

40 anos de “Uma voz diferente”: entrevista com Carol Gilligan

Entrevista

Carol Gilligan

Interviewer

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva¹

This interview is part of the Dossier “40 years of ‘In a Different Voice’: contributions, developments and the legacy of the ideas of Carol Gilligan (1936-)” published by Schème Journal – Electronic Journal of Genetic Psychology and Epistemology, and organized by me and by professor Patricia Unger Raphael Bataglia from Unesp/Marília.

The proposal of this Dossier, as already mentioned in the Editorial of this volume, was born from two demands: first, to celebrate the 40 years that Carol Gilligan's book (1982), *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, complete in 2022; and second, to fill a gap that still exists in Brazilian research on morality, which is the non-approach or the minimal, partial and/or mistaken approach to Gilligan's ideas, as we found in previous research (SILVA, 2020; 2021; 2022) .

My first contact with Gilligan's work took place during my graduation in Pedagogy, specifically at the end of it, in 2018, when I was completing a research

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of Scientific Initiation. The following year, I had the honor of contacting her by email. Always receptive and patient in answering my messages and questions, we have been in contact since then. I reiterate my thanks to Professor Gilligan for her interest and willingness to participate in our Dossier and for granting me this interview.

Gilligan became a world reference for the Psychology of Moral Development, for Feminist Studies and for Gender Studies in the 1980s, after publishing, in 1982, the book *In a Different Voice*. In the words of Harvard University Press, “this is the little book that started a revolution”². Over the years, Gilligan’s early work also gained notoriety and was recognized by other areas of knowledge, at first in Philosophy and Law, later in Education, Nursing and others, as well as in various fields of Psychology itself. Her contribution is invaluable and, in the field of Moral Development Psychology, much of the current concern with the renewal of the literature on moral development is due to her.

Now 84 years old, Gilligan is currently professor at New York University (2002-currently) and a retired professor at Harvard University (1969-1997), where she earned her Ph.D. in Social Psychology in 1964, and previously taught at Harvard University of Chicago (1965-1966) until she was hired at Harvard.

Based on my prior knowledge of her work, a broad analysis of bibliographic materials that address it, and previous interviews given by Professor Gilligan, I initially prepared 17 questions, which later, with the continuous dialogue in electronic messages that we exchanged, were expanded for 21 questions. Thus, the questions were sent by e-mail, giving her as much space as thought necessary to answer them. After being revised, I was responsible for translating the interview for publication in a Portuguese version (Pt-Br) together with the original English version.

² GILLIGAN, C. Revisiting “In a Different Voice”. *The Harbinger*, v. 39, n. 1, p. 19-28, 2015.

We divided the questions, and their respective answers, arranged below, into four parts: 1) History; 2) The book; 3) Reception; and 4) Actuality. The questions in the first part concern her story and the background of her book *In a Different Voice*. The questions in the second part are about the process of producing her book and the ideas it contains. The questions in the third part are about the reception of the book, the acclaim and the criticisms it has received, and the questions in the fourth part are about the present.

Finally, I would like to thank the Editors of Schème Journal for attending and approving our Dossier proposal, especially Rafael dos Reis Ferreira, who was involved and closely followed the entire process for its achievement and in all its steps.



Photo of Carol Gilligan captured by Sabine Mirlesse - Source: Friedman (2020)

I**History**

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: In other interviews and speeches given by you³, you evidence your involvement in social movements in the United States since the 1960s, and the extent of that was the Feminism. What do you mean by that?

Carol Gilligan: *It would be more accurate to say that my involvement in social movements in the United States began in the 1960s and extended to Feminism. I would say that feminism is one of the great liberation movements in human history: it is the movement to free democracy from patriarchy and as such it endorses the civil rights of women as well as of civil rights as well as a protest against violence and war.*

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: You also point out that your initial experience in Psychology was a shock, because you realized that you had a very progressive life and Psychology was under skewed interpretations arising from white men which ideas that bias the compression about human development, starting with the assumption that women's development was inferior to men's development.

Carol Gilligan: *Gender or the development of women was not my initial concern; my encounter with the field of psychology as a graduate student at Harvard in the late 1950s*

³ LEEAT, G. **Interview with Carol Gilligan** [Video Recording]. Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History and Online Archive Project. New York, NY, 2009; HAMER, M. Listen to the voice: an interview with Carol Gilligan. **Women: A Cultural Review**, v. 10, n. 2, 173-184, 1999; SILVA, M. E. F. da. A crítica de Carol Gilligan ao androcentrismo e sexismo na psicologia e na produção científica. **Revista do Instituto de Políticas Públicas de Marília**, v. 8, n. esp., p. 67-86, 2022.

