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Implicit Virtues, Divergent Goods, Multiple Communities

Explicitly Addressing Virtues in the Behavioral Sciences

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Developing good theory about virtues and character requires facing a major obstacle: Many behavioral scientists, including scientific, humanistic, and postmodern, oppose the very idea of virtue. Careful examination of their narratives, ideologies, practices, and communities suggests, however, that each clearly has notions about praiseworthy human characteristics, that is, about virtues. Concepts of virtues and character within a variety of behavioral science approaches are discussed and identified. Virtues are closely related to concepts of goodness and community, with different virtues linked to divergent concepts of the good and competing communities. The problems of implicit conceptions of virtue and the good are discussed. Explicit discussions of virtue, goodness, and multiple communities, it is argued, can help us develop the best possible accounts of character.

Keywords: virtues; character; ethics; goodness; community

Theoretically and philosophically sophisticated behavioral scientists often strive to make explicit behavioral scientists' implicit assumptions, including epistemological and metaphysical assumptions. In this article, I address a set of assumptions to which behavioral scientists—even when theoretically and philosophically sophisticated—have given little heed, assumptions about virtues.

The neglect of assumptions about virtues stems, no doubt, from a variety of causes. Let me list four candidates and then consider a way to think about virtues, or character, that can address those impediments to clear thinking and permit us to develop better accounts of virtues.

First, virtue is commonly understood to mean, and only to mean, "chastity esp. in a woman" (Fish, 1995, p. 1320), one dictionary definition of the word. In

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the behavioral science and philosophical literatures discussed here, very different understandings (and definitions) of virtues are employed.

Second, some scientists argue, on scientific grounds, that it is unprofitable to address virtues. There are at least two reasons for making this claim: first, interpretations of the scientific evidence. As Emler (1999) notes, some psychologists contend that “the concept of moral character has no foundation in fact” (p. 377). Behavior, they argue, depends on circumstances rather than on any stable characteristics of persons. One source of this claim is a particular interpretation of Hartshorne and May’s famous Depression-era study *Studies in the Nature of Character*. Hartshorne and colleagues (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Hartshorne, May, & Maller, 1929; Hartshorne, May, & Shuttlesworth, 1930), it is claimed, established empirically that character does not exist. When given an opportunity to lie, even those students who were reported—by themselves, by peers, and by teachers—to be honest, in fact, lied. “Moral behavior,” Hartshorne et al. (1930) concluded, “is specific and conditioned to a large degree by the external situation” (p. 287). That research, Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg claimed in 1989, delivered “the death blow to character education” (p. 127). Psychologists, accordingly, dropped investigations of character (Campbell, Christopher, & Bickhard, 2002; Cawley, Martin, & Johnson, 2000; Emler, 1999; Lapsley, 1996).

For two reasons, however, Hartshorne and colleagues’ (1928, 1929, 1930) research is not a good reason for behavioral scientists to avoid research on character and virtues. First, Hartshorne and colleagues did not draw that conclusion from their findings. Although they thought character education should be modified, they did not think it should be abandoned (Leming, 1997). Furthermore, Hartshorne et al. (1930) reported that the behavior of some children was fairly consistent across situations; those children were either generally honest or generally dishonest, a finding also obtained by Burton (1963) in his factor-analytic reanalysis of their data. Emler (1999) summarized additional findings indicating some stability of behavior across settings; the construct of character, he concludes, is valid.

Hartshorne and colleagues’ (1928, 1929, 1930) research is not a reason to avoid investigations of character for a second reason: their implicit definition of character. Although Hartshorne and May (1928) stated that they “avoided the premature formulation of definitions” of character (p. 7), a definition of character is evident in their practices and assumptions. Their definition was behavioralist, with judgments of character, for instance, depending on measuring children’s behavior of lying in an experimentally controlled situation when the children were given a chance (they were led to believe) to do so undetected. Their definition was also individualistic (Emler, 1999). In both regards, as we shall see, their definition is quite different from most ancient and contemporary understandings of character or virtue.

The second reason for behavioral scientists to avoid virtue is that science supposedly has to do with facts, not values, with the *descriptive*, not the *prescriptive*

or normative. Accordingly, Kendler (1999, 2000) argues for the philosophical position that objective science requires a fact-value "dichotomy," one "which assumes there is an unbridgeable chasm between facts and values" (Kendler, 1999, p. 828). The concept of virtue I am discussing, however, clearly has an ethical component. If we contend Sociologist A is virtuous because she shows courage and integrity, we are claiming that it is good or right that she exhibits courage and integrity. Virtue is thus a concept that sits uneasily astride the traditional fact-value divide. Virtue is clearly an ethical concept; it is also clearly a psychological concept. That ethical character means, say some, that behavioral scientists should steer clear of it. Indeed, Allport (1921), a leading figure in the development of personality psychology, used Watson's (1919) definition of character from *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*. Character, Allport argued, is "personality evaluated according to prevailing standards of conduct" (p. 443). Character, Allport argued, does not fall "in the province of psychology; it belongs rather to social ethics" (p. 443). Allport and Vernon (1930) thus came to argue for "the rigid exclusion of all normative considerations from the sphere of personality proper" (p. 686; see also Allport, 1927, 1937; Baumrind, 1998; McCullough & Snyder, 2000b; Nicholson, 1998, 2003; Sandage & Hill, 2001).

