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Self-Sacrifice, Caring and Peace:

A Socio-Ethical Preface to

Feminist Theology

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a critical survey of selected feminist writings on topics of interest to Christian, feminist thinkers. Specifically, this thesis has examined inter-feminist debates, highlighting those themes related narrowly to the virtues of self-sacrifice, care and peace, and broadly to how these relate to wider themes in Christian theology. This survey indicates directions and tendencies within works on virtues connected to women's work and gendered ideological assumptions about public and private spheres.

A summary of the contribution and themes of this thesis includes using critical social theory to uncover ideological distortions such as those perpetuated by patriarchy. The thesis highlights how a feminist critique contributes to the debate on values and virtues, pointing out biases which previously hid the contributions of women. An important theme uncovered using these critical tools is the dualist division between the public and the private spheres which reinforce gendered social and moral roles. The discussion is structured around three virtues with an emphasis on *praxis*, that is, since values arise out of shared practices, these values are inherently teachable and able to contribute to an evolving understanding of moral principles which break from and/or enhance traditional liberal understandings of these principles. Finally, connections are made with the gospel and utopian values grounded in a Christian vision of the kingdom of God.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse est une étude critique d'une sélection d'écrits
féministes portant sur des sujets qui intéressent les penseurs
chrétiens féministes. En particulier, cette thèse a examiné d'une
part des débates inter-feministes qui mettent en valeur des thèmes
étroitement reliés aux vertus de l'abnégation, de l'aide envers
autrui et de la paix et d'autre part, comment, en gros, ceux-ci se
rattachent aux grands thèmes de la théologie chrétienne. Cette
étude montre les directions et les tendances présentes dans les
travaux sur les vertus rattachées au travail des femmes ainsi que
les suppositions idéologiques existantes à ce sujet, selon les
sexes dans les domaines public et privé.

Le sommaire de la contribution et des thèmes de cette thèse
inclut l'emploi de la théorie socio-critique afin de découvrir des
déformations idéologiques telles que celles perpétuées par le pa-
triarcat. La thèse souligne comment une critique féministe con-
tribue au débat sur les valeurs et les vertues tout en signalant
les préjugés qui ont auparavant caché les contributions des femmes.
Un thème important mis à nu par l'emploi de ces outils critiques
est la séparation dualiste qui existe entre les domaines public et
privé et qui renforce les rôles sociaux et moraux selon les sexes.
La discussion est organisée autour de trois vertus avec une
importance particulière accordée au *praxis*: étant donné que les
valeurs émergent d'expériences communes, ces valeurs sont fondamen-
talement enseignables et sont à même de contribuer au développment
d'une compréhension des principes moraux qui se dégagent des
compréhensions traditionnellement libérales de ces principes et/ou
les accroissent. En dernier lieu des liens sont faits entre
l'évangile et des valeurs utopiques fondées sur une vue chrétienne
du royaume de Dieu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to conduct a critical survey of selected feminist literature of interest to Christian feminist thinkers in ethics and theology. To structure this discussion I have chosen to write on three virtues which in the Christian tradition have been assigned to all people but in practice have been seen to be associated with women and with their roles in the domestic sphere. The three virtues are self-sacrifice/selflessness, associated with women in the "helping" professions (teaching, nursing, social work, clerical); care, associated with women as mother; and peace, associated most often with women as nonviolent, offering compassion and succour, in opposition to the image of the male soldier and war-making.

The feminist critique of gender construction and the virtues which come to be associated with one or the other sex argues that the gendered divisions in society are deeply rooted in the Western tradition and receive particular strength from the liberal legacy of the Enlightenment. Given the general sexual division of labour, the position of women is structurally different from that of men, resulting in a profound difference in their lived realities and hence their knowledge of the world. This experiential and epistemological difference is not always readily apparent, as ideological constructs obscure and justify its existence; the language of equality and choice can in fact disguise the reality of domination and coercion. The ideology that men make decisions and women serve has received reinforcement from the symbolism and the hierarchy of

1

the church; traditional women's virtues are held up as "highest" while women themselves are often relegated to the low in terms of status and power.

The dualisms present in the Western tradition, in particular the split between the public and private, were deepened by the arrival of industrial society. Theoretical and ideological dualisms are deeply rooted in Western philosophical traditions; they are reflected in the social symbolic order and have often been reinforced by religion and moral values. The split between masculine/feminine is associated with other dualisms: culture/nature, active/passive, mind/body, universal/particular, self/other, and the pervasive split between the public realm of politics and work and the private, apolitical realm of the domestic life. The fundamental split between the public sphere of (male) individuals engaged in political and economic activity and the private realm where women are devoted to nurture and self-sacrificial virtues is reinforced in the social division of labour. The notions of public and private, therefore, help to structure the world of lived experience and the moral realm.

Moreover, in the transition to modernity, it could even be argued that the self's relation to the ultimate questions of religion and being has been privatized, and the conception of privacy is so enlarged that the domestic-familial sphere is subsumed under it. The political, public realm is defined by competition and self-interest, while the values of compassion, love and altruism are relegated to the private realm of the home. For a woman to

2

move "outside" and be recognized as a fully autonomous citizen would demand that political philosophy and the role of the family be revised.

The history of Western, Euro-North American society includes accounts of the efforts of certain early feminists to humanize society by introducing the virtues of the home to the public arena. A more profound analysis has shown that this strategy was inadequate. For example, the arguments of the suffragists, an early phase of feminism, attempted to expand the virtues of the private realm to encompass or to ameliorate the "immorality" of the public realm, without really challenging the public/private paradigm itself. This strategy only serves to perpetuate the symbolic order which works against the true liberation of all women and men, and leaves the private sphere in its disembodied relationship to the social, historical, political and cultural life. More recently, feminists from several disciplines have examined the sexual divisions of labour and morality, including how these are created and perpetuated. This examination has involved studying patterns of child-rearing and mothering; common to all societies across all cultures and ages is the fact that at some point women's work includes the bearing and nurturing of children. The closely related assumptions about the relationship of the private to the public sphere also needs to be questioned here.

Critical feminist analysis challenges the rules and codes that legitimate the public/private split and tries to offer new paradigms of mutuality derived from women's experience. If discourse

3

is political in nature, the task of Christian feminist thinkers is to critique theological language in order to uncover the social and symbolic rules which perpetuate the implicit hierarchy in the existing social-symbolic order. The reigning discourses which stress opposition must be questioned and new symbols and practices allowing differences and connections invoked.

> In feminist critical theory, contextual approaches identify possibilities of change and transformation through analysis of symbolic structures and meanings in relationship to practices, institutions, and social relations....A critical theory arises in a specific situation, attempts to move against distortion and destruction and to anticipate new forms of flourishing.[1]

The emancipatory task of feminist critical theory to uncover the oppression and exploitation of women is aided by developing an *explanatory diagnostic analysis*, (that is, social-scientific accounts of women's oppression across history, culture and societies), and by articulating an *anticipatory-utopian critique* of norms and values, (that is after negating the ideological, negative aspects of these moral and political values, the future possibilities for emancipation and true mutuality become visible.)[2]

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[1]Rebecca S. Chopp, "Feminist Queries and Metaphysical Musings," *Modern Theology* 11 (January 1995): 53.

[2]Seyla Benhabib, "The Generalized and the Concrete Other," in *Feminism as Critique: On the Politics of Gender*, eds. S. Benhabib, D. Cornell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987): 80-1; Marsha Hewitt, "Woman, Nature and Power: Emancipatory Themes in Critical Theory and Feminist Theology," *Studies in Religion* 20 (Summer 1991): 270. It should be noted that "utopian" is not to be understood in the negative or pejorative sense of an idealistic but unrealizable future goal or state. Utopian is understood here in the critical social science sense of the future possibilities rooted in the present reality which act as a critique of the present and a goad and goal toward the future. This understanding is not foreign to the Christian concept of the "already/not yet"

4

Women cannot simply "opt out," nor simply correct existing structures, nor make up some new discourse. In this thesis the task is to negate the ideological dimensions of the three virtues, to retrieve their emancipatory aspects, and to transform these moral concepts as consistent with a liberation and feminist standpoint. This is in part the definition of and the task of Christian feminist ethics. Feminist theology is not a mere corrective or supplement but a reconstruction of the symbols, practices, and orderings of the social-symbolic order which calls for a descriptive, interpretive analysis. Critique must be particular, speaking from situations of oppression, but must also be complex, carefully tracing the interrelations between productive and reproductive relations.

All three of the virtues that I will examine have a positive and a dark side for women. The virtue of self-sacrifice is an obvious candidate for being applied in an oppressive manner. Yet in the Christian tradition, the example of Jesus on the cross surely retains a positive image for men and women. Christian

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view of God's kingdom which renounces sins and shortcomings of the current age while at the same time provides a picture of the true justice and mutuality intended for humankind. As Sallie McFague writes, it is "a framework, a heuristic picture for interpreting Christian faith.... It is not expected that human beings can bring about a just order for all life, for such a vision is utopian and apocalyptic - a way of expressing what the tradition has meant by the 'kingdom of God.' Nonetheless, the picture that one holds of utopia makes a difference in the way one conducts daily business....[Fulfilment] is always partial, but...serves as a goal and a goad, as an attraction and a critique." Sallie McFague, "The Ethic of God as Mother, Lover and Friend," in *Feminist Theology: A Reader*, ed. Ann Loades (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990): 257.

5

feminists argue that this model has been distorted and that we need to look beyond the cross to the goal of Christ's mission, that all may be brought to salvation through a radical love that aims at mutuality. If women are to reject adopting a "victim ethic" (Nietzsche, M. Daly), what does this mean for our notion of sin for women beyond sacrificial selflessness? Simply reversing the locus of power or substituting a gynocentric for an androcentric model is not sufficient.

The virtue of care for Christians is implied in the love commandment, (eg., in the story of the good Samaritan), and in the use of the language of care, compassion and mercy. Men and women are called to cultivate this virtue in their lives, but the lived reality in our modern, industrialized society follows the bifurcation between the private and public realm, where men are judged by two separate standards, depending on the arena of activity, but women are judged only by one, that is, even in the public arena women are measured by the "gentle" virtues of home and hearth. In the public realm, conflicting claims can be weighed and the call to nurture or other-regard can be modified in the name of prudence; this option is not usually extended to the private sphere. Here, the sentimentalized, privatized morality has no serious public power; since justice is associated with the public sphere, gender relations are removed from it. Women are called to care for the members of the household with repetitious and arduous labour which is often held to be less worthy because of its association with nature and necessity.

6

The virtue of peace may seem on the surface a less ambiguous value and a positive goal. Again, the bifurcation of the public and the private realm has tended to assign this as a virtue appropriate to women but to be of only qualified relevance in the arena of justice and power relations associated with male activity. Moreover, some Christian feminists are beginning to question whether this moral attribute of peace and peace-making has been instrumental in keeping women trapped in abusive relationships

Carol Gilligan is one of the best known scholars to have uncovered the moral perspective of women as an ethic of care, showing the possibilities of using the value of inter-connection and relationship as a supplement, if not alternative, to the "justice orientation" traditionally associated with (male) defined stages of moral development. She argues that women frame moral dilemmas with a sensitivity to the complex web of social relationships which surround them. While there is much debate about how gender-specific the use of justice and care are in actual practice, Gilligan has made an important contribution to validating the experience of women in their moral decision-making.

There are, however, many aspects of this debate that warrant further consideration and critique. Gilligan, for example, leaves unchallenged the assumptions of the public/private paradigm and seems to assume that the values of the private sphere can be expanded into the public arena without reference to the historical and social relations in which they are expressed. An ethic of care also needs to be evaluated in light of the question whether women

7

have certain attributes and skills because these qualities are essentially feminine, or are these virtues available to all, male and female, who partake in the practice of caring labour and/or motherwork? Can such values which have arisen in a situation of oppression be freed of the latter's effects? The way in which we understand justice in the re-evaluation of our theological understanding of agape also needs attention in this context.

Two explanatory notes remain. One concerns my use of the word "virtue" in this dissertation. I am using this term in a non-technical sense, that is, virtue as a habitual disposition to do good or develop excellence in an area of life, although I am aware of the current specialized debate in virtue ethics associated with scholars like Alisdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, Philippa Foot and others. Like these authors, the critical feminist works discussed here attempt to make connections with the social, political, and historical location in which virtues are determined and practised. There is a shared emphasis on uncovering the ideological implications of certain aspects of liberal theory, and an appreciation for the social, relational and narrative aspects of moral life [see Chapter One "The Role of Virtue"].

The second note concerns my use of the terms "feminist" and "feminism." I am aware that feminism in our society is a multi-faceted movement continually evolving and responding to the questions and pressures of our modern world. Numerous works outline the varieties of feminist thinking: liberal, Marxist, radical,

8

psychoanalytic, existential, socialist, post-modern, womanist, etc.[3] For my purposes here, I wish to speak of feminism in a neutral, inclusive way. I see feminism as a movement for social justice and dignity for all women and men, dedicated to the elimination of inequalities, oppression, subordination and injustices which women have suffered on the basis of their sex. I recognize that both women and men participate in oppressive relationships, and that the humanity of both men and women has been distorted. Both sexes need to participate in constructing alternative paradigms, developing a new concept of personhood, and building community and communion based on equality and mutuality. I also recognize that as a feminist I must acknowledge that I write as a white, heterosexual, middle-class, immigrant daughter, Mennonite woman, and that my understanding of the issues discussed in this thesis, and of the definition of feminist ethics and theology, will probably exclude other ideals held by other feminists who could quickly point out my (unintended) ethnocentrism and biases. I intend this study to be but one voice in a broader discussion, not an evaluation of various points to declare some kind of ultimate winner. [See Addendum chapter for a brief outline of how my own feminism has been shaped by my tradition.]

In conclusion, the topic of my dissertation can be encapsulated as a feminist critique exploring three virtues (self-sacrifice, care, and peace) and their accompanying associative symbols

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[3]For example, see Rosemarie Tong's *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989).

in order to uncover their ideological elements and see how through resistance and critique there are also possibilities for emancipatory transformation. Self-sacrifice was the first virtue I chose to structure my discussion because it could highlight issues related to personhood, the moral subject and the epistemology which undergirds so much of liberal moral theory. Readings on self-sacrifice and feminism quickly led to the discussion of an ethic of care and caring labour, my second choice. Here the dialogue among feminist writers focused on the *praxis* of motherwork and the day-to-day labour which is gendered by association with nurture and care. The third virtue, peace, connects the discussion to broader social issues related to gendered expectations of women and their roles in society. However, this division of issues according to virtue is, of course, artificial, as it is evident that points related to personhood have wide social implications, and the view of women as exemplars of peace is connected to assumptions about moral personhood.

All three virtues can be traced to the symbolic separation of the public and private sphere which pervades the Western tradition. All are addressed by Christian feminist scholars, for whom resistance, critique and reconstruction has special importance, in dialogue with feminists in other disciplines (philosophy, psychology, political theory, etc.). The critical survey is necessarily selective, indicating directions and tendencies within works of feminist ethics and cannot be considered exhaustive or a final authoritative work of this subject.

10

After a theoretical introductory chapter which outlines aspects of liberal theory, epistemology and the feminist critique, the three virtues will be treated in consecutive chapters. An addendum chapter addresses the three virtues, particularly the virtue of peace and peace-making in dialogue with my own Mennonite heritage and pacifist, peace-church stance and a feminist critique. This thesis project is original in that it brings together material that has been published mostly in journals or collected works in a variety of disciplines and enters the dialogue from the perspective of Christian feminist ethics. It therefore highlights themes emerging in the broader feminist literature that has been influenced by the study of women's moral perspective and the "ethic of care." For myself, this work allows me to connect Christian social ethics, feminism, critical theory and the critique of liberal paradigms underlying the Western tradition.

Before turning to an account of three of the virtues which are associated with women and which are frequently addressed by the feminist critique in numerous disciplines, it is necessary to examine the foundational assumptions in standard accounts of philosophy and epistemology informing our search for moral knowledge and how feminist scholars have challenged these presuppositions. Much of the current philosophical practice values what is abstract and claims to be universal in its relevance and application; recent challenges to this mode of philosophy and ethics have come from those who take the concrete and the particular seriously, among them women. To these critics, to "know well" is morally significant and, moreover, is affected by the epistemic location of the knower.

> Different cognitive capacities and epistemic circumstances create situations where experience is structured and hence the world is known quite differently from one cognitive agent to another. Responsible action is dependent upon responsible knowing.[1]

Feminists argue that, given the social nature of knowing, the sexual division of labour, and the formative place of work in human lives, it is not surprising that women might have a distinctive moral perspective that has been unobserved by male thinkers. Traditionally, moral theory has tended to recognized the so-called public domain as the arena of moral life, the domain where women

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[1] Lorraine B. Code, "Responsibility and the Epistemic Community: Women's Place," *Social Research* 50 (Aut. 1983): 537-38.

12

were largely excluded in terms of power or status; the actual moral domain of women, generally the private or domestic sphere, has been rendered invisible. Claims to objectivity ignored the fact that moral assessments were often gender-dependent.

An alternative epistemology, where the female voice is at least an important if not sufficient corrective, reexamines the standard assumptions and forms; it includes the task of retrieval, reconstruction and building new moral understandings. It embraces a different way of identifying and appreciating the forms of intelligence which define responsible moral considerations.[2] "[While] social and moral life does not change simply because our ways of thinking about it change, our ways of thinking are neces- sarily part of the change."[3] In other words, given that humans are formed by their social context and that there is a dialectical relationship between our actions and work (praxis) and the way we think and speak, both elements are necessary to bring about change to our moral understandings and, ultimately, living in true mutuality as women and men.

In this chapter I wish to examine various aspects of the epistemological questions raised by a feminist critique of ethics, showing how gender-shaped rationality has contributed to gendered

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[2]Margaret U. Walker, "Moral Understandings: Alternative 'Epistemology' for a Feminist Ethics," in Cole & Coultrap-McQuin, *Explorations in Feminist Ethics: Theory and Practice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992): 165.

[3]Ruth L. Smith, "Morality and Perceptions of Society: the Limits of Self-Interest," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26 (1987): 280, n.1.

morality and how this is based on our very construction of what is "masculine" and what is "feminine." This feminist critique insists on the interrelation of ontology and epistemology, the reciprocal relation between being and knowing, which takes seriously not only experience, but *women's* experience. The social, political, and historical location in which morality and the related practice of the virtues takes place is always in view. In this examination it will be necessary to show first how the legacy of the liberal understanding of society, the self and values is challenged by this alternative view, the relationship between epistemology and gender, the implications of the feminist critique for moral understanding, including some necessary cautions, and, finally, how a general understanding of virtues fits this thesis. The liberal legacy of the standard account and its feminist critique is the topic we turn to now.

The Legacy of Liberalism

The description of liberal theory and the normative assumptions embedded in it most often addressed by feminists is the general Anglo strain of western philosophical and political thought, with its emphasis on maximizing freedom from interference from others and its association with liberal democracy and capitalist society.[4] It is important to note, however, that other strands within philosophy, such as some of the German thinkers or even

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[4] Elisabeth J. Porter, *Women and Moral Identity* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991): 122.

14

within the English tradition, or other segments of society, like working-class women, were perhaps less hostile to notions of collective life and joint moral activity.[5]

The tendency in some liberal theories which favor dichotomies and dualisms can be traced to early roots in Greek philosophy such as some of the views of Aristotle. Here, the good life achieved by participating in the *polis* was categorically not achievable by women, children and slaves, even if the more private *oikos* was necessarily linked to and supported the public *polis*. There was a "good" linked with the sphere of women and others who did not qualify as free males, but it was lesser than the full realization of goodness and rationality which defined the participants of the political sphere; it was the limited goodness of the "naturally ruled."[6]

The Aristotelian typology, although more diverse and flexible than Plato is commonly portrayed, remained inflexible in its ordering principles and teleological commitments which gave public voice only to those free males of reason and goodness. This legacy

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[5] See Annette Baier, "Hume, the Women's Moral Theorist?" in Kittay & Meyers, *Women and Moral Theory* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1987), and Smith & Valenze, "Mutuality and Marginality: Liberal Moral Theory and the Working Class Women in Nineteenth-Century England," *Signs* 13 (Winter 1988): 277-98. Many authors cited in the bibliography devote at least some space to an outline of the development of western liberal thought, its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition, its views of women, etc.. As well as numerous essays in Gould, Harding & Hintikka, and works by Elshtain, other oft cited works include Evelyn Keller Fox, *Gender and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) and Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

[6] Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Moral Woman and Immoral Man," *Politics and Society* 4 (1974): 453-5.

