Although twentieth-century feminine and feminist approaches to ethics are distinguishable one from the other, they share many ontological and epistemological assumptions. Whether a “feminine” and/or “feminist” thinker is celebrating or critiquing the virtue of care, s/he will tend to believe that the self is an interdependent being rather than an atomistic entity. S/he will also tend to believe that knowledge is "emotional" as well as "rational" and that thoughtful persons reflect on concrete particularities as well as abstract universals. This is certainly true of Carol Gilligan, whose ethics of care is definitely rooted in "women's ways" of being and knowing.

The questions that Gilligan poses about the relationship between gender and morality are similar to the ones that Wollstonecraft, Mill, Taylor, Beecher, Stanton, and Gilman posed. Is virtue the same or different in men and women? What is moral virtue, what is nonmoral virtue, and how are the two related? Does society encourage women to cultivate empowering or disempowering feminine psychological traits? What makes a feminine psychological trait either empowering (positive) or disempowering (negative)?

Gilligan's answers to these questions are provocative ones. In her first major book, In a Different Voice, Gilligan claimed that on the average, and for a variety of cultural reasons, women tend to espouse an ethics of care that stresses relationships and responsibilities, whereas men tend to espouse an ethics of justice that stresses rules and rights. Even though Gilligan has qualified her gender-based claims over the years, she has not given them up entirely. In one of her more recent studies involving eighty educationally privileged North American adults and adolescents, two-thirds of the men and women raised considerations of both justice and care. Nevertheless, these men and women tended to focus on one more than the other of these two ethical perspectives. Whereas the women were just as likely to focus on justice as on care, only one man focused on care. Thus, for Gilligan, care retains its connection to the "feminine."

Our task is to interpret and assess Gilligan's claims and claims like them. "With focus defined as 75 percent or more of the considerations raised pertaining either to justice or to care," it is, after all, puzzling why only one of Gilligan's male subjects focused on care, while several of her female subjects focused on justice. Could it be that men have good reason not to be carers? Is caring always a risky business? Or is it risky only in certain kinds of societies? Specifically, is it dangerous for women and other vulnerable people to espouse an ethics of care in a patriarchal society?

EXPLANATIONS OF GILLIGAN'S ETHICS OF CARE

Gilligan represents her work as a response to the Freudian notion that men have a well-developed moral sense whereas women do not. As Gilligan sees it, Freud condemned women twice. On the basis of what amounted to little more than his own personal reflections, Freud, simply declared that women "show less sense of justice than men ... are less ready to submit to the great exigencies of life, ... [and] are more often influenced in their judgments by feelings of affection or hostility." Later Freud underscored his observations by attributing women's supposed moral inferiority to a developmental difference, namely, "the strength and persistence of women's pre-Oedipal attachments to their mothers," attachments that men successfully break. Freud claimed that girls are much slower than boys to develop a sense of themselves as autonomous moral agents personally responsible for the consequences of their actions or inactions. Because the female id (unconscious desires) is supposedly more resistant to society's rules and regulations than is the male id, women are not as "civilized" as men.

Freud's account of women's "moral inferiority" is by no means peculiar to him. Traditionally, many psychologists and philosophers have reasoned from an androcentric point of view, seeing women's moral inferiority as a developmental difference, namely, "the strength and persistence of women's pre-Oedipal attachments to their mothers," attachments that men successfully break. Freud claimed that girls are much slower than boys to develop a sense of themselves as autonomous moral agents personally responsible for the consequences of their actions or inactions. Because the female id (unconscious desires) is supposedly more resistant to society's rules and regulations than is the male id, women are not as "civilized" as men.

My research suggests that men and women may speak different languages that they assume are the same, using similar words to encode disparate experiences of self and social relationships. Because these languages share an
overlapping moral vocabulary, they contain a propensity for systematic mistranslation, creating misunderstandings which impede communication and limit the potential for cooperation and care in relationships.  

Because these "mistranslation(s)" and "misunderstandings" contribute to a gross misrepresentation of women's morality, Gilligan aims to correct them.

Her main target for criticism is her former mentor, educational psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, who claims that moral development is a six-stage process. Stage One is "the punishment and obedience orientation." To avoid the "stick" of punishment and/or to receive the "carrot" of a reward, the child does as s/he is told. Stage Two is "the instrumental relativist orientation." Based on a limited principle of reciprocity—"You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours"—the child does what satisfies his or her own needs and occasionally the needs of others. Stage Three is "the interpersonal concordance or 'good boy-nice girl' orientation." The adolescent conforms to prevailing mores because s/he seeks the approval of other people. Stage Four is "the law and order orientation." The adolescent begins to do his or her duty, show respect for authority, and maintain the given social order for its own sake in order to be recognized as an honorable, as opposed to a shameful, person. Stage Five is "the social contract legalistic orientation." The adult adopts an essentially utilitarian moral point of view according to which individuals are permitted to do as s/he pleases; provided that they refrain from harming other people in the process. Stage Six is "the universal ethical principle orientation." The adult adopts an essentially Kantian point of view that provides a moral perspective universal enough to serve as a critique of any conventional morality. The adult is no longer ruled by self-interest, the opinion of others, or the force of legal convention, but by self-legislated and self-imposed universal principles such as those of justice, reciprocity, and respect for the dignity of human beings as intrinsically valuable persons.

Kohlberg's six-stage scale appeals to many people schooled in traditional ethics. Yet the popularity of a theory of moral development is not an index of its truth. We must ask ourselves whether Kohlberg's six stages of moral development are indeed (1) universal, (2) invariant (a always precedes b, b always precedes c, and so on), and (3) hierarchical (b is "more adequate" than a, c is "more adequate" than b, and so on). Should we interpret the fact that women rarely climb past Stage Three on Kohlberg's scale, whereas men routinely ascend to Stage Five, to mean that women are less morally developed than men are? Or should we, like Gilligan, question Kohlberg's methodology, claiming that his scale provides an account of male moral development rather than of human moral development? 

