

CHAPTER 1

Processes Underlying Social, Emotional, and Personality Development

A Preliminary Survey of the Terrain

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this volume is to provide a comprehensive assessment of developmental scientific scholarship in relation to social, emotional, and personality development. As with the other volumes in this *Handbook*, contributing authors were selected on the basis of their ability to summarize and synthesize what is known about their designated topics while identifying crucial issues that seem destined to become the focus of important theory-driven research in the years ahead. Whereas contributors to the first edition of this *Handbook* (then, the *Manual of Child Psychology*; Carmichael, 1946) could plausibly claim to have surveyed and cited essentially all scholarly work on their chosen topics, the voluminous literature that has accumulated with increasing pace in the decades since has made that aspiration not only impossible but also undesirable. Readers need informed guidance when either distinguishing between truly important and mundane contributions or discerning those interesting and important lines of inquiry likely to dominate scholarship in the immediate future. Time alone will tell whether our contributors have been prescient, but every reader can recognize the authors' mastery, synthetic ability, and interpretive perspectives.

The 22 chapters that follow provide authoritative and eloquent introductions to topics that lie at the forefront of

contemporary scholarship, and it would be impossible to do justice to their richness, originality, or points of intersection in this brief introduction. Instead, my goal is considerably more modest. In the next section, I draw attention to four overarching themes explored and illustrated in the chapters that follow. Thereafter, I briefly introduce each of the chapters, drawing attention to key themes or insights, especially those that might represent useful points of intersection or cross reference for readers and scholars eager to reassemble the developmental science necessarily disaggregated into the more manageably sized chunks and topically organized chapters of which this volume is comprised.

CROSS-CUTTING CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The contributors to this volume explore a variety of topics, but their chapters share a number of significant features that are briefly highlighted in this introductory chapter.

Organizational Developmental Contextualism

Like contributors to the other volumes in the seventh edition of the *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science*, the contributors to this volume have all embraced organizational developmental contextual frameworks to

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guide their conceptualization of ontogenetic processes (see Overton & Molenaar, Chapter 1, this *Handbook*, Volume 1, for a discussion of the relational developmental systems paradigm within which these frameworks are conceptually embedded). This nearly universal convergence of theoretical orientation is noteworthy, representing as it does the transformation of a subdiscipline that was once dominated by the proponents and adherents of grand theories. Viewed in retrospect, there is little doubt that the research motivated by the grand theorists and conducted by themselves and their acolytes enormously advanced our understanding of human development, as documented in many of the landmark chapters published in previous editions of the *Handbook/Manual*, all the way back to the first edition in the Wiley series published about 70 years ago. By the same token, the steady accumulation of evidence held the keys to the destruction of these grand theoretical edifices, as it became apparent that their ability to account for significant portions of the variance in developmental outcomes left most of the variance unexplained.

One response to this realization was to incorporate ideas and findings central to competing theoretical frameworks, simultaneously expanding researchers' ability to explain aspects of development while undermining the purity and coherence of specific theoretical approaches. As documented more fully and eloquently in Volume 1, the frameworks that have since evolved reflect awareness that development is multiply determined and that single-minded focus on any one type of influence is almost certainly misleadingly incomplete. Instead, as several contributors show in the chapters that follow, human development is shaped by both those species-specific and individually differentiating biological processes that are the product of evolutionary and intergenerational transmission; that these biogenic propensities are shaped by sociogenic experiences of ancestors and of the individuals themselves from the time of conception; that each individual's phenomenological construction of interactions and relationships from the onset of postnatal life, constrained as they are by cognitive developmental structures, condition the effects of social experience on the developing sense of self and on a range of behavioral propensities; and that the behavior and beliefs of both the socialization agents and developing children are profoundly influenced by dynamically changing aspects of the behavioral and sociocultural context. It remains to be seen whether developmental scientists can create one or more theoretical frameworks that simultaneously represent and recognize the complexity of human developmental processes while generating testable predictions and hypotheses.

