

2017 APS Janet Taylor Spence Awards for Transformative Early Career Contributions

May 08, 2017

Five psychological scientists whose research aims to illuminate some of the most fundamental aspects of human life — from romantic relationships to moral judgment, from eating behavior to cognitive development — have been awarded the 2017 APS Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions. Their areas of study may span many lines of inquiry, but these researchers share a unique talent for bridging disciplinary boundaries, using various methodological approaches to investigate their questions through an integrative lens.

The Janet Taylor Spence Award, named for APS's first elected president, recognizes early-career scientists whose cutting-edge work promises to advance psychological science. This year's recipients spoke with APS about their ongoing investigations, the events that led them to research in the first place, and the questions they hope to answer in the future. The awards will be presented at the 2017 APS Annual Convention, May 25–28, in Boston, Massachusetts.

[Paul Eastwick](#)

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[Elliot Tucker-Drob](#)

[Liane Young](#)



Paul Eastwick

Paul Eastwick

University of California, Davis

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Observer: Please describe your research interests.

Eastwick: My research investigates the process of romantic relationship initiation and the manner in which relationships unfold and develop over time. These days, I am working on two primary lines of research. The first examines relationship trajectories across time and attempts to identify the factors that differentiate long-term from short-term relationships: What features predict whether a relationship will last or not, and at what point in the development of a relationship do people know what they want from a partner? The second area of study examines the structure and function of people's preferences for particular qualities in romantic partners: How do people come to understand their preferences, and how do they use those preferences when evaluating real-life partners? At a broad level, my work strives to build connections between the fields of close relationships and evolutionary psychology.

Observer: What was the seminal event, or series of events, that led you to an interest in your award-winning research?

Eastwick: The process by which two people shift from complete strangers to romantic partners has always fascinated me. Yet historically, it has been challenging to study the relationship arc in its entirety — from the first interaction through the process of initiating and then maintaining the relationship across time. In graduate school, I remember feeling distressed that initial attraction and relationship maintenance seemed like two separate topics. It seemed to me that a good way to begin bridging that divide was to bring together the evolutionary psychological literature (much of which examined initial attraction) and the literature on close relationships (much of which examined relationship maintenance).

Observer: Tell us about one of the accomplishments you are most proud of within this area of research. What factors led to your success?

Eastwick: I am proud of the research that I describe in this article:

Eastwick, P. W. (2016). The emerging integration of close relationships research and evolutionary psychology. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 25, 183–190.

This article reviews the exciting lines of work at the intersection of close relationships and evolutionary psychology, two literatures that remain surprisingly disconnected from each other. One such line of work is my collaboration with evolutionary psychologists Kristina Durante and Steve Gangestad, close-relationships researcher Eli Finkel, and close-relationships researcher/evolutionary-psychologist hybrid Jeff Simpson. The experience of working with this team enabled me to see firsthand how productive it can be to bring together scholars from different perspectives in pursuit of a common scientific goal.

Observer: What contributions, or contributors, to psychological science do you feel have had a major impact on your career path?

Eastwick: My advisor in graduate school was Alice Eagly, and I learned a great deal from her about how to be your own toughest critic in order to build a strong, programmatic, and persuasive line of research. Also, I was very fortunate that Eli Finkel arrived at Northwestern University as an assistant professor the same year that I arrived as a graduate student. Our research interests grew together in those early years, and 14 years later, we continue to initiate new projects together as well as to build on old ones.

Observer: What questions do you hope to tackle in the future?

Eastwick: My graduate student Leigh Smith and I are conducting several lines of research examining how people come to understand their own preferences for attributes in a romantic partner. By adapting various classic cognitive and social cognitive paradigms, we have been able to design experiments that simulate the experience of learning about which traits are strongly (versus weakly) associated with desirable partners. We think that these paradigms can help illuminate the process of how people form and infer preferences for attributes, which remains something of a mystery.

Observer: What does winning this award mean to you both personally and professionally?