and early 1960s came as something of a shock because of what struck me at the time as a reductionistic or unnuanced view of human experience and more specifically, human conflict. I had come to psychology after doing my undergraduate work in literature, and in contrast to Shakespeare and Tolstoy, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner and Yeats, the depictions of human life in the research studies and case histories I read struck me for the most part as rather flat, as for example in descriptions such as “mother was cold and father was absent” or statements such as “this is not the happy way to be”. It was only later, after listening to women speaking about self and morality that it struck me that the psychology I had been studying and teaching (the theories of Freud and Erikson, Piage and Kohlberg) had implicitly assumed that man (literally boys and men and for the most part white boys and men) was the measure of human. Insofar as women differed from those men, we were for the most part seen by psychologists as deficient in development, lacking a clear sense of self or, as Freud wrote, incapable of love and having “less sense of justice than men”. This took me by surprise – the realization that major theorists of human psychology had not seen the omission of women from their research studies or dismissing women as exceptions to their theories of human sexuality or of identity and moral development – as a problem; and conversely, that women, myself included, had either not seen the omission of ourselves or considered it as a significant omission. A gender bias (e.g., choosing samples of boys and men for studies of humans) pervaded the field of psychology but it had for the most part been invisible: unrecognized or dismissed as not a problem. As I came to realize, psychology had been mistaking patriarchy for nature.

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: I would like you to talk a little bit more about that moment in your life. How would you describe the implications of this involvement in social movements with your performance in scientific research in Psychology, which until then had this bias perspective?

Carol Gilligan: *Prior to completing my dissertation (“Responses to Temptation: An Analysis of Motives”) and receiving my Ph.D. in 1964, I was active in the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war Movement. I did voter registration in African-American communities. In the winter of 1965-66, when I was teaching part-time at the University of Chicago, I was among the mostly junior faculty members who protested the use of grades to determine which students would be drafted to fight the war in Vietnam. That year I also became aware of a disparity in both rank and salary between women and men faculty members who were teaching the same undergraduate course (Introduction to Modern Social Science). It was my introduction to feminism. In retrospect, these experiences of social activism and protesting injustice together with my experience as a young mother living in married student housing and spending time with an international group of women, no doubt heightened my sensitivity to race and gender bias that was endemic in the field of psychology, but I didn’t directly confront these issues until I started doing my own research in the early 1970s. My focus then was not on race or gender but rather on the relationship of judgment to action in real (actual rather than hypothetical) situations of conflict and choice.*

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: In other fragments of your previous interviews⁴, you said that Professor Erik Erikson was like a mentor to you, and that he showed you a way of working in Psychology that had integrity, that “you can’t separate identity from relationships” and that “life story and history are intertwined”. How do you see the influence of these reflections on your research journey?

⁴ HAMER, M. Listen to the voice: an interview with Carol Gilligan. **Women: A Cultural Review**, v. 10, n. 2, 173-184, 1999; LEEAT, G. **Interview with Carol Gilligan** [Video Recording]. Psychology’s Feminist Voices Oral History and Online Archive Project. New York, NY, 2009.

Carol Gilligan: *Erik Erikson was an artist as well as a psychoanalyst, someone who said, “all I have to offer is a way of seeing,” and because his way of seeing joined life-history with history, he showed me a way of working within psychology that I could relate to and thus I credit him with drawing me back into the field. Erik was a mentor to me and teaching with him inspired me. In retrospect, I can see what I did as reflecting what he advocated doing: connecting life history with history. What I don’t think he imagined and what I had not anticipated was how disruptive it would be for me to do what Erikson himself had done. Because I was bringing women’s life histories into a history that had largely been shaped by men.*

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: When you started your postgraduation, what was the research theme that initially interested you? How did you move from that initial theme to the themes of your next researches, as Assistant Researcher for Professor Lawrence Kohlberg and then as a Professor at Harvard? Did your first research show you what you would work with next? I would like you to talk about how was this process.

Carol Gilligan: *I was interested in people’s responses to real situations of conflict and choice, times when conceptions of self and morality come into play in response the questions: What am I going to do? Or What should I do? Who was the “I” and what was the conception of morality? I began by studying Harvard men who were facing the Vietnam war draft and then in 1973 when President Nixon ended the draft and the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion in *Roe v. Wade*, I continued my study with women who were in the first trimester of a confirmed pregnancy and were considering abortion. At the time I was blind to gender – I was interested in interviewing people who were actually facing a situation of conflict and choice and would have to live with the outcomes of their decision. But I had started by interviewing only men and then continued by interviewing only*

women, and perhaps as a result, the distinctness and the dissonances in the women's voices stood out. What struck me was a tendency among the women to conceive of self as being in rather than apart from relationships and also a concern with responsibility and caring, for others and also for self, as integral to morality.