In order to determine the truth of Gilligan's claim, we need to understand how Kohlberg's methodology works. For the most part, Kohlbergian researchers present their subjects with hypothetical moral dilemmas that they are asked to resolve. The case of Heinz, a husband who wants to buy his grievously ill wife a drug that might cure her, is typical among these dilemmas. A druggist has overpriced the needed drug, and Heinz cannot afford to buy it. The question is, then, "Should Heinz steal the drug?"

When Kohlbergian researchers asked this question of two eleven-year-old children named Jake and Amy, they gave very different answers. Viewing a moral dilemma as "a math problem with humans," Jake set up the dilemma like an equation and produced an appropriate Kohlbergian answer. Heinz should steal the drug because Heinz's wife is worth more than the druggist's business: That is, the right to life is greater than the right to property. In contrast, Amy failed to produce an appropriate Kohlbergian answer. Viewing a moral dilemma as "a narrative of relationships that extend over time," she made no attempt to compare the value of life to the value of property. Instead, she immediately focused on the concrete effects that Heinz's theft would have on the relationship between him and his wife:

If he stole the drug, he might save his wife then, but if he did, he might have to go to jail, and then his wife might get sicker again, and he couldn't get more of the drug, and it might not be good. So, they should really just talk it out and find some other way to make the money.

Despite the reasonability of Amy's response, the Kohlbergian re-searcher insisted that she focus on the question at hand: "Should Heinz steal the drug, after all?" Fearing that she was not producing the "right" answer to the "right" question, Amy began to hesitate, a fact that the researcher used to mark her down on Kohlberg's scale. Apparently, doubt and intellectual soul-searching are not a part of "mature" moral agents.

Gilligan contrasts the two children's differing responses not to negate Jake's way of handling Heinz's dilemma but to affirm Amy's way of handling it. As the result of several empirical studies, including interviews...
with twenty-nine relatively diverse women who were deciding whether to have an abortion, Gilligan concluded that women's ontologies and epistemologies as well as ethics typically diverge from men's. Because women tend to view the self as an interdependent being and morality as a matter of responsibilities for others, women do not act as well on Kohlberg's scale as do men, who tend to view the self as an independent, autonomous being and morality as a matter of ranking individual's rights.

Gilligan's controversial claims about men's and women's differing ontologies, epistemologies, and ethics are not, by her own admission, altogether unique. She relies, for example, on the theories of psychologist Nancy Chodorow, who roots men's and women's different conceptions of the self in what she maintains are the different "object-relational" experiences they have as infants with their mothers and fathers. As Chodorow sees it, the pre-Oedipal stage is sexually charged for boys in a way that it is not for girls. Feeling a sexual current between himself and his mother, the son senses that his mother's body is not like his own. As he enters the Oedipal stage, the son realizes how much of a problem his mother's otherness is. Though overwhelmingly in love with her, he cannot remain attached to her without risking his father's wrath. Not willing to take this risk, the son separates from his mother. What makes this process of separation less painful for the son is his dawning realization that power and prestige come from identification with men—in this case, the father. It is disturbing that social contempt for women helps the boy define himself in opposition to the female sex that his mother represents.15

In contrast to the mother-son pre-Oedipal relationship, "prolonged symbiosis" and "narcissistic over-identification characterize the mother-daughter pre-Oedipal relationship."16 Because both the mother and the daughter are female, the daughter's sense of gender and self is continuous with that of her mother. Nevertheless, during the Oedipal stage, the mother-daughter symbiosis begins to weaken. What prompts a girl to distance herself from her mother is what her father symbolizes: namely, an independent being who presumably has what it takes to (sexually) satisfy women. Thus, as Chodorow interprets it, girls "envy" the penis because it signifies male power in the bedroom as well as in the boardroom.

Chodorow believes that the disparate psychosexual development of boys and girls has profound social implications. The boy's separation from his mother is the source of his inability to relate deeply to others. This inability prepares him for work in the public sphere, which values single-minded efficiency, a down-to-business attitude, and competitiveness. Similarly, the girl's oneness with her mother is the source of her capacity for relatedness. This capacity is necessary for her role as nurturant wife and mother in the private sphere. If men have a major problem, it is with intimacy; if women have a major problem, it is with self-individuation.

Focusing on the asymmetrical role of intimacy and self-individuation in men's and women's lives, Gilligan notes that the importance of separation and autonomy for men often leads them to center discussions of morality around issues of justice, fairness, rules, and rights, whereas the importance of family and friends for women often leads them to center discussions of morality around people's wants, needs, interests, and aspirations. Gilligan also suggests that for women, much more than for men, moral development means learning how to integrate other-directed demands with self-centered concerns. During the process of their moral development, women supposedly move in and out of three stages: (1) an overemphasis on self; (2) an overemphasis on others; and (3) a proper emphasis on self in relation to others. Although a woman's moral development from an overly self-centered position (Level One), to an overly other-directed position (Level Two), and finally to a self-inrelation-to-others position (Level Three) is never final, as a woman morally matures, an increasing number of her decisions will follow Level Three patterns.

At Level One, the self is the sole object of a woman's concern. This self is a beleaguered self: a powerless and disappointed self, so afraid of being hurt that it prefers isolation to connectedness. As one woman in Gilligan's abortion study asserted, this is a self that wants above all to survive:

I think survival is one of the first things in life that people fight for. I think it is the most important thing, more important than stealing. Stealing might be wrong, but if you have to steal to survive yourself or even kill, that is what you should do. . . . Preservation of oneself, I think, is the most important thing. It comes before anything in life.17

No wonder, then, that some of Gilligan's subjects initially regarded a baby as someone who would help them survive by loving them. How-ever, as these women struggled through their abortion decisions, many of them concluded that a baby, no less than themselves, is a vulnerable
person in need of love. Gradually, they began to reinterpret their self-interest as selfishness. So, for example, a seventeen-year-old, who at first wanted to carry her baby to term to assuage her loneliness, finally decided that it would be wrong for her to do so because she did not have the means to take care of a baby:

What I want to do is to have the baby, but what I feel I should do, which is what I need to do, is have an abortion right now, because sometimes what you want isn't right. Sometimes what is necessary comes before what you want, because it might not always lead to the right thing.  