Eastwick: For me, this award highlights how lucky I am to have received advice and training from strong mentors over the years. In fact, in the spring of 2003, I was fortunate to have a phone conversation with Dr. Spence as I was choosing between several graduate programs (Dr. Spence happened to be a friend of a family member). I recall that she had especially glowing things to say about Alice Eagly and the social psychology graduate program at Northwestern University, and this conversation helped to tip my decision in that direction. Over the subsequent years, I had countless conversations with brilliant mentors who pushed me to think more deeply about my programs of research. It is somehow fitting that Dr. Spence played a role in that trajectory, and I am honored to receive this award.

Kimberly Noble



Teachers College, Columbia University

columbia.edu/cu/needlab

Observer: Please describe your research interests.

Noble: My research aims to understand how socioeconomic inequality relates to children's cognitive and brain development. This work takes a developmental framework, examining both neural and cognitive development across infancy, childhood, and adolescence. We use a variety of methodologies, including measures of brain structure and function, stress physiology, parenting, and behavior. Our lab is particularly interested in (1) understanding the developmental origins of social and economic disparities in cognition and brain structure and function, as this has critical implications for *when* to screen and intervene, and (2) the modifiable environmental experiences that account for these disparities, as this has critical implications for *how* to screen and intervene. I am most excited by the work we are doing that harnesses this research to inform the design of interventions.

Observer: What was the seminal event, or series of events, that led you to an interest in your award-winning research?

Noble: As an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, I took Martha Farah's graduate seminar in cognitive neuroscience. At the time, I had been planning to pursue graduate training examining the neural basis of reading development and reading impairment. Although Martha had spent the first several decades of her career writing some of the seminal work on visual cognition, she now wanted to switch gears and study "real-world applications of cognitive neuroscience." After the course, she asked if I would want to be her first graduate student to focus on the neuroscience of poverty — and I happily accepted! That was almost 20 years ago. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have gotten in on the ground floor of a brand-new field that has led to exciting advances in science while making neuroscience relevant for the public.

Observer: Tell us about one of the accomplishments you are most proud of within this area of

research. What factors led to your success?

Noble: Our 2015 *Nature Neuroscience* paper was the largest study to date to examine socioeconomic disparities in brain structure. I am indebted to the investigators in the Pediatric Imaging Neurocognition and Genetics study, especially Dr. Elizabeth Sowell, who made this collaboration possible. This work received a good deal of attention in the popular press — it was fun to see my work shared on social media by friends who didn't know it was mine! More importantly, this paper propelled issues regarding inequality and the brain into the national spotlight, and provided the opportunity to reach the public and policy makers in new ways.

Observer: What contributions, or contributors, to psychological science do you feel have had a major impact on your career path?

Noble: I am lucky to have so many wonderful role models and mentors. Most notably, of course, I credit my graduate school mentors, Martha Farah at the University of Pennsylvania and Bruce McCandliss, who is now at Stanford University. Martha taught me to take academic risks and to be willing and ready to defend those decisions. Bruce taught me that it is possible to balance fascinating science and practical application. Here at Columbia University's Teachers College, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn's extensive body of work on socioeconomic status (SES) disparities and child development has shaped my thinking on SES disparities since the beginning of my career. BJ Casey at Yale University was a pioneer in the study of child brain development and has served as a role model of how to be a woman in science. Bill Fifer here at Columbia has taught me a tremendous amount regarding the infant brain and has been the most generous mentor in my junior faculty years. The brilliant work of Chuck Nelson, Nathan Fox, and Charley Zeanah on the effects of early adversity on child development has been a great influence on me. Finally, for the last 4 years I've been collaborating with an amazing cast of social scientists who have shaped my thinking in innumerable ways – Greg Duncan at the University of California, Irvine, Katherine Magnuson at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and Hirokazu Yoshikawa and Lisa Gennetian, both at New York University.

Observer: What questions do you hope to tackle in the future?

