

The Development of the Moral Personality

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That moral rationality attaches to selves who have personalities is a notion so commonplace that it is likely to be contested only in certain quarters of academic psychology. Yet ever since Kohlberg's landmark articulation of the "cognitive developmental approach to socialization" (Kohlberg, 1969), there was a way of talking about moral development that scarcely required reference to personality. One could describe the ontogenesis of moral reasoning without invoking the usual indicators of personality, such as traits, dispositions, or character. If anything, personological considerations were regarded as sources of bias, backsliding, and special pleading that had to be surmounted in order to render judgments from the "moral point of view." Moreover, for Kohlberg, the moral stage sequence could not be used to describe persons or to chart individual differences, and he was opposed to the use of the stage theory as a way to make "aretaic judgments" about the moral worthiness of individuals. Moral stages were not, after all, "boxes for classifying and evaluating persons" (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983, p. 11). Instead moral stages serve as a taxonomic classification of different kinds of sociomoral operations. They describe forms of thought organization of an ideal rational moral agent – an epistemic subject – and hence cannot be "reflections upon the self" (Kohlberg, Levine & Hewer, 1983, p. 36).

But there has been a discernible movement, in both ethical theory (Flanagan & Rorty, 1990; Taylor, 1989) and moral development (Blasi, 2005; Hart, 2005; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Narvaez & Lapsley, in press; Walker & Frimer, this volume) to draw a tighter connection between moral agency and personality. At least among psychologists, the desire for thicker conceptions of the moral self was motivated partly by a desire to offer a compelling account of the relationship between moral judgment and moral action (Blasi, 1983). Moreover, it has proven difficult to tell a

coherent developmental story about the origins of moral rationality without reference to the developmental processes that frame the emergence of selfhood in early childhood (Narvaez & Lapsley, in press; Thompson, this volume).

There are at least two impediments to research on the development of the moral personality. First, although a number of conceptions of moral self-identity and personality have emerged recently (Aquino & Freeman, this volume; Blasi, 2005, this volume; Walker & Hennig, 1998), these models start from the perspective of mature adult functioning. Consequently, we lack precise specification of the developmental processes, influences, or pathways that yield these models as an outcome (Narvaez & Lapsley, in press). Second, personality itself is understood in different ways, and it is not clear which of the various options for conceptualizing personality is the best candidate for developmental analysis in the moral domain. If moral self-identity, or “character,” is the moral dimension of personality, then our accounts of these constructs must be compatible with well-attested models of personality. But *which* models?

Personality science provides a number of options, all of which have implications for understanding the personological dimensions of moral functioning. Indeed, a commitment to theoretical and methodological pluralism is a prudent and useful strategy at this early stage of inquiry. Still, one has to start somewhere. Our own preference is for a social cognitive-developmental account of the moral personality, not the least because of its meta-theoretical compatibility with ecological-contextualist models of development (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004), and its strong integrative potential with theoretical accounts of mature social cognitive functioning (Olson & Dweck, 2008). That said, other approaches hold promise for understanding patterns of continuity and change in moral dispositions (Caspi, Roberts & Shiner, 2005; Robins & Tracey, 2003), and broad integrative perspectives among the various models of personality are within reach (Caspi & Shiner, 2006; McAdams, this volume).

Our goal in this chapter is to explore some features of personality science that seem to offer promising directions for integrative study of moral development. We begin by considering some broad issues concerning the basic units of personality and recent advances in understanding the structure and types of personality. We then extract five themes from the extant empirical literature on personality development and explore their implications for theory and research in the moral character development literature. We then take up the social cognitive option. After noting the two traditions of social cognitive development, we attempt to explicate

a possible developmental course for the social cognitive mechanisms that seem to underlie moral self-identity, as well as prospects for future integrative research.

MODELS OF PERSONALITY

The Two Disciplines

Cervone (2001, 2005, this volume) argues that personality psychology divides into two disciplines on the question of how best to represent the basic structural units of personality. One discipline focuses on *traits* as the basic unit of analysis. The second discipline focuses on *social cognitive* constructs – such as scripts, schemas, and prototypes – as the unit of analysis (Mischel, 1990). According to Cervone the traits approach accounts for personality structure by classifying between-person variability using latent variable taxonomies identified by factor analysis, of which the Big Five (extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness-to-experience) is a prominent example (McCrae & Costa, 1999).

Moreover, the five-factor trait approach is said to adopt an explanatory strategy that is “Aristotelian” (Cervone, Shadel, & Jencius, 2001). For Kurt Lewin (1931) an explanatory strategy is Aristotelian if it considers abstractly defined classes as the essential nature of an object, and appeals to such classifications to explain behavior. To understand the essence of an object, one looks to the class of things under which it is subsumed. These essential qualities refer typically to statistical averages, with the added assumption that essential qualities do not vary by context and do not change over time. This follows from an Aristotelian conception of lawfulness, for which objects or events occur with regularity in the same way and without exception. Lewin (1931), writing almost eight decades ago, thought that contemporary psychology was rife with Aristotelian explanations. “Present day child psychology,” he writes, “exemplify clearly the Aristotelian habit of considering abstractly defined classes as the essential nature of the particular object and hence as the ‘explanation’ of its behavior” (p. 153). One example is the case of taking the negative behavior of three-year-olds as evidence of the “negativism” characteristic of that age, as indicating something of its essential reality, and then using negativism as the explanation of their behavior. Other examples included explanations of character and of temperament. “Here, as in a great many other fundamental concepts, such as that of ability, talent and similar concepts ... present day psychology is really reduced to explanations in terms of Aristotelian ‘essences’” (p. 153).