Like this seventeen-year-old, any woman who makes the transition from "wish" to "necessity"—that is, from "the selfishness of willful decision" to "the responsibility of moral choice"—will reach Level Two of moral development. What motivates a woman to move from Level One to Level Two is a desire to establish connections with others and to participate in social life. In many ways, the Level Two woman is the conventional, nurturant woman who equates goodness with self-sacrifice and who tries to subjugate her wants to those of other people. In extreme cases, such a woman comes to believe that it is always "selfish" for her to do what she wants. In Gilligan's abortion study, for example, one woman who wanted to continue her pregnancy was being pressured by her lover to terminate it. Because this woman wanted both the baby and her lover's approval, she found herself in a moral "no-win" situation.

On the one hand, aborting the fetus would be "selfish." She would thereby secure one of her wants, namely, her lover's approval. On the other hand, not aborting the fetus would also be "selfish." She would thereby secure another of her wants, namely, a baby. The woman reasoned that no matter what she decided to do, she would hurt someone: either her lover or her fetus. In the end, the woman decided to have the abortion, consoling herself that it was not really her decision, but her lover's. Because the woman resented her lover's "decision," how-ever, her resentment gradually turned to anger, souring the very relationship for which she had sacrificed her child.

The moral of Gilligan's anecdote is that a woman can suppress her wants only so long before she reaches a destructive boiling point. To avoid becoming a resentful, angry, even hateful person, a woman needs to push beyond Level Two to Level Three of moral development, where she will learn how to care for herself as well as for others. As a woman moves to Level Three, the decision to abort, for example, becomes a complex choice she must make about how best to care for the fetus, herself, and anyone likely to be deeply affected by her decision. One of the women in Gilligan's study explains her decision to have an abortion as just such a choice:

I would not be doing myself or the child or the world any kind of favor having this child. I don't need to pay off my imaginary debts to the world through this child, and I don't think that it is right to bring a child into the world and use it for that purpose.

Gilligan characterizes the move from Level Two to Level Three as a transition from goodness to truth. A woman moves from pleasing others—being the conventionally good, always self-sacrificing woman—to recognizing her own needs as part of any relationship. In sum, a woman attains moral maturity when she stops opposing her needs in favor of others', simultaneously recognizing the falseness of this polarity and the truth of her and others' interconnectedness.

If we compare Gilligan's account of women's moral development with Kohlberg's account of human moral development, we can begin to appreciate why she thinks his account is really one that describes men's moral development. A "formal logic of fairness" informs Kohlberg's mode of reasoning and style of discourse; his scale structures moral phenomena in terms of a set of rights and rules. In contrast, a "psycho-logical logic of relationships" informs Gilligan's mode of reasoning and style of discourse; her scale structures moral phenomena in terms of a set of responsibilities and connections. 22 To be sure, Gilligan's scale is no more a scale of human moral development than is Kohlberg's. Far from denying this fact, however, Gilligan instead suggests that students of moral development should not expect men and women to achieve moral personhood in precisely the same way. Rather, researchers should be attentive to the different ways in which men and women describe the beginnings and endings of their distinctive moral journeys, viewing them as alternative ways to achieve the goals of a morality that ultimately requires both rights and responsibilities. 

In her most recent work, Mapping the Moral Domain, Gilligan further develops the position she introduced in In a Different Voice. Several recent studies of adolescents' moral development indicate that by the age of eleven, most children are able to use either a justice approach or a care approach to solve a moral problem. They can, in other
words, speak the language of both rights and responsibilities. The fact that a child favors one of these languages over the other in everyday speech is not, however, a clear sign that s/he is using his/her preferred moral language. On the contrary, it may merely be a sign that s/he wishes to use whatever moral language his/her peers favor. For example, in one dual-sexed high school, where the justice perspective pre-dominated among boys and girls alike, "students of both sexes tended to characterize care-focused solutions or inclusive problem-solving strategies as utopian or outdated; one student linked them with impractical Sunday school teachings, another with the outworn philosophy of 'hippies.' Presumably, students in the school who voiced care strategies would encounter negative reactions from their peers and even be rejected as definitely not "cool."

Rather than being disheartened by this adolescent behavior, Gilligan consoles herself that the "cool" response to a moral problem is a learned response that can, after all, be either unlearned or never learned in the first place. It encourages Gilligan that early childhood psychologists no longer view young children as isolationists, capable only of "parallel play," instead viewing them as skilled social interactors capable of creating relationships with their peers. It also encourages her that an in-creasing number of adolescent psychologists have replaced asking the question "Why has this sixteen-year-old not developed relational capacities x, y, and z yet?" with the question "Why has this sixteen-year-old lost so many of the relational capacities s/he had when s/he was eleven, or seven, or even three?"

Recently, several studies have concluded that most children (but especially girls) express a "deep sense of outrage and despair over disconnection" as they enter adolescence. They perceive that the adult world is inhospitable to the kind of intense and intimate relationships that make childhood special. Because girls, even more than boys, treasure their close friendships, they are particularly distressed at the parental admonition, "Growing up is about standing on one's own two feet." They fear that adulthood is not so much about autonomy as it is about aloneness, that is, about "being excluded, left out, and abandoned."

As Gilligan sees it, teachers routinely communicate to students the message that "caring is for kids," that adults do not have time to build a strong network of relationships. Our whole educational system stresses only certain kinds of thinking. Teachers encourage students to analyze arguments; to be scientific, objective, and rational; to abstract and universalize their thoughts. As a result, students begin to view the humanities as so much frivolous fluff—subjective stuff for sentimental softies. Rather than providing students with the strategies and skills for communal life, teachers provide them with the strategies and skills for competitive life.

