The Wonder of Interpersonal Relationships VIc: Carol Gilligan as an Exemplar of Relating Midst Differences

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Developmental theories about human development became quite popular during the second half of the 20th Century. It began with the work of Erik Erikson (1963), who identified six specific stages through which most human being traverse during their lifetime. Each stage was dictated by the specific challenges being faced at various points in our life as we mature, confront new experiences and grow older. This stage theory gained considerable attention through the work of Daniel Levinsohn and his colleagues at Yale University and the popularization of his work (and that of several other developmental theorists) through the writing of Gail Sheehy (1996). The notion of a mid-life crisis gained considerable traction as a result of this developmental work.

There was a second set of developmental theories that built on the conceptual foundation offered by Jean Piaget, the noted Swiss biologists/psychologists. These theorists also offered a set of stages. However, not all human beings "reach" each of these stages. Some remain at "lower" stages of development throughout their life. Several of these adult development theorists and researchers (notably Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan) focused on moral development. Like others in the Piagetian school, they found that many people do not end up at higher levels of moral maturating. Furthermore, Kohlberg and Gilligan both provided extensive evidence indicating that adults continue to struggle with and change personal values throughout their lives.

Lawrence Kohlberg: Moral Development

Offering a Piagetian model of cognitive maturation, Kohlberg (1984) begins with the assumption that moral reasoning is required for each of us to engage in ethical behavior. Furthermore, based on his extensive interviewing (making use of responses to specific case studies), Kohlberg proposes that there are three developmental phases and six developmental stages. Each phase and stage offers a conception of morality that is more complex and nuanced than the conception held at the previous phase and stage.

Three Phases/Six Stages

Starting with Piaget's (1977) description of morality conceived by children at several ages, Kohlberg identifies three phases (pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional) that encompass the six stages of morality. Each phase contains two of the stages.

Pre-conventional: This phase is solely concerned with the self in an egocentric manner. A child with pre-conventional morality has not yet adopted or internalized society's conventions regarding what is right or wrong but instead focuses largely on external consequences that certain actions may bring: "If I do x then what will happen." As the most egocentric of the six stages, Stage one (obedience and punishment driven) focus on the direct consequences of actions on oneself. Stage two (self-interest driven) concerns "what's in it for me." What does an individual believe to be in their best interest. What

is immediately "convenient." As related to other people, it is all about reciprocity: "You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours."

Conventional: The conventional level concerns comparative judgements regarding the morality of actions. "What are my society's views and expectations regarding ethical behavior." Conventional ethics means "following the crowd." It requires adherence to rules and conventions without any higher-level reflection on their "rightness." Stage three concerns good intentions as determined by social consensus. Individuals look to other people for guidance. They try to be a "good person" and find that being "nice" rather than "naughty" brings them important rewards. The "golden rule" operates because we get some of the gold when we follow the rules.

By contrast, in Stage four we find a broader reflection on the reasons why authority and social order are important and why we should be obedient to the rules of our society. The rule is golden because it represents some greater good—some ideal about the nature of a good and just society. Kohlberg proposes that most law-abiding citizens of contemporary societies tend to reside at this stage.

Post-conventional: This is the phase where Kohlberg becomes quite philosophical. There is a growing realization among some members of a society that their own perspective and values may take precedence over the collective perspectives and established values of their society. These "principled" members of a community are likely to be advocates for such basic human rights as life, liberty, and justice. On behalf of these rights, an advocate might engage in what John Lewis, the noted civil rights activist, has coined as "good trouble" ("Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America"). Rules and regulations are respected—yet viewed as leverage points for both stability and change. They are not permanently "golden" or in some sense "God-given." They can be questioned and altered.

Stage five is based on the notion of a "social contract." Differing societal opinions, rights, and values must be respected; however, changes should be made on behalf of "the greatest good for the greatest number of people." Governance is often a focal point, with democratic rule often being the desired operating principle for a society. Finally, at Stage six we find the often-elusive quest for universal ethical principles. Abstract reasoning prevails and explorations regarding the fundamental meaning of justice and equity are engaged. The absolutes of Immanuel Kant are "golden" Not many people (if any) are found at this "ultimate" level of moral reasoning. This stage might exist in Lawrence Kohlberg's mind rather than in reality.

Along Comes Carol Gilligan

Kohlberg's model of moral development has been criticized by many development researchers for failing to account for inconsistencies among many people in their moral judgements and for relying too much on rational processes. There is an even more condemning criticism. Many developmental theorists believe that Kohlberg is being naïve—and perhaps arrogant--in applying his model to cultures other than the American culture upon which he built his original model.

Kohlberg might be standing alone, with his own isolated thoughts and his assurance that the Kohlbergian model applies to all cultures and all times. Like Immanuel Kant, Kohlberg seems to have

grabbed hold of some eternal truth while pondering moral reasoning in an ivy-covered office building at Harvard University. Then along comes, Carol Gilligan, one of his doctoral students. It is Carol Gilligan who has had the greatest impact on the acceptance of Kohlberg's work—yet Carol Gilligan had sustained a close relationship with her now-deceased mentor. In a recent retrospective narrative regarding her own work, Gilligan (2023, p.3) indicates that Kohlberg's focus on morality and commitment to studying the way people acquire values was an "inspiration" for her. This was a relationship sustained midst profound differences.

