The title of this chapter may seem mundane, even forgettable, at first glance. But on reflection, the title may cause the reader some apprehension. We suspect such a reaction is sourced to two related paradoxes—each a seemingly nonkosher befuddlement of concepts—in the title itself. Ponder, then, these two questions: First, how can the descriptive method of psychological science—which can catalogue how matters are—inform the prescriptive domain of morality, which dictates how matters ought to be? And second, how can impersonal scientific observations examine moral phenomena that are personal, subjective experiences? We introduce this chapter by exploring these paradoxes, which will allow us to carve out a paradigmatic space for the science of morality. By describing the discipline’s subject matter and what it can and cannot achieve, this exercise will also provide a framework for approaching the different content areas within this domain, which make up the subject matter of this chapter.

THE INTERPLAY OF SCIENCE AND MORALITY

Can Descriptive Psychology Inform Prescriptive Morality?

A first source of hesitation may arise from an unusual application of science: to the study of morality. Historically, morality has fallen outside the purview of science, more often addressed by religious figures, social commentators, philosophers, and societal leaders. Morality, after all, is inherently prescriptive; by contrast, the epistemic toolkit of science is explicitly descriptive. Contributing to a prescriptive discipline using a
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descriptive device may appear to be an impossible task, a mixing of categories. Drawing conclusions about what ought to be based on observations of an existing state of affairs is such a verboten deed that philosophers (Moore, 1903) have applied the pejorative label “the naturalistic fallacy.” So, how can the descriptive method of science approach or inform moral prescriptions?

As is presupposed in the chapter’s title, we believe that the coordination of science and morality is not only feasible but, in fact, worthwhile and productive. As a method for acquiring knowledge, science needs a subject matter, a set of claims to test empirically. The subject matter (e.g., reasoning vs. emotions) may be selected either by deliberately ascribing to a particular prescriptive philosophy or by more passively riding a zeitgeist. This adoption of a prescriptive theory, whether explicit or implicit, marks a critical turning point, which often favors certain methods and arguments over others. (These turning points are highlighted in each section of this chapter.) As will become apparent, some of the diversity within the psychological study of moral development can be primarily attributed to the differing paradigmatic assumptions underlying the enterprises. To help situate a scientific study, each enterprise needs to clearly acknowledge the prescriptive claims about morality underlying the empirical work. In this sense, psychological science is a “consumer” of moral philosophy.

The influence between moral psychology and philosophy, however, is not unidirectional. Science contributes to our understanding of prescriptions by testing descriptive assertions that are part of the foundation of prescriptive claims (Johnson, 1996). Often, prescriptive codes entail descriptive premises. For example, Kant’s (1785/1964) categorical imperative prescribes a method for reasoning through moral conflicts, built on the assumption that abstract reasoning is an essential step in acting appropriately. Notice that the latter (namely, that the quality of one’s reasoning influences behavior) is an empirical claim—one that has been challenged using scientific methods (Blasi, 1980; Haïdèt, 2001). In this way, psychological science can bolster or undermine the foundation of moral claims.

This opening discussion is meant to (1) draw attention to some anticipated concerns about the application of science to morality; (2) set a paradigmatic boundary around this field of study; and (3) foreshadow some of the ways that scientific work can interplay with morality. Exploring the second apparent paradox built into the application of science to morality will help pinpoint the kinds of topics studied in this field.

Can Impersonal Science Examine Personal Moral Phenomena?

To return to possible reactions to the title of this chapter, we now address the second paradox therein. Experiencing morality—be it a reasoned argument about right or wrong, a stab of guilt, or a sense of compassion for the hurting—is a personal, subjective affair; the phenomenon of morality is located inside the individual (the moral agent). By contrast, science, as the systematic study of natural phenomena, is impersonal, verifiably witnessed by multiple observers. How can scientists study phenomena that exist uniquely in the subjective experience of individuals? This problem is not unique to moral psychology (e.g., similar concerns are evident in the study of attitudes, the self-concept, and so on), but the solution within each discipline may be somewhat different.

The solution that scientists of morality have adopted is to conceive of moral beings not only as subjects (experiencing their world in moral terms) but also as objects (as
having certain psychological mechanisms and structures that interact with their experience). Researchers study the latter—the psychological functioning of persons experiencing, forming, and reacting to their morality. This distinction hopefully helps to frame the subject matter of the discipline as being the psychological processes that are at play in individuals' moral experience.

The Subject Matter of Moral Development

Demystifying this second paradox is intended to locate the subject matter of the discipline. What, then, is this subjective psychological matter that makes up the moral experience? Early theories highlighted different components of the moral experience. Freud's (1927) psychoanalytic approach to morality focused on the development of the superego, acquired primarily through identification with the same-sex parent; moral functioning in his theory was limited to emotion regulation processes. This emphasis on affect marginalized moral judgment, which was viewed as being readily distorted by defense mechanisms. Skinner's (1938) behaviorist approach focused on the acquisition of overt behaviors, shaped and conditioned through environmental contingencies. Cognitive and affective processes were regarded as epiphenomenal and irrelevant; and eventually Skinner (1971) explicitly eschewed the notion of morality altogether. In essence, behaviorism argued against the idea of a science of moral development. Piaget's (1932/1977) cognitive-developmental approach focused on moral judgment, which was held to develop as a function of structural growth and cognitive disequilibrium. In this approach, moral behavior was essentially regarded as a by-product of moral cognition. Thus the early history of the field was characterized by a seemingly rigid "partitioning" of the moral domain, which obscured its complexity and the interdependent nature of its components.

The contemporary study of moral development is, at least superficially, more pluralistic in that each "school" acknowledges that moral functioning references not a single but several processes. This scaffold allows us to provide a brief outline of the evolution of the science of moral development by exploring particular topics in their historical context. Our initial attention in this chapter is on the development of moral reasoning, given the dominance of Kohlberg's (1969) cognitive-developmental model in the field for some time and the fact that much of the later work either built on his framework or was an explicit reaction to it. For example, the neo-Kohlbergian approach (advocated by Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999) entailed a significant conceptual and methodological extension of Kohlberg's approach, with a focus on moral schemas.

Some of the blunter challenges to Kohlberg's model, giving rise to substantial controversy, included Gilligan's (1982) positing of gender-related moral orientations, Turiel's (1983) notion of domain distinctions, and Haidt's (2001) emphasis on moral intuition and the relegation of deliberative reasoning. One of the problems, however, of the conceptual focus on moral cognition is that it tends to slight the moral competencies of young children, who are largely inarticulate on moral matters. Thus our attention shifts to early conscience development and the significance of various moral emotions (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Sadovsky, 2006). Finally, the imperfect, indeed weak, relation that is typically evident between moral cognition and behavior leads to a discussion of aspects of moral motivation, including moral personality and identity, which intends to answer the question, "Why be moral, anyway?"
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STAGES

A major impetus for the psychological study of moral development was World War II, with its horrors of global conflagration, over 60 million casualties, the Holocaust, and the releasing of nuclear weapons on civilian populations. In its aftermath, social scientists struggled to explain such pernicious behavior. Personality psychologists speculated about the functioning of the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950); social psychologists focused on the contextual pressures that contribute to obedience to authorities (Milgram, 1974; Zimbardo, Banks, Haney, & Jaffe, 1973); and developmental psychologists pointed to deficiencies in processes of moral judgment (Kohlberg, 1969).

Kohlberg’s Stage Model

Among the intellectual tasks that Kohlberg engaged in was explaining how most Germans could be complicit or even actively participate in the heinous projects of the Third Reich. Kohlberg’s general approach was to differentiate three different types (or levels) of moral reasoning: personal, conventional, and principled. (Two stages compose each level, as discussed later.) The personal, preconventional level largely characterizes the thinking of children. Whereas the conventional level is the most common form of reasoning for adults, this orientation left the German masses grossly underequipped to adequately challenge the broader Nazi culture. The rarely acquired principled, postconventional level, by contrast, provides a basis for critically examining the deeds of authorities and moving against the same when good reasons so dictate.