15

continues to inform discussions of public and private realms and "rules of conduct" that might be appropriate to one sphere but not the other. Christianity, for example, as an heir to classical neo-Platonism and apocalyptic Judaism, was not immune to the dualisms which condition the ontological split between public/private, mind/body, subject/other, male/female, etc.; indeed, the influence of the Christian religion can itself at times reinforce these deep, hierarchical divisions.[7]

The "Greek method" of philosophy, however, at least preserved the link between being and knowing; philosophy was concerned with determining the right way to live. In the modern era, this changed:

> Within philosophy, such questions of being [ie. the aim to harmonize *logos*, what and how one thinks and speaks, with *ergon*, what one is and how one acts] cease to be primary after Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes and Locke. The major questions become epistemological: 'how do we know we know?'; and 'what is the status of our knowledge?'[8]

Scientific, objective methodologies are paradigmatic even in moral considerations in the modern era. For Hobbes and Bentham, the "rational" applies to the choice of means, not to the desired ends; for Rousseau and Kant, man the rational agent in pursuit of the general good is guided by objective rational principles of morality. rather than some principle of prudence. Even with their significant differences, for all of these men limitations of time,

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[7]Rosemary Ruether, "Motherearth and the Megamachine," in Christ & Plaskow, *Womanspirit Rising* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979): 43. See also her "Spirit and Matter, Public and Private," in Cooey et al, *Embodied Love* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

[8]Porter, *Women and Moral Identity*, p. 98.

place, culture and history were accidental constraints to man's nature as a moral and political being.[9]

In the last two centuries the thrust of liberal policies has been progressively to eliminate from the public realm all pre-modern traces of differences and inequalities (age, sex, race, religion, etc.); these factors are then relegated as relevant only within the private realm of nature and domesticity. The rational imperative demonstrated by the philosophers and political theorists was, of course, also paralleled in the manifest growth of industrialization and capitalist economic exchange, contributing to the depersonalization of the public sphere where age, religion, sex, race, economic circumstances etc. were no longer considered relevant to the functioning of liberal society.[10]

Moral theory was not unaffected by the broader shifts in social and political theory. For Kant and Hegel, virtues that were thought of as distinctly moral paralleled features that were traditionally thought of as masculine: rationality, self-control, strength of will, consistency, acting from universal principles, and adhering to duty and obligation. Such characteristics were seen to meet the needs of wider society and large scale public institutions, whereas emotional components of human interaction,

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[9]Robert P. Wolff, "There's Nobody here but us Persons," in Gould & Wartofsky, *Women and Philosophy* (New York: G. P. Putman's, 1976): 129-30.

[10]Wolff, "There's Nobody Here," p. 134-5. In liberal theory, for example, opportunities to vote or hold public office are said to be open to one and all. Depersonalization also refers to changes in how workers are viewed, that is, the economic activity of workers is increasingly seen as inter-changeable and expendible.

17

such as sympathy, compassion, kindness, caring for others, and human concern, were associated with the feminine and the needs of private family life.[11]

It would be false to say, of course, that the philosophers of the 18th and 19th century were literally oblivious to the cultural, historical or psychological dimensions of life in every sense; facts of an individual's social, historical or economic location were simply not considered ultimately important for understanding man as citizen and actor in society. Society, however, becomes in many ways problematic.

There are two basic versions of society according to liberal theory. In one view, society is an association of autonomous in- dividuals, voluntarily brought together by virtue of natural reason and freedom. This view would encompass Locke's rational social contract as well as Hobbes' more negative view that society at least keeps competitive individuals in some kind of order. Overall, society has a positive value. The second view is more negative; society consists of relations whose determinacy prevents autonomy and individuality, a view which became more prominent in the 19th century. Society consists of those who by "nature" are without the capacity for rationality and judgement: the working classes, the poor and women. Women, however, or at least those who

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[11]Linda Nicholson, "Women, Morality and History," *Social Research* 50 (Aut. 1983): 520. The "moral rationaliism" associated with Kant and Hegel represents one of the dominant strands in classical liberal theory. A fuller examination would need to include how the "sentimentalism" movement viewed qualities such as sympathy and compassion and to what degree these were or were not part of a masculinist viewpoint.

conformed to the middle class ideal, were considered "natural" bearers of morality in matters associated with the domestic sphere and were superior to members of the working classes, but this did not qualify them for full participation in the social contract.[12]

In the construction of the self in liberal theory, society becomes an expression of otherness. The social and moral worlds of those defined as "other" due to race, class, sexual orientation, religion, or physical capabilities are systematically excluded by the dominant political and moral theories of the self.[13] Society is contingent and therefore less valued since contingency and need are inconsistent with bourgeois conceptions of autonomy. Society is the arena where autonomous individuals pursue calculated self-interest and power, the basis of social relations, but at the same time society is tainted and impoverished by exactly these same pursuits.[14]

The abstract individual is primary and transcends society in liberal theory, a construction which Protestant theology has tended

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[12]Ruth L. Smith, "Relationality and the Ordering of Differences in Feminist Ethics," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 9 (Spr/Fall 1993): 201-2. See also Jane Flax, "Political Philosophy and Patriarchal Unconsciousness," in Harding & Hintikka, *Discovering Reality* (Boston: D. Reidel Publ., 1983): 258-67.

[13]Ruth L. Smith, "The Evasion of Otherness," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 43 (1989): 145. Smith states that society is distinct from individuality in this view, and hence, "women are assigned to society constructed as the realm of nonindividuality." Yet the agency given to middle class women, although superior to working class women, was not adequate for their inclusion in the social contract in the full sense as were their male counterparts.

[14]Smith, "Evasion of Otherness," p. 153.

to reinforce.[15] While important liberal goals like the protection of individual rights, self-interest and autonomy could be said to promote tolerance and the worth of individuals, in abstract individualism human characteristics are properties given independently of particular differences between people and their social context.[16] Details of an individual's particular context are accidental; indeed social relations and historical circumstances are an impediment to the individual who seeks to make his moral choices under conditions of freedom and autonomy. All that threatens the individual's claim to separateness and completeness is "other" than self: contingent, dependent, non-essential and non-permanent.[17] Social and communal life is limited and difficult to account for except by a theory like a "social contract". Moreover, democratic ideals said to be promoted by liberal theory are actually undermined in practice.

> [The] various entitlements Hobbes and especially Locke
> thought belonged to individuals as individuals and which
> it is society's responsibility to protect, are often not
> extended to women.... [Women] are conspicuously excluded
> from references to the 'individual'. Furthermore, in the
> context of liberal civil rights, public success is seen

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[15]See numerous works by Ruth Smith who has studied the influence of liberal thought in Reinhold Niebuhr, especially her "Morality and Perceptions of Society: the Limits of Self-Interest," "Reinhold Niebuhr and History: the Elusive Liberal Critique," *Horizons* (Fall 1988): 283-98, and her doctoral dissertation *The Individual and Society in Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl Marx*, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1982). Also Judith Plaskow, *Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1980).

[16]Porter, p. 122.

[17]Smith, "Evasion," p. 145.

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as the actualisation of this individual. Many women, relegated to the 'natural' realm of a domestic household, are effectively excluded from this fulfilment....[18]

The rationalist, individualist view was reflected in the writings on values and morality. In the period before the scientific and industrial revolution, the "good life" was defined ontologically, that is with reference to man's place in the cosmos. With the destruction of the medieval worldview and the rise of bourgeois individualism, justice becomes the centre of moral theory and of the task of creating a legitimate basis for social order. "What 'ought' to be is now defined as what all would have rationally to agree in order to ensure civil peace and prosperity (Hobbes, Locke), or the 'ought' is derived from the rational form of the moral law alone (Rousseau, Kant)."[19] The "good" man, the moral man, was the rational and reasonable man; his qualities included impartiality, strength of will, self-control, and being concerned with rights and autonomy. Emotions in rationalist philosophical thinking were not considered significant for the moral life since they fall outside the scope of our will.[20] Questions

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[18]Women, as noted elsewhere, were not the only ones excluded. Those of other race, colour, and class were often not assumed to be included, either. Porter, pp. 123-4.

[19]Seyla Benhabib, "The Generalized and the Concrete Other," in Benhabib & Cornell, *Feminism as Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987): 83.

[20]Lawrence A. Blum, "Kant and Hegel's Moral Rationalism: a Feminist Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 12 (June 1982): 287-9. The general argument critiquing this strain of liberal philosophy which feminists and other critics focus on would, of course, require further nuancing when speaking of specific authors. Rousseau, Hume, Herder etc. gave broader scope to the role of emotions than perhaps some other thinkers.

about man's place in the cosmos, ultimate questions of religion, and domestic familial affairs are all relegated under the concept "privacy" and into the sphere of the personal; gender relations are removed from the sphere of justice.[21]

There is a kind of female class of virtues, revolving around nurture and self-sacrifice, practised in the private sphere which is described as separate and complementary, but these are necessarily inferior and without social significance, reflecting a legacy of a hierarchical gendered division of morals. The private sphere is the realm of the particular, of nature and the care of physical needs. Activity in this realm is supposedly not universalizable and thus women are antithetical to and incapable of public and higher morality.[22]

Epistemology and Gender

The importance of reflecting on epistemological and ethical issues lies in the fact that it is here that we form our assumptions about what it means to be human, to be considered fully a person, and where we decide which problems are worthy of our consideration and which will be set aside as morally insignificant. There are two broad conceptions of what it means to be human and a moral agent, but only one has been held up to be normative. Our western, liberal tradition generally favours a view of the agent as

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[21]Benhabib, "Generalized and Concrete," p. 83.

[22]Ruth L. Smith, "Moral Transcendence and Moral Space in the Historical Experience of Women," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4 (Fall 1988): 25-8. Also Blum, pp. 288-96.

rational, capable of deliberation and choice, as having metaphysical freedom, etc. This view contradicts the simultaneous view that humans are finite, time-bound, historically located, socially determined, and essentially (not accidentally) differentiated by sex, race, age, culture, class, etc.[23] The contradictory views are in keeping with the broader epistemological separation basic to liberal thought which sets up a dichotomy between reason, thought, form, rules and means, etc., and desire, feeling, content, substance and ends.[24] When the former conception is translated into political life, the connection between the related ideals and women's concern with oppression and liberation become clear. That is, when reason is associated only with ideals such as equality, freedom, justice and personhood, reason is misconstrued in masculinist terms and domination is legitimated.

> [It] helps to explain why women are excluded from the full range of possibilities and responsibilities that derive from the categories 'subject', 'person', 'moral identity' and 'citizen' which are so central to the western intellectual tradition; indeed, the category 'woman' has alone been sufficient to differentiate from the category 'man' which has been synonymous with 'person' and 'human being'.[25]

The charge of "sexism" in confronting and correcting this one-sided emphasis is not sufficient; we cannot simply "add on" facts to our concepts of rationality and personhood to include women. Instead there must be a recognition that "prevailing forms of

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[23]Wolff, p. 128.

[24]Nicholson, p. 523.

[25]Porter, pp. 89-90.

rationality and consciousness and our present accumulated knowledge reflect all aspects of human history including the existence of a sex/gender system in which biological characteristics are transformed into different and unequal social statuses and women are devalued."[26]   Neither women *nor* men can be properly understood without this recognition about our inherited frameworks. What counts as knowledge must include *all* experience (that is, more than just in the realm of thought etc.), taking seriously the fact that women's lives have been structurally different from men's lives, providing a different epistemological perspective than what has been developed largely from the perspective of male philosophers and theorists.

> Although philosophers differ in the degree to which they hope and allow that women can become 'rational,' the attainment of reason for both women and men tends to depend upon overcoming what is identified, within particular philosophical and cultural contexts, as female – body, change, emotion, and particular affections.[27]

The sex-gender system, which forms the lens through which men and women develop their identity, is not contingently but essentially the way in which social reality is organized, symbolically divided and lived through experientially. Societies and cultures reproduce embodied individuals, male and female.[28] This is not to say that it is the single cause of the underlying divisions in

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[26]Flax, p. 269.

[27]Sara Ruddick, "Remarks on the Sexual Politics of Reason," in Kittay & Meyers, eds. *Women and Moral Theory* (Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987): 238.

[28]Benhabib, p. 80. See also Porter, pp. 7-9.

society which have excluded women from much of what is socially valued, but the sex-gender system does interact dialectically as a social variable.

> The outstanding feature of the sex-gender system emanates from an underlying dynamic in all historically documented cultures, relating to the organisation of collective life and to cross-cultural similarities linked to nurturing. Despite variations in kinship patterns, there is a universal sexual division of labour where the domain of the young children and most housework is the exclusive or major province of women.[29]

As feminists and others have argued, when material conditions are recognized as structuring and limiting what one can know, the sexual division of labour becomes recognized as an epistemological factor. If women and men have systematically divergent activities, it should not be surprising that there are different world views and epistemic perspectives associated with one or the other gender.[30] Feminist thinkers are not unified as to what a subsequent female ideal of reason entails, but some themes would include reason as "connected" to the passions that motivate it, an ability to see particulars in their complexity, to conceive of a truth that

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[29]Porter, p. 8.

[30]The objection might be raised that in recent decades, due to the availability of contraceptive means and at least some progress in the vocational options open to women, many women no longer feel bound by this division of roles. The argument here is that the expectation that women are primarily the ones responsible for the care of young children and domestic duties is still the dominant one; even if a woman chooses not to conform to the liberal, middle-class heterosexual ideal, she is still making her choice over against this expectation which has shaped her identity in a more general sense.

is caring.[31] As will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis, especially in the chapter related to the virtue of care, some feminists have proposed making the paradigm of maternal care, based on "women's epistemology," the alternative starting point for ethics.[32]

The fact that women, not men, bear children is a biological fact, not a social choice, but the fact that women, not men, are the primary early-childrearing parent does reflect a social choice and an institutionalized social practice which manifests a particular ontology and epistemology.[33] Motherhood as an institution, as opposed to an experience, means that female existence generally centres on a complex web of relationships. It also means that growing up either as male or as female entails a different respective psychic dynamic in the family which structures and reinforces patterns of male and female activity required by the sexual division of labour.[34]

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[31]Sara Ruddick, "The Rationality of Care," in Elshtain & Tobias, eds., *Women, Militarism, and War* (Savage: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990): 235.

[32]For example, see Held, Purvis, and Treblicot in bibliography. The writer who has perhaps articulated this perspective most extensively and has drawn some important insights from it is Sara Ruddick (see chapters three and four, plus numerous citations in bibliography).

[33]Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint," in *Discovering Reality*, p. 289.

[34]Hartsock, "Feminist Standpoint," pp. 294-6. The most influential work in this area is Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction on Motherhood: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). Object-relations theory, briefly, holds that since the ego development of boys entails establishing their separation from their mothers, and little girls

The experience of maturing in a family in which only
women mother insures that patriarchy will be reproduced.
Males under patriarchy must repress early infantile
experience for several reasons: patriarchy by definition
imputes political, moral and social *meanings* to sexual
differentiation. Women are considered inferior in all
these dimensions. The social world is thus both gender
differentiated and stratified.[35]

Morality has evolved in relation to these historical deve-
lopments in the family, political life and economics. As such it
has also reflected the divisions in society. If the sexual divi-
sion of labour has contributed to a gendered epistemology, then it
has also reinforced a gendered morality. Women and men have come
to be associated with different moral norms and values at the level
of stereotypes, symbols, and myths which contribute to the social
construction of gender.[36] Women can be said to be identified with
"communal" norms and virtues (care, responsiveness, etc.) while men
are associated with "agentic" norms (justice, rights, etc.) which
in turn shape the perceptions and expectations we have of each

see themselves as identifying with their mothers, boys tend to
construct their sense of self as over-against others, whereas girls
tends to construct a self that is in a web of relationships with
other subjects. As Hartsock has suggested, "the boy's construction
of self in opposition to unity with the mother, his construction of
identity as differentiation from the other, sets a hostile and
combative dualism at the heart of both the community men construct
and the masculinist world view by means of which they understand
their lives." Ibid., p. 296. Object-relations theory is founda-
tional to Carol Gilligan's work and other authors cited in this
thesis. See Benhabib, , Pfäfflin, and numerous articles in Harding
& Hintikka, *Discovering Reality*. Object-relations theory has also
been qualified and critiqued by other authors. See further
comments below, especially chapter three.

[35]Flax, "Political Philosophy," p. 246.

[36]Marilyn Friedman, "Beyond Caring: the De-moralization of
Gender, " in M. Hanen & K. Nielsen, eds. *Science, Morality and
Feminist Theory* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1987): 94.

gender, even if women and men each in fact display both kinds of norms at some time.[37]

Recognizing the social construction of gender which interacts with our biological life has allowed critics to show the ideological implications of how we define and construct the masculine and the feminine. To show that masculinity is a matter of cultural construction and not merely hormones, a set of institutions and practices that constitute the norms and standards associated with men, one need only point to how well women like Margaret Thatcher have "fit in".[38] By rethinking our assumptions about how infants come to acquire their emotions, beliefs, virtues and vices, theories like object-relations shows that the self develops essentially in relation to particular others. When males learn to

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[37]This is, of course, central to the moral psychology discussion generated by the Gilligan-Kohlberg debate on an ethic of "care" verses an ethic of "justice" which has been taken up to some degree by many feminist writers and which has generated virtually a whole subcategory of feminist moral ethics. Ruddick summarizes the two types of moral reasoning, identified by cognitive modality, moral themes and distinctive concepts of the self, as a morality of justice verses a morality of love. The former is abstract and hypothetical, concerned with rights and duties, and the prime virtue is fairness. The latter is contextual and narrative, concerned with responsibility and response, responding to real needs, and has as prime virtue the quality of care. These two voices are not dependent upon or limited to male or female respectively, but they are strongly associated with gender historically and empirically. "Politics of Reason," pp. 240-1.

[38]Hartsock, "Masculinity, Heroism, and the Making of War," in Harris & King, eds., Rocking the Ship of State (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989): 135. Other examples which show how uncomfortable we become when standard roles are challenged could include the kind of debate that surrounded Hillary Rodham Clinton's public image during the recent presidential campaign in the U.S., the way the press presented Kim Campbell, ex prime minister of Canada, in terms of her leadership skills (or lack thereof), or media analysis of Audrey McLaughlin's leadership of the New Democratic Party.

define themselves and achieve independence over against the female mother, masculinity comes to be symbolized as separation and difference. Girls' sense of self is not so sharply divided from the mother, leading some feminist thinkers to argue that this leads to a general opposition to dualisms, a valuation of concrete everyday life, and a sense of connections with other persons and the natural world.[39]

> [The] view of a separate, autonomous, sharply individuated self embedded in liberal political and economic ideology and in individualist philosophies of mind can be seen as a defensive reification of the process of ego development in males raised by women in a patriarchal society....Since men (tend to) exemplify the psychical structures declared by political and philosophical theories to be universal..., we are kept from criticizing those structures and from considering alternatives based on female experience.[40]

If the above is true, then it again follows that our critique of standard accounts of epistemology and ontology must go beyond "adding in" women's experience but must also confront the conceptual biases within the mainstream philosophical tradition. The

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[39]Hartsock, "Feminist Standpoint," p. 298.

[40]Naomi Scheman, "Individualism and the Objects of Psychology," in *Discovering Reality*, pp. 234-5. There is no intention here to argue that psychological claims alone explain different modes of reasoning etc., nor that philosophical claims about women's different standpoint are a sufficient explanation. Each supplements and confirms the other. Furthermore, political and economic trends are also factors which reinforce these other tendencies. See J. Reeder's review of three works on community, including Catherine Keller's *From a Broken Web*. "Visions of Community." *Religious Study Review* 16 (Jan. 1990): 28-34. Object relations theory also needs to be seen critically. Elisabeth Porter has pointed out that the stereotypes elaborated by object-relations theory and authors like Chodorow stresses the self-other distinction, rather than a self-other relation, making caring about the self-in-relation-to-others more difficult to represent. See Porter, pp. 108-9.

focus is on issues in the theory overall, not on women's issues alone; the danger of ignoring differences between ideals that are promoted as universal but are largely shaped by male experience, and ideals that are associated with women and nature and are therefore assigned lesser status, is that domination continues to be legitimated.[41]

The critique which arises out of a feminist viewpoint and other critical traditions which feminists draw on (post-modernism, etc.) seeks to reveal unacknowledged assumptions, to uncover why certain forms of social relations have shaped our current philosophical understanding, to advocate connecting knowing and being, and to link this with issues of ethics, politics and power. As well as showing how ideals of reason are not neutral but reflect gendered standards of rationality, as discussed above, our critique must show that, although we cannot transcend the divisions in our lives and in the world at will, we can acknowledge the connection between reason and practice, that is, our human activity. Epistemology and ontology are not separate.[42] Thinking depends on practice because thought is social; activities make sense because the concepts and values which help us make sense of those activities are developed socially. Even solitary thought is governed by public criteria of truth and meaning. Moreover, thought does not transcend its social origins but is intrinsically linked to the limits and perspectives in which it is formed. No one viewpoint,

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[41]Porter, pp. 3-5.