Few developmental scientists would contest the evidence regarding the importance of each of the formative factors mentioned above, although researchers (like the contributors to this volume) tend to focus their attention selectively on a subset of the formatively significant factors. This strategy has fueled explosive growth in the number of published papers exploring aspects of social, emotional, and personality development. The absence of strict and definitive theoretical predictions, however, have allowed researchers to focus attention on easily answered questions while sidestepping the more theoretically challenging and (often) more central questions. Whether developmental science continues to advance our understanding of human behavior in the next few decades will depend, in large part, on the success of efforts to address these complex but seldom explored interdisciplinary questions about poorly understood and vaguely described developmental processes. Readers who are so motivated will find the following chapters invaluable, because all of the authors have clearly identified not only what we (as a discipline) currently know and believe, but also what questions need to be framed and addressed if we are to advance our collective understanding.

The Focus on Individual Differences

The ascendance to prominence of the organizational contextual developmental framework was potentiated by a shift in the 1970s from a focus on normative aspects of social, emotional, and personality development to an emphasis on individual differences, a shift that made evident the inability of any of the grand theories to account for the rich diversity of developmental trajectories and outcomes that were readily apparent. This concern with individual differences continues to the present, and dominates each of the chapters in this volume, although the contributing authors painstakingly analyze the factors accounting for individual differences in the context of normative processes, thereby creating more coherent and persuasive portraits of human developmental processes than would otherwise be the case.

Diversity and Internationalism

By the same token, the nearly universal embrace of the developmental organizational contextual approach is responsible for another common feature of these chapters: Recognition that developmental trajectories and contexts are extremely diverse despite the fact that most of our knowledge has been derived from studies of individuals growing up in a small number of quite unrepresentative

socioecological contexts. Although developmental science is an increasingly international field, as the list of contributors makes clear, it has long been dominated by the United States, with disproportionate representation of research participants from relatively advantaged White European American backgrounds. Relative to that template, scholars decades ago began bemoaning the implicit assumption that those whose backgrounds deviated from this norm must be deficient in some ways, although serious focus on representative populations emerged much later, and until two decades ago, children growing up outside the United States were seldom studied except, on rare occasions, when select groups of children from other countries were misleadingly portrayed as representative of comparison cultures.

Meaningful cross-cultural research is increasingly common today, fortunately, supported by a growing number of developmental scientists who grew up outside North America, and the urgent need to recognize and study more diverse groups within and outside the United States is universally recognized. Although concerns with diversity have not animated scholarship on all aspects of developmental science equally, as perusal of the following chapters makes clear, it is widely recognized as a pressing need, and the amount of attention to this topic provides a sharp point of distinction between contributions to this as opposed to earlier editions of this *Handbook*.

Prominent Phases of Development

One final historical change that also deserves mention is the phase of development accorded the greatest attention by researchers and scholars. During the 1960s, students of social, emotional, and personality development focused most attention on children in early to middle childhood. There was relatively little concern with infancy, and when adolescents were studied, they were the university students who could easily be surveyed by instructors doubling as researchers. In the 1970s, however, the focus switched to infancy, driven in part by the publication of Bowlby's (1969) seminal treatise on attachment theory and the resultant spirited debates between attachment and social learning theorists about the ways in which early social relationships shaped development. Over the ensuing decades, the focus on infancy has declined and scholars have increasingly recognized the importance of adolescence, with more recent recognition that the newly designated phase, *early adulthood*, might deserve much more attention than it has been accorded hitherto. Readers of this volume will accordingly observe that the contributing authors

have predominantly focused on childhood and subsequent phases of development rather than on the earliest years of life. There are significant exceptions, however, with many contributors emphasizing the formative importance of infancy for aspects of development more typically associated with (and studied in) later years of life.