Kohlberg’s claim was not just that these three types of thought differ from one another but that principled reasoning is better than conventional reasoning, which is, in turn, better than preconventional reasoning. By “better,” Kohlberg meant that the former is better able to solve moral problems, is more equilibrated, and is more philosophically defensible than the latter. This prescriptive claim aimed to defend against, even defeat, ethical relativism—the notion that morality can only be defined and scrutinized relative to a culture—and thus provided a sound basis for rejecting the likes of Nazism. Kohlberg’s empirical project was to substantiate this prescriptive claim using scientific, descriptive methods—to “Commit the Naturalistic Fallacy and Get Away with It,” as he brahshly put it (Kohlberg, 1971). The core of Kohlberg’s approach was to argue that if the ordering of the adequacy of these structures of reasoning is correct, then this order will be evident in the natural world, in individual human development. This postulation reframed the sequence into a developmental stage model of moral reasoning (see Colby & Kohlberg, 1987), one that was claimed to be cross-culturally applicable.

The first two stages make up the preconventional level. At Stage 1 (heteronomy), children understand the dictates of authorities and the physical consequences of actions as defining right and wrong. Stage 2 (exchange) reasoning focuses on serving one’s own interests and so cooperative interaction is based on notions of simple exchange. The next two stages reflect the conventional level of moral reasoning and are typical of the thinking of older adolescents and adults. Stage 3 (expectations) entails conforming to expectations, having good motives, and keeping mutual relationships. The focus of Stage 4 (social system and conscience) is on maintenance of the social order and meeting the demands of conscience. Finally, Stages 5 and 6 compose the principled, postconventional level. Stage 5 (prior rights and social contract) is evidenced by a
small minority of adults who reason in terms of nonrelative values and mutual standards that reflect a social contract. The theoretical end point of the model is Stage 6 (universal ethical principles), which entails self-chosen universal principles of justice that focus on equality of rights and respect for the dignity of human beings (Kohlberg, Boyd, & Levine, 1990). The “logic” of the stage order reflects the increasing complexity of social perspective that each entails: from self alone, to self and another, to the primary reference group, to broader society, and then beyond society.

Kohlberg’s (1981, 1984) model quickly came to dominate the field of moral development because of its bold conceptual claims and significant practical implications. His approach reflected not only the psychological tradition of Piaget’s (1932/1977) structural-developmental theory but also the Western philosophical tradition of the Enlightenment thinkers (such as Immanuel Kant, 1785/1964). More than any other scientist in the field of moral development, Kohlberg was aware of and explicit about the philosophical framing of his model. His 1981 book, The Philosophy of Moral Development, embraced a formalist, deontological moral philosophy that emphasized the centrality of reasoning in moral functioning and that specified universal principles of justice as the developmental end point. Furthermore, Kohlberg was clear about what he meant by moral development: progression through the moral reasoning stage sequence.

How did Kohlberg suggest that one measure these stages of moral reasoning? Kohlberg’s Moral Judgment Interview (MJI) entails prompting a participant to reason through several challenging, hypothetical moral dilemmas, which were designed to “test the limits” of people’s moral understandings. The most classic of these is the “Heinz dilemma,” wherein Heinz, having exhausted all other alternatives, needs to decide whether to steal a pharmaceutical drug to save his wife’s life. Responses are scored using a laborious but highly specific coding manual (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987).

**Empirical Claims**

With this background in mind, we can now examine the heart of Kohlberg’s conceptual and scientific enterprise. His project entailed a series of empirical claims. First, he claimed that each stage of moral reasoning is psychologically real—not merely an ad hoc abstraction but indeed representing a holistic structure in the natural world. This assertion was extended into the scientific realm to claim that individuals are relatively consistent in their moral reasoning across different contexts, either “in” a stage or “in transition” between adjacent stages, but not straddling two nonadjacent stages (e.g., Stages 2 and 4). The extant evidence (Walker, 1988) indicates that people are typically found to be consistent in their stage of moral reasoning across varying contexts (e.g., in responding to hypothetical vs. real-life dilemmas); only under fairly intense situational pressure does this consistency begin to crack.

Next, Kohlberg claimed that these stage structures are not only real but are ordered relative to one another in a highly specific, namely invariant, way. Developmentally, this was translated to mean that the progress of acquisition of the stages is irreversibly forward, one stage at a time (no regressions and no stage skipping). The rate and eventual end point of development may vary, but not the order of the stages. Longitudinal evidence (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983; Walker, Gustafson, & Frimer, 2007) has confirmed that people do develop through the stages in the order specified, with few violations of the sequence.
A third claim of Kohlberg's model holds that successive stages represent better equilibrated reasoning in that they hierarchically integrate the concepts of previous stages. That is, a later stage is both psychologically and ethically superior. Available evidence suggests that people do recognize the increasing moral adequacy of successive moral stages by favoring the highest stage within the range of their comprehension (Walker, de Vries, & Bichard, 1984). Thus, the validity of Kohlberg's model of moral reasoning development has received considerable empirical support and therein is his foremost contribution to the discipline.

**Developmental Mechanism of Disequilibrium**

An understanding of Kohlberg's stage model raises the question of how one progresses through the stages. What developmental processes underlie transitions? The core developmental mechanism in cognitive-developmental theory is disequilibrium, which is the subjective experience of conflict, puzzlement, or inadequacy (Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1975/1985). Kohlberg saw disequilibrium as being of paramount developmental importance in spite of (perhaps because of) such associated discomfort. Disequilibrium is held to propel (or motivate) structural reorganization toward more equilibrated stages of thinking. Note that the structural-developmental mechanism for development differs sharply from the identification-internalization process proposed by the psychoanalytic approach and from the conditioning and observational learning process proposed by the behavioral approach.

Various research strategies have examined the viability of the construct of disequilibrium as a mechanism for moral reasoning development (see Walker, 2004, for a review). Perhaps the most illustrative of these has examined disequilibrium within the family context. Walker, Hennig, and Krettenauer (2000) found that contrasting parenting styles were differentially predictive of children's moral reasoning development. The parents of children who evidenced considerable moral growth were particularly child-centered in their techniques, scaffolding their child's development by eliciting the child's opinions, posing appropriate probing questions, and checking for understanding. This was typically accomplished in the context of emotional support and attentiveness, along with the challenging stimulation of more sophisticated reasoning. These techniques reflect a disequilibrating Socratic style that can be strongly effective in inducing rethinking. In contrast, the parents of children who evidenced minimal development seemed to undermine their children's processing by engaging in overwhelmingly opinionated and challenging interactions, being hostile and critical, and being ego defensive. This parenting style interferes with children's meaningful engagement with moral issues and diminishes their experience of disequilibrium that might foster more mature moral understandings.

The conceptual richness and empirical strength of Kohlberg's model and methodology allowed their domination of the field of moral psychology for almost a generation. As has been seen in this section, empirical support did accrue for the validity of the stage model and for the developmental mechanism it posited. But, not surprisingly, Kohlberg's model attracted a number of significant challenges that speak to its limitations. To anticipate what follows, Kohlberg's approach embodies an incomplete depiction of the functioning of a moral agent. This claim does not diminish the model's substantial contributions to our understanding of moral reasoning but rather places these contributions within a more comprehensive framework.
SCHEMAS

The viability of Kohlberg’s enterprise eventually was stymied by his labor-intensive interview and subjective coding system. Conducting and coding interviews consumed an inordinate amount of resources, and so research on the model began to languish from lack of an efficient methodology.

