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"May You Live in Interesting Times": Moral Philosophy and Empirical Psychology [Review of *The Moral Psychology Handbook*]

Nancy E. Snow
Marquette University, nancy.snow@marquette.edu

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Nancy E. Snow
Philosophy, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

Keywords

Abstract

The Moral Psychology Handbook is a contribution to a relatively new genre of philosophical writing, the "handbook." In the first section, I comment on an expectation about handbooks, namely that handbooks contain works representative of a field, and raise concerns about *The Moral Psychology Handbook* in this regard. In the rest of the article I comment in detail on two *Handbook* articles, "Moral Motivation" by Timothy Schroeder, Adina Roskies, and Shaun Nichols, and "Character" by Maria W. Merritt, John M. Doris, and Gilbert Harman. Both articles illustrate the perils as well as the promise of reliance on empirical studies for philosophers who work in moral psychology.

John M. Doris and the Moral Psychology Research Group, *The Moral Psychology Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 403 pages. ISBN 9780199852143 (hbk). Hardback: $80.

As the ancient Chinese curse has it, "May you live in interesting times." John M. Doris introduces *The Moral Psychology Handbook* with this provocative quote, noting that times are indeed interesting for moral philosophers, though not in the negative sense intended by the curse (Doris, p. 1). Times are interesting in an exciting sense, due in no small part to the efforts of Doris and his like-minded associates in the Moral Psychology Research Group. They and other philosophers have contributed to a revolution in the way moral philosophy is being done. The change is this: moral philosophers are now no longer free to ignore empirical science in their work, as had been the norm from time immemorial. Doris and his colleagues have taken moral philosophy, especially moral psychology as done by philosophers, out of the realm of purely conceptual argumentation and armchair speculation and into the realms of reading the work of empirical psychologists, biologists, cognitive scientists, and neuroscientists, and, in some cases, of interacting with them and collaborating on experiments. The upshot is the promise of exciting advances in our understanding of moral phenomena. The downside is the burden this innovation places on philosophers, most of whom are trained in only their own field. Doris and his colleagues have created the need for a moral psychology handbook, and with the present volume, endeavor to satisfy it.

I begin this review essay with some general remarks about *The Moral Psychology Handbook* as an example of a relatively new genre in philosophical publications, the "handbook," then devote the remainder to more in-depth examinations of selected chapters. The attention given to some is not meant to slight the contributions of others; in-depth treatment of all the chapters is impossible. A list of the chapter titles and authors gives a flavor of the scope of the topics covered in the handbook: "Evolution of Morality," by Edouard Machery and Ron Mallon; "Multi-system Moral Psychology," by Fiery Cushman, Liane Young, and Joshua D. Greene; "Moral Motivation," by Timothy Schroeder, Adina L. Roskies, and Shaun Nichols; "Moral Emotions," by Jesse J. Prinz and Shaun Nichols; "Altruism," by Stephen Stich, John M. Doris, and Erica Roedder; "Moral Reasoning," by Gilbert Harman, Kelby Mason, and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong; "Moral Intuitions," by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Liane Young, and Fiery Cushman; "Linguistics and Moral Theory," by Erica Roedder and Gilbert Harman; "Rules," by Ron Mallon and Shaun Nichols; "Responsibility," by Joshua Knobe and John M. Doris; "Character," by Maria W. Merritt, John M. Doris, and Gilbert Harman; "Well-Being," by Valerie Tiberius and Alexandra Plakias; and "Race and Racial Cognition," by Daniel Kelly, Edouard Machery, and Ron Mallon.

1. The Moral Psychology Handbook as a "Handbook"

The genre of the "handbook" is a relatively recent arrival on the philosophical scene. In years past, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* was the only reference resource available.[1] Today we have an embarrassment of riches – dictionaries, both online and in print; "companions," featuring articles by acknowledged authorities in the field; and now, "handbooks." Philosophical handbooks seem modeled after handbooks published in other fields, such as psychology. I have always thought, perhaps wrongly, that the purpose of handbooks is to acquaint the reader with a general but reliable overview of work in a subfield of a discipline. For example, to name but two, *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology* and *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* each contain state of the art essays by prominent philosophers in the relevant subfield of philosophy, and each begins with a substantial introduction that orients the reader both to the shape of the essays that follow and their relation to one another, as well as to the main contours of the subfield the handbook purports to represent.[2] Even when not explicitly stated, the clear impression given by the editors is that their volumes are representative of the main themes, debates, and problems with which the subfield is currently concerned.

