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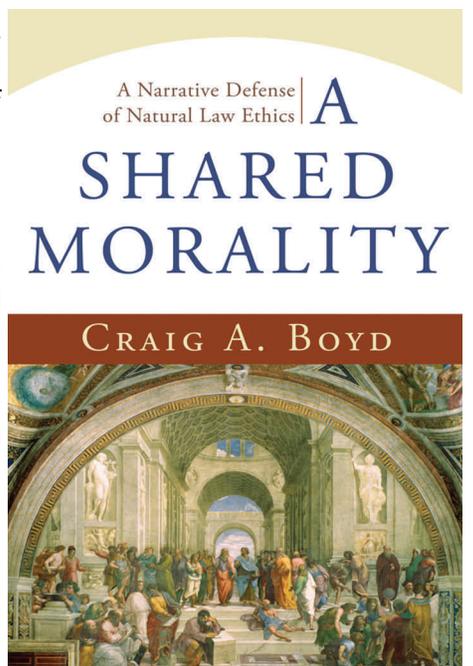
A Shared Morality: A Narrative Defense of Natural Law Ethics by Dr. Craig A. Boyd

Dr. Craig A. Boyd, Professor of Philosophy and Director of Faith Integration, cogently combines aspects of natural law theory and virtue ethics to create a persuasive new paradigm in his *A Shared Morality: A Narrative Defense of Natural Law Ethics* (Brazos Press, 2007). After tracing the history of and misconceptions about natural law, plus the criticisms of it, he states that his “theory will include the following elements: (1) all human beings have a specific nature in common, (2) moral precepts are grounded in that human nature, (3) the basic moral precepts cannot change unless human nature changes, (4) these precepts are teleological in character—they direct human beings to their end, but this end also requires a theory of the virtues, and (5) all properly functioning human beings know what the basic moral precepts are.” Following Thomas Aquinas’s affirmation that “each person’s reason naturally dictates that he is to act according to virtue,” Boyd describes in depth the virtue ethics that must complement natural law theory, thus making an original combination of two views of ethics that have often been in competition with one another but need not be.

Virtue ethics clarifies specific moral behavior in a way that moves beyond the foundational natural law theory. Boyd wisely notes, “one must not only know what kind of act is required in any given moral situation, one must also act for the right purposes and in the right circumstances” consistently. Families, religions, laws, and communities continually shape an individual’s understanding of virtue which he defines as “an acquired trait of the soul [which] will vary from person to person; but it will never stray beyond the bounds of the basic precepts of the natural law” such as the prohibition of murder, theft, and adultery and the promotion of “honoring one’s parents, showing mercy, telling the truth, and peacemaking.”

Boyd provides a shrewd analysis and refutation of some claims made by sociobiologists and evolutionary psychologists, particularly those of Richard Dawkins, in his third chapter. He also shows how evolutionary biology can provide a plausible basis—or even an ally—for natural law ethics even though many people have seen it as an enemy. He investigates postmodernism’s rejection of “the essentialism which is the epistemic basis for natural law’s conception of human nature” in the fifth chapter. He astutely remarks that “postmodern arguments are self-referentially incoherent. . . . if the postmodern critique is merely one interpretation among many, then any interpretation of metaphysics, epistemology, ontology, and ethics must be acceptable.”

He concludes that the grace needed to become virtuous is given by God as one “participates” in His love and shares it with others.—
Carole Lambert



The Development of a Substance Abuse Treatment Program for Forensic Patients With Cognitive Impairment

by Dr. Robert K. Welsh

Dr. Robert K. Welsh, Associate Professor of Graduate Psychology and Director of the Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology - Family Psychology Program, along with David Glassmire and Jeanne Clevenger, explores how substance abuse programs can be adapted to be successful in order to meet the needs of forensic patients with cognitive limitations.