Rest (1979) developed the Defining Issues Test (DIT), loosely based on Kohlberg’s approach, as a multiple-choice alternative to Kohlberg’s MJI. The accessibility and relative ease of use of the DIT quickly vaulted it to the position of measure-of-choice in the moral development field. On the DIT, participants respond to a series of hypothetical dilemmas (as on the MJI). However, unlike the MJI, in which participants actually reason aloud regarding the moral problems, on the DIT participants simply evaluate brief fragmentary examples of moral judgments (by rating and then ranking them). The recommended index of moral judgment development is not a stage score but rather the P score, which is an indicator of how highly an individual ranks post-conventional items.

Neo-Kohlbergian Approach

Although the DIT approach initially surfed the rising tide of Kohlberg’s moral stage model by providing a methodological alternative, over time it also introduced some significant conceptual reformulations, becoming known as the neo-Kohlbergian approach (Rest et al., 1999). In the neo-Kohlbergian approach, focus is on tacit moral understandings rather than on the articulation of moral reasons (as with the MJI). The premise is that people often know more than they can tell. In that sense, the DIT can be considered akin to a projective test because it presents brief questions or fragments of reasoning (not elaborated arguments) to which participants impute meaning as they respond to the test items. The DIT is construed as a device for activating moral schemas and for assessing these schemas in terms of relevance judgments.

The items on the DIT were initially intended as examples of reasoning at Kohlberg’s moral stages, but the neo-Kohlbergian approach (Rest et al., 1999) now explicitly abandons those stages and instead proposes three developmental moral schemas: personal interest, maintaining norms, and postconventional. These schemas are understood as general knowledge structures that facilitate information processing. They differ from stages in that they are not defined in terms of underlying structural operations; rather, they are more concrete and entail more content.

Moral Schemas

The personal-interest schema references the personal stake that individuals have in the consequences of their actions and entails some of the themes in Kohlberg’s Stages 2 and 3. The maintaining-norms schema aligns with Kohlberg’s Stage 4 and references generally accepted norms and role structures for governing a society. The postconventional schema appeals to shared ideals that are impartial in their formulation and logically coherent in fostering consensus. Kohlberg was often criticized for aligning his psychological theory with a particular philosophical tradition that espoused formalist principles of justice and respect for persons. The neo-Kohlbergian model circumvents this criticism by not embracing principled morality or any other recognizable moral
philosophy, but instead advocating a less philosophically pure “common morality” that is characterized in generic postconventional terms (merely reflecting judgments that tend to cluster and to be endorsed by relatively mature people).

Neo-Kohlbergians have long held antipathy to the strong stage model in the moral domain (Rest, 1979), arguing against defining development as progression through a sequence of “hard” stages of reasoning and instead conceptualizing development as “softer” changes involving shifting distributions of reasoning across schemas. The emphasis of the neo-Kohlbergian approach has been on the shift from conventional to postconventional moral understandings. The DIT is not intended to tap the moral schemas that are predominant in childhood, and its cognitive demands preclude its use with participants younger than adolescence. This emphasis pinpoints one of the major limitations of the model and the measure: It does not offer much insight into the moral functioning of children.

Construct Validity

Researchers within the neo-Kohlbergian framework, however, have amassed a considerable amount of evidence attesting to the construct validity of the DIT (Rest et al., 1999), and their program of research is illustrative in that regard. A sampling of these findings include: differences in moral judgment level between groups that vary in age, education, or expertise; progressive changes in level of moral judgment in longitudinal studies and in moral education interventions; relationships to political attitudes; prediction of moral behavior; evidence of internal structure (factor-analytic studies yield factors reflecting the three moral schemas); and discriminant validity (moral judgment is not merely a reflection of other variables such as verbal ability).

Although Rest and his colleagues introduced both conceptual and methodological innovations to the Kohlbergian framework (see Walker, 2002, for a review), they believe that the general approach remains generally useful and valid (hence the neo-Kohlbergian moniker). For example, the approaches share the emphasis on the personal construction of moral meanings in their understanding of moral epistemology. They explicitly share an emphasis on the cognitive aspects of moral functioning. Both approaches are unambiguously developmental, eschewing any definition of morality that aligns it with adherence to conventional norms and claiming that a principled or postconventional form of moral reasoning is more defensible from a philosophical perspective. Despite the considerable empirical success of the Kohlbergian and neo-Kohlbergian paradigms, the tandem encountered significant challenges for other reasons, which quickly heightened controversy in the field.

ORIENTATIONS

Gilligan (1982) may have provided the most direct challenge to dominant models in moral psychology with her well-publicized arguments regarding gender and morality, arguments made during the ascendancy of feminism in America. Her contentions were twofold. First, Gilligan claimed that the moral thinking of women is qualitatively different (“In a Different Voice”) from that of men; women’s morality is characterized by an ethic of care, and men’s by an ethic of justice. These moral orientations are held to reflect a fundamental difference in the way that women and men orient to life. Second, she claimed that influential theories of human development (including Kohlberg’s) are
biased against women's experiences. In her view, Kohlberg's approach misconstrues women's distinctive voice on morality and hence portrays women as being morally deficient.

**Gendered Moral Orientations**

Gilligan's primary proposal was that men and women typically have different moral orientations. A moral orientation is a conceptually distinctive framework for understanding and organizing one's morality. Men, she argued, typically have a justice orientation, based on their individualistic sense of self, identity derived from vocation, detached objectivity, and preference for abstract rules and principles. In contrast (and she does hold that these are fundamentally incompatible perspectives), women characteristically have a care orientation, based on their interdependent sense of self, identity derived from relationships, sensitivity not to hurt, concern for the well-being of self and others, and a focus on maintaining harmonious relationships.

Gilligan's claim of gender-related moral orientations raised questions of their developmental origins. Borrowing from neopsychoanalytic theory, Gilligan and Wiggins (1987) proposed that these orientations arise in young boys' and girls' relationships with parents; in particular, in their differential experiences of attachment and inequality. Gilligan surmised that girls are both attached to and identify with their mothers; and so their identities develop in the context of maintaining this relationship. Thus, for girls, the experience of attachment, of maintaining connections with others, is central to their self-definitions, whereas the experience of inequality is not as relevant. Their developmental outcome is an orientation toward care and the maintenance of relationships. In contrast, although boys are also initially attached to their mothers, they come to identify with their fathers; and so their identities develop as they detach from the mother and begin to relate to the father's power and status. Thus, for boys, the experience of inequality and the need for independence become central to their self-definitions. Their developmental outcome is an orientation toward justice and a separate sense of self.

Gilligan's theorizing attracted widespread attention, with scientific examination of her claims (a fuller discussion is provided by Walker, 2006). A fundamental issue concerns whether the characterization of individuals as having a specific moral orientation accurately captures how they actually function. In Gilligan's view, the notion of an orientation implies that people should be relatively consistent (across contexts and over time) in their reliance on that orientation. However, the available evidence does not support this claim (Walker & Frimer, 2009b). In a typical examination of this issue, participants were prompted to reason through two real-life moral problems, and their orientation on each was scored as either justice or care (Pratt, Golding, Hunter, & Sampson, 1988). Only 60% of their sample evidenced the same orientation on the two moral dilemmas, a level of consistency that does not differ from chance. Thus empirical examination has not supported the claim of consistency; most people use a mix of both types of reasoning, with no evident preference, undermining the naturalistic claim of moral orientations.

Setting aside the question of consistency in moral orientations, Gilligan's primary claim concerned gender differences, with men orienting to justice and women to care. This claim proved to be provocative and prompted considerable research on the issue, culminating in Jaffee and Hyde's (2000) review and meta-analysis of 113 studies. Overall, they found that gender differences were not evident in most studies (73% of
the studies that assessed care reasoning and 72% of those that assessed justice reasoning). In short, there is no compelling evidence for the strong gender polarity in moral orientations claimed by Gilligan.