Cervone et al. (2001) want to show that old explanatory habits die hard, and so press Lewin's (1931) case against the five-factor model. On their view the Big Five factors refer to "statistical properties of populations, not individual persons" (Cervone & Shoda, 1999, p. 28); and proffer an explanation of personality that is "prototypically Aristotelian" (Cervone et al., p. 37) in that it refers simply to the abstract properties of the object ("conscientiousness") whose action is being explained. As Cervone et al (2001, p. 37) put it, "Explanation is in terms of hypothetical constructs that are essential qualities of an individual that correspond to his or her overall average tendency to perform given types of action," and quite irrespective of situational context. Indeed, the immutable cross-situational consistency and temporal stability of dispositional tendencies is a deeply held assumption of essentialist trait psychology (or else is a deeply held caricature of traits, see Caspi & Shiner, 2006).

In contrast, the social cognitive approach understands personality structure in terms of within-individual, cognitive-affective mechanisms that are "in the head," as it were (Mischel, 1990). These cognitive mechanisms include *knowledge structures* that are used to encode features of situations – *self-reflective* processes through which individuals construct self-beliefs and attributions that contribute to affective and behavioral tendencies, and *self-regulatory* processes through which individuals set goals, evaluate progress, and maintain a motivational focus (Bandura, 1999, 1986). Moreover, in contrast to trait taxonomic approaches, social cognitive theory assumes that personal and situational variables interpenetrate and are mutually implicative. Psychological systems are in dynamic interaction with changing situational contexts (Cervone, 2005). This reciprocal determinism highlights the role of sociocultural contexts for shaping the contours of personality development, but also the active role of the agent who selects and moves into environments and shapes them to his or her own interests.

The dynamic interactions of persons and contexts also points to the explanatory strategy of the social cognitive approach. If the explanatory strategy of the five-factor model is Aristotelian, the explanatory strategy of social cognitive theory is "Galilean" (Cervone et al., 2001). The Galilean strategy looks for functional and causal explanations (Lewin, 1931). In doing so, it does not reference class membership or the essential qualities of the object or average dispositional tendencies, but rather underlying mechanisms that are reciprocally interactive with the environment (Bandura, 1986). In social cognitive theory, dispositional coherence is to be found at the intersection of Person x Context interactions (or else as a precipitate of transactions with environments, if not quite interactions in the statistical

sense). Actions are explained “by reference to the interacting character of the object and the environmental context in which the action occurs” (Cervone et al., 2001 p. 37). This approach accounts for both stability and idiosyncratic behavior. There is both a stable behavioral signature but also situational variability. And social cognitive theory assumes that psychological qualities develop dynamically over time (Cervone et al, 2001; Cervone & Shoda, 1999).

The Trait Dispositional Approach

Although there is an “essentialist” reading of the five-factor theory (McCrae et al., 1999, 2000), many other researchers working on trait dispositions would not recognize the terrain surveyed by Cervone et al. (2001). Caspi, Roberts, and Shiner (2005) assert, for example, that the antimony between traits and social cognitive theory is exaggerated; and that the two approaches are not only complementary and mutually informative, but also capable of useful integration. They write: “By integrating social cognitive constructs (e.g., mental representations, encoding processes) into research on traits, developmentalists can advance understanding of how traits are directly manifested at different ages” (Caspi et al., 2005, p. 461).

There is also convergence on how to understand the person-situation debate and, in turn, the nature of traits. The person-situation debate consumed researchers for many years, and pitted social psychologists against personologists on the question of whether dispositional traits were consistently displayed across situations (the personologist position) or were trumped by the demand characteristics of situations (the social psychologist position). Some moral development researchers (Kohlberg, 1987) and philosophers (Doris, 2002; Harman, 2000; cf. Flanagan, this volume) took sides, joining the situationist attack on the reality of traits (and cognate concepts, such as virtues and character); or else, in the case of Kohlberg, accepting the situationist evidence against traits, but looking elsewhere (moral reasoning) for behavioral consistency. Personologists, for their part, mounted an impressive counterattack that demonstrated at least heterotypic dispositional consistency across situations (and continuity over time), or else consistency at the broader level of psychological meaning of situations (or broader trait descriptions), as opposed to consistency of specific, discrete behavior (Epstein, 1979; Epstein & O’Brien, 1985; Funder & Colvin, 1991; Funder & Ozer, 1983; Shoda Mischel & Wright, 1994).

The person-situation debate turns on what to think about the ontological reality of traits (Caspi & Shiner, 2006), and on at least two conceptions

of traits, there is little daylight between trait and social cognitive theory. For example, the *dispositional* conception holds that traits are tendencies to behave in certain ways given certain activating conditions. Personality traits are “if-then” conditional propositions, such as, “if Jones is put in a situation where demands are placed upon his sense of competency, *then* he is aggressive.” This view is consonant with the social-cognitive conception of dispositions and of person-situation interactions (Mischel, 1990; Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1993, 1994; Wright & Mischel, 1987, 1988) and is not disputed by trait theorists, either (Caspi & Shiner, 2006). Indeed, as noted above, personologists have insisted on incorporating the psychological meaning of situations into the investigation of behavioral consistency across situations (Funder & Colvin, 1991). It is now a widely shared view that persons and situations interact in complex ways (Kendrick & Funder, 1988; Higgins, 1990); that the person-situation distinction is a false one (Funder, 1996); that situational specificity and behavioral consistency are not antagonistic positions (Ozer, 1986); and that traits are not static, non-developmental and immutable essences, but are instead organizational constructs that operate dynamically in transaction with environments (Caspi, 1987; Caspi & Shiner, 2006).

With respect to the dispositional notion of personality structure, then, there is much common ground between many trait and social cognitive theorists. Moreover modern trait theory embraces a *realist* conception of traits that is decidedly “Galilean” in its desire to postulate underlying causal mechanisms. As Caspi and Shiner (2006, p. 301) put it, “Whereas the dispositional, if-then conception of traits is agnostic with regard to explanation, a realist conception attempts to postulate underlying processes that lead traits to cause certain intentional states.” On this view, personality traits are real characteristics of individuals (Funder, 1991, 1995). Although personality structure, for the trait theorist, could mean the pattern of covariation of traits across individuals, it can also refer to the organization of traits within individuals (Caspi & Shiner, 2006). Even here, though, dispositional and realist conceptions of traits are not antithetical, and theorists from either side of the “two disciplines” can properly claim a Galilean commitment to investigate real properties of individuals that interact dynamically with settings and contexts.