[42]Ruddick, "Rationality of Care," p. 232, 236.

even science, can serve as a transcendant perspective.[43]

Given the connection between thinking and praxis, some have proposed that motherwork is a distinctive practice with a distinctive kind of thinking that yields new insights about relationships, caring, and even anti-militarism.[44] It is potentially gender-less, since only birthing and lactating are exclusive to women but the *practice* of mothering can be performed by anyone. Writers like Virginia Held argue that it is at least a viable alternative and no more or less adequate than the model of economic man or contract theory which mould our current social and philosophical theories.[45] It is important to note, however, that "care" designates *many* activities, of which mothering is a central instance and symbol. It is caring labour more generally which gives rise to a "rationality of care" which exemplifies the alternative ideals of reason formulated by feminists. Maternal thinking is one central

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[43]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 15.

[44]This will be discussed more extensively in later chapters. It should be noted that "caring labour," the basis of maternal paradigms in epistemology, may vary across cultural, racial and economic lines, and should never be divorced from the social milieu in which it is practised. Other issues would include looking at how the one caring and the one cared for are related in terms of how each is valued and in terms of power.

[45]Held does not argue that the mother-child paradigm will be adequate for all areas of life, but that we may need different moral approaches for different moral problems. However, it may be an important paradigm to consider along the way to freeing ourselves from the above mentioned standard liberal marketplace models. When critics ask her "who in our society are the 'mothers' and who are the 'children'," she responds "who in the family are the 'contractors'?" revealing a distorted thinking that has not been previously challenged. "Non-Contractual Society," *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory*, pp. 114 *et passim*.

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expression of this rationality.[46] Sara Ruddick writes:

> Acting upon the demands for preservation, growth and [social] acceptability [of their children], reflecting upon their [own] actions, articulating and sharing principles of actions, mothers develop a distinctive standpoint. They ask certain questions rather than others, identify criteria for satisfactory answers, establish appropriate ways of knowing, develop fundamental attitudes to what is known and identify virtues appropriate to their work.[47]

Maternal thinking is an example of how thinking can be shaped by the concrete instead of the abstract; a way of being and knowing that is "embodied" has the potential to challenge not only our ways of thinking about the world but about God and our theologizing as well. To this point Beverly Harrison has stated that all knowledge, including moral knowledge, is body-mediated knowledge.

> As a feminist moral theology celebrates the power of *our* human praxis as an intrinsic aspect of the work of *God's* love, as it celebrates the reality that our moral-selves are body-selves who touch and see and hear each other into life, recognizing sensuality as fundamental to the work and power of love, so above all else a feminist moral theology insists that relationality is at the heart of all things.[48]

Even if we do not use maternal practice per se as the paradigm of an alternative epistemology, feminist proposals for rethinking our moral life arise out of experience which is associated with women's lives. There is an appreciation of the context in which moral choices are made, of the narrative quality of life, and

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[46]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 46. See also her discussion of Hartsock and a privileged political and epistemological "standpoint" pp. 129-34.

[47]"Politics of Reason," p. 241.

[48]Beverly W. Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love," in *Making the Connections* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985): 15.

attention to particular others. Instead of the adequacy of our moral understanding increasing as it approaches generality, here increased abstraction means the adequacy of understanding decreases.

Margaret Walker has highlighted three characteristics of an alternative basis for ethics. First, it challenges the way the dominant tradition has valued *indirect* ways of relating as paradigmatic, resulting in a "systematic depersonalization of the moral and a demoralization of the personal." Secondly, to be sincerely reflective, moral philosophy must ask questions that have previously been unasked, such as who and whose interests are actually represented by a particular moral thinking? Who decides the rules and what is morally significant? Finally, it challenges the "separate sphere" dichotomy which has promoted universal principles for the public sphere of politics, economics and law, and leaving particularism for personal and intimate life. It might be appropriate in certain instances to maintain such divisions,[49] but not when inequality and abuse is thus justified or ignored; the rhetoric of the standard account of moral life has been compatible

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[49]Jean Bethke Elshtain makes an interesting observation when she sees common ground between extreme patriarchal views and women who advocate a very radical feminism when the distinctions between private and public are completely flattened: "...if all relationships and activities, including our most intimate ones, are political in their essence, if politics is everything and everywhere, then no genuine political action and purpose is possible, as we can never distinguish the political from anything else....[There is in patriarchal theory and in certain radical feminist theories] a free flow between public and private, politics and family. All spheres and activities are characterized in a *single, 'privatized' public language." Public Man, Private Woman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981): 104.

with the exclusion of women as moral agents.[50]

The Feminist Critique

Feminist theory, as part of a critical theory tradition, has as its task to be "explanatory-diagnostic;" that is, to contribute to "a more universal understanding of the dynamics of the power that renders women as its objects."[51] Feminist writers have set out to uncover and challenge the notions about society, the self and moral norms and values that have been part of the western liberal philosophical and political tradition which has been so dominant.

Much of the feminist critique of the liberal construction of society and the possibility for and meaning of social relations comes in its analysis of the bifurcation between public and private spheres. This split is more than descriptive and carries normative implications which have often remained unexamined. As noted above, it is not the argument here that all human relationships and activities should be considered "public;"[52] some issues ought to remain personal, but the point made by critics concerns where the

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[50]Margaret U. Walker, "Moral Understandings," pp. 170-2.

[51]Marsha Hewitt, "Women, nature and power: Emancipatory Themes in Critical Theory and Feminist Theology," *Studies in Religion* 20 (Summer 1991): 268; 270. As noted in the introduction chapter, the other part of critical theory's task is "anticipatory-utopian," which is normative and philosophical, involving the clarification of principles at the metaethical level and at the substantive level with reference to their concrete content. Hewitt takes this from Seyla Benhabib. See Benhabib, pp. 80-1

[52]See note 49 above.

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starting point and focus lies, ie. on commonality or on independence and separateness. "Human interaction that takes continuity rather than discontinuity between public and private sphere for granted is qualitatively different from that which assumes a dichotomy between the two."[53] An alternate view of the self and others becomes possible.

Examining the activity of women and women's experience in the private sphere highlights those values and virtues that previously were without theoretical articulation or were denigrated as morally less significant. Women become the subjects of their own accounts of social, political and moral life. The contingent character and relations of the terms "public" and "private" and the historical and gender-based particularity of these constructions held to be universal are exposed and highlighted.[54] The social location of women in the non-public sphere is not only recognized as being historical in nature but also morally significant. "Analysis of the moralities of women helps us recognize the ways in which social space also becomes moral space. We define space not only by particular kinds of human relations but also by particular kinds of values."[55]

The paradox of moving between the two spheres is accented in the definition of citizenship since even when women move into the

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[53]Lorraine B. Code, "Second Persons," in *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory*, p. 372.

[54]Smith, "Moral Transcendence," p. 22.

[55]Smith, "Moral Transcendence," p. 24.

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public sphere they are often judged by standards of the private sphere. In the rhetoric of 19th century (and even recent) political thought, "[all] that women were in private (kind, virtuous, loving, responsible) men could attempt to become with the aid and succor of women; but women could not 'become' what men were (responsible public persons) without forsaking their womanhood by definition."[56] To incorporate justice into the private sphere we need more than a strategy of complementary spheres or the expansion of private values into public life, since neither of these approaches challenges the fundamental liberal definition of moral space and moral transcendence nor do they challenge the fact that these divisions reflect a class privileged perspective.[57] Elshtain has studied the arguments of the early Suffragists to show that although they made important contributions in the history of reformist feminism, they implicitly shared the current dominant liberal paradigms. The nineteenth-century Suffragists thought that the solution to society's problems was to expand the moral virtues

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[56]Elshtain, "Moral Woman," p. 460.

[57]Smith, "Moral Transcendence," pp. 26-7, 34-6. The critique made by Smith and others of Gilligan's thesis is just such a challenge, since Gilligan seems to suggest that the way to reconcile the diverse moral perspectives is to give an equal weight to the values associated with an ethic of care as to those associated with an ethic of justice. However, one cannot promote the supposedly distinctive values associated with women without taking into account the historical, economic, political conditions under which these are practised. For example, the nurture practised in white, middle class families socializing their children to uphold middle class values is different from the nurture practised in black families where children are taught how to survive in a racist society. Smith, p. 22. More discussion on this point is found in the chapter on care et passim.

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of the home in which women were said to excel to "clean up" the public, corrupt world of politics. In the end they continued to demonstrate the prejudices of their middle-class male counterparts without a deeper examination of the nature of political power.

> [By] accepting a definition of themselves that arose out of their powerlessness, that meant embracing their purity and suffering, was to reinforce a set of presumptions which were strongly arrayed against female political participation and socio-economic equality.[58]

Unless there is a deeper critique of the implicit values and power configurations which are embedded in our constructions of public and private life, which takes into account the historical, social, and economic conditions under which virtues are practised, real change and liberation will not be possible. It is false to assume that the activities which traditionally take place in the home are without public meaning or wider social implications. As well as shaping our identities as male and female as discussed above and elsewhere, our initiation into language and the social construction of reality which that language reflects takes place largely in the home. Moreover, even women whose lives do conform to a traditional understanding of "homemaker" interact with public institutions such as schools, the courts, social service agencies and employers. Families are not natural units but social units;

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[58]Elshtain, *Public Man*, p. 236. Elshtain cites from Harper's *History of Woman's Suffrage*, vol 5, p.77 an example from one argument in the U.S. to expand the vote to women, which clearly means *white, middle to upper-class, Anglo-Saxon Protestant* women, since, the argument runs, "they" statistically outnumber coloured and foreign-born men and women combined, that women have a high literacy rate and make up two-thirds of church membership and only eleven percent of the prison population. Elshtain pp. 234-5.

reproduction and maintaining members of society has always carried "public" meaning.[59] Even relations among women are not just casual and private, but rather women as a group are public and political since they experience exclusion not as individuals but as a class.[60]

There is no one theory of the self or individuality held among feminist thinkers, since various perspectives within feminism, whether liberal, radical, postmodernist etc., define this problem differently, and hence propose different solutions. There are, however, some common themes and directions. The most important entails the claim that "the individual is social or relational...[-which] means that the relations and groups of which we are a part are in some sense constitutive of individuality itself. Such relations are not just an environment external to the individual."[61] This is in contrast to the standard account of the individual as standing apart and autonomous from other selves and institutions. Of course the notion of autonomy, self-determination and being the subject of one's own history has also been important to feminism, but this is not at the expense of collective work and relationships.

In feminist theory, the moral perspective is not detachment but sociality; we are social not in general but in specific his-

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[59]Smith & Valenze, "Mutuality and Marginality," p. 285.

[60]Ruth Smith, "Feminism and the Moral Subject," in Andolsen et al, eds., *Women's Consciousness, Women's Conscience* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985): 243.

[61]Smith, "Feminism and the Moral Subject," p. 236.

torical ways, "ways which make our rationality and our moral freedom not *a priori* givens but problems to be struggled with within the social structure of relations and within the relations of our identity as subjects."[62] The context of choice is as important as the principles which might be called on in any moral deliberation. There is not a generic self which acts as a moral agent, since this construction can easily overlook significant considerations and hides the fact that many are not accorded agency due to race, gender, class, etc.

When the self is not defined oppositionally and the social dimensions of personhood are acknowledged, new possibilities for the concept of subjectivity emerge;[63] the *real* artificial problematic is the division between the "self" and "all others." We acknowledge that our moral domain is made up of particular others, who engage our emotions, and with whom we live in some kind of relationship in specific contexts.[64]

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[62]Smith, "Feminism," p. 248.

[63]For example, Catherine Keller has used process philosophy to develop a concept of the self as a "web of relationship." See "Feminism and the Ethic of Inseparability," in *Women's Consciousness*, and her *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986). Other feminist authors would include Carter Heywood, C. Halkes and Rosemary Ruether. Of course women are not the only ones who take into account the social nature of persons; a recent example would be Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[64]Virginia Held, "Feminism and Moral Theory," in Kittay & Meyers, *Women and Moral Theory* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publ., 1987): 117-18. Using alternative paradigms in moral theories, such as friendship or the parent-child relationship, is sometimes objected to on the basis that the focus on particular, actually known others makes the possibility for moral action on the behalf of others on a more global scale problematic. This is not

A shift from seeing the world and moral dilemmas from the perspective of abstract individual agents to a more collective understanding which attempts to uncover the specific social, historical and economic relationships governing our lives and decisions means that values, virtues and norms that were previously undervalued or dismissed are now available to help in the project of restoration and transformation. Often in the past,

> [when] describing the character of social life, moral theory has often adopted the terms of justice that prevail in political theory. Couched in terms of "rights" rather than need, most theory fails to account for moments of human collective existence [sickness, death, ritual, communal celebration] outside such contractual arrangements.[65]

Feminist theorists challenge the implied demotion of mutuality and affirm that collective action can take on moral significance. Moreover, new paradigms, like aspects of a mothering parent and child relationship, can suggest a different view of power, since the power exercised by a parent is, ideally, not "power-over" but rather seeking to empower the child to act responsibly. It means being sensitive to the needs of others and in turn becoming vulnerable to the claims of morality in our particular relationships,

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the argument here. Feelings of empathy and care for victims of war, famine and violence in other countries are real emotions that can motivate moral behaviour to alleviate suffering elsewhere. The difference is that here the action is not motivated (solely) by abstract universal principles and rules but rather by linking what one ought to do with our motivating emotions, etc.

[65]Smith & Valenze, "Mutuality and Marginality," p. 284.

not just to some abstract universal rules.[66] Ruddick has suggested that a morality of love looks for ways to change circumstances in which dilemmas arise rather than to abstract from circumstances in order to sharpen principles.[67]

Critiques and Cautions

Several critiques and cautions need to be stated in addition to those already raised. First, the terms of the arguments given here are clearly part of the philosophical and moral traditions of western, technologically advanced, capitalist countries; we cannot assume, for example, that the meaning of work or its role in shaping identity can be applied to other countries and cultures indiscriminately. Indeed, even in our own context we need to acknowledge that women living within Canada are divided by race, class, culture, etc., and may reason differently from each other.

Secondly, feminist theory has been challenged for its own set of unquestioned assumptions. When the relationships of power are not uncovered, including within women's lives, relational morality is not enough to reshape moral social reconstructions as liberating, as Beverly Harrison has stressed. Gendered dualisms, like public/private, will only be reinforced since power and injustices

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[66]Held, "Non-Contractual," pp. 131-33. There is no implication here that women are morally superior or that these qualities are "essentially" part of all women and are unavailable to men. Nor is the mother/parent-child relationship without its ambiguities and possibilities for abuse of power. This is also discussed further elsewhere in the thesis.

[67]Ruddick, "Politics of Reason," p. 244.

41

are not confined to the sphere of men alone. Relations are webs of connection and obligation which are historical creations and which enforce and reinforce specific arrangements of power, even among women.[68]

Further, recognizing that selves are inherently social by itself is not enough to critique highly individualistic selves. There is no reason to suppose that caring, nuturant, relational, sociable selves are better *per se* than autonomous independent selves.[69] The "communal" norms advocated are not to be idealized and abstracted once more; moral essentialism, implying that values are intrinsically good no matter in which context they occur, is as much to be avoided as the implication that these traits are essentially part of women alone.[70] We need to remember that motherhood and nurturing has been associated with subjugation; we need to be cautious about claiming qualities that have been formulated under conditions of oppression in order that sociological structures and definitions of gender complementarity are not

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[68]Smith, "Relationality and the Ordering of Difference," p. 203. She cites Harrison's work in "The Power of Anger," and in her work *Our Right to Choose* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

[69]Marilyn Friedman, "Feminism and Modern Friendship," in *Explorations in Feminist Ethics*, p. 90.

[70]Barbara Houston, "Rescuing Womanly Virtues: Some Dangers of Moral Reclamation," in *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory*, p. 256-7. As noted elsewhere, much of the debate about moral essentialism has surrounded Gilligan's thesis, the "ethic of care" issue and what a maternal practice might look like.

uncritically perpetuated.[71]

While there is no acultural, ahistorical, apolitical vantage point from which to evaluate different moral traditions, the argument made here is not to imply that all principled moral thinking, including the universal dimension, is to be completely dismissed. There must be some fundamental sources of appeal.[72] As critics have pointed out, however, universalizability has *political* as well as epistemological implications because it has been used as an instrument of exclusion.

Feminists are calling for the acknowledgement of difference without exclusion and the recognition that particularity does not bar common goals.[73] Conversely, any new proposals must not simply assert a new dominance or force inclusion without recognizing historically conditioned differences which exist, even among women; to make the exclusion of women from the social contract the diagnosis and inclusion the solution "fails to grasp the significance of the juxtapositions of morality, society and nature in which all the terms simultaneously presume the subordination of women to men

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[71]Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Epistemology or Bust: A Maternal Feminist Knowledge of Knowing," *Journal of Religion* 72 (April 1992): 235.

[72]Smith, "Feminism and the Moral Subject," p. 249. Lorraine Code notes that "maternity" as such does not lack universalizable implications when one distinguishes maternal *being* from maternal *thinking*. Maternal thinking, which is connected to maternal practice, means that caring becomes possible for men and women. "Responsibility," p. 553.

[73]Smith, "Feminism," p. 249; Ruddick, "Politics of Reason," pp. 243-44.

and of everyone else to the white middle classes."[74] Who defines "difference" and is all difference the same? Does accepting definitions of rationality or personhood of those who have in the past not been included mean accepting the oppressive conditions under which those definitions were formed?

Lastly, the most fundamental difference discussed by feminist critics, the difference between men and women, has led some to argue a kind of essentialist feminism which assumes an epistemological and morally privileged standpoint for women. However, if the goal is to reclaim certain virtues as emancipatory for women *and* men, there must be a careful articulation of what a distinctive women's morality can offer to the construction of transformative ethics.

Barbara Houston has pointed out some of the dangers of rescuing so-called womanly virtues. First, there is the danger of perpetuating a gender essentialism of a biological and a cultural sort. "That is, in identifying womanly virtues as womanly, one has to avoid asserting or implying that these are virtues which only women can have, or virtues which all women have, even if they are now the virtues that only women do have."[75] This does not negate the fact that certain virtues continue to bear the imprint of their

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[74]Smith, "Relationality," p. 208. Feminist critics have pointed out that strategies of inclusion and recognizing differences within the women's movement has not been without its own problem of defining liberation on behalf of others without sensitivity to the claims of these groups, whether they be women of colour, lesbian, non-Judeo-Christian, etc.

[75]Houston, "Rescuing Womanly Virtues," *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory*, p. 256.

44

association with one gender and should not be devalued on this basis. Secondly, as mentioned above, moral essentialism, implying that certain values have intrinsic worth no matter in which context they occur, is also to be avoided. Finding the ideal form of some virtue, like caring, is to succumb to abstraction once more. "Morality is a guide to conduct, for persons, in their social contexts. Any ethics which refuses to pay attention to the moral selves which might use the ethics is mistaken."[76] Thirdly, Houston calls attention to the danger of moral monism, identifying a single value, for example again "care," as important. She points out that this tendency to monism is in part a reaction to the fear that once again the so-called womanly virtues will be dismissed because they are associated with women's oppression. Other values, like justice or freedom, are also very important to feminist critics, along with the "womanly virtues."

It is also important to point out the danger of making women the sole, obligatory agents of communal norms, and why separatist feminist political action needs careful study and articulation. Some women who advocate a kind of cultural, essentialist feminist theory place great importance on anatomical differences and the physical ability to give birth as grounding women's distinctive epistemology and morality. Yet, anatomical differences by them- selves do not constitute the difference between women's moral voice and that of men; it is the *culturally and socially mediated meaning* that these physical differences acquire which connects them to one

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[76]Houston, "Rescuing," p. 257.

45

or the other moral orientation. "The fact that we now assign these anatomical differences a meaning which is inimical to parallel development in women and men is not evidence of essentialism but of contingent development that is, of course, female and male development."[77]

Similarly, the attempt to blend myth and history to describe a past, idealized matriarchical society to legitimate present efforts to "reclaim" virtues associated with the feminine once again produces a new abstraction of the feminine.

> Women become hypostatized into "feminine essence" whose transformative power is perceived to be derived from female bodily specificity and its corresponding psychic attributes. For living, historical women this becomes another element of oppression, regulating their behaviour and restricting their opportunities, forcing women to bear the "preposterous contradiction of love in a loveless world."[78]

Finally, assuming that nurture and care practised by women is unaffected by class, race and geography once again subverts the significant differences among women. Nor does the "shift from the morally silenced to the morally vocal...[by] itself mean that those subordinated and oppressed are automatically good. Feminists should reject...the move from women as morally pathological to

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[77]Barbara Houston, "Gilligan and the Politics of Distinctive Women's Morality," in Code, Mullet & Overall, eds., *Feminist Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988): 178.