In follow-up analyses, Jaffee and Hyde (2000) compared studies using standard hypothetical dilemmas (including those designed to elicit either justice or care reasoning) with those using personally generated, real-life dilemmas. Gender differences were generally weak and not significant when participants were responding to standard dilemmas, whereas moderate effects were found when participants were reasoning through real-life dilemmas. Given that the real-life dilemmas were idiosyncratic, this latter pattern of moderate gender differences may be explained by a methodological artifact. That is, the occasional findings of gender differences on real-life dilemmas could merely be a function of the different moral problems that women and men tend to encounter and choose to relate, rather than a dispositional difference in moral orientation.

This hypothesis was corroborated by Walker, de Vries, and Trevethan's (1987) finding that, within different types of real-life dilemmas (namely, personal vs. impersonal), gender differences in moral orientations were not evident. The apparent gender differences in moral orientations with real-life dilemmas reflect a methodological artifact. En masse, the evidence reveals that people do not consistently focus on a single moral orientation but, instead, use reasoning that reflects the nature of the moral problem under consideration. Gilligan's claim of gender differences in moral orientations has thus far not fared well against scientific scrutiny.

Another of Gilligan's claims concerns the developmental origins of these orientations. Unfortunately, she did not present any supportive empirical evidence relevant to this issue, nor did she explain how the dimensions of inequality and attachment might be directly assessed in early parent–child relationships. One should not expect that such psychoanalytic theorizing would be readily amenable to empirical test. Also note Gilligan's implication that relationships with peers and with other adults are not particularly relevant to moral development. Turiel (2006) challenged that implication and the claim that these dimensions are strongly related to gender by noting that the experience of inequality is more salient for girls and women in patriarchal societies and that the experience of attachment is salient for boys in the context of groups, team sports, and gangs. The only study that is tangentially relevant to Gilligan's claims regarding developmental origins of the orientations was conducted by Lollis, Ross, and Leroux (1996). But, in observing parents' interactions with their preschoolers, they found no indication that girls receive more care-oriented reasoning or that boys receive more justice-oriented reasoning from either parent.

Conceptual issues regarding Gilligan's theory have also been raised. One recurring question concerns her prescriptive claim of what moral maturity entails. Is the care orientation ethically preferable? Are the two orientations equally valid but fundamentally incompatible? Is moral maturity represented by integration of the two orientations? Gilligan (1982) provides conflicting answers on this score. As was discussed at the outset of this chapter, specifying the developmental end point (and thus the prescriptive claim) is critical in evaluating any model of human development. Other conceptual problems with Gilligan's theory have been identified, including: its reinforcement of restrictive and traditional stereotypes about the sexes, its rigid dichotomization on the basis of gender, and its limited scope of moral responsibility (only within the sphere of familiar, personal relationships).
Gender Bias in Dominant Models

Regardless of the validity of Gilligan’s claim of gendered moral orientations, we can consider her second major claim: that influential theories of human development—particularly Kohlberg’s—are biased against females and their ethic of care. Gilligan (1982) alleged that Kohlberg’s approach indicates a lower stage of moral reasoning for women than for men and that such evidence confirms the pervasive gender bias of Kohlberg’s model.

As is becoming a pattern, Gilligan’s claim of gender bias is at odds with the data. Walker (1984) conducted a meta-analysis of the 80 existing studies of gender differences in Kohlberg’s model and found that gender was not a significant predictor of moral stage as Gilligan assumed; indeed, gender explained an infinitesimal portion (1/2000th) of the variability in moral reasoning development. Thoma (1986) similarly reviewed gender differences on the DIT and found a small effect favoring females; and, to put this effect into context, age and education were found to be 250 times more powerful in predicting level of moral judgment than was gender. Perish in the scientific gauntlet did Gilligan’s allegation of gender bias; her claim has been “convincingly debunked” (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000, p. 707).

This section of the chapter has revealed that gender explains a negligible amount of the variability in moral reasoning development and that Gilligan is substantially incorrect in that regard. This, of course, does not speak to the possibility that gender might be an important variable in other aspects of moral functioning (such as moral emotions or moral character), and it does not negate the many other positive contributions that Gilligan has made to moral psychology in general—by drawing attention to the need to have better representative samples in psychological research; by raising awareness of the limited scope of theoretical perspectives in moral psychology; by expanding our conceptions of moral development with the broadening emphasis on care; and by introducing the methodology of eliciting self-generated real-life dilemmas which has yielded new insights about the moral lives of real people.

DOMAINS

All of the theoretical perspectives considered to this point in the chapter have centered on the development of moral intellect, with their prescriptive claims thus far sending inarticulate preschool children to the moral basement. But we can rightly ask whether anything foundational in moral development occurs early in the lifespan. This section and the next explore early indicators of moral sensibilities in the development of younger children.

Early Moral Awareness

Evidence is beginning to accumulate to indicate that the moral lives of young children are already rich. Wright and Bartsch (2008), for example, analyzed everyday conversations of children between 2 and 5 years of age, attempting to provide a window on their moral awareness. They documented that, even at the youngest ages, children readily engage in morally relevant conversations with adults. There was a clear tendency for these preschoolers to be active rather than passive in their moral conversations; that is, to introduce moral issues rather than merely respond to adult leads. This is not what
the cognitive-developmental tradition would have predicted; in that framework, children are premorally self-focused.

Both Piaget (1932/1977) and Kohlberg (1969) described young children as heteronomous, as having unilateral respect for authorities who dictate what is right and wrong. However, studies of children’s reasoning about authority (Laupa, Turiel, & Cowan, 1995) have revealed a more differentiated view. For example, Tisak (1986) found that children do draw boundaries around parents’ jurisdiction based on the nature of the action involved: Almost all children accorded parents the authority to make a rule prohibiting stealing; fewer children gave this response when the rule involved family chores; and almost none allowed that parents should regulate friendships. Although these findings suggest that children respect parental authority at least in the moral domain, Damon (1977) found that even preschool children rejected the legitimacy of a parental injunction to steal from or to harm someone else, suggesting that children understand that moral rules are not subject to parental whims. Clearly, the moral universe of young children is not simply determined by the dictates of authority. Indeed, these findings indicate that children’s view of authority varies with the domain of social knowledge.

Domains of Social Knowledge

In Kohlberg’s framework, personal, conventional, and moral considerations are jumbled together in early life and only gradually become differentiated over the course of development. Turiel’s (1983) conceptual challenge to this view claimed that personal, conventional, and moral knowledge constitute distinct conceptual domains, each of which (1) is understood even by young children, (2) entails its own unique sort of social experience, and (3) develops independently from the other domains.

Turiel’s domain theory identifies three domains. The moral domain pertains to issues of justice, rights, and human welfare, and so entails prescriptive judgments about how people should behave toward each other. Prototypical moral transgressions would be inherently wrong actions, such as hitting or stealing. The conventional domain pertains to arbitrary but shared norms in behavior that serve to coordinate people’s interactions. Prototypical social conventions would be types of attire or modes of address (e.g., “Yes, sir”). The personal domain pertains to matters of individual prerogative that apply primarily to the self and fall outside the purview of moral concern and social regulation. Prototypical personal issues would be choice of friends and personal appearance.

Research on this model indicates that even preschool children make distinctions across these domains, in accord with theoretical criteria (Smetana, 2006). Typically, the research paradigm involves presenting children with simple, hypothetical vignettes that are prototypical of each domain and then eliciting their judgments (and justifications). For moral transgressions (such as hitting or lying), children assert that the wrongness of this action is not dependent on the existence of a rule and that it would be wrong to alter this rule. These rule contingency and rule alterability criteria reflect the philosophical notion that moral rules are prescriptive. Children similarly assert that it would be wrong for another society not to have such a rule and that it would be wrong to engage in this action even if that society had no rule. These rule and act generalizability criteria reflect the notion that moral rules are universally applicable. Thus moral rules are viewed as independent of social regulation and generalizable across contexts.
In contrast, social conventions (such as forms of greeting or address) are rule-dependent and hold normative force only within the social system in which they were formed. Thus a conventional violation (e.g., referring to schoolteachers by their first names) is wrong only if there is an explicit prohibition, and these rules can readily vary across social contexts. Personal issues (such as the choice of friends) are judged by children to be under individual jurisdiction and not subject to either moral or conventional regulation.

