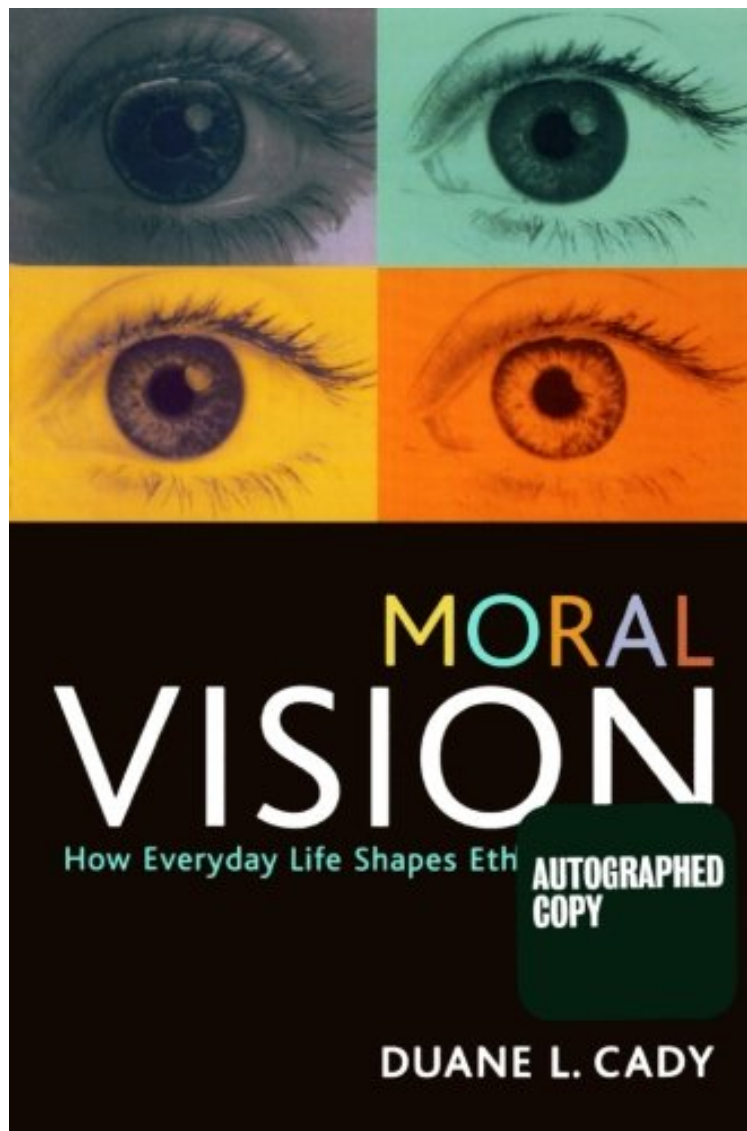


(Free pdf) Moral Vision: How Everyday Life Shapes Ethical Thinking (Studies in Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy)

Moral Vision: How Everyday Life Shapes Ethical Thinking (Studies in Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy)

Duane L. Cady

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#5295181 in Books Duane L Cady 2005-03-29 2005-03-29 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.98 x .46 x 6.50l, .47 #File Name: 074254494X134 pages Moral Vision | File size: 50.Mb

Duane L. Cady : Moral Vision: How Everyday Life Shapes Ethical Thinking (Studies in Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moral Vision: How Everyday Life Shapes Ethical Thinking (Studies in Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy):

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A worthy project. Loses focus and becomes a diatribe. By J.