[78]Hewitt, "Women, Nature and Power," p. 277. Hewitt is citing Sheila Rowbotham. In Hewitt's article here she is critiquing Bachofen's theory of "mother right," Goddess religion and critical theorists like Marcuse who postulated a "female counter-force" in society and Horkheimer's identification of women with a humanizing influence. These "undermine the historical project of emancipation, collapsing it into a private experience of moments of freedom found within the reassuring warmth of maternal love." Ibid.

46

morally emblematic, since one version implies the other and both deprive women of agency."[79] The argument made here is not that men cannot or do not display relational characteristics, nor that women are the only ones able to contribute to overcoming the effects of gender related oppression. Both women and men have and must continue to contribute to a project of critique and transformation which liberates all humankind.

The Role of Virtue

Our discussion thus far has challenged the standard account of individualistic agents who are solitary seekers of knowledge about the world and moral life. A feminist critique asserts that humans are by their very nature interdependent in their formation and in their world view. This coheres with the tacit assumption of moral theory which liberal epistemology often seems to expressly deny, that is: "[moral] theory is built upon the assumption that human beings are social creatures. It is concerned as much with the nature of human interaction as with how the individual should strive to achieve a good life: indeed, the latter is, justifiably, construed as crucially dependent on the former."[80]   We are part of what Code calls an "epistemic community" where we learn to rely on certain others in collectively building our knowledge of the world. She cites MacIntyre's notion of "character" as recognizable carriers of social roles which help provide a context of under-

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[79]Smith, "Relationality," p. 214.

[80]Code, "Responsibility," p. 540.

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standing our life together. "From the unity of lives where virtue is seen to flourish, a culture derives its moral definitions and, by extension, its intellectual definitions."[81] Character models are moral representatives of their culture, providing a means of sifting through the various conflicts and disagreements and of identifying those virtues held to be important to the moral life of the community.

Given the arguments of this chapter, that we are in fact social beings formed by our context, that our location affects the way we know the world, that women's ways of knowing are a resource for defining moral behaviour, and that knowing and being, responsible action and responsible knowing, are inextric-ably linked, it is appropriate to speak of wanting to reconstruct "feminine virtues." This project affords us new opportunities in evaluating our notions of moral life so that some "lesser" virtues can now be reclaimed as valuable and liberating for men and women. Since many of these feminine traits are also associated with important moral qualities of the Christian life, which in practice our western, industrialized, capitalist society has devalued for public life, this project as carried out by feminist Christian moral theorists is also important for the church.

There has been a renewed interest in virtue ethics in recent scholarship in moral theory.[82] Generally, virtue is seen as the

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[81]Code, "Responsibility," p. 542.

[82]Sometimes also designated "communitarian ethics," scholars most closely identified with this approach include Alisdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, and Philippa Foot. This philosophical

ability to discern how one should respond to particular circum-
stances, a habitual disposition to do good or develop excellence in
an area of life. The cognitive activity that forms the basis of
moral activity is assumed to take place under conditions of freedom
and choice, is recognized as being limited by time, place, culture,
etc. and is communal in nature. This view challenges the standard
account which sees moral agents as solitary and as perceiving and
understanding situations in the same way, differing only in their
choice of action.[83] Socially established forms of activities form
a "practice," which has goods internal to its realization. A
baseball game, political rule, or making and sustaining family life
are all practices with particular ends and particular qualities of
character (virtues) which best facilitate fulfilling those ends.
Virtues are thus largely historically and socially determined,
although some virtues may be said to be perennial (justice,
courage, temperance, etc.); the problem arises when institutions

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approach has done much to revive interest in Aristotle and his
ethics. While this thesis is not an attempt to use Aristotle's
analysis, nor does it seek to continue, critique or follow the
above mentioned authors, some of their concerns overlap mine and
their analysis is useful for clarifying some of my own arguments.
In particular, the emphasis on the uncovering of ideological
implications of liberal theory, the significance of social, rela-
tional and narrative aspects of moral life, and the connections
between material conditions, epistemology and the values and
virtues which social practices promote are helpful. See Marilyn
Friedman, "Feminism and Modern Friendship," in *Explorations in
Feminist Ethics* for some critiques and cautions in allying the
concerns of feminists and "communitarians."

[83]Code, "Responsibility," p. 537.

change or are challenged and the virtues embedded in them are not.[84]

Until recently it has been difficult for women to be acknowledged as fully epistemically and morally responsible; the "character models" and the virtues identified with women and women's lives were perceived to be at best of secondary importance. If virtues embody a culture's ideals in various spheres of life, whether intellectual, political, religious, etc., they are learned through observation and emulation. When women's lives are largely confined to the invisible domestic sphere, it is no surprise that in the past their achievements of intellectual or other virtue are rarely visible in history. The social structures of our lives exert an even stronger influence than socialization since what a woman is able to "know" is restricted to the limits of her own sphere. "The separation of the public (male) and the private (female) domain throughout history has consequences for female cognitive 'location' which are as significant as its consequences for moral 'location.'"[85] The history of separate virtues which act in an ideological fashion is long and, as noted, not without debate as to "whether 'feminine virtue' should be seen as a genuine and unique ethical ideal or an ideological justification for an

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[84]See Jean Porter, "Perennial and Timely Virtues: Practical Wisdom, Courage and Temperance," Concilium 191 *Changing Values and Virtues* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., June 1987).

[85]Code, "Responsibility," p. 344.

50

oppressive sexual division of labour."[86]

Three scholars identify helpful ways to see virtues in a way which furthers the feminist analysis and critique. Annette Baier has looked for strands in the dominant, western philosophical tradition which may be less difficult to reconcile with feminist proposals on moral thinking and personhood. Her study of Hume reveals that, unlike Kant, Hume sees moral theory not as obedience to universal law but of cultivating proper character traits. These traits, or virtues, listed by Hume are remarkably unaggressive and uncompetitive. "Although many of the virtues on his list are character traits that would show in a great range of contexts, most of those contexts are social contexts, involving relations to others, and many of them involve particular relationships."[87] Lorraine Code, in commenting on Baier's work on notions of personhood, affirms her challenge to the idea that the self-sufficient, universal Man must remain the undisputed hero of philosophical discourse:

> One is always a 'second person,' open to the effects of interdependence....Shifting patterns of interaction within human lives, and constant reassimilation and reinterpretation of one's own history, often through communication with other 'second persons,' shows how inappropriate it would be to conceive of persons as unified, wholly self-conscious selves....One is con-

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[86]John Exdell, "Ethics, Ideology, and Feminine Virtue," in *Science, Morality and Feminine Theory*, p. 171.

[87]Baier, "Hume, The Women's Moral Theorist?" in *Women and Moral Theory*, p. 43.

stantly learning the arts of personhood....[88]

John Exdell is an author who agrees that the work of domestic life so closely associated with women's lives constitutes a "practice" with related virtues that comprise the human good in relation to making and sustaining family life. Exdell uses Alisdair MacIntyre's own critique as the basis of his analysis. He notes that in MacIntyre's scheme, qualities which foster slavishness and docility are disqualified as virtues. As a consequence one cannot appeal to the traditional "virtues of submission" assigned to women since characteristics like weakness and passivity have lost their connection to the Aristotelian idea of practical intelligence.[89] Instead, the virtues we hope to find in those who raise children - gentleness, sensitivity, resilient cheerfulness, patience, etc. - are acknowledged by a wide range of philosophers not as simple sentiments but capacities involving discipline and active intelligence.[90] In affirming the virtues which have been devalued, women and those who have been assigned secondary import-

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[88]Code, "Second Persons," p. 363. Code in this article is challenging the conception of "autonomous man" within modern ethical and epistemological thinking with ideas drawn from Baier and to some extent Caroline Whitbeck. A "second person" is one who "was long enough dependent upon other persons to acquire the essential arts of personhood;" there is an emphasis on the communal, community dependent nature of most aspects of moral and mental activity. See ibid pp. 360-1.

[89]Exdell, "Ethics," p. 181. He notes that "virtue in women - once divorced from skill, education, discipline, and the exercise of practical reason - can no longer serve as a foundation for their human dignity and equality with men." Ibid.

[90]Exdell, p. 183. He cites Wollstonecraft, Weil, Murdoch and Ruddick as examples of such philosophers.

ance can participate fully in community life without "inhabiting discordant worlds with separate virtues."[91]

Finally, Anne Patrick identifies two competing paradigms found in Christianity and the church which have historically shaped values and virtues, that is "patriarchal" verses "egalitarian" models. The former has enjoyed long ascendency, where different ideals of character were assigned according to gender and status. As Christians she challenges us to identify which values and virtues will best contribute to the process of social transformation for the sake of the kingdom. With an egalitarian paradigm, gender-integrated ideals are promoted; love and justice are no longer segregated into the realm of the personal and the public.[92] Similarly, new paradigms of understanding moral agency, our relationship to others and to our social and historical context which have been proposed and developed by feminist critics, emphasize some notion of *mutuality* which acknowledges the importance of the social for our moral life and the various relationships and configurations of power and oppression in which we find ourselves.

Conclusion

The analysis of the gender-shaped ideals of rationality and the critique of the standard, liberal account of self, social life and values presented thus far is an important component of the

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[91]Exdell, p. 198.

[92]"Narrative and the Social Dynamics of Virtue," in *Changing Values and Virtues*, pp. 69-73.

"explanatory-diagnostic" task of feminist critique and theology, that is, the critical analysis of how women have been oppressed across histories and cultures. Although much of this analysis is by necessity interdisciplinary in nature, ranging from not only religion but the social sciences to history, philosophy and psychology, as Elisabeth Fiorenza reminds us, any attempt to make a clean-cut distinction between theological and sociological problems continues to reinforce the androcentric dualist split: male/female, soul/body, public/private, religious/secular.[93]

Feminists in their critique support the view that individuals and their knowledge of the world cannot be isolated from the historical, social, economic, cultural and religious forces which shape and are shaped by particular actors and communities. Experience, *all* experience, including that which is traditionally associated with women's work and life in the domestic sphere or that sphere's limited extension into public life (teaching, nursing, etc.), influences our knowledge of the world and offers a place to identify skills and virtues. Emphasizing women's experience contrasts with the past where the sex-gender system has tended to limit what is valued socially and symbolically. Contrary to an abstracted view, emotions and so-called feminine virtues become equally important to qualities such as rationality, autonomy and strength of will, and may even provide alternative understandings of these latter virtues. This re-evaluation is a necessary

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[93]Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Endless Day: Introduction," in Fiorenza & Carr, eds., *Women, Work and Poverty*, Concilium 194 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Dec. 1987): xviii.

step in breaking those barriers covertly and overtly placed in the way of women and other marginalized groups, preventing their full participation in all realms of political and social life.

Another important component in the critique outlined here is the challenge to the split between public and private spheres. This split has tended to carry normative implications and has supported an emphasis on some activities and values at the expense of others and thereby has justified domination. Divisions between the sexes as well as between class and racial groups need to be taken into account in *both* spheres so that relationships of power are exposed.

The focus on the social construction of knowledge and of individuals is also important. Our social life together shapes what we know and what we value. Individuals are shaped by their context which includes their connection to and relationship with particular others. These relationships are also the context of our moral choices and hence cannot be ignored in our thinking about ethics and morality. Again, the importance of understanding configurations of power is emphasized because advocating "communal" values by itself is not enough to guarantee transformative ethics.

When relationality and alternative paradigms, like the maternal caretaking one, are given serious attention as contributing to our understanding of rationality, personhood and virtue, resources become available towards not perpetuating ideological and oppressive divisions. Unlike the standard account of rationality which assumes that knowledge, including moral knowledge, must have

a stateable propositional content applying universal principles to particular situation, virtue cannot be reduced to a set of rules. "Occasion by occasion, one knows what to do, if one does, not by applying universal principles but by being a certain kind of person: one who sees situations in a certain distinctive way."[94] This view is compatible with a feminist perspective which values the narrative quality of life and the particular qualities of character required by the work and activities in women's lives.[95]

The chapters which follow will examine in more detail three of the virtues which are associated with women and the private sphere: self-sacrifice, care, and peace.   In Christianity and the church these qualities are promoted as appropriate for all believers for all spheres of daily life but often have in fact been left to be practised by women in marginalized roles. Given secondary importance, these virtues have in cases been used to ensure that women and others who are not members of the dominant race and class do not threaten the pursuit of self-interest and power in the public sphere.   If these virtues are to be reclaimed, the "explanatory-

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[94]John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *The Monist* 62 (July 1979): 347.   The revival of Aristotelian ethics attempts to restore the shared emphasis on epistemology and ontology, knowledge and being.   The question is not "what can one know?" but rather "how should one live?" The following quote from McDowell is quite in keeping with feminist Sara Ruddick's work on maternal thinking: "Acting in light of a conception of how to live requires selecting and acting on the right concern....So if an action whose motivation is spelled out in our core explanation is a manifestation of virtue, more must be true of its agent than just on this occasion he acted with that motivation. The core explanation must be seen against the background of the agent's conception of how to live...." p. 344.

[95]See, for example, note 26 above.

diagnostic" element of our analysis must include an outline of how each virtue has in fact been promoted for women, using resources from philosophy, history, and the social sciences. The "anticipatory-utopian critique" will explore ways of reconstructing these qualities so that the oppressive and ideological elements are clarified and denounced, and new forms of these virtues become possible. The goal is not to simply include those who have been left out of positions of power and status, but to explore new ways of understanding our moral and social life together in the liberating project of God's kingdom.

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58

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The literature which discusses the quality or virtue of "self-sacrifice" is fairly broad, especially when its numerous synonyms and related terms are included: altruism, self-abnegation, self-denial, self-surrender, masochism, other-regard, selflessness, and self-giving. From writings in the Judeo-Christian moral tradition, one could add the numerous discussions of Christian neighbour love and of the nature of divine love, often term-ed as agape, which usually includes the idea of self-sacrifice as one of its charact-eristics.

Self-sacrifice and devotion to the interests and needs of others has evoked both positive and negative evaluations from philosophers, theologians and critics such as feminist thinkers. For some it is seen as morally worthy even though there are some admitted distortions in the practice of self-sacrifice when tra-ditional gender roles are enforced. Others, however, are less favourable in their critique. The tension over how this virtue is to be considered within feminism divides itself between those who wish to highlight qualities they feel are more likely found in women, seeing altruism as a human good to be encouraged in the struggle for liberation, and those who see the denial of self for the sake of others (usually men) as too entwined with women's oppression and symptomatic of their guilt and low self-esteem. Both of these views have weaknesses, as the positive view is tempted by moral essentialism and the negative view does not acknowledge that altruism and autonomy are not necessarily mutually

exclusive.[1]

A life of service to others naturally includes putting aside one's own needs and interests. However, the accusation made by Mary Daly and others is that a moral ideology, a theoretical one-sided emphasis on virtues like charity, obedience and sacrifice, has been accepted by women, but in general not by men, creating an ethic which reinforces women's traditionally marginalized roles as mothers or as "helpers" in some capacity.[2] The "double-shift" put in by many women, working inside and outside the home, is carried out in part because personal sacrifice is the hidden expectation or moral duty of motherhood. The expectation that mothers, or more generally, women, constitute the altruistic population can be most starkly seen in issues of pregnancy and reproductive technology. Janice Raymond, for example, links the expectation of sacrifice in connection with gestation to the wider patriarchical tradition through history which holds that women are not only the gift-givers but have been "given away" themselves. "The pervasiveness of women's personal and social obligation to give shapes the contexts of reproductive gifts and gift giving."[3] She cites the Christian

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[1]Lawrence Blum et al., "Altruism and Women's Oppression," in Gould & Wartofsky, *Women and Philosophy* (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1976): 222-3. For a related discussion of moral essentialism, see chapter 1 "Critiques and Cautions" and Houston's article on "Rescuing Womanly Virtues."

[2]Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973): 100-1. Daly does acknowledge that these virtues are also expected of males in oppressed groups by virtue of race, class, etc.

[3]Janice G. Raymond, "Reproductive Gifts and Gift Giving: the Altruistic Woman," *Hastings Center Report* 20 (Nov./Dec. 1990): 7.

social ethicist Beverly Harrison:

> Many philosophers and theologians, although decrying
> gender inequality, still unconsciously assume that
> women's lives should express a different moral norm than
> men's, that women should exemplify moral purity and self-
> sacrifice, whereas men may live by the more minimal
> rational standards of moral obligation...perfection and
> self-sacrifice are never taken to be a day-to-day moral
> requirement for any moral agent except it would seem, a
> pregnant woman.[4]

Among those who wish to retain self-sacrifice as an important
virtue are some Christian interpreters of the moral life.
Christian moral theology typically places love at the centre of
ethical life, usually characterized as involving a willingness to
sacrifice, even to the point of laying down one's life. Yet the
Christian tradition has not escaped the patriarchical oppressive
overtones which need to be critiqued before the liberating elements
of the tradition can be retrieved. Further, theologically there
has been a tendency to link self-assertion with sin and pride, and
love with selflessness, with women held up as models of self-giving
and self-denial. The feminist critique claims that the typical
traditional description of the sin of pride is rooted in the
practice of male theologians universalizing their own perspective,
without acknowledging that for women sin might mean something else
altogether, such as a self that is not nurtured and developed
enough. To achieve truly mutual relationships between individuals
and within communities, there must be a dimension of self-love and
-affirmation along with a nonideological understanding of self-

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[4]From Harrison's *Our Right to Choose* (Boston: Beacon Press,
1983): 39-40, cited in Raymond, "Reproductive Gifts," p. 8.

sacrifice.

This chapter will hence examine first the virtue of self-sacrifice and women as it is reinforced by the liberal paradigms of western, capitalist societies. The following section explores the related ideological dimensions which support particular power relationships. Some secular and theological proposals and studies on altruism and agape and their critique by feminists are outlined next. The feminist critique in the final section includes an examination of the discussion of Christian neighbour love, some alternative theological motifs, and offers some reflection on moral agency, construction of personhood, and what substantive motives for self-sacrifice and justice might look like. Some of the discussion in this chapter applies equally well to the next chapter, which examines the caring role and virtue as practised by women; since the caring labour of women is the most visible place for self-sacrifice to be demonstrated, the present chapter will in some ways anticipate and supplement the arguments of the next.

Liberalism, Women and Self-Sacrifice

The era in which liberalism was developed in its classical form was concurrent with the era of emerging modern capitalism and industrialism. The common locus of productive labour changed from inside to outside the home, reinforcing a sexual division of labour. The fact that more women were also at this time increasingly moving outside the home to take on waged labour did not essentially change the domestic paradigm which dictated what work

was considered suitable to women. The employment eventually conceded to women -- teaching, nursing and other paramedical services, social work -- clustered around what are known as the "helping professions." Margaret Adams, who writes about the "compassion trap," states:

> The emergence of the helping professions on a significant scale from the middle of the nineteenth century can be interpreted as the *psychosocial* counterpart of the general trend in *economic* productivity that shifted the site of industrial activity from the small personal setting of individual homes to the larger impersonal centers, usually factories, outside....[Instead] of (or in addition to) keeping the family intact and maximally functional, women became involved in housekeeping tasks on behalf of society at large....[5]

The implicit assumption that women are inherently suited to these jobs is based on the idea that women gain a sense of value and satisfaction from subordinating their own interests and claims to the needs and concerns of others. To assume that care and self-sacrifice are natural to women perpetuates both the notion of women's "special nature," and the uncritical acceptance of public and private spheres as ahistorical. Such a naturalistic view is a kind of false universalizing, presuming that the practice of virtues associated with the private sphere is identical across cultural, class, and geographical boundaries; those who are confined to the private sphere have no history and are not credited with the ability to construct social and moral meaning from their activi-

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[5]Margaret Adams, "The Compassion Trap," in *Women in Sexist Society*, V. Gornick, B. K. Moran, eds. (New York: Basic Books, 1971): 403. I do not wish to imply that the situation before the industrial and democratic revolution in the West was somehow an ideal; the pre-modern period is sometimes by implication romanticized by some historians.

ties.[6]

Politics in the liberal paradigm continues to be the arena where various individual and aggregate interests come together in the public sphere. This effectively relegates certain relationships, including gender and other relations of inequality, to the private sphere; the division between public and private is uncritically assumed in this view, with no way to adjudicate "private" conflicts in the public sphere when persons in the private sphere are in a position of disadvantage. Power imbalances are masked. Smith concurs with Mary Daly, Barbara Andolsen and others when she writes: "[Self]-sacrifice has been extolled as a universal virtue but is in practice a virtue assigned to women and to the private sphere. This division results in the confinement of virtue itself to the private sphere and in the universal sanction for gender-specific behavior."[7]

The paradigmatic example of a relationship where women are expected to be self-sacrificing is marriage and the family. Moreover, there has been a one-sided expectation that women are primarily responsible for maintaining relationships, not just marital ones, emotionally or otherwise. Kathryn Morgan's analysis

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[6]See Ruth L. Smith, "Moral Transcendence and Moral Space in the Historical Experience of Women," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4 (Fall 1988): 21-37.