Carol Gilligan: An Epistemological Revolution

The challenging of Kohlberg's model all begins with the case studies used to determine level of moral development. It seems that men are more likely than women to exhibit higher levels of moral development. Gilligan (2023, p. 5) reports on Kohlberg's findings:

> On Kohlberg's six stage scale of moral development, women typically score at the third or interpersonal stage and are less likely than men to progress to the more abstract or principled stage of moral reasoning.

She goes on to report that Kohlberg was not alone in his assessment. His findings were in aligned with Sigmund Freud's belief that women have less sense of justice than me –and with the beliefs of Erik Erikson, another prominent psychologist (Gilligan, 2023, p. 5): "According to Erikson, women fuse or confuse identity with intimacy, and Piaget observed that, in contrast to boy, girls give priority to relationships over rules."

What seems to be going on here? Primarily it is because many of the women being tested weren't "going along" with the experiment as Kohlberg devised it. They didn't buy into restrictions regarding the type of comments they could make about the presenting case studies. For example, take the widely used case study of Heinz, a man who came to a pharmacy on Sunday afternoon to obtain a medication that would keep his seriously ill wife alive. The "opportunistic" pharmacist charged a large amount for the medication knowing that other drug stores were not open, and that Heinz had no other choice than to purchase what he had to offer. The phone rings. The pharmacist leaves the counter to answer it. Does Heinz steal the drug and race out the door? This is the hypothetical moral dilemma that Kohlberg poses for his study subjects to address.

Many of the women (and some of the men) are unwilling to provide an answer without finding out more about Heinz, his marital relationship, the pharmacist's state of mind or financial condition, etc. Why did Heinz wait until Sunday afternoon? Why was this drug store open? Did Heinz have a history of interacting with the pharmacist and what was the nature of this relationship? How did Heinz's wife become ill in the first place? It seems that moral reasoning for these study subjects can't take place in a vacuum. Abstract reasoning doesn't make sense if we are considering the life and death of Heinz' wife or the potential of Heinz spending time in prison (and thus unable to assist his wife).

A Different Perspective and Voice

As someone working with Heinz's case and other similar cases, Carol Gilligan began to consider a different model of moral reasoning. Piaget might be right in giving priority to relationships over rules – but does this mean that relationships are unrelated to morality and ethics? Erikson might be correct that women tend to fuse identity with intimacy—but isn't intimacy interwoven with higher levels of morality and ethics? Carol Gilligan offered a model that took the situation and broader circumstances into account when considering ethical and unethical actions.

We can only make a judgement regarding Heinz decision to steal the drug by knowing more about the world in which Heinz and the pharmacist dwelled. Reality exists in this immediate moment when Heinz decided what to do. We have to reside inside Heinz' heart and soul if we are to somehow determine if he did the right thing. We also need to reside the heart and soul of the pharmacist to fully appreciate his own ethical or unethical behavior. A view from far away—in a Harvard research lab—is not of much use nor is it an ethically-valid way in which to make a decision regarding the ethics of both Heinz and the pharmacist.

Carol Gilligan wrote a book regarding this alternative way to think about moral reasoning. Called *In a Different Voice* (Gilligan, 1982), this short, highly influential book addressed far more than Heinz's decision to steal the drugs. Expanding on her reflections regarding contextual reasoning, Gilligan proposed a quite different developmental sequence for women (and some men). She suggests that intimacy and identity are interwoven in the lives of many people. One does not precede the other. Rather intimacy and identity are merged in the enactment of interdependence and an ethic of mutual care.

According to Gilligan, the primary task for young women is to learn how to relate to other people and foster interdependency. Young women learn how to form and describe complex interpersonal relationships because they were exposed during childhood primarily to mothering figures. Both the mother and female child have been traditionally identified first and foremost as females. In this regard, they are "alike." It is this intense socialization that leads many women in the study to inquiry about the relationship between Heinz and the pharmacist rather that make judgments from a distant, abstract level.

Three Stages

The entire three stage process, according to Gilligan (1982) moves developmentally towards maturity. All aspects of self are involved: cognitive, affective moral and spiritual.

Stage One: At the first stage, we find *self-interested and selfish* behavior. This stage relates to Kohlberg's egocentrism. "I am the center of the universe, and accordingly."

Stage Two: At the second stage we engage in relationships that expresses care. As in the case of Lawrence Kohlberg' model, the interests of self are related to the interests of other people within our group, tribe or community. There is an "our and they" or "insiders and outsiders" experience. Some psychologists have explored a "theory of mind" that relates specifically to our ability to see the world through the eyes of other people. Stage Two requires that we can engage this capacity.

