Chapter 12: Different Gender, Different Ethics?
Some Historical Issues

Gender and one’s…
- role in society
- role in religion
- treatment in language/ gender specific referents
- job equality – of access, pay and treatment
Gender vs. sexual identity

- Gender: establishes identity based on socio-political differences and may or may not depend on one’s sexual identity. Differences are socially and culturally constructed thus are not predetermined or immutably set by biological facts.

- Sexual: establishes identity based on biological differences.
Three core claims:

- There are biological differences
- The fact of these biological differences is not sufficient in itself to justify differences in treatment, access to public goods or assignment of social burdens (descriptive terms do not necessarily imply normative standards)
- Gender equality does not necessarily require exact equality in treatment.
Have women always been subjugated?

- Historians, archaeologists, anthropologists and sociologists suggest that there is good evidence that it is not the case that patriarchy has been the universal norm.
- Counterexamples are found in early Middle Eastern, African, American Indian, European, British and Irish cultures where women occupied an influential role and had a much higher standing than later in history.
Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz (1651-1695)

- born illegitimate and largely self educated, she came under the protection of the Spanish viceroy to Mexico and his wife which allowed her to escape pressure from the Catholic Church to conform to traditional standards for nuns.
- argued for the right of Mexican women to disagree with and to criticize both church and political authorities.
- wrote literature centered on freedom. In her poem *Redondillas* she defends a woman's right to be respected as a human being. Therein, she also criticizes the sexism of the society of her time, poking fun at and revealing the hypocrisy of men who publicly condemn prostitutes, yet privately pay women to perform on them what they have just said is an abomination to God. Sor Juana asks the sharp question in this age-old matter of the purity/whoredom split found in base male mentality: "Who sins more, she who sins for pay? Or he who pays for sin?"
Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)

- wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792
- died giving birth to Mary Shelley (author of Frankenstein legend)
- argued that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason.
A Brief History of the Feminist Movement in America:

First Wave:

- Begins in 1848 with Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls led by Lecretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton & ends with 19th Amendment in 1920
- They lobbied for:
  - Suffrage (right to vote)
  - Right to own & inherit property
  - Right of self-determination
  - Right to raise one’s children
A Brief History of the Feminist Movement in America:

Second Wave:

- Principle goal was an equal opportunity society including “*a complete and discrimination-free access for women to any education or profession they might be interested in and qualified for.*” (p.600)
A Brief History of the Feminist Movement in America:

Third Wave:

- Begins somewhere between Carol Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice* in 1982 and Susan Faludi’s *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* in 1991.
- Goals less well defined and range in approaches from radical feminism to applied issues such as child care, political representation, environmentalism, etc.
3 Facets of Feminism:

De Beauvoir & Androgyny

- Argued against viewing man as typical human and woman as atypical or “other”
- For women to have authentic lives, they must consciously shed their assigned traditional roles and characteristics
- She must reject being thought of as “the second sex”
3 Facets of Feminism:

Hoff Sommers & Equity Feminism

- Criticizes other feminists as perpetuating role of victim and “even ready to fabricate atrocities…”
- Argues that “resenter feminists” and in general, “misguided feminism has harmed young men”
- Maintains the focus ought now to be on gender equality for both men and women
3 Facets of Feminism:

- Gilligan and the Ethic of Care: Difference Feminism
- Suggests that values placed on specific characteristics have been defined by men historically and that any differences perceived in women have been automatically assigned lesser value.
- Argues that differences in women need not be lesser – just different and alternate modes of behavior.
The Ethic of Care

“the primary aim is caring and being cared for.”
(Rita Manning)
The theory began as a critique of Kolberg’s Study

Lawrence Kohlberg was interested in models of maturation of moral agents. Kohlberg's (1958a) core sample was comprised of 72 boys, from both middle- and lower-class families in Chicago. They were ages 10, 13, and 16. He later added to his sample younger children, delinquents, and boys and girls from other American cities and from other countries (1963, 1970). He modeled his study after those done by the classical psychologist Piaget.

The basic interview consists of a series of dilemmas such as the following: “Heinz Steals the Drug”

_In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $ 1,000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug-for his wife. Should the husband have done that?_ (Kohlberg, 1963, p. 19)
Kohlberg’s Stages

Summary

- **At stage 1** children think of what is right as that which authority says is right. Doing the right thing is obeying authority and avoiding punishment. At stage 2, children are no longer so impressed by any single authority; they see that there are different sides to any issue. Since everything is relative, one is free to pursue one's own interests, although it is often useful to make deals and exchange favors with others.

- **At stages 3 and 4**, young people think as members of the conventional society with its values, norms, and expectations. At stage 3, they emphasize being a good person, which basically means having helpful motives toward people close to one. At stage 4, the concern shifts toward obeying laws to maintain society as a whole.