[7]Smith, "Morality and Perceptions," p. 285. She goes on to write: "Likewise, the notion of self-sacrifice may be extolled as a patriotic virtue masking the fact that the dominant classes and groups live off the voluntary and enforced sacrifice of oppressed classes and groups." In other words, self-sacrifice may be found in the public sphere as well as in the private, but this still does not mean the virtue is required equally of all citizens.

of Simone de Beauvoir and romantic love summarizes three beliefs which constitute a patriarchal conception and dynamic of romantic love:

> (1) the belief that loving is a woman's central vocation; (2) the belief that loving is what confirms a woman in her womanliness; and (3) the belief that the proper moral principle in this situation is unconditional person-specific altruism....[An important motive for women to want love] is *to acquire a locus of values*.[8]

Paula Caplan notes that although psychological studies of development identify the ability to delay gratification for a greater good as a sign of maturity, in women this ability is often interpreted as masochism. Behaviour in altruistic ways is learned and rewarded; for example, Nancy Chodorow is cited as describing the way society shapes females to become absorbed in meeting their children's needs. "What has often been called masochistic has tended to be the very essence of trained femininity in western culture. Daughters are suppose to be trained to be nurturant, selfless (even self-denying), endlessly patient....What often goes hand in hand with this is low self esteem...."[9]

In the past, women have been dependant on their fathers and then their husbands for their economic survival and for their [social] identity. However, the dynamics described here are also true of other social interactions between men and women, especially in expectations of women in certain social roles vis-à-vis their

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[8]Kathryn Pauly Morgan, "Romantic Love, Altruism, and Self-Respect" *Hypatia* 1 (Spring 1986):128-9 (emphasis Morgan's).

[9]Paula Caplan, "The Myth of Women's Masochism," *American Psychologist* 39 (Feb. 1984): 137.

65

male employers or co-workers. To defer to the judgement, prefer-
ences, and principles of others does not, of course, constitute
servility per se, unless the woman is not allowed to use her own
resources to make a moral discrimination among the preferences she
seeks to satisfy.[10] To have an authentic sense of self, women
cannot be left to live vicariously through others (men), submerged
in roles believed to be pleasing to males.[11]

The spectrum of behaviour covered by egoism and altruism is
taken up by moral philosophy as well as by psychology, relating to
paradigms in liberal thought which are concerned with terms such as
autonomy and self-interest to explain social behaviour. The
Kantian emphasis on autonomy is foundational to Western liberal
individualistic anthropology, assuming that society is made up of
discreet self-interested beings in competition with one another.
Relationality and particularity are of secondary importance, if
considered at all, unlike the feminist critique which emphasizes
selves-in-relation. In both psychology and philosophy, traditional
theorists align the self and morality with separation and autonomy
and associate care with self-sacrifice and emotion, which renders
the feminist counter-proposal that women's practice of caring can

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[10]Marilyn Friedman, "Moral Integrity and the Deferential Wife,"
Philosophical Studies 47 (Jan. 1985): 144-6.

[11]It should be noted, however, that some authors interpret the
altruistic behaviour of women more as a coping strategy in a
patriarchal society rather than as some trait essential to women.

also inform epistemology incoherent as a moral perspective.[12]

To be truly free and self-reliant in our modern understanding means to be free of dependence on others. For feminist critics, the capacity to be autonomous and self-directing which is so basic to the liberal tradition has been very important in liberating women from confining sex roles. Yet these critics would want to stress that "personal autonomy in no way involves a solitary or disengaged self; rather, [a feminist understanding] stresses the *social* foundation of optimal self-directing action."[13] For example, Berlin and Johnson see the work on women's psychological development by Gilligan and Jean B. Miller as positive efforts to articulate what a relational understanding of self might look like. In addition, however, they also see that this could involve a new way to articulate "autonomy;" that is, autonomy does not need to denote the polar opposite of separation and detachment but could denote a sense of freedom and personal integrity which enhances relationship.[14]

Moral theory as it relates to individualist liberal social theory describes self-sacrifice as the moral counterpart to self-

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[12]Carol Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development," in Kittay & Meyers, *Women and Moral Theory* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publ., 1987): 29.

[13]Carol Robb, "Introduction," in Beverly Harrison, *Making the Connections* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985): xvi. (Emphasis mine.)

[14]To use other language, Gilligan and Miller's work is part of the critical theory "negation and retrieval" process necessary to reevaluate our understanding of autonomy. "Women and Autonomy," *Psychiatry* 52 (Feb. 1989): 79-95.

interest; both terms are categories of moral analysis and evalua-
tion but also of social perception and analysis.[15] Interest is the
most important explanation for human actions and the institutions
which have been developed to accommodate man's activities in
political, economic and social spheres. "In describing moral
activity positively or negatively in terms of self-interest and
self-sacrifice, interest serves as the precondition of morality-
....[Social] relations involve either the presence or absence of
interest."[16] If, as is argued here, altruism and self-interest are
two sides of one moral coin, with the former more strongly
associated with women and interest with male self-interest, complex
questions are raised about "moral double standards" in a culture
where men set the standards in such a way that inequality becomes
systemic and women have an investment in their own subordination.[17]

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[15]Ruth L. Smith, "Morality and Perceptions of Society," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26 (1987): 281. Self-interest is not the same as selfishness. As Judith Tormey notes, we do things for our own interest all the time: take care of our health, do well at our jobs, avoid automobile accidents. These activities are not usually carried out at the expense of others. She writes: "[In] human relationships, exploitation typically appears in association over an extended period of time in which *roles* can be identified, e.g. master-slave, colonial-subject, pusher-addict. (Oppression, in its socially significant forms, is also characteristically a long term relation which facilitates exploitation in that it renders the use of persons for gain less difficult.)" "Exploitation, Oppression and Self-Sacrifice," in Gould & Wartofsky, p. 211. The problem is that a "morality of self-sacrifice" is imposed as a way of life, and women are taught to believe that the interests of others always carry inherently more weight.

[16]Smith, "Morality and Perceptions of Society," p. 282.

[17]Raymond, "Reproductive Gifts," p. 8. Since, however, women's options are limited through physical, economic and conceptual coercion, the apparent sacrifices of interest on the part of women

The discussion thus far, that is, how we view self, society, and moral values, is also not unrelated to how we understand God and theology. Beverly Harrison, after citing a study by John Wikse which notes the connection between the metaphors of self we use with the property metaphors dominant in the socioeconomic order, goes on to link this view with our image of God.

> [A] theological tradition that envisaged deity as autonomous and unrelated was bound over time to produce a humanism of the sort we have generated, with its vision of "Promethean man," the individual who may, if he chooses, enter into relationship. Where our image of transcendence is represented to us as unrelatedness, as freedom from reciprocity and mutuality, the experience of God as living presence grows cold and unreal....[Notions] of love...whether they are images of divine or Promethean human love are images...of patronizing love, the love of the strong for the weak, or, conversely, the snivelling gratitude of the weak toward those stronger who grant "favors."[18]

Religion has been used to justify sex roles and to deny moral autonomy and maturity to women behind seemingly benign terms such as speaking of women's "complementary" role or the "designs of creation." Descriptions of adulthood and maturity in a teleological view of natural law more fully match the traditionally ascribed attributes of men, leaving women de facto denied full moral autonomy. Christian feminists are among those who call into question the relevance of expectations of women's self-sacrifice

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may at times actually be survival tactics. Sarah Hoagland, "Lesbian Ethics and Female Agency," in Cole & McQuin, *Explorations in Feminist Ethics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992): 160.

[18]Beverly Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love," in *Making the Connections*, p. 17. The work by Wikse is *About Possession: The Self as Private Property* (University Park: Pennsylvania Univ. Press, 1977).

from people who do not assume women to be fully valuable moral persons.[19]

Ideology and "Slave Morality"

The vision of society which liberalism supports, that is as the arena of competition among self-interested individuals pursuing their own economic and political aims, is in its darkest form a bleak picture of greed and fear. The valorization of "passive" virtues such as self-sacrifice, nurture and care would seem to be a countervailing attempt to find goodness and to ameliorate the human condition. However, as Sarah Hoagland notes, "[although] these virtues may herald for us the possibility of ethics -- the possibility of some goodness in an otherwise nasty world -- they are the virtues of subservience...."[20] Since these so-called feminine virtues are relegated to the private sphere, they lose their ability to critique systems of inequality and exploitation; indeed, structures of oppression are reinforced and questioning power hierarchies is labelled as "sin."

The phenomenon of "slave morality" and its identification with Christianity has been noted by earlier thinkers such as Nietzsche,

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[19]Carol Robb, "Introduction," *Making the Connections* , pp. xvi-xviii.

[20]Sarah Hoagland, "Lesbian Ethics," p. 157. On this point Mary Daly, who Hoagland also cites here, makes an even stronger contrast between the behavioral excesses of the stereotypical male embodied in a masculinist culture, and the traditional Christian virtue which emphasizes charity and meekness as a perhaps guilty reaction to this extreme. See Daly, "After the Death of God the Father," in *Womanspirit Rising*, C. Christ, J. Plaskow, eds. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979): 60.

Marx and others. The message of love as service makes the practice of subservience redemptive; this is especially appealing because theoretically it is suppose to be the calling of all members of society equally. What in fact happens, however, is a selective validation of servitude, that is, not a balancing or equalizing of humble service, but only advocating humility for some or at least until one has successfully climbed out of a position of subordination.[21]

Mary Daly is often noted for her discussion of selective valorization of passive virtues, or what she calls the "scapegoat syndrome," as it is perpetuated in the name of Christianity.

> While the image of sacrificial victim may inspire saintliness in a few, in the many the effect seems to evoke intolerance. That is, rather than being enabled to imitate the sacrifice of Jesus, they feel guilt and transfer this to "the Other," thus making the latter "imitate" Jesus in the role of scapegoat....The qualities which Christianity idealizes, especially for women, are also those of a victim: sacrificial love, passive acceptance of suffering, humility, meekness, etc. Since these are qualities idealized in Jesus "who died for our sins," his functioning as a model reinforces the scapegoat syndrome for women.[22]

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[21]Bill Puka, "The Liberation of Caring," in *An Ethic of Care*, M. J. Larrabee, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1993): 222. Puka notes that for Marx and Nietzsche this critique applied equally to secular revolutionary movements of the left, eg. the proletariat would continue to be victimized by the ideology of property if liberation merely meant becoming property owners themselves, no longer subject to the former ideals. Here, we need a more transformative understanding of self-sacrifice for women and men.

[22]Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, pp. 76, 77. She notes that minority groups and those in marginalized positions are also candidates for the role of Other/scapegoat, although her radical feminist stance still makes sexism the fundamental model for national, racial or class discrimination. See "After the Death," p. 61.

Unlike Jesus, however, women are not seen as the blameless victim offering up the self for the sins of others, but rather women are blamed for their association with the body and sexual desire, and are identified with Eve and the coming of sin into the world. Women are caught in a double bind as they are censured or praised for acquiring virtues or vices. On the one hand, women are socialized into distorted moral paradigms which label dependent and self-abnegating behaviour as virtuous and condemn any sense of power or self-determination. On the other hand, when women display the virtues associated with men and assertive behaviour, the same virtues are seen as gender incongruent and blameworthy in women.[23]

Social paradigms, such as liberalism, can function in an ideological way because relationships of power and domination are disguised, justified and perpetuated. Whether speaking about women or other marginalized groups, an ideological ethic justifies social relations which require in a systemic way that one group sacrifices important human goods in order to elevate others above them.[24] Moreover,

> the very structures and processes of knowing, perceiving and feeling are wounded by the ethics of domination and culture superiority, by language of binary opposition, and by the way all structures of our human interaction have become locked into the absolutizing of the "individualistic I," the "enclosed I" for whom full

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[23]Kathryn Morgan, "Women and Moral Madness," in *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory*, M. Hanen, K. Nielsen, eds. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1987): 212-215. See also the discussion of women's "pathological masochism" in Caplan.

[24]John Exdell, "Ethics, Ideology, and Feminine Virtue," in *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory*, p. 170.

mutuality is impossible.[25]

For women, however, unequal power relationships are not only disguised in their epistemological and social forms, but indeed the very ties of caring itself connect them to the domestic sphere mask their own subordination. When in the name of altruism the wife and mother is never allowed to care for her own needs, when she lacks autonomy, and caring lacks reciprocity, the defectiveness of the caring she practices affects her and, moreover, those to whom she directs her ministrations.[26]

Inequality between partners such that one person has the power and authority to define the terms of the relationship on the part of the other leaves the woman vulnerable to exploitation. In at least one study of women in the workplace the writer discovered that women find it hard to change this pattern even outside the home. Women in the workplace had difficulty forming alliances to defend "only" their own interests, as opposed to defending the interests of others for whom they felt some responsibility. Having been socialized to identify with the problems of others, women had trouble distinguishing between their own "fair share" or self-interest, and those of others, even in workplaces with clear formal

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[25]Mary Grey, "Claiming Power-in-Relation," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7 (Spring 1991): 10. See chapter one for further discussion of the dichotomous thinking which is part of the liberal legacy.

[26]Blum et al., "Altruism," p. 321-2.

structures.[27]

The social construction of altruism is not limited to the effects of socialization or the epistemological assumptions discussed above; the institutions and structures in society which reinforce an ethic of self-denial in women must also be critiqued. Marriage, for example, is one institution that receives much criticism and attack from some feminist groups who see it as hopelessly entangled with patriarchical power and domination. It may be true that the damage to women's *and* men's consciousness caused by oppressive social norms has been reinforced by traditional understandings of gender roles as expressed in marriage, but the problem is deeper and not unconnected to our views of nature and society more generally and their expression in oppressive structures in which women also participate. The quest by feminists and others to reconstruct an understanding of mutuality and true reciprocity would suggest that our understanding of intimate relationships could also be positively retrieved.[28]

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[27]Hildur Ve, "Women's Mutual Alliances: Altruism as a Premise for Interaction," in *Patriarchy in a Welfare Society*, H. Holter, ed. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1984): 133. Of course the converse is also true, that is men are also affected by their socialization. Traditionally, the expectations placed on men and their workplace situations can erode men's capacity to work at and value personal relationships. Blum et al., "Altruism," p. 238-9.

[28]Even though I recognize the many inequalities which marriage can perpetuate because our damaged understanding of gender roles have deep roots in our worldview generally, I would hope that *all* relationships are capable of being liberated from their oppressive dimensions. On the other hand, I also recognize that there are important discussions going on which seek to redefine our understanding of marriage and family, notably the concerns raised by the gay and lesbian community. The stir caused by Shere Hite's report on the family (hopelessly damaged by patriarchy, in her

In terms of a traditional understanding of marriage, it is perhaps the label and role "housewife" associated with this understanding which draws the most ire and hostility from some critics. The term seems to evoke all the negative images of dependency and sacrifice, a woman executing her duties of care in return for economic support, with her success at keeping her home clean and orderly only serving to make her work increasingly invisible.[29]

Margaret Adams, as mentioned above, has examined the role of housewife as it is seen in its social expression, namely in the "helping" professions such as nursing, teaching and social work. These professions arose in the context of industrialization and the increased separation of home and workplace, which reinforced the split between private and public and the respective virtues governing each realm, that is with service and sacrifice seen as appropriate to the home, and assertiveness and rationality dominating the workplace. This social trend had a devastating effect

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opinion) and the debate about same-sex spousal benefits debated in legislative halls across Canada, serve to highlight some very important issues which I in no way wish to dismiss here, even if space does not allow for more discussion on this topic. The reader will note that the husband/wife roles assumed by the critics is the white, middle-class ideal of the modern era, which has rarely corresponded to the reality experienced by women of other races or classes; this ideal, too, performs an ideological function.

[29]Blum et al, "Altruism," p. 239. Mary Daly is one who sees the traditional institutions as irredeemable. She writes: "Those who are alienated from their own deepest identity do receive a kind of security in return for accepting very limited and undifferentiated identities. The woman who single-mindedly accepts the role of 'housewife,' for example, may to some extent avoid the experience of nothingness but she also avoids a fuller participation in being, which would be her only real security and source of community." *Beyond God the Father*, p. 23.

on women and the quality of public culture.[30]   Nurturing and

protective functions from the home were expanded to keep pace with

the social problems and issues which accompanied an increasingly

technical, complex society; the "helping professions were the

institutionalized mechanisms by which a rapidly evolving society

maintained its integrity and continuity."[31] Under similar changing

social conditions there is often a move to clearly define and

maintain roles and identity. Women were given credit for their

supposedly special insights and abilities to be caring and self-

giving, hence when they were offered positions in which they might

feel socially useful, women took on these jobs, even as many

continued   to   feel   frustrated   and   disappointed   in   their

circumscribed roles.[32]

Related to the role of housewife, the discussion often in-

cludes an examination of motherhood as an institution which re-

inforces gender role expectations, and around which much of the

language of selflessness and responsibility toward others frames

the possibilities open to women.   "Motherhood becomes an inspira-

tional metaphor or symbol for the caring, the nurturing, and the

sensitivity that women bring to a world ravaged by conflict."[33]

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[30]Barbara Andolsen, "Agape in Feminist Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 9 (Spring 1981): 76. Andolsen is citing Rosemary Ruether here.

[31]Adams, "Compassion Trap," p. 403.

[32]Adams, "Compassion Trap," p. 405-6.

[33]Raymond, "Reproductive Gifts," p. 9.   It is important to distinguish motherhood as "institution" from how it might be experienced by particular women, as well as being sensitive to the

The ethic of self-sacrifice associated with the traditional roles of women is internalized and reinforced by social norms in such a way that choices women make cannot always be described as being real. Raymond cites Durkheim's study of altruistic suicide, noting that his analysis of social integration is especially applicable to the social construction of women's altruism. "For women, family expectations often generate [a kind of] social integration, with family values and inducements overriding a woman's individuality."[34] As feminist critics remind us, the normative configurations of our society are not divorced from social structures, and social structures reinforce particular normative aspects of society; unless oppressive social norms are changed, identifying these norms and social dynamics is not enough to change the internalized ethic of self-denial or victimization.[35] The challenge for feminist critics is to affirm qualities, like altruism, in an undistorted form without idealizing or abstracting these virtues into some essence or absolute.

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differences race, class, and sexual orientation might make to its practice. Further discussion of motherhood, or more specifically, maternal paradigms, will be taken up in the chapter which follows.

[34]Raymond, "Reproductive Gifts," p. 9.

[35]Smith, "Morality and Perceptions," p. 280; Grey, "Claiming Power," p. 9. Grey reminds us that damage to structures of consciousness are not only due to the relations between the sexes but also our relationship to nature and the dominance of the machine paradigm; women also participate in oppressive structures. A novel which does an excellent job of exploring the expectations women have of themselves as mothers sacrificing for their children in the context of social and institutional forces which work against their full self-actualization is *Her Mother's Daughter*, by the radical feminist theorist Marilyn French (Summit Books, 1987).

77

Agape and Altruism: Some Proposals

Within philosophy, psychology and religion there have been numerous discussions in recent decades about the way we understand our concern for others. For Christians, the focus has been the nature of divine (agape) and neighbour love. After a brief overview of some secular debates on the nature of altruism, the study here will look at the feminist critique of the traditional understanding offered by theologians and some of the counter proposals put forward by women authors.

Discussions of altruism in moral philosophy have not escaped the dualistic thinking so pervasive in our modern understandings of self and society, nor have discussions of our concern for others been free of abstraction, as particular qualities are examined out of their social context and apart from any other aspects of a person's life. Even that philosophy which is clearly influenced by Christian thought posits an opposition, explicit or implicit, between concern for self and concern for others, implying that the latter must always involve some degree of disregard for the former.[36]

Blum, Homiak, Housman and Scheman have in their article traced a strain within traditional moral philosophy which sees at least some compatibility between concern for self and concern for others. Joseph Butler (d. 1752) discussed egoism and altruism in his

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[36]Blum et al., "Altruism," p. 244, n.4. The example given by Blum is in Kant, where the opposition is seen in the idea of the struggle between morality on the one hand and personal happiness or inclination on the other.