Stage Three: awareness regarding the interconnectedness of people everywhere resides at the heart of stage three—as does our connection to nature. There is a pervasive sense of *universal care*. Martin Buber's (2000) concept of "I-Thou" relationships is central to this stage three perspective. We are together with other people on behalf of something greater than either of us. This something greater includes all people and the environment in which we all dwell. Everything in some important ways becomes "sacred" and is a source of beauty and grace.

Achieving a higher stage of moral development is not permanent, however. The critique of Kohlberg's model as failing to account for inconsistencies is justified. Anyone can fall from a higher moral stage to lower ones when under or duress, stress. Downward developmental pressures also increase when there are major conflicts of interest—or when one is confronted with the intoxication of privilege or power (in service to self-interest) or the desperation of powerlessness and alienation. A developmental state can sometimes drop two moral stages in Gilligan's taxonomy.

Each of these three stages has to do not just with relationships, but also with the expanding engagement of intelligence. The first stage, *selfishness*, harnesses the individual's egocentric intelligence. We become "smart" about serving our own individual interests. We become opportunists and clever manipulators of the world in which we live. The second stage, *care*, concerns collective intelligence. We become "smart" about collaborating with others in our group, tribe or community on behalf of shared interests and priorities. The third stage concerns a global intelligence on behalf of *global care*. All residents of the world become the focus of this collective endeavor--including those least well off and those who are the least powerful.

With the identification of this third stage comes a concern about reality and feasibility. Is Carol Gilligan joining with her mentor, Lawrence Kohlberg, when envisioning a world of global care from the distance of her ivy-covered halls of Harvard? And has she really left behind Kohlberg's models of moral reasoning? Isn't he also focused on relationships. His preconventional phase seems to be about not letting in any outside relationships (egocentrism), while his conventional phase is about figuring what to do with the relationships that we are letting in. The postconventional phase, in turn, is about becoming independent of the relationships we have let in.

While conventional morality is about allowing for an external locus of control over our decisions, postconventional morality is about gaining an internal locus of control regarding our moral decisions. It is ultimately about context and relationships for both Kohlberg and Gilligan. This might be the major reason why Carol Gilligan and Lawrence Kohlberg remained committed and caring colleagues, despite their seeming differences.

Contextual Knowing

Diverging from the established epistemological framework (which supported Lawrence Kohlberg's model) Carol Gilligan offered an alternative mode of knowing that is more commonly found and valued in non-western cultures and among many women in western cultures. C*ontextual knowing* has received greatest attention in not only the writings of Carol Gilligan, but also those of Mary Belenky and her associates (Belenky, et al., 1996)

as well as those of their colleagues at the Stone Center in Wellesley Massachusetts (Miller, 1987; Jordon, et. al., 1991).

This framework has served as the foundation for a feminine epistemology that is focuses on knowledge embedded in specific relationships and setting. In what way(s) are processes and principles created that are specifically appropriate to a unique situation. As Mary Belenky and her colleagues have proposed, there is a "women's ways of knowing" that is distinctive and critical to any appreciation of the diverse ways that people think and behave.

In essence, this constructivist perspective builds on the assumption that all knowledge is based in relationships and that each relationship can be a source of important wisdom that is specific to this relationship. Thus, all members of a community can contribute to the base of knowledge in the community, regardless of their status in the community. One looks for communalities rather than stratification from this perspective. An ethic of mutual care emerges as one finds communality with another person: "I care about you because I see me within you and because the two of us together can become wiser and more understanding of not only one another but also other members of our community."

From this perspective, all relationships involve the construction of new knowledge—for knowledge exists in the specific relationship rather than in some abstract, external reality. Knowledge thus becomes a dynamic, ever evolving process. It is widely acknowledged in many cultures that knowledge is contained within the context. The story is told, heard and accepted within a specific community. Truth resides in the credibility of a specific leader or tribal council. There's a self within the context of who I am with you at this moment that is more important than the enduring self. Apparently, contextual epistemology was not invented by Carol Gilligan. This widely held epistemological perspective is described by Julio Olalla, a noted philosophy and founder of the school of Ontological coaching. Julio offers the following observation during an interview I conducted with him quite a while ago (Olalla and Bergquist, 2008):

> I love that perspective from Carol Gilligan for a very simple reason: it challenges the ontology that you are you. Actually, *you* can never exist without *me*. We are a dance. Now, of course, we have a biology, but even from that perspective we're not as independent as we think we are. The way I am being right now is not just defined by history. It is defined by your presence. What you allow me to be probably also means what you do *not* allow me to be. The dance constitutes the dancers as much as the dancers constitute the dance.

Julio moves on to an even more profound observation regarding the implications of contextual epistemology:

> The moment that we hold the notion that we are interdependent, we begin to understand the phenomena of love and care in a very powerful territory. You allow me to unfold in ways that no one else does. The man that I am with you is just the man I can be with you. There's a continuity, of course, but the unfolding that you allow me, the reflection I get from your questions, your presence, your physical attitude, etc., is all part of it. What Carol Gilligan is

6

saying challenges the epistemology of the individual, and that is a very ontological, and interesting perspective.

