

BOOK REVIEW

Handbook of Moral Development (2005), by M. Killen & J. Smetana (Eds.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 790 pages

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AN INTERGENERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Using the 1991 handbook on moral development as the comparison (Kurtines & Gewirtz, 1991), one can readily see that much has changed in the intellectual landscape during the past 2 decades. Kohlberg's theory no longer holds a hegemonic position for generating research or specifying theoretical issues. Liberal philosophy, which undergirded Kohlberg's stance on individual autonomy and universal rights, has become only one of several resources from which developmental theorists can draw. Socialization-internalization theory which seemed on its last legs has made a remarkable comeback. Advocates have resuscitated it by infusing the child with cognitive skills for appraising experience, by acknowledging reciprocal influences in parent-child relationships, and by imputing reasoned intent

on the part of parents, teachers, and other adults. Moral emotions, which were given a secondary role to reason because they implied individual differences and personal preferences, have been brought back as motivating forces for and anticipated consequences of moral action. Culture, which seemed to entail moral relativism and was often treated as an oppressive threat to individual autonomy, is now recognized as a constituting force of moral systems and as a helpful resource in the preservation and conveyance of moral traditions across generations.

The topic of moral character, which had been shunted to the background because it relied on an array of unstable virtues and seemed to have an ideological tinge that was premodern in tone and politically neoconservative in orientation, has now made a reappearance. This is in part to provide a psychological person who embodies reason and exercises moral discernment since reasoning on its own lacks the human dimension and does not neces-

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sarily lead to moral concern or commitment. The related topic of moral education fared no better in the past as it languished in the academic backwaters, unable to rise above the ideological struggle between progressive educators who put children's constructive powers first and educators who believed construction ought to be guided by the authority of tradition. This battle seems to have given way to a new realization that both sides have valuable insights which need to be integrated in order to prepare the younger generation for confronting the challenges of a complex pluralistic world in which reason does not lead to a singular conclusion and multiple traditions have legitimate claims to be heard.

These notable shifts in thinking can be found in over two thirds of the 26 chapters which make up this volume. The historical contributions and heuristic limits of Kohlberg's monumental work are described in the volume's first substantive section in chapters by Turiel (chap. 1), Lapsley (chap. 2), Thoma (chap. 3), Walker (chap. 4), as well as in subsequent chapters by Nucci (chap. 24) and Narvaez (chap. 26). The self-initiated transformation of the socialization-internalization approach is detailed in Grusec's invaluable chapter 9, Thompson et al.'s chapter 10, and Kuczynski and Navara's chapter 11, and is entailed in Dunn's chapter 12. The ascendant role of moral emotions is demonstrated throughout the volume and is especially shown in Hastings et al. (chap. 18), Eisenberg et al. (chap. 19), and Carlo (chap. 20). The changing status of culture is found in Tappan's innovative chapter (chap. 13), in Miller (chap. 14), in Fry (chap. 15), and Nucci (chap. 24).

The new move to center stage for moral character and moral education is addressed seriously and clearly in the volume's final section in chapters by Hart et al. (chap. 23), Nucci (chap. 24), Berkowitz et al. (chap. 25), and Narvaez (chap. 26). Hart et al. describe the personal and environmental factors which lead youth to do voluntary community service and then they assess the consequences of the service experience. These include introducing

youth to moral traditions of sponsoring service organizations, instilling long-term habits of civic involvement, and altering young people's definition of self as morally oriented individuals who can do good in society. Nucci offers a new understanding of the relationship between tradition, or social convention, and principles of morality that follow from reasoning. It is my view that in structural-developmental theory, convention maintaining justifications were scored as lower level judgments compared with explanations based on principles achieved through reasoning. Nucci now sees that conventions and principles are both important and argues that moral maturity may consist, not in the latter overtaking the former, but in the person being able to coordinate them. He makes this clear by setting this and other key issues in historical context and confronting philosophical questions which cannot be disassociated from research methods and choices of theory.

Berkowitz offers a fresh approach to moral character by considering it, not as a thing in itself, and not as a rearguard action against society's moral decay. Rather, he views character as part of the positive psychological development of the person. He uses the analogy of multiple intelligences to suggest that morality is one expression of the full individual. He argues also that character may be better understood in terms of how the person is oriented to society, than as a counter-weight to negative behavior tendencies. Narvaez takes on directly the antinomy which stultified progress in moral education, the battle between producing critical thinkers versus students who internalized tradition and carried it forward. She seeks out the value of both positions and offers models of how they might be integrated, to end at last that unproductive stalemate.

