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rooted in patterns of maturation. Much, perhaps most, of it may well be rooted in the distinctive socialization of young girls in a culture which has always rested on the sexual division of labor, which has long ascribed some social tasks to men and others to women, and which has served as a mechanism by which a patriarchal society excludes one segment of the population from certain roles and therefore makes easier the task of producing hegemonic consensus. Gilligan describes how women make lemonade out of the lemons they have inherited. She does not tell how to transform the lemons into chocolate.

Department of History
University of Iowa

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Gilligan's book *In a Different Voice* was intended to right a wrong. In 1965 Jean Piaget wrote, "The most superficial observation is sufficient to show that in the main the legal sense is far less developed in little girls than in boys." Several studies using Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development scale also reported sex differences (and male superiority) in the level of moral reasoning employed in response to hypothetical moral dilemmas.[7] Gilligan argues that these supposed deficiencies of female development result from an injustice inherent in the research. She notes that the research paradigm, and the analyses of moral "levels," have been based primarily on the study of male subjects. As a result, psychologists have fallen into an observational bias; by "implicitly adopting the male life as the norm, they have tried to fashion women out of a masculine cloth" (p. 6), and women's particular moral development "falls through the sieve" (p. 31) of an androcentric research tradition. Gilligan's view is that with a less biased approach to moral thinking, one would find that women's thinking was somewhat different from men's, but not less mature. Psychologists have erred, not in believing that women are different from men, but that they are inferior to men; because women develop along a moral path that is distinct from that followed by men, existing research paradigms have failed them.

Because Gilligan addresses Kohlberg's paradigm primarily, it is well

7. Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 77; Henry Alker and Paul J. Poppen, "Ideology in University Students," *Journal of Personality* 41, no. 4 (December 1973): 653–71.

to be aware of certain features of his work, as well as some of the recent advances in theory, method, and findings.[8] The major goal of Kohlberg and his colleagues has been to trace developmental change in moral reasoning. While Kohlberg originally thought he could distinguish six such levels, more recent work indicates that there are four that can be applied to the large majority of children and adults. These four levels form a clear developmental progression. That is, individuals move from one to the next as they grow older, and there is evidence for the claim that the four levels have validity for individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The transition from level 3 to level 4 is of the greatest interest for our purposes. Level 3 is considered to be the first stage of adult reasoning. Some studies using Kohlberg's rating system found that women tended to remain scored there, while men more consistently matured to level 4.[9] Level 3 reasoning involves a concern with maintaining bonds of trust with others. The individual strives to be—and to be seen by others as—a "good" or "nice" person. The "good" or "right" action is that which will not hurt those with whom one has valued relationships. Shared feelings and agreements take priority over individual interests. The move to level 4 involves what might be called a move to a societal level of thought, where moral issues are considered in terms of a system of law or justice that must be maintained for the good of society. The higher level does not supersede or supplant the lower—persons who can think in societal terms about moral issues also can continue to think about the effects of their actions on other persons with whom they have relationships—but a new progression in thought has occurred. There can be no doubt that level 4 considerations do appear in an individual's thinking later than level 3 considerations. In this sense, the societal level is more mature.

Here Gilligan makes her primary departure from the work that precedes her. She argues that although the androcentric coding system used for Kohlberg's dilemmas shows women remaining at level 3 more often than do men, women are not in fact fixed at this relatively immature level but progress along a path different from that followed by men. Specifically, she believes that women move from an exclusive orientation toward serving others' interests to a greater emphasis on self-

8. Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981); Anne Colby et al., "A Longitudinal Study of Moral Judgment," *Monographs for the Society for Research in Child Development* 48, nos. 1–2, whole no. 200 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

9. James Fishkin, Kenneth Keniston, and Catharine MacKinnon, "Moral Reasoning and Political Ideology," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27, no. 1 (July 1973): 109–19; Norma Haan, M. Brewster Smith, and Jeanne Block, "Moral Reasoning of Young Adults: Political-social Behavior, Family Background, and Personality Correlates," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 10, no. 3 (November 1968): 183–201.

actualization. Thus the "different construction of the moral problem by women may be seen as the reason for their failure to develop within the constraints of Kohlberg's system" (p. 19).