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: If I am correct, you met Lawrence Kohlberg in 1969 and he invited you to work with him in his research. In the beginning, did your research interest fully cover in the research that you were doing together? Was there a specific moment you started to see yourself interested in aspects that were not considered by Kohlberg and the others, or it only happened when you interviewed pregnant women in abortion clinics and had what we would call an "epiphany"? I imagine that this may have started when you were teaching a section of Kohlberg's course, talking about the Vietnam War, but I would like you to clarify that.

Carol Gilligan: *I met Larry Kohlberg in 1969 and after reading my dissertation, he invited me to work with him as a research assistant in a study he was conducting on adolescents' reasoning about sexual dilemmas. He also asked me to be a teaching assistant in his 1970-71 undergraduate course on Moral and Political Choice. Larry knew I was interested in the relationship of judgment to action, and in people's responses to real rather than hypothetical moral conflicts, and he encouraged me to pursue these interests. We became friends and he wrote a very generous endorsement of *In a Different Voice* (which you can see on Amazon). As for the experience of epiphany, it occurred when I was reading through the transcripts of the interviews that Mary Belenky (a graduate student at the time) and I had conducted with pregnant women who were considering abortion. I remember the feeling of sudden insight or radical illumination when I realized why psychologists including Freud and Erikson and Piaget and Kohlberg had been so*

mystified by women and unable to fit women into their theories of identity and moral development. Listening to women's conceptions of self and morality, I had heard a different voice – meaning a voice that differed from the voice of psychological theory in that it spoke from a premise of connectedness or interdependence rather than of separateness, which then changed the grounds for thinking about self and morality. In contrast to the focus on justice and rights, the different voice focused on responsibility and care, on the relational context of conflict and choice.

II

The book

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: When the Supreme Court legalized abortion and you started your study with women in abortion clinics, you said that you were gender-blind and you only became aware of the situation after facing the interviews that you did⁵. And this was your epiphany moment, starting to do Feminist Psychology from there. But was your restlessness with Psychology long-standing? And was it no longer considered a feminist way of looking at Psychology?

Carol Gilligan: *At the time I was blind to gender – I wasn't thinking that my initial study involving Harvard students who were facing the Vietnam War draft was a study of men or that the abortion decision study was a study of women. I was interested in the relationship of moral judgment to action in situations of actual conflict and choice. It was only later, when reading through the interviews with pregnant women that it struck me that many were starting from a premise of connected rather than one of separateness and that's why psychologists (Freud, Erikson, Piaget and Kohlberg – all of whose theories I was teaching at the time) had so much trouble understanding women. Because it was a*

⁵ LEEAT, G. **Interview with Carol Gilligan** [Video Recording]. Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History and Online Archive Project. New York, NY, 2009.

different voice – joining reason with emotion, mind with body, and the self with relationships. I hadn't noticed the extent to which psychologists had taken men as the norm and considered women an exception and less developed insofar as they differed from what was a male standard. Prior to the abortion decision study, I was not thinking about gender and feminist issues within psychology.

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: Regarding your work with Kohlberg and the research that you subsequently made about morality, in a previous interview⁶ you said you were more interested in “a paradigm of developmental psychology that contained more than cognitive development structures, for example, conflicts and issues that arise at various stages of life”. In other words, you were more interested in the “content of moral reasoning and the context in which moral language was used, while Kohlberg was particularly interested in this ‘very particular slice of... development’”, as you called it. For me, this doesn't seem to be clear to many morality Brazilian researchers. Could you talk a little bit about this and enlighten what your real interest was and why it differs from Kohlberg's interest and proposal?

Carol Gilligan: *Larry Kohlberg used to say that he was interested in moral reasoning and I was interested in the relationship between moral judgment and action, which is true. He initially hired me as a research assistant to conduct a study of adolescents' reasoning about sexual dilemmas, presumably that they might actually face. When I wrote about a “different voice” meaning a voice that differed from the voice of psychological theory (including Kohlberg's theory of moral development), I described an ethic of care that was contextual rather than abstracted from context and that started from a*

⁶ JORGENSEN, G. Kohlberg and Gilligan: duet or duel?. **Journal of Moral Education**, v. 35, n. 2, p. 179-196, 2006.

premise of interdependence rather than of independence. I contrasted care ethics with Kohlberg's conception of morality as justice and in the early 1980s wrote that both care and justice were concerns built into the human life cycle, given that children are less powerful than adults (and thus subject to oppression) and also dependent on adults to care for them, rather than to abandon them. "It's not fair" and "you don't care" are common expressions among children and capture these moral concerns. Larry Kohlberg would quote Socrates saying virtue is one and it's name is justice. It is in this context that I identified justice as a moral voice (not the moral voice) and describe a care voice as a different voice within this context.