Wisdom In this book, Duane Cady explores several relevant and vital topics, including the nature of moral reasoning, the dangers of making ethical considerations subservient to economic interests, the nature of gender, sexuality and race, and the moral implications of globalization. His general thesis is that, "formal reasoning happens within conceptual frameworks but it cannot prove or provide those frameworks. Metaphor, allegory, parable, narrative, and life experience all reveal constructive visions that frame and guide moral reasoning. While these are not themselves reducible to formal reasoning, neither are they irrational." (xii) His task in the book is to understand how we get our moral visions and then to consider the ethics of negotiating between them. Cady claims that we get our moral visions from many different sources, and that, with regard to moral argument, moral visions lead and guide such argumentation, rather than result from it. (xiii) Cady begins by briefly surveying various critiques of a modern, analytic approach to philosophy; specifically, in ethics. The common theme here is that traditional analytic methods of reasoning are inadequate for describing and understanding moral reasoning. In subsequent chapters he argues that although reason is valuable within a specific ethical framework (e.g. deontology, consequentialism, virtue ethics), reason alone does not get us into or out of these frameworks. In other words, we are not merely argued into or out of our particular moral framework; rather, ethical change is also a result of psychological, experiential, and aesthetic considerations. Cady examines the aesthetic aspects of moral thought (chapter four), but he does not spend much time on psychology per se and its relationship to moral theory. Given his main thesis (see above), this is unfortunate. Cady himself claims that *Moral Vision* is only a sketch or picture of an alternative to the standard, analytic approach to moral theory. However, I fear that without further development of his views, few analytically-minded philosophers will be inclined to follow his lead even if they are sympathetic to his approach. Similarly, Cady does not spend much time specifically presenting arguments for or against his views. Rather, he will often simply state his own view, or else quote the opinions of others with whom he agrees and leave it at that. There is one other aspect of *Moral Vision* that renders it much less effective than it could otherwise have been. While the first four chapters cohere rather well with Cady's thesis, the tone and emphasis of chapters five through seven are, so to speak, all over the map. What begins as an inspiring adventure into what a robust picture of what morality might be quickly degenerates into an angry diatribe. In chapter five, for example, Cady lumps those who hold traditional values about sexuality (he calls them heterosexists) with racists and those who want to dehumanize women. He writes, "Racists both enrage and inspire with racial slurs, sexist with gender put-downs, heterosexists with crude and hateful labels, and often the bigoted words are metaphoric and not literal, provoking images that entangle imagination, emotion, morality, and immorality... Surely their aesthetic power adds to their destructiveness by grabbing, engaging, provoking, and holding our attention." (71) In doing so, Cady himself undoubtedly realizes that he is using the very strategy for which he condemns racists, sexist, and "heterosexists." One wonders, therefore, why he adopts this strategy. In chapter six, Cady quotes philosophers who essentially equate science with racism, claiming that, "scientific racism [is] one of modernity's more durable intellectual products." He also appears to equate being caucasian with being a racist, or at least employs a stereotype when he writes that, "whitely people have a staggering faith in their own rightness and goodness, and that of other whitely people." (78) Although he rightly notes that there is no scientific basis for race, he continues to write using race-oriented terminology, referring to "whites" as the dominant group and "blacks" as the disadvantaged, subordinate group. Given his prior emphasis on the power of metaphor for influencing one's moral outlook, one wonders why Cady has decided to cast social interaction in such combative terms rather than seeking to inspire people of all ethnicities to embrace one another as people worthy of respect. Also, as he does in chapter five, in this chapter Cady again portrays caucasians and heterosexuals in a negative light. Specifically, he approvingly cites Marilyn Frye's view that white, male heterosexuals, "remain comfortably oblivious, not even noticing the social structures that provide them with advantages, imagining that merit alone accounts for well-being, secured in self-deceptive conceptual frameworks of self-deluding moral visions," while non-whites, along with gays and lesbians, "have a better understanding of what's going on" (82). The point of this passage seems to be that while heterosexual males are self-deluded and oblivious, gays and non-whites are informed and aware. Again one wonders why Cady employs such unsubstantiated stereotypes instead of cogent arguments to support his views. There appears to be a lot of anger just beneath the surface in much of Cady's writing, which for several reasons is a hindrance to his project. For one thing, angry people are seldom, if ever, able to objectively examine their and others' points of view. Moreover, this aspect of *Moral Vision* is largely out of sync with the tone and focus of the rest of his material. Even in these chapters Cady makes several important claims, but I suspect that most readers will either be so filled with "righteous anger" at having their cause vindicated in writing, or so indignant at being ridiculed and browbeaten that, ultimately, the point of prior chapters will have been lost. So, while I cannot recommend *Moral Vision* for its organization, writing style, or for having carefully presented and argued for a substantive philosophical view, I do recommend that readers consider the issues which Cady discusses, even if the reader heartily disagrees with Cady's take on them.

What is moral reasoning? Are we being reasonable when we make moral decisions if we cannot supply compelling arguments, criteria, necessary and sufficient conditions, decisive empirical evidence and the like? In *Moral Vision*, Duane L. Cady critiques the contemporary inclination to model reason after textbook natural science, noting that our

values are not conclusions of proofs or derivations but frameworks in which such reasoning may take place, frameworks that we struggle to understand and explain. Cady goes on to suggest a rich conception of reason beyond that of stereotypical science, one that reflects aesthetic, historical, experiential, and pluralistic aspects of moral thinking, one that widens and deepens descriptions of how moral thinking typically happens. This book will be of interest to anyone wondering what philosophy may contribute to our contemporary struggle with conflicting values and value collisions, both personal as well as cultural.

There are two things I find frustrating. One is that although I spent a lot of time in graduate school studying ethical theories, I find that they aren't very helpful in trying to resolve real-life dilemmas...The other frustration is that serious ethical disagreements rarely seem to get resolved, and good arguments or at least, what seem like good arguments to me rarely seem to change anyone's mind. A new book by Duane Cady...has given me fresh insight on both of these perplexities. (Jeremy Iggers Star Tribune)Cady draws on I. Murdoch, S. Langer, M. Nussbaum, and the American pragmatists to develop a rich conception of moral vision that includes the goods of pluralism, nonviolence, and coherenceHis clear arguments and use of texts would be helpful for students working through issues of metaethical theory and praxis. (CHOICE)A deeply felt, wonderfully clear and heartening book. Moral Vision reflects decades of writing and teaching about theories of war by a philosopher actively engaged in non-violent projects, waging peace. Duane Cady's revisionary moral concepts enable us to think against violence, to see non-violence as reason's dream. (Sara Ruddick, New School University)About the AuthorDuane L. Cady is professor of philosophy at Hamline University in Minnesota.