So if there are two disciplines, there is perhaps more that is shared than is contested between them. Of course, the two disciplines differ on just what are the real properties of individuals that account for dispositional coherence. Traits and social cognitive constructs are very different things, although not necessarily incommensurable things. Yet the two disciplines

are not far apart in their understanding of person-context interactions, of dispositional and realist conceptions of the units of personality, or in their Galilean commitment to identify underlying causal mechanisms. The integrative spirit abides here.

Personality Types

Research on the structure of personality focuses on attempts to understand the variables or dimensions along which individuals differ. Another strategy is to emphasize not the variable but the person as the unit of study. A person-centered strategy attempts to identify how personality dimensions cohere within individuals (typically by means of Q-sort descriptions), and then to determine the resemblance of these descriptions across samples of individuals (typically by means of inverse factor analysis). Where the trait approach attempts to show the relative standing of individuals on single variables, the person-centered approach wants to show how variables are organized within the person. The goal is to identify clusters of individuals, or personality *types*, who share certain personality attributes. In a classic study, J. Block (1971) identified three important personality types (among others): *resilient*, *overcontrolled* and *undercontrolled*. These types vary on two dimensions, *ego resiliency* (resilient) and *ego control* (overcontrolled, undercontrolled). Ego resiliency refers to an “ability to modify one’s behavior in accordance with contextual demands” (Block & Block, 1980, p. 48). Resilient individuals are able to flexibly adapt to changing situations, particularly those that are stressful, frustrating, or demanding. Ego control refers to the “degree of impulse control and modulation” (Block & Block, 1980, p. 41), with overcontrolled individuals clamping down hard on impulses and permitting little modulation; and undercontrolled individuals giving freer reign to impulses and permitting wider modulation of them.

The three personality types have been observed in studies of children and adolescents in North America, Europe, and New Zealand (Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996; Hart, Hofmann, Edelstein, & Keller, 1997; Asendorpf, Borkenau, Ostendorf, & Van Aken, 2001). In addition to replicability, three additional findings are of interest. First, this typology predicts patterns of adaptation. Typically resilient children and adolescents show a good profile of adjustment. Overcontrolled children tend towards internalizing symptoms, social withdrawal, and self-esteem problems, and undercontrolled children show a more pervasive pattern of behavioral and emotional problems, including aggressive behavior (Robins et al., 1996; Hart et al., 1997; Huey & Weisz, 1997).

Second, the three personality types identified in early childhood predict outcomes later in development. Hart et al. (1997) showed, for example, using growth curve analyses, that resilient children at age 7 had higher levels of academic achievement and lower levels of concentration difficulties throughout adolescence. In a related study, Hart, Keller, Edelstein, and Hoffman (1998) showed that ego resiliency in early childhood predicted faster acquisition of friendship understanding between ages 7 and 15, and of moral judgment between 12 and 19, than did the ego control dimensions. Ego resiliency appears, then, to be a robust predictor of important acquisitions of social cognitive development, including moral reasoning, and calls attention to the role of personality in the moral formation of children.

Third, the personality types appear to converge with the Big Five (Asendorpf & Van Aken, 1999; Robins et al., 1996). In one study (van Leeuwen, De Fruyt, & Mervielde, 2004), resilient individuals were associated with socially adjusted factors, such as agreeableness, extraversion, openness-to-experience, but not neuroticism. Overcontrolled individuals, on the other hand, were high in neuroticism, low in extraversion; while undercontrolled individuals scored lower on agreeableness and conscientiousness. The apparent convergence of types and traits, along with evidence that traits are comparatively stronger predictors of various outcomes (van Leeuwen et al., 2004; Caspi & Shiner, 2006), have led some researchers to conclude that type membership is of interest only to the extent that it points to trait characteristics (Costa, Herbst, McCrae, Samuels, & Ozer, 2002). The integrative spirit appears to abide here as well.

Our interest in wading into these issues is not, of course, to resolve them, but rather to establish the terms of reference for considering how contemporary models of personality and allied empirical literatures can help frame our understanding of the moral personality. In the next section we review some key themes that emerge from recent reviews of the personality development literature that moral psychology will need to consider; and then we review what is known about the relationship between personality traits, types, and moral development.

DISPOSITIONS AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Five Themes from Personality Development for Moral Development

The personality development literature has profited from recent analytical (Caspi & Shiner, 2006; Caspi, Roberts, & Shiner, 2005; Shiner, 1998) and meta-analytical (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000) reviews of its sprawling

literature. Our aim here is to identify themes that emerge from these and other reviews that strike us as particularly important for framing research on the development of the moral personality.

Temperament and Personality. First, the distinction between temperament and personality may not be a rigid one, at least with regard to their respective structural properties. Temperament refers to “individual differences in reactivity and self-regulation in nonhuman animals and young infants” (Rothbart & Bates, 2006, p. 100). Often temperament traits are considered on a lower-order of generality than are personality traits, and more closely tied to genetic-biological foundations. Moreover, temperament is thought to provide the building blocks of later personality, or else point to qualities that have to be assembled into broader dispositional patterns.