In this respect, I find *The Moral Psychology Handbook* puzzling, if not lacking. Instead of a substantial introduction mapping the terrain of the book and, presumably, the major contours of the subfield of moral

psychology as it is currently being pursued by philosophers, Doris (pp. 1-2) offers a two page "Introduction" in which he contends that moral psychology requires empirical backing, and offers the essays that follow as examples of the kind of empirically informed work likely to advance our understanding of traditional moral psychological fare. Doris (p. 2) claims to eschew two "fool's errands:" the attempt to provide a comprehensive survey of work in moral psychology, and the "pretense of impartiality." Not attempting comprehensiveness is wise because of the impossibility of covering adequately the wide range of work currently being produced. Avoiding impartiality is not so wise, as it *prima facie* undermines the representative character of the essays readers have come to expect through their experience of handbooks in other philosophical subfields.

Does the lack of impartiality undermine the representativeness of the essays included in the volume? Doris (p. 2) thinks not:

> While we've aspired to balanced reporting on the controversial issues, we've more than occasionally adopted editorial positions. The result is not survey, but argumentative survey. Nevertheless, we hope that collectively, the chapters achieve what a *Handbook* should achieve: a wide-ranging statement of what moral psychology is about, and why it matters.

Is Doris correct in his assessment? Yes and no. The topics are well-chosen, and generally do represent the wide range of issues of importance for moral psychology. Lack of partiality is apt to show up in a more fine-grained way, however, at the level of the treatment of topics given in individual essays. I pursue this point in my discussion of selected essays.[3] My advice to readers who are not familiar with the science on which the contributing authors draw is this: take seriously what the authors in the *Handbook* say, but do your own reading of the science, and draw your own conclusions about its implications for moral philosophy. I doubt that Doris and the Moral Psychology Research Group would disagree.

2. Moral Motivation

There are better and worse ways to bring empirical science to bear on issues in moral psychology. The article on "Moral Motivation" by Timothy Schroeder, Adina L. Roskies, and Shaun Nichols (pp. 72-110) illustrates the benefits as well as the perils of incorporating empirical work into the kind of moral psychology traditionally done by philosophers.

They begin in section 1, "Motivation," with the observation that moral motivation is a type of motivation in general; consequently, we need to become clear on motivation in general before homing in on moral motivation. Accordingly, they list four apparent features of motivation in general, concluding that "… motivation is an occurrent state, capable of causing actions, and associated with certain feelings" (p. 74). They turn in section 2, "Philosophical Approaches to Moral Motivation," to sketch four philosophical views of moral motivation, labeling them the instrumentalist, cognitivist, sentimentalist, and personalist accounts. These sketches are brief; at one point, the authors even label them 'caricature' (p. 77).

Motivation, on the instrumentalist's view, is a complex belief-desire chain, originating with intrinsic desires. Intrinsic desires, when coupled with occurrent beliefs about how to act to satisfy those desires, give rise to instrumental desires to perform the acts in question (pp. 74-6). Cognitivism holds that moral motivation begins with occurrent beliefs about right action (p. 76). Such beliefs lead to motivation to perform right action, independently of antecedent desires. Sentimentalists give emotion a central view in their account of moral motivation, maintaining that the right kind of emotion is necessary for moral motivation (pp. 76-7). Finally, personalism is the Aristotelian view that moral motivation relies on good character, where "Good character involves knowledge of the good, wanting what is good for its own sake, long-standing emotional dispositions that favor good action, and long-standing habits of responding to one's knowledge, desires, and emotions with

good action" (p. 77). The picture of moral motivation found on the personalist's account is a complex of many elements, including cognitive, conative, and behavioral dispositions.

The authors follow this excursion into philosophy with a foray into neuroscience, beginning with section 3, entitled, "The Neurophysiology of Moral Motivation," which offers a general sketch of how the brain functions to produce action. They devote section 4, entitled, "Initial Implications of Neurophysiology," to deriving implications of this general neuroscientific picture for the four views of moral motivation previously outlined, and conclude with section 5, entitled, "Some Pressing Questions," which raises specific problems for the four philosophical accounts of motivation.

