**Gender I and Ethics of Care**

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| Jean-Léon Gérôme,  *Egyptian Water Carrier*  (1882)  |     | **Goals:**1. Understand the principles of Ethics of Care
2. Be able to articulate current issues of sexual discrimination

**To Do:**1. Read the required texts
2. Discussion on *Lean In* with Sheryl Sandberg
3. 2 page paper on Ethics of Care and Hooters
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         When Carol Gilligan began doing her research with female subjects, she noted that their responses didn't seem to fit neatly inKohlberg's framework. It's not that the responses couldn't be squeezed into that framework, but rather that something essential and distinctive was lost in the process and other things were misinterpreted or misvalued. Gilligan's study showed, first, that women tended much more often than the men of Kohlberg's studies to see the moral life in terms of care rather than justice, in terms of responsibility rather than rights. Whereas men see problems as moral issues when they involve competing claims about rights, women see problems as moral issues when they involve the suffering of other people. Whereas men see the primary moral imperative as centering on treating everyone fairly, women see the moral imperative as centering on caring about others and about themselves. Men typically make moral decisions by applying rules fairly and impartially, whereas women are more likely to seek resolutions that preserve emotional connectedness for everyone. Similarly, men tend to look back and to judge whether a moral decision was correct or not by asking whether the rules were properly applied, whereas women tend to ask whether relationships were preserved and whether people were hurt.

         These differences in ethical responses tend to reflect deeper differences between men and women, differences in the way in which they conceive of the self. Men are much more likely to see the self in terms of autonomy, freedom, independence, separateness and hierarchy. Rules guide the interactions among people, and roles establish each individual's place in the hierarchy. In contrast, women tend to see the self in terms of relatedness, interdependence, emotional connectedness, and responsiveness to the needs of others.

          Ethics of Care falls partially within the consequentialist framework, placing it with utilitarianism and egoism. Gilligan reacts against the cold rationality of the Enlightenment to a postmodern world view with differing voices and no clear answers. Gilligan is seeking happiness as a result of her ethic but unlike egoism, it is not entirely selfish or like  utilitarianism which seeks an impartial happiness for the greatest number. Ethics of Care can make irrational decisions whereby one may sacrifice for the good of another the way a mother sacrifices for her family. The mother does not sacrifice herself for the good of the world but for the good of the ones she loves. This is partially altruistic in her selflessness towards her family but it is self interested as well, in that one's family is tied to one's own identity and legacy. Diotima in Plato's *The Symposium* calls children a form of immortality. Ayn Rand in next week's lesson might disagree that being a mother is altruistic since she might get a great deal of satisfaction out of motherhood and sacrificing for one's children is not selfless but instead, ultimately rewarding. This can certainly be debated.

        Unlike many of the earlier Enlightenment theories with a clear set of principles and maxims, Ethics of Care is a little more difficult to nail down. It is not a rule based ethic so we cannot turn to a set of rules to understand it. This is a normative theory of ethics so there is an element whereby the Ethic of Care is telling us what we should be doing. There is an imperative involved. When you read these texts, keep in the forefront of your mind the question, what are the principles? Make a list of the vocabulary and principles you are uncovering so that you can apply them to the Sandberg and Hooters assignments. You will need these principles next week too, so hold on to your notes. It won't be enough just to repeat what I typed above so take the reading seriously and read it analytically.

         Before concluding, be aware that this work is a little dated when it comes to nuances of feminist thought today.  Gilligan published her findings in the 1982 work titled *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development.* This work was a result of over a decade of research and writing from women in secret, in fear that if men in their field discovered their work before it had been fully worked out that they would be blacklisted as quacks and not real scientists. Gilligan and her colleagues were not challenging the whole male establishment or the binary gender stereotypes, but rather were just trying to make the claim that moral development between men and women are often different and women are not wrong for failing to fit within an Enlightenment framework. Gilligan contend that feminine ethics is just as valid as the traditional form of ethics. When you review Sandberg's interview you may even find that there are many business advantages to the feminist ethic since mothers are competent and efficient with their time and resources.

### Material

The text this week includes an introduction to Ethics of Care. I am relying more heavily on an interview with Sheryl Sandberg as an example of the modern-day issues with sexism in the workplace. Sandberg talks candidly about the challenges of the stereotypes about being a woman in the workplace, which men do not have to deal with.  Women are perceived to leave work for extended periods of time to bare and raise children whereas men are not perceived to have that same interruption.  Sandberg like Gilligan before her points out that women handle leadership differently than men, using a more collaborative approach and focusing far less on individual accomplishments. Sandberg explains that this approach might lose a woman the promotion because she does not advocate for her own talents the way men are trained to do; however, women might produce better results and a better working environment. Sandberg does not blame these problems on men claiming that women are just as skeptical of other women taking on masculine forms of communication and self promotion. Sandberg's solution to the problem is that we must train society from an early age not to shame women into passive roles and train sons to view their female friends as equally strong and competent. In the true fashion of Ethic of Care, Sandberg makes claims that we should also learn to respect the way that women engage the workplace and perhaps men could start to mimic the feminine traits a bit more. Listen, teamwork, care for colleagues, and an integration of family and business life make a company stronger, therefore, the Ethic of Care model has a valuable role in modern society. This is week 1 of 2 on Gender so there will be more in the following week.