Excluding normative considerations was, however, both unsuccessful (the ethical dimensions of concepts of virtue and character appear in behavioral scientists' investigations notwithstanding their attempts to eliminate them) and problematic (with interesting and important psychological questions remaining unaddressed because they are obviously and inescapably ethical). As dogma proudly bearing the mantle "scientific," Allport's exclusion of virtue and character from the field has, however, long prevailed in the behavioral sciences.

Humanistic psychologists have opposed not so much the idea of virtue per se but traditionalist understandings of character, understandings that see the origin of virtue in community. Indeed, Maslow's "self-actualization" and Rogers's "fully functioning self" can be understood as their own "catalog of virtues," virtues that arise not from communities, which stultify the self, but from liberating the self from community and allowing the self's inner depths (Taylor, 1989) to emerge. The results of individual processes of self-actualization and self-fulfillment are, importantly, held to be consistent across people (Maslow, 1963; Rogers, 1964). Human nature, actualized, produces consistent patterns that are very like what we are discussing as virtues. Instead of espousing character ideals such as a person's being honest and just, however, they celebrated virtues such as spontaneity and self-awareness.

Finally, many of that heterogeneous band of skeptical (Prilleltensky, 1997) postmodern critics of modernity are suspicious of the concept of virtue, as are classical liberal individualists. They are often suspicious because the concepts of virtue and character can be used and, some claim, are always used to gain power over others (cf. Veatch, 1985). Therefore, Kohn (1997) claimed, most efforts at character education are "tantamount to indoctrination" (p. 429). Some

multicultural critics assert that by emphasizing the personal qualities of individuals, advocates of virtue ignore the environmental factors that significantly affect marginalized persons and judge them as morally deficient. Ibrahim (1996) claimed that in their advocacy of a multiculturally relevant virtue ethics, Meara, Schmidt, and Day (1996) were "imprisoned by Western civilization" (p. 78) and suggested that advocates of virtue ethics could be subject to "charges of cultural oppression" (p. 84).

Those kinds of critiques, I think, are sometimes valid. Some who stress virtues do neglect environmental influences on individuals, some are on power trips, and some likely are unaware of their hidden ideologies. I do not think the case has been made, however, that that is true of all who discuss virtues. Furthermore, the hidden ideologies of those critics warrant attention as well. Even as they criticize the very notion of virtue, they espouse their own set of virtues, including the praiseworthy character traits of skepticism, awareness of hidden ideologies, sensitivity to power dynamics, and ironic detachment.

Those are not the only critiques of virtue ethics that draw on implicit concepts of virtue, however. Humanistic psychologists draw on their own set of virtues. Scientists do as well, valuing, for instance, the trait of dispassionate, empirically based, scientific rigor. Indeed, contends Gewirth (1978),

empirical science requires various personal and social moral traits and conditions, including honesty, truthfulness . . . and willingness to subject one's ideas to public scrutiny, to follow the evidence where it may lead, and to subordinate one's own selfish desires to impartial acceptance of the facts. (p. 359)

It is no accident, I suggest, that even critics of the concept of virtue prize particular virtues. Some ethical notion pertaining to virtue is intrinsic, I think, to any concept of what a good behavioral scientist is, and to behavioral science. To make my case for that rather sweeping assertion, I will first set out a broader framework for understanding virtues (beginning with a description of various forms of renewed interest in questions of character and virtue), move to a more fine-grained approach to what virtue and character mean, and then discuss in greater depth the ways in which behavioral scientists are often (and perhaps always) committed to notions of virtue and character.

RENEWED SCHOLARLY ATTENTION TO VIRTUES AND CHARACTER

Within philosophical ethics as a whole, there has been a dramatic resurgence of interest in questions of virtues and character, beginning with Anscombe (1958) and greatly accelerated by MacIntyre (1984) but currently moving well beyond both. Of critical importance to the behavioral sciences, virtue ethics and virtue theory require a moral psychology to give a full account of virtue.

Flanagan and Rorty (1990), for example, contend that "normative ethics . . . is appropriately constrained by psychology" (p. 1). Virtue theorists, that is, need good behavioral science.

Within the more narrowly focused realms of professional ethics for psychologists, much attention also is being devoted to virtue ethics (Cohen & Cohen, 1999; Davis, 2001; Doherty, 1995; Dueck, 1995; Kitchener, 2000; Meara, 2001; Meara et al., 1996; Tjeltveit, 1999, 2000), an approach that is relevant to behavioral scientists in three ways: We need, in addressing questions of professional ethics, to take virtue seriously, and we need to contribute to an adequate behavioral science to account for the virtues of professionals. Finally, a comprehensive understanding of human beings (presumably an epistemic goal of the behavioral sciences) requires that it address (well) questions of virtue and character, because they are an integral dimension of human existence.