Indeed, several narrow, lower-order temperament dimensions have been identified – such as fear/inhibition, irritability, activity level, attentional focusing, and inhibitory control, among others (Rothbart & Bates, 2006). But factor analytic research has shown that narrow bands of temperament tend to coalesce into three broader, higher-order dimensions, identified as *surgency*, *negative affectivity*, and *effortful control* (Rothbart, Ahadi, Hershey, & Fisher, 2001), which are related conceptually to three of the Big Five factors – *extraversion*, *neuroticism*, and *conscientiousness*, respectively (Rothbart & Bates, 2006). Moreover, temperament dimensions show up in samples of older children and adolescents (Capaldi & Rothbart, 1992; Putnam et al., 2001), and are empirically related to Big Five factor scores in adults (Rothbart, Ahadi & Evens, 2000). Shiner and Caspi (2003; also, Caspi et al., 2005; Caspi & Shiner, 2006; Shiner, 1998) have proposed a taxonomy of childhood personality that underscores the hierarchical nature of lower-order temperament and higher-order (Big Five) personality traits. For example, in their taxonomy, extraversion as a personality dimension is composed of lower-order traits of sociability and energy/activity level. Agreeableness includes prosocial tendencies and a lack of willfulness or antagonism. Neuroticism subsumes fear, anxiety, sadness, and so on.

This first theme highlights the fact that stable dimensions of temperament emerge early, persist into later developmental periods, and are elaborated into broader dimensions of individual differences. This underscores the importance of examining both lower- and higher-order temperament dimensions as the first place to look for emergent signs of a moral orientation (Eisenberg, 2000). There is some evidence, for example, that individual differences in dispositional regulation are related to the experience of moral emotions, such as guilt and shame (Rothbart, Ahadi & Hershey, 1994). The display of prosocial behaviors may tap into a complex

of dispositional factors that add up to broader traits, such as agreeableness or conscientiousness.

Moreover, there is mounting evidence, particularly from Nancy Eisenberg's lab, that dimensions such as negative emotionality, impulsivity, and effortful control are related to an array of childhood outcomes, including problem-behavior (Eisenberg et al., 1996, 2000, 2005), quality of social functioning (Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie, & Reisser, 2000), and resilient adjustment (Eisenberg, Spinrad, Fabes, Reisser, Cumberland, & Shepard et al. (2004). Studies that chart similar relationships with prosocial moral behavioral outcomes are comparatively slight. There is some evidence that children with sociable or agreeable temperaments are more likely to demonstrate concern for others (Hastings, Zahn-Waxler, & McShane, 2006). In addition, negative emotionality (Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Karbon, Smith, & Maszk, 1996) and anger (Denham, 1986) counterindicates prosocial behavior, sympathy, and concern for others.

Finally, the first theme underscores two important claims of the "new Big Five" model of moral personality outlined by McAdams (this volume; McAdams & Pals, 2006). In his layered account of the moral personality, McAdams argues that genetically based temperament dimensions are transformed into Level 2 dispositional traits, and that dispositional traits underwrite the Level 3 characteristic adaptations of childhood. As we have seen, both claims are well grounded by the extant literature, although more research anchored clearly in the moral domain is needed.

Elaboration of Temperament. But how is temperament elaborated into dispositional personality traits? Caspi and Shiner (2006) propose seven mechanisms. The first mechanism ("*learning*") suggests that temperament might shape the child's experience of what is reinforcing (e.g., agreeable and neurotic children might find novel, complex stimuli differentially rewarding). Temperament might evoke or shape the response of others to the child ("*environmental elicitation*"). Highly extraverted children, for example, might enlist the support of peers more reliably than introverted children. Temperament might influence the way children interpret their experiences ("*environmental construal*"). For example, children low on agreeableness might misconstrue the ambiguous social cues of others as hostile intent or as an unwelcome imposition. Temperament might influence how children make "*social and temporal comparisons.*" A neurotic child might disbelieve that he or she is as good as anybody else in a certain domain, or has shown growth or improvement over time. Temperament could shape the choices children make ("*environmental selection*"). By choosing certain environments, individuals place themselves into contexts that canalize

their dispositional tendencies. Finally, by means of “*environmental manipulation*,” temperament might influence the way children move into environments, shape, manipulate, and alter them. A child high on extraversion might exert more leadership over peers, and thereby shape peer activities around one’s own interests.

These mechanisms illustrate how personality unfolds in the dynamic transaction between dispositional tendencies and context, a theme that is quite at home in developmental science, a theme we take up next. We note, too, that the appeal to temperament in several of these mechanisms masks significant contributions of social cognitive development, which might, in fact, provide the more powerful explanatory framework. Environmental construal, for example, requires mechanisms of interpretation that invoke the literatures of social information processing. Social and temporal comparisons hinge on patterns of self-beliefs. Environmental selection invites consideration of the motivational properties of self-goals. Perhaps the safe lesson is that both dispositional and social cognitive perspectives are required to account adequately for the elaboration of moral personality.

Persons and Contexts. Dispositional tendencies, although stable and enduring, are amenable to moderation by contextual influence. There is ample confirmation of this in the personality development literature (Rothbart & Bates, 2006; Caspi & Shiner, 2006). For example, dysregulation traits in young children – such as impulsivity and resistance-to-control – are related to problem behavior, but the effects are especially pronounced when impulsive and resistant children have parents who are harshly punitive. Similarly, negative emotionality foreshadows externalizing behaviors, but especially in children exposed to adverse rearing conditions. Angry parenting is associated with externalizing behavior in children, but the relationship is stronger in children low in agreeableness. Parental control is associated with lower levels of antisocial behavior in adolescence, but such parenting may be particularly important for adolescents who are impulsive. Similar moderating effects are reported in the development of conscience, as we will see. Clearly, dispositional tendencies are not destiny. Children’s transactions with parents, peers, schools, and neighborhoods moderate the influence of personality traits; and the search for moderators and mediators should pay dividends in the study of the moral personality. Indeed, Hart and Matsuba (this volume) show how neighborhood effects influence prosocial behavior and moral identity.

Continuity and Consequences. But personalities are not easy to change, and dispositions can influence a wide variety of outcomes across the life-course, which is why moral psychology cannot afford to neglect them.