OUTLINE OF THE VOLUME

Contrasts between earlier editions and the seventh abound, and the differences are perhaps most dramatic and obvious when examining the methods employed by researchers seeking to explore social, emotional, and personality development. Particularly when seeking to understand the infant's mind, earlier generations relied on parental reports, fanciful speculation, and the occasional observational diary kept by distinguished biographers such as Darwin, Piaget, and Preyer. Only in the 1960s did researchers begin to deploy techniques such as visual preference and habituation paradigms to explore infant abilities and tendencies, especially in the perceptual realm, as evident in Kessen, Haith, and Salapatek's (1970) masterful and encyclopedic contribution to the third edition of the *Handbook/Manual* published the year after Bowlby's (1969) influential book on attachment and before the resultant wave of research on infant social and emotional development crested. Fittingly, the present volume—like the first in the Wiley series in 1946—opens with a broad and engaging introduction to the ingenious ways in which contemporary developmental scientists study social and emotional behavior in their efforts to elucidate developmental processes. In their chapter, Brownell, Lemerise, Pelphrey, and Roisman (Chapter 2) describe in turn how and why researchers use observational, verbal report, and psychobiological measurement strategies, the strengths and weaknesses associated with each of these, and how researchers can maximize the reliability and validity of the information they obtain. Brownell and her colleagues make clear that the most useful insights have come, and surely will come in the future, from research driven by clear theories and hypotheses and from studies employing multiple complementary methods, rather than any single approach, with its inevitable weaknesses and limitations. Sadly, a scan of most journal tables of contents reveals how frequently contemporary researchers ignore these fundamental admonitions, whereas close readers of later chapters will observe just how frequently the seminal and enduring contributions to the scholarly literature are all marked by careful adherence to Brownell and colleagues' admonitions and guidance. Where Chapter 2 underscores

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the role of sound methodology in the generation of knowledge and understanding, Chapter 3 addresses a topic typically dominated by atheoretical and jumbled observation by illustrating the transcendent value of coherent and organizing theoretical frameworks. Specifically, Coall, Callan, Dickins, and Chisholm richly document how the prenatal period of human development has implications for later development by drawing on an evolutionary life history approach. Whereas evolutionary psychologists are often criticized for using a caricature of evolutionary theory to generate post-hoc and untestable explanations of contemporary human behavior, Coall and his colleagues powerfully demonstrate how a thorough understanding of biological processes at both the population and molecular levels (and everywhere in between) allows us to conceptualize the dynamic nature of the relationship between gestating mothers and the organisms (concepti, fetuses) growing within them in a coherent way that explains why, how, and how much experiences during the prenatal period influence later individual development, as well as the development of offspring and subsequent generations of descendants.

In recounting formative prenatal processes (which were, coincidentally, the focus of Carmichael's own contributions to the 1946, 1954, and 1970 editions of the manual that once bore his name), Coall and his colleagues focus attention on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis that, among other things, modulates and mediates reactions to psychological challenges and stresses. Discussion of the HPA axis is also at the heart of Chapter 4, in which Gunnar, Doom, and Esposito introduce and explain the conceptualization of the psychoneuroendocrinology of stress. As noted by Brownell and her colleagues in Chapter 2, developmentalists (along with many other psychologists and neuroscientists) have taken advantage of the ease with which cortisol levels can be assessed noninvasively to add measures of cortisol to studies in which stress might be anticipated or feared. Gunnar and her colleagues clearly document how much we have learned about the developing HPA axis and its role in mediating individual reactions to psychological challenges. As we might expect, a burgeoning understanding has brought recognition that single measures of cortisol levels are often uninformative, even misleading, whereas careful and comprehensive assessments in which cortisol levels are viewed in relation to diurnal, individual, and contextual factors can render assessments richly informative about individual status as well as about developmental processes. Furthermore, advances in our understanding of stress reactivity, and

more particularly of the HPA axis's functions, have made necessary widespread recognition of the extent to which the future functioning of the axis can be powerfully, perhaps irrevocably, altered by excessive earlier activation in response to influential experiences, as Gunnar et al. explain, complementing Coall et al.'s discussion of prenatal experiences and their sequelae in Chapter 3. Taken together, the two chapters roundly and conclusively document the untenability of simplistic biogenic determinism by illustrating the complex and bidirectional links between biology and experience.

