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Virtue, Character and Situation

**Author:** [Jonathan Webber](#)¹**Source:** [Journal of Moral Philosophy](#), Volume 3, Issue 2, **pages** 193 –213 **Publication Year :** 2006**DOI:** [10.1177/1740468106065492](#)**ISSN:** 1740-4681 **E-ISSN:** 1745-5243**Subjects:** [Philosophy](#)**Keywords:** [character traits](#); [social psychology](#); [virtue ethics](#);
[situationism](#)[« Previous Article](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Article »](#)[Abstract](#)[Full Text](#)[Media](#)[References\(0\)](#)[Cited By \(27\)](#)[Metrics](#)

Philosophers have recently argued that traditional discussions of virtue and character presuppose that experimental psychology has shown to be false. Behaviour does not issue from global traits such as temperance, courage or fairness, they claim, but from local traits such as sailing-in-rough-weather temperance or office-party-temperance. The data employed provides evidence for this view only if we understand behaviour in terms of stimulus and response, rather than in the light of the behaviourist construal of traits in terms of inner events such as inclinations. More recent experiments have shown this traditional view to have greater explanatory and predictive power than its behaviourist rival. So we should retain the traditional view and hence reject the proposed alteration to our understanding of behaviour. This discussion has fur

philosophical investigations of character and virtue.

Affiliations: 1: Department of Philosophy, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK, Email: j.m.webber@sheffield.ac.uk



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