How do such domain distinctions arise in children's social understanding? Domain theory holds that the emergence of these different conceptual systems can be explained by the qualitatively different forms of social interaction that children experience. Nucci and Weber (1995), for example, found in an observational study that mothers of preschoolers restricted children's actions in the moral and the conventional domains but negotiated personal matters and accorded children a fair amount of freedom. And although both children and adults respond to moral transgressions, children are less likely than adults to respond to conventional violations because of their arbitrary nature and social origins (Smetana, 2006).

**Definition of the Moral Domain**

The evidence from the domain approach is compelling in its demonstration that young children have more complex social understandings than was previously presumed—in particular, in distinguishing between unalterable moral imperatives, arbitrary social norms, and areas of personal jurisdiction. However, a couple of related issues surrounding the approach should be flagged. One concern focuses on its paradigmatic assumptions regarding the nature of the moral domain—defined narrowly as pertaining only to issues of justice, rights, and human welfare. This definition circumscribes the scope of the domain to be exclusively interpersonal and excludes intrapsychic functions (such as values and identity), even if these functions are responsible for motivating one to live out the “morally good life.” A more complete account of development includes both the differentiation of morality from the personal and also the later integration of the two (Piaget, 1973/1985).

The other concern deals with the frequent reliance on simplistic prototypical vignettes to tap each domain, which yields evidence that these domains are more strongly demarcated than is either typical or appropriate in everyday life. Although social conventions may be arbitrary, that does not mean that they are void of moral significance. For example, gender roles are obvious social conventions (arbitrary, changeable, specific to contexts), but gender inequality certainly has moral implications (Okin, 1989). Similarly, substance abuse reflects the personal domain (as a matter of personal jurisdiction), but that activity is rife with moral implications for self and others. The domain approach has yet to accord sufficient attention to children's and adolescents' developing ability to handle multifaceted events in their social worlds and, in particular, to appreciate the moral implications of many personal choices and actions.

**EMOTIONS**

Young children evidence a moral sense not only in the form of social knowledge but also by way of emotional dispositions. Based on observations of toddlers' reactions
to flawed objects, Kagan (1981) made an intriguing suggestion. He speculated that young children's interest in and distress over broken objects reflects an emerging sense of propriety—an awareness of standards and how things ought to be. This emerging sense would set the important psychological building blocks for aspects of conscience, including guilt, shame, and similar self-conscious emotions.

**Self-Conscious Emotions**

Kochanska, Casey, and Fukumoto (1995) unpacked this assertion to predict that differences in toddlers' sensitivity to flawed objects would predict their emotional reactions to their own transgressions. These researchers compared 2- and 3-year-olds' reactions to flawed and whole objects; in another context, they assessed the toddlers' behavior in response to contrived mishaps (in which the children were led to believe that they had caused damage to the experimenter's valued possession). Toddlers' reactivity to this whole–flawed quality of objects predicted their responses to their own apparent wrongdoing, as evidenced by distress during mishaps and subsequent apologetic comments and reparative attempts. These findings indicate that young children's ability to appreciate standards and their violations—to experience right and wrong—perhaps reflects an early-arriving "moral instinct" (Pinker, 2008).

**Other-Oriented Emotions**

Moral behavior can be motivated not only by "negative" self-conscious emotions, such as guilt and shame, but also by more "positive" other-oriented emotions, such as empathy and sympathy. When do children first experience empathy, and how does it develop from then on? Hoffman's (2000) stage theory posits that empathy emerges early and that infants are biologically predisposed to experience a primitive form, given the evidence that newborns cry selectively in response to other infants' cries. Moving from this initial stage of global empathic distress, toddlers develop to a stage of undifferentiated, egocentric empathy in which they often fail to distinguish their own and the other's internal states, and so their prosocial behaviors are sometimes misguided (e.g., a toddler might try to console another child by proffering his or her own security blanket). Later, in the preschool years, children typically reach a stage at which they evidence empathy for another's feelings based on simple perspective taking and an appreciation of a wider range of emotions. Then, by later childhood, development proceeds to a stage of empathy for others' general condition or plight beyond the immediate situation, based on broader social understandings. Note that, in Hoffman's model, emotion and cognition become increasingly interwoven as development proceeds.

This conceptualization of the moral capabilities of infants and toddlers challenges the cognitive-developmental caricature of the young child as "premoral" and overwhelmingly egocentric. Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, Wagner, and Chapman (1992) provided empirical corroboration of the notion that empathy-related responding begins early in the lifespan, behavior that is not merely based on parental directives or coercive fear. They assessed infants' responses to others' distress in a sample of 1-year-olds followed longitudinally for a year. Mothers reported their children's responses to emotion events, including ones witnessed by the children (e.g., parents arguing), and the children's behaviors in response to simulated distress incidents (e.g., mother feigning choking). Findings indicated that both empathic concern and prosocial behaviors
increase over this age range, suggesting that young children are not purely egocentric but are actively involved in the emotional lives of others.

How does empathy lead to prosocial behavior, and how can this process go awry? Eisenberg and colleagues (2006) propose an answer. They conceptualize empathy as being value-neutral, as an affective response similar to what the other is feeling. This empathic response can lead either to personal distress (a self-focused, aversive reaction to another's emotional state) or to sympathy (an emotional response involving feelings of concern for the other). Personal distress is likely to lead to egoistic reactions and reflects poor social competence, whereas sympathy more likely motivates prosocial behavior. Thus the ability to regulate emotional reactions may figure prominently in activating moral behavior.

Temperament and Socialization Influences

If early-appearing moral emotions have some biological or temperamental origin, then that raises the question of the corresponding role of socialization influences on children's conscience development. Kochanska's (1997) research nicely melds these two effects. Her goodness-of-fit model focuses on the interplay between the child's temperament and parental socialization in fostering the development of conscience and suggests that there may be different socialization processes that promote moral internalization in children with different temperaments. She suggests that, for temperamentally anxious children, deemphasizing power assertion and instead relying on psychological discipline that capitalizes on the child's internal discomfort will be most effective. In contrast, for temperamentally fearful children, discipline (either power assertive or psychological) will be ineffective because it induces minimal anxiety; rather, effective parenting should capitalize on the secure relationship between parent and child. Kochanska's study with 2- and 3-year-olds initially assessed children's temperament and mother-child interactions and then, a year later, assessed conscience development (cheating on games and moral themes in projective stories). As hypothesized, inductive discipline predicted moral internalization for temperamentally fearful children, whereas a secure attachment to a responsive mother predicted moral internalization for temperamentally fearless children. In sum, these and other findings (Thompson, Meyer, & McGinley, 2006) indicate that the influence of early socialization experience may be mediated by the child's temperamental profile.

The now compelling data regarding young children's moral sensibilities prompt interest in the socialization influences that might foster these nascent understandings and emotions. Parent-child interactions, particularly in the context of disciplinary situations, are rife with moral implications and entail strong relational incentives for learning self-regulation. Grusec (2006) argues for the importance of the type of information parents present and how it is communicated and received. Accurate perception of the parent's message is achieved through attention getting, clarity, redundancy, and consistency, whereas acceptance of the message depends on a warm relationship and the child's belief that the value was self-generated rather than externally imposed.