What are the good and bad parts of this approach? The good part is section 5, where the authors refer to accounts of the neuroscience of diseases and disorders, such as Parkinson's, Tourette Syndrome, and various forms of prefrontal ventro-medial brain damage to draw implications for the philosophical perspectives on moral motivation. Neurophysiological deficits affecting cognition are significant for all of the philosophical views, though especially worrisome for cognitivists. Sentimentalism, too, is given an interesting treatment in light of psychology and neuroscience, especially with reference to studies of psychopaths. Key to the value of section 5 is that the authors move beyond textbook neuroscience to bring more specific neurophysiological studies to bear on specific roles for cognition and emotion in moral motivation. So, the most useful and interesting part of the article is where the authors really dig into the neuroscience, and examine the implications of specific results of scientific studies for specific claims made by the various philosophical accounts.

By contrast, the authors falter in earlier sections. Most obviously, the description of philosophical accounts of moral motivation is overly thin. A deeper problem arises when the authors rely on textbook neuroscience in section 3, "The Neurophysiology of Moral Motivation," to sketch a general account of brain functioning in perception, cognition, the reward system, and action. The problem with their neurophysiological sketch is its level of generality. The authors anticipate this, and defend their choice to rely on textbook neuroscience, claiming, "To minimize the perils of reliance on cutting-edge scientific work, most of this section will deal in textbook neuroscience. Thus, while we remain aware that neuroscience is as vulnerable to revolution as any science, we also remain moderately confident that the fundamentals of the empirical picture we sketch will remain substantially intact in the future" (p. 79). This strategy is not unreasonable: take what is settled in neuroscience, and use it to assess divergent philosophical theories of moral motivation.

But how much insight can be gained from using a general neuroscientific picture to assess philosophical views that the authors themselves describe as "caricature"? This approach is not very helpful, amounting at worst to the kind of "cookbook" or formulaic approach used for many years in the field of applied ethics. In its infancy and perhaps even its adolescence, applied ethics was notable for an overly simplistic approach in which philosophers applied ethical theories, usually consequentialism and deontology, to practical problems, such as abortion and euthanasia, to "crank out" a result. This approach can be considered "cookbook" in the sense that one takes a specific theory, adds a moral problem, and derives an "answer": add two eggs, flour, stir, *et voilá*! You have an ethical answer. The earlier sections of "Moral Motivation" seem similar: take four philosophical accounts, sketchily delineated, add a general, textbook-based overview of the neuroscience of action, assess the former in terms of the latter, and what do you get? Quite honestly, I'm not sure. I remain disappointed with the first four sections of their article, and am much happier with the fifth, where the authors delve more deeply into truly interesting applications of neuroscience to philosophy.

Their reluctance in earlier sections to draw on "cutting-edge" neuroscience illustrates one of the perils that empirically-minded philosophers face. "Cutting-edge" science is often not fully settled. Yet, more often than not, it is cutting edge science that promises to yield insights for philosophers. The price of these potential insights is that cutting-edge research does not always map neatly onto philosophical accounts and categories, thereby

problematizing the approaches traditionally taken by philosophers, or, less drastically, making the application of neuroscientific research to philosophical issues unclear.

The lack of clear consilience between cutting edge neuroscientific work and traditional philosophical perspectives is one challenge that confronts empirically minded philosophers. A more specific problem for Schroeder, Roskies, and Nichols is that adverting to some cutting edge neuroscientific research could provide a slant on the sketched accounts of moral motivation that differs from theirs. For example, cognitivism, in particular, does not fare well in their assessments. Yet consider cutting-edge work on cognitive reappraisal by the social neuroscientist Kevin N. Ochsner and his colleagues.[4] Cognitive reappraisal is the ability to mentally transform the meanings of stimuli that affect us. Through such reappraisal, we are able to regulate our emotional responses to the stimuli.[5] Ochsner has shown that emotion can be generated along two pathways: bottom-up generation, in which emotion is elicited by the properties of a stimulus, for example, by viewing an aversive photograph; and top-down production, in which emotion is evoked through cognition, as when I tell myself that a stimulus is bad, and thereby generate unpleasant thoughts that elicit negative affect.[6] Ochsner and his colleagues have also discovered that we have the ability to both up- and down-regulate emotion through cognitive reappraisal.[7] We up-regulate emotion when we increase our affective reactions to negative events; we down-regulate when we decrease such responses. Finally, Ochsner and others have tested self- and situation-focused emotional appraisal.[8] In the self-focus group of an experiment subjects were instructed either to increase personal connection while viewing photographs by imagining themselves or a loved one involved in the depicted scene, or to decrease personal links by adopting a clinical, detached, third-person perspective. Those in the situation-focused group were instructed to regulate their negative feelings by attending to contexts, outcomes, and affects of the persons pictured in increasingly or decreasingly negative ways.