Noble: The project I am most excited about is a collaborative effort between a team of social scientists and neuroscientists, in which we are planning the first clinical trial of poverty reduction in early childhood. The ambition is large but the premise is simple — we are planning to recruit 1,000 poor mothers from across the United States and planning to randomize half to receive a large monthly income supplement, while the other half will receive a nominal monthly income supplement. They will receive this unconditional cash every month for the first 3 years of their children's lives. In this way, we will move beyond the “correlation is not causation” problem and actually be able to estimate the causal impact of income on children's cognitive, emotional, and brain development during their first 3 years — when we believe the developing brain is most malleable to experience.

Observer: What does winning this award mean to you both personally and professionally?

Noble: I am honored and humbled to receive this award. I am a great fan of many of the past and present winners, and I am quite flattered to be in their company. In addition, it is a particular honor to receive an award named after a pioneer who helped to pave the way for women in science.



A. Janet Tomiyama

University of California, Los Angeles

dishlab.org

Observer: Please describe your research interests.

Tomiyama: I study why we eat. Hunger — the obvious reason — is actually one of the least important causes of eating, which I find fascinating. My lab (the Dieting, Stress, & Health, or DiSH.lab) focuses on two main drivers: stress and weight stigma. We take a biobehavioral approach, meaning we care equally about the biology of people (e.g., metabolic health, stress hormones) and their behavior (e.g., dieting, comfort eating).

Observer: What was the seminal event, or series of events, that led you to an interest in your award-winning research?

Tomiyama: In 4th grade, I moved from Pennsylvania to Tokyo and spent my formative years attending the American School in Japan. In school, I was taught the dangers of eating disorders and the importance of maintaining a healthy body image. Among my family in Japanese culture, however, comments such as “You’ve gained weight” were interchangeable with greetings such as “Hello.” How was it, I wondered, that I didn’t have an eating disorder? For that matter, why didn’t everyone in Japan have an eating disorder? That spurred my interest initially, and many years later my first publication was on cultural contributions to eating disorder pathology. When it came time to decide on graduate school, I faced the impossible choice of going to Yale University to work with Kelly Brownell in the clinical program or to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), to work with Traci Mann in the Social/Health program. That was a fork in the road when I decided to veer away from eating disorders to instead research eating behavior in general.

Observer: Tell us about one of the accomplishments you are most proud of within this area of

research. What factors led to your success?

Tomiyama: I am very proud of my NSF CAREER grant. It funds my research on weight stigma for 5 years, but equally importantly, it funds a summer research intensive program for underrepresented minority students at community and 2-year colleges. These students are rarely exposed to psychological research, and the program also provides career development training. We need to get more underrepresented students into the research pipeline, and hopefully this program will help.

As for factors that helped lay the groundwork — I am an unabashed zealot about the Faculty Success Program offered by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. I learned so many important lessons, such as how to create a daily writing habit, how to say no, and how to let go of perfectionism, from that program. As a result, I now have proudly achieved tenure while sleeping 8 hours a night and not working nights or weekends. It's this program, plus an annual flu shot, plus great mentors, collaborators, and students, plus luck that contribute the lion's share of variance to any success I've experienced.

Observer: What contributions, or contributors, to psychological science do you feel have had a major impact on your career path?

Tomiyama: Traci Mann, my graduate advisor, is the reason I love my job. She approaches science with a style that is equal parts rigor and humor. If you don't believe me, get her book, *Secrets from the Eating Lab* (I love her so much that I will shill her book unasked). Elissa Epel, my postdoctoral advisor, gave me my biology chops, taught me to revel in complexity, and correctly identified that I should marry Josh, now father to our baby, Clark. In her lab, I met Eli Puterman, my academic husband and now father to many coauthored papers. I would not have tenure if not for Annette Stanton, my career mentor at UCLA, who has supported me in my research, teaching, mentoring, and service endeavors and has plied me with champagne at critical moments. Annette is also part of what I secretly call the Fab Five — my colleagues in the Health Psychology area at UCLA that include Julie Bower, Chris Dunkel Schetter, Rena Repetti, and Ted Robles. I cannot imagine a warmer and more supportive cadre of colleagues. Nancy Adler and Brenda Major are my big-thinking heroes and among my embarrass de richesses of women role models that I seek to emulate. Greg Miller: a department chair as if out of ancient folklore, whose powers and support are seemingly boundless and who is as accessible as a genie appearing from a magic lamp. Finally, I am continually awed by the brilliance and talent of my students, who work so very hard but still manage to remain cheerful and celebrate things like National Guacamole Day.