Forensic patients are those who have been declared by a court of law as “not guilty by reason of insanity” or as “incompetent to stand trial,” and generally been diagnosed with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Research has shown that patients with cognitive impairments are likely to have also been diagnosed with substance abuse or dependence. Focusing specifically on a program called the Substance Abuse and Mental Illness (SAMI), the authors elucidate how this program provides effectual and intentional intervention. Prior to the integration of SAMI, they found that a typical substance abuse program used in a forensic hospital was reliant upon a “classroom setting where reading and writing were central components and where a number of cognitive demands were placed upon patients,” such as memory, concentration, and abstract reasoning. These program components and requirements proved to be extremely challenging for patients with cognitive impairments. In contrast, the SAMI program is designed to cater specifi-

cally to the “lower functioning” patient who demonstrates “at least a basic willingness to consider changing their behavior.” Welsh et al indicate a number of strategies used during the SAMI treatment sessions: “frequent breaks, short treatment sessions, multimodal learning... role playing exercises, use of mnemonic devices (i.e. acronyms) during learning tasks, frequent repetition of information, and a primary focus on teaching concrete relapse-prevention skills as opposed to abstract concepts.” The philosophical underpinnings of SAMI are rooted in a “harm reduction” approach, which includes recognizing warning signs of possible relapse, as well as particular preventative skills. Other fundamental components of SAMI include a modified 12-step self-help group and encouraging self-efficacy to bolster confidence in relapse situations. Although somewhat limited by factors beyond their control, the authors are able to provide empirical evidence from their study that cognitively impaired patients “indeed demonstrated increased knowledge of substance abuse relapse-prevention strategies following participation in the SAMI program.” The authors thoroughly explain and provide insight into this complex area of clinical psychology. This intriguing scholarly work, “The Development of a Substance Abuse Treatment Program for Forensic Patients With Cognitive Impairment,” can be found in the *Journal of Addictions & Offender Counseling* (April 2007; 27: 66-81).—
Abbylin Sellers



“A Corpus of Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian-Style Pottery from Tel Beth-Shean” by Dr. Robert A. Mullins

Dr. Robert A. Mullins, Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies, reveals the importance of carefully studying ancient pottery in a Canaanite settlement “at the strategic crossroads of the Jezreel and Jordan Valleys.” “A Corpus of Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian-Style Pottery from Tel Beth-Shean” (*I Will Speak the Riddles of Ancient Times: Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Aren M. Maeir and Pierre de Miroschedji, Eisenbrauns, 2006, 247-262) clearly describes the archaeological findings (and their historical limitations) from two excavations at Beth-Shean in northern Israel: Hebrew University’s work from 1989 to 1996 and the University of Pennsylvania’s first investigations there from 1921 to 1933.

For some 300 years, Beth-Shean served as an Egyptian stronghold in the Land of Canaan. Dr. Mullins provides “a preliminary investigation” into the Egyptian-style pottery found at the site from the first 150 years of its existence (1450-1300 BC). The importance of this study is that Beth-Shean is the first Eighteenth Dynasty garrison to have been fully excavated, giving us a substantial glimpse into the daily life of those who inhabited the mixed Canaanite and Egyptian settlement.

The “Egyptian-style” pottery was not imported from Egypt, but made on site by Egyptian craftsmen or Canaanite potters imitating Egyptian forms. Moreover, the “total number of Egyptian-inspired vessels from Stratum RI/Level IX is quite small”—only 1% of the total assemblage—“in marked contrast to the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dy-

nasties” where the percentages were as high as 70%. Most of these objects are bowls, some illustrations of which he provides in his essay. Particularly indicative of Egyptian inspiration are the bowls with “weak red rims and splash.” He notes that this “same decoration also shows up in the northern Sinai.”

Also found in the excavations is “an open V-shaped form usually called a ‘flower pot’.” These vessels were probably used by the Egyptian officers. There are also “ovoid or ‘date-shaped’ jars” which “bear the characteristic marks of two or three horizontal lines below the most restricted part of the neck,” probably made by wrapping string around the clay when forming the jar.

The sparsity of this pottery in contrast to more plentiful findings a century later seems “to conform with current historical reconstructions that regard Eighteenth Dynasty rule in Canaan to be based on a suzerain-vassal relationship that was less interventionist” than Egypt’s stronger control over the region in the 13th century BCE. Dr. Mullins cogently presents a fascinating archaeological adventure that is valuable to both specialists in the field and lay readers curious about how pottery shards connect to ancient civilizations and the modern histories which describe them.—Carole Lambert





***“Be still and know
that I Am God.”
Psalm 46:10***

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