

BOOK REVIEWS

Shogan, D.(1988). *Care and moral motivation*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 102 pp., \$14.50 (softcover).

Elias, J.L.(1989). *Moral education/Secular and religious*. Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger, 228 pp., \$18.50 (softcover).

It is difficult to imagine two more dissimilar books about moral education. *Moral Education/Secular and Religious* is a series of summaries of psychological, sociological, and philosophical theories of potential interest to moral educators. *Care and Moral Motivation* is a philosophical analysis of the concept of care in its motivational aspect.

Recently, I have heard it rumored that we are all tired of the concept of care, that there is nothing new to be said. Debra Shogan's thoughtful analysis gives the lie to this statement. In fact, it raises many important questions about what I still believe to be a fascinating subject. The style is clear but succinct, 90 pages that require the reader's close attention. It is well worth the effort. Shogan has crafted a closely reasoned, carefully structured argument. Her intent is to explicate care as a motivational term. A second theme is the problem of how we are motivated to care. Shogan sees care as closely linked with reason, autonomy, and justice. By analyzing care in a motivational context, she is able to argue that caring moral decisions are not opposed to just moral decisions, that caring judgments need not be capricious and that differences in masculine and feminine ways of responding to moral situations are not necessarily indicative of differences in caring.

She defines a person of caring character as having a fairly permanent desire that others' welfare be enhanced and that they be treated fairly. When a direct desire for benevolence or justice is not possible (as when the potential recipient is a thoroughly despicable person), a desire to fulfill a duty to treat others fairly or benevolently is present. Whereas one's actions or words do not prove that one cares, one cannot be called caring if care is never evident in either act or expression. A caring person, thus defined, is not antithetical to a just person, nor synonymous with a benevolent person. Care motivates both justice and benevolence depending on the situation.

The *desire* for justice and benevolence, then, is part, if not all, of caring. In addition, Shogan's scheme also requires motivating reasons for this desire. While caring about the welfare of others might seem to provide such motivation, what Shogan wants are reasons that motivate caring itself. It is here that she cites Murdoch's (1970) notion of just attention, but the question that it answers

is "By what method are we motivated?" rather than "What might be motivating reasons to care?" and the answer is "by giving just attention to others." The desire to be benevolent or just depends on one's habitually directing attention to others rather than self. Then one's desires and thus one's course of action will be determined in the direction of care for others when a choice must be made. But why would anyone be motivated to direct attention to others? A desire to be just or kind or to care about others could provide motivation; Murdoch's anecdote implies this. But now we've come full circle. Care motivates attention to others which in turn motivates care.

For motivating reasons to be just, kind, or caring enough to practice attention to others, Shogan could appeal to empathetic emotion, but does not. In fact, although she often refers to the place of emotion or empathy in a caring person, she seems quite uncomfortable with any affective component of care or desire, and certainly does not include emotion as a motivating force (reasons motivate). Here she differs profoundly with Noddings (1984), for example, who "locates the very wellspring of ethical behavior in human affective response" (p. 3). Not so for Shogan. Caring emotions are the ordinary emotions of joy, sorrow, anger, etc. experienced as the "necessary result of caring that someone is treated well or fairly" (Shogan, p.41). Emotions are a result of care, a way of expressing care. Indeed, they may sometimes inhibit effective caring acts. Now this is eminently sensible, but if care is not itself an emotion, what is it? An assessment made, an evaluation of circumstances? Shogan has effectively removed emotion to the periphery of moral judgment. This seems peculiar. Surely the essence of the debate about care versus justice is whether or not emotion should have a central place in moral judgments.

Does care motivate a desire to act justly and benevolently, or is care, and thus the desire to act, the result of motivating reasons? Is a desire to act a motivation or an effect of motivation? Are emotions a way of expressing care, or is an act of care one way of expressing emotion? That such questions are raised is a sign that this book is an important contribution to the field. Whether the author's singularly consistent appeal to reason rather than emotion and her totally unemotional writing style makes the argument of the book more rather than less compelling, I leave to the reader to judge.

Elias states in his introduction that his purpose is "to develop an approach to moral education based on sound principles of religious faith and secular learning" (p. xii). But this book is not the author's justification of a moral education based on religious principles; little in the way of such an argument appears. Neither is a systematic approach to moral education developed, either as a theoretical position or a practical methodology. In fact, Elias' purpose is to offer religious educators a taste of many ways in which they might approach the teaching of moral education. This is not explicitly stated but is apparent in phrases like "Although Noddings explicitly rules religion out of her approach,

the approach has much to recommend it” (p. 55) and “Religious educators have found much of value in this [Kohlberg’s] theory” (p. 85) or “Buber offers valuable insights for a religiously based moral education” (p. 54). Elias has done painstaking research resulting in a wide sampling of philosophical, sociological, and psychological theories, each explained as fairly as brevity and simplicity allow, and this must have been no easy task. Where a critique of the theory is offered, it is often by other theorists, not by the author. As clear explication, then, it gains, but as original personal insight, it loses.

The first chapter offers a brief historical account of efforts in moral education from early Christian society to 20th century Europe and the United States. There follow chapters outlining the relation to the moral realm of representative theories from each of the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, the social sciences, and theology. The concluding chapter uses a similar format with approaches developed by educators. Clive Beck’s contribution to the OISE Values Series is used as an example of the cognitive approach to moral education along with the values analysis technique developed by Jerrold Coombs, Milton Mieux, and James Chadwick.

Elias has the ability to reduce a complex theoretical structure to something easily understandable by nonspecialists, and at least in the areas in which I am familiar, he appears to do justice to each theory. On the other hand, due to his studied nonpartisan stance, no particular position emerges as particularly interesting or worthy of consideration. The epilogue contains the only sustained personal comment, and it is for this reason that the moral life “is one that is lived beautifully. It is a life in which we express our deepest feelings and intuitions. From this perspective the moral educator is an artist in both the conduct of life and in the teaching of students” (p.189). But no moral position is developed from this premise.

I wonder who will use such a book. For all its indisputably thorough research, careful selection of representative material and fair presentation, I fervently hope that it will *not* be used as a text for college level courses in moral education and its teaching. A survey of all the significant theories in philosophy, psychology, and sociology including a list of references, index of principal names and subjects, with no original sources, almost no analysis or critique, all in a mere 200 pages, cannot lead anyone to the thorough understanding necessary either to developing a personal moral philosophy or to helping students develop theirs. It seems to me that providing a potpourri of secular and theological moral theories to be tasted and used at pleasure by religious instructors of any given denomination is the wrong way to go about educating moral educators.

On the other hand, Shogan’s analysis, if used astutely, could prove a valuable resource in Philosophy of Education classes.

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