Do these results have implications for moral motivation? *Prima facie*, it would appear that they do, at least if moral motivation is thought to involve the cognitive regulation of emotion. Drawing out the implications of Ochsner's research is beyond the scope of this essay. My point is that, despite possible drawbacks, cutting edge research offers more interesting, more fine-grained, and possibly, more fruitful philosophical insights than can be obtained from applying textbook accounts of neuroscience to philosophical theories.

Should philosophers eschew the textbooks? By no means – textbooks supply basic scientific background knowledge needed to understand more advanced studies. Yet I doubt the textbook accounts are useful in the rather "cookbook" role suggested by Schroeder, Roskies, and Nichols. In that role, I fear that textbook neuroscience could yield superficial or even misleading results when applied to philosophy.

3. Character

"Character," is by the three philosophers, Maria W. Merritt, John M. Doris, and Gilbert Harman, who introduced the 'situationist' critique of character and virtue ethics into philosophical literature, and started the current trend of forcing philosophers to take empirical psychology seriously. Central to virtue ethics is the assumption that virtues are 'global' or 'robust' traits – the kinds of traits that are manifested in stable behavior across a variety of types of situations. Thus, if a person possesses the virtue of honesty, she can be thought to be honest in a variety of settings – in conversations with her spouse, under oath in court, on her income taxes, and so on. Harman claimed that we have no empirical reason to think that global traits, and thus, virtues, exist, and consequently, no way of becoming the kinds of people that virtue ethicists tell us to become.[9] Harman's critique was taken up by Doris and Merritt.[10] Doris admitted that the possession of such traits by small numbers of people is consistent with empirical evidence,[11] but amassed a large number of empirical studies to argue that (a) situations influence behavior far more extensively than do traits; and (b) traits, if they exist, are more likely to be local and narrowly indexed to the objective, physically describable features of situations than global and capable of producing behavior across objectively different situation-types. [12]

A number of philosophers have argued against the situationist critique.[13] Some have insisted that personality is not as fragmented as the situationists contend, arguing that practical rationality is capable of providing virtuous people with an integrated perspective on the situational factors that affect them, thereby allowing for personality coherence as well as for reliably virtuous responses across a range of different situation-types.[14] In "Character," Merritt, Doris, and Harman attack the claim that practical rationality can satisfy this integrative function. Their method is the same as that used in their assault on global traits: they amass a body of empirical evidence to argue that practical reasoning itself is fragmented, and thus, unable to provide the integrative functions needed to sustain the conception of character presupposed by traditional virtue ethics.[15]

Before I comment on their claims about practical reasoning, let me make an observation about impartiality and unbiased reporting. "Character," though impressive and useful in many respects, is far from impartial. Since Doris (p. 2) regards impartiality as a "fool's errand," this comes as no surprise. Yet, he also claims to have aspired to "… balanced reporting on the controversial issues," while admitting, "… we've more than occasionally adopted editorial positions" (p. 2). The article on "Character" fails in "balanced reporting" on controversial issues both major and minor.

Here are two minor failures in balanced reporting. First, in their section on "Skepticism in Character," in which the authors recap the situationist critique of character traits, they cite Isen and Levin (1972), a study purporting to show that helping behavior is affected by trivial factors, such as finding a dime in a phone booth.[16] This study is reported as follows (p. 356):

> Isen and Levin (1972: 387) discovered that subjects who had just found a dime were 22 times more likely to help a woman who had dropped some papers than subjects who did not find a dime (88% vs. 4%).