Sermons. He saw no incompatibility between concern for self and that for others because these are distinct and hence there is no relationship between these two affections. However, in doing so, "he is...making a purely conceptual point which does not apply to the 'contingent' conflict between concern for self and concern for others which the structures of women's lives so often impose on them."[37]

In his work *On the Basis of Morality*, Arthur Schopenhauer (d. 1860) attacks the views associated with Hume and Adam Smith. These latter authors see compassion and sympathy associated with an identification with the other, feeling the same feelings. Schopenhauer criticizes this premise because a clear sense of the other as other is not maintained, and therefore we are still in the end concerned with ourselves. The weakness of Schopenhauer's position is that it does not address the deeper, more insidious ways in which a woman is tied to her husband or children which do not allow her to experience herself as a separate, autonomous person.[38]

The later view of Max Scheler combines Schopenhauer's insight with a deeper, psychological understanding in stressing that a genuine and authentic fellow-feeling actually requires autonomy and independence of the self. While all are capable of acts which might appear to benefit others, such appearances are not enough. He writes: "For a man who neither leads his own life nor finds it worth living cannot sacrifice himself for another. He simply does

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[37]Blum et al., "Altruism," p. 225.

[38]Blum et al., "Altruism," p. 226.

not possess the one thing needful for sacrifice, namely a life of his own."[39] Blum et al point out, however, that Scheler is still speaking of abstract selves without examining the social conditions which produce this lack of a developed self. Moreover, inauthentic fellow-feeling is more serious than he seems to indicate because it means there can be no clear sense of the other's needs and wants.

The last work in their survey is Milton Meyerhoff's *On Car-ing* (1971) which succeeds in showing how true caring for the other requires a clear sense of self which does not include the kind of dependence and inferiority which makes authentic sacrifice difficult. However, his analysis concentrates on individuals; Meyerhoff does not seem to see how structures in which people live often keep them from becoming autonomous selves capable of com-passion etc. The description of women as "dependent" is not merely psychological but describes an integral part of the social structure to which women are relegated in our society.[40]

Studies in social psychology on altruism are surveyed by Paul Rigby and Paul O'Grady; they note that until recently there was no room for an altruistic motivation in human behaviour because such actions could seemingly always be reduced to egotistic or even hedonistic impulses. John Dovidio, for example, reviews the literature on a "cost-reward" model; bystanders might be motivated to help someone in trouble because intervention is seen as an

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[39]*The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Heath (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954): 42. Cited in Blum et al., "Altruism," p.227.

[40]Blum et al., pp. 228-9.

effective way to reduce the unpleasant arousal generated by witnessing another person's distress, incurring for the actor as few net costs as possible. Perceived costs include feelings such as shame, fear or pride in anticipation of how other people will react.[41] In another example, Robert Cialdini and Alice Isen are two researchers who maintain that people's helping behaviour is a function of their desire to maintain a good mood or at least alleviate a sad one, since benevolent activity is socialized to be self-gratifying.[42]

C. Daniel Batson and his colleagues are cited as a dissenting viewpoint. They claim that natural love, eros, "cannot be exhaustively characterized as acquisitive and egocentric desire. The fact that people often do act for selfish reasons does not mean that they always do or that they should....[Eros] is a mixture of motives, selfish and altruistic."[43] In experiments Batson manipulated the ease with which subjects observing someone else's distress could escape helping, allowing for some tentative conclusions that empathy can lead to altruistic behaviour.[44]

Secular proposals as to the nature and possibility of self-

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[41]P. Rigby; P. O'Grady, "Agape and Altruism: Debates in Theology and Social Psychology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 57 (Winter 1989): 722-23. Note how the language of the marketplace is being applied to human relationships.

[42]Rigby & O'Grady, "Agape and Altruism," p. 723. The authors note that the consensus on the impossibility of purely motivated altruistic behaviour was not challenged by theologians since this finding merely confirmed the fallen state of humanity.

[43]Rigby & O'Grady, "Agape and Altruism," p. 724.

[44]Rigby & O'Grady, "Agape and Altruism," pp. 724-28.

giving behaviour should also include the work of feminist social scientists such as Nell Noddings and Carol Gilligan. Noddings tries to base an ethic on a model of humanity as relational which requires that persons be responsive to others without ignoring the needs of the one who is acting. She acknowledges that caring entails sacrifice and this will seem burdensome, but "when I am as I need the other to be toward me, I am the way I want to be --that is, I am closest to goodness when I accept and affirm the internal 'I must.'"[45] She goes on:

> The ethical self is an active relation between my actual self and a vision of my ideal self as one-caring and cared-for. It is born of the fundamental recognition of relatedness....As I care for others and am cared for by them, I become able to care for myself. The characteristic "I must" arises in connection with this other in me, this ideal self, and I respond to it. It is this caring that sustains me when caring for the other fails....[46]

Carol Gilligan's work on women's moral development and the possibility of an ethic of care has sparked debate across numerous disciplines.[47] She, too, stresses the fact that seeing ourselves as relational opens up new ethical possibilities previously overlooked. Recognizing that in the past the moral issue of goodness for women lay in self-sacrifice, women were effectively held back from full participation in adult questions of

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[45]*Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California, 1984): 49. One assumes the "I must" refers to those actions and responses in which the agent is required to sacrifice her own needs and wants for the other.

[46]Noddings, *Caring*, pp. 49-50.

[47]*In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

responsibility and choice. The language of "rights" which accompanied the movement for equality initially seemed to conflict with this morality of self-sacrifice and -abnegation. Gilligan claims that the concept of rights changes women's conception of self, allowing women to consider their own needs.

> When assertion no longer seems dangerous, the concept of relationships changes from a bonding of continuing dependence to a dynamic of interdependence. Then the notion of care expands from the paralyzing injunction not to hurt others to an injunction to act responsively toward self and others and thus to sustain connection. A consciousness of the dynamics of human relationships then becomes central to moral understanding....[48]

Further discussion and critique of Noddings and especially Gilligan will be included in the chapter on care which follows.

Christian moral theory in its traditional understanding has certainly reinforced an ethic of self-sacrifice for women, even though the discussion has been addressed to all members of the church under the general heading of Christian neighbour love which takes as its model divine love. Whereas the human condition is characterized as one of anxiety because man realizes the difference between his finite existence and his larger possibilities and choices, and which he tries to overcome by magnifying his own power, righteousness and knowledge, Christian love is characterized as being the opposite. Sin is the unjustified concern of the self for its own power, treating others as means to be manipulated in self-serving ends, love is the solution to man's predicament

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[48]*In a Different Voice*, p. 149. Permission to consider one's own needs might imply that a new understanding of autonomy is being developed. See n.14 above.

because it is completely self-giving, seeking only the good of the other.[49] It is characterized as a "radical conversion of the mind and will, resulting in a selfless concern for the needs of the other. It is a love that, abandoning all self-interest, is _for_ the other completely. While other forms of love retain vestiges of acquisitive or selfish desires, Christian agapeic love alone is truly and fully self-sacrificial."[50] The ultimate model of such disinterested love directed to all equally is the crucifixion, the doctrine of Atonement, firmly linking sacrifice and other-regard with agape. This latter emphasis has been accompanied by a suspicion toward, or even condemnation of, self-love. However this norm is only unambiguously applied in the arena of private relationships, not in the public realm where prudence and justice are allowed to overrule actions of a sacrificial nature.[51] Since women are associated with the realm of personal relations, and to be "feminine" is to be nurturing and other-regarding, women are effectively held to an ethic of self-sacrifice to a greater degree than men.

The theologians who are most often cited as being influential

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[49]Valerie Saiving, "The Human Situation: a Feminine View," _Womanspirit Rising_, p. 26.

[50]Linell Cady, "Relational Love: A Feminist Christian Vision," in _Embodied Love_, P. Cooey et al., eds. (San Francisco: Harper & Row): 139-40. Linda Woodhead makes the interesting observation that really, Christians do _not_ have a developed understanding of neighbour love because most theologians discuss God's love and just assume that our love for each other is or should be identical. "Love and Justice," _Studies in Christian Ethics_ 5 (1992): 44-46.

[51]Andolsen, "Agape," p. 69.

in their articulation of agape and Christian neighbour love are the Protestant writers Anders Nygren and Gene Outka. The Roman Catholic tradition, while not wholly satisfying the feminist critique with regards to notions of selves-in-relation, at least retains more of Augustine's concept of *caritas* which does allow for a degree of self-love providing it is proper ordered after "higher" loves, i.e., of God and spiritual and intellectual endeavours.[52] It was Nygren's critique of Augustine and some of the earlier church fathers which was taken up by later critics. Nygren felt that agape was a fundamental motif in Christianity; since the Augustinian *caritas* view synthesizes agape and eros it is not in his view true to the New Testament, especially not to the Pauline theology of the cross.[53] Agape and eros, in Nygren's view, are completely antithetical since God's love for us, demonstrated in the atonement, was completely disinterested and not based on our merit.

Many thinkers challenged Nygren's extreme opposition of the two loves (as well as his interpretation of Augustine). Outka writes: "The normative content most often ascribed [to agape] I

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[52]Jennifer Rike, "The Lion and the Unicorn: Feminist Perspectives on Christian Love as Care," *Encounter* 51 (Summer 1990): 227-45.

[53]Rigby & O'Grady, "Agape and Altruism," pp. 719-20. Nygren's work of 1954 was called *Agape and Eros* (London: S.P.C.K.). It should be noted that this interpretation on Augustine applies to his view of agape, not necessarily of neighbour love. Only in respect to love of God did Augustine include *eros*. Neighbour love should contain no element of need, desire, or partiality, valuing the other only as a creature ordered to God. Linda Woodhead, "Love and Justice," p. 46, n.5. See note 49 above.

have called equal regard, involving in Barth's words 'identification with his interests in utter independence of the question of his attractiveness.'"[54] In Outka's view, agape is other-regarding, impartial and nonexclusive, and even if self-interest is not absent, it is peripheral; agape responds to the other generically, not for any particular trait.[55] Self-regarding actions may in Outka's view be legitimate, assuming that justice will limit and balance the interests of self and other. Other-regard and self-sacrifice are not synonymous, since our own happiness is enhanced when we act on behalf of others; when conflict arises, however, agape dictates the Christian should go the second mile.[56]

A Catholic author noted by some feminists who does allow for the possibility of self-regard in notions of Christian love is Martin D'Arcy. He characterizes the dualistic nature of love as *eros*, the lion (self-regarding love as rational, possessive, assertive) and *agape*, the unicorn (other-regarding love as emotional and giving to the point of self-denial).[57] These two must achieve a healthy balance and equilibrium. D'Arcy grounds his view on the doctrine of the Trinity as a model of mutuality, as opposed

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[54]Outka, *Agape: An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972): 260. Cited in Sally Purvis, "Mothers, Neighbours and Strangers," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7 (Spring 1991): 20.

[55]Purvis, "Mothers, Neighbours and Strangers," p. 20.

[56]Andolsen, "Agape," p. 72.

[57]Rike, "The Lion and the Unicorn," p. 231.

to the more typically Protestant appeal to the Atonement.[58] While his call to balance and his elaboration of the anthropological foundations of Christian love are welcomed by feminists, D'Arcy's picture of competing loves reinforces a dualism that associates self-regard with the masculine and self-surrender with the feminine instead of the dialectical dynamics of one love.[59]

A discussion related to agape and neighbour love is the analysis of sin as pride as presented by Reinhold Niebuhr which a number of feminists have critiqued.[60] Niebuhr sees human nature as dipolar with a resulting tension between our finitude and our freedom; sin, too, is dipolar. The self seeks relief from the anxieties of finite freedom either by denying its own limitations through pride (will-to-power, over-reaching limitations of human creatureliness) or by denying its spiritual dimension in a pursuit of sensuality (hiding freedom, losing self in some aspect of the

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[58]Andolsen, "Agape," p. 73. Discussion of a feminist proposal on the possibility of the Trinity as a model of mutuality will follow below.

[59]Rike, "The Lion and the Unicorn," p. 232. This association can be attributed to the influence of Jung on D'Arcy's analysis. D'Arcy does state that each person must have qualities of both masculine and feminine natures, but more work would need to be outlined to ensure that hierarchical or sexist stereotypes are not reinforced.

[60]The most widely cited work is Valerie Saiving's 1960 article "The Human Situation," republished in *Womanspirit Rising*. This article is credited by many women as being the first one to open their eyes to the effect gender has on theological formulations. Other notable works include Judith Plaskow's *Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich* (Lenham: University Press of America, 1980); Susan N. Dunfee, "The Sin of Hiding: A Feminist Critique of Reinhold Niebuhr's Account of the Sin of Pride," *Soundings* 65 (Fall 1982): 316-27; and numerous articles by Ruth L. Smith (see bibliography).

world's vitalities).[61] "Hence the sin of [sensuality] can take the form of devotion to another -- the expending of one's vital energies not in the acceptance of one's own freedom, but in the running away from that freedom by pouring those energies in to the life of another."[62] As Niebuhr works out what this means, however, the sin of sensuality becomes escape to physical cravings, forfeiting the connotation of losing the self in other finite persons, institutions, or causes. The sin of pride, the misuse of self-determination, is primary in Niebuhr's analysis, while the sin of sensuality, the failure to live up to the obligations of freedom, becomes derivative. It is this dynamic which Saiving, Plaskow and others identify as Niebuhr's androcentric bias, since he fails to take full account of women's experience, shaped by social expectations, which makes the sin of sensuality the prime sin of women. No author claims that women are never guilty of pride or misuse of what power they are given; as Saiving states:

> [The] temptations of woman *as woman* are not the same as the temptations of man *as man*, and specifically feminine forms of sin -- "feminine" not because they are confined to women or because women are incapable of sinning in other ways but because they are outgrowths of the basic feminine character structure -- have a quality which can never be encompassed by such terms of "pride" and "will-to-power." They are better suggested by such items as triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness;...dependence on others for one's own self-

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[61]Plaskow, *Sin and Grace*, p. 58; Dunfee, "Sin of Hiding," p. 318.

[62]Dunfee, "Sin of Hiding," p. 319. Dunfee uses the term "hiding" to refer to this aspect of Niebuhr's doctrine of sin to focus more on the act, or non-act, of escaping rather than on the locus to which one escapes so that the full meaning of escapism is not limited to a bodily form of finitude. p. 318.

definition...--in short, underdevelopment or negation of the self.[63]

Niebuhr is also critiqued by feminists for his uncritical acceptance of distorting liberal paradigms in his analysis of society, such as the public/private split which enforces a gendered morality. For Niebuhr, Christ is the final norm of human nature; since the first Adam committed the essential sin of pride and self-love, the essential goodness of the "second Adam" is sacrificial, suffering, and self-giving love.[64] Andolsen points to Niebuhr's emphasis on sacrifice as the prime historical manifestation of *agape*, but which in the end only applies to the private realm. When he turns to the public world of government, love becomes the "impossible possibility" which Christians can use as a reference point but which will never be realized in the conflux of competing pressures.[65] As emphasized throughout, this places self-sacrifice once more in the realm of the domestic, the personal, ie. of women. Self-sacrifice as an ideal where the temptation is not primarily sinful self-assertion but the denial of freedom reinforces servitude and will make the development of a whole, healthy self difficult.

Feminists point out that to the extent that Niebuhr and others

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[63]Saiving, "The Human Situation," p. 37. Saiving has been criticized for an implied biological determinism in her analysis of gender roles. The essence of her argument, however, still holds, even when we recognize how gender expectations are culturally and socially mediated.

[64]Plaskow, *Sin and Grace*, pp. 76-77. She is citing from Niebuhr's *Faith and History*.

[65]Andolsen, "Agape," p. 71.

have overlooked women's experience, they have misunderstood the human condition as a whole. "Both men and women need a doctrine of [sin and] grace which seriously addresses the self in its abdication of freedom and which clarifies the process through which it comes to stand responsibly before itself, other persons, and God."[66] Agape defined exclusively as other-regard and sacrifice is not an appropriate virtue for men or women, but for women especially who have been prone to excessive selflessness the consequences can be destructive. Too often, "[men] have espoused an ethic which they did not practice; women have practised it to their detriment."[67] Feminists who wish to remain Christian acknowledge the importance of the sacrifice which is demanded in discipleship but would want to see that any new formulations promote the full humanity of women and that our theology be reflective of women's experience.[68]

Linda Woodhead has looked at Outka's formulation of Christian neighbour love (self-sacrificing equal regard which is indifferent to the value of its object), considering each of its features in light of a Christian feminist critique.[69] First, the implication of equal regard is that it is disinterested, one-way love. As soon as a dimension of mutuality enters, such as in marital/erotic love

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[66]Plaskow, *Sin and Grace*, p. 93.

[67]Andolsen, "Agape," p. 75.

[68]Rike, "Lion and Unicorn," p. 230.

[69]Woodhead, "Love and Justice," pp. 44-61. The language is Outka's but reflects a traditional Protestant understanding and can therefore serve as general formula.

90

or friendship, the claim to be "Christian" is thought to be invalid. Yet many women would want to include a measure of warmth and emotional attachment in their regard for others. Simone Weil and Iris Murdoch speak of "attention," an opening oneself up to the value of the object of attention; H. Oppenheimer speaks of an appreciative love which involves the other in an eager desire to see mutual feelings flourish. Instead of threatening autonomy, humanity is enriched.[70] While the implied universalism of *equal* regard is part of the Christian understanding of agape as demonstrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, when we see how the Samaritan cared for the wounded stranger, we see the attention rendered resembles that of a mother or a lover, not a disinterested passerby. "[Women's] loves have traditionally been to family....These loves are forms of neighbour-love; Christians should not be afraid of admitting that such special loves are more likely to tell us about agape than any others....[Love] for family at its best can serve as a model for other loves...."[71] It is ironic that theologians have in effect designated the private domestic sphere as the place where we should practice love that is disinterested, since family and marital ties are our strongest mutual loves.[72] We in fact do not love others as if they were generic beings interchangeable with anyone else. We care for others for their

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[70]Woodhead, "Love and Justice," p. 48.

[71]Woodhead, "Love and Justice," p. 50.

[72]Christine Gudorf, "Parenting, Mutual Love, and Sacrifice," *Women's Consciousness, Women's Conscience,* Andolsen, Gudorf, Pellauer, eds. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985): 181.

91

unique qualities, and when we find that difficult we can still take our cues for our behaviour from the way we have experienced love in our intimate circle of family and friends.

The suspicion of feminists against the ideal of self-sacrifice, another element of Outka's formula, has already been documented here. Woodhead also challenges the inevitable link between sacrifice and the Christian command to love others for a number of reasons. First, these two concepts should not be equated since it is entirely possible to be sacrificing without being in the least bit loving; the negative connotations of the word "martyr" convey this sense. Secondly, the fact that it is necessary to have a developed sense of "self" to sacrifice is obscured. Self-acceptance does not preclude being loving; indeed, it is a necessary precondition.[73] Another obvious reason to challenge the traditional call to sacrifice is because of the way women have convinced themselves that staying in abusive relationships or other subjugated positions is part of their duty. Moreover, as Linell Cady points out, women are not the only ones to have suffered because of Christianity's complicity in reinforcing inequality through its ideal of sacrificing love.

> By making self-sacrifice the primary criterion of the
> virtuous life, Christianity has given powerful religious
> validation to the situation of oppression. For those who
> lack power and status in a society, there is no
> motivational lever by which equality can be gained when

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[73]Woodhead uses "self-acceptance" to differentiate from the kind of self-love that might shade into pride. Self-acceptance is a gift bestowed on us by others, including God through the transforming work of the Spirit, which enables us to love others. p. 52.

the religious ideal is one of altruistic selflessness.
Indeed, this ideal tends to foster the reverse dynamic:
an inducement to remain subjugated in testimony to one's
disregard for self.[74]

Lastly, self-sacrifice as an ideal is dangerous because it makes

suffering itself essentially part of agape. When love is working

as it should, anything that is required of one on behalf of the

other is counted as joy and not a sacrifice or a burden at all.[75]

Feminist Christian Love: Selves-in-Relation

The traditional understanding of self-sacrifice and agape is

criticized by feminists because it fails to highlight the rela-

tional character of the self and the dynamics of love.[76] Our

conception of personhood needs to be challenged to go beyond iso-

lated self-interested agents where self-sacrifice "comes to be seen

as an end in itself, rather than as a means to the creation of some

other good....Instead of construing love as a feeling or virtue of

an isolated individual, we need to consider it from a relational

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[74]Cady, "Relational Love," p. 140.

[75]Woodhead, p. 53. The connection of agape and sacrifice is
of course based on the suffering sacrifice of Jesus on the cross on
our behalf. The discussion here does not deny that sometimes the
demands of love will involve suffering. What is being challenged
is suffering for the sake of suffering. Beverly Harrison has
stated: "Jesus was radical not in his lust for sacrifice but in his
power of mutuality. Jesus' death on a cross, his sacrifice, was no
abstract exercise in moral virtue. His death was the price he paid
for refusing to abandon the radical activity of love -- of
expressing solidarity and reciprocity with the excluded ones in his
community." "Power of Anger," p. 18. Jesus' goal was not
suffering *per se* but the joy and promise of the resurrection.
Discussion on alternative theological motifs follows below.