I assume that readers of this journal care most about these last four chapters and the preceding chapters insofar as they are relevant to them. If there were not connections between the first 22 and the last 4 chapters, then the topics of moral character and moral education would remain distant from the larger discipline

and be at risk for becoming even more isolated from the mainstream of research and theory. In the past, they were separated largely because cognitive-developmental theory forced character to the background and insisted on a particular approach to moral education which came with a specific liberal philosophy. As a result, the topics of moral character and moral education were allowed to be usurped for political and ideological purposes, removing them from the critical feedback which social science research could provide. In particular, moral character has come to be seen today as the antidote to progressive education and permissive liberal theories about child rearing. I do not believe this a correct reading, but its very reality necessitates that we take it seriously if these topics are to be brought back within the mainstream of developmental research.

For this purpose, the remainder of this review will be devoted to discussing why the present is an opportune moment for reassimilating these topics. I will argue that with the fading of the cognitive-developmental model, an opening to alternative outlooks has become possible. Three points seem central. One, with the relegation of reasoning to coequal status with emotions and other psychological forces, we can now study a humanized moral agent who is viewed in terms of the variable qualities which make up the psychological individual in whom morality is an essential part. Two, as the moral agent has come to be viewed less an autonomous individual and more as a person in relationships with others, culture, tradition, and authority, have taken on new and potentially positive meaning. This allows moral education to become more of a process of balancing critical reasoning with an understanding of tradition and its intergenerational role of moving history ahead collaboratively. Third, as the old lines of division have become crossed over and blurred, there is greater focus on children and youth as whole persons whose development includes but is not solely the moral dimension. By taking a positive perspective toward youth development, new opportunities arise to renew and strengthen the

discipline's interest in moral character and moral education.

REHUMANIZING THE MORAL AGENT

Which comes first, identity or morality? Is moral reasoning a specialized function apart from a person's psychological make-up or does morality ensue as an expression of a person's identity or personality? These questions were posed in critiques of the cognitive-developmental approach which construed moral judgment almost as an independent operation without a psychological operator. To Blasi (1984), Flanagan (1991), and others, this problem springs in part from the separation of judgment from behavior and the abstract treatment of the moral agent as an "everyperson" who can be plopped into the midst of any situation and, with the use of reason, reach the same judgment that anyone else would.

Several chapters indicate that this abstracted agent has undergone considerable alteration during the past 2 decades. In its stead are persons who are suffused with family dynamics; partners in close interpersonal relationships; members of racial, gender, and other kinds of groups; and representatives of established traditions and organizations. Fry (chap. 15), for example, spells out the moral implications of participating in ongoing intimate relationships. The partners come to situations with a shared history of experiences, which leads to shared expectations and obligations regarding future behavior. Behavior that would be uninterpretable to outsiders, is rife with meaning for the partners. Individuals are not replaceable parts that can be plugged in or switched about freely; lacking a relational history of accumulated reciprocity, any outsider could not be expected to make the same judgment as the partners themselves would.

Another sense of the psychological side of the moral agent is found in the several chapters which deal with moral emotions that spark, accompany, and follow from moral actions.

Empathy, sympathy, anger, altruism, and the like, serve to engage people morally. They spur individuals to take action and demonstrate concern as the consequences of doing one thing rather than another, or of omitting an action, can be disturbing and long lasting. In contrast, consider the prototypical judge of cognitive-developmental theory, who would mete the same harsh punishment to her sister or father as to a hardened criminal stranger. But this model seems stilted and a bit superhuman for the daily morality of sustaining close relationships.

Reason of its own accord does not ensure morality. It leaves unanswered questions about moral sensitivity, or the capacity to see the moral dimensions of otherwise mere social behavior. Reason alone does not account for moral awareness, and it surely does not produce morally committed persons or actions. These points are reinforced by studies of individuals who have lived exemplary moral lives involving persistent commitment to just causes. The typical exemplar does not score at upper level stages in Kohlberg's scheme, but most often gives rationales apropos middle stages where community enhancement is central (Colby & Damon, 1992; Gross, 1997; Youniss & Yates, 1999).

It follows that there are individual differences in moral understandings and in moral behavior. These differences cannot be easily sorted into a stage hierarchy of maturity, but appear to be products of the many forces which account for persons' psychological composition and the environment which sustains it. More importantly, this discussion suggests the value of reintroducing moral character in the mainstream of developmental studies. The consideration of character was either avoided or shunted to the background, in part, because of the seeming arbitrariness of moral attributes and their potential for ideological manipulation. But the amorphous status of these attributes, derogatorily called a "bag of virtues," is hardly necessary. Moral awareness, moral sensitivity, and moral commitment—all of which apply to the lives of moral exem-

plars—seem more than arbitrary and less than ideologically-driven code words.