The rank-order stability of personality is remarkably high from early childhood to adulthood (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000), and its influence on adaptation, competence, and adjustment is pervasive (Rothbart & Bates, 1998). Research shows, for example, that childhood personality characteristics predict indices of adaptation ten (Shiner, 2000) and twenty (Shiner, Masten & Roberts, 2003) years later, and that the young child is, indeed, “father of the man” (Caspi, 2000). Two examples will make the point.

Caspi (2000; also Caspi & Silva, 1995) identified undercontrolled, inhibited, and well-adjusted temperament types in the Dunedin sample (Silva & Stanton, 1996) of three-year-olds, and then tracked them at various times up through young adulthood. Remarkably, temperament measured at age three predicted behavioral problems in childhood and adolescence and the structure of personality at age 18. But three-year-old temperament also predicted the quality of interpersonal relationships, the extent of social support, employment status, psychiatric risk, and criminality in young adulthood.

Shiner (2000) identified four higher-order dispositions (Mastery Motivation, Academic Conscientiousness, Surgent Engagement, Agreeableness) in a community of sample of 8- to 12-year-old children, and then attempted to predict both concurrent and longitudinal adaptation ten years later (and twenty years later, Shiner et al., 2003). Her results showed that “childhood personality traits evidence robust, conceptually coherent relationships with adaptation both concurrently and across time” (p. 310). For example, the average correlation of childhood Mastery Motivation with indices of academic achievement, conduct (rule-abidingness vs. antisocial behavior) and peer social competence ten years later was $r = .34$ (the average of the concurrent relationship was $r = .30$). The average correlation of Agreeableness across the three indices of adaptation was $r = .31$ (concurrent $r = .24$). To put this in perspective: the magnitude of these correlations fall within the top third of correlations reported in psychological research (Hemphill, 2003).

Of course, the continuity of personality also reflects the influence of transactions with environments (Caspi, 2000). We are producers of our own development (Lerner & Busch-Rossnagel, 1981) to the extent that our personality evokes consistent patterns of response from others; or else we actively select environments, friends, groups, and settings that support our dispositional tendencies. But our main point here is that the ubiquity of personality, and its pervasive and long-term influence on the way one’s life goes, should figure more prominently in accounts of the moral life. There is no reason to suppose that dispositional tendencies influence every other facet of human experience, but leaves the moral domain untouched.

Take, for example, Blasi's (2005) influential account of moral character. Found lurking here are notions that bear striking resemblance to dispositional constructs. Much like a good trait theorist, Blasi distinguishes lower- and higher-order virtues. Of particular interest are two clusters of higher-order traits. One cluster is called "willpower" (or, alternatively, self-control). Willpower as self-control is a toolbox of skills that permit self-regulation in problem-solving. Breaking down problems, goal-setting, focusing attention, avoiding distractions, resisting temptation, staying on task, persevering with determination and self-discipline – these are the skills of willpower. The second cluster of higher-order traits are organized around the notion of "integrity," which refers to internal self-consistency. Being a person of one's word, being transparent to oneself, being responsible, self-accountable, sincere, resistant to self-deception – these are the dispositions of integrity. Integrity is felt as *responsibility* when one constrains the self with intentional acts of self-control in the pursuit of moral aims. Integrity is felt as *identity* when one imbues the construction of self-meaning with moral desires.

Clearly there are a host of empirical questions embedded in this account, not the least of which is how to account empirically for the two higher-order clusters, their relationship to each other, and to important prosocial and moral behavioral outcomes. But it is not difficult to see that at least one of the clusters – willpower-as-self-control – is a full toolbox of temperament and personality trait dispositions.

Special Status of Early Adulthood. Although much research is directed properly to the early organization of personality and its forward-leaning influence on developmental outcomes, there is now increasing evidence that early adulthood might also be a fertile period for investigation. In a meta-analysis of 92 longitudinal samples, Roberts, Walton, and Viechtbauer (2006) found that mean-level change in personality is found predominantly in young adulthood, particularly for traits such as conscientiousness, emotional stability, and social dominance-extraversion. They note that adolescence may be a period of "personality trait moratorium," just as it is an identity-moratorium, a time of exploration not just in terms of identity commitments but in dispositional qualities as well. But these qualities become consolidated when individuals make the transition to adulthood. "It is during young adulthood," they write, "when people begin to confront the realities of becoming an adult and when we find significant gains in personality traits" (p. 20). As a result the authors suggest that the window for investigating personality development be opened a bit wider to include this part of the lifecourse. The implication is straightforward for researchers interested in moral self-identity and moral personality.

Traits, Types, and Moral Functioning

Traits. A number of research programs have worked dispositional variables into their investigation of topics in the moral domain. For example, Walker and his colleagues examined the personality of moral exemplars in terms of the Big Five taxonomy. One study showed that the personality of moral exemplars was oriented towards conscientiousness and agreeableness (Walker, 1999). Agreeableness also characterized young adult moral exemplars (Matsuba & Walker, 2005). In a study of brave, caring, and just Canadians, Walker and Pitts (1998) found that brave exemplars aligned with a complex of traits associated with extraversion; caring exemplars aligned with agreeableness; and just exemplars with a mixture of conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. This pattern was largely replicated by Walker and Hennig (2004). More recently Walker and Frimer (this volume) have utilized several layers of the “new Big Five” (McAdams, this volume) to good advantage in their analysis of the dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and life narratives of brave and caring exemplars.

Types. Hart (2005; Hart & Matsuba, this volume) proposed a model of moral identity that also carves out a significant role for both disposition and characteristic adaptations. In this model, moral identity is influenced by (1) enduring dispositional and (2) social (family, culture, social class) characteristics that change slowly and are beyond the volitional control of the child. Children, after all, do not choose their personality traits or their family, their neighborhood or other social conditions of their rearing. Yet these early childhood factors exert a long influence on adolescent moral identity. In one study Hart, Atkins, and Fegley, (2003) showed that adolescents whose personality profile was judged “resilient” when they were children were more likely to be engaged in voluntary community service in adolescence than were teens who had undercontrolled or overcontrolled personality profiles as children.