The authors omit two crucial facts about the study. First, the low number of participants: of subjects who found a dime, 14 helped and 2 did not; of those who did not find a dime, only 1 helped and 24 did not.[17] Reporting the experimental findings as percentages and in terms of the magnitude of the likeliness of helping behavior masks the low number of subjects, and creates the impression of stronger experimental support for the influence of a trivial situational factor on helping behavior than can be inferred from Isen and Levin (1972) alone. Second, psychologists have been unable to replicate Isen and Levin's results.[18] Many other studies provide stronger support for the influence of trivial situational factors on helping behavior.[19] Why continue to cite Isen and Levin (1972) as unproblematic evidence of the effects of situational factors on this kind of behavior?[20]

The second minor failure in balanced reporting is this. Situationists often rely on Darley and Batson (1973), the study of Princeton seminarians who, in their hurry to get to a talk, fail to help (sometimes even stepping over), a confederate of the experimenters slumped over and moaning. Situationists conclude that degree of hurry is the situational factor that derails helping behavior. This plausible-sounding conclusion was tested in a follow-up study by Batson et. al. (1978) – a study not cited in situationist literature, nor discussed in "Character."[21] Batson et. al. (1978) challenged the hypothesis that hurry *per se* reduced helping behavior, positing instead that conflict over whom to help was the relevant variable. Subjects were told that they needed to deliver data that either were or were not important for the successful completion of a research project to another building on campus, and, along the way, encountered a confederate slumped over and moaning. Of 10 subjects in the "not hurry" condition, 8 who thought that others were not counting on them stopped to help, and 5 who thought that others were counting on them stopped to help. Of 10 subjects in the "hurry" condition, 7 who thought that others were not counting on them stopped to help, and 1 who thought that others were counting on him stopped to help. These results led Batson et. al. to conclude that conflict about whom to help, and not hurry or callousness, explained the behavior of those who did not stop. Additionally, Jost and Jost cite a comment from Batson on a study by Staub (1974), in which "… a prosocial orientation index … significantly predicted helping

behavior across a variety of circumstances." Batson is quoted as agreeing that "… dispositional predictors have fared better than in earlier work."[22]

I raise these issues to make two points. First, philosophers do not merely *report*, but *use* the results of empirical studies to make arguments to support their favored conclusions. While there is nothing wrong with this, readers should be aware that the use of empirical studies in philosophical argumentation often imports an interpretative dimension that is not present in the studies themselves. Indeed, philosophers sometimes exceed the cautious claims made by the authors of the studies, and sometimes use the studies to advance conclusions not proffered by psychologists themselves.[23]

Second, these minor failures in reporting are parts of the empirical record that situationists tend to ignore.[24] Situationists also give short shrift to other empirical psychological studies, most notably the work of Walter Mischel and his collaborators, which I have argued provides empirical evidence for the kinds of traits a subset of which can be virtues in the traditional Aristotelian sense.[25]

What about the claim by Merritt, Doris, and Harman that empirical evidence shows practical rationality to be too fragmented to supply the integrative functions needed to support the personality coherence required by traditional philosophical conceptions of character? Here, too, a failure of reporting occurs. Correcting the failure generates a more integrated picture of practical rationality that is more amenable to traditional philosophical conceptions of character and virtue ethics than is presented in "Character."

The authors motivate their views on practical rationality by attempting to explain a phenomenon they call 'moral dissociation' (pp. 367-70). Moral dissociation, as they define it, is shown by many of the subjects in the social psychological experiments situationists cite: the subjects engage in behavior that is at odds with their moral commitments. The authors argue that behavior inconsistent with subjects' endorsed values is owing to what they call 'depersonalized response tendencies' (pp. 370-71). These are tendencies to respond to situational factors that operate below the level of conscious awareness. To explain these tendencies, the authors invoke "dual process" theories of cognition (pp. 371ff). According to the dual process approach, ordinary people have two modes of cognition – controlled and automatic. The controlled mode is familiar from everyday life. I use controlled cognition as I deliberately write these words, deliberately take a break, and, in general, am consciously aware of what I am doing. Automatic cognition operates below the level of conscious awareness. As I type these words, I do not have to deliberately choose where to place my fingers on the keyboard. I automatically hit the correct keys (most of the time) without conscious effort or deliberation.