This realization evokes memories of the nature–nurture dichotomy that long bedeviled developmental science by promoting a kind of dualism in the analysis of developmental processes. Nowhere was this more evident than in discussions of temperament and personality, the focus of Chapter 5 by Chen and Schmidt. Psychologists have been assessing personality almost as long as they have been assessing intelligence, and the early emerging individual differences in behavioral style known as temperament have fascinated parents, pediatricians, nurses, psychologists, and psychiatrists for more than half a century. Indeed, the classic New York Longitudinal Study was undertaken and reported by child psychiatrists Thomas and Chess (1977) to show that stable individual differences were evident from infancy. Since Thomas and Chess's pioneering work, Chen and Schmidt show, scholars have struggled to determine exactly how many distinct dimensions of temperament there are, how they originate, how they can best be assessed, whether and how they change over time, how they relate to the dimensions of personality that have been studied extensively in adulthood, and how they interact with environmental factors to determine adjustment. These issues and conundrums endure to the present, and growing recognition that temperament is neither immutable nor necessarily innate has been complemented by increasingly sophisticated attempts to understand both the associations between psychophysiological processes and behavioral manifestations and the extent to which these powerful individual differences shape and are shaped by experiences, beginning in utero and continuing across the life span.

The dynamic interactional processes involving young children and the adults charged with their care move to the foreground in Chapter 6, in which Thompson discusses research and theory in relation to early relationships and self-regulation. Building on a theme raised earlier by Gunnar and her colleagues, Thompson draws attention to the dependence of young infants on interventions by adults to regulate their states of arousal before showing

how researchers and scholars have elucidated the gradual transition of responsibility for emotion regulation to young children themselves. Studying these developmental processes, researchers have been particularly impressed by the magnitude of individual differences in the nurturing and regulatory behavior of different adults (especially parents) and the enduring impact of these individual differences on their offspring's development. Attempts to unpack the processes have dominated research on early social relationships for decades, as Thompson (1998, 2006) has documented in earlier editions of this *Handbook*, and we have thus learned a considerable amount about the developmental processes that underlie early social development and the emergence of self-control and regulation in the first few years of life.

The focus shifts in Chapter 7 from the ways in which individual developmental trajectories are shaped by experience to the factors and processes that minimize and mitigate harmful effects of adverse experiences. This topic has gained in prominence over the last several decades as we have simultaneously learned both how many factors, singly or in concert, can affect the course of development among children in risky circumstances and how variable the effects of these factors can be. Resilience in the face of adversity helps explain and reconcile these apparently contradictory bodies of knowledge, argue Luthar, Crossman, and Small in Chapter 7. They further show that, whereas resilience was once viewed as a characteristic of individuals somewhat akin to a dimension of temperament or personality, it is now viewed as a complex concept vested in the individual, his or her social and physical context, social history, and the interaction among these, although considerably more research remains to be completed before the multilevel complexity of resilience, and its implications for developmental science, will be understood. Luthar and her colleagues emphasize that research on resilience is fundamentally applied in nature, that protective factors have difficulty overcoming the pernicious and pervasive risks posed by chronic and severe maltreatment (a point underscored by Cicchetti and Toth in Chapter 13), and that successful interventions for children will require more focus on parental well-being and its correlates.

Chronic illness and disability are intrinsic characteristics that typically distinguish individuals from their relatives, rather than making them similar to one another, as Crnic and Neece show in Chapter 8, and they can have equally extensive and multifaceted effects on development. As noted in multiple chapters throughout this volume, however, these effects are both direct and indirect as well

as bidirectional. Many chronic conditions are associated with enduring differences in physical, cognitive, and emotional function that directly affect attainments and behavior throughout childhood and, indeed, across the life span. Equally, however, these conditions, and their associated effects on the affected individual's behavior, can powerfully affect the well-being, relationships, and behavior of other key people in their lives, most notably their parents and members of their families, and these can in turn affect the ways in which those people interact with the probands, indirectly affecting their experiences and their developmental trajectories. Broad individual differences of diverse origins among probands and family members, and the heterogeneity of the conditions that have been identified and studied, combine to ensure that our understanding of the processes, and especially of powerful variations therein, remains quite superficial, and thus have compromised our ability to develop, implement, and test interventions designed to ameliorate or reverse destructive developmental processes.

