for those who would like to learn about temperament and personality research.

The author works as a child psychiatrist at the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont, USA, where a program has been developed to incorporate dimensional models of psychopathology into daily clinical practice. It has been refreshing for me to learn from his experiences and practical recommendations; I have been involved in research on child psychiatry for the past 4 years, and this book helped me to see my research from a different angle. I assume, many readers of *Twin Research and Human Genetics* to have a similar background, and believe this book can help them to put their research in a broader perspective and fuel enthusiasm for the work they are doing. Thereby this book will help to focus genetic research on temperament, personality, and psychopathology on its ultimate goal, which is to improve mental health.