In summary, none of the chapters in this volume abandoned the essential role that reasoning plays in the reflective, sense-making of experience and in the possibility of its leading to general moral principles. At the same time, many of the authors have tempered reasoning with such things as the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, emotions which imply interpersonal attachments, and concerns which go beyond particular individuals to society wide issues. These infusions help to humanize the moral agent whose moral choices involve more than the use of cool cognition. This shift in orientation is viewed here as an opportunity for researchers and theorists to study moral character with a new vigor and in so doing, to look beyond classic virtues in order to address freshly moral awareness, sensitivity, and behavior.

CULTURE, TRADITION, AND AUTHORITY

Another notable change occurred in new orientations toward culture, tradition, and authority. For Kohlberg, authority-maintaining justifications indicated lower level reasoning than justifications regarding autonomous rights. This theme seems to have been carried on in domain theory in which cultural traditions are frequently presented as impediments to individual rights and freedom. This general view toward culture follows a modernist position that can be seen in the contrast between Durkheim and Kant, with the former emphasizing the importance of cultural belongingness and the latter stressing the primacy of the individual who achieves principle via the use of reason.

Part of the concern with authority and tradition is the propensity to make morality contingent on a time, a place, and the ethos of a people. If morality is shaped according to custom, then individuals become extensions of culture and existing moral standards. The

emergence of cognitive-developmental theory was close in time to the Nuremberg and Japanese war time trials and, thus, pointedly sought to avoid this stance. Pleas such as "I was only following orders;" or "We were supporting our leadership out of patriotism;" were exposed as indefensible whether expressed by military generals or civilian administrators. The on-looking world said that these individuals were obliged to follow higher order principles which necessarily superseded dutiful acceptance of the existing moral code.

The coupling of the rise of cognitive-developmental theory and reflective clarity in the aftermath of World War II, made it difficult to embrace culture without deep suspicion of its accompaniments of respect for tradition and authority. However, several of the chapters in this volume indicate that there are other, more positive ways to view culture, not the least of which concurs with Erving Goffman's or Nancy Rosenblum's (1998) views that social groups temper individual extremism and check idiosyncrasy. Several authors advance this point by focusing on the explicit positive role that culture plays in assisting moral development, not thwarting it.

One such instance is found in the chapters that deal with the revised socialization-internalization approach. At the time Kohlberg initiated his work, this approach was caught in a dilemma between having children adopt extant moral codes, yet wanting children to make these codes their own. Hence, theorists tried to differentiate internalization from interiorization. But the distinction in itself, did not undo the fact that children in the end, possessed the same code which adults conveyed to them. Consequently there was little room for children's initiatives, innovations, or questions about traditions.

In present thinking, however, this dilemma is avoided by a fundamental change in the relationship between authoritative adults and children. Transmission is no longer one-way from the former to the latter, but occurs through a dynamic reciprocal process. Children are not passive recipients of parental messages but

reflect on them and, in turn, help to shape them. At the same time, parents are pictured as using authority, not to impose authority, but to help prepare children for the future. What becomes interiorized as a result of this process is a coordination in which tradition is not duplicated whole, but modified according to the joint understanding of the parties and belief that conditional judgments are required in the future.

Still, some other chapters emphasize the potential for authority to become oppressive by way of imposing tradition and quashing individual initiative. The counterpoint to this is found in different chapters that view traditions as repositories of moral thinking which ought to be conveyed to youth. These traditions summarize history and bring its conclusions to the younger generation so that it need not have to reinvent what has already been discovered through group experience. This is especially evident in Tappan's chapter on the sociocultural ideas of Vygotsky and his contemporary interpreters. This shift necessarily puts adults in new light as they become teachers who share moral life with youth. Their exercise of authority is more clearly a matter of sharing expertise than of asserting power or trying to hold time still.

In an important essay during the tumultuous 1960s, Erik Erikson (1968) commented on the moral confusion which youth were confronting at the time. He was concerned that institutions representing moral systems failed to convey clearly to youth in compelling ways. Erikson's goal was not to have youth's voice quieted or their views coopted. Rather he wanted youth to explore these positions and to determine their value for the times. Erikson, much like David Riesman (1950), thought that during times of rapid social change, it would be dysfunctional to demand that youth replicate extant codes. Rather, the functional solution would be to provide youth with the tools needed for coping with the conditions which affected their lives. In making these traditions clear and available, adults provide youth with the resources they need to move society forward on a moral path.

The chapters by Tappan, Hart, et al. come closest to exemplifying Erikson's vision. The former emphasizes the intergenerational function of joint construction of traditions. The latter shows how this process works when youth do community service under the sponsorship of tradition-bearing organizations. In doing service, youth not only help others in need, but come to participate actually and virtually in the moral traditions which these sponsors support. It ought not to surprise one that there are long-term consequences of such service. Longitudinal findings, with comparison groups, indicate that the experience of service during youth eventuates in lifetimes of civic engagement which includes a propensity for joining social movements which are directed toward changing society for moral causes.