Social scientists have recently begun addressing virtues and character as well, most notably positive psychologists (Baumeister & Exline, 1999, 2000; Keyes & Haidt, 2002; McCullough & Snyder, 2000a; Morgeson, Seligman, Sternberg, Taylor, & Manning, 1999; Sandage & Hill, 2001; Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Czikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002) who are explicitly addressing a wide variety of virtues. They are doing so, in the main, with traditional scientific methods (notwithstanding the concerns of Allport & Vernon, 1930, and Kendler, 1999, 2000, about the inappropriateness of scientists qua scientists addressing fundamentally ethical questions).

In addition, an assortment of psychologists not associated with positive psychology are addressing character, including the development of character (Colby, James, & Hart, 1998), moral character within the psychology of personality (Cawley et al., 2000; Emler, 1999), the development of an overarching moral psychology (Hogan, 1973; Lapsley, 1996), and in other ways (Sandage & Hill, 2001). These psychologists also generally approach questions of virtue and character with traditional empirical methods, albeit expanded at times to include qualitative approaches.

Finally, Fowers (1998); Overholser (1999); Richardson, Fowers, and Guignon (1999); Roberts (1988); Tjeltveit (1999); and others want to make explicit the theoretical assumptions about character and virtues that behavioral scientists make implicitly, a task considered either to be of intrinsic merit or to be a critically important preface for developing better accounts of those virtues. Making behavioral scientists' notions about virtue more explicit is my primary emphasis in this article.

DEFINING AND IDENTIFYING VIRTUES IN THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Virtues and (the related term) character are defined in a variety of ways (Slote, 2000). Referring in general to relatively stable, praiseworthy qualities in

a person, such as honesty or integrity, virtues have to do with who a person is, about the excellence of the person's qualities.

"Personality evaluated" is one way to think about character (Allport, 1921, 1927, 1937; Allport & Vernon, 1930; Baumrind, 1998), but in the broadly neo-Aristotelian sense of the term I want to discuss (see Hursthouse, 1999; MacIntyre, 1984, 1988, 1990), virtues and character¹ refer to something deeper and broader. As Drane (1994) put it, "character refers to personality structure, with special emphasis on its ethical components. It refers to the kind of person who makes a decision or acts in a certain way" (p. 291). Brody (1994) argues that in contrast to traditional (narrower) approaches to ethics, virtue ethics "embraces the whole of a life and not simply the one decision that is at hand" (p. 211). Slote (2000) notes that

virtue ethics specifies what is moral in relation to such inner factors as character and motive, and unlike most modern views, it treats aretaic notions like "admirable" and "excellent" . . . as fundamental to the enterprise of ethics [instead of] deontic concepts like "ought," "right," and "obligatory." (p. 325)²

Zagzebski (1996) notes that virtue is "an excellence . . . a deep trait of a person" (p. 89). Finally, Punzo (1996) and Meara et al. (1996) point to the importance in understanding virtue of, among other things, emotions, motivation, and perceiving ethically relevant features of situations. And so, notes Thomas (1996), Stocker (1996) argues that emotions play "an indispensable role" (p. 26) in moral thought and behavior. Sherman (2000) speaks about "wise emotions" (cf. Sabini & Silver, 1987). Fowers (2003, this issue) likewise argues for a close relationship between emotions and virtue. And, in his book *Morals from Motives*, Slote (2001) develops an ethical theory based in moral motivation.

Three dimensions of character and virtue are particularly important in making more explicit the understandings of virtues and character implicit in behavioral scientists' theories and practices: Character and virtues are, in part, properly ethical terms, they have to do with what is good, and they are closely tied to community.³

CHARACTER AND VIRTUE: ETHICAL TERMS

Character and virtue have to do with the ethical qualities of persons, with what we view as good, or excellent, or praiseworthy about them. Character, suggests Baumrind (1998), is "the ethical estimate of an individual" (p. 4; see Power, 1997; Sabini & Silver, 1998). This ethical dimension of character is precisely what led Allport to reject psychological investigations of character. As Baumrind notes, "Allport objected to . . . the moral connotations of character, exclaiming that, 'The study of personality is difficult enough without complicating it at the beginning with ethical evaluation' " (p. 2).

At least two problems face Allport's attempt to remove ethical evaluation from character, to "devalue" it. First, behavioral scientists continue to address ethical issues. What happens, however, is that the ethical character of the behavioral sciences and its moral discourse simply go underground. Evaluations are hidden rather than open. Kendler (1999), for example, denies that psychologists qua psychologists validly make ethical assertions, yet careful analysis makes clear his passionate advocacy of his own moral convictions about moral pluralism and democracy.