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: Without the intention of appearing repetitive about the previous question: still about the structuralist paradigm and the stage development model, which you had contact with even through working with Kohlberg, in the book *In a Different Voice* you described stages of development. However, your next works and your colleagues works are about moral orientation, not to affirm a new model of levels and stages of the morality of care. So, it initially seemed that you didn't want to break with structuralism, but today it seems that this issue has been left behind, as a possible continuation of *In a Different Voice* and that had no continuity. Perhaps this has to do with your departure from the conversation between "Kohlberg" and "Gilligan", as you said at the AME conference in Atlanta in 1997⁷, that your voice was no longer being heard, or perhaps it was simply something that no longer interested you. I would like you to talk a little about this, your position regarding structuralism at that time and today and about tracing a development model in stages of the Ethics of Care.

⁷ GILLIGAN, C. Remembering Larry. *Journal of Moral Education*, v. 27, n. 2, p. 125-140, 1998.

Carol Gilligan: *I very much appreciate your asking me this question. It's true: when I wrote *I a Different Voice* I was still thinking in terms of the structural stage theory of Piaget and Kohlberg where thinking begins as pre-conventional, then becomes conventional, and then post-conventional and development consists in the move from pre-conventional to conventional to post-conventional or autonomous thought. This was before I realized that this developmental theory itself was framed within a particular set of cultural assumptions. The key to the shift you refer to came from the studies of girls' development that I initiated following *In a Different Voice* (the research of the 10 year Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development that I began with my graduate students in 1981). The major and unexpected finding of those studies of girls' development was the observation of resistance and the recognition that what had been seen as steps in a developmental progression were more accurately viewed as a process of initiation. As a healthy body resists infection, a healthy psychic resists the conventions of a culture that splits mind from body, thought from emotion, and the self from relationships. Rather than pre-conventional I came to see the thinking of girls prior to adolescence as "pre-initiated", and adolescence as the time when girls are inducted into the gendered splits of a patriarchal order, where reason, mind, and self (gendered masculine) are split from and elevated over emotion, body, and relationships (gendered feminine). With these splits, basic human relational capacities are compromised or stunted. As neuroscientists (Damasio for example) have observed, the splitting of reason from emotion, rather than signifying the attainment of rationality, is a manifestation of brain injury or trauma, so developmental psychologists – the studies of infants and also the Harvard Project studies of girls and the studies with boys that followed – came to see the separation of the self from relationships not as the apogee of development, the attainment of independence or individual autonomy – but as a manifestation of injury or trauma (see Gilligan and Snider, 2018, *Why Does Patriarchy Persist?*).*

III

Reception

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: Susan Hekman, in the book “Moral voices, moral selves: Carol Gilligan and feminist moral theory”⁸, points out that although *In a Different Voice* is not a philosophy book, it had important implications for Moral Philosophy. She considers that you don’t define your project in terms of a deconstruction of the rationalism and universalism of modernist moral theory (with Kant’s self-regulating moral subject as its main representative), but that your work contributes significantly to this deconstruction, towards conceptions that emphasize particularity and concreteness. Do you agree with that? How do you see this reverberation of your book in an area that, at first, was not its focus?

Carol Gilligan: *I do agree with this and I am very appreciative of the philosophers who have extended and expanded the focus of my work in this manner. In several recent works, I have directly addressed the issue of difference in my title, *In a Different Voice*, noting that the word “woman” does not appear in my title. I was writing about a different voice (not a woman’s voice), and as a growing body of evidence now attests that different voice (namely, a voice that connects thought with emotion, mind with body, self with relationships) is a human voice. The voice it differs from is a patriarchal voice – the gendered voice of a patriarchal order that divides human capacities into masculine (reason, mind, and self) and feminine (emotion, body, and relationships) and privileges the masculine. As I’ve come to see it, the gender binary and the gender hierarchy are the DNA, the building blocks of a patriarchal order. And, within a patriarchal order, the human voice is a*

⁸ HEKMAN, S. **Moral voices, moral selves:** Carol Gilligan and feminist moral theory. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

voice of resistance (because it resists the gender binary and hierarchy that comprise or undermine basic human relational capacities).

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: In the article “The need for more than justice”⁹ of 1987, Annette Baier wrote that in North American Moral Philosophy, justice is considered the “first of virtues”, but there was a countermovement gaining strength due to your book *In a Different Voice* and that this movement came from sectors of society that are expected to be aware of the importance of justice, namely black people and women. She points out that from that point on, justice was placed as just one virtue among many, and one may need the presence of the other virtues to give its own indisputable value. How do you see this movement and the vanguard position they put you in?

Carol Gilligan: *I love the work of Annette Baier and I very much appreciate this movement and the position they put me in. To hear concerns about justice as a voice, one voice, opens the way to hearing other voices, including the voice of care. I find it not surprising that the people who do the lion’s share of caring in society – black people and women – would give voice to its importance and its urgency for human flourishing and survival. I would only add that the psyche is polyvocal – and given human experience, concerns about justice and concerns about caring are universal human concerns. Given that children are smaller and less powerful than adults and dependent on caring for their survival, the cries “It’s not fair!” and “You don’t care!” as protests against oppression and abandonment, are built into everyone’s childhood.*

⁹ BAIER, A. The need for more than justice. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, v. 17, n. 1, p. 41-56, 1987.