The intergenerational aspect of culture leads directly to ideas about moral education which are found in the volume's latter chapters. Two emphases in particular merit mention. First, Nucci points out that morality and conventions, which I interpret to include traditions, need not be seen as incompatible. He brings into focus that many traditions are designed to perpetuate and enrich moral life. Although some may not be formally moral, for example, conventions regarding dress, clothing, or food; they can be considered part of the larger moral ethos and have the purpose of strengthening it. It follows that one goal of moral education ought to be to help young people understand these conventions and integrate them into their moral lives. This helps them become members within a shared moral framework.

Second, Nucci, Berkowitz, and Narvaez—authors who operate from quite distinct theoretical premises—make a common plea to end the exhausting battle between progressive education, with its emphasis on children's autonomous constructions, and tradition-conveying education, with its stress on authority or the past. Whereas the latter provides the grounds for a shared framework, the former provides the tools for responsible innovations, protest, and change, which all moral systems need as

they persist over time. Never in the last four decades has there been such an opening for a rapprochement. The valuable contributions of each side are now recognized and the quest for coordination is palpable. The task facing us now is to seek workable integrations that will bring about understanding of moral persons who take up the best of our moral traditions and adapt them to future historical conditions. This requires adults with a serious sense of generative sharing and youth who use their talents not to undo the past or reinvent culture on their own, but who will collaborate in sustaining the best of our moral traditions and adapting to the future.

YOUTH'S WELFARE AS THE CONTEXT FOR MORAL EDUCATION

These are difficult times for promoting moral education because the political context has intruded on the classroom in a limiting fashion. As the authors of the volume's final chapters note, the focus on reading and math achievement restricts focus on other goals, even though morality is inculcated via the hidden curriculum. Moreover, the formal introduction of morality is fraught with controversy, especially today when ideological side-taking has pervaded politics and consciously entered the nation's classrooms. Something so elemental as teaching government and civics has become a hot button item from which teachers tend to shy lest they be labeled and chastised for crossing the line of neutrality.

One of the problems which accounts for this limiting of perspective has its roots in a systemic negative orientation toward youth. Four decades of differential fertility rates by ethnicity and increased immigration have changed the composition of the under-18 population. At the same time, there has been widening of the income gap between well-off and barely making it groups (Alperovitz, 2005). These demographic shifts have spawned the view that youth are leading us deeper into cultural decay. Thus, youth are viewed with suspicion which

the media stokes by repeatedly portraying images of school failure, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, violence, and more.

This is neither an honest nor useful depiction and emphasis on prevention policy has shifted funds to targeted problems and risks. In fact, the data do not support these bleak portrayals. Academic achievement has not declined over the past 30 years. There is not a large scale drug abuse problem in youth; recent cohorts, in fact, use drugs at much lower rates than their parents did as teenagers. The rate of births to teenage mothers is at a 65-year low, having plummeted to a pre-World War II level. And the epidemic of teenage violence which has been predicted since the late 1980s has not eventuated.

Thus, there is more than naive optimism in the authors' pleas to take a new perspective toward youth and toward moral education. Rather than predicating moral education on stemming the rush toward moral decay, we ought to be trying to promote moral growth as part of youth's overall development. This approach puts youth's potential in the foreground and seeks to provide them with the resources they need to become healthy individuals and contributing citizens. Hart et al.'s chapter is a case in point; when youth are given opportunities to do service, they develop constructive views of self which include the normalcy of using their talents to help others and better society. Whereas the prevention model sanctions youth in an anticipatory manner, a positive approach encourages them to use their talents for advancing themselves and bettering society. Again, as Hart et al. reported, longitudinal studies indicate a longitudinal linkage between youth service and adult civic engagement which includes not only high rates of voting, but also participation in protests and movements that are designed to reform society.

It may not be easy to change the tone of the conversation about moral education and the framework on which it is too frequently based. But the present volume gives plenty of evidence showing that when the old theoretical and ideological battles are set aside, new, more

constructive integrations become possible. For example, voting and protesting might represent the conforming and critical reasoning sides that use to be viewed as the respective results of the virtue and cognitive approaches. We can now see that the two can coexist within the same healthy and moral individual.

This volume gives us hope that changes in research and theory during the past 2 decades has helped overcome the barriers which separated mainstream thinking from moral character and moral education. It makes sense to capitalize on this opening by focusing more on the needs and potential of young people than on the theoretical-philosophical antinomies which are unresolvable and kept the field in constant battle. These oppositions allowed ideologies to capture moral education and make it immune from the results of serious research. They led us to lose the insight that morality inheres in persons as it becomes part of their psychological identities and relationships to other people and to society. They led us also to renege on our responsibility to look on youth as the next generation extension of our moral and civic traditions and aspirations. In summary, this volume reawakens us to this obligation and leads us to see how, with more open minds, we can help youth bring about a more moral society.

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