The second problem with attempts to sever the ethical from our understanding of human character is, I think, that when we try to eliminate the ethical from the behavioral sciences, we omit something crucial to who we are. If we want to understand human beings fully, it matters that we understand honesty, courage, practical wisdom, and other virtues. Indeed, Campbell et al. (2002) suggest that morality is "at the core of the self . . . because goals and values are strongly constitutive of the human self" (p. 814). A behavioral science that fails to address character and virtues is thus impoverished.

Positive psychology (McCullough & Snyder, 2000a; Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002) promises to address positive dimensions of human beings that psychologists have problematically tended to ignore, positive dimensions such as character and virtue. Whether positive psychologists will explicitly address the ethical dimensions of the topics they are investigating remains to be seen, however. Positive psychology is presumably called "positive" because psychologists are addressing dimensions of human existence that are good, positive, virtuous, and excellent. Those are ethical terms. Calls for research proposals in positive psychology emphasize scientific rigor, however, not ethical reflection; indeed, there is not even a call for making explicit the ethical assumptions underlying a research proposal, no less for addressing how to include the best possible (Taylor, 1989; Tjeltveit, 1999) ethical account in investigations of positive psychology. Kendler (1999, 2000) is right in objecting to attempts to draw values from facts derived scientifically, to attempts to draw ethical conclusions from traditional scientific methods. And investigations about virtues, strengths, and positive psychology often, it seems to me, problematically do just that. At the very least, they make ethical assumptions that are never spelled out, assumptions that (unsurprisingly) may show up in their conclusions.

A second problem facing positive psychologists is the use of definitions of virtue and character that produce thin, unsatisfying versions of virtue. As an example of a well-intentioned, but flawed, approach to definition, McCullough and Snyder (2000b) defined virtue as "any psychological process that consistently enables a person to think and act so as to yield benefits to him- or herself and society" (p. 1). Their claim that a virtue, to be a virtue, must produce "benefits" (p. 1) clearly, but not explicitly, reflects an adherence to a classically

consequentialist or teleological ethical theory. This ethical theory is, however, not only implicit (cloaked as it is in the language of science); it fails to draw on the traditions of deontological ethical theory and virtue ethics on which many bioethicists and others draw. Explicit ethical reflection, I suggest, would lead to more adequate (if more challenging) understandings of positive dimensions of human existence.

VIRTUES AND GOODS

That McCullough and Snyder (2000b) included “benefits” in their definition of virtue points toward the very important relationship between virtue and what is good. We say something has benefits if it produces something that is good. All behavioral scientists, I think, hold implicit or explicit views about what is good, views that shape our approach to behavioral science inquiries and our understanding of human beings, and especially our views of human virtues. Understanding behavioral scientists’ implicit views about what is good is therefore crucially important in understanding the virtues to which behavioral scientists are committed. This points us in the direction of a view of ethics that is broader than the principles-based ethics that has long dominated American philosophy, professional codes of ethics, and behavioral science research (e.g., the ethical assumptions in Kohlberg’s research on moral development).

“The concept of *the good life*” for human beings, claims MacIntyre (1984), “is prior to the concept of a virtue” (p. 184). Although there are many dimensions of the relationship between virtue and what is good, and many definitions and understandings of those terms,⁴ I will focus on the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, which contends that virtues produce both good people and good ends in general. And so, notes Zagzebski (1996), Aquinas stated, “ ‘the Philosopher says: ‘Virtue is that which makes its possessor good, and his work good likewise’ ” (p. 91). Or, as Fowers (2000) notes, “we cultivate virtues because we can see that certain character strengths are necessary for the goods we seek” (p. 9).

Addressing what is good as part of discussing virtue will be distinctly disquieting for many behavioral scientists, however. As MacIntyre (1984) and Taylor (1989) have pointed out, certain features of Western intellectual life have made it very difficult to talk about—indeed, even to recognize—the understandings of goodness to which we are committed. However, one of the stated purposes of the American Psychological Association (1994) is advancing human welfare, as it is of the American Psychological Society (1988). In both instances, one goal of the professional/scientific associations is to advance what is good. Indeed, argues Schwartz (2000), psychology “must be informed by a vision of what a good human life contains” (p. 87).

Taylor (1988, 1989) argues that a commitment to some notion of the good is inescapable because in formulating and living out our identities, we always understand ourselves in relation to some ideal. Our notions of what is good form

the basis for our evaluations of ourselves, and others. "Selfhood and the good," Taylor (1989) argues, "turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes" (p. 3; see Campbell et al., 2002).⁵ When asking about (implicitly or explicitly expressed) virtues within behavioral sciences, then, we need to ask about the goods in relationship to which we evaluate ourselves and those in relationship to which we evaluate others. Answers to those questions will help us address the question of the virtues we (and others) exemplify and those to which we (and others) aspire. And they can help us understand the implicit concepts of goodness and virtues in behavioral science theories and practices.