Observer: What questions do you hope to tackle in the future?

Tomiyama: I want to find ways for people to eat healthy without being tortured about it — that is, avoiding the agony of dieting and going ahead and doing a little comfort eating, but in a healthy way. It would be great if fruits and veggies could replace ice cream and chocolate as comfort foods, and I've been funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to see if that works. For those of you who are skeptics: We conducted a survey of UCLA undergraduates, and they ranked apples as more comforting than apple pie — the quintessential comfort food!

I also want to find a way to eradicate the antifat attitudes that are running rampant in today's society. I fear it will be a tough job — I made one tiny foray into this by testing a perspective-taking manipulation

and it failed miserably.

Observer: What does winning this award mean to you both personally and professionally?

Tomiyama: Personally, it's fun to share this award with Paul Eastwick, as we sang together in [The Chordials](#), a coed a cappella group at our undergraduate alma mater Cornell University. We even shared a solo — “To Be With You,” by Mr. Big.

Professionally, it's thrilling! One criterion for Full Professor (my next big milestone) is whether you've established yourself at the national level, and this will go a long way toward demonstrating that. It's also wonderful to see that health psychology, among the youngest of the many fields of psychology, is valued by psychological scientists.

Honestly, I am dumbstruck. I would never have thought myself Janet Taylor Spence Award material were it not for a mysterious email from a shadow cabinet of scholars that encouraged me to consider the nomination. Thanks to this experience, I vow to think of and nudge strong scholars to put themselves forward whenever I see an award announcement pop up. And I urge anyone reading this to not sell yourself short and remember the lotto motto: “You can't win if you don't play.”



Elliot Tucker-Drob

The University of Texas at Austin

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Observer: Please describe your research interests.

Tucker-Drob: I study individual differences in psychological development, particularly in the areas of cognitive ability, academic achievement, personality, and psychopathology. My work combines approaches from developmental psychology, psychometrics, behavioral genetics, and human ecology.

Observer: What was the seminal event, or series of events, that led you to an interest in your award-winning research?

Tucker-Drob: As a psychology major at Cornell University, I enrolled in Dick Neisser's course titled "Intelligence." Professor Neisser had recently finished serving as chair of an American Psychological Association task force that had been charged with distinguishing scientific evidence from political ideology in what had come to be termed "the intelligence debate." The class surveyed the scientific literature on which the task force's report (published in *American Psychologist* in 1996) was based. I found the material fascinating and, having recently taken an introductory course in developmental psychology, I approached Professor Neisser about conducting a senior honors thesis on the dynamics of intellectual development across the lifespan. Referring to his semiretirement, Professor Neisser agreed to co-supervise me so long as I could find a second supervisor. After coming up empty-handed in my search for a second advisor in the psychology department, I made my way to the school of human ecology and was delighted to succeed in convincing Steve Ceci to co-mentor my work.

Observer: Tell us about one of the accomplishments you are most proud of within this area of research. What factors led to your success?

Tucker-Drob: When we arrived at the University of Texas in 2009 for our very first jobs, Paige Harden and I came up with the ambitious idea of starting a large-scale multivariate multimodal twin study of child and adolescent development. We had essentially spent our time in graduate school analyzing large existing data sets, and we decided that we wanted to build one of our own from the ground up. Somehow, we were successful: We started the Texas Twin Project. To date, we have collected a wealth of detailed, multivariate in-laboratory data from a racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse sample of approximately 2,000 individual twins. Data from the Texas Twin Project has served as the basis for several important papers. We are continuing to grow the sample and prepare reports based on the data. This accomplishment, of course, could not have been possible without the outstanding group of graduate students, project managers, and undergraduate research assistants that we have had the privilege to work with.

Observer: What contributions, or contributors, to psychological science do you feel have had a major impact on your career path?

