

Thesis Title	Carol Gilligan's Feminist Ethics of Care: A Defense
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ABSTRACT

Carol Gilligan, an American psychoanalyst, developed the now famous feminist ethics of "care". In her studies, Gilligan identifies and indicates the significance of 'care' in moral decision making. Gilligan's ethics of care reacts to Kohlberg's and traditional ethical theories which identify women as morally underdeveloped and moral agent as impersonal and atomistic beings. Gilligan observes that the failure of these theories to see women's moral significance renders from their strict and rigid way of thought and way of research which is based mainly on the all-male sample and strict theory of rationality of justice perspective following Kantian ethics.

Kantian ethics tends to rely on universal and abstract rational principles connected to the independent subject. In this way, ethicists fail to see the importance of relationships and fail to recognize that human is born into relationships, i.e., of family, community, of friendship. Hence, care emphasizes relationships. It recognizes that life is a form of connectedness in a web of relationships, which is the point which Gilligan expands on.

This research is a defense of Gilligan's theory of 'ethics of care'. It is conducted with a belief that care is an effective solution to the problems of extreme individualism and violence in the world today.

In this research, the researcher, first of all, introduces the background of problems in Chapter I. In Chapter II she proceeds to discuss feminist ethics in general, and the development of feminist ideas in order to see where Gilligan's idea stands. This part is an attempt to answer some questions: What are feminist ethical concerns? How is feminist ethics different from the traditional ethics of the male? How do feminists differ among themselves? What are the problems or challenges in feminist ethical theories?

In chapter III the researcher shows how women think as demonstrated by Gilligan's research and theories regarding feminist ethical idea of care. The research shows how this idea can be considered as the harbinger of a new moral theory and as a challenge to the exhausted masculine tradition of moral philosophy. Yet she indicates how Gilligan's theory has also been condemned as methodologically unsound, theoretically confused, and even antifeminist.

Chapter IV is the practical part of the theory. In this part the researcher relates Gilligan's ethics of care to the present world problems. In this way she defends the ethics of care and shows how crucial it is to put this theory into practice in an attempt to solve the major problems of violence and individualism.

Finally, as her conclusion, Chapter V points out the significance of feminist ethics of care in human life. It is the recognition that human is not only "rational" but also "relational" which means that, for human, life without interaction and relationship is impossible. Thus to live in a sustainable and happy atmosphere, both justice perspective and care perspective need to be in balance.