Olalla's observations would seem to apply to the basic relationship that Carol Gilligan has with her mentor, Lawrence Kohlberg. What Olalla has to say justifies Gilligan's continuing relationship with and support for Kohlberg—for they are in a dance together. This dance results in the opportunity for Carol Gilligan to move beyond Kohlberg's model of moral development and create her own revolutionary model. Their relationship was sustained midst profound differences.

Ethic of Care

Perhaps of greatest immediate importance regarding the divergence of Carol Gilligan from Lawrence Kohlberg (and the establishment of an epistemological revolution) is Gilligan's portrait of mature adult development as an embrace of care as a fundamental virtue in life. It is necessary, according to Gilligan (1982, p.98), to recognize "the importance throughout life of the connection between the universality of the need for compassion and care. The concept of the separate self and of moral principles uncompromised by the constraints of reality is an adolescent ideal . . ."

Gilligan (1982, p. 149) expands the notion of care in both space and time. As a result:
> . . . the notion of care expands from the paralyzing injunction not to hurt others to an injunction to act responsively toward self and others and thus to sustain connection. A consciousness of the dynamics of human relationship then becomes central to moral understanding, joining the heart and the eye in an ethic that ties the activity of thought to the activity of care.

Thus, the ethic or (more broadly conceived) virtue of deep caring becomes a thoughtful, sustained initiative (Bergquist and Quehl, 2019). This deep caring extends time and space, offering a bridge of creation and caring tying together multiple generations within the context of a generative society: "The virtue of care ties together different generations, promotes exchange between generations, and passes on values from generation to generation. Thus, generativity includes both *creating* and *caring*." (Imada, 2004, p. 91) Most importantly, It is an ethic that is viewed as important In many cultures—existing alongside an emphasis on context-dependent knowledge.

This is another important point to be made about contextual knowledge and an ethic of care. Dynamic relationship-based knowledge is most likely to be of benefit to those in the relationship if it is being generated on behalf of a shared ethics of care. Collectively, a community that is aligned with this ethic of care holds great promise in addressing the multi-tiered epistemological challenges associated with VUCA-Plus conditions (vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction). (Bergquist, 2023a; Bergquist, 2023b) Unfortunately, this is an ethic that is often strained in a society that emphasizes individualism and individual rights—such as that found in the United States.

In reflecting on the American culture in *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues (1985) speak of the personal emptiness that lies at the end of the successful quest for total autonomy and

individual rights. Carol Gilligan similarly describes the inadequacies of individual rights when they are not integrated with collective responsibility. In studying the development of a personal sense of morality, Gilligan (1982) proposes that American society has tended to emphasize individual rights at the expense of collective responsibilities for the past two centuries.

In part this imbalance results from the emphasis in American society on distinctiveness and separation in contrast to an emphasis on connectedness and similarities between people that exists in many other societies. This emphasis, in turn, has been reinforced by the American economic and political systems. The wheels of American business are often greased with a spirit of competition and a win-lose mentality. It is in this analysis that Carol Gilligan becomes "revolutionary" in not only her formulation of a contextual epistemology but also her advocacy of a society that balances individual rights and collective responsibility.

Revolution and Relationship

Significant differences of perspective and practice does not deter Carol Gilligan from staying connected to Lawrence Kohlberg. She is a revolutionary who never fully leaves behind her home. Similarly, Bach's sons remain close to their father. The sons of Papa Bach saw that music must be directed more broadly to the emerging Middle Class. Their father could appreciate this broader appeal. He might similarly have admired Carol Gilligan's deeply embedded values and views on ethical behavior. Her perspective would have aligned with his own deeply held religious beliefs. Perhaps, Papa Bach invites Carol to one of his Sunday concerts at a nearby coffee house. Abraham Lincoln might have similarly admired Carol Gilligan's balancing of rights and responsibilities. He would undoubtedly have invited Carol Gilligan for tea at the White House – and perhaps recruited her to become a member of his cabinet.

Each of these imagined invitations for coffee or team suggests that there is a common ingredient to be found in all sustained relationships. This common ingredient might center on the presence in all of the real and imagined relationship I have described of something above and beyond differences in perspective and practice—and differences in cultural values across a generation or even several hundred years. There is a "glue" that enables the relationships to endure. In each case, something was engaged that went beyond their immediate differences.

A "revolution" took place in the music being composed by the Bach family. Yet, father and sons could unite in their shared belief that music is in some way transcendent of specific forms and fashion. Shared commitments were being made among members of Lincoln's cabinet to national unification. Rivalry was set aside on behalf of a war that must be won. Both Kohlberg and Gilligan believed that it was critical to determine how people arrive at moral decisions and find an ethical way to lead their life. Even beyond this focus on morality and ethics, there was an abiding interest on the part of both Kohlberg and Gilligan in the nature and dynamics of knowledge (epistemology). Both inherited this interest from Jean Piaget. [I wonder if shared inheritance is often to be found among those who remain in a relationship despite major differences of perspective and practice.] In this case, Swiss biology was fully interwoven with American psychology. It was just a matter of a different cloth emerging from the studies of Kohlberg and those of Gilligan.

