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View-Shaping, First Personal Authority, and the Asymmetry between Providing and Withholding

Clara W. Cullen

Introduction

In her paper, *Freedom and Influence in Formative Education*, Kyla Ebels-Duggan addresses the debate regarding the moral justification of parents and educators raising children under a particular normative outlook, with normative outlook and beliefs referring to one's perspective on what actions, behaviors, outcomes, or beliefs are acceptable or correct. This normative outlook pertains not just to moral judgments but also views on the superior way of life. This debate questioning if parents and educators are morally correct in shaping their children according to their normative beliefs is of particular importance amidst rising political contention regarding the content and methods of public education. In contrast to many philosophers who favor an "open future" approach, where important choices are left undecided until the child is able to choose for themselves, Ebels-Duggan argues that parents should raise their children according to their own normative beliefs. Ebels-Duggan agrees with her counterparts that respecting autonomy is a crucial requirement when teaching children, yet she suggests doing so does not prohibit educators from offering their own well-reasoned normative views. However, Ebels-Duggan's argument remains somewhat ambiguous as to the methods of view-shaping; is it, for example, morally justifiable to deliberately withhold information, narratives, or views in attempts to shape another person?

This paper will side with Ebels-Duggan in the view that parents and those with influence can and likely should attempt to raise children within a normative outlook they believe to be good. Although I agree with the general claim Ebels-Duggan presents, I believe her argument leaves ambiguity as to what methods of view-shaping are morally justifiable. View-shaping can occur through at least two means: providing information and withholding information. Yet, Ebels-Duggan's argument would suggest that both

providing and withholding are morally justifiable means of view-shaping. In this paper, I argue that intentionally withholding information as a method of view-shaping is morally objectionable because it disrespects the other's first personal authority, or the ability and right of an individual to know and own their own psychological state and character more than anyone else (Parrott 2011).

This paper has four major sections. First, I present Ebels-Duggan's view and argument on view-shaping and discuss the ambiguity she leaves regarding withholding information as a method of view-shaping. I then present a case to highlight asymmetry between providing and withholding to display the moral difference between the two methods. My third section will discuss first personal authority as a foundation for respecting autonomy and a crucial requirement for view-shaping, leading to my alteration to Ebels-Duggan's argument. Lastly, I provide four additional cases as examples of the moral distinction between providing and withholding as methods of view-shaping.

Educating and View-Shaping

In his work, *The Child's Right to an Open Future*, Joel Feinberg argues that educators and those who influence the upbringing of children need to educate them while treating their autonomy rights as rights in trust, or "rights to be preserved for them" (Feinberg 1994). To Feinberg, this includes leaving all options open for a child until they are able to choose between those options themselves. This upbringing, he argues, excludes educators from teaching a particular normative outlook because doing so would limit the options available to the child, thus violating their autonomy.

Ebels-Duggan explains Feinberg's view is problematic because he must either support a maximization of options open to a child or allow for some influences to be blocked. Yet, a maximization of options would still allow some other outlook to influence the child, just not the educator's outlook. As an example of this consequence, she points to profit-seeking corporations that aim to shape children; she explains that directionless teaching leaves the child vulnerable to inevitable, less valuable influences that would still violate Feinberg's understanding of autonomy because the child is being shaped nonetheless. Ebels-Duggan then points out that the second possibility of allowing some influences to be blocked would require a principled way to draw the line between possibilities a child is entitled to and those that can be closed. Yet, this line can only be drawn through a judgment call on what is right and wrong, valuable or harmful. Thus, it is impossible to raise a child in a way where all options remain open to them independent of the educator's normative outlook.

Ebels-Duggan's central critique of Feinberg and those who argue against normative instruction for children is that they misunderstand autonomy, or the freedom to guide one's own life according to their own value judgments. To Feinberg, it would be incorrect to interfere with an adult's choices and way of life for the reason that their choices are poor ones. Following the Kantian conception of autonomy, Ebels-Duggan critiques Feinberg's principle of autonomy saying it regards desires and inclinations as authoritative; such innate desires would signify which options must surely be left open for a

child. For Feinberg, the options that must be kept open for children are those which the child would choose between once reaching the age of maturity. However, those matured decisions and desires will inherently depend on the child's upbringing. One could rely on innate or pre-social tendencies of the child, but these are likely to include selfishness, unkindness, or other tendencies that parents are responsible to rear children away from. It would be impermissible, for example, for children to view stealing, lying, or bullying as good or acceptable.