One of the great challenges facing anyone trying to address questions about goodness, of course, is that behavioral scientists hold divergent ideas about human flourishing. What one person considers good, a second may not. Or, more commonly, the good that is most important or most central for one person is not for a second. Indeed, in part because conceptions (and orderings) of goodness are so diverse (in contrast to agreement about basic ethical principles such as justice or respect for autonomy), divergences about virtues are likely greater among behavioral scientists than divergences regarding ethical principles (cf. Veatch, 1985). One behavioral scientist may value above all (the good of) an impeccably designed, rigorous, empirically grounded, and cumulative research program, but a second may value (the good of) a spontaneous life full of exploration, creativity, and personal growth. Another area for disagreement has to do with the sources for our beliefs about what is good. At one level of abstraction, those in the West almost all affirm such goods as freedom and benevolence. But at the level of the sources of our ethical convictions, at the level of the good to which we are most deeply committed, we are deeply divided.

To bring some order to the divergence of goods to which we are most deeply committed, to the divergence in our ethical sources (and, in terms of this article, to help us understand the different virtues corresponding to those divergent goods), Taylor's (1989) identification of "three large domains" (p. 495) of ethical sources is, I think, helpful. The first is the "theistic grounding" (p. 495) of standards such as freedom, benevolence, and justice, a grounding that—200-some years of premature obituaries notwithstanding—remains vital for not a few people (e.g., Adams, 1999). But the second and third "constellations of ideas" (p. 319) associated with ethical sources are likely more prominent in the public discourse of behavioral scientists. Disengaged reason is the ethical source most closely tied to behavioral sciences' self-perception as sciences created in the image of natural science. In it, Taylor affirms, "one joins a lively sense of our powers of disengaged reason to an instrumental reading of nature" (p. 319).⁶ Or, to oversimplify, if we have a problem, we should investigate the problem scientifically. And then, all will be as well as it can be.

The crucial point is that disengaged reason as ethical source implicitly affirms disengaged reason as good, and conducive to good ends. Certain virtues follow from that conception of goodness, virtues such as honesty and truthfulness (Gewirth, 1978).

The third set of ethical sources focuses, in varying ways, on “on our powers of creative imagination and links these to a sense of nature as an inner moral source” (Taylor, 1989, p. 319).⁷ Humanistic and some postmodernist behavioral scientists find their ethical sources here. Indeed, a rough parallel can be drawn between the second and third of Taylor’s sets of ethical sources and the epistemological differences between Snow’s two cultures, the culture of the natural sciences and that of the humanities (Kimble, 1984). Again, to oversimplify, advocates of this view might hold this view: “To solve a problem, you need to get in touch with your feelings so you can be true to yourself, to be the person you truly are, to live in accord with your own individual nature.” And so, for Rogers (1961) (exhibiting a level of explicitness unusual among behavioral scientists), “an increasing openness to experience” (p. 187), “increasingly existential living” (p. 188), and “an increasing trust in one’s organism” (p. 189) were virtues believed to arise from an ethical source deep within the person (cf. Naranjo, 1970).

Working through the diversity of goods and ethical sources is, fortunately, made easier by the fact that we all do, in fact, have convictions about what is good and draw on some ethical source (or sources). And we likewise all have some more-or-less extensive and articulated notions about virtues. To be sure, we can often benefit from being more explicit about these and from subjecting our ideas about goodness and virtue to the intellectual challenges raised by differing ideas. Although there is no escaping the responsibility for identifying and improving our own convictions about goodness and virtue and articulating and drawing on our own ethical sources, our task is not to start with a blank slate and develop perfect or certain answers. Our task, rather, is to move from our current, partly implicit, partly explicit ethical ideas to ideas about goodness, virtue, and ethical sources that are better than those we currently employ.

VIRTUES AND COMMUNITIES

In addition to involving concepts of the good, the rich psychological/ethical concept of character I am discussing is tied closely to community. Although the individualistic tenor of American life, and American psychology, makes discussion of the relationship of communities and virtue foreign to most psychologists, I think we learn much by exploring this relationship. The virtue ethicists are not alone, of course, in emphasizing the relationship of community and virtue or character. In addition to the contributions of sociologists, social psychologists have shown how features of the social situation influence the stability of personal qualities. One of the enduring lessons of Hartshorne and colleagues’ (1928, 1929, 1930) studies has been an appropriate acknowledgement of the very important role of social factors in shaping human behavior, including human moral behavior. The hermeneutic focus on our lives as inescapably socially embedded (Richardson et al., 1999) is also consistent with an emphasis

on the close ties between community and character: One dimension of our interpreted lives is our socially embedded virtues and character.

Aristotle, Aquinas, and MacIntyre all emphasize the crucial role community plays.⁸ Indeed, "some forms of community," Blum (1996) asserts, "are crucial to the maintenance of a moral psychology of excellence" (p. 232). Communities and virtues can be linked in a variety of ways. Blum has identified six: We learn virtues in (and, some assert, only in) communities, communities sustain virtues, our moral identity and moral agency are (at least in part) constituted by communities, communities provide ethical content, communities confer worth on some human qualities (making those qualities virtues particular to the particular community conferring worth on them), and communities are sustained by virtues.