Research on moral emotions has challenged the once-prevailing view that young children are essentially premoral—lacking the moral emotions and insights to regulate moral behavior. Instead, a more sharply focused image of toddlers and preschoolers is one of emerging moral sensivities: awareness of standards as well as self-conscious and other-oriented moral emotions.
INTUITION

Until the turn of the millennium, approaches emphasizing conscious, deliberative, rational processes of moral decision making largely dominated the field of moral development (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget, 1932/1977; Rest et al., 1999; Turiel, 1983). Recently, this zeitgeist faced a stiff challenge from theoretical perspectives claiming that moral judgments are more typically the result of quick, automatic intuitions and, as such, that these moral intuitions provide a more veridical description of moral functioning. This section surveys what we know and have yet to learn about these dual processes within the moral domain. Although most theories of moral reasoning thus far reviewed are clearly developmental in perspective (with research on participants across the lifespan), most theories of moral intuition lack a developmental perspective, and relevant research with children is currently missing.

Dual-Process Theories

Dual-process theories have been of interest to the more general study of cognition for some time (Sherry & Schacter, 1987; Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977), but only in the last decade have such models come to the fore in moral psychology. Dual-process theories posit a bifurcation of mental processing. The intuitive System 1 (as it is known) is a quick, automatic, associative, affectively imbued parallel processor that functions outside of conscious awareness. In contrast, the deliberative System 2 is a slow, effortful, rule-governed serial processor that functions within the individual's awareness. Each system may govern its own class of behavior (namely, System 1 governs nonverbal "body language" and System 2 governs verbal expression; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002). Their functional independence, however, only goes so far; the two processes interact in synchronic functioning and diachronically in the course of development (Lapsley & Hill, 2008; Wegner & Bargh, 1998).

Critical to our understanding of moral development is how each system contributes to everyday moral decision making. This is not a trite issue for the field, because Kohlberg (1981), for example, was adamant that the moral quality of behavior was set by the individual's conscious intention, effectively ruling out intuitive processes. For Kohlberg, what differentiates amoral actions (e.g., classically conditioned, biologically determined, or reflex-governed movements) from actions of the moral kind is a conscious control function that affords the individual a choice to act or not act and thus forms a basis for moral responsibility (Blasi, 2009; Turiel, 2006). This standing challenge to the role of moral intuition beckons a response: What brings intuition into the moral domain?

Affective Intuition Models

Social Intuitionist Model

Various models of moral intuition have been proposed (see Lapsley & Hill, 2008, for a recent overview), but, for the sake of highlighting issues, we make a dichotomous classification between those that front-load moral functioning with affective intuitions (bequeathed by evolution) and those that back-end the process with heuristic intuitions (emerging through experience). The front-load approach is illustrated by Haidt's (2001, 2008) social intuitionist model (SIM), which represents what is likely the most
brazen challenge to Kohlberg’s perspective on moral judgment. To Haidt, intuitions are primarily “gut feeling,” affective evaluations, constitutive of evolutionarily based human nature and prior to moral judgment and reasoning. According to the SIM, these intuitions are the default system for governing our moral universe, with later evolving capacities for language and higher order reasoning subordinated to it. Moral judgments, then, are typically the result of quick and automatic moral intuitions; and moral reasoning, if and when it is produced, typically only factors in later to justify (rationalize) the prior intuitive judgment and serve as a social means of impression management.

What brings Haidt’s brand of intuition into the moral domain is not the quality that Kohlberg demanded (namely, agentic choice) but rather a stripped-down sense of morality based on the felt experience of rightness and wrongness arising from evolutionary adaptiveness. Within the SIM, the adequacy of a moral judgment cannot be evaluated based on a justifying reason, as reason does not play a causal role in the formation of the former; what makes one moral judgment better developed than another, and therefore what prescriptive claim is being advanced, remains unclear (Jacobson, 2008; Narvaez, 2008). For this reason, the SIM has little to say about moral development, and it is thin on developmental considerations.

Evidence proffered in support of the SIM (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008a) includes the phenomenon of “moral dumbfounding”—people’s sometime puzzled inability to justify a strongly held moral conviction. Haidt argues that, if reasons cannot be produced to justify a moral judgment, then it must have been, by default, created via intuition. The classic illustration of this phenomenon involves a vignette about sibling incest in which no apparent harm comes of the act. Virtually all participants contend that the incest is wrong, and they maintain this stance even when unable to provide a reason. Other evidence, supportive of the model, includes the finding that manipulating affective processes can affect subsequent moral judgments.

Challenges to the SIM have been many (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2008) and have prompted a drastic shrinking of the scope and applicability of Haidt’s earlier claims. Narvaez (2008) took philosophical issue with Haidt’s claim of the ubiquity of moral intuition by identifying commonplace aspects of moral deliberation for which affective intuitions are simply inadequate; for example, in assessing the moral quality of past decisions, setting personal goals and evaluating progress toward them, reconciling multiple considerations and competing values, and making evaluations of right and wrong. Haidt and Bjorklund (2008b), in response, acknowledge that the SIM does not apply when more consequential decisions about morally relevant actions involving self and others are being considered; rather, the SIM pertains only to evaluative judgments about the character or actions of others when relatively little is at stake (as in aesthetic judgments).

**The Personal–Impersonal Dimension**

The SIM affords intuitive processing inordinate sway in the formation of moral judgments. By comparison, the remainder of the accounts reviewed here distribute the load more evenly and in a more sophisticated way. Of these accounts, the smallest role afforded to reasoning is advanced in the perspective of Greene, Sommerville, Nystrom, Darley, and Cohen (2001). They divide moral experience along a personal–impersonal dimension and argue that personal situations (in which one is faced with directly inflicting harm on another person) activate an intuitive–emotional center in
the brain; in contrast, impersonal experiences (in which harm may ensue but is not caused by direct action) are handled by more rational centers.

Tests of Greene’s theory come in the context of hypothetical scenarios involving a trolley (Hauser, Cushman, Young, Jin, & Mikhail, 2007). The trolley is moving quickly along the tracks, out of control. Ahead, on the tracks, are five people who are about to be hit and killed by the careening trolley. Participants are asked whether or not they would undertake a specific action to save the five lives when doing so would cost the life of one innocent bystander.

Participants tend to respond differently depending on how the averting action is framed. In the trolley condition, activating a switch will cause the trolley to change tracks, hitting and killing a single innocent bystander. The death of this one person would be caused by a remote action; thus this condition represents an impersonal moral dilemma. Almost univocally, participants say that they would indeed pull the switch, sacrificing one life to save five. In contrast, the footbridge condition elicits a different response. In this condition, the averting action involves pushing a man (of considerable heft) off the footbridge onto the tracks, killing him but derailing the train and saving the other five lives. In a rational framework, the two dilemmas are indistinguishable—the calculus in intention and human life is equal. Nevertheless, participants tend to take a different stance on the second (personal) one, claiming that they would not push the man and therefore allow the five to die.

To test the relevance of the personal–impersonal distinction to moral functioning, Greene and colleagues (2001) had participants respond to the trolley and footbridge conditions while in an fMRI machine. They found that different areas of the brain were activated between the two conditions, with intuitive–emotional centers more active during the personal dilemma and more deliberative, working-memory centers more active during the impersonal dilemma. The implication of these results is that our moral universe may be divided into two different processes depending on the nature of the action. Greene and colleagues are clear that this is a descriptive claim, not a prescriptive one; that is, this is a theory of how judgments are formed, not a theory of how judgments ought to be formed. Whatever the better (or least bad) response to these dilemmas may be, Greene’s and Haidt’s theories have little to say about how to judge the moral validity of intuitions, what moral maturity would entail, and which developmental processes might lead to it.

**Heuristic Intuition Models**

Unlike Greene’s and Haidt’s front-load perspectives, in which affective intuitions emerge from some biological module, back-end theories focus on those moral intuitions that are in some way learned and informed by prior reasoning (Pizarro & Bloom, 2003). These theories, therefore, have the potential to contribute more to our understanding of the development of intuitive judgment and, at least, have the potential to implicate developmental processes.