Unlike characteristics such as resilience, vulnerability, or chronic illness, race and ethnicity are ascribed characteristics and class is an inextricable aspect of family background. Where Luthar and her colleagues show in Chapter 7 how elements of the social environment can simultaneously produce change and buffer against those effects, the focus shifts even more emphatically to characteristics of the socioeconomic context in Chapter 9, in which Marks, Ejesi, McCullough, and García Coll explore the implications of discrimination for child and adolescent development. In the course of development, children soon become aware of some superordinate and externally evident categories (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity) into which people, including other children, can be sorted. They also learn, all too quickly, that these categories underlie patterns of discriminatory judgment and prejudice on the part of others, including adults, and that these judgments and prejudices often come to account both for the discriminatory treatment they receive from others to whom they are both similar and different, and for them to begin treating others in like fashion (see also Killen & Smetana, Chapter 17). Marks and her colleagues trace the developmental course from perceptual to social discrimination and review evidence of the ways in which prejudice and discrimination diminish and affect, to varying degrees, both those who are prejudiced and those against whom they discriminate. In a world characterized by a rapidly expanding population, increasing levels of migration, and dramatically evident differences in skin color, ethnicity,

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religion, gender, and language, the urgency of efforts to understand better the relevant developmental processes could hardly be exaggerated.

The twin processes of discrimination and prejudice are also at the heart of Chapter 10, written by McLoyd, Purtell, and Hardaway, which focuses more narrowly on the implications of race, class, and ethnicity for people making the transition from adolescence to adulthood. McLoyd and colleagues' overarching message is simple but powerful: Discrimination, especially against people of color and those from minority ethnic groups, profoundly limits the opportunities available to many individuals, and these restrictions have enduring—lifelong—implications, foreclosing educational and professional occupations for which they would otherwise be suited and thereby limiting their aspirations, achievements, incomes, and the opportunities that they can open up for their own children. McLoyd and her colleagues elucidate the extent to which constraints on the adult generation limit the social capital, including the social contacts and networks that play a crucial role in opening metaphorical doors for young adults in an increasingly competitive world. These intergenerational processes remain at least partially responsible for the failure of early interventions to have enduring transformational effects on the respondents' lives and for the perseveration, if not intensification, of intranational inequality in a growing proportion of both developed and developing countries around the world.

Discrimination attributable to race, class, and gender have tragically long histories, and have been the focus of both scholarly and impassioned multidisciplinary attention for centuries. By contrast, widespread awareness of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is of far more recent origin, even though individuals with non-heterosexual orientations must have existed for millennia, whether or not their freedom to act on their inclinations was severely constrained. Individuals with same-sex orientations have also had children far longer than is generally recognized, often in the context of heterosexual marriages consummated to satisfy individual, familial, or societal expectations. Within the last few decades, however, increasing numbers of gay and lesbian adults have made their orientations public and have sought to raise children, singly or in the context of same-sex relationships, and a substantial literature exploring the implications of their children's development is summarized by Golombok and Tasker in Chapter 11, within the context of a broader consideration of changing family environments. In a comparatively short period of time, Golombok and Tasker

report, developmental psychologists have come to recognize that the majority of children in Western countries grow up in nontraditional family environments, including households that do not involve married mothers and fathers with genetically related children. By examining the research literature on single, cohabiting, step, assisted reproduction, and same-sex parent families, Golombok and Tasker show that initial assumptions that any deviation from traditional family constellations would inevitably have adverse effects on children's development have proven unfounded. Nevertheless, some family structures are associated with enhanced risks of maladjustment on the part of children. The growing body of research helps document that family processes, rather than family structures, better explain developmental trajectories for children in different family contexts.

Almost all children grow up in some kind of family, making that environment of near universal relevance, whereas significantly fewer children have encounters with the legal system. Those children are the focus of Chapter 12, written by Lamb, Malloy, Hershkowitz, and La Rooy. These children are a heterogeneous group, who may enter the system as witnesses, victim witnesses, suspects, or as the focus of public or private law proceedings designed to make decisions about where the children should live. Lamb and his colleagues show in detail how a variety of interacting factors influence children's performance in legal contexts, regardless of the specific roles they are playing, and that the failures of various adult professionals to recognize the specific and unique capacities and limitations of children in legal situations help to stack the deck against them, reducing the chances of fair and equitable treatment and protection. By contrast, supportive practices that recognize developmental differences can dramatically affect children's level of performance. Accordingly, a sizable portion of Lamb et al.'s chapter recounts examples of ways in which important practices and procedures could be altered, informed by our growing understanding of children's developing characteristics.