[76]Rike, "Lion and Unicorn," p. 232; Cady, "Relational Love,"
p. 140.

perspective in order to understand its motivations and effects."[77] Our self-understanding is changed and more holistic when we integrate mind and body, emotions and rationality. Moreover, we no longer see ourselves over-against others but as overcoming isolation to create community together-with others.   T h i s integrated understanding does not mean sacrifice for the sake of another will never be required.   All relationships involve the negotiation of give and take. What is being criticized is an ethic that has been determined by one party and imposed on another; women insist that they determine for themselves which situations morally obligate them to sacrifice and when they may assert their claims for justice instead of having this defined on their behalf by men who have the economic, cultural and political power.[78]   When sacrifice is seen as a kind of natural feminine virtue, women are robbed of the power to define their own social and moral identity which may serve as the basis of their equality and human dignity.

Part of the task of feminists who look to the Christian tradition as offering some hope in the project of reconstructing our ideals and virtues is to find alternative or overlooked theological motifs which might support this renewed understanding.   Here, only a few of the themes or general approaches will be highlighted; feminists have either worked at specific doctrines of systematic theology, such as re-visioning our perception of the atonement or the trinity, or have looked to discover how taking women's exper-

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[77]Cady, "Relational Love," p. 140.

[78]Andolsen, "Agape," p. 76.

94

ience into account enriches our understanding of Scripture, as in the commandment to love God with all our being and our neighbour as ourselves as illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The critique of the atonement offered by feminist Christian authors targets the emphasis on complete self-sacrifice and the glorification of suffering that have been used to support gendered morality and to counsel women to remain silent and passive even in cases of extreme physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Having a symbol of torture and death like the cross so central to the faith has meant for some women that they could no longer remain in the church. Yet, for many, including women, the cross holds meaning that goes beyond suffering and becomes a symbol of resistance and hope. The cross can embrace the ambiguity and absurdity of the human condition, reminding us of God's incarnation and common experience of suffering with us, pointing beyond to the grounding of hope for the future.[79]

> Feminist theology...'negates' the ideal of sacrifice and selflessness as an ideology of control....Christian feminists try to retrieve [a non-ideological under-standing of sacrifice]. They realize that implicit in such sacrifice is courageous self-determination as it has been practised by the prophets, the reformers and revolutionaries in human history. Implicit in such

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[79]Kathleen Talvacchia, "Contradictions of the Cross," *Christianity and Crisis* 52 (Feb. 17, 1992): 28-9. Monique Dumais notes that for some Latin American Christians, Mary, servant par excellence and model of submission and silence, has also become a figure of liberation. Dumais, however, cannot accept the traditional presentation of Mary because it is used against women without any critique of men and is used to legitimate hierarchical understandings of service. "Must a Theology of Service for Women make them into Second Class Citizens?" in *Women, Work and Poverty*, E. S. Fiorenza, A. Carr, eds. Concilium 194 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Dec. 1987): 102-9.

sacrifice is freedom and self-possession as is practised by people capable of great love, whether they be men or women.[80]

Mary Schertz has begun to think through a new understanding of the atonement that is empowering for Mennonite women by examining the Luke-Acts account.[81] She looks at statements where the verb "it is necessary" (*dei*) appears which explain why Jesus had to die and whether and how his disciples are to follow his example of suffering. Schertz concludes that Luke views the necessity of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in light of the continuity between the kingdom Jesus proclaimed and the story of God's faithfulness to Israel. It is not suffering alone that redeems; while it is clear that suffering can be a consequence of being faithful to the kingdom, it is the mission of God which redeems.

> There is always evil in the world and resistance to the love of God. Likely we will suffer. In that suffering we are to continue in the faith. But that is not victimization....If someone is suffering because she is actively engaged in God's mission...then...such suffering must be defended and supported as redemptive. In that sense, biblical-theology provides a corrective to those types of feminism that have no space for sacrifice.[82]

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[80]Gregory Baum, "Feminism and Christian Theology," *Gender and World Religions* 4 (1993): 13.

[81]Mary H. Schertz, "God's Cross and Women's Questions: A Biblical Perspective on Atonement," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 68 (April 1994): 194-208.

[82]Schertz, "God's Cross," p. 207. Of course, if the suffering is due to injustice, illness, poverty or some other evil, it is not to be glorified or romanticized, and is *not* redemptive. Schertz also makes the interesting comment that Luke does not glorify suffering nor reduce salvation to the cross the way some theories of atonement do. This suggests that the paradigm of rationality which seeks to reduce morality to rules and regulations has also blinded us to more nuanced understandings of biblical theology.

Rachel Reesor has surveyed some other Christian feminist attempts to rethink the atonement.[83] Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel explores a feminist theology of the cross. She speaks of the enigma, mystery, and paradoxical nature of the cross as a symbol of life. The cross speaks of solidarity in suffering and addresses the suffering of structural sin. Moltmann-Wendel warns against ignoring the dark side of God and of the human experience which happens when we stress immanence at the cost of transcendence. Sally Purvis explores dimensions of power. While the cross does not justify suffering, it does not deny it either; the cross stands as a witness to the reality of pain, suffering but also of much love. She notes that traditional theories of atonement have perhaps failed to grasp the full significance of the cross because they seek to ask and answer questions the cross as symbol of God's power does not ask. The third theologian, the Catholic Mary Grey, treats atonement in the broader discussion of redemption. Grey reclaims the strand of "mutuality-in-relation" that Jesus exemplified in a life which led him to the cross; it was not so much that Jesus was punished for the guilt of the world as that his death was the culmination of the way Jesus lived, including a rejection of violence. Instead of images of death, Grey invites us to consider transformative possibilities based on the image of

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[83]Rachel Reesor, "Atonement: Mystery and Metaphorical Language," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 68 (April 1994): 209-8.

birth and creation.[84]

Mary Grey has also used the mutuality of love relationships to re-image our view of the Trinity. She takes as a starting point from both a psychological and philosophical relational perspective the rethinking of transcendence and immanence. Instead of stressing a vertical relationship between the Father-Son and humanity, other New Testament images, such as the organic interdependence suggested by Christ the Vine or the communal Body of Christ could be noted. Grey finds much promise in the feminist reflection on process philosophy:

> [With] a philosophy of the world seen as relational, and the mutual, reciprocal becoming of God and world a prominent feature, the path should be clear for seeing the intrinsic link between a mutual, relational under-standing of personhood and a relational concept of God. In the process vision of reciprocity between God-world it is possible to ground a relational understanding of God, faithful to the psychological strengths of women.[85]

Divine radical relatedness would not be bound by the old gender-bound categories and perspectives of philosophy and theology.

Feminist theologians have found in Jesus' teaching, such as the parable of the Good Samaritan, another rich source of under-standing what selfless love and service means for the believer. While it is true that Jesus' answer to the lawyer's question, "who is my neighbour," given in the context of a discussion on eternal

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[84]Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Jürgen Moltmann, *God: His and Hers* (London: SCM, 1991); Sally Purvis, *The Power of the Cross: Foundations for a Christian Feminist Ethic of Community* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993); Mary Grey, *Feminism, Redemption, and the Christian Tradition* (Mystic: Twenty-Third Publ., 1990).

[85]Mary Grey, "The Core of Our Desire: Re-Imaging the Trinity," *Theology* 93 (Sept/Oct. 1990): 369.

life, includes the lesson that we should be willing to love and help others no matter what their race or creed, when we see what the Samaritan in fact did for the injured stranger, we do not see the actions of a disinterested self following a code of ethics or moral rule book. Indeed, "following the rules" is exactly what justified the priest and Levite passing by and leaving the man to his possible death.[86] Instead, the Samaritan treats the man like a lover or a mother would. Sally Purvis has noted the heuristic value of mother-love for understanding agape; common important features would include its inclusivity, because mothers love all their children "the same" even while recognizing their uniqueness, its involved and other-regarding nature, changing as the needs of the child change, and its unconditional nature which can never be cancelled even if pain, suffering and failed dreams occur.[87] Purvis, and others, would not want to argue that human loves are identical with or equal to divine love, but *in their proper forms* these two-way loves, whether maternal, marital or between friends, can serve as models for agape love. We in fact do not love others generically but for their unique and particular features. When showing love is difficult, such as loving our enemies or strangers, we can still draw on our own experience of love and acceptance to

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[86]An interesting discussion of this parable and others in Luke are found in the works of Kenneth Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* and *Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke*, Combined Ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm Eerdman's, 1976, 1980). According to rabbinic tradition and the rules of defilement, the priest and Levite were not "legally" in the wrong.

[87]Purvis, "Mothers, Neighbours and Strangers," pp. 26-7.

understand what divine love and compassion requires of us. This understanding challenges the understanding of agape as primarily self-sacrificial, stressing its mutuality based on women's experience of loving and which includes a dimension of self-love and -affirmation.[88]

Conclusion

For the virtue of self-sacrifice, as for each of the virtues examined in this thesis, the task of negation and retrieval requires acknowledging both the liberating and the oppressive aspects of this trait. Feminist critics praise women's ability to preserve their families and their children through sacrifice in the face of poverty and institutional barriers to their own self-advancement and -fulfilment, yet decry its imposition and gender-specific application which reinforces those same barriers. Christian women find themselves caught between taking seriously the call to accept sacrifice as a religious value, and having this call used to thwart their efforts to develop their own sense of self, gifts, and calls to ministry.

Liberal paradigms and social theory in the modern era have shaped the expectations placed on women and the virtues they are expected to practice and model, whether in the realm of politics, economics, the family or of religion. The ahistorical view of the split between the public and the private realm masks the inequality

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[88]Purvis, "Mothers, Neighbours," p. 34; Rike, "Lion and Unicorn," p. 230.

and imbalance of power between the sexes, and to the extent that women are associated with the private domestic arena of interpersonal relationships and family, they are denied full social and moral personhood. Values associated with classical liberalism, such as freedom and autonomy, also need to be critiqued and re-evaluated as feminist attempt to define a more relational understanding of the self and to cultivate the value of mutuality.

The valorizing of passive virtues such as self-sacrifice has supported ideological constructions of moral paradigms. Relationships of unequal power are masked when liberalism is allowed to function ideologically, that is, favouring the unencumbered self-interested acts of the public sphere, leaving the care-takers the task of practising altruism even to their own detriment. Traditional understandings and expectations in marriage, and the role of "housewife," whether practised in the home or at a social level, reinforce and are reinforced by social structures which need to be further critiqued, and deeply held world-views need to be questioned.

The nature of altruism has been debated in psychology, moral philosophy and theology. Again, liberal paradigms and binary oppositional thinking has shaped the proposals put forward. Feminist critiques have tended to support views which emphasize the relationship between the one who gives and the one cared for, with the individual who cares retaining a clear sense of self without the debilitating dependence and inferior status which makes authentic sacrifice impossible. Concern for or nurturing of the

self need not rule out authentic action on behalf of others, and indeed losing one's self and denying the freedom granted by God is the real arena of temptation for many women.

The ethic of self-sacrifice and its ideological application which reinforces the marginalized role of women is rooted in our traditional theological formulations and is supported in our western, industrialized society through the liberal paradigms that inform our social, political and economic life. Indeed, our theology has adopted the metaphor of the autonomous individual to describe God as well as the human person. The emphasis on relationship means that paradigms based on, for example, economics, are not appropriate. Instead of the model of self-interested, individualistic selves negotiating minimum conflict with maximum self-gain, feminists propose a mutuality gained from understanding selves relationally. Critics such as Noddings and Gilligan in secular literature or Linell Cady and Mary Grey in Christian feminist theological writings propose exploring relational love, care and mutuality. As Cady has pointed out:

> [Love] is a mode of relating that seeks to establish bonds between the self and the other, creating a unity out of formerly detached individuals....[The] wider life that emerges through the loving relationship between selves does not swallow up individuals, blurring their identities and concerns...[but, on the contrary] the wider life created by love constitutes a community of persons....Self-sacrifice is an abstraction from the largest set of characteristics needed to create, sustain, and deepen the relational life of love.[89]

Certainly sacrifice will be required in the task of furthering

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[89]Cady, "Relational Love," p. 141, 142.

God's kingdom in our troubled and fragmented world, but as a consequence of this work, not as sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice, nor by designating one gender, class or race to be the sacrificers. Unless acts of sacrifice support the establishment of true mutuality, whether between men and women or between race, class or other differences, these acts are not acts of love. The proposals here are not meant to end the discussion but to further stimulate the necessary task of negation and retrieval.

This chapter has examined self-sacrifice as it relates to our construction of moral agency and ideas of personhood, often from a philosophical perspective. The next chapter turns to the virtue of care. In many ways the issues raised in the next chapter will be tied to those concerned with self-sacrifice because women's caring labour in the home and on behalf of society is the arena where the virtue of sacrifice is invoked. Many of the theological critiques and insights related to the virtue of self-sacrifice could easily speak to this next virtue as well. The following chapter will also examine some of the psychological theories of development and their connection to women's morality, as well as looking at some maternal paradigms proposed by secular and Christian feminists.

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104-105

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It is widely accepted that women are encouraged to develop patterns of interacting which are altruistic. To simply state that the practice and virtue of caring somehow comes "naturally" to women, however, does not take into account how social roles are constructed from the complex interactions of socialization which take place in particular political, economic and cultural contexts. Race and class as factors have also been overlooked in the past, even by feminist critics studying women's lives. Our notions of family and understanding of what is entailed by "work" need to be included; "[it] is not possible to understand the structural roots of caring without giving attention to the interrelationship of patriarchy and capitalism, the way they play out in women's labour at home and in the workplace and influence our expectations of the roles and obligations of different family members."[1] Women's work and women's experience have been rendered invisible because women's labour in creating and maintaining life has been subsumed under "nature," whereas the achievements of men's labour are celebrated as "cultural." The oversight extends to our understanding of work and religion.

> When feminist theologians fail to attach theological relevance to women's work and women's poverty, the feminist critique of male theology makes no difference to their acceptance of the male definition of what theology

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[1]Carol Baines et al, "Caring: Its Impact on the Lives of Women," in Baines, Evans, Neysmith, eds., *Women's Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991), p. 20.

'really' is and leaves them still within the confines of the theology they criticize.[2]

The sexual division of labour which reinforces the private/-public split associated with women and men respectively means that the self-images that guide women's thoughts and actions differ from those of men. Feminist theorists like Carol Gilligan have developed models where "women are more inclined to link morality to responsibility and relationships and to their ability to maintain ongoing social ties than are men."[3] Statements in recent years about the differences between men and women, whether biological, cognitive or developmental, usually elicit much controversy, but few debates have had as much academic and popular influence as this challenge by Gilligan, championed by many, that women differ in their moral development, with the implication that certain virtues, such as care, are to be celebrated as "feminine." Support for this position might seen as a reaction to past assumptions that being embedded in relationships is somehow morally inferior, and that moral *difference* implies a claim about moral *worth*.

In this chapter, the meaning and definition of care will be

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[2]Christine Schaumberger, "Sharing and Feeding the Hungry for Bread and Roses," in Fiorenza & Carr, eds. *Women, Work and Poverty*, Concilium 194 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Dec. 1987): 120. While it is to be commended that the editors of Concilium have addressed the issue of women and work in the cited volume, it is interesting that another whole volume devoted to "Work and Religion" (vol. 131) makes no mention of how the work of women or the labour that takes place in the private sphere might have something to say about theology.

[3]Carol Stack, "The Culture of Gender: Women and Men of Colour," in "On *A Different Voice*: An Interdisciplinary Forum," *Signs* 11 (Winter 1986): 321. Reprinted in Larrabee, ed., *An Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993): 108.

explored as it relates to women's lives through their life-cycle and in their work inside and outside the home. The historical, social, and economic location in which caring labour takes place will be noted, as it is at this juncture that institutional and economic relations intersect with our understanding of gender and gender roles such as motherhood and care itself. Proposals for a feminist ethic of care will be discussed, with the contribution of Carol Gilligan's work addressed at greater length given the wide-ranging sphere of its influence. The critique of an "ethic of care" will include examining the temptation to reinforce tradi-tional stereotypes and the persistence of liberal paradigms and assumptions in Gilligan's work. Many women theorists, including theologians, have made maternal thinking and the mother-child relationship a proposal for an alternative paradigm for human and human-divine relationships, which will also be briefly outlined.

The Meaning of Care and Women's Lives

The experience and meanings of care discussed here are shared by some men, but by and large the construction of care has been associated with women who by cultural definition are seen as "na-turally" suited for such activity. The practice of care does not take place in an abstract vacuum but denotes a relational value lived out in concrete relationships within particular social, cultural and economic contexts. Here,

> Care names an ongoing pattern of actions that are design-
> ed to create and sustain positive relationships among
> human beings. The one who acts from a stance of care
> responds to the one-cared-for in a fashion that minimizes

harm, comforts and, to the extent possible, increases opportunities for growth and joy. Therefore, care requires the development of a capacity to discern those responses that most helpfully address the particular needs of specific others involved in a particular configuration of relationships.[4]

While the designation "care" might include many activities, from maintaining a safe shelter for dependents or others, to sustaining kinship connections, to preparing food or to teaching the young, it is not interchangeable with "mothering," although the work of mothering is a central instance and symbol of care.[5] There continues to be a temptation to idealize caring labour and its association with maternal warmth; care, however, need not require enthusiasm, although it does entail responding to the needs of others with attention rather than with indifference or abuse.

Much of the discussion about care is muddied by the failure to

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[4]Barbara H. Andolsen, "Justice, Gender, and the Frail Elderly: Re-examining the Ethic of Care," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 9 (Spr/Fall 1993): 134. Note that this description of care is congruent with the understanding of virtue discussed in chapter one, that is, not relying on propositional rules and norms but on being a certain kind of person, acting on a conception of how to live, selecting and acting on the right concern. See "The Role of Virtue," chapter one above.

[5]Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (New York: Ballantine, 1989): 46. The listed instances of practical caring labour, according to Ruddick, seem to be suffi- cient common to designate such activity as a "practice" in the sense used in moral theory. Ruddick goes on to note some advan- tages to speaking of care more generally. First, "although in many cultures most kinds of caring labour are performed by women, care is not tied to activities of female bodies, as mothering is often mistakenly taken to be." Second, more women are involved in the work of care than are mothers themselves. Thirdly, "caring labour" as exploited work is more effectively highlighted in demands of feminist labour politics, that is in the efforts to secure the autonomy, economic benefits and political powers women need for themselves and their work. *Ibid.*

distinguish between caring *for* and caring *about* another. The latter includes feelings of love or affection, whereas care for, e.g. the frail elderly or dependent children, means tending to physical or practical needs from some sense of obligation which may or may not be based on affection. Caring cannot be reduced to either aspect, the emotional and psychological aspect or "a kind of domestic labour performed on people."[6] A further distinction can be made as to the type of care rendered. The most "one-sided" care is for those who would without such attention suffer or even die, such as young children, the handicapped or the infirm elderly. There is also a "personal service" care for those who could perhaps help themselves but where one partner continues to give more practical help, such as much of the work women do on behalf of able-bodied spouses and older children. Finally there is the kind of support given among friends where power is equal and care is based on mutuality.[7]

Care has become part of the constitution of feminine identity, associated with the intimate and private place of home and family.[8] For women, it has come to define who they are and what they do; for humanity, it is the way society reproduces itself. Care involves real, labour-intensive work which nonetheless remains invisible

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[6]Janet Finch, Dulcie Groves, "Introduction," *A Labour of Love: Women, Work and Caring* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983): 3-4.

[7]Baines et al., "Caring," p. 14-15. The discussion here relates mainly to the first two types, with the understanding that the third, mutuality, anticipates the view of care we wish to retrieve from its ideological entanglements.

[8]Finch & Groves, "Introduction," *A Labour of Love*, p. 3.

since it is unpaid and is hidden behind sentiment and emotion.[9] For instance, when proposed reforms in health services talk about "community care" replacing institutional care, it sometimes seems to be based on some nostalgic idea of people caring for one another, ignoring that such community care is fundamentally dependent on women's availability and their unpaid domestic labour.

> [In] order to find alternatives to a strengthening of community care not based on women having to stick to their traditional family roles, we need a better understanding of both the important changes in the organization of care-giving work which have followed the modernization of society, and the ambiguities in today's social policy concerning the responsibility for the welfare of different groups of dependents.[10]

As discussed in the previous chapter, when considering women's work outside the home, women are often to be found in the so-called "caring professions," which might be described as domestic labour on the behalf of society at large. The preponderance of women in public service is only true in the lower paying positions, however; higher paying administrative, professional level jobs are more often held by men.