**Heuristics and Biases**

One approach to moral intuition development advances the view that everyday moral functioning is often controlled by moral heuristics—shortcuts or rules of thumb—that may contribute to errors in judgment (Sunstein, 2005). These heuristics and biases,
although viable in some specific contexts, can lead to substantial errors in moral decisions if generalized without deliberation. The imperative, therefore, is to apply these learned shortcuts only in the contexts in which they were formed and to engage deliberative reasoning otherwise.

Much of the empirical work regarding heuristics and biases has been conducted in domains that involve factual knowledge (Kahneman, 2003). Less apparent is how to assess heuristic errors in the moral domain, in which agreement on what constitutes an error is more elusive. Pizarro, Uhlmann, and Bloom's (2003) approach is illustrative in that regard. They asked participants to compare a pair of vignettes: a causally normal scenario (in which an ill-intentioned action causes negative consequences) versus a causally deviant scenario (in which the same ill intention is enacted but ineffectual, and instead something else intervenes, producing the same negative consequences). Participants were prompted to rely on intuition to evaluate each act. Implicitly defining intuitive judgments as being fundamentally irrational, Pizarro and colleagues classified any response other than an equal evaluation of the actions in the two vignettes as an intuitive one because it deviates from the normative standard of evaluating exclusively on the basis of intentions. What remains unclear is how participants interpreted the instruction on this task to respond intuitively; some may have taken it as an instruction to take an illogical position. In any case, a measure that instructs participants to deliberately be intuitive does some violence to the meaning of the construct.

**Expertise**

Distinguished from the heuristics-and-biases approach is the expertise tradition, which regards moral intuitions as a developmentally advanced form of cognition that has become efficient, accurate, and highly automatized. In this perspective, novices are more likely to be dumbfounded and to use unreliable moral heuristics; with practice, these same individuals can become experts. This is achieved by addressing moral issues intentionally and deliberatively, taking a rational approach. Repetition of this process trains the intuitive system to the point of becoming equal to the task of managing similar moral conflicts. In this conceptualization, automaticity in moral functioning does not necessarily imply that the judgment or behavior is unintentional or uncontrollable (think of skills such as riding a bicycle, playing video games, or interpreting political machinations). Controlled and reflective reasoning processes thus hold an influential role in the diachronic development of intuition and may perform important functions (such as overriding an intuition) in certain circumstances (see Wegner & Bargh, 1998).

Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) operationalize moral expertise as an individual-differences personality variable, defined by the ready accessibility of moral concepts and schemas, ones that have been consistently and frequently activated. Their research (Narvaez, Lapsley, Hagele, & Lasky, 2006) compared moral experts (those for whom moral schemas were readily accessible) with moral novices (those for whom other schemas were predominant) and found that moral expertise was predictive of better information processing when dealing with morally relevant material on a spontaneous trait-inference task and a lexical decision-making task. Thus the expertise framework proffers the back-end view that some intuitions are a product of explicit moral understandings that become intuitive and implicit over the course of development; however, research within this framework has yet to be undertaken with children.
Definition of Intuition

It should now be apparent that little agreement has yet arisen regarding the processes characterizing moral intuition, with a clear divergence between the front-load view of affective evaluations and the back-end view of heuristic cognitions. Obviously, the psychological definition of intuition is an important issue, but consensus has been elusive. Topolinski and Strack (2008) have proposed four defining aspects of intuitive functioning: (1) operating outside of conscious awareness, (2) entailing fast and efficient decision making, (3) activated automatically, and (4) affectively charged. None of the extant measures of moral intuition tap all of these aspects; indeed, deliberative responding to contrived scenarios (e.g., incestuous siblings, trolley problem, causally deviant stories) hardly seems to be an approach that strikes close to the mark. The challenge for the field is to frame intuitive and rational approaches in a way that provides a meaningful account of their mutual conflicts, complementarities, and developing interdependence. With few exceptions, developmental considerations have yet to be explored; for this reason, the field of intuition has only begun to emerge as a topic of moral development.

PERSONALITY

Our review of moral reasoning, emotion, and intuition has shed light on how individuals respond to conflict situations, but by studying morality primarily as responses to moral problems, the more proactive side of morality has been neglected. When asked to name a moral hero, most people think of someone who is proactively compassionate, not someone who is particularly adept at resisting temptation or resolving dilemmas (Walker, Pitts, Hennig, & Matsuba, 1995). To fill in our picture of the morally developed individual, the focus of this section is on the psychological aspects of more supererogatory functioning (good to do but not necessarily required). This approach mostly augments what we know from these other enterprises, but it also offers an important conceptual challenge.

Dualistic Conception of Human Nature

The initial impetus for interest in moral development can be credited to the efforts of Piaget and Kohlberg, who advocated deliberative judgment as the primary moral function. This stance reflected the formalist assumptions of Enlightenment-era philosophers who viewed human nature dualistically, pitting reason against the self's more primal desires. As previously reviewed, in this framework, moral cognition was exalted—viewed as both necessary to define the moral quality of situations and as adequate to motivate moral action. Meanwhile, personal desires were not merely benignly neglected but, rather, explicitly denigrated as potentially corrupting influences that the moral agent must somehow overcome (Kohlberg, 1981).

Two challenges have been mounted against this dualistic framing. The first is empirical: Level of moral reasoning does not have adequate predictive validity, typically explaining about 10% of the variability in moral action (Blasi, 1980; Walker, 2004) and thus implying that the singular emphasis on moral cognition may be missing something important in moral functioning. The second challenge is more conceptual: If, as the dualism suggests, “doing the good” means acting on what one believes to be the right course and somehow overcoming self-interest, then precisely what interest
does the agent have in the action? If morality runs counter to one’s self-interest, then why be moral in the first place? The answer advocated by scholars of moral personality stems from the Aristotelian tradition, which highlights the role of virtuous character.

**Personality Functioning of Moral Exemplars**

In everyday temptations, emotional pangs or the voice of reason may often be sufficient to steer one down the path of decency. But when we consider moral exemplars—individuals who consistently live by a lofty moral code, devoting their lives to doing right by others—these moral functions seem to have insufficient motivational thrust in themselves. Premising the study of the moral personality is a suspicion that, on some deeper motivational plane, the actions of these moral exemplars are subtly, and in some kind of enlightened sense, self-enhancing (Colby & Damon, 1992).

Researchers have approached this claim by studying moral exemplars, aiming to understand their functioning. Studying more banal populations would yield limited insights into these highly adaptive modes of moral functioning, especially if banal and heroic populations function in some qualitatively different way. This does not imply that exemplars are different kinds of people from the rest of us. Approaching the study of moral exemplars through a developmental lens inspires the possibility that these exemplars are simply more mature instances of ordinary people. The focus is, first, on identifying the ways in which their personalities are extraordinary and, second, on exploring how those personality functions may have developed (if they did).

Our interest here is on the motivational aspects of personality. One of the landmark studies of moral exemplarity is Colby and Damon’s (1992) qualitative analysis of a small sample of social activists. They proposed four processes in moral personality development, including (1) a continuing desire and capacity to change; (2) a balancing of certainty about moral ideals with openness to new ideas; (3) a stance of positivity, love, humility, and an underlying faith; and (4) an identity that integrates personal and moral goals. Such findings are suggestive, as are those from similar exemplar research (Oliner, 2003), but the lack of psychometrically valid measures and appropriate comparison groups renders the interpretation of these findings fragile.

Follow-up studies have confirmed some of Colby and Damon’s suspicions. Hart and Fegley (1995), for example, studied adolescent care exemplars, teenagers who had taken on exceptional volunteer service activities or family responsibilities. They were extensively interviewed regarding qualities and aspects of the self. In contrast to comparison adolescents, these care exemplars used more moral personality traits in their self-attributions, more strongly incorporated their ideal selves into their actual selves, and evidenced greater continuity in their self-understanding.