Current work reveals, however, that Gilligan has been attacking a straw man. In a comprehensive review paper, Lawrence Walker considers sixty-one studies in which the Kohlberg paradigm is used to score moral reasoning for subjects of both sexes. These show that in childhood and adolescence, there is no trend whatever for males to score at higher levels than females on Kohlberg's scales. In adulthood, the large majority of comparisons reveal no sex differences. In the studies that do show sex differences, the women were less well educated than the men, and it appears that education, not gender, accounts for women's seeming lesser maturity. Throughout this large body of research, there is no indication whatever that the two sexes take different developmental paths with respect to moral thought about abstract, hypothetical issues.[10]

Because Gilligan's own writings do not include data on how girls and women change their moral thinking as they grow older, we do not know whether a different scoring system, based on Gilligan's formulations, would show differences in the sequence of developmental steps. For two reasons we think it highly doubtful that such differences will emerge if and when the necessary comparisons are made: (1) the number of men and the number of women who reach the different Kohlberg levels at successive ages are highly similar, which suggests that the sexes follow the same developmental path; and (2) thinking about moral issues is closely linked to, though not identical with, general cognitive development, and we know that the sexes do not differ in the average rate at which they climb the ladder of cognitive growth.

Of course, thinking about hypothetical moral issues is not all there is to morality. In retrospect, it is unfortunate that Gilligan focused her attack primarily on the Kohlberg paradigm. Gilligan has other points to make about morality, and in the long run, her greatest contribution may be her work on these other aspects of moral decision making. Women, Gilligan believes, are bound into a network of intimate interpersonal ties. Compared with men, they are more empathic and compassionate, more concerned lest they fail to respond to others' needs, and made more anxious by the threat of separation from their loved ones. All these things could be true even if the sexes did not differ in their thinking about abstract moral issues.

Gilligan is not the only writer to point to sex differences in the capacity for intimate interpersonal relationships. The claim that women are more oriented toward interpersonal relations has a well-established

10. Lawrence Walker, "Sex Differences in the Development of Moral Reasoning: A Critical Review," *Child Development* 55, no. 3 (June 1984): 667–91.

history in many forums of discussion. Women's predominance in the nurturance and care of young children is an accepted and cross-culturally universal fact. Theorists have used women's presumably greater interpersonal orientation to "explain" a wide variety of sex-linked phenomena, ranging from differences in mathematical or spatial ability to differences in the nature of the roles assigned to women in most societies. Talcott Parsons and R. F. Bales's distinction between the instrumental (masculine) and the expressive (feminine) functions in family organization provides an early example. The more recent work of Sandra Bem and of Janet Spence, Robert Helmreich, and Joy Stapp makes similar distinctions.[11]

Research has indicated that there are indeed some robust sex differences that relate to Gilligan's concerns. For example, empathy and altruism have been frequently examined for sex differences.[12] Self-report scores on these qualities are particularly striking: in each of the sixteen self-report studies reported by Nancy Eisenberg and Roger Lennon, women rate themselves as more empathic than do men. These sex differences are sometimes very large statistically. Also, it has been found that when observers, such as teachers or peers, are asked to rate qualities of people they know, females are rated as more empathic and altruistic than males.[13] The stereotype of women's greater empathy and altruism is very strong, and, as Martin Hoffman points out in his review of empathy, "The relevant theorizing in the literature is in essential agreement with this stereotype. . . . There appear to have been no theorists who contradict [it]."[14]

It is clear that women have a greater *reputation* for altruism and empathy than do men, and that women accept its validity. Whether the reputation is deserved is a more complicated question. There are many studies in which people are unobtrusively observed while confronting an opportunity to help others. In general, these studies do not show that women are any more likely than men to offer help. However, most of these studies involve situations in which the person to be helped is a

11. Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales, *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1955); Sandra L. Bem, "The Measurement of Psychological Androgyny," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 42, no. 2 (April 1974): 155–62; Janet T. Spence, Robert Helmreich, and Joy Stapp, "Ratings of Self and Peers on Sex Role Attributes and Their Relation to Self-Esteem and Conceptions of Masculinity and Femininity," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32, no. 1 (July 1975): 29–39.