Apart from the substantial number of children who have some (often tangential) contact with the legal system because their separating parents cannot agree on post-separation living arrangements, most of the children who encounter the legal system are the presumed victims of child maltreatment, and the effects this has on children's development are the focus of Cicchetti and Toth's chapter (Chapter 13). Decades of research, mostly conducted by these scholars, have elucidated in some detail exactly how histories of maltreatment adversely affect and compromise

children's development, and these findings are summarized in this chapter. Readers will be particularly struck by the amount of evidence now available to document the neurophysiological mechanisms whereby maltreatment affects children, and the extent to which studies documenting the adverse effects of maltreatment on children's development has also substantially enriched our understanding of normative developmental processes. Cicchetti and Toth's chapter further complements Gunnar et al.'s (Chapter 4) description of the ways in which neurophysiology can be transformed by repeated stressful experiences, and Luthar et al.'s (Chapter 7) analysis of individual differences in reactions to stressful life experiences, such as maltreatment, and particularly of the factors that promote resilience in such circumstances.

Following this series of chapters concerned with factors that affect children's development and performance, the focus shifts to specific aspects or "products" of development, beginning in Chapter 14 with Hughes and Devine's focus on "theory of mind," the ability to perceive that others do not know the world as we, as individuals, do. Since Wimmer and Perner (1983) first drew attention to an apparently abrupt transition in this regard around 4 years of age, and Frith (Frith & Happé, 1994; Frith, Happé, & Siddons, 1994) observed that this awareness was often lacking or deficient in children and adolescents labeled autistic a decade later, hundreds of studies have explored the emergence of theory-of-mind understanding in typically and atypically developing children, with most research underscoring just how important this aspect of development appears to be. In their chapter, Hughes and Devine show how an understanding of theory of mind grows out of everyday social interactions beginning in early infancy as well as how cultural differences in parental behavior parallel cultural differences in theory-of-mind understanding. Both sets of findings underscore the role of social experiences in fostering development in this domain and recent research examines how theory-of-mind understanding continues to develop from early childhood to adolescence.

As both Hughes and Devine (Chapter 14) and the authors of Chapter 15 agree, theory-of-mind understanding not only emerges from social interaction, but also powerfully affects social interaction. Nowhere is this more evident than with respect to prosocial behavior, which, as Eisenberg, Spinrad, and Knafo-Noam show conclusively in Chapter 15, becomes increasingly sophisticated over time. Extensive research, often drawing on observations of children interacting with peers and parents in experimental,

educational, and home settings, shows that prosocial behavior is evident from early in life, and that its continued development, as well as children's own understanding of what it means, are fostered by the reactions of parents, teachers, and peers who play increasingly important roles in this aspect of socialization. Eisenberg and her colleagues further underscore the extent to which this area of research has been enriched by efforts to understand the biogenetic factors that may underlie prosocial behavior, and in particular its neurophysiological correlates and bases. They rightly caution that both the biogenetic and socialization influences may often be mediated by their effects on individual differences in self-regulation, emotionality, and agreeableness as well as on the nature of their social relationships. In addition, it is clear that an enhanced understanding of prosocial beliefs and tendencies may also advance our understanding both of aggression and bullying as well as of effective forms of intervention, as noted by Eisner and Malti in Chapter 19.

Like prosocial behavior, achievement motivation and school engagement are influenced by agents of socialization both inside and outside the family (Wigfield, Eccles, Fredricks, Simpkins, Roeser, & Schiefele, Chapter 16). Despite continued engagement over time with significant socialization agents (parents, teachers) eager to promote achievement and school engagement, however, Wigfield and his colleagues draw attention to a significant decline over time in the extent to which adolescents around the world appear motivated to achieve. Their efforts to understand this surprising but robust developmental pattern are framed by an expectancy-value model of achievement that seeks to explain the development of motivation by showing how children's expectancies and values are influenced both by their own experiences when undertaking novel challenges as well as by the attitudes and expectations of those around them and how these, in turn, influence children's performance, persistence, and task choice. Furthermore, unlike most developmental models, the model explored by Wigfield and his colleagues includes cultural factors and historical events as intrinsic components.