Walker and Frimer (2007, 2009a) assessed the functioning of two different types of moral exemplars (namely, caring vs. brave). These nationally recognized caring and brave exemplars were demographically matched to comparison participants drawn from the community. The study employed multiple measures (including several personality inventories and an extensive interview), tapping all three levels of personality description (McAdams, 1995): (1) dispositional traits (broad and decontextualized dimensions of personality), (2) characteristic adaptations (motivational and developmental aspects of personality that are more particular to contexts), and (3) integrative life narratives (the psychosocial construction of a personal identity).

One of the issues framing Walker and Frimer’s (2007) research examined whether a foundational core, common to both the brave and caring exemplars, could be identi-
fied. Five personality variables were identified as foundational, with pronounced differences between exemplar and comparison groups: themes of agency and of communion, redemption sequences (the tendency to reframe transformative life events such that some benefit is discerned out of adversity), the identification of helpers in early life, and secure childhood attachments.

Integrated Identity

Although these findings may seem to be of the "motherhood and apple pie" variety, the finding that exemplars expressed strong themes of both agency and communion calls for pause. Agency captures self-enhancing, "yes I can" type themes (e.g., achievement, mastery); communion is depicted in solidarity with and in helping others. This finding challenges the dualism between self-interest and morality identified at the outset of this section: If doing the good requires suppressing one's own self-interest, then the dualism would predict that moral exemplars would be lower on agency, not higher, than comparisons. Instead, the self seems to be among the benefactors of the exemplars' actions, as represented by enhanced levels of agency.

This exemplar research has identified a range of personality variables that may be implicated in development toward moral maturity. Missing as yet is a developmental account of how these personality outcomes came about and how "creatures like us" (Flanagan, 1991) could become like them. One attempt to fill in the developmental story was seeded by Colby and Damon's (1992) impression that, rather than seeing the two in tension, moral exemplars tended to fuse their personal and moral goals. This notion that the self's interests and moral concerns are integrated in moral maturity provides an empirical inroad to the lofty notion of enlightened self-interest and, in doing so, adds to our understanding of the development of moral motivation. This speculative notion, however, has only recently been subjected to empirical test.

The traditional view (e.g., Schwartz's [1992] values paradigm) is that agency represents the self-enhancing aspects of motivation, whereas communion represents the other-enhancing aspects, and that these motivations are, by their respective natures, mutually interfering. Frimer and Walker (2009) have, however, recently proposed a reconciliation model of moral identity development. In their model, the individual development of each of these competing motivations necessarily proceeds in segregation throughout childhood and adolescence until their evolving importance but growing tension produces a disequilibrating crisis. This disequilibrium can be reduced either by abandoning one motivation or the other (resulting in either unmitigated agency or unmitigated communion) and thus stagnating in development or by more adaptively integrating agency and communion—a reconciliation between these two fundamental motives.

To operationalize and test the reconciliation model, Frimer and Walker (2009) had participants respond to a self-understanding interview; their responses were coded in terms of value orientations. Of particular interest were the agentic values of power and achievement and the communal values of benevolence and universalism. An integrated identity was operationalized as the tendency to weave together agentic and communal values in the same segment of the narrative. Participants (university student club leaders representing a variety of worldviews and interests) also completed several measures tapping prosocial behaviors. As predicted by the reconciliation model, the integration of agency and communion positively predicted moral behaviors. In a mor-
ally integrated identity, agency brings life to communion and communion imparts agency with a greater purpose. This notion of an integrated identity that reconciles the self and morality has greater potential to explain the developmental roots of moral motivation than those conceptual frameworks that regard them as fundamentally at loggerheads.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As prefigured in its title, this chapter was framed by the seeming paradox of using science’s descriptive, outsider observations to examine morality’s prescriptive, inner experience. Our intent in highlighting this tension was to focus attention on the critical paradigmatic assumptions underlying psychological theories of moral development and to clarify the respective boundaries of, and relationships between, developmental science and moral philosophy. We claim that moral philosophy and psychological science can be mutually informative.

In this chapter we surveyed several different human functions (including reasoning, intuition, emotions, and personality) as they relate to the moral experience. As is now readily apparent, the domain is expansive and entails the dynamic interplay of various aspects of cognition, emotion, and behavioral expression. But among these bodies of conceptual and empirical work are entrenched differences of opinion about which psychological process drives an individual’s moral life (e.g., empathy vs. reasoning vs. values). Ultimately, these various processes work together in the whole person, and so integrating insights from across schools of thought represents important work to be done (Reed, 2009)—but not just yet. Development, at both the level of the individual person and at the level of the scientific enterprise, involves an initial stage of differentiation, which both precedes and motivates a move toward integration (Werner, 1957). We believe that, with the possible exception of Kohlberg’s theory, each of the approaches to moral development has yet to be properly clarified and scientifically substantiated. Therefore, we contend that differentiating each approach should continue until which time integration becomes a meaningful possibility.

Moral reasoning has long been regnant in the study of moral development, but its dominant role has recently been sharply challenged by claims regarding the significance of intuitive processes in moral functioning. This challenge prompts two critical issues for future work. One question is largely conceptual and concerns the moral validity of intuition: What brings automatic, intuitive processes into the moral domain given that morality is typically understood to require that the individual has an opportunity to choose a course of action (Turiel, 2006)?

A second research direction calls for a meaningful analysis of the functional relationship between deliberative and intuitive processes in moral cognition (both in a synchronic moment and, through time, diachronically). Something approaching a consensus appears to be forming that dual processes are operative, but their respective roles in governing different classes of behavior in any instance and how they influence each other in real time remain to be properly explored. Similarly, explicating the developmental nature of moral intuition has yet to make it to the scientific table. What is the typical developmental trajectory of the affective and heuristic aspects of moral intuition? How are later forms more adequate or profound than earlier forms? What are the developmental roots of these intuitive processes? And what are the cognitive
and social mechanisms underlying developmental change? Consider in these regards the contrasting perspectives on intuition that were reviewed: affective intuitions that arise prior to judgment and reasoning versus heuristic intuitions that are one output of the honed exercise of moral reflection. Embedded within this conceptual enterprise is the empirical challenge of devising appropriate means by which to assess moral intuition and thus test theory. Addressing these questions will be no small task but will be of considerable practical import for socialization efforts in fostering moral growth.

As noted earlier, the privileged position long accorded moral rationality in the field consequently slighted the moral competencies of young children whose elocutionary skills are nascent. Evolving evidence, however, speaks to the moral sensitivities of young children, both in terms of differentiated understandings of social domains and the development of self- and other-oriented emotions. Developmental differentiation has been demonstrated in children making domain distinctions, appropriately treating different types of social questions using different rules. The value of the approach would be advanced by research that addresses the requisite second part of development—integration—perhaps evident in adolescents’ and adults’ developing ability to handle multifaceted events in their social worlds and, in particular, to appreciate the moral implications of many choices and actions.

To round out our suggestions for future directions, we consider the morally relevant aspects of personality and identity as a way to understand the motivation to be moral. The bald concern is that moral knowledge, in itself, does not seem sufficient to impel moral action, particularly when one’s morality dictates that one should act against one’s self-interest. Moral psychology ought to be constrained by psychologically feasible motivational mechanisms. Future research needs to clarify when and how personal and moral goals developmentally differentiate and then integrate, how these developmental states affect (and are affected by) situations and behavior, and what factors can facilitate or thwart such a process. Perhaps, then, we will be in a better space to answer the questions, “Why live the morally good life?” and “How can we make this outcome the norm, rather than the exception?”

SUGGESTED READINGS


REFERENCES


III. SOCIAL BEHAVIORS


Piaget, J. (1985). The equilibration of cognitive structures: The central problem of intellectual develop-
10. The Science of Moral Development