Although Gilligan criticizes overly analytical, objective, and neutral teachers in general, she saves her harshest words for those educational psychologists who interpret children's relationships as unhealthy attachments or growth-limiting dependencies. There is nothing "sick" about children's relationships in Gilligan's estimation. Far from being impediments to moral development, such "attachments" or "dependencies" are actually a sign of growth. Rather than encouraging children to be detached and independent, adults should encourage them to be responsive to other people's needs and wants.

CRITICISMS OF GILLIGAN'S ETHICS OF CARE

Despite the appeal of Gilligan's ethics of care, critics have raised several plausible objections against it. First, Gilligan misunderstands or misinterprets Kohlberg. Second, the distinction between justice and care is not a new one, but an old one. Third, justice and care are not so much two different approaches to morality as they are two complementary approaches to morality. Fourth, justice and care are two different approaches to morality, but care is not as good an approach to morality as justice is. Fifth, justice and care are not gender correlated. Sixth, whether or not justice and care are gender correlated, the cultural identification of women with care has negative consequences for women. Seventh, "justice" and "care" are inappropriate descriptions of the ethical perspectives in question. Indeed, if "justice" and "care" are nothing more than the perspectives of the oppressor and oppressed, valuing care may worsen the position of the oppressed. Finally, to laud care as the "woman's voice" ignores the sometimes hurtful selectivity and even exclusivity of care: Racism, classism, and lesbophobia within women's ranks turn care itself into a questionable approach to morality. We must examine who cares about whom and why before we give the feminist stamp of approval to a "caring" act.

Criticism One

There is some reason to think that in attacking Kohlberg, Gilligan is attacking a "straw man." For example, researchers Catherine G. Greeno and Eleanor E. Maccoby claim that, overall, Kohlberg's paradigm does
not show women fixating at Stage Three of moral development as men climb on toward the pinnacle of moral perfection. On the contrary, sixty-one Kohlbergian studies show female children and adolescents scoring approximately the same in moral reasoning as male children and adolescents. They also show female and male adults achieving nearly identical moral development scores, with the exception of those studies that include in their sample relatively uneducated and unemployed housewives." Because the ability to move from Stage Three to Stages Four and Five on Kohlberg's scale largely depends on actively participating in the public world, it stands to reason that housewives would remain fixed at Stage Three. Not women's gender but their lack of experience in the public world causes their moral underdevelopment.

There are at least two ways to answer Greeno and Maccoby's criticism, both of which challenge the assumption that one's educational and occupational experiences rather than one's gender most strongly affect one's ultimate moral development. The first way is to concede that career women do better than housewives on Kohlberg's tests but to explain the "success" of career women as a function of their acquired masculine gender and not of their educational and occupational levels per se. For the most part, the public world is a "male" world. Women who succeed in it tend to think and act like conventional men who, more of-ten than not, sacrifice intimacy for autonomy. Women who fail in the public world tend to think and act like conventional women who, more often than not, sacrifice autonomy for intimacy. Because Kohlberg's scale of moral development is structured to fit the contours of the public world, a woman will climb high on the scale to the degree that her moral voice is recognizably "masculine" (that is, "justice" rather than "care" inflected). Thus, a career woman who speaks like a man will strike a Kohlbergian researcher as more morally developed than a housewife who speaks like a woman. It is at once as simple and as complex as this.

The second way to resist the claim that not gender but educational and occupational experiences play the crucial role in one's moral development is simply to deny that whereas housewives speak in a "feminine" voice, career women speak in a "masculine" voice. Gilligan herself disputes Greeno and Maccoby's empirical findings by contrasting them with those of Diana Baumrind. According to Baumrind, the most educated women are the ones least likely to speak the masculine language of justice. One possible explanation for Baumrind's results is that the truly educated woman—that is, the woman with a mind of her own—will refuse to become a "man" in exchange for social approval. The accolades of society are no substitute for the kind of pride and pleasure that a self-confident woman derives from the knowledge that she is her own person.

**Criticism Two**

Despite the fact that Gilligan writes as if she has discovered a different moral voice, her ethics of care may not be that novel. For example, philosopher George Sher claims that Gilligan's contrast between women's approach to morality—an approach that is supposedly concrete, non-principled, personal, care-driven, and responsibility-oriented—and men's approach to morality—an approach that is supposedly abstract, principled, impersonal, duty-driven, and rights oriented—is a distinction that traditional ethicists such as Kant and Schopenhauer have already made. Comments Sher: "The opposition of concrete and abstract, personal and impersonal, duty and care are not recent empirical discoveries but generic determinants of the moral problematic."

Sher's point is worthy of consideration. William K. Frankena, a traditional ethicist, reduces all moral principles to two fundamental ones: (1) justice or equality and (2) benevolence.

There are two basic principles of prima facie obligation: that of benevolence and that of justice or equality. From the former follow various less basic principles of prima facie obligation: the principle of utility, the principle of not injuring anyone, the principle of not interfering with another's liberty, and so on. From the latter follow others, for instance, equality of consideration and equality before the law. Possibly some others like keeping promises follow from both.

Yet even though Frankena's distinction between justice and benevolence is similar to Gilligan's distinction between justice and care, philosopher Marilyn Friedman argues that it is not the same as Gilligan's distinction. Gilligan's care reasoners, unlike Frankena's benevolence reasoners, consider persons in their *particularity* rather than in their *universality*. Care reasoners do not attend to everyone in general, but to the individual men and women, boys and girls, to whom they are specifically related. *Whom* one benefits or harms is of essential and intrinsic concern to them.
Criticism Three

To the degree that caring and justice are actually complementary rather than conflicting approaches to the moral life, Gilligan may be exaggerating the differences between caring and justice. For example, Sher insists that no matter how "abstract" an ethicist is, he still has to attend to matters of context to determine whether an action does in fact constitute adultery, murder, rape, or arson. Similarly, no matter how "concrete" an ethicist is, she cannot possibly focus on each element of a moral situation equally without being overwhelmed by detail.  