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: About your method of evaluating the interviews in the book *In a Different Voice*, which resulted later in your “The Listening Guide Method”, in subsequent research the system developed by Nona Lyons was also used. However, several alternatives for evaluating the morality of care have also emerged, some closed tests and even an interview to assess the levels and stages of the Ethics of Care outlined in your book, being this one Eva Skoe’s Ethics of Care Interview (ECI). I would like to know your opinion about these measuring instruments of moral orientation and your opinion about the Skoe interview, if you know them and what you think about them. And do you consider any evaluation method more appropriate (or do you have any preference?) in psychological research on the morality of care?

Carol Gilligan: *Just as my research on development and the observation of resistance led me to a major critique of developmental theory for mistaking culture for nature, so I came to see how many accepted research methods incorporate and thus perpetuate culturally sanctioned binaries and hierarchies, such as the splitting of reason from emotion and of the self from relationships. As the poet Audre Lorde observed, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” It is on these grounds that I have come to see the limitations in the coding system developed by Nona Lyons (which I had initially encouraged) and also Eva Skoe’s work, which I also had initially endorsed. My Listening Guide method resists binary categories and the binary logic of coding systems; by distinguishing different voices and tracking their interplay, it offers a way of attending to tensions such as reflected in the question I was initially asked by a woman in one of my studies, in response to one of Kohlberg’s hypothetical moral dilemmas: “Would you like to know what I think? Or, would you like to know what I really think?” She was saying in effect that she had come to think about morality in a way that differed from how she “really” thought. The Listening Guide is a psychologically informed guide to listening; it reflects*

the non-binary, both-and logic of psychological processes, including dissociation: our ability to know and also not know what we know.

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: The current paradigm of Moral Psychology that seeks to contemplate the complexity of moral development, such as considering the affective aspect while considering the cognitive aspect, owes a lot to your work. Many of the theories and continuations of Kohlberg's work point to your book as one of the first writings to highlight this issue, the importance and the need to think of the subject not only as a rational being, but also as a composed subject, as a totality, of affective and other aspects. How do you see this recognition of your work and what is your opinion about this current paradigm of Moral Psychology?

Carol Gilligan: *I see it as an important correction and in line with the work of Antonio Damasio and other neuroscientists whose research has shown that the separation of reason or thought from emotion, rather than signifying the apogee of rationality, is more accurately seen as a manifestation of brain injury or trauma (see Damasio, *Descartes' Error*¹⁰). In effect I think psychologists mistook trauma for development, and the current paradigm of moral psychology that integrates cognition and affect or reason and emotion (along with mind and body and self and relationships) is a major correction and signifies a paradigm shift. I find this an important and accurate and very gratifying recognition of my work.*

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: I'm going to ask you to speak a little bit about the critiques of your work by morality researchers and by other feminist authors

¹⁰ DAMASIO, A. R. *Descartes' error*. New York: Random House, 2006.

who say that you essentializes female nature, and criticisms that in feminists case comes mainly from post-structuralist authors. In your book, you make it clear that the different voice you describe is characterized not by gender but by theme and that its association with women is an empirical observation. How do you see these criticisms and what do you attribute to them to persist?

Carol Gilligan: *Again, I appreciate this question. In a recent essay, "Disrupting the Story: Enter Eve" (GILLIGAN, 2020, Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association)¹¹, I speak directly to this point and how in part I am responsible for the confusion that arose by my joining the word "different" with the word "woman" in the title of my 1982 book (In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development) and the 1977 article that preceded it, "In a Different Voice: Women's Conceptions of Self and of Morality"¹². This fostered the assumption that the different voice was a woman's voice – and at the time I wrote, it was hard not to hear it as such because the "different voice" was a voice that connected thought with emotion and self with relationships, and both emotions and relationships were considered "feminine" and thought to compromise the "masculine" qualities of reason and self. But the major shift within the human sciences that has taken place within the ensuing years – the paradigm shift or relational turn – now makes it clear that as humans we are inherently relational, responsive beings, born with a voice, that is, with the ability to communicate our experience, and with the desire to and also the ability to engage responsively with others. The separation of reason from emotion and of self from relationships are now increasingly recognized to be markers of injury or trauma, resulting in a loss of relationship. And morally speaking, the loss or stunting of basic human relational capacities opens the way for all forms of oppression and hierarchy (injustice, carelessness, the justification of oppression and abandonment).*

¹¹ GILLIGAN, C. Disrupting the story: enter Eve. **Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association**, v. 68, n. 4, p. 675-693, 2020.