Is prosocial behavior moral? To the extent that morality is centrally concerned with evaluations of the ways in which people treat others, the question is certainly appropriate. Of course, students of morality within philosophy and psychology have long debated whether morality merely involves behaving prosocially, or whether there are some universal features of morality, such as the principles of justice and equity, and there has been considerable focus over the last few decades on the cultural and subcultural

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differences in moral behavior and evaluation that Killen and Smetana explore in Chapter 17. In our increasingly integrated world characterized by ever-increasing international engagement and migration, these issues are particularly pertinent, and they also have major implications for developmental scientists. Killen and Smetana further show how students of morality have successfully identified the complexity of morality in early life, revealing that moral competencies are related to intentionality and emotion understanding, and explore the challenges posed to morality in childhood and adolescence by the stereotyping, interpersonal conflicts, and social inequalities encountered in everyday social life.

If morality defines the ways in which individuals seek to behave toward and to evaluate the behavior of others, then the focus of Chapter 18 on conceptualizations of the self is profoundly different. In the century and a quarter since William James (1890) published his seminal work on this topic, many psychologists have pondered the developmental processes by which individuals come to define the essence of their continuity, aspirations, background, and history, as well as of the ways in which these complex interrelated constructions are altered or elaborated in response to social experiences. In Chapter 18, Spencer, Swanson, and Harpalani address these universal and enduring issues from the perspective of minority youth in the United States, illustrating (as do McLoyd and her colleagues in Chapter 10) how the legacy of discrimination and inequality not only forecloses the concrete opportunities for many non-White youth but limits their self appraisals and aspirations in ways that have lifelong and intergenerational implications. By showing how individual trajectories are shaped by intrinsic as well as contextual factors, Spencer and her colleagues again illustrate the heuristic usefulness of the dynamic developmental contextual approach adopted by most contributors to this volume. Through a focus on minorities in the United States, with an emphasis on race, ethnicity, color, and gender, Spencer et al. draw attention to processes that affect youth regardless of cultural contexts, and highlight the implications of privilege for self-appraisal processes.

Aggressive and violent behavior is the focus of Eisner and Malti's review (Chapter 19). Students of aggressive behavior in childhood and adolescence have often worked alongside and have used the same methods and theoretical approaches as those studying the social-cognitive aspects and socialization of prosocial behavior (Chapter 15), interpersonal relationships (Chapter 22), and gender differences (Chapters 20 and 21), but the field has been

dominated by debates between those who emphasize the evolution and inevitability of aggressive behavior and those who focus on social factors, in the form of parental and peer behavior and social norms, that appear to regulate individual behavior. Proponents of both families of theories about the development of aggressive behavior can point to persuasive evidence of at least some limited significance, but adherents of both approaches have been shaken out of their metaphorical comfort zones by evidence that the levels of serious interpersonal violence have dropped precipitously worldwide, apparently regardless of tangible changes in economic, political, or criminal justice policy. As Eisner and Malti observe, such well-documented trends have revealed how much is still not understood about the determinants and developmental origins of violence and aggressive behavior.

The next two chapters are concerned with gender and sexuality. Specifically, gendered development is Hines's focus in Chapter 20. Gender is one of the so-called ascribed human characteristics, and there has long been controversy about the existence, extent, and provenance of behavioral differences between males and females. Hines shows that many of the gender differences studied by psychologists are quite small, and that mean-level differences between the sexes are often associated with substantial degrees of overlap, such that many females, say, have scores above and below the mean scores for males, and vice versa. For a long time, and in some circles even today, debates have ensued between those who assume that the differences are biologically determined and the others who believe that they are the result of social construction processes, and the vehemence with which these beliefs are held, along with the methodological difficulties associated with conducting definitive research on this complex topic, have inhibited careful research addressing these questions. As Hines shows, however, gendered behavior appears to be a classic example of the ways in which biological and social factors interact and complement one another, with ample evidence that both types of factors play important roles in the emergence and development over time of gender-differentiated behavior of all sorts.