In particular, communities shape the character of behavioral scientists' lives and virtues. In private, we are usually willing to acknowledge the crucial role played by fellow graduate students, by members of a lab, by clinic colleagues, by those who share specialized research or clinical interests, and so forth. We behavioral scientists, that is, are shaped by those communities. Our virtues are shaped through the habits we develop in those communities and by our interactions and bonds with people in those communities. We thus need to be clear—in understanding ourselves, in understanding our colleagues, and in understanding those human beings our disciplines purportedly seek to understand—about the role of community in shaping virtues.

This close tie between virtue and community suggests one approach to making more explicit the virtues behavioral scientists hold implicitly: Look within any community of behavioral scientists, whether that be a community of Gergenesque postmodernists, of psychologists who would rather be called neuroscientists or cognitive scientists, of Freudians, of Skinnerians, of Lacanians, of Gadamerian hermeneuticists, of neo-Popperians, or whatever. If we listen for the qualities of the persons who are praised, for the characteristics of persons selected to present papers or participate in panels, for the traits of a person that make a difference in decisions about hiring, promoting, and firing colleagues, we will often hear language that, if not overtly invoking the language of virtue and character, pertains in fact to the virtues especially honored in that community.

Behavioral scientists live in multiple communities, which may be especially devoted to the same, to related, or to conflicting concepts of virtue, character, and the good. This may be both energizing and bewildering, especially when one belongs to communities whose members' ethical views conflict. Addressing how an optimal approach to understanding virtue best takes into account the multiple overlapping communities within the behavioral sciences is a decided challenge, worthy of attention beyond the scope of this article (see Richardson, 2003, this issue). However, clearly articulating the goods that motivate us (and others) and the virtues producing our highest goods (and those of others) can help us as we wrestle with the challenge. We can benefit, I think, by

thinking about the particular virtues (and concepts of the good) tied to various communities, looking not only at published theoretical statements but also at implicit theoretical assumptions related to virtue and character, at the nature of the community, at qualities of persons most esteemed in the community, and at the practices of those in the community.

Simple solutions to this pluralism include, of course, relativism (holding that all ethical views are equally valid) and striving for some consensus.

However, neither claiming the equality of all views nor striving for consensus solves another problem we face: our need for empowering ethical sources. Taylor (1989) argues that “high standards need strong sources” (p. 516). To motivate us in our professional lives, and certainly in our private lives, we need something to live by, something to love. And the general consensus, the least common denominator, is not enough. We need to be able to articulate, and so draw on, deep ethical sources that empower us ethically—when we love them—“to do and be good” (Taylor, p. 93), ethical sources that provide the content of our ethical theories, including our understandings of virtue, character, and the good.

IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT UNDERSTANDINGS OF VIRTUE AND THE GOOD

Although implicit conceptions of virtue are the rule in the behavioral sciences, occasional explicit articulations of virtues can shed light on behavioral scientists’ tacit virtues and aid in the pursuit of adequately strong ethical sources. Conceptions of virtues and the good are often implicit, in part, because behavioral scientists who draw on the second and third sorts of ethical sources discussed by Taylor (1989) tend to reject overt intellectual discussions of the goods that motivate them and shape their understanding of virtues.

This “holding an ethical position while denying that I hold an ethical position” can be seen clearly in Allport. In Nicholson’s (1998) summary of his views, Allport “repudiated the category of character and replaced it with the ideal of a devaluated individual: an objective essence that existed independently of any ethical frame of reference” (p. 64). Allport’s “ideal of a devaluated individual” drips with irony. As does the claim, “The *good* scientist is objective, holding (in his or her scientific work) *no* convictions about what is good.”

Implicit conceptions of virtues and character can be made more explicit (and thus critically evaluated, refined, and improved) in several ways. As I have suggested, we can examine behavioral scientists’ theories from an ethical perspective (On which conceptions of what is good, right, and/or obligatory does the theory draw?), because virtue and character are, in part, ethical concepts. We also can examine carefully the virtues and ethical convictions present in particular communities. Occasionally, these are spelled out explicitly, whether by careful observers of a leading theorist or of a particular community or by self-

reflective individuals or community members. Those explicit renderings of virtues and character are very helpful in understanding what is implicit in behavioral science theory and practice.

Of particular importance, we can look at the conception of goodness present in a theory, because virtues are (in part) held to be virtues because they bring about some good or goods. Taylor's (1989) analysis of three sets of ethical sources can again be helpful. From the perspective of that analysis, in the second set of ethical sources, the scientist's goal, or greatest good, is disengaged reason tied to nature understood instrumentally, which produces the good of scientific knowledge. And so science is, at its core, deeply normative, or ethical, even as it strives to be value-free and objective (Laudan, 1984, 1987). Because of its commitment to that good, the behavioral scientist reinforces most strongly the virtue of dispassionate empirical rigor because that rigor (the scientist believes) will produce the good of scientific knowledge. Good and virtue can thus be seen as tightly interrelated. Adjectives describing the valued qualities of the "good scientist" include tough-minded, rigorous, objective, skeptical, consistently bases his or her conclusions on facts (i.e., on empirical data), and rational (cf. Bunge, 1976; Gewirth, 1978; Longino, 1996). Those are the virtues of the scientist, "virtues" because they help produce the good of scientific knowledge.