The authors present a number of automaticity studies, mainly illustrating the effects of priming on behavior. Behavior is primed when it is elicited by presenting subjects with nonconsciously registered cues that are shown to influence their subsequent behavior. For example, the authors cite experiments in which subjects' polite or rude behavior was primed by their having read scrambled sentences containing embedded descriptions of polite or rude behavior (p. 374). Such studies are ubiquitous in the literature on social cognition. The authors use them to support what they call 'incongruency' (p. 375). Incongruency results when automatically produced behavior is at odds with the individual's normative commitments such that the person would reject or condemn such behavior were she consciously aware of it. Examples of incongruency can be found in literature on social stereotypes: we often have stereotypically aversive reactions based on race, gender, age, disability, and other factors which we would reject or condemn were we made aware of them (p. 375).

The authors go beyond the claim that automatic processes can explain the apparently conflicted behavior of subjects in situationist experiments to critique practical rationality: "To the extent that automaticity is pervasive, it renders the virtue-ethical model of practical rationality problematic. Most obviously, incongruency unsettles

notions of well-integrated deliberation …" (p. 375). Their treatment creates the impression that automatic processes undermine conscious deliberation, thereby resulting in fragmented cognition.

The authors pull back from this in the last section of the article, "Remedial Measures," noting work within automaticity literature on self-monitoring and self-control as well as on the nonconscious effects of interpersonal influences on moral cognition (pp. 387ff). They write: "By way of remediation, then, the traditional virtue-ethical approach can prescribe, in effect, an agenda of deliberate self-improvement: e.g., 'Note to self: pay better attention to how the other person is doing' or, "If I encounter someone in distress and other bystanders are around, do not look to the others to figure out what to do" (p. 388). Yet they caution against the usefulness of such strategies: "… given the ubiquity and power of behavior-influencing cognitive processes that may resist reflective supervision, and the limitations on the cognitive resources required to implement such supervision" (p. 388). We are left with a bleak view of the prospects for traditional philosophical conceptions of character and virtue ethics.

However, the picture of fragmented practical rationality rests on a major failure of reporting. The authors neglect to report on three different lines of research that suggest a more unified picture of how practical rationality functions. Though this research does not negate the possibility of fragmentation wrought by conflicting conscious and automatic processes, it explains why we are not completely at the mercy of automatic processes operating below the level of conscious awareness, and offers a more unified and unifying picture of automatic and controlled processes of cognition than that presented in "Character."

First, the authors fail to discuss research on goal-dependent automaticity, which provides evidence that automatic processes are used in the service of consciously chosen goals.[26] In goal-dependent automaticity, environmental stimuli activate representations of a person's enduring goals: the frequent and consistent pairing of situational features with goal-directed behaviors develops chronic situation-to-representation links. Representations of an individual's enduring goals can repeatedly become activated in the same type of situation so that the mental association between situational features and goal-directed behavior becomes automatic. When an individual encounters the relevant situational features, the representation of the associated goal is nonconsciously activated. The activated representation sets in train plans to achieve the goal which flexibly unfold in interaction with changing information from the environment. Nonconsciously activated goal-directed behaviors are not reflex reactions to stimuli, but are intelligent, flexible responses to unfolding situational cues and have many of the same qualities as consciously chosen actions. Goals related to the pursuit of valued life tasks, such as parenting, and personal goals, such as being a moral person, are likely to be enduring and thus, can be automatically activated. Moreover, they are likely to be pursued in different types of actions across many objectively different situation-types. Interestingly, temptations have been shown to activate overriding goal pursuits.[27] These findings distinguish automatic goal activation from situational control, suggesting that automatic goal activation can counteract situational forces and, like consciously chosen actions, promote the personal control of action in accordance with a person's values.