Kant, however, views inclinations as a threat to our autonomy because they occur within us passively, not because of our reason or other characteristics that make us agents (Kant 1998; Ebels-Duggan, forthcoming). So, if the goal is to educate for autonomy, it would be inappropriate to design such an education from the child's (or anyone's) inclinations or unreasoned desires. Instead, Kant views autonomy of thought or values as a matter of *first personal authority* (Ebels-Duggan 2018; Moran 2001). As Ebels-Duggan explains, "Our principles, or maxims, of action count as our own because we determine their content through our own assessment of the reasons supporting them" (Ebels-Duggan 2018). Thus, to honor the autonomy of others is not to encourage inclinations, but rather to respect one's authority over their own reasoning and appreciation. Practically speaking, this may include shaping views in a way that allows the agent to provide their own attention and thinking to the reasons provided.

To Ebels-Duggan, and as taken on in this paper, this is the understanding of autonomy that should limit or approve what educators teach to children. As such, she believes we are not morally justified in shaping views through methods reliant on inclinations of the agent. She again uses for-profit corporations as an example, explaining that such corporations seek to shape outlooks without regard to reasons or principles. Such corporations largely rely on associations of products with desires, often without a basis in reality. They shape views and motivate actions by using the other's inclinations instead of their capacity to reason. Such unprincipled view-shaping disrespects first, personal authority, as it disregards the agent's reasoning and is thus unjustified. Likewise, she explains, if a parent instrumentally shapes their child's views for their own ends and does not care about putting the child in a position to appreciate the reasons of their outlook, this disrespects the first personal authority of the child.

Ebels-Duggan argues that view-shaping through internally held and well-reasoned principles does not disrespect a child's autonomy. In fact, doing so may facilitate the child's use of their own first personal authority. When educators present concepts or viewpoints, this generally provides opportunities for the student to attentively think through their reasons. Ebels-Duggan does not suggest educators should force views on others, as this would indicate lack of respect for their reasoning and thus autonomy, but believes educating by presenting their own beliefs and views on what is good or bad does not present a conflict for autonomy as many philosophers have suggested (e.g., Callan 1997; Feinberg 1994; Gutmann 1999). Because view-shaping relies on and is responsive to the reasoning capacity of the individual being educated, Ebels-Duggan views normative education as morally acceptable.

Ebels-Duggan suggests that the best thing parents and educators can do is thoroughly think through their own beliefs and rationalizations. She explains, “The responsible parent does not merely expose her child to the largest and most random set of influences, but rather makes considered judgments about which influences are salutary and which are rightly excluded and actively seeks to close certain existential possibilities.” When parents shape views according to their good principles, they work through the child’s reasons and not inclinations because the child must internally evaluate those principles. Ebels-Duggan believes a child’s right to autonomy offers important guidelines for parents, but that it does not conflict with educating by principled conceptions of the good because the child can still assess such conceptions themselves. Ebels-Duggan’s argument on view-shaping can be presented as follows:

1. Education should respect autonomy.
2. Respecting autonomy requires respecting first personal authority.
3. View-shaping through reasoned principles is compatible with first personal authority.

Conclusion: Educating by view-shaping on reasoned principles is acceptable

Yet, as in Premise 3, Ebels-Duggan does not differentiate between different methods of view-shaping that can exist under reasoned principles. For example, when she says that parents can exclude and actively close possibilities, she does not acknowledge that an educator could do so through providing or withholding. The educator could provide information and reasons in order to close the options, or the educator could hide the information and never provide the child with reasons. Furthermore, Ebels-Duggan’s language to describe justified view-shaping throughout her paper remains similarly ambiguous. She says educators can guide, educate, teach to value, communicate their views, and shape values and normative outlooks. Again, such shaping can occur through providing information or withholding. Because she does not distinguish between these two methods of view-shaping, the following premises and conclusion naturally follow her argument:

4. View-shaping can include both providing and withholding information.
5. So, principled providing and withholding are compatible with first personal authority.