¹² GILLIGAN, C. In a different voice: women's conceptions of self and of morality. **Harvard Educational Review**, v. 47, n. 4, p. 481-517, 1977.

*In terms of essentialism, as you observe, I say on p. 2 of *In a Different Voice* that the different voice is distinguished not by gender but theme. It's association with women, as I would now put it, reflects the reality that within patriarchal cultures, women are something of an afterthought and their initiation into the gender binaries and hierarchies of a patriarchal order tends to occur at adolescence, whereas the initiation of boys typically begins at the time formal schooling starts, roughly between 4 and 7, and then is reinforced in adolescence when boys are learning, in the words of one of the boys in Niobe Way's studies of adolescent boys, "how to be more of a man". In my 2014 essay: "Moral Injury and the Ethic of Care: Reframing the Conversation about differences"¹³, I depict what I describe as a triptych of development, beginning with the initiation of young boys, then centering on the studies of pre-adolescent and adolescent girls which led to the finding of resistance, and then the final panel showing the reinforcement of the initiation with adolescent boys. The initiation into patriarchy is marked by a "crisis of connection" where children are given all sorts of incentives to give up relationship (the experience of living in connection with themselves and with others) in order to have what are called "relationships," within a patriarchal order.*

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: In your book, *In a Different Voice*, there is a foundation in Nancy Chodorow's¹⁴ reading of the psychoanalysis. This foundation is present when you approach some hypotheses about why gender differences appear in people in adulthood, and explore the relationship of this with care and the first caregivers that the child has in childhood. We verified that one of the most criticized points of his work is this foundation in Psychoanalysis, like the criticism that this brings essentialist ideas of gender. We would like to know

¹³ GILLIGAN, C. Moral injury and the Ethic of Care: reframing the conversation about differences. **Journal of Social Philosophy**, v. 45, n. 1, p. 89-106, Spring, 2014.

¹⁴ CHODOROW, N. **The reproduction of mothering**. Berkeley: University of California press, 1978.

your opinion on these criticisms and what you now think about this foundation on Chodorow in your book.

Carol Gilligan: *With respect to essentialist ideas of gender, please note the following paragraph on page 2 of In a Different Voice:*

“The different voice I describe is characterized not by gender but theme (italics added). It’s association with women is an empirical observation, and it is primarily through women’s voices that I trace its development. But this association is not absolute, and the contrasts between male and female voices are presented here to highlight a distinction between two modes of thought and to focus a problem of interpretation rather than to represent a generalization about either sex. In tracing development, I point to the interplay of these voices within each sex and suggest that their convergence marks times of crisis and change. No claims are made about the origins of the differences described or their distribution in a wider population, across cultures, or through time. Clearly, these differences arise in a social context where factors of social status and power combine with reproductive biology to shape the experiences of males and females and the relation between the sexes. My interest lies in the interaction of experience and thought, in different voices and the dialogues to which they give rise, in the way we listen to ourselves and to others, in the stories we tell about our lives”.

With respect to Nancy Chodorow’s work, I found her observation both obvious and trenchant: that because women typically mother, the dynamics of gender identity formation tend to differ for boys and for girls, since for boys, the mother is of the so-called opposite sex whereas for girls she is the same sex.

I present her work as an attempt to account for, in her words, “the reproduction within each generation of certain general and nearly universal differences that characterize masculine and feminine personality and roles”. In essence she is seeking to explain

“the reproduction of mothering”, and she attributes it to “the fact that women, universally, are largely responsible for early child care”. This strikes me as the opposite of an essentialist argument. As I write, “because this early social environment differs for and is experienced differently by male and female children, basic sex differences recur in personality development. As a result, (again quoting Chodorow) ‘feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality’” (In a Different Voice, p. 7).

Psychoanalytic theory comes in only insofar as it connects the child’s first love object (typically the mother or a female) to the development of the child’s sense of self and to moral development (via the Oedipus complex). Hence girls presented a developmental puzzle for Freud, and Chodorow in effect explains why.

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: Some morality researchers criticize your work alleging a lack of empirical evidence about gender differences in the Kohlbergian model and about the existence of an Ethics of Care. However, they don’t seem to understand that your argument since your book was not statistical, as you explained in your article “Reply by Carol Gilligan”¹⁵ in 1986: it would be enough for a subject not to fit the model for the universality of the theory be questioned, or at least to point out that there is another way of looking at moral problems. What do you attribute this criticism to? Do you think that this difficulty for them to understand your argument has to do with the conception of science that your critics maintain?