Sense of Self

There is one other way in which Carol Gilligan has moved beyond the confines of Lawrence Kohlberg's world of abstract moral development. Gilligan confronts Erik Erikson's assumption that one must gain a clear sense of self (stage of identity formation) before establishing a successful interpersonal relationship (stage of intimacy). Gilligan suggests that this is not always the case. For many women (and some men) the formation of identity and establishment of a successful intimate relationship are interwoven (each enhancing the other). In suggesting that the developmental issues faced by men and women might often differ, Carol Gilligan opened the door to a thoughtful consideration of differing ways in which women and men tend to gain a clear sense of self. She has been assisted in moving through this door by several theorists and researchers who were involved in the early years of the feminist movement in the United States.

Individuation

More than forty years ago, a psychotherapist, Nancy Chodorow (1974, 1978), offered an interesting comparative analysis of the childhoods experienced by males and females. Her insights subsequently influenced Carol Gilligan and many authors (such as Lillian Rubin and Deborah Tannen) who were writing during the second half of the 20th Century about differences between men and women. Chodorow first noted what is obvious to all of us: women did most of the child rearing during infancy in most societies at this point in time. Chodorow builds on this fundamental observation by suggesting that, in such a society, girls grow up learning how they are similar to their primary caregiver—both they and their mother being female. Boys, by contrast, learn how they are different from their primary caregiver since they are male and their mother is female.

As a result of this early childhood experience, Chodorow suggests that males grow up focusing primarily on their differences from other people. We are told from very early in our life as males that we are "different" from our primary mothering figure. Our society conveys in many ways that we must break away from our mother. We must not be tied to her apron strings. There is something wrong if we remain too close to our mother. We even have a label for such a man: "Moma's boy." As young men we learn to value autonomy and competition. We want to stand out in a crowd and gain a sense of independence. We want to be known as an independent young man who can "stand on his own two feet!"

In the world described by Nancy Chodorow, young women typically grow up focusing on relationships, whereas young men grow up focusing on autonomy. As young men we were smart about some things such as sports trivia (e.g. batting averages) and the latest triumphs of some caped crusader (e.g. Superman). However, we were blissfully ignorant about other things—such as the nature of intimacy and ways to "court a girl." Unfortunately, these "other things" were ultimately of much greater importance. We now speak with great reverence of something called "emotional intelligence"[i] (EQ) (Goleman, 1995). Young men typically are challenged in this domain. As mature men we often never catch up to our female colleagues with regard to EQ.

Chodorow proposed that men come to recognize during mid-life that they are isolated in their autonomy. Mature men conclude that they need to learn much more about relationships and, even

more broadly, about community. This emerging realization is a critical component of the late midlife transformation for most men. Chodorow suggested that women tend to move in exactly the opposite direction. Midlife women recognize that they need to begin differentiating themselves from other people. They must find their own independent identities. They look beyond their most prized and intimate relationships with spouses and children to a wider world of individual career achievement.

What about today—in the midst of the 21st Century? Is this gap in the world of men and women still as great? Are not young women just as likely as young men to value their independence? Are young men now more likely to be praised for their EQ? Don't young women now face many of the challenges that were traditionally in the domain of male upbringing and aren't men more likely to exhibit a modicum of interpersonal sensitivity in their dealings at home and at work? Even more fundamentally, was the gender gap ever that great? Do men really live on one planet and women on another planet as one best-selling author (Gray, 2012) on male/female relationships proposed several years ago? Don't men and women both live on planet Earth and face the same interpersonal challenges?

Splitting of Self

Several decades ago, Carol Gilligan and her associate (Brown and Gilligan, 1992) made another important discovery regarding one's sense of self—this time while studying the development of young women as they reasoned about challenging ethical issues. Frustrated by the evidence she was getting, Carol Gilligan at one point apparently stopped an interview and asked her interviewee in an exasperated tone if what she was saying is "really" what she believes. At this point, her young female subject admitted that her response to this ethical dilemma was based on what young women (and perhaps all women) are supposed to say.

Gilligan then shifted the direction of her research to find out what her young women were really thinking and feeling. She found that most of the young women she was interviewing offered two quite different versions of themselves to the world. There is the polite, thoughtful and caring self that they offer out in public. Then there is a second self that is something of a rogue. This self is perhaps a bit greedy, self-serving and even rude. There is one "self" that is the "good girl" who does and thinks what society expects. There is another "self" that relates to what the young woman actually thinks, feels (and would like to do). In an interview with Charlie Rose, Gilligan speculates that this splitting many occur even earlier in the lives of young men.

The Coherent Self

While these two selves might be confined to the middle-class women that Gilligan was interviewing, they might very well be found in the heart and soul of other young people. We might ask, is this splitting a recent phenomenon among young women and men? Perhaps, it has simply become more evident given reduction in the pressures for young people to conform to powerful societal expectations and cultural traditions (at least in many parts of the world). If nothing else, I would suggest that this splitting is likely to be widespread in a world that is saturated as Ken Gergen (2000)

suggests with multiple images of self. Splitting is even more likely if our sense of an authentic self is reduced in size, as Christopher Lasch (1984) suggests, as we retreat from the many challenges of our time.

