

**Carol Gilligan**  
**IN A DIFFERENT VOICE:**  
**PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY AND WOMEN'S**  
**DEVELOPMENT**

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982. Hardback or paperback; 184 pages; \$5.95.

Carol Gilligan, Associate Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, has written an important book dealing with female moral development. She believes that women's life views have been misunderstood because of psychology's persistent view of female thought and action vis-a-vis the male model of moral development. Human developmental theories had been built on observations of males until Gilligan's book focused attention on females' psychological growth pattern as being greatly different.

Gilligan proposed that there are two different models of thought about moral issues - male and female. The different voice she describes is characterized by the themes of separation and attachment. The association is not absolutely tied to gender, although in our society separation tends to be viewed as masculine and attachment as feminine. She suggests that male gender identity is threatened by intimacy, often causing males to have difficulties with relationships. On the other hand, femininity is defined through attachment, causing females to have problems with individuality.

Gilligan's research focus lies in the interaction of experience and thought and is based on the central assumption: "That the way people talk about their lives is of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make reveal the world that they see and in which they act" (p.2). Her book is based on three studies she conducted

dealing with the same questions about concepts of self and morality, and about experiences of conflict and choice. Her research points out that people have become so accustomed to viewing the world through men's eyes that they do not recognize the lens through which they gaze, nor do they see the distortions caused by a singular, male point of view. Hence, for example, the female's focus on interconnections rather than separation has been defined as failure to develop. Sensitivity and caring about feelings has been construed as weakness rather than strength. Gilligan's point is that women have a different moral understanding than men and that they have a more contextual mode of understanding. Thus, they bring to the life cycle a different point of view and have a different set of priorities in the ordering of human experience.

As with other life arenas, art has been viewed predominantly through the male lens. Just as Gilligan pointed out there are two modes (male and female) that need recognition in the world of art. Women artists' contributions throughout history have been largely ignored. Serious art has been viewed as a part of the man's world and women's hiddenstream art as merely handicraft or hobby art. Although recently we have begun to see a change in attitudes toward female artists and their work, in textbooks the ratio of male to female artists, art historians, art critics, and aestheticians still indicates the bias. The questions arise: Who created art?; Who

selected the artists who are considered masters?; Who benefited from the process?; and Why are women not represented? Gilligan would suggest that the dominant male world view has affected artistic choices and continues, in subtle ways, to shape how aesthetic quality is

defined. She offers the possibility of equitable changes by a societal shift in acceptance of not only man's, but also woman's moral values. Art can serve the human need of making connections between other and self by being a means of expressing the different voice.

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