Longino (1996) illustrates the merit of explicit articulation of virtues. From a feminist perspective, she notes, the ethical convictions (and virtues) required for science need revision. In addition to the importance of empirical adequacy, we appropriately judge the merits of a theory in terms of "novelty, ontological heterogeneity, mutuality of interactions, applicability to human needs, and diffusion or decentralization of power" (p. 44). Whether a particular ethical conviction should be added to the desiderata of what constitutes the good qualities of scientists should depend, she argues, on "the contribution any proposed virtue can make to furthering feminist goals in inquiry" (p. 50). Whether one agrees or disagrees with her, Longino's explicit statements about the virtues of the scientist (including the feminist scientist) and about the close relationship between feminist virtues and the goods (goals) of feminist inquiry are exemplary in their lucidity.

Likewise helpful are clear articulations of the virtues espoused by humanistic behavioral scientists, whose highest goods belong to the third set of moral sources identified by Taylor (1989). Humanistic psychologists, for instance, thus especially esteem the good of "our powers of creative imagination" linked to "a sense of nature as an inner moral source" (p. 319). Corresponding virtues include creativity, spontaneity, and awareness of one's own experiencing, because those virtues permit one to reach self-actualization, to flourish, to live the good life (Rogers, 1961). For Rogers, however, I think the process of becoming and the goal of becoming merge; that is, the virtues of the fully functioning person and the goods characteristic of such a person's life are one and the same. The goods and the virtues bringing about those goods are thus hard to distinguish. In "a therapist's view of the good life," for instance, Rogers (1961)

emphasized the qualities/goals of “increasing openness to experience” (p. 187), “increasingly existential living” (p. 188), “an increasing trust in his organism” (p. 189), and “creativity” (p. 193). Therefore, he denied that “the good life” is “a *state* [italics added] of virtue” (p. 186); it is, rather, an ongoing *process* of virtue.

Finally, at least some skeptical postmodernists valorize the virtues of skepticism, awareness of hidden ideologies and power, and ironic detachment. Explicit articulations of the good end(s) toward which those postmodernists aspire are even rarer than articulations of the ethical stances of other behavioral scientists. But by their passionate, vigorous, and at times judgmental attacks on modernism, skeptical postmodernists clearly appear to me to be defending some good or goods. Emancipation is the strongest candidate in my mind for the good that most deeply energizes and motivates postmodernists, but that is so individualistic, Western, and culture-laden a good that it can scarcely be the whole answer. Taylor (1985) suggests that Foucaultian analyses emphasize power/domination and disguise/illusion as the states from which people need to be led; emancipation from power and domination comes through unmasking the disguises behind which the power operates. Foucault thus appears to have drawn implicitly on the goods of freedom and truth, Taylor suggests. But Taylor notes that “Foucault himself repudiates” (p. 152) the notion that there is a good we can affirm. It would thus appear that Foucault, at least, paradoxically preferred to keep his deepest ethical convictions (and the virtues to which they are tied) masked.

What is true in all three dominant forms of discourse is that explicit discussions about virtues and the concept of good to which they are devoted, the goods they love (Heft, 1999), are all too rare. One of the challenges we face, suggests Taylor (1989), is that the pursuit of some goods, such as disengaged objectivity, mitigates against an explicit acknowledgement of the very goods motivating that pursuit. The scientist, in the habit of striving to be objective, soon becomes inarticulate about the goodness of disengaged objectivity and the other goods that motivate scientists. Put another way, certain virtues, pursued single mindedly by certain scientists, humanistic psychologists, and skeptical postmodernists, mitigate (ironically) against good thinking about virtue.

CONCLUSION: THE VIRTUES OF EXPLICIT, BEST ACCOUNTS OF VIRTUES IN THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

In arguing for the omnipresence of concepts of virtue in behavioral science theory and practice, I have emphasized the importance of clarity and explicitness, goods that theoretically and philosophically sophisticated behavioral scientists generally affirm, goods that I think can help us address the issues raised by multiple, conflicting communities with varying understandings of virtue and divergent conceptions of the good, issues raised by our need for deep ethical

sources. They also can help us actively strive to improve our ethical understandings, to produce “best accounts” (Taylor, 1989, p. 58) of what is good and virtuous.

In particular, I have emphasized the need for explicit discussion of the virtues and conceptions of the good held implicitly in the multiple communities to which behavioral scientists belong. Implicit conceptions of virtue and the good prevent discourse about them, preclude theoretical and philosophical evaluation of them, make behavioral science research about them difficult, and occlude the moral sources on which behavioral scientists (and other human beings) ideally draw. Explicit discussions of virtue, the good, and multiple communities can, by way of contrast, help us develop the best possible accounts of character.