Our search for psychic survival by minimizes our sense of self makes us vulnerable to virtually any version of authenticity. It is hard, if not impossible, to gain and maintain a coherent sense of self if we are barraged with multiple challenges and many compelling images of the "successful", "healthy" or at least "satisfied" selves. At an even more penetrating level, we can turn to the perspective offered by Harry Stack Sullivan (1953), who suggests that our sense of self is based on the specific relationship in which we are currently engaged. It changes when we meet with someone else. Leslie Brothers (2001) takes it even further, suggesting that our sense of reality is defined within specific relationships. Perhaps we find it very challenging when relating to someone with very different perspectives precisely because our version of self and reality is besieged in this relationship.

Connecting with Other People and Expressing Emotions

Carol Gilligan has clearly sought to capture a portrait of adult development that is more often aligned with women than with men -- and with women and men who live in many nonwestern cultures. We find a contextual epistemology in many societies. In many Asian societies, for instance, the meaning of a word will change depending on the type of relationship in which the word is being conveyed. We also see an emphasis on context in most African societies—with emphasis being placed on the spoken word within a relationship rather than the written word that is context-free (Bergquist, 2021b).

 Like those who live in nonwestern cultures, Gilligan proposes that the spoken word is critical for many women living in Western cultures (especially the United States). She writes about women finding their voice, rather than just expressing themselves through action (which is a more common preference among men). Furthermore, the content of what is being said may vary between women and men. In traditional American society, it is the men's way which tends to prevail when it comes to *knowing* and it is the women's way that tends to be dominant with regard to *feeling*. Specifically: the so-called women's way of feeling is manifest as the clear articulation of feelings through the use of *words.* Women in our society have been socialized to share their feelings with other people through talking about these feelings. By contrast, men have traditionally been socialized to not speak about their feelings, nor to show these feelings directly in public. "Real men" aren't supposed to cry, be too exuberant or be too "touchy-feely."

Finding One's Voice

Along with her colleagues at the Stone Center, Carol Gilligan wrote about the developmental challenge associated with finding one's genuine voice (whether as a young woman or as a woman in mid-life). The focus is on the voice of women as they are engaged in connected relationships with other people. While Gilligan is focused particularly on the challenges that women face in finding their voice, I would suggest, ultimately, that this is a developmental challenge for all of us—men and women. For me to be truly free, I must find what it is that I truly believe. To be truly free, I must be able to articulate clearly and in a

compelling fashion to other people what I believe – particularly in a manner that furthers trust with other people. It is with the "freedom" of honesty that I can establish a deeply trusting and supportive relationship with another person.

Several of Carol Gilligan's colleagues wrote a book at about the same time that Gilligan was advocating the finding of voice among women. I have already mentioned these women: Mary Belenky and her colleagues. They (Belenky, et. al., 1986) offered a powerful account of women who must remain silent because of the constraints placed on them by their society. Along with her colleagues, Belenky asked how these women of silence would come to know anything. Can one engage in the acquisition of knowledge—can one learn—when there is no active verbal engagement with other people? Is a person ever free if they can never speak or engage with other people in knowledge-generating discourse? I would suggest that the answer is "No." Freedom requires engagement and the creation of shared knowledge. As I noted previously, we might consider interactions with other people to be the foundation for not only our sense of self, but also our fundamental sense of reality (Brothers, 2001). If this is the case, then our hold on reality is tenuous if we must remain silent.

Taking Action

As I have noted, while voice is of primary importance for some people (especially women), action is of primary importance for other people (especially men). Many men (and some women) primarily connect with other people and express their feelings in modes other than words. This predilection for action rather than words has prevailed for many centuries in Western culture, and virtually all other cultures in the world. Many men (and women) have used rituals, ceremony, gift-giving, symbolic gestures, and other physical modes to express their feelings. They bring flowers as an expression of love. They engage in chants, face-painting and cheers to express their enthusiastic support for a sports team. They go fishing with a friend and silently sit beside their friend. The act of fishing together is itself a manifestation of their friendship.

These action-oriented men (and women) look forward to the expression of family devotion at the Sunday evening dinner each week. They choke up at the playing of the national anthem and care deeply about the special evening at the movies each Friday night with their spouse. Repetition, tradition and tangible evidence of support and commitment are at the heart of the matter. Men's ways of feeling begin with the assumption that one's feelings are most believable when they translate into action: "Action speaks louder than words". "Watch what they do and not what they say!" This alternative mode of expressing feelings can be distilled into one phrase: "show me." Connections are made through the gestures being articulating and the patterns of behavior being forming in setting up and maintaining a relationship. Emblematic short-cuts are engaged, with humor and storytelling often replacing the need to elaborate on personal insights or acknowledge vulnerabilities out loud. This is the "man's way."