Prosocial Behavior. There have been attempts to understand the dispositional basis of prosocial behavior. For example, there is considerable evidence of a relationship between empathy-related responding and children’s prosocial behavior (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Sadovsky, 2006). Moreover, sociability appears to influence children’s helping behavior, particularly helping behavior that is emitted spontaneously, towards strangers and in unfamiliar settings (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006). Eisenberg and her colleagues also investigated whether there is a dispositional or personological basis for prosocial behavior. In one study, spontaneous, other-oriented prosocial sharing behavior (but not low-cost helping or compliant prosocial

behavior) observed at ages four to five predicted actual and self-reported prosocial behavior up to 17 years later, a relationship that was partially mediated by sympathy (Eisenberg, Guthrie, Murphy, Shepard, Cumberland, & Carlo, 1999). Similarly, self-reports of prosocial dispositions in early adulthood often related to self-reports of sympathy, empathy, and prosocial behavior 10 to 16 years earlier (Eisenberg, Guthrie, Cumberland, Murphy, Shepard, Zhou, & Carlo, 2002). These studies support the claim that there is a prosocial personality disposition that emerges in early childhood and is consistent over time, although the manifestation of the “altruistic personality” may vary with the demand characteristics of social contexts (Carlo, Eisenberg, Troyer, Switzer, & Speer, 1991, Carlo et al., this volume).

Conscience. Kochanska’s research program documents the interplay of temperament, parenting, and the emergence of the moral self (Kochanska, 2002a; Kochanska & Aksan, 2004; Kochanska et al., 2004; Kochanska, Aksan, & Koenig, 1995; Thompson, this volume). Her model of emerging morality begins with the quality of parent-child attachment. A strong, mutually responsive relationship with caregivers orients the child to be receptive to parental influence (Kochanska, 1997a, 2002b).

This “mutually responsive orientation” (MRO) is characterized by shared positive affect, mutually coordinated enjoyable routines (“good times”) and a “cooperative interpersonal set” that describes the joint willingness of parent and child to initiate and reciprocate relational overtures. It is from within the context of the MRO, and the secure attachment that it denotes, that the child is eager to comply with parental expectations and standards. There is “committed compliance” on the part of the child to the norms and values of caregivers that, in turn, motivates moral internalization and the work of “conscience.” This was documented in a recent longitudinal study. Children who had experienced a highly responsive relationship with mothers over the first 24 months of life strongly embraced maternal prohibitions and gave evidence of strong self-regulation skills at preschool age (Kochanska, Aksan, Prisco, & Adams, 2008).

Kochanska’s model moves, then, from security of attachment (MRO) to committed compliance to moral internalization. This movement is also expected to influence the child’s emerging internal representation of the self. As Kochanska et al. (2002a) put it:

“Children with a strong history of committed compliance with the parent are likely gradually to come to view themselves as embracing the parent’s values and rules. Such a moral self, in turn, comes to serve as the regulator of future moral conduct and, more generally, of early morality” (p. 340).

But children bring something to the interaction, too – namely, their temperament. Indeed, Kochanska (1991, 1993) argues that there are multiple pathways to conscience, and that one parenting style is not uniformly more effective irrespective of the temperamental dispositions of the child. She suggests, for example, that children who are highly prone to fearful reactions would profit from gentle, low power-assertive discipline. This “silken glove” approach capitalizes on the child’s own discomfort to produce the optimal level of anxiety that facilitates the processing and retention of parents’ socialization messages. But for “fearless” children another approach is called for, not the “iron hand,” which would only make the fearless child angry, highly reactive, and resistant to socialization messages (Kochanska, Aksan, & Joy, 2007), but rather one that capitalizes on positive emotions (rather than on anxiety).

Here, then, are two pathways to the internalization of conscience. For fearful children, it leads through the soft touch of gentle discipline; for fearless children, it leads through the reciprocal positive parent-child relationship. This has now been documented in a number of studies (Kochanska, 1997b; Kochanska, Forman, Aksan, & Dunbar, 2005). Moreover, this model is drawing increasing interest as a possible developmental grounding for the emergence of mature forms of moral self-identity (Lapsley, 2007; Narvaez & Lapsley, in press).

THE SOCIAL COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MORAL PERSONALITY

To this point we have explored the contribution of the trait dispositional discipline of personality science to understanding moral personality. We now turn our attention to the social-cognitive, the second discipline of personality. The expression “social cognitive development” signifies two rather different research traditions. The older tradition investigated (often stage-)developmental variation in domains – such as person perception, interpersonal- and self-understanding, and, of course, moral development (Damon, 1977; Damon & Hart, 1982; Livesly & Bromley, 1973; Shantz, 1975; Selman, 1980).

More recently, Olson and Dweck (2008) have proposed a “blueprint” for social cognitive development (SCD) that attempts to bridge the divide between cognitive and social development. In the manner of cognitive development, mental representations and cognitive processes are the core of SCD. These are, after all, the “means by which children package their

experiences and carry them forward” (Dweck & London, 2007, p. 121). But cognitive processes also are deeply embedded in social relationships both as antecedents and outcomes. Four goals are outlined to facilitate SCD research (Olson & Dweck, 2008): *Identify* and then assess a social cognitive mental representation or process, *manipulate* it to see how it changes some aspect of the child’s functioning, investigate its *antecedents*, and *compare* how the representations or processes work in natural settings and in the lab.

Lapsley and Narvaez (2004; also Aquino & Freeman, this volume) have proposed a social cognitive account of the moral personality. Although social cognitive theory draws attention to cognitive-affective mechanisms that influence social perception, these mechanisms also serve to create and sustain patterns of individual differences. If schemas are easily primed and readily activated (“chronically accessible”), then they direct our attention selectively to certain features of our experience. This selective framing disposes one to select schema-compatible tasks, goals, and settings that canalize and maintain our dispositional tendencies (Cantor, 1990). We choose environments, in other words, that support or reinforce our schema-relevant interests, which illustrates the reciprocal nature of person-context transaction. Moreover, we tend to develop highly practiced behavioral routines in those areas of our experience that are regulated by chronically accessible schemes. In these areas of our social experience, we become “virtual experts,” and in these life contexts, social cognitive schemas function as “a ready, sometimes automatically available plan of action” (Cantor, 1990, p. 738). In this way, chronically accessible schemas function as the cognitive carriers of dispositions.