- **At stages 5 and 6** people are less concerned with maintaining society for its own sake, and more concerned with the principles and values that make for a good society. At stage 5 they emphasize basic rights and the democratic processes that give everyone a say, and at stage 6 they define the principles by which agreement will be most just.
Kohlberg’s morally mature agent:

**Stage 6: Universal Principles.** Stage 5 respondents are working toward a conception of the good society. They suggest that we need to (a) protect certain individual rights and (b) settle disputes through democratic processes. However, democratic processes alone do not always result in outcomes that we intuitively sense are just. A majority, for example, may vote for a law that hinders a minority. Thus, Kohlberg believes that there must be a higher stage--stage 6--which defines the principles by which we achieve justice.

Carol Gilligan’s response to Kohlberg:

Gilligan argued that Kohlberg ignored the emergence of an alternate way of resolving moral dilemmas which was often reflected in the way little girls responded to the Heinz dilemma.
Carol Gilligan’s Reply to Kohlberg

- What set her off in thinking this was the fact that in some of Kohlberg's investigations, women turned out to score lower - less developed - than did men. Were women really moral midgets? Gilligan did not think so. In taking this stand, she was going against the current of a great deal of psychological opinion. Freud thought women's moral sense was stunted because they stayed attached to their mothers. Another great developmental theorist, Erik Erickson, thought the tasks of development were separation from mother and the family. If women did not succeed in this scale, then they were obviously deficient.

- Gilligan's reply was to assert that women were not inferior in their personal or moral development, but that they were different. They developed in a way that focused on connections among people (rather than separation) and with an ethic of care for those people (rather than an ethic of justice). Gilligan lays out in this groundbreaking book this alternative theory.
Gilligan's Stages of the Ethic of Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preconventional</td>
<td>Goal is individual survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Transition</strong> is from selfishness -- to -- responsibility to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>Self sacrifice is goodness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Transition</strong> is from goodness -- to -- truth that she is a person too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postconventional</td>
<td>Principle of nonviolence: do not hurt others or self</td>
</tr>
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Two Models

Justice Model
Emphasis on Autonomy
Rule & principle directed
Appeal to what is “just”
Focus on integrity
Jake: “Stealing is wrong”

Ethic of Care
Emphasis on Relationships
Context dependent
Appeal to “compromise & accommodation”
Focus on caring responsiveness
Amy: “It depends, ....”
Is it a Virtue Ethic?

- Caring *For* – a skill which requires moral attention and practice. Often based on past experiences - both successful and not so successful – of giving care and receiving care.

- Caring *About* – an attitude one has – may enhance one’s ability to recognize need for care and to respond adequately but is not necessary to engendering a moral response.
The Ethic of Care: Four Key Elements

1. Moral Attention: one must pay attention to the complexity of the situation gather information and immerse oneself into the principle issues.

“Jasmine” - rescued dog - http://www.warwickshirewildlifesanctuary.co.uk/index.htm
The Ethic of Care: Four Key Elements

2. Sympathetic Understanding: story of Iris Murdock and her daughter in law – she went from seeing her as “vulgar” to seeing her as “naïve and charming.”
The Ethic of Care: Four Key Elements

3. Relationship Awareness: this is an issue of accounting and accountability
The Ethic of Care: Four Key Elements

4. Harmony: one must respond in a way that balance is preserved and nurtured.
When do we have an Obligation to Care?

Three Conditions:
1. A relationship exists.
2. A need for care exists.
3. We have the ability to provide care.
Caring for Strangers: What if there’s no existing Relationship?

- If the need for care exists and our ability to provide care for others is not strained or exhausted, then we do have an obligation.

“If we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable significance, we ought to do it…” (Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”)
Is Care based on Reciprocity?

Restricting obligations to care based solely on reciprocity results in some problems:

1. Those incapable of returning care would never receive care they need
2. Relationships would fail to be based on the core principle of care and become contractual – and perhaps ego-centric – “what’s in it for me?”
How do we ensure everyone gets the care they need?

“Networks of Care” – instead of a reciprocal contract we build a community of care – as long as no one is exhausted in their capacity to care and no one is not given care then the goal has been accomplished.
We are not obligated to care if our resources are exhausted. Care includes care for oneself – which should not be necessarily regarded as in conflict with care for others.

A Model for the Ethic of Care

Mother/Child relationship
Advantages of the model

In the ideal world case:

- The care is not based on reciprocity
- The care is nonjudgmental and not conditioned – it is because one cares about the other that one cares for the other
- The level and amount of care given is adapted to the needs of the other – as one grows, one needs more independence and perhaps, less direct care.
Some Problems with the Model

- May inadvertently place too great a burden on women to carry the responsibility of caring for others.
- May exclude men by inference when in fact the theory not only does not preclude men but maintains that they must play a role in functional networks of care and in functional societies.
- Implies an imbalance inherent in the relationship rather than ideals of mutuality.