Today, there are many "ways" – and these ways are often unrelated to gender. While it is appropriate and timely that gender-based differences are now being challenged, the distinction to be drawn between connecting via voice rather than action is important—regardless of the source of this distinction. We must appreciate this distinction and recognize, as Carol Gilligan has done, that there is a

wide diversity of strategies for not only reasoning about moral behavior but also finding the best way to connect with other people.

Collaborating

We find yet another important implication to be drawn from Gilligan's work related to the differences among people in their way of connecting with other people—and particularly their orientation toward collaboration. If, as Carol Gilligan suggests, women have often been socialized in Western societies as contextual epistemologists (that is as people who tend to think and reason by considering specific issues within their specific setting or context) then it might also be the case that they have adopted a specific orientation toward interpersonal collaboration.

To reiterate, Carol Gilligan (1982) has observed that women tend to look at specific issues within the specific context surrounding the issue, whereas men (at least European/American White men) tend to look at specific issues in terms of abstract principles that are applied to understanding and resolving the issue. This would suggest that women tend to be influenced as leaders and team members by the context in which they are working and making decisions. This being the case, women might tend to be more effective than men in working in and leading in settings that are complex and volatile with regard to context. VUCA-Plus conditions might require that one moves beyond rigid, abstract reasoning. We can stick with the rules only when our world isn't dancing beneath our feet (Bergquist, 2021a).

This also means that women are more likely than men to feel comfortable in working collaboratively— which is a much more complex environment in which to work than that of autonomous, isolated work. Furthermore, the sharing of information and the promotion of collective intelligence may be more important for many women then for men—given the value women place on identifying and analyzing the environment and context in which they are operating. This information is typically only available from multiple sources and validated only from multiple perspectives—thus motivating a collaborative orientation among women. Collaboration would seem to be of even greater value given the associated challenge of receiving and interpreting information that is VUCA-Plus saturated. Does this mean that many women are better equipped to handle mid-21st Century conditions than are many men?

Containing and Transforming Anxiety

We can expand our understanding of the role played by women in promoting collaboration by turning to the notion of a holding environment. Wilfred Bion (1995) identifies the role played by leaders in providing a "holding" environment for their followers. This connects with the original Object Relations model of the "holding" environment in psychotherapy and the psychodynamic proposal that parents often provide an environment in which they hold or contains the anxiety of their children. They hold and contain the anxiety until their child can handle the anxiety themselves or until their parent has transformed the anxiety into something that is manageable.

This holding function operates for the leader much like the parent. Effective leaders often provide an environment in which they hold or contains the anxiety of their followers for a period of time. They hold and contain the anxiety until the followers (individually and collectively) can handle the anxiety themselves or until the leader has transformed (catalyzed) the anxiety into something that is

manageable, actionable or at least understandable (Bergquist, 2020). The organization's culture often is a vehicle for this management of anxiety (Menzies Lyth, 1988: Bergquist and Brock, 2008)

I would suggest that a holding environment might be critical to the creation of a collaborative culture. To what extent, are women as leaders more likely than men to provide the container for organizational anxiety? Are women more likely to hold the anxiety of their organization until it can be transformed and shared with other members of the organizations? Do they hold the tensions of the organization until these tensions can be effectively addressed by others in the organization? At a personal level, we might even ask a question about Carol Gilligan's relationship with Lawrence Kohlberg. To what extent has Carol Gilligan provided a container for Lawrence Kohlberg's anxiety that may arose when the acceptance of his model was declining? Did Gilligan shift from being the student and mentee to being the empathetic colleague?

Riane Eisler (1987) identifies this same holding function when she writes about women providing the chalice of support rather than the challenge of a blade (a strategy more commonly found among men). Eisler sketches out a history of feminine leadership to be found in many cultures and points to the holding environment (chalice) established by these women. Her historical analysis is quite convincing. However, I do have some concerns regarding what Eisler has written. While the female leader plays a critical role in providing this chalice to contain the anxiety of her followers, I can't help but wonder about the psychological costs associated with holding the anxiety for other people. Does this lead to psychological (or physical) burn-out among women (and men) who are the containers? Does Carol Gilligan carry a burden regarding her own promoting of a challenging perspective while retaining her relationship with Lawrence Kohlberg?

The Human Voice

Multiple insights offered by Carol Gilligan and others who have contributed to the feminist epistemological revolution. We have found that women tend to think and know as contextualists and have identified the role played by women as containers of anxiety. Then along comes Carol Gilligan once again to disrupt things. In this case, she is challenging her own model and analyses. She has recently written about a human voice that transcends all gender and cultural boundaries (Gilligan, 2023). It is no longer a matter of gender; rather it is a matter of the way power is distributed in a society. It seems that Carol Gilligan has not only confronted Lawrence Kohlberg—she has also confronted the earlier Carol Gilligan!