Conclusion: Principled providing and withholding are acceptable for educating by view-shaping.

As Ebels-Duggan’s argument stands, one could conclude that both providing and withholding information are morally justified forms of view-shaping. I suggest that there is a moral distinction between the two methods.

While Ebels-Duggan herself posits that first personal authority is crucial, her view on acceptable methods of view-shaping within the scope of first personal authority is largely ambiguous. For Ebels-Duggan, parents must believe their views to be right,

and if they do, they can generally trust that they respect the first personal authority of their children, as long as they shape in a way that is responsive to the child's reasoning and not inclinations. If having reasoned principles is the key factor for respecting the other's first personal authority, as Ebels-Duggan seems to suggest, then providing and withholding information would both meet the moral requirement for shaping views. Yet, although an educator could believe in a view and then provide or withhold information to another in a way that is responsive to and reliant on their own reasons, doing so through intentionally withholding information generally disrespects the other's first personal authority by disregarding their capacity to reason through the withheld information. In the following section, I present a case to show the asymmetry between providing and withholding information as they relate to first personal authority. This asymmetry shows that having good principles behind view-shaping is not enough to justify it, although I maintain that having reasoned principles is one moral requirement for view-shaping.

Providing and Withholding Asymmetry

Ebels-Duggan's argument suggests two requirements for view-shaping: first, that the view-shaper respects the other's first personal authority, and second, that the view-shaper must have well-reasoned principles supporting the normative outlook they teach. Her argument seems to suggest that first personal authority will be naturally respected when the view-shaper has well-reasoned principles. By this view, what matters is that the outlook-shaping stems from good principles and works through reasoning. If the educator has reasoned through their outlook and believes it to be good, they are in the right to educate according to those principles. Because Ebels-Duggan does not distinguish between methods of view-shaping, her view indicates that both providing and withholding information are acceptable forms of view-shaping when the educator is principled in their own reasoning.

Yet, when examining providing and withholding information side by side, it is no longer clear that having good reasons is enough to meet the requirement to respect first personal authority or that the two requirements are automatically compatible. Consider the case George Tsai presents regarding providing another with reasons or evidence in attempts to shape their views.

Claire, a recent college graduate living at home, has just this afternoon received acceptance letters from some law schools and philosophy PhD programs. Peter, her father, is anxious about the decision she has to make a month from now either to go to law school or philosophy graduate school. Peter thinks that Claire is insufficiently capable of carefully considering everything that she ought to be considering before making her decision and worries that Claire will make the wrong decision. Peter strongly prefers that Claire choose law over philosophy, believes that Claire would be making a serious mistake should she choose the latter, and is not open to Claire persuading him that he is wrong. This evening, Peter presents Claire

with lots of information—income statistics, placement data, labor market outlook, testimonials on the climate for women, and so on—about both professions. Peter provides this information with a view to getting Claire to choose law school over philosophy graduate school, making his intentions plain to Claire. (Assume for the sake of argument that the information Peter presents to Claire is relevant, accurate, and unbiased. So, Peter presents Claire with good evidence.) (Tsai 2014, 94)

George Tsai argues that although Peter acts by rationally persuading Claire, he is wrong to do so. Peter's paternalism is morally objectionable, Tsai believes, because he provides Claire with the information on the same day that she has the opportunity to consider her options, so Peter interferes with Claire's personal assessment of her options (94). Tsai explains that this form of paternalism shows that Peter does not trust Claire to "adequately recognize or weigh reasons that bear on her good" and believes she is "insufficiently capable of engaging with those reasons" (111). So, to Tsai, Peter provides information out of distrust of Claire's capacity to gather reasons and to independently assess the given reasons.

Yet, Ebels-Duggan's piece suggests Peter is right in his attempts to shape Claire's views to prefer law school. For Ebels-Duggan, providing these reasons early would be morally acceptable, and often preferable, as it allows opportunities for Claire to assess the given reasons she might not otherwise have. Furthermore, it would seem that for Ebels-Duggan, Peter is not providing reasons out of distrust of Claire's reasoning, but instead because he values her capacity to reason and assess the information when she has it. He wants to provide Claire with additional reasons and information that she can internally think through and form a conclusion from.

From Ebels-Duggan's two requirements of having good principles and respecting first personal authority, it seems to be morally acceptable for Peter to provide this information to Claire in attempts to shape her views. He does so based on his well-reasoned principles, and he respects Claire's first personal authority because he respects her ability to assess the information he provides and to make an informed decision. So, providing information as a method of view-shaping is morally acceptable.

Now, imagine that during Peter's research, he comes across information he thinks Claire would assess to decide against the law, such as evidence on the soul depleting nature of practicing law and the soul enriching nature philosophy (again assuming for the argument that such evidence is relevant, accurate, and unbiased). When taking all information into account, Peter still regards law as the optimal choice for Claire and in general. Yet, he believes that if Claire were to know the evidence regarding souls in law and philosophy, she would form the opposite conclusion he did and decide to pursue philosophy. So, he deliberately withholds the evidence in favor of philosophy as he presents his argument to Claire.

There seems to be an intuitive difference between the morality of the two versions of this case. Where the first version seems acceptable under Ebels-Duggan's framework of first personal authority, the second feels morally questionable under that same framework, causing us to evaluate what made the difference. In both versions of this case,

Peter attempts to shape Claire based on his reasoned principles and attempts to shape views in a way that is responsive to Claire's reasoning, acknowledging that she will think through and make judgements on the information she has. The only difference with the new iteration is that Peter withholds information. Because the only difference is that Peter deliberately withholds information, it appears that withholding information as means of view-shaping is morally questionable.

As laid out, Ebels-Duggan's argument would suggest that Peter is still in the right in his attempts to shape Claire's views because the view-shaping is based on Peter's good principles, even when intentionally withholding information. Yet, when the second case is examined in light of first personal authority, it is no longer clear that Peter's attempts to shape his daughter's views are acceptable. Although he is responsive to Claire's capacity to reason and assess (he believes Claire will understand the reasons and form a conclusion from them), he is no longer respectful of that capacity. He withholds the information because he fears she would use her capacity to form a different conclusion than he desires.

The asymmetry between providing and withholding information, even in the context of good principles, seems to deny Premise 5 of Ebels-Duggan's argument, that providing and withholding are both compatible with first personal authority. Following Ebels-Duggan's view on first personal authority, I suggest that withholding information is a violation of first personal authority. As such, it is not a morally acceptable method of shaping views.

First Personal Autonomy

Liberal Political Theory stipulates that each person should be free to choose for himself what is good and to live his life by these self-decided principles. Yet distinguishing which principles and views are our own fuels much of the debates on autonomy and first personal authority in relation to raising children and more generally.

Ebels-Duggan relies on a Kantian understanding of autonomy to answer these questions. For Kant, autonomy seems to depend on active and internal reasonings. As Ebels-Duggan explains, "when we consider the reasons that support acting a certain way, determine that these reasons are sufficient, and act on this determination, we bring our own activity to bear and so act autonomously." Inclinations, on the other hand, are passive and thus not indicators of autonomy or the attributes of an agent. Thus, she claims, Kant views autonomy as a matter of first personal authority. First personal authority attributes thoughts, values, and beliefs to a person's free agency only when they are the result of their judgments or assessment of the reasons for them (Smith 2005; Scanlon 2010; Hieronymi 2014). Principles of action are "subject to the authority of our judgments," while inclinations or desires are "motivational states that simply happen in or to us" (Ebels-Duggan 2018). She explains:

If I were to encounter a poisonous snake while hiking, I would be afraid. But the fear does not seem to be a mere force, some arational part of the causal order. It

is, rather, an intelligible, warranted response to the danger of the situation. When all is going well, the fear arises through my attention to and thinking about actual features of my situation and would change in response to changes in my interpretations of these features. Upon realizing that what I took to be a poisonous snake is really perfectly harmless, my fear would dissipate, replaced by relief. Fear that is describable in this way is fear over which I have first personal authority. (396)

Contrast a phobia: if I am subject to a phobia of snakes, my feeling of fear persists even in the face of my wholly sincere and considered judgment that there is no danger. In this case the fear does incur on me as an alien force, something that happens in me and is not subject to my authority. (397)

For Ebels-Duggan's first personal authority, attitudes, including judgments, desires, and emotions are one's own when they respond to one's own assessment of the reasons supporting them. If they do, it makes sense to attribute such attitudes to free expressions of one's own agency, not to "alien forces occurring in me" (Ebels-Duggan 2018). Thus, using first personal authority to choose normative outlooks requires being attentive to and thinking about the reasons for the normative outlook.

If a child is to be educated in a way that respects their first personal authority, they must be educated in a way where they are able to exercise their first personal authority. The outlook they develop must be responsive to their own appreciation of the reasons and values that support it; they must be "able to affirm it from the inside" (Ebels-Duggan 2018). As such, providing reasons to a child does not disrespect their first personal authority. The child can internally evaluate those reasons and then abide by them or reject them.

Yet, providing reasons is not the only way parents can teach children an outlook. Ebels-Duggan's argument does not fully address other methods or if those methods respect the child's first personal authority. In her argument, Ebels-Duggan does rule out cases when the influencer motivates the child's outlook through the child's inclinations and desires as opposed to interacting with her first personal authority. Yet, as shown in George Tsai's case of Peter and Claire, it is possible for educators to be aware of and responsive to another's first personal autonomy and still disrespectful of that authority. In Tsai's case, Peter recognizes and relies on Claire's ability to reason, and he desires to present and withhold information to facilitate her reasoning. However, when he decides to withhold information because he thinks she would use the information to form a different conclusion than he has, he no longer respects her first personal autonomy, although he remains aware of and responsive to it. I suggest that most cases of intentionally withholding information for the purpose of view-shaping in fact disrespect the first personal authority of the other person. My argument revision can be stated as follows:

1. Education should respect autonomy.
2. Respecting autonomy requires respecting first personal authority.
3. Educating by view-shaping can include both providing and withholding information.
4. Providing information respects first personal authority.

5. Intentionally withholding information does not respect first personal authority.

Conclusion: It is acceptable to provide information but unacceptable to intentionally withhold to educate by view-shaping.

To clarify this discussion, withholding information for the purpose of view-shaping as discussed here remains distinct from broader debates on the morality of lying, misleading, and reticence. If lying is to say X when X is false (Mahon 2003), then withholding as a method of view-shaping is distinct from lying because one does not say something that is false when withholding. Rather, withholding is more about what one does not say. Further, withholding for view-shaping remains distinct from misleading. Misleading is to influence another to believe X when you yourself do not believe X to be true (Berstler 2019). Although there are surely cases where someone does not believe the view they spread, and would thus be misleading, such cases already lack moral justification by the requirements for view-shaping because it is not done through well-reasoned principles the view-shaper believes in. In cases of morally justified view-shaping, the view-shaper must believe their view to be true; so, such withholding is not a type of misleading.

Withholding for view-shaping is perhaps comparable to the concept of reticence, as reticence is to not say X when X is true. As Kant and others have discussed, one can be truthful without telling the whole truth (Mahon 2003). Similarly, one can shape views without providing all information. Yet, withholding for the purpose of view-shaping is distinct from the more general debate regarding the moral justification of reticence. The morality of withholding (reticence) as discussed in this paper specifically evaluates withholding with an intent to shape another's views. As discussed in this paper, the actions of view-shaping have at least two justifications that must be fulfilled independent of the broader debate on reticence. This paper examines if withholding information meets those two requirements. It may be the case that withholding for the purpose of view-shaping must also meet the general moral requirements for reticence, but those requirements are beyond the scope of this paper.

Application to Additional Cases

Here I present four cases of withholding information as means of shaping views of those one has influence over. I will examine each case according to Ebels-Duggan's two moral requirements for view-shaping and evaluate if these cases of view-shaping through withholding information are morally justified.

Case 1: Parents Teaching Abstinence

Imagine a parent who believes in chastity and abstinence until marriage. For them, sexual intimacy within marriage is a good thing, but sexual intimacy outside of marriage is a bad thing. They believe the purpose of intimacy is to create and raise children and to forge bonds of emotional connection between a couple. Yet, they believe these things can only happen in a positive way when a couple is wholly committed to each

other to a degree that requires marriage. As they believe adopting this view would benefit their child, they aim to raise their child with this perspective. They do so by expressing their feelings and beliefs described above and the reasons for them.

As this case stands, these parents meet the first requirement of view-shaping to teach by well-reasoned principles. They have thought through their beliefs, and they use those principles to teach their child. Similarly, the parents meet the second requirement of respecting the first personal authority of their child when they present their reasons to her. They allow their child opportunities to apply their own assessment to the principles they believe in.

Now imagine that these parents also intentionally withhold information that they believe would discourage their child from their own view. These parents do not, for example, teach their child about forms of birth control or safe sex. They fear doing so would encourage their child to consider and form what is to them an incorrect rationalization about sexual intimacy, namely that it would be appropriate outside of marriage. If their child were to ask about potential options, they would immediately disregard, attack, and ignore such options without meaningful discussion.

This case provides another intuitive distinction between the morality of view-shaping through providing information and withholding information. These parents still have and use well-reasoned principles in their attempts to shape their child's views. They believe they were better off for abiding by abstinence, and they believe their child will be if they do so too. They do not desire to spread the view to their child because they believe it will advantage them as parents, but rather because they genuinely believe it is the right lifestyle. Yet, they no longer respect the first personal authority of their child. They withhold information *because* they think their child would form beliefs and make choices they do not agree with if it had such information. This fear of their child's opposing reasoning indicates a lack of respect for its first personal authority.

Note, these parents are different from parents who more unintentionally neglect teaching their children about safe sex because they are too uncomfortable to talk about it. These uncomfortable parents may also have reasoned principles supporting abstinence until marriage, even though they avoid teaching about it, and they may respect their children's ability to reason and rationalize on their own. In such instances, their withholding of information emerges from their own insecurities. Although problematic for other reasons, this does not intrinsically violate the child's first personal authority because it does not stem from disrespect of the child's own assessment.

Similarly, the intentionally withholding parents are different than parents who think the school will take over the responsibility of sex education, or parents that merely forget or never get around to teaching about it. It may be the case that they themselves do not view premarital sex as an option and thus unintentionally withhold the information because they do not think to teach about it, but their motivation is not to limit or avoid their child's reasoning. The outcomes of this may be problematic for practical reasons, yet the intention of these parents separates them from the intentionally withholding parents regarding respecting autonomy. The intentionally withholding parents fear that teaching about premarital sex would lead their child to develop views

different than their own, and thus do not respect the child's autonomy in their intent to withhold such information and possibilities from them.

Case 2: Amish Parents

Consider now a case presented by Feinberg and objected to by Ebels-Duggan. Feinberg argues that the traditional Amish upbringing violates a children's right to an open future because it passes on a particular normative outlook and blocks other viable options. Yet, as Ebels-Duggan provides, the Amish parents presumably offer their children all options that they believe to be worthwhile and good.

Ebels-Duggan's response to Feinberg regarding the Amish parents seems to stem from the requirement for good principles. Like other parents, the Amish parents view their values to be superior to the alternatives. Like other parents, they may attempt to close off options and alternative views to exclude possibilities they view as inferior or wrong. As Ebels-Duggan points out, objections to the Amish parent's attempts to shape their children's views may in fact be objections to the Amish tradition and values, not to their qualification of this first requirement as many responsible parents aim to shape their children's outlooks.

Yet, Ebels-Duggan's evaluation of this case does not respond to the requirement to respect the first personal authority of the one whose views you try to shape. It may be that parents in this case close options through providing reasons against the undesirable options, in which case they maintain respect for their child's first personal authority. However, if these parents intentionally refuse to introduce information to their child on the undesirable options *because* they think their child would internally conclude that the alternative options are superior, then they do not respect their child's autonomy, although for different reasons than Feinberg originally suggests. In such a case, they fear that the authority of their child's reasoning will differ from their own reasoning, and by intentionally withholding information because of this fear, they also seek to limit the reasoning opportunities of their child.

Case 3: Doubting Missionaries

Consider now the efforts of missionaries to persuade an individual to commit to their religious faith and outlook. These missionaries provide their student with lessons, church doctrine, scripture references, and other information that they believe in. Up to this point, the missionaries rely on both well-reasoned principles and respect the first personal authority of their religious student. Now imagine that these missionaries also avoid topics and information they believe would dissuade their student from adopting their views. For example, they may deliberately avoid teaching about their church's controversial history with race. They themselves do not understand the history and cannot provide reasons they believe in to explain it beyond a more general and overpowering belief in their religion overall.

Conceivably, the missionaries may withhold the information on their church's controversial history knowingly but not deliberately. They may, for example, forget or never get around to teaching the history due to limited meeting time. Although their

undeliberate neglect is perhaps problematic for other reasons, it is not problematic in its relation to respecting autonomy.

Alternatively, the missionaries may be aware that they have not yet mentioned the controversial history, but this may be a result of a plan to first teach principles they find to be most important and foundational. It may be their intent to provide information on the controversial history once they have laid the groundwork to support their reasoning for maintaining their faith in light of the controversy. They respect that their student may still come to a conclusion different than their own once they have finished their lessons, but they will have provided their student with a foundation to understand their own conclusions and consider it as a viable option. In this variation, the missionaries seem to maintain an overall respect for their student's first personal authority because they respect their capacity to assess and plan to provide them with all of the information as their lessons continue; they simply need time to present the entirety of their principles. In a sense, this form of withholding is more comparable to a prolonged, long-winded providing case.

However, if the missionaries avoid the controversy and intend to continue to do so because they think their student would not accept their views if offered the history, they would disrespect the first personal authority of the individual they are teaching. Although the missionaries use well-reasoned principles to teach, they indicate disrespect for their student's authority for their own reason.

Interestingly, this case of view-shaping may also be morally unjustified by Ebels-Duggan's argument if the missionaries do not genuinely believe in the reasons behind their withholding. In this case, the missionaries withhold information about their church's history that they themselves do not understand or support. They do not genuinely believe its history was a good thing or that it would be good for their student to believe so. Yet, the missionaries do believe in the church overall, and they think it would be good for their student to believe in their church overall. Their acceptance of their church's history comes from their belief in their church, which they believe to be more important than their doubts about its history. So, they would be unjustified in teaching their student that the controversial history was a good thing since they do not genuinely believe it, but they would be justified in teaching reasons for their overall belief in their church.

Case 4: Return of the Ex-Lover (Lindsey)

Your son Brett recently broke up with his girlfriend Lindsey, who abandoned Brett and moved directly after their breakup. You consider the breakup to be for the best since their relationship was always rocky, and Lindsey was emotionally abusive to Brett. Brett is still distraught over the breakup, and although he knows the relationship is over, you suspect he would still get back together with Lindsey if he had the chance. Thus far, the only reason Brett does not attempt to renew his relationship with Lindsey is because she disappeared, so he believes she does not want to get back together. Since the breakup, you have done what you can to help Brett recover and to view the breakup as a good thing, and from an objective view it really is best for Brett not to date the

controlling and abusive Lindsey. Although you have thoroughly presented your reasons on this view, Brett does not agree.

Now suppose that you run into Lindsey while at the grocery store. She tells you that she moved back into town and suggests a desire for you to inform Brett. You then talk to Brett about Lindsey to again try to convince him that she was bad for him, but you deliberately do not tell Brett of Lindsey's return or her desire to reconnect with him. You do not tell him because you think he would form the wrong conclusion and do the wrong thing if he were to know.

As I have argued, you would be morally incorrect in attempting to shape Brett through withholding in this way. Yet, this case offers a meaningful objection to my argument: it is objectively better for Brett not to know of Lindsey's return and her desire to reconnect because they had a harmful relationship. Getting back together would be the wrong choice. One could argue against my second premise which is that respecting autonomy requires respecting first personal authority. Instead, autonomy may be more about exercising your capacities to achieve the right result. In this sense you would be right to withhold the information from Brett because if he were to know of Lindsey's return, he would make the objectively incorrect choice.

It seems to be the case that when first personal authority is required for autonomy, individuals like Brett may make a wrong or harmful decision. Brett's reason and assessment of the situation would have led him back into a harmful relationship. However, getting the right result seems to be a problematic guide for respecting autonomy, since the "right result" is often highly subjective. Although the right result may appear more obvious in this case, many cases do not have such a clear, right answer. Notably, even though we, from an external viewpoint, may view their continued separation as the right result, this is not what Brett would believe if he knew. Autonomy by exercising capacities to achieve the right result seems to rely on a reality that there is a right result. However, if there is an objectively right result for each circumstance, we lack the capacity to consistently discover those right results. Or, if the right result is subjective to an individual's values or reasoning, as Brett might contend, this concept of autonomy still must account for reasoning in a way it currently lacks. Thus, autonomy defined by exercising capacities to achieve the right result does not seem to be a viable alternative requirement for view-shaping.

Alternatively, someone considering Kant's arguments against acting according to inclinations could offer different objections to my argument against withholding. They could suggest that if Brett knew of Lindsey's return and chose to get back together, this would not be truly autonomous as this decision would be based on emotions and longing rather than self-legislated principles. They might suggest that even if the parent were to provide the information, Brett would be acted upon by these emotions and inclinations nonetheless. So, by withholding, the parent could relieve Brett from those forces which he would fall prey to.

However, the parent withholding, even with these intentions, transforms a situation where external forces (i.e. Brett's emotions) may potentially determine Brett's choices, into one in which external forces (i.e. the parent's interference) are definitely

determining Brett's choices. By withholding information, the parent not only shows disrespect for Brett's reasoning and self-regulating capacity, but they also limit the choices Brett has. So, withholding is not justified by the withholder believing the other would be overtaken by their own emotions rather than reasoning and principles.

In this case I argue that the right result, be that an outcome or the protecting the agent from acting according to emotion instead of reason, does not justify withholding. Even if there were a definite right result that we could identify and bring about, I would argue that we would still be wrong in withholding the information as means of view-shaping because a respect for an individual's own reasoning and assessment would be disregarded. Although the requirement to respect first personal authority does allow for individuals to potentially make wrong choices, or to make them influenced by their emotions instead of their reason, I maintain that respecting the first personal authority of others is a crucial moral requirement for view-shaping.

Conclusion

Although I agree with Ebels-Duggan that parents and educators are morally justified in their attempts to spread their genuine normative views in ways that respect autonomy, I suggest that withholding information or options as a method of view-shaping generally indicates disrespect for first personal authority, even when responsive to the reasoning capacity of the individual. Those with influence might genuinely believe in the view they hope to spread through intentionally withholding information, yet such withholding indicates disrespect for the internal reasoning of the other individual. Surely it is not practical or required to provide all information or viewpoints to another at all times, and future discussion could elaborate on this distinction. Still, intentionally withholding information should meet the two requirements to justify withholding as means of shaping another's views: the view-shaper must work through well-reasoned principles, and they must respect the other's first personal authority.

Notably, even if both requirements are met and the educator manages to withhold while respecting the other's autonomy, it seems generally unwise to intentionally withhold information for the purpose of view-shaping. If educators are aware of alternative views and can provide reasonings to support their own views in favor of those alternatives, they likely do their students a disservice by not offering these reasons. In most instances, those they seek to influence will nonetheless come across reasons or inclinations in favor of the undesirable outlook, even if the educator does not themselves provide the information. Educators that refuse to acknowledge such views miss opportunities to provide reasons in support of their preferred views.

Although there are surely cases where those with influence withhold information while not meeting the requirement for well-reasoned principles in support of their normative view, I would agree with Ebels-Duggan that such attempts are not morally justified, even if the influencer could simultaneously respect the first personal authority of the individual. Yet, genuine belief in a view and responding to the reasoning capacity of the individual is not enough to justify view-shaping. For shaping views to be morally

justified, educators must maintain respect for the first personal authority of the individual; they must respect the other's ability to assess reasons and form values from their own assessments. This is true for parents, public and private educators, and other individuals and institutions with the responsibility to teach or inform others. While providing information is a method of view-shaping that maintains this respect, intentionally withholding information for the purpose of view-shaping generally indicates disrespect for such autonomy.

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