Tucker-Drob: My two undergraduate mentors, Professors Neisser and Ceci, have of course had a very lasting influence on my work. As a graduate student at the University of Virginia, I was tremendously lucky to have had the opportunity to work with Tim Salthouse on the topic of individual differences in cognitive aging and with John Nesselroade on developmental research methodology. Although I did not work directly with Eric Turkheimer until the very end of my time at Virginia, I have always deeply admired his nuanced approach to integrating advanced quantitative methods with rich theory in order to tackle questions as fundamental as "What does it mean for a trait to be heritable?" I also have been strongly influenced by many "near misses" — intellectual giants who deeply influenced the scientific cultures at Cornell and Virginia, but with whom I did not directly overlap. Urie Bronfenbrenner was no longer active when I arrived at Cornell, but his bioecological model of human development continues to influence me considerably. Paul Baltes passed away shortly after I arrived at Virginia, but the lifespan psychology orientation continues to guide much of my own work. Jack McArdle and Sandra Scarr left Virginia just before I arrived there, but I continue to be highly influenced by Professor McArdle's

approaches to longitudinal data analysis and by Professor Scarr's corpus of empirical and theoretical work on the genetics of psychological development and genotype?environment effects. At the University of Texas, my colleague John Loehlin, who pioneered some of the most important developments in the behavioral genetics of personality and intelligence of the 20th century, continues to influence me and my work. Over the past few years, I also have developed transatlantic collaborations with Ian Deary, Tim. Bates, and Stuart Ritchie at the University of Edinburgh as well as Ulman Lindenberger at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. These have been stimulating and fulfilling partnerships that I hope to continue for many years to come. Avshalom Caspi's and Terrie Moffitt's work continues to inspire me from afar. Finally, my entire program of research has the indelible mark of my wife and collaborator, Professor Paige Harden. My past decade of work would be only a shadow of what it has been without her insight, guidance, critique, and collaboration.

Observer: What questions do you hope to tackle in the future?

Tucker-Drob: I have long been interested in dynamic feedback processes by which individuals sort themselves into different environments on the basis of their interests, aptitudes, and proclivities, that in turn affect their trajectories of psychological development. In the future, I hope to more precisely chart these dynamic processes.

Observer: What does winning this award mean to you both personally and professionally?

Tucker-Drob: It is a true honor to have my work recognized and to be listed among the many outstanding current and past recipients of this award. Receiving the award inspires me to continue to work on difficult scientific problems far into the future.



Liane Young. Photo credit: Gary Gilbert

Liane Young

Boston College

Observer: Please describe your research interests.

Young: My research addresses questions about human moral cognition from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining approaches from social psychology, cognitive neuroscience, neuropsychology, and developmental psychology. I take a fairly expansive view of morality, but I'll identify four specific lines of active research in my lab that I consider to be central to moral psychology. First, we investigate how social cognitive processes — including theory of mind (ToM), which is the processing of information about mental states such as beliefs and intentions — inform moral judgment in typical and atypical populations (e.g., autism, psychopathy). Second, we explore how people deploy these processes for different kinds of moral judgments. For instance, does information about mental states (i.e., whether an act is intentional or accidental) matter more for evaluating some norm violations (such as harms) than others (such as purity violations, e.g., incest, eating taboo foods)? Third, our research has begun to examine how ToM is used not just for third-party moral judgments but also for social interactions across distinct motivational contexts. For instance, how do people consider the minds of ingroup versus outgroup members in predicting and evaluating their actions? How do people deploy ToM when they are actively cooperating versus competing with others? Fourth, we examine not only how people represent others' beliefs and intentions but also how people's own moral beliefs influence their behavior. What is the relationship between beliefs (e.g., about the self, about specific values, about broader metaethical claims) and behavior? The overarching aim of my research program is to understand the psychological processes that guide human moral judgment and behavior across distinct social contexts.

Observer: What was the seminal event, or series of events, that led you to an interest in your award-winning research?