NOTES

1. Character and virtue are distinguished in a variety of ways. McCullough and Snyder (2000b), for example, assert that “character is best understood as a superordinate construct that subsumes the lower-order virtues. Furthermore, a person’s character is evaluated on the basis of the extent to which the person manifests any particular virtues across time and situations” (p. 4). Hursthouse (1999), Meara, Schmidt, and Day (1996) and Sandage and Hill (2001) talk about virtues as traits of character. Drane (1994) suggests that character “is a designation for the inner being of a person: a constellation of distinctive personal traits (virtues and vices)” (p. 291). Kupperman (1991) considers character to be an overarching concept, getting at the interrelationships and integration among virtues. It has to do “with the particularity of a person’s life” (p. 9). Finally, Slote (2000) contends that “virtue ethics specifies what is moral in relation to such inner factors as character and motive” (p. 325).

2. Driver (1996) and Slote (2000) explicitly contrast virtue theory in philosophy, in which virtue and character are addressed but not considered primary (e.g., Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; Frankena, 1963), and virtue ethics, where they are central. An account of virtue counts as virtue ethics, Slote maintains, “if and only if it treats aretaic terms as fundamental (and deontic notions as either derivative or dispensable) and it focuses mainly on inner character and/or motive rather than on rules for or consequences of actions” (p. 325). Driver, drawing the same distinction, regards her approach to be a virtue theory, but not a virtue ethics. That distinction is not generally drawn by psychologists such as Meara et al. (1996), Kitchener (2000), and Tjeltveit (1999), who include virtue in their ethical approaches, seeing virtue ethics and principle ethics to be complementary.

3. Not all virtue theorists emphasize these dimensions of virtue and character. Slote (2000; see also Hursthouse, 1999; Zagzebski, 1996) provides a helpful taxonomy of various contemporary approaches to understanding virtue. He distinguishes between eudaimonistic virtue ethics, in which the agent’s long-term well-being is critical, and noneudaimonistic virtue ethics. Virtue theorists may or may not be concerned with the moral evaluation of acts, and may or may not believe virtue ethics should be theoretical. Finally, and of particular relevance to the argument of this article, Slote distinguishes between teleological and agent-based virtue ethicists. Agent-based virtue ethics, he argues, derives “its ethical assessments of actions from what it has to say about (the motives and/or character traits of) agents, and judgments about eudaimonia, in turn, will be either independent of or derived from claims about virtue and right actions” (p. 329). In contrast, teleological virtue ethics “sees the virtues as ways of achieving the good life, and if we say such things we presumably are thinking of the good life as something specified independently of virtue” (p. 328). Aristotle, as commonly interpreted, is an exemplar. I focus in this article, and especially in the next two sections of the article, on a teleological virtue theory, a contemporary example of which is MacIntyre (1984).

4. Virtues and character may be tied “often,” “contingently,” or “necessarily” to concepts of goodness and community. As Zagzebski (1996) notes, “Virtue is an excellence of the person and so it is connected directly with the idea of good, but this raises a number of questions about the sense in which virtue is good. For one thing, when we call a virtue good, we may mean that it makes a person good, or we may mean it is good for its possessor. . . . Second, we may ask whether a virtue is also connected with good as a property of something other than the agent, such as the good of the world as a whole” (pp. 89-90).

5. No simple summary suffices to capture Taylor’s (1989) nuanced thinking, which includes but pushes beyond philosophy, psychology, sociology, history, and political science. Later in his book, for instance, he argues for “a connection between four terms: not just (a) our notions of the good and (b) our understandings of self, but also (c) the kinds of narrative in which we make sense of our lives, and (d) conceptions of society, i.e., conceptions of what it is to be a human agent among human agents. . . . These evolve together, in loose ‘packages,’ as it were” (p. 105). Taylor (1989) differentiates among life goods, hypergoods (higher-order goods “which not only are incomparably more important than [other goods] but provide the standpoint from which these must be weighted, judged, decided about” [p. 63]), and constitutive goods (goods that empower us ethically “to do and be good” [p. 93] [when we love them] and provide the content of ethical theories). Together, these goods, and especially constitutive goods, provide our ethical sources.

6. Taylor (1988) asserts that “the modern disengaged self has arisen from a certain moral vision. It has been linked with a definite moral topography, one that has eschewed all external sources and seen our moral resources as inner. And in its [the modern disengaged self’s] more austere variants, these [inner moral resources] are not seen as in the impulses of nature within us, but in the power of rational disengagement itself. This goes along with a certain conception of human dignity. It is thought to reside in the power of disengaged freedom, and humans achieve their full stature when they realize this power integrally” (p. 312).

7. This “third family of views,” Taylor (1989) asserts, “finds its sources in Romantic expressivism or in one of the modernist successor visions” (p. 495).

8. Meilaender (1984) and Blum (1996) note, however, that some virtue theorists do not emphasize community. They are, Meilaender asserts, more self-focused in their accounts of virtues.

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