In the succeeding chapter, Diamond, Bonner, and Dickenson (Chapter 21) ask a slightly narrower, though related, question about the development of sexuality, a topic that has attracted researchers' attention much more recently than have questions about gender differences more generally. In large part, scholars' failure to address this question until the 21st century can be attributed to a cultural unwillingness to recognize sexual feelings and

behaviors in children and adolescents, thereby leaving this important facet of development poorly explored and inadequately understood. Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, progress in this field has also been hindered by basic disagreements among researchers about the operational definitions of various sexual orientations, with the different approaches adopted by different research groups accounting for contradictory answers to some apparently fundamental questions about, for example, the stability of sexual orientation. Diamond and her colleagues also draw attention to poorly recognized gender differences in the stability and meaning of sexual orientation and show how these may have important implications for our understanding of gender socialization more generally.

Sexuality and sexual orientation are enacted socially, in the context of interactions with others, including romantic relationships, but just as developmental researchers long shied away from careful examination of sexuality in childhood and adolescence, so too did they pay scant attention to the development of close friendships and romantic relationships in these phases of life, choosing instead to focus on social interactions with peers more generally. In Chapter 22, Furman and Rose focus on a growing body of research on the characteristics and development of friendships, romantic relationships, and other dyadic peer relationships. The review highlights the extent to which such relationships bring together individuals with unique personalities and histories whose backstories play important roles in shaping the parameters of their relationships as well as their developmental course and outcomes, including longevity. For the same reason, friendships and romantic relationships have much in common, although they have tended to be the focus of different research groups who regrettably overlook potential commonalities and have created bodies of literature that intersect less than would be desirable. One troubling theme, evident particularly in the research on emergent romantic relationships, highlights the surprisingly high levels of interpersonal violence in these relationships.

In Chapter 23, finally, King and Boyatzis discuss the role of spirituality and religion in childhood and adolescence. This topic is relatively new to developmental science, having made its debut in the Sixth Edition with a chapter focused on theoretical issues. As with many other contributors, King and Boyatzis use a developmental contextual framework that focuses on both individual and contextual factors to show that religion is a significant force in the lives of most American children and adolescents, that its salience is attributable to the family and (to a lesser

extent) community factors, and that individual differences in both spirituality and the commitment to religion are associated with individual differences in civic engagement, concern about others, and other indices of psychological adjustment. Interestingly, differences associated with the type of religion (e.g., Catholic, Jewish, Mormon) appear to be much less significant than might be expected, but there is a pressing need for research on the role of religion and spirituality in the understudied parts of the world (especially in Asia and Africa) where religious affiliation is a central component of self-identity and, often, ethnicity and political orientation. Indeed, perhaps because religion is a much more significant social institution in the United States than in other research-intensive countries, King and Boyatzis's chapter is dominated by research on and by Americans.

CONCLUSIONS

It is impossible to do justice to 22 richly insightful and thorough chapters so briefly, and the preceding paragraphs merely telegraph some key features of the contributions while drawing attention to some overarching themes and points of intersection. Each of the chapters will reward readers with an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the topics covered, but it is perhaps worth ending this introduction with a word of caution. Increasing levels of specialization have led over the last several decades to a situation in which researchers and scholars master vast bodies of knowledge about narrower and narrower topics. To understand development fully, it is necessary to recognize that the processes or functions or behaviors that are the focus of any scholar's research co-occur alongside and inextricably affect the dozens of other processes, functions, or behaviors that are the focus of other researchers' work. As a result, although the salami-sliced child may be easier to study, it is important to acknowledge the inevitable risk of ignoring or overlooking the whole developing child and his or her sociocultural and historical environment.

If this introduction entices readers to reach beyond the chapters focused on their own narrow interests, to recognize some of the ways in which different aspects of development must be viewed in broader context, and to research previously unstudied topics and questions, then this chapter will have succeeded. Developmental science has never had more to offer, but the risk of centrifugal disintegration has never been greater. Along with the entire

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editorial team, I earnestly hope that this *Handbook* helps counteract the forces that threaten the field's coherence and integrity.

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