12. For a useful review, see Nancy Eisenberg and Roger Lennon, "Sex Differences in Empathy and Related Capacities," *Psychological Bulletin* 94, no. 1 (July 1983): 100–131.

13. Douglas B. Sawin et al., "Empathy and Altruism" (Department of Psychology, University of Texas at Austin, 1979, mimeographed).

14. Martin L. Hoffman, "Sex Differences in Empathy and Related Behaviors," *Psychological Bulletin* 84, no. 4 (July 1977): 712–22.

stranger. It has become clear that an individual's helpfulness to strangers depends on a complex set of factors that may or may not be related to gender. Thus, a person's readiness to offer help depends on the sex of the person in need, on perceived risks entailed in helping, and on the helper's beliefs about whether he or she has the skills needed to be an effective resource (e.g., a man is more likely to offer to change a tire, a woman, to soothe a child). It should be noted that in real life most altruistic acts are performed for the benefit of persons close to us. We suspect that if a real sex difference in altruism emerges, it will be found with respect to helpful acts directed toward friends and intimates, not toward strangers. But this work remains to be done; so far a sex difference can be neither confirmed nor refuted.

Recent work on children's play groups indicates that even at a very early age males and females show decidedly different styles in social interactions.[15] This research provides some evidence supporting an "agentive/expressive" distinction, similar to the one proposed by Parsons and Bales, but at a preadult phase of development. Girls' groups are smaller, most often a dyad or triad of "best friends" whose interactions are based on shared confidences. Boys' groups are larger and more task-oriented; that is, play tends to center on some goal-directed game or activity. These differences appear fairly early in childhood and are persistent. It is possible that some of the gender differences postulated in areas such as empathy and altruism stem from these early tendencies and preferences. An interesting parallel is, in fact, found in the literature on intimacy among adults. Women's relationships tend to focus on self-disclosure, and "liking" among women is highly correlated to the amount of self-disclosure that goes on in a relationship. For men the correlation between liking and self-disclosure is very low.[16] Self-disclosure tends to be a feature of intimacy and may be connected to the kind of network of interpersonal ties that Gilligan perceives. A great deal of work is left to be done on the exact nature of intimate relationships and possible gender differences therein.

When we read Gilligan, it is easy to be impressed by the elegance of her style and by the historical, philosophical depth of what she has to say. In these respects, her writing is very refreshing compared to the dry fact citing of much of social science. It seems almost philistine to challenge the nature of her evidence. Many women readers find that the comments by

15. For a review, see Eleanor Maccoby, "Social Groupings in Childhood: Their Relationship to Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior in Boys and Girls," in *Development of Antisocial and Prosocial Behavior: Theories, Research and Issues*, ed. Dan Olwens, Jack Block, and Marian Radke-Yarrow (San Diego: Academic Press, 1985).