Social cognitive theory asserts, then, that schema accessibility and conditions of activation are critical for understanding how patterns of individual differences are channeled and maintained. From this perspective, Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) claim that a moral person, or a person who has a moral identity or character, is one for whom moral categories are chronically accessible. If having a moral identity is just when moral notions are central, important, and essential one’s self-understanding, then notions that are central, important, and essential are also those that are chronically accessible for appraising the social landscape. Chronically accessible moral schemas provide a dispositional readiness to discern the moral dimensions of experience, as well as to underwrite the discriminative facility in selecting situationally appropriate behavior.

Five Advantages. A social cognitive model of moral personality has at least five attractive features (Narvaez & Lapsley, in press). First, social

cognitive theory accords with the paradigmatic assumptions of ecological “systems” models of development (Lerner, 2006). Both developmental systems and social cognitive theory affirm that a dispositional behavioral signature is to be found at the intersection of Person x Context interactions. This alignment increases the probability of articulating robust, integrative social cognitive developmental models of moral personality.

Second, it provides an explanation for the model of moral identity favored by Blasi (1984), who argues that one has a moral identity just when moral categories are essential, central, and important to one’s self-understanding. A social cognitive interpretation would add that moral categories that are essential, central, and important for one’s self-identity would also be ones that are chronically accessible for interpreting the social landscape. These categories would be on-line, vigilant, easily primed, easily activated, for discerning the meaning of events, for noticing the moral dimensions of experience, and, once activated, to dispose one to interpret events in light of one’s moral commitments.

Third, this model accounts for the felt necessity of moral commitments experienced by moral exemplars, their experience of moral clarity or felt conviction that their decisions are evidently appropriate, justified, and true. Typically moral exemplars report that they “just knew” what was required of them, automatically as it were, without the experience of working through an elaborate decision-making calculus (Colby & Damon, 1992). Yet this is precisely the outcome of preconscious activation of chronically accessible constructs that it should induce strong feelings of certainty or conviction with respect to social judgments (Bargh, 1989; Narvaez & Lapsley, in press).

Fourth, the social cognitive framework is better able to account for the implicit, tacit, and automatic features of moral functioning (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005). There is growing recognition that much of human decision making is under non-conscious control (Bargh, 2005) and occurs with an automaticity that belies the standard notions of rational, deliberative calculation (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Though this possibility offends traditional accounts of moral development, there is no reason to think that automaticity is evident in every domain of decision making except the moral domain (Narvaez & Lapsley, in press). However, unlike the social intuitionist model (Haidt, 2001), which frontloads automaticity prior to judgment and reasoning as a result of intuitions that are constitutive of human nature (and hence prior to learning and enculturation), the social cognitive approach to moral personality locates automaticity on the backend of development

as the result of repeated experience, of instruction, intentional coaching, and socialization (Lapsley & Hill, in press). It is the automaticity that comes from expertise in life domains, where we have vast experience and well-practiced behavioral routines (Cantor, 1990).

Finally, a social cognitive model of the moral personality can account for situational variability in the display of a virtue (Cervone, this volume). The accessibility of social cognitive schemas underwrites not only the discriminative facility in the selection of situationally appropriate behavior, but also the automaticity of schema activation that contributes to the tacit, implicit qualities often associated with the “habits” of moral character (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006).

Recent research has attempted to document the social cognitive dimensions of moral cognition. For example, research shows that conceptions of good character (Lapsley & Lasky, 1999) and of moral, spiritual, and religious persons (Walker & Pitts, 1998) are organized as cognitive prototypes. Moreover, moral chronicity appears to be a dimension of individual differences that influences spontaneous trait inference and text comprehension (Narvaez, Lapsley, Hagele, & Lasky, 2006). In two studies, Narvaez et al. (2006) showed that moral chronics and non-chronics respond differently to the dispositional and moral implications of social cues.

Social Cognitive Development. Of course, all social cognitive theories share a common defect, which is the absence of a developmental account of the pathways that bring individuals to adult forms of functioning specified by the theory. Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) speculate on the developmental grounding of their social cognitive account of the moral personality. They argue that moral chronicity is built on the foundation of generalized event representations that characterize early sociopersonality development (Thompson, 1998). Event representations have been called the “basic building blocks of cognitive development” (Nelson & Gruendel, 1981, p. 131). They are working models of how social routines unfold and of what one can expect of social experience. These prototypic knowledge structures are progressively elaborated in the early dialogues with caregivers, who help children review, structure, and consolidate memories in script-like fashion (Fivush, Kuebli, & Chubb, 1992).

But the key characterological turn of significance for moral personality is how these early social-cognitive units are transformed from episodic into autobiographical memory. At some point, specific episodic memories must be integrated into a narrative form that references a self whose story it is. The mechanisms that drive this integration are both cognitive

and social. On the cognitive front, autobiographical memory development shows two important achievements during the preschool years. First, children begin to include subjective interpretations of the events (Fivush, 2001), which include markers of the personal significance of the event for the self. Second, children's event memories show greater grammatical and emotional detail (Fivush & Haden, 1997), which signals increasing maturity as a "storyteller."