Sher's commonsensical objection to Gilligan is quite compelling. To meet with our full approval, the just person must be caring, and the caring person must be just. Far from being dichotomous moral concepts, justice and care are at least mutually compatible if not actually symbiotically related.

Friedman has effectively explored the interconnections between justice and care. As she sees it, justice is relevant to care in at least three ways. First, if we view a personal relationship as a "miniature social system which provides valued mutual intimacy, support, and concern for those who are involved," we will find that frequently one person in the relationship becomes the giver, and the other becomes the receiver. This mode of injustice characterizes many heterosexual relationships, for example. Women typically serve men's physical and psychological needs and wants rather than the other way around; it is women who feed men's egos, and it is women who tend men's wounds. Unless this inequitable state of affairs is remedied over time, women's caring acts are gradually transformed into masochistic acts.

Second, if we think about it, a personal relationship creates "special vulnerabilities to harm." When someone I care about and who supposedly cares about me harms me, justice demands that this wrong be "righted." The fact that someone cares for me does not give him or her license to exploit and oppress me. On the contrary, any injustice perpetrated in the context of a caring relationship is worse than it would otherwise be. An argument can be made, for example, that rape by an acquaintance inflicts deeper psychological wounds than rape by a stranger because the "date rapist" takes advantage of his victim's trust.

Third, if we focus on some of our closest relationships, especially our familial relationships, we will discover that they are fraught with the potential for myriad injustices. Should mom and dad give their son, Jim, privileges they are not willing to give their daughter, Sue? Should Mr. and Mrs. Jones pay for Grandpa Jones's much-needed vacation or for daughter Beth's summer camp? Should Mr. Smith give up an excellent job so that he can move with Mrs. Smith, who has a mediocre job, to a city where she will have an excellent job but he will have only a mediocre one?

Although Friedman does not specify care's effects on justice in as much detail as she specifies justice's effects on care, several examples quickly come to mind. We are reluctant to punish adolescent criminals as severely as adult criminals. We sometimes give people another chance because it would be too cruel to ruin their lives on account of a single mistake. We occasionally give people more than their fair share because we want to "cheer them up" or motivate them to do even better in the future. We even forgive our enemies.

Despite the fact that Sher and Friedman are correct to stress the interaction between justice and care, in fairness to Gilligan, we must recognize that she too has explored this interaction. Initially she suggested that, properly developed, justice and care slowly converge in the realization that just as inequality adversely affects both parties in an unequal relationship, so too violence is destructive for everyone involved. This dialogue between fairness and care not only provides a better understanding of relations between the sexes but also gives rise to a more comprehensive portrayal of adult work and family relationships. For reasons she does not specify, however, Gilligan has recently replaced her "convergence" theory with a "gestalt" theory.

Like an ambiguous drawing that may be seen either as a duck or as a rabbit, a moral drama may be framed either in terms of justice or in terms of care. Although these two perspectives cannot completely and finally converge, neither are they diametrically opposed polarities. Most individuals will find themselves interpreting a moral drama first from one of these perspectives and then from the other, but some individuals will be unable to alternate their viewpoint between the justice and care perspectives. An exclusive focus either on matters of justice or on matters of care is not without precedent, however, for try as they might, some individuals can see only the duck or the rabbit in an ambiguous "duck-rabbit" drawing.

Like her past efforts to interrelate care and justice, Gilligan's most recent efforts have tended to fall on deaf ears. The majority of Gilligan's readers continue to hear her words as a claim that care is somehow both
separate from and better than justice. Moreover, some of Gilligan's most careful readers believe that she is committed to the view that women, on account of their alleged capacity for caring, are more moral than men.

In an attempt to bolster this interpretation of Gilligan, Michelle M. Moody-Adams cites the following passage from one of Gilligan's relatively recent articles:

... stereotypes of males as aggressive and females as nurturant, however distorting and however limited, have some empirical claim. The overwhelmingly male composition of the prison population and the extent to which women take care of young children cannot readily be dismissed as irrelevant to theories of morality or excluded from accounts of moral development. If there are no sex differences in empathy or moral reasoning, why are there sex differences in moral and immoral behavior?

Gilligan's linkage of empirical evidence with moral claims heightens her critics' fear that she tends toward "biologism." As Moody-Adams pointedly asks, does Gilligan believe that because more men than women are in prison, women are more moral than men? If so, would she be equally eager to note that given the higher percentage of blacks than whites in prison, whites are more moral than blacks? Do we really want to tie morality to genetics—to accept the sexism and racism inherent in such a view?

Criticism Four

Even if care and justice are, after all, very distinct approaches to morality, Gilligan may be wrong to argue that care is just as good an approach to morality as justice. Philosopher Bill Puka, for example, suggests that care bears more resemblance to nonmoral virtues, or psychological traits, than to bona fide moral virtues. He claims that we must take seriously Kohlberg's objections to any kind of "benevolence ethics," including Gilligan's ethics of care. First, benevolence ethics valorizes a certain set of nonmoral values or psychological traits. It puts a premium on possessing a certain type of personality: specifically, a kindly and caring one. Second, benevolence ethics does not take seriously the existence of mean, nasty, cruel, hard-hearted, hateful, or abusive individuals. It provides little or no guidance to a benevolent person who is harmed by a malevolent person, for example. May the benevolent person resist evil actively, or must s/he turn the other cheek passively? Third, and finally, benevolence ethics demands too much in the way of self-sacrifice. It often instructs benevolent persons to give until they can give no more—that is, until their physical, psychological, and spiritual resources are entirely exhausted.

Gilligan's ethics of care is vulnerable to all three of these objections, but especially to the first. As Puka sees it, everything Gilligan writes about care in In a Different Voice suggests an interpretation of care according to which it is

a preference for relating to others closely, for getting into each other's psychologies to share fears, concerns and vulnerabilities when confronting moral issues; (2) a preference for harmonious, non-competitive feelings and cooperative spirit in relating; (3) a commitment to making relationships last by working on them and nurturing them.