16. Zick Rubin and Stephen Schenker, "Friendship, Proximity, and Self-Disclosure," *Journal of Personality* 46, no. 1 (March 1978): 1–22.

women quoted in Gilligan's book resonate so thoroughly with their own experience that they do not need any further demonstration of the truth of what is being said. The fact remains, however, that Gilligan claims that the views expressed by women in her book represent a *different* voice—different, that is, from men. This assertion demands quantitative, as well as qualitative, research. There is no sphere of human thought, action, or feeling in which the two sexes are entirely distinct. Reproductive activity is the area in which behaviors come closest to being truly dimorphic, but apart from this, the male and female distributions overlap greatly, and in most respects, men and women are more alike than they are different. A claim that the two sexes speak in different voices amounts to a claim that there are more women than men who think, feel, or behave in a given way. Simply quoting how some women feel is not enough proof. We need to know whether what is being said is distinctively *female*, or simply human. We believe that no researcher who makes assertions such as Gilligan's can escape the obligation to demonstrate a quantitative difference in the proportion of the two sexes who show the characteristic in question. Here, Gilligan's research, as cited in the book, is unsatisfying. One study on abortion decisions was understandably confined to women subjects, and we consequently cannot compare how women and men think about this issue. Another study by Susan Pollak and Gilligan, after comparing the responses of men and women to a set of pictured scenes, maintained that women are made more anxious than men by the isolation that is involved in achievement, while men are made anxious by intimacy. However, a recent attempt to replicate that study raises serious questions about the way the pictures were classified to elicit the sex differences. Other classification systems reveal no tendency for the sexes to differ in their anxiety about intimacy or separation.[17] Finally, Gilligan has not yet provided any evidence that boys and girls follow different developmental courses in their thinking about morality. The book's only evidence concerning children's responses to moral issues consists of quotations from two eight-year-olds and two eleven-year-olds. These quotations fit our stereotypes about boys and girls, and intuitively we may feel that Gilligan must be right. But can we remain satisfied with this level of evidence?

We can only sound a warning: women have been trapped for generations by people's willingness to accept their own intuitions about the truth of gender stereotypes. To us, there seems no alternative to the slow,

17. Susan Pollak and Carol Gilligan, "Images of Violence in Thematic Apperception Test Stories," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 42, no. 1 (January 1982): 159–67; Kay Bussey and Betty Maugham, "Gender Differences in Moral Reasoning," ibid., 42, no. 4 (April 1982): 701–6; Cynthia J. Benton et al., "Is Hostility Linked with Affiliation among Males and with Achievement in Females? A Critique of Pollak and Gilligan," ibid., 45, no. 5 (November 1983): 1167–71.

painful, and sometimes dull accumulation of quantitative data to show whether the almost infinite variations in the way human beings think, feel, and act are actually linked to gender. Let us hasten to say that we are not arguing that the sexes do not differ in important respects. We only urge that claims about what these differences are should be subjected to the empirical tests that are the basis of social science.

Department of Psychology
Stanford University

A Methodological Critique

Zella Luria

In a Different Voice has had a predictably wide audience among women. Indeed the six story-filled essays have an intuitive fit with how many women see themselves, especially in relation to men. Given the potential influence of this work in characterizing women's thinking, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the bases of its arguments and to ask whether the evidence is yet sufficient to warrant Gilligan's conclusions. If the evidence is found insufficient, what further research might be needed for a more rigorous test of the book's intriguing assertions?

Gilligan's work demonstrates her immersion in the field of adolescent development and the influence on her of psychoanalytic theory. In research (as well as in popular thought) on the psychology of adolescence, Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson are critical figures; the theories and methodologies of both turn up repeatedly in all of Gilligan's writing here and elsewhere. The weaving of literary examples (presumably as metaphors), theoretical proposal, and loosely defined empirical research can be a winning but seductive design; occasionally Gilligan does not draw a clear line between theoretical speculation and discussion of data and slips from hunch, example, or metaphor to "proven fact." The structure of her work, to use a metaphor myself, is built of solid bricks intermixed with some of cardboard.

In Gilligan's interview work, for instance, the nature of the evidence is sometimes unclear. Although psychological work on adolescents has been criticized for relying too heavily on the single method of the semi-structured interview that is favored by Gilligan, that method *can* be a useful technique if certain requirements of rigorous research are fulfilled. First, good samples must be carefully characterized by age, social class, education, and method of recruitment so that readers can securely apply the findings to similar groups. In general, Gilligan's sample spec-