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Book Review:

Barnes, M., Brannelly, T., Ward, L., Ward, N. (2015). Ethics of care: Critical advances in international perspectives

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Joint special issue: Love in Professional Practice.

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Book Review

**Barnes, M., Brannelly, T., Ward, L., Ward, N. (2015).
Ethics of care: Critical advances in international
perspectives. Policy Press. 286pp, ISBN – 978-1-44731-
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This edited volume provides a comprehensive conceptual and practical exploration of ethics of care from a diverse range of perspectives and contexts. The market place for such a book is not over-crowded and this allows the editors to rightly lay claim to a book that forges new ground in terms of the relevance and applicability of ethics of care globally and across professions. The book is helpfully split into two focussed sections: theoretical developments and practical applications.

The first section examines the theoretical and conceptual landscape. The significance and centrality of valuing humans as relational beings is established as a foundation stone, and the book makes persuasive and powerful links to the impact that this apparently individualistic ethos can have on the political and cultural environment in which we live. It is this interplay between the individual and their environment (local and global) which makes this book conceptually such a useful and impactful read. The critical exploration of the relevance of ethics of care is timely in the context of neo-liberalism reappears as a motif throughout the book and the role it can have in helping reshape the way we think about democracy, welfare policies and the relationship between states and citizens. The book keeps a keen eye on international perspectives to underline the universality of ethics of care. An example of this is Vivienne Bozalek's excellent chapter on the role that a relational approach to readdressing privileged irresponsibility in South Africa could have in terms of establishing

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shared responsibility and more importantly a shared vision of future societal relationships and constructs.

The second section of the book provides a wide-ranging series of practice-focussed contributions from across the globe. These chapters engage with a range of complex practice contexts which include residential child care, older people, carers' issues, HIV care and disabilities. The real strength of these contributions lies in the complex issues which are grappled with and meaningfully understood through the application of a care ethics perspective. For example, Laura Steckley casts new light on the uncomfortable ethical debate around the appropriateness of using physical restraint with young people. Issues of risk, power and control are unpicked and understood, through holding a clear sense of the motivation to care being at the core of decisions and actions. This is useful as it provides conceptual and ethical space for such an issue to be examined and also potentially redefined for practitioners. This section will be particularly attractive to practitioners as the focus is on professional application and the issues explored are familiar and complex in equal measure.

This book is highly recommended for academics, practitioners and students. It provides a comprehensive account of ethics of care and also places this within the current political and economic landscape. By doing so, this book allows questions to be asked about the complex reality of care giving and receiving, and the connections that this can and should have with the development policy and practice across the globe.

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