But socialization experiences are also crucial. Parents help children organize events into personally relevant biographical memories by the frequency and kinds of questions they ask about daily routines or recent experiences. Parental interrogatives ("What happened when you pushed your sister? What should you do next?") are a scaffold that helps children structure events in narrative fashion, which provide, in turn, as part of the self-narrative, action-guiding scripts ("apologize when you harm") that become frequently practiced, over-learned, routine, habitual, and automatic (a type of moral expertise development; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005). Parental interrogatives might also include reference to norms, standards, and values, so that the moral ideal-self becomes part of the child's autobiographical narrative. In this way parents help children identify morally relevant features of their experience and encourage the formation of social cognitive schemas that are chronically accessible (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004).

If the Lapsley-Narvaez model is plausible, it would then suggest that the most important forms of moral character formation are not the result of an intervention, nor are they the product of a formal curriculum, and they do not take place primarily in schools. Rather they are grounded by the prosaic transactions in the daily family and social life of the young child. The banality and ubiquity of moral character formation, its ordinariness, the way it ramifies into developmental and personality constructs and processes of all kinds, points to a pressing need for comprehensive, intentional, integrative, and interdisciplinary approaches to studying this model.

Indeed, we are now beginning to see with more clarity how topics of long interest to developmental science – topics such as social referencing, internal working models, event representation, theory of mind, self-regulation – have implications for the developing moral self (Thompson, this volume), even though these are not typically considered contributions to a moral development literature. How these acquisitions are carried forward, how they take on dispositions and are moderated by transactions with the world, and how they come to influence behavior and under what conditions – these are the pressing questions before the new field of moral personality development.

CONCLUSION

We should like to conclude, then, with some ideas about the future development of the nascent field of moral personality development that are suggested by the present review. Clearly there is a case, first of all, for future research to examine both lower- and higher-order temperament dispositions for emergent signs of the moral self. On one level, this is a call for more research on the dispositional antecedents of behavior that is demonstrably prosocial. But on another level it calls for investigations into the dispositional sources of variation in social and cognitive achievements that are crucial for the early organization of the moral personality, such as self-regulation, self-conscious emotions, theory of mind, event representation, among others. These acquisitions seem to underlie, for example, the emerging sense of what is normative and what one ought to do (Narvaez & Lapsley, in press; Thompson, this volume), an understanding that goes to the heart of what it means to be a moral person. Is there a dispositional element to these social cognitive acquisitions? This question might well guide integrative research in the development of the moral personality.

A second possible future concerns research on the manner in which dispositions are elaborated in the service of prosocial behavior. We noted earlier how some of the mechanisms of elaboration proposed by Caspi and Shiner (2006) require significant social cognitive competencies. For example, *environmental construal* might well govern the transformation of temperament into personality, but its social cognitive elements are well known to developmental researchers (Dodge, 1980; Dodge & Frame, 1982). Similarly, the study of *social and temporal comparisons* and *environmental selection* as mechanisms for elaborating temperament might profit from social cognitive literatures on self-beliefs (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli and Cervone, 2004) and self-guides (Higgins, 1987), respectively.

A third line of research would test directly a key empirical claim of Lapsley-Narvaez that individuals with a strong moral identity – which is to say, individuals for whom moral notions are central, important, and essential to self-understanding – would also have moral notions chronically accessible for guiding social information processing.

A fourth line of research should examine the empirical implications of Blasi's (2005) model of moral character. The notions of willpower and integrity are key higher-order virtues that underwrite the second-order volitions and moral desires of the subjective self-as-agent (Lapsley, 2007). Yet, as we have seen, these components of moral self-identity are built on a foundation

of dispositional constructs, the implication of which has not been examined directly.

Perhaps one strategy is to approach this problem with the organizing framework of the “new Big Five” (McAdams & Pals, 2006). This framework for integrating personality science has already shown its conceptual (McAdams, this volume) and empirical (Walker & Frimer, this volume) utility for moral psychology; and it invites new investigations into how dispositional traits map into characteristic moral adaptations, and how these contribute to individual differences in the thematic narratives that individuals construct to make sense of their lives. Moral identity may turn out to be not so much a matter of chronically accessible schemas (at the level of “characteristic” adaptations), but rather a kind of self-narrative that makes sense of one’s being-in-the-world.

Moreover, for all the importance of early childhood, the study of moral personality development cannot neglect the adult lifespan, and particularly early adulthood, which seems to be a period of particular ferment for the construction of moral self-identity (and its presumptive narrative structure). The question of what it means to be a moral person is a life-long concern, and our developmental work must follow accordingly. But the division of labor whereby personologists and social psychologists focus on adults, while developmentalists focus on children, is not helpful. Fortunately, the pace of integrative research across fields is increasing, and the blueprint for social cognitive development (Olson & Dweck, 2008) is also a welcome step in this direction.

Finally, on a methodological note, the field of moral personality research would profit from new ways to measure the constructs of interest. Particularly glaring is the relative lack of assessment strategies for measuring such foundational constructs as “moral identity.” We have taken some steps in this direction by constructing a Q-sort assessment of moral identity that is showing promising results (Jimenez, Nawrocki, Hill, & Lapsley, 2008), although much more research is required.

Moreover, though we talk about dispositional traits, adopt variable-centered measurement strategies, and understand the personality as something that is layered, the truth is that the object of study is a whole person. We are sympathetic to the point raised by Robins and Tracey (2003) that person-centered strategies might prove more attractive to developmental researchers who want to study the child holistically. With such strategies we can ask: How do moral qualities cohere within individuals? Are there different moral types?

These questions are central to some basic claims about moral personality. It is believed widely that moral identity is a dimension of individual differences, and in a double sense. First, people differ on how central moral notions are to their sense of self-understanding. Some individuals construct their self-understanding on moral grounds; others have only a glancing acquaintance with morality but construct the self around other priorities. Second, even among those who value morality as a source of self-definition, there are different ways of living a moral life well – some might orient to justice, some to care, and still others to utility or virtues (and so on). These dual claims about individual differences in moral identity have never been tested adequately, yet doing so would seem to be a high priority for a field of moral personality development. A person-centered assessment strategy that identifies a typology of moral personality in this way would open up a fascinating and productive line of research.

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