Young: My first exposure to Peter Singer's provocative views on euthanasia, abortion, and animal rights, during my senior year of high school, had me hooked. I wanted to figure out how to navigate the tricky terrain of morality. So, in college, as a premed interested in biomedical ethics, I majored in philosophy. I spent countless hours with my undergraduate thesis advisor, Frances Kamm in the Philosophy Department at Harvard, testing our intuitions on hypothetical scenarios (e.g., pitting the life of one against the lives of many) and trying to determine normative principles to guide moral judgments of right and wrong. In the Mind, Brain, and Behavior program (and as a leader of its student organization), I had the opportunity to hear from and talk with Marc Hauser, who ultimately convinced me to take a detour (on my way to medical school) to go to graduate school with him and study how ordinary people actually make moral decisions (instead of how people ought to behave, as I'd been studying in philosophy). A combination of excitement about the emerging field of moral psychology and conversation, collaboration, and commiseration with my genius officemate and classmate Fiery Cushman kept me on my current path. Together, in grad school, we examined descriptive principles of moral cognition as well as the roles of emotion and theory of mind in moral judgment.

Around this time, the study of moral psychology picked up its pace, with Josh Greene's seminal studies using fMRI to support a dual-process theory of moral judgment and Jon Haidt's social intuitionist model ("The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail"). While I certainly appreciated the central role of emotions in moral cognition, I also thought back to my undergraduate training in philosophy and the seemingly rational principles we sought to identify, especially those highlighting the role of intent in moral

judgments. I had the extraordinary fortune of becoming one of the inaugural members of Rebecca Saxe's lab at MIT, where I was able to build on Rebecca's transformative fMRI work identifying brain regions such as the right temporoparietal junction as dedicated to processing information about mental states, including intent. I spent the rest of grad school and 3 years as a postdoc in Rebecca's lab tracking neural activity associated with ToM for moral cognition. For a while, this struck me as a great way to render complex questions about human moral cognition more tractable by focusing on a cognitive rule that could apply across diverse contexts: Intentional transgressions, whatever they might be, are always perceived to be worse than accidents. Much of the work I currently do with my students and collaborators, however, focuses on qualitative and quantitative differences in how people deploy ToM across different social and moral contexts. For example, how do people think about the minds of competitors versus cooperators? How do people use information about mental states for moral judgments of different kinds of norm violations?

Observer: Tell us about one of the accomplishments you are most proud of within this area of research. What factors led to your success?

Young: I am very proud of the research that my current and former students, James Dungan, Alek Chakroff, Laura Niemi, Josh Rottman, and I have conducted to establish distinct moral domains — in particular, the boundary between norms against harm and norms for preserving purity. Most of my work as a grad student and postdoc served to reveal the key role of theory of mind in moral judgment (e.g., murder is worse than manslaughter). But at a meeting of the Moral Psychology Research Group (MPRG; my intellectual extended family, comprised of a group of philosophers and psychologists who meet twice a year to discuss ongoing work), I had the chance to talk with Joe Henrich. He told me that, from an anthropological perspective, he didn't buy my argument that information about intent always matters. In some small-scale societies, he told me, disapproval of taboo behaviors didn't appear to depend on intent. Around the same time, I read and hung onto this quote from philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah: "With taboo breaking ... it doesn't matter what you meant to do. You're polluted. You need to get clean." These anthropological observations kick-started a new program of research in my lab on the role of intent across moral domains (starting with research revealing the reduced role of intent for purity vs. harm) and the distinct cognitive signatures of moral domains more generally.

Observer: What contributions, or contributors, to psychological science do you feel have had a major impact on your career path?

Young: I mentioned a few mentors above who helped to define my current path, and I'll add just a few more words here. My undergraduate advisor, philosopher Frances Kamm, shaped the way I approach both philosophy and psychology in showing me how to think — by way of (figurative) blood and sweat and (literal) tears in her office. Josh Greene has been equal parts leader and cheerleader to me for over a decade. Rebecca Saxe made me smarter every moment I spent with her and continues to set my standards as a mentor and scientist. And without Marc Hauser to convince me to stick around for grad school, I'd be a different kind of doctor right now — today, I can say I am thankful for his hard sell.