The association of care with women begins with the earliest socialization of young girls, and even if its practice remains constant, with each stage of a woman's life-cycle the subject of

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[9]Statistics Canada estimates that for 1992 the unpaid household work in Canada made up 41.4% of the GDP, with an average gross opportunity cost of $14,930 per person, i.e. $16,860 for women and $12,920 for men. The replacement cost of household work was $284.9 billion. "Unpaid Work: Never Done," *The Vancouver Sun*, 22 October, 1994, p. C10.

[10]Kari Waerness, "Caring as Women's Work in the Welfare State," *Patriarchy in a Welfare Society*, ed. Harriet Holter (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1984): 74-5.

111

her attention changes, from the care for young infants in early adulthood, to nursing elderly parents, and if she outlives her partner, possibly tending to an infirm spouse. Many feminist theorists cite the theory of Nancy Chodorow on gender formation, albeit with some critical reservations, to account for the way women are the ones who are, or are thought to be, expert in the practice of relationship values like caring and nurture.[11] Referred to as "object-relations theory," Chodorow argues that mothering cannot be reduced to nature or instinct, but rather it is the result of complicated interactions between social structures and psychological processes where little girls continue to identify with the mother as they grow up but boys must embark on a process of non-identification and separation from the mother. Moreover,

> [Women's] mothering...produces asymmetries in the relational experiences of girls and boys as they grow up, which account for crucial differences in feminine and masculine personality, and the relational capacities and modes which these entail. Women and men grow up with personalities affected by different boundary experiences and differently constructed and experienced inner object-worlds, and are preoccupied with different relational issues. Feminine personality comes to be based...on retention and continuity of external relationships....[Growing] girls come to define and experience themselves as continuous with others....Boys come to define themselves as more separate and distinct-....[Women] remain preoccupied with ongoing relational issues...in a way that men do not....Thus, relational abilities and preoccupations have been extended in women's development and curtailed in men's.[12]

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[11]Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[12]Chodorow, *Reproduction of Mothering*, p. 169. See also "Epistemology and Gender" in chapter one. Carol Gilligan, who is generally cited as someone who has used Chodorow's thesis to

Chodorow is not arguing that men cannot acquire the relational capacities which women have; she does seem to take some account that other factors, like the sexual division of labour and economic forces which have contributed to the modern organization of the family and patterns of parenting, have also helped determine that it is women and not men who mother. To bring about the type of society envisioned by Christian feminist critics and others, further changes would need to be made in primary social models of parenting so that men as well as women are encouraged to learn and value relational virtues.

Critics point out that Chodorow treats gender formation in isolation from the development of race and class identity, although she does imply some interesting connections between these issues. Elizabeth Spelman suggests, however, that she has not gone far enough in exploring the complicated process of becoming gendered, since Chodorow does in fact take sexism as a model for racism and classism in terms of domination.[13] Spelman notes that Chodorow

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support her own work, does raise the critique that object-relations theory preserves the sets of oppositions in Western thought and moral theory, perpetuating the division of psychological labour between men and women. It also means that mothers are cast in the role of "object," (a mirror reflecting her child), implying that insofar as a mother experiences herself as a subject she is "selfish" and not a good mother. Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development," in *Women and Moral Theory*, Kittay & Meyers, eds. (Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987): 29. Jennifer Rike has noted the proposal for a "subject-relations theory." *Encounter* 51 (Sum. 1990): 227-45.

[13]See Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), especially chapter 4, "Gender in the Context of Race and Class: Notes on Chodorow's 'Reproduction of Mothering.'"

leaves unexplained how victims of discrimination are formed psychologically. Boys supposedly learn domination of women and other classes in our differentiated and hierarchical social world. How do white girls, who have identified with their mothers as subjects, learn to treat black or aboriginal girls as "other"? Differences among women or between women and men are as important as their similarities (white woman/black woman, white man/black woman, white woman/black man); there is no such being who is *only* a woman.[14]

The work-role which women enter as they care for their children, their spouses or their employer is constantly being reshaped by their web of social and sexual relationships. "This work-role, moreover, provides the basis on which women negotiate their entrée into these intimate relationships and into the wider structures--of the community, the state and the economy--which surround them."[15] The care for young children is most readily associated with the work assigned to women, but with longer life expectancy and better health care, patterns of caring are shifting to the chronic, not just acute, care for an aging population. All these changes have been accompanied by the increased number of women in the formal labour market, who often then have double burdens undermining their efficiency at home and at work. Not only does this affect women per se, but a growing percentage of younger people from

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[14]Spelman, pp. 100-2.

[15]Hilary Graham, "Caring: a Labour of Love," in *A Labour of Love: Women, Work and Caring*, p. 29-30.

114

disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups are caring for a largely European-American elderly population.[16]

Clearly for women the true cost of caring is high and has been largely ignored. The caring work of women remains invisible and is not properly accounted for when social policy and services are designed. The gendered division of labour means that women are subject to a socially structured dependency--as housewives, mothers, dutiful daughters--which, paradoxically, is the result of *providing* care, not *receiving* care. "For children, and for men, economic dependency and poverty is the cost of being cared for; for women, economic dependency and poverty is the cost of caring."[17] The impact of this dependency is, naturally, felt more by women who are poor to begin with.

There are also concrete costs to women, in the form of lost earnings and pension contributions, who perhaps give up paid employment to care for dependents at home. More than this, however, is the impact of isolation, lack of friends and feelings of being "de-sexed," especially for single women who give up remunerated work. "It is a privatised form of labour and something which women invariably do alone: yet, at the same time, it is the medium through which women are accepted into and feel they belong in the social world."[18] These "opportunity costs" are the result of a

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[16]Andolsen, "Justice, Gender, and the Frail Elderly," p. 133.

[17]Graham, "Caring," p. 24-5. Also Baines & Neysmith, "Caring: Its Impact...," p. 12.

[18]Finch & Groves, "Introduction," p. 8.

complex interaction between two sets of forces, the material conditions at home and in the labour market, and the ideology of women's place which they internalize. Given the latent sexism which continues in the workforce and the perception, not borne out by statistics, that women are more likely to take time off to deal with family matters, the prospects for women's wages and promotions improving remain low. "[Hence], if there is a need for someone to be looked after at home, *it makes sense in material terms and will continue to make sense for the wife to give up her job or reduce her working hours. Thus the ideology of housework and women's place within it has a material impact on women's paid work which in turn serves to reinforce that very ideology.*"[19]

There are also racial and class overtones in the analysis of care in the lives and experiences of women. As stated earlier in connection with Chodorow's thesis, gender issues are not merely parallel to but are intertwined with race and class issues. "It is theoretically significant for any feminist analysis of gender and of sexism if statements that appear to be true about 'men and women' clearly aren't true when we specify that we are talking about men and women of different classes or races."[20] When Aristotle claimed men were superior to women he clearly did not mean *slave* men vis-à-vis *free* women, nor does one assume that a black man will be in a socially superior position to a white woman, even

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[19]Clare Ungerson, "Why do Women Care?" in Finch & Groves, pp. 35-8, author's emphasis.

[20]Spelman, "Gender in the Context," p. 80.

116

in many countries today. It may be that the sexual division of labour and the particular practical tasks of mothering are universally assigned to women, but the "content" of mothering is non-universal, even if we know very little about the effect something like class may have on the practices which also reproduce gender identity. "[If] what children learn in acquiring gender identity is rich enough to explain how they are so psychically ready to assume their place in a hierarchal world, how can it not include an understanding of gender identity appropriate to one's race, class, ethnic group?"[21]

Chodorow tends to write as if the kind of care provided by mothers (i.e., the "content" of mothering) is the same everywhere, a questionable assumption to make. For example, bell hooks has warned against seeing the decision of African-American women to care for family members as some natural phenomenon without the element of choice. Theorists have failed to realize that for African-American women, care for their elders was part of their commitment to the black community.

> The assumption then is that the black woman who works hard to be a responsible caretaker is only doing what she should be doing. Failure to recognize the realm of choice, the remarkable re-visioning of both woman's role and the idea of 'home' that black women consciously exercised in practice, obscures the political commitment

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[21]Spelman, "Gender in the Context," p. 88; 97. Object-relations theory is limited in that it can only account for the characteristics of abstract masculinity in cultures that give excessive privilege to such characteristics, for example to independence. The theory is a product of such a culture. It cannot explain male domination per se since it occurs in societies which do not value independence in the way object-relations theory presumes. Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 268, n. 10.

to race uplift, to eradicate racism, which was the philosophical core of dedication to community and home.[22]

Carol B. Stack is a scholar who questions universal assumptions in women's experience. In her study of black return migrants to the rural South, discussions during interviews reveal that the experiences of black men and women are similar in terms of caste and economic systems, and that there is a convergence in their moral vocabulary. Both men and women speak with force and conviction about the strength and nature of their kinship ties. Stack finds that these voices differ significantly from those on which Gilligan and Kohlberg (discussed below) base their models of relatedness and moral reasoning.[23]

The studies of gender which ignore race and class tend to leave unquestioned the experience of white, middle-class women as typical and normative. For example, the nineteenth century emergence of the "cult of true womanhood," associated with the virtues of piety, purity, domesticity and submissiveness, also served the interests of upwardly mobile middle-class women, since the slogan "a woman's place is in the home" was announced at the same time that an increasing number of poorer women *left* their homes to

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[22]bell hooks, "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance," in *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990): 45, cited in Andolsen, "Justice, Gender...," p. 136.

[23]Carol B. Stack, "The Culture of Gender," pp. 108-11. See also Sandra Harding, "The Curious Coincidence of Feminine and African Moralities: Challenges for Feminist Theory," Kittay & Meyers, *Women and Moral Theory*. Some have suggested that "oppression," not gender, is the common denominator.

become factory workers.[24]   Newly enfranchised women voted in keeping with their race and class interests, not solely on the basis of concerns from the domestic sphere.   Care is socially variable; it is impossible to predict how concepts will be understood across different cultures.   Women also need to listen to the different voices without seeking to assimilate them.[25]

The Context and Construction of Care

The study of care, how care is understood and how it has become associated with feminine identity and domestic activity, has been hampered in part by the binary thinking which is part of the liberal and capitalist legacy of Western culture.   The discussion of caring in scholarly literature is fractured because of the conceptual separation which is maintained between family life, labour market activity, and state responsibility.   The academic disciplines delineate their areas of interest separate from others, and state policy decisions about the needs of children or seniors are restricted to particular population groups without reference to the larger context of how these decisions might affect the caretakers.[26]   The "disciplinary limbo" into which caring falls is further reinforced by the liberal separation of private and public

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[24]Linda Kerber, "Some Cautionary Words for Historians," in *A Ethic of Care*, p. 104.

[25]Sara Ruddick, "The Rationality of Care," in *Women, Militarism and War*, Elshtain & Tobias, eds. (Savage: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990): 238.

[26]Sheila Neysmith, "From Community Care to a Social Model of Care," in *Women's Caring*, p. 273.

spheres.

The confusion between caring *for* and caring *about*, mentioned above, is reflected in the separation of "love," or the study of women's nature and psychology, and "labour," the sociological study of women's work, in social scientific literature.

> The psychological perspective sees caring as the mechanism through which the consciousness of women and men is recreated [over generations]: but as a result, it has tended to ignore the economic and political forces which determine that consciousness in the first place. Conversely, within social policy...[caring]...is reduced to the obligatory transaction of goods and services which occur in the patriarchal family. Caring, here, tends to be defined as an act of female sacrifice and selflessness, not...the primary process through which a sense of self and a sense of self-fulfilment is achieved.[27]

Each perspective is incomplete without the other; both are needed to avoid a reified picture of care. There is the danger that as certain traits are valorized in psychology, the status quo and gender essentialism are reinforced. When care and femininity are defined within the narrow confines of marriage and motherhood, the wider economic forces which ensure dependency and how reproduction in the broad sense is organized in our society is disguised. Caring is more than preserving the nuclear family but extends to a wider web of relationships within the broader community. Gender divisions must always be seen in their connections with political and economic forces but without ignoring the symbolic bonds that hold families and caring relationships together.[28]

The study of care and women's lives is also hampered by the

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[27]Graham, "Caring: a Labour of Love," p. 17.

[28]Graham, pp. 20, 25-6.

theoretical separation of public and private life; indeed, not only do women's caring relationships have a public dimension, the state intervenes at the material and ideological level in the private realm by promoting in its policies particular ideals of family life where women care for and nurture others.[29] The ideological separation of the two spheres supports the "economic man" and marketplace paradigm of the public realm as exempt from obligations of social responsibility, and supports the caring values as sequestered in the home, the antidote to the public sphere rather than as a force shaping it.[30]

In pre-industrialized western society, women were often able to combine their care-giving work with their participation in productive labour. With the growth of industry and waged labour outside the home, the activity of sustaining daily life remained in the invisible private sphere of nature. "The social and spatial separation of production (doing-in-the-workplace) from reproduction (caring-in-the-home) is linked to the rise of capitalism and its attendant separation of 'breadwinners' and 'dependents'...-[although] the logic of capitalism alone does not explain why these divisions coincide with those of gender."[31] The public sphere of

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[29]Finch & Groves, "Introduction," *Labour of Love*, p. 3.

[30]N. Hooyman, "Gender, Caregiving and Equity: A Feminist Perspective," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Council of Social Work Education, 1989, cited by Neysmith, "From Community Care," p. 292-3.

[31]Graham, p. 23. Capitalism is the dominant economic system in western, industrialized nations, but all economic systems, socialism included, shape forms of oppression like patriarchy and the traditional division of labour and roles. Baines et al., "Caring,"

121

politics, culture, and the marketplace were reinforced as the domain of men's activities; the private sphere of domesticity, nature and nurture was left as the domain of women, dependents and the labour of sustaining day to day life. Since women's work is not accredited as being "productive" its significance is overlooked and the idea that caring is the natural work of women is reinforced.

The association of women and nature is made in part because much of the work done to care for young children or disabled adults is bodily care, often unpleasant and messy. There is a temptation to trivialize and dismiss this physical labour and ignore the ethical and moral worth of such activity because of our inherited philosophical tradition which is contemptuous of the body and material life. The isolated nature of much of women's caring labour is unseen, undervalued and its moral achievements in ongoing relationships ignored.[32] Feminist critics seek to challenge the fragmentation between work and love. However, the fact that the ties and relationships sustained by care are a concrete and particular nexus of interpersonal and larger social bonds means that caution also needs to be heeded against slipping into another kind of abstract universalizing phenomenology of care.[33]

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p. 25.

[32]Andolsen writes: "As [Beverly] Harrison has always insisted, we will not benefit from any more theologies or philosophies that view 'the activity of sustaining daily life as mundane and unimportant' ethically. If we ignore or trivialize the ethical importance of consistent bodily care for frail elders, it is the moral achievements of women--the main caregivers--that we render invisible. "Justice, Gender...," pp. 135-6.

[33]Andolsen, "Justice, Gender...," p. 134.

The caring relationships of women in the domestic sphere have a public dimension that certain ideological forces seek to disguise, masking the need to see that social justice is also relevant in this private realm. The socioeconomic constraints experienced by women go beyond anything that might be considered only within the realm of a "private moral choice" to care for others. The description that a woman "chooses" to stay home to care for dependents leaves out any consideration of how real that choice may be under the given circumstances and at what cost. Moreover, the fact that many caring functions have moved outside the home (see below), means that women are constantly interacting and cooperating with these various outside agencies: day-cares, schools, social services, etc., and hence they are connected with the public sphere.

When women enter the public realm of paid employment, they do not necessarily leave behind what has been called "the coercion of privacy;" the paid work available to women is often the market equivalent to her unpaid work at home, as some of the more specialized aspects of caring have been transferred to the service sector and women again find themselves living/acting in response to others.[34] The jobs which have a dimension of care in the public sector are clustered in what has already been referred to above as the "helping" or "caring professions."

> In the after-war period the care-giving work in the
> private and the public sphere respectively, has changed

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[34]Graham is citing an article by T. Dahl and A. Snare in the 1978 work *Women, Sexuality and Social Control*. Graham, p. 27.

in opposite directions in one sense. The increasing intimization of the family, partly due to the shrinking size of family households, contrasts with the change in the care-giving institutions outside the family becoming more and more professionalized. For the individual dependant this means fewer care-givers in the private sphere to give personal help and support, at the same time as public care has become more fragmentary and impersonalized.[35]

Even in the public sphere the virtue of caring remains undervalued. There is a marked contrast between the principles of the general labour force, where good wages supposedly attract good workers, and the resistance to pay for care due to the fear that paying high salaries for something like, for example, foster care, might "attract the wrong type of person."[36] "The difficulty in specifying or creating a 'job description' for caring work, particularly the emotional labour inherent in it, is partly due to the minimal theoretical attention paid to it....[Although] women may be hired for these jobs because of their skills in dealing with people's feelings, they are given no credit for these skills."[37]

Carol Baines has written an article on women's caring in the public sphere, how care has shaped women's public role, and the tension women have experienced in combining caring with professionalism. In particular she has looked at "maternal feminism" and social work, nursing and teaching.

> [Maternal] feminism...[is] the underlying ideology that spurred the movement of women into the public sphere during the first wave of feminism. Determined to play a

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[35]Waerness, "Caring as Women's Work," p. 74.

[36]Neysmith, "From Community Care," p.280-1.

[37]Neysmith, "From Community Care," p. 282.

useful role in a society in flux, women transferred the values and caring functions they had learned and practised within the home and the community to new fields of work. The paradox was that, although maternal feminism provided women with a rationale to work outside the home and served to unite women, it also reinforced the traditional role of women as caregivers.[38]

The movement to the public sphere cannot be described only as women being co-opted into subservient positions by male leaders. Rather, it was an opportunity seized to develop a collective consciousness of themselves as women, separate from men, even though they eventually did begin to model their work on the "male" professions of medicine and law in an effort to gain some social power.

The "new woman" in the late 19th century was, according to Baines, typically middle- or upper-class, who accepted the reality that she was responsible for caring about marginal populations, often meaning poor women and their dependents. The economic and urban transformation of society, including Canada, brought many problems, the solutions to which women saw themselves as qualified to develop. The new institutions and enterprises associated with the reform movement of this era, including the Protestant Church's initiatives and the social gospel movement, facilitated the re-cruitment of women to their new roles. Mission societies, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, new nursing sisterhoods, etc. all had their origins in this era; in promoting an ethic of care women worked as fund raisers, managers, planners and policy-makers. A feminine

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[38]Carol T. Baines, "The Professions and an Ethic of Care," in *Women's Caring*, p. 37.

125

consciousness and solidarity was encouraged, and the replication of a familial division of labour, sometimes under the supervision of clergy or other males, was not seen as problematic.

Baines argues that the efforts to adopt an emphasis on professionalism after the 1920s and the increased recruitment of men to management positions in the caring professions reflected a "male ethos" and affirmation of male-centred values of order, efficiency, and hierarchical development.[39] There currently continues to exist a tension between caring and professionalisation which will not be resolved until more efforts are made to understand how these two factors have defined the work of women and the social and political context in which that work has developed. The minimal first step is to recognize women's caring as work.

Gender, motherhood and care are not naturally occurring roles or concepts divorced from the wider social forces of our society but are constantly shaped and reshaped by those forces. Gender is constructed psychologically and socially, as opposed to sex, which is connected to nature and biology. There are a number of assumptions made in psychology, sociology, anthropology and history which have been used to describe the differences between men and women.

> (1)Men and women differ significantly in their construction of themselves in relationship to others. (2)Women and men experience issues of dependency differently. (3)Women and men experience class differently. (4)Women's work is perceived differently from men's work. (5)Boys and girls experience relationships differently. (6)There is a male and a female model for moral

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[39]Baines, "The Professions," p. 55.

development. Feminist thinking across the disciplines links the construction of gender to these differences or oppositions.[40]

The psychological affinity of caring work with femininity, that is, the work-role allocated to women in the sexual division of labour is the constitutive activity through which women achieve their femininity and against which masculinity takes shape, is documented by Karen Horney, Jean Baker Miller and Nancy Chodorow. Indeed it is *the* organizing principle of the division of work. "'Caring' becomes the category through which one sex is differentiated from the other. Caring is 'given' to women: it becomes the defining characteristic of their self-identity and their life's work. At the same time, caring is taken away from men: not-caring becomes the defining characteristic of manhood."[41] Given the conventional wisdom that women are naturally better suited to parenting and men to waging war, the resistance to assuming/assigning equal responsibility for child-care and to drafting women, feminism becomes in the popular view a rejection of

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[40]Stack, "The Culture of Gender," p. 109. Stack specifically cites Gilligan as one who shares these