Carol Gilligan: *I attribute this criticism to an attempt to assimilate my work to the very framework which it calls into question. And I do think that framework had until recently*

¹⁵ GILLIGAN, C. Reply by Carol Gilligan. *Signs*, v. 11, n. 2, p. 324-333, 1986.

and still in some ways continues to be the accepted framework for thinking about psychology. Within that framework (not seen to be a framework), the most interesting questions are: 1: are women the same as or different from men (thus sustaining the either/or of the gender binary) and 2: if women are different from men, who is better? (thus sustaining the gender hierarchy). With the ten year Harvard Project connecting women's psychology with girls' development (rather than comparing women with men) and its key finding of resistance to losing basic relational capacities, I lost interest in both of the above questions. As my inquiry centered on the question of resistance and the healthy psyche's ability to resist cultural pressures that would deform human nature or compromise our humanity, I asked: resistance to what? With my 2002 book, *The Birth of Pleasure*¹⁶, the word "patriarchy" entered my work as an answer to that question. As a healthy body resists infection, a healthy psyche resists the culture of patriarchy.

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: In a research that I did in Brazil about the approach of your work in articles and in theses and dissertations¹⁷, I found many mistakes made when they approached it. The simplest mistake is they say that you were a student of Kohlberg, his postdoctoral student, etc., and the most serious mistake is that you proposed a theory about the exclusive moral development of women, that the different voice was found by gender and not by theme, contrary to what you clarify since *In a Different Voice*. I had some hypotheses about why it is happening, such as the abusive use of secondary sources to get in touch with your work, and the fact that only your 1982's book has been translated into Portuguese. I would like to know if this also occurs in an international context, have you encountered these types of misunderstandings? And what would you attribute these mistakes to?

¹⁶ GILLIGAN, C. **The birth of pleasure:** a new map of love. New York: Knopf, 2002.

¹⁷ SILVA, M. E. F. da. Carol Gilligan e a ética do cuidado na produção de pesquisa em Psicologia do Desenvolvimento Moral de três Programas de Pós-Graduação stricto sensu (2008-2019). *Schème - Revista Eletrônica de Psicologia e Epistemologia Genéticas*, v. 12, n. 1, p. 166-204, 2020.

Carol Gilligan: *Yes, it does occur here in the U.S. as well as in an international context and I am puzzled as to why so many people speak about my work on the basis of reading only secondary sources and also nothing after *In a Different Voice* which is now 40 years in the past. I really don't know why this is although I suspect that one reason may be because in this way they can avoid its more radical implications both for psychology (and philosophy) and for people's lives and the world more generally. I am heartened though by a growing interest in the ethic of care and its relevance or urgency given the problems we are now facing, including the heightened awareness of the costs of carelessness both on a personal and a global scale. Sandra Laugier, the French moral philosopher at the Sorbonne, Patricia Papperman, the French sociologist who studies care work, the philosopher Michael Slote are among the leaders in this movement to develop care ethics and explore its implications for society and politics at this time.*

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: You have a great academic career, both in Psychology and in Feminist Studies, and although we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of your book, I would like you to talk a little bit about the research you did after the publication of this book, from the research that resulted in "Meeting at the Crossroads"¹⁸ to "The Birth of Pleasure" and currently. How did *In a Different Voice* build your research areas after it and today?

Carol Gilligan: *Of all the voices in *In a Different Voice*, the one that many women readers found the most arresting and unsettling was the voice of the eleven year old girl I call Amy, the only girl (and one of two children) in the book. That struck me – it was a voice many women recognized and yet had learned to dismiss as naïve or stupid. At the*

¹⁸ BROWN, L. M.; GILLIGAN, C. (Orgs.). **Meeting at the crossroads:** women's psychology and girl's development. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

time when I finished writing In a Different Voice, I also became aware (from the 1980 Handbook of Adolescent Psychology) that girls “had simply not been much studied. The psychology of adolescence was the psychology of the male youngster writ large”. I found it odd that women’s psychology was thus divorced from its roots in girls’ development (and the main questions being asked were how do women compare to men). Thus with my graduate students (mostly women), I embarked on what turned out to be a ten year project conducted in a variety of school and after school settings to learn from girls about girls’ experiences in the transition from childhood to adolescence – from girl to woman. I found it to be the most deeply illuminating research I have done because it illuminated the phenomenon of resistance and highlighted the tension between human psychology and the culture of patriarchy. With my graduate students I co-authored or co-edited 5 books on this project (Mapping the Moral Domain: The Contribution of Women’s Thinking to Moral Development Theory and Education¹⁹; Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School²⁰; Meeting at the Crossroads: Women’s Psychology and Girl’s Development – a New York Times notable book of the year in 1992 – Women, Girls, and Psychotherapy: Reframing Resistance²¹; and Between Voice and Silence: Women and Girls, Race and Relationship²².