Perhaps the key to Carol Gilligan's continuing relationship with and support of the work done by Lawrence Kohlberg is her sustained openness to new information and new ideas—even if they counter what she herself has proposed at an earlier time in her career. Does she insist on not remaining silent about lingering concerns regarding her own work? Is her sustained relationship with Kohlberg based on an underlying belief that she needs to remain always vigilant about the disconfirmation of any theory—including her own? Isn't this ultimately the perspective to be held by any "true" scientist?

It is in Carol Gilligan's recent book called *In a Human Voice* (Gilligan, 2023) that we find her display of openness and an accompanying candor regarding her own shifting perspectives on the nature of moral

reasoning and epistemology as related to gender. This shift is based in part on a study she conducted with Jane Attanucci that focused on the moral orientation of medical students. Here is her account (Gilligan, 2023, p. 9):

> In a study published in the Merrill Palmer Quarterly in 1988 ("Two Moral Orientations: Gender Differences and Similarities"), Jane Attanucci and I looked at the relationship between moral orientation and gender. Analyzing the responses of medical students to Kohlberg's hypothetical moral dilemmas, we found that the men divided 50/50 between those who oriented to justice only and those who introduced considerations of both justice and care into solving moral problems. With the women, a third considered justice only, a third spoke about both justice and care, and a third oriented to care only. Care is not essentially or exclusively a woman's concern, although, at least in this sample of medical students, concerns about care and caring were articulated more often by women, and only women responded to moral problems by speaking solely about care.

Thus, it seems that women are more oriented to Gilligan's ethics of care—but the male medical students were not always inclined toward Kohlberg's way of thinking. Do male medical students differ from most other men or is the matter of gender differences a bit fuzzier than Gilligan (or at least many of her feminist followers) concluded?

In her continuing work, Carol Gilligan comes to a new perspective regarding difference among both women and men regarding moral reasoning and the acquisition of knowledge. She points not to gender differences but instead to the role played by power in the way people think and act. It is a dominant patriarchal view of the world that saturates the way people in our society come to their views about ethical actions and reality (Gilligan and Snider, 2018). Carol Gilligan (2023, p. 9) turns to Manon Garcia who proposes that women are not born submissive; rather, it is patriarchy that shapes women's lives.

Gilligan acknowledges that even her own distinction between male and female reasoning is strongly influenced by the patriarchal viewpoint. At the end of her remarkably telling book on the Human voice (rather than the "Different" voice), Carol Gilligan (2023, p. 109) offers the following powerful statement regarding the way we think and act in the world:

> I find myself asking what stands in the way of our seeing what is right in front of our eyes and listening to voices that are in our midst? What investment do we have in not hearing girls' voices as courageous, or recognizing girls' resistance as a healthy resistance, or not seeing the emotional intimacy of boys' friendships or recognizing boys' tenderness and emotional intelligence? I find these questions painful, in part because I know the costs of not seeing and not listening, the price of carelessness and indifference. I know that morality and gender scripts can blind us to the obvious. And keep us from hearing what is surprisingly accessible.

At this point, Gilligan (2023, pp. 109-110) seems to be turning in part to her study of the young women who speak with two voices:

> I know that if you want to hear the under-voice—the human voice that goes undercover—you may have to question the cover voice:

If it's good to be empathic with people and responsive to people's needs and concerns, why is it "selfish" to respond to yourself?

Why is that the ultimate nightmare [her in the arms of another man]?

Is that true?

Do you believe that?

Do you really feel that way?

As an ethics of relationship, care ethics is a guide to knowing others and oneself. It is a guide to listening. Its wisdom is a psychological wisdom: notice what happens when you replace judgment with curiosity.

Carol Gilligan (2023, p. 110) directly acknowledges her shift in perspective.

From the vantage point of the present, then, it has become possible for me to clarify and articulate what couldn't quite be seen or said at the time when my work was first published: that the "different voice" (the voice of care ethics), although initially heard as a "feminine" voice, is in fact a human voice, that the voice it differs from is a patriarchal voice (listen for the tell-tale gender binaries and hierarchies), and that where patriarchy is in force and enforced, the human voice is a voice of resistance, and care ethics is an ethics of liberation.

With this theoretical clarification, it becomes evident why *In a Different Voice* continues to resonate strongly with people's experience and, perhaps more crucially, why the different voice is a voice for the twenty-first century.

Rarely, do we witness this level of openness and candor offered by someone like Carol Gilligan who has been professionally successful. And it is in this final passage that we may find an important message regarding how we can remain engaged in meaningful relationships with other people while disagreeing with them regarding important perspectives and practices. It is in the abandonment of patriarchy (Eisler's sword) that we are able to listen to the divergent views of another person. It is with an ethic of care that we listen deeply to the voice of people with whom we are relating—even when they disrupt our view of reality.

Conclusions

As Carol Gillian notes, it is a matter of remaining vigilant regarding our own biases—and we might become most aware of these distortions in our relationship with other people who disagree with us. Furthermore, it is when we embrace an ethics of care that we are most like to sustain this relationship of differences in a manner that preserves the dignity of both parties. Carol Gilligan has taught us about this ethics of care not only in her own writings but also in her sustained relationship of care with her mentor, Lawrence Kohlberg.

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