But if this is care, it is little more than a capacity for psychological relatedness that will be actualized to a greater or lesser degree by a person depending on his/her proclivities. For Gilligan to elevate this psychological capacity into a moral imperative is for her to make individuals "responsible for feeling certain ways, for generating certain psychological reactions and putting them in action." Yet, as things stand, men find it much more difficult to show their feelings than do women. Society still socializes men, but not women, to suppress their feelings. Thus, Puka concludes that in demanding more of men than of women, Gilligan's ethics of care discriminates against men in ways that Kohlberg's ethics of justice does not discriminate against women:

Even in expecting both genders to combine care and justice, women are given the far easier task. To become more justice oriented women need only revise certain behavior, certain minimal treatment of others. But to become more caring, systematically desensitized males must somehow discover how to make compassion flow.

Puka is certainly correct to insist that 'ought implies can. We cannot be morally required to do something that we do not have the physical and psychological capacities to perform. Still, in fairness to Gilligan, it is not clear that it is any easier for women to be just than it is for men to be caring. Consider the female welfare administrator who wants to give the women and children who come to her office what they really need to thrive, but whose hands are tied by bureaucratic regulations. As she
send these vulnerable people away with the inadequate amount of resources to which they are legally entitled, she will feel frustrated. As hard as it is to do more for people than one wants, it is just as hard to do less for people than one wants.

What is more, Puka's tendency to trivialize care and to valorize justice may simply signal how much he subscribes to traditional definitions of morality (see Pojman in Chapter 2). Because Kohlberg's ethics of justice fits those definitions better than Gilligan's ethics of care, Puka simply endorses Kohlberg's ethics without challenging the criteria that validate it. Certainly, he fails to take seriously the possibility that justice commits us to a morality that few women or men are prepared to practice.

In a forthcoming book on friendship, Friedman discusses how an excessive emphasis on justice can generate morally perplexing situations. To clarify the ways in which we can have too much of a good thing—in this instance, justice—Friedman refers to the passage in Kohlberg's Moral Stages where he summarizes eleven-year-old Jake's reactions to the Heinz case. Not only did researchers ask Jake whether it would be morally permissible (required) for Heinz to steal a drug to save his wife's life, they asked him whether it would be morally permissible (required) for him to do so for a stranger. At first, the boy answered "No," noting that Heinz and the stranger did not have a relationship strong enough to motivate such an act. Later, however, the boy altered his initial judgment, commenting, "But somehow it doesn't seem fair to say that. The stranger has his life and wants to live just as much as your wife; it isn't fair to say you should steal it for your wife but not for the stranger."

As Friedman sees it, Jake's second response is technically correct. It is not fair for Heinz to steal for his wife but not for the stranger. Yet, there is more to morality than being fair to everyone in general. There is the matter of the special duties I owe to the people to whom I am intimately related—especially the people who depend on me for their material, psychological, and spiritual well-being. These intimates have a right to more than an equal share of what I have to offer to humanity in general. And it is good that they do, for my sake as well as theirs; for if I were related to no one in particular, there would be no reason for me to meet one person's needs more or less concertedly than some other person's. I would be committed to spreading myself as "thinly" as possible in order to distribute myself as "fairly" as possible.

Yet another thinker who objects to the valorization of justice and the trivialization of care is Annette C. Baier. As she sees it, "warmer, more communitarian virtues and social ideals" need to supplement what the eighteenth-century philosopher David Hume termed the "cold jealous virtue of justice." Baier observes that traditional ethics encourages individuals to seek their own good, their own way. Under such conditions, a "minimal formal common good," based on contracts that protect the self from the other, replaces a maximal substantive common good, based on the close relationships that exist in well-functioning families. Supposedly, each person is a rational contractor who has the same right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as any other person. Provided that s/he knows what s/he wants and has the power to attain it freely, each rational contractor may pursue his/her goals single-mindedly, provided that s/he does not harm any other rational contractor in the process. Such a vision of human relationships is not only an impoverished one in Baier's estimation but also an unrealistic one, since so many human relationships are not contractual. Nevertheless, traditional ethics operates on the assumption that morality exists, first and foremost, to order relationships between so-called consenting adults:

It is a typical feature of the dominant moral theories and traditions, since Kant, or perhaps since Hobbes, that relationships between equals or those who are deemed equal in some important sense have been the relations that morality is concerned primarily to regulate. Relationships between those who are clearly unequal in power, such as parents and children, earlier and later generations in relation to one another, states and citizens, doctors and patients, the well and the ill, large states and small states, have had to be shunted to the bottom of the agenda, and then dealt with by some sort of "promotion" of the weaker so that an appearance of virtual equality is achieved.

By deceiving ourselves that those weaker than ourselves are actually as strong as we are, however, we neglect to develop adequate moral guide-lines for relations between stronger and weaker individuals. Moral real-ism begins with the perception that we, who began life as helpless infants, will spend the rest of it relating to individuals who are either more powerful or less powerful than we are. Because our true equals are few and far between, we need moral rules that take account of this fact.

An ethics of care is not just an alternative ethics for "softies"—a second-rate morality for runners up in the struggle to be good and to
do good. On the contrary, an ethics of care is just as necessary as an ethics of justice. Although Baier is not a moral monist who insists that caring is the only intrinsically valuable moral virtue—the ultimate root of morality—she refuses to reduce an ethics of care to "popular psychology," to some version of "I'm okay, you're okay, we're all okay because we're all connected somehow or another." For Baier, an ethics of care is no less required than an ethics of justice, since "Not all morally important relationships can or should be freely chosen." Ethics is a matter of learning how to live excellently within the limits that our humanity imposes on us. We cannot escape, nor should we seek to escape, all of our biological ties—not if we wish to ensure "that each new generation is made appropriately welcome and prepared for their adult lives."  