A second line of research that counters the portrayal of rationality as fragmented comes from the work of Lapsley and Hill, who have developed a social cognitive account of moral personality.[28] Central to this account is the notion of moral schemas. Schemas are "… general knowledge structures that organise information, expectations and experience."[29] Moral schemas organize a person's moral beliefs, values, expectations, and so on. On Lapsley and Hill's view, one's moral personality is explained by the chronic accessibility of one's moral schemas. Chronically accessible schemas are easily primed by environmental cues, and can approach automaticity. They enable their possessors to appraise and respond in reliable ways to the social landscape. Moral schemas function similarly to enduring goals: both are enduring knowledge constructs, which, when activated by environmental stimuli, enable an individual to respond with little or no conscious processing. Yet, neither goals nor moral schemas are irrational. Each type of construct is the product of rational processes, and,

when automatically primed, can work cooperatively with conscious rational processing, thereby unifying moral personality.

A third line of research is from neuroscience. Imaging studies of the brain support a model of brain functioning as a confederation of different systems.[30]Generally, these systems cooperate to guide behavior. Disagreements, for example between beliefs and behavior, reflect competition among the systems. To be sure, this line of research partially supports the view of fragmented rationality put forward by Merritt, Doris, and Harman. Yet it offers a more balanced perspective, explaining both how we can act consistently with consciously chosen beliefs, and what happens when incongruency occurs.

To recap, evidence from psychology on goal-dependent automaticity and moral schema accessibility, as well as from neuroscience, offers a more unified perspective on character than that proffered by Merritt, Doris, and Harman. On this portrayal, virtue cultivation is not merely a corrective to overwhelming nonconscious forces. How might such cultivation work? Slingerland outlines an approach to virtue cultivation found in the early Confucian tradition, and argues that this approach, according to which situations are consciously used to cultivate virtuous dispositions, is consistent with a wide range of empirical studies on how cognitive and emotional systems contribute to moral personality and behavior.[31] The situations used to cultivate virtue by early Confucians do not reduce to the kind of "note to self" advice noted earlier, but are elements of sustained, serious efforts to integrate conscious and nonconscious forces in the development of character.

In conclusion, my discussion of "Character" illustrates a caution about the *Handbook* as a whole: the authors use, and do not merely report, empirical findings. Readers are well advised to peruse the empirical literature for themselves. Yet, by inspiring philosophers to delve into empirical work, *Handbook* authors provide a valuable service to the profession.

Notes

[1] Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

[2] Paul K. Moser, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Epistemology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), and David Copp, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[3] In the interest of full disclosure, let me confess that I was drawn into empirical moral psychology through reading Harman, Doris, and Merritt, who use social psychological studies to attack traditional philosophical conceptions of character and virtue ethics (see Gilbert Harman, "Moral Philosophy Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 99 (1999), pp. 315-32; "The Nonexistence of Character Traits," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 100 (2000), pp. 223-26; and "No Character or Personality," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 13 (2003), pp. 87-94; John M. Doris, "Persons, Situations, and Virtue Ethics," *Nous* 32:4 (1998), pp. 504-30; *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Précis of *Lack of Character, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* LXXI:3 (2005), pp. 632-34; and Maria Merritt, "Virtue Ethics and Situationist Personality Psychology," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 3 (2000), pp. 365-83). Their work inspired me to do my own reading, and I came to conclusions very different from theirs about the implications of empirical psychology for character and virtue ethics (see Nancy E. Snow, *Virtue as Social Intelligence: An Empirically Grounded Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[4] The ideas in this paragraph draw on my book in progress: *Landscapes of Hope: The 'What,' 'Why,' and 'How' of Hope*.

[5] See Kevin N. Ochsner, "How Thinking Controls Feeling: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience Approach," in *Social Neuroscience: Integrating Biological and Psychological Explanations of Social Behavior*, eds. Eddie Harmon-Jones and Piotry Winkielman (New York: The Guilford Press, 2007), pp. 116-18; Kevin N.

Ochsner, Rebecca D. Ray, Jeffrey C. Cooper, Elaine R. Robinson, Sita Chopra, John D. E. Gabrieli, and James J. Gross, "For Better or For Worse: Neural Systems Supporting the Cognitive Down- and Up-Regulation of Negative Emotion," *NeuroImage* 23 (2004), p. 483; Kevin N. Ochsner, Silvia A. Bunge, James J. Gross, and John D. E. Gabrieli, "Rethinking Feelings: An fMRI Study of the Cognitive Regulation of Emotion," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 14:8 (2002), p. 1215.