In addition to my more official mentors, I was very lucky to have had the support and example of some other amazing scientists during my graduate career at Harvard and beyond: Ralph Adolphs, Alvaro Pascual-Leone, Antonio Damasio, Steve Pinker, Liz Spelke, Alfonso Caramazza, and Susan Carey.

More than a decade ago, when I was a second-year graduate student, I had the unique opportunity to join a group of philosophers and psychologists, the MPRG. Of all the very friendly faces there, Walter Sinnott-Armstrong's was the friendliest — he has been a terrific mentor since I met him, and I aspire to be as happy doing what I'm doing everyday as he is. Walter, along with Josh Knobe, Shaun Nichols, John Doris, Adina Roskies, Ron Mallon, Steve Stich, Edouard Machery, Chandra Sripada, Dan Kelly, Valerie Tiberius, Gil Harman, and all the other longstanding members of MPRG (along with the Society for Philosophy and Psychology "regulars") have formed my most consistent intellectual home base.

I have been fortunate to have had brilliant longtime friends and collaborators: Fiery Cushman, Adam Waytz, Hyo Gweon, David Dodell-Feder, Katie Kinzler, Kristina Olson, Kurt Gray, Nina Strohminger, Jesse Graham, Mike Koenigs, and Jonathan Phillips, and also mentors and friends in my wonderfully supportive community at Boston College, including Ellen Winner, Elizabeth Kensinger, Jim Russell, Sara Cordes, and Andrea Heberlein.

But it is really my students (and lab alums) who have had the greatest day-to-day impact on me and on my thinking: James Dungan, Jordan Theriault, Lily Tsoi, Alek Chakroff, Laura Niemi, Josh Rottman, Larisa Heiphetz, Brendan Gaesser, Amelia Brown, and Emily Wasserman. They are responsible for the best I've done in psychological science.

Observer: What questions do you hope to tackle in the future?

Young: My research group has become deeply interested in moral cognition in context (i.e., the contexts of cooperation vs. competition, the contexts of ingroup vs. outgroup interaction). We are exploring which features of mental states are differentially encoded by the social brain across such fundamental contexts. In another line of work, we are interested in characterizing when ingroup violations are more unexpected and more salient, and perhaps elicit more punishment, compared with outgroup violations, and, on the flip side, when ingroup violations are discounted, consistent with accounts of automatic ingroup bias. We also want to know whether this depends on the nature of the norm violation (e.g., harm vs. purity, fairness vs. loyalty). For example, do we deliver harsher punishments when ingroup members violate purity or loyalty norms and when outgroup members violate harm or fairness norms? Finally, we are interested in how norm violations might be processed like any other unexpected events, and also in the neural basis of these prediction errors. How do we respond to agents whose behaviors are inconsistent with our social and moral norms versus inconsistent with what we know about their past behaviors or motivations?

Observer: What does winning this award mean to you both personally and professionally?

Young: I am extremely honored to be receiving the Spence award and to be in the company of so many individuals whose work I greatly admire. Professionally, I am thankful for the occasion to reflect on the path leading me to this point — and, most importantly, to acknowledge the people who helped to create that path. Research is a team effort, and for me that's been the best part of what I do — whether I'm meeting with a lab member in my office or Skyping with a colleague across the country. What's striking to me is that research increasingly reflects collaborations not just between individuals but between disciplines. In responding to the prompts above, I remembered that, when I first started graduate school in 2004, nobody knew whether moral psychology would later be dismissed as a passing fad. I've since discovered that moral psychology pops up in all sorts of places, and I believe the reason why is that the

study of moral psychology is inherently interdisciplinary. I am grateful that research in this area is being recognized as such today.

Personally, I am gratified to be receiving this honor as an “academic mama” to my three-year-old daughter. More and more, I appreciate the dual perspectives I have from my personal and professional lives and the support I have to make this all happen — from my dad (who continues to achieve the best work–life balance of anyone I know), my mom (who, as the very best stay-at-home mom, inspires me to be the best I can be at work and at home), and my husband Xin Gao (who makes parenthood and partnership the best combination of life satisfaction and happiness).