Criticism Five  

Even if Gilligan constructs a persuasive case about the distinctive natures and functions of justice and care, her argument that justice and care are gender correlated fails to convince one and all. Indeed, whenever I present the justice-care debate to my ethics students, they immediately bring up films such as Three Men and a Baby, in which the men supposedly deserve the Nobel Prize for basic child care, and Mommie Dearest, which portrays Joan Crawford as a vicious child abuser. They also refer to saints like Francis of Assisi who loved all vulnerable creatures, animal as well as human, and to public figures like Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of Great Britain, known for her iron will and tough political stands. Finally, they relate stories about their dads, moms, siblings, and friends: dads who cry; moms who enforce rigid rules and regulations; brothers who are always ready to lend a hand; sisters who care only about their own privileges and successes; male friends who donate time and energy to the downtrodden; and female friends who support war, capital punishment, and the elimination of welfare programs.  

Clearly, some women care little for others. Historian Linda Kerber, for example, calls attention to a disturbing book of essays on women in Weimar and Nazi Germany thatdetails the ways in which German women deserted and even betrayed Jewish women.  

Not all German women opposed the extermination of the Jews, and among those who did, relatively few publicly expressed their opposition.  

Conversely, some men care much for others. At a recent men's conference in Boulder, Colorado, for example, one attendee said he left elementary school teaching because parents objected to his "practice of hugging" his third-grade students: "As men, we're encouraged to be more nurturing. But then when we nurture, people can't cope with it." Reinforcing his friend's words, another attendee, who works as a guidance counselor and yoga instructor, commented: "Men want the same things that women want... . Men want to be loved, touched and respected, the same as women. We should appreciate these common threads between us, not just get caught up in all the conflict."  

Yet even if empirical observations and studies reveal that women do not have a monopoly on care any more than men have a monopoly on justice, Friedman maintains that our culture nonetheless conceives "specific moral ideals, values, virtues, and practices as the special projects or domains of specific genders." "Genderized" moral conceptions guide our social expectations about how "normal" men and women should talk and act. Men should fight for truth, justice, and the American way. Women should care for their loved ones' physical and psychological needs. What Gilligan may have discovered, then, is something that exists as value rather than as fact:  

The moralization of gender is more a matter of how we think we reason than of how we actually reason, more a matter of the oral concerns we attribute to women and men than of true statistical differences between women's and men's moral reasoning. Gilligan's findings resonate with the experiences of many people because those experiences are shaped, in part, by cultural myths and stereotypes of gender which even feminist theorizing may not dispel. Thus, both women and men in our culture expect women and men to exhibit this moral dichotomy, and, on my hypothesis, it is this expectation which has shaped both Gilligan's observations and the plausibility which we attribute to them.  

We accept the surface truth of Gilligan's empirical findings because society trains us to see women as caring and men as just. Before we can study men and women as they truly are, then, we must remove the cultural lens that distorts our vision.  

Gilligan herself unintentionally corroborates Friedman's belief that the alleged differences between men's and women's morality are more ideological than empirical. For example, one of her most recent studies on these alleged differences showed (1) thirty-one men and twenty-two women focused equally on justice and care; (2) thirty men and ten women focused exclusively, or primarily, on justice; and (3) twelve women but only one man focused exclusively, or primarily, on care.
Instead of underscoring the encouraging fact that thirty-one men spoke the language of care and justice equally, however, Gilligan chose to emphasize the fact that only one man spoke the language of care exclusively—as if one must speak only the language of care to be truly moral. In her focus on care, Gilligan reveals an all-or-nothing perspective that may be as myopic as the perspective of those who focus on justice. If men must learn to care, perhaps women must learn to be just. Replacing one approach with the other is not the solution.

**Criticism Six**

Even if women are better carers than men (for whatever reasons), it may still be epistemically, ethnically, or politically unwise to associate women with the value of care. To link women with caring is to promote the view that women care by nature. It is also to promote the view that because women can and have cared, they should always care no matter the cost to themselves.

In *Femininity and Domination*, Sandra Lee Bartky seeks to determine whether women's experience of feeding men's egos and tending men's wounds ultimately disempowers or empowers them. She notes that the kind of "emotional work" practiced by female flight attendants often leads "to self-estrangement, an inability to identify one's own emotional states, even to drug abuse or alcoholism." To pay a person to be "relentlessly cheerful"—to smile at even the most verbally abusive and unreasonably demanding passengers—means paying a person to feign a certain set of emotions. A person can pretend to be happy only so many times before that person forgets how it feels to be genuinely or authentically happy.

The kind of emotional work flight attendants do for passengers, however, may be far more alienating and disempowering than the kind of emotional work wives do for their husbands, for example. Bartky notes that many wives find the experience of caring for their husbands empowering. The better carer a wife is, the more able she may be to think of herself as an extraordinarily good person. Yet subjective feelings of empowerment are not the same as the objective reality of actually having power. Bartky explains how women's androcentric emotional work eventually harms women far more than it benefits them. Among the ways that women accord men status is through a variety of "bodily displays" including "the sympathetic cocking of the head; the forward inclination of the body; the frequent smiling; the urging, through appropriate vocalizations, that the man continue his recital, hence, that he may continue to commande the woman's time and attention."

Men do not accord women similar status, however, and because they do not, women's caregiving of men amounts to "a collective genuflection by women to men, an affirmation of male importance that is unreciprocated."

In Bartky's estimation, the epistemic and ethical consequences of women's unreciprocated caregiving of men is most worrisome. The more emotional support a woman gives a man, the more she will tend to see things as he sees them. Indeed, to the extent that her viewpoint diverges from his, she will find it difficult to participate in his projects, share his friends, rejoice in his successes, and feel badly about his failures. But women do not need yet another reason to doubt their own vision of reality and version of the truth. Men's and women's interests are not identical in a patriarchal society, and it is important that women, who tend "to get the short end of the stick," realize this.