[6] Ochsner (2007), pp. 118-19.

[7] Ochsner, et. al. (2004), p. 483; Ochsner (2007), pp. 119-20.

[8] Ochsner (2007), pp. 120-21.

[9] See Harman (1999), p. 316; see also Doris (2002), p. 6.

[10] See Doris (1998), (2002), (2005), and Merritt (2000).

[11] See Doris (2002), p. 6.

[12] See Ibid., p. 62.

[13] Recent examples include Edward Slingerland, "The Situationist Critique and Early Confucian Virtue Ethics," *Ethics* 121 (2011), pp. 390-419; Snow (2010); and Daniel Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), pp. 239-331.

[14] See, for example, Rachana Kamtekar, "Situationism and Virtue Ethics on the Content of Our Character," *Ethics* 114 (2004), pp. 458-91.

[15] See also John M. Doris, "Skepticism about Persons," *Philosophical Issues* 19, pp. 57-91.

[16] A. M. Isen and P. F. Levin, "Effect of Feeling Good on Helping: Cookies and Kindness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 21 (1972), pp. 384-88.

[17] See Snow (2010), p. 101.

[18] See Christian Miller, "Social Psychology and Virtue Ethics," *The Journal of Ethics* 7 (2003), pp. 389-92; Miller, "Social Psychology, Mood, and Helping: Mixed Results for Virtue Ethics," *The Journal of Ethics* 13 (2009), pp. 148-49; Doris (2002), p. 30, n. 4; and Snow (2010), pp. 101-02.

[19] See especially Miller (2009).

[20] Let me note a similar complaint about Prinz and Nichols's use of Isen and Levin (1972) in their article, "Moral Emotions," pp. 112-13.

[21] See Batson, C. D., P. J. Cochran, M. F. Biederman, J. L. Blosser, M. J. Ryan, and B. Vogt, "Failure to Help When in a Hurry: Callousness or Conflict?," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 4:1 (1978), p. 100; see also Snow (2010), p. 106.

[22] See John T. Jost and Lawrence J. Jost, "Virtue Ethics and the Social Psychology of Character: Philosophical Issues from the Person-Situation Debate," *Journal of Research in Personality* 43, p. 253. The study is Ervin Staub, "Helping a Distressed Person: Social, Personality, and Stimulus Determinants," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 7, pp. 293-341; the quote is from C. D. Batson, "Altruism and Prosocial Behavior," in D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, and G. Lindzey (eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology*, 4th ed., vol. 2 (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), p. 284.

[23] Contrast Prinz and Nichols' (pp. 112-13) confident assertion about the Isen and Levin study with the psychologists' own cautious conclusion at Isen and Levin (1972), p. 387.

[24] But see Doris (2002), p. 30 n. 4 on Isen and Levin.

[25] See Snow (2010).

[26] I draw on Snow (2010), pp. 43-5 for the ideas in this paragraph. For more information, see, for example, John A. Bargh and Peter M. Gollwitzer, "Environmental Control of Goal-Directed Action: Automatic and Strategic Contingencies Between Situation and Behavior," in *Integrative Views of Motivation, Cognition, and Emotion*, ed. William D. Spaulding (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), pp. 71-124; and John A. Bargh, Peter M. Gollwitzer, Annette Lee-Chair and Kimberly Barndollar, and Roman Trotschel, "The Automated Will: Nonconscious Activation and Pursuit of Behavioral Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81 (2001), pp. 1014-27.

[27] See Ayelet Fishbach, Ronald S. Friedman, and Arie W. Kruglanski, "Leading Us Not Into Temptation: Momentary Allurements Elicit Overriding Goal Activation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84 (2003), pp. 296-309.

[28] See Daniel K. Lapsley and Patrick L. Hill, "On Dual Processing and Heuristic Approaches to Moral Cognition," *Journal of Moral Education* 37: 3 (2008), pp. 322-23.

[29] Ibid., p. 322.

[30] See Jonathan D. Cohen, "The Vulcanization of the Human Brain: A Neural Perspective on Interactions Between Cognition and Emotion," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19:4 (2005), p. 5.

[31] See Slingerland (2011). Slingerland explores the neuroscientific research as well as that by Lapsley and Hill.