I then wrote The Birth of Pleasure to underscore the paradigm shift: from the birth of tragedy to the birth of pleasure, and the psychological ramifications of the tensions between democracy, based on equal voice, and patriarchy, which privileges the voices of some men over other men and all men over women, and to highlight the capacity for resistance. In The Birth of Pleasure, I read the ancient myth of Psyche and Cupid as a map of resistance, showing how to get out of the Oedipus tragedy, and my title comes

¹⁹ GILLIGAN, C.; WARD, J. V.; TAYLOR, J. M.; BARDIGE, B. (Orgs.). **Mapping the moral domain**: the contribution of women's thinking to moral development theory and education. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

²⁰ GILLIGAN, C.; LYONS, N.; HANMER, T. J. (Orgs.). **Making connections**: the relational worlds of adolescent girls at Emma Willard School. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

²¹ GILLIGAN, C.; ROGERS, A. G.; TOLMAN, D. L. (Orgs.). **Women, girls, and psychotherapy**: reframing resistance. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1991.

²² TAYLOR, J. M.; GILLIGAN, C.; SULLIVAN, A. M. (Orgs.). **Between voice and silence**: women and girls, race and relationship. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

from the end of the Psyche and Cupid myth: the birth of a daughter named Pleasure. With The Birth of Pleasure, I show how my psychological research is at once both deeply psychological and indelibly political, because the healthy resistance to losses that would compromise basic psychological capacities (empathy, mind-reading and cooperation---the requisites for mutual understanding) also takes on some of the characteristics of a political resistance: namely, speaking truth to power.

IV

Currently

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: How do you see the field of research on the Ethics of Care today? What advances and news? What would be your suggestions for the new studies? And in your opinion, what are the main research centers (where the most relevant research and discussions are carried out) on the subject today?

Carol Gilligan: *As I mentioned, Paris is a current research center for research on the ethics of care – Prof. Sandra Laugier at the Sorbonne and Patricia Papperman at EHESS. I believe you know some of the others.*

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: Have the challenges launched by your book to Psychology and other areas been sufficiently explored? Are there aspects that have been explored more in detriment of others that you think need more attention? And four decades after its publication, the theoretical, methodological and epistemological implications of its work are still being explored and discussed in scientific research. What do you attribute that to?

Carol Gilligan: *The most obvious omission and one that I find striking is almost total absence of attention to the question of why it was the abortion decision study that led to this work. That study is the focus of the two central chapters of *In a Different Voice* and yet it is almost never discussed. In my opinion, it was crucial to the discoveries that followed. If I ask myself why it has been ignored, I would say because the abortion study exposes the most radical grounding of the work: that is, the challenge it poses to the entire intellectual and moral and political framework that rests on an assumption of separateness. And within that framework or paradigm, women's experiences, including the experience of pregnancy and decisions surrounding pregnancy and abortion, must remain marginal in order to leave prevailing assumptions in place. Because the abortion decision study highlights the reality of interdependence as the ground upon which to consider the meaning of self and of morality. In short, it forces the reframing or paradigm shift.*

Matheus Estevão Ferreira da Silva: Is there anything else that I haven't asked you about which is important for this interview about your work or is there anything that you want to expand on? In addition, I would like to know what your future plans or projects concerning to the research and the writing of books and articles.

Carol Gilligan: *I can't think of anything else – your questions touched on all the key issues. Several issues are very alive for me at the current moment, including the question why does patriarchy persist (the title of my most recent book²³, co-authored with my former student Naomi Snider--a human rights lawyer and now a psychoanalyst) and also an observation that lingers, how readily people can access what I have come to think of as an under-voice – the voice that says what one "really" or "actually" feels and thinks. For example, in the middle of what turns out to be her last diary entry, Anne Frank writes,*

²³ GILLIGAN, C.; SNIDER, N. **Why does patriarchy persist?**. New York: Polity Press, 2018.

"If I were to be quite honest..." and following this, she reframes the problem she is facing from one of contradiction to one of relationship. As for writing, I've just completed a second novel and started work on a book on listening called Radical Listening: A Guide.

*In my 2020 paper, *Disrupting the Story: Enter Eve*, I recall how from the very beginning, my work was recognized as a disruption. I was disrupting a story about human development that didn't ring true. It took me longer than I imagined to come up with the following three sentences that speak directly to what have been major sources of confusion surrounding my work, including the issue of gender.*

- 1. The different voice is a human voice*
- 2. The voice it differs from is a patriarchal voice*
- 3. Within a patriarchal society or culture, a human voice is a voice of resistance.*

My studies of development and the finding that the initiation into patriarchy typically begins later for girls than for boys (at adolescence rather than at the end of early childhood) underscore why women's voices have been so informative to my work and continue to be politically relevant – which also explains the continuing investment in women's silences or the pressures on women not to say or even to know what they "really" think and feel. In short, although the "different voice" is a human voice, women's voices continue to be critical to bringing the tension between democracy (based on equal voice) and patriarchy (which privileges the voices of fathers) into the open.

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Recebido: 20/10/2021

Aprovado: 21/03/2022