As bad as it is, from an epistemic point of view, to know the world only, or primarily, through someone else's eyes, especially someone who looks down on you, it is even worse, from an ethical point of view, to affirm someone else's morality no matter the goodness or badness of his/her values. Bartky points to Teresa Stangl, wife of Fritz Stangl, Kommandant of Treblinka. Despite the fact that her husband's monstrous activities horrified her, she continued to "feed" and "tend" him dutifully, even lovingly. In doing so, however, she was playing "footloose and fancy free" with her own soul. Quoting the following passage from Jill Tweedie's *In the Name of Love*, Bartky observes that one cannot re-main silent about evil and expect to keep one's goodness entirely intact:

> Behind every great man is a woman, we say, but behind every monster there is a woman too, behind each of those countless men who stood astride their narrow worlds and crushed other human beings, causing them hideous suffering and pain. There she is in the shadows, a vague female silhouette, tenderly wiping blood from their hands.

Because horror perpetrated by a loved one is still horror, women need to analyze "the pitfalls and temptations of caregiving itself before they embrace an ethics of care wholeheartedly."

For reasons related to Bartky's general concerns about any and all ethics of care, Puka singles out Gilligan's ethics of care for specific criticism. He claims that care can be interpreted in two ways: (1) in
Gilligan's way, "as a general orientation toward moral problems (interpersonal problems) and a track of moral development," or (2) in his way, "as a sexist service orientation, prominent in the patriarchal socialization, social conventions, and roles of many cultures." Those who interpret care as Gilligan does will trace women's moral development through the three levels presented earlier in this chapter. In contrast, those who interpret care as Puka does will view these supposed levels of moral development largely as coping mechanisms or defensive strategies that women use in a patriarchal world structured to work against their best interests.

Puka develops a persuasive case for his view of care. First, he interprets Level One as those strategies of self-protection and self-concern that women use to avoid rejection or domination. "I'm out for myself" and "If I don't care about myself, no one else will" are statements likely to be uttered by a woman who feels that she has to privilege herself over other people simply because other people, especially men, are not likely to concern themselves about her.

Second, Puka interprets Level Two, which often develops in reaction to the loneliness of Level One, as a resumption of the "conventional slavish approach" that women typically adopt in a patriarchal society. Although Level Two is frequently described as altruistic, as if women always freely choose to put other people's needs and interests ahead of their own, in reality Level Two is simply another coping mechanism. Within a patriarchy, women learn that men will reward, or at least not punish, the women who faithfully serve them.

Third, and finally, Puka interprets Level Three as a coping mechanism that involves elements of self-protection as well as slavishness:

Here a woman learns where she can exercise her strengths, interest, and commitments (within the male power structure) and where she would do better to comply (with that structure). A delicate contextual balance must be struck to be effective here.

Insofar as a woman is rationally calculating her chances of surviving and possibly even thriving within a patriarchy, Level Three constitutes a degree of cognitive liberation for her. It does not, however, signal the one caring

CONCLUSIONS

In expressing concern about the dangers of care, Gilligan's critics echo Elizabeth Cady Stanton's nineteenth-century admonition that, given society's tendency to take advantage of women, it is vital that women make self-development rather than other-directed self-sacrifice their first priority. Still, it is important not to overemphasize the problems associated with retrieving feminine or womanly virtues from the webs of patriarchy. Whatever weaknesses Gilligan's ethics of care may have, there are serious problems with women abandoning all of their nurturant activities. The world would be a much worse place tomorrow than it is today were women suddenly to stop meeting the physical and psychological needs of those who depend on them. Just because men and, yes, children have more or less routinely taken advantage of some women's willingness to serve them, does not mean that every woman's caring actions should be contemptuously dismissed as yet another instance of women's "pathological masochism," "fear of success," or "passivity." Care is worth "rescuing" from the patriarchal structures that would misuse or abuse it. If it is to be rescued, however, we need to recognize the differences between what Sheila Mullett terms "distortions of caring" on the one hand and "undistorted caring" on the other.

According to Mullett, a person cannot truly care for someone if she is economically, socially, and/or psychologically forced to do so. Thus, genuine or fully authentic caring cannot occur under patriarchal conditions, that is, conditions characterized by male domination and female subordination. Only under conditions of sexual equality and freedom can women care for men without men in any way diminishing, disempowering, and/or disregarding them. Until such conditions are achieved, women must care cautiously, asking themselves whether the kind of caring in which they are engaged:

1. Fulfills the one caring
2. Calls upon the unique and particular individuality of the one caring
3. Is not produced by a person in a role because of gender, with one gender engaging in nurturing behavior and the other engaging in instrumental behavior
4. Is reciprocated with caring, and not merely with the satisfaction of seeing the ones cared for flourishing and pursuing other projects
5. Takes place within the framework of consciousness-raising practice and conversation.
Care can be freely given only when the one caring is not taken for granted. As long as men demand and expect caring from women, both sexes will morally shrink: Neither men nor women will be able to authentically care.

In the next chapter, we will analyze Nel Noddings's attempts to re-claim care not only for women but also for men. Her success will depend on whether her vision of care tends to empower rather than disempower women. If Gilligan has persuaded us that, either as "fact" or as "value," women speak a different moral language than men do, perhaps Noddings can persuade us that this different language is one that women should continue to speak and men should start to learn.

NOTES


2. Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).
4. Ibid.
5. Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 7. [Quoting Freud.]
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., 173.
10. Gilligan, In a Different Voice: 173.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 28.
14. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 104.
17. Gilligan, In a Different Voice, 76.
18. Ibid., 77.

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 81.
21. Ibid., 92.
22. Ibid., 73.
23. Ibid., 174.
26. Ibid., viii.
27. Ibid., x.
28. Ibid., xi.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., 21.
31. I owe this last point to Claudia Card, professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin.
39. Sher, "Other Voices, Other Rooms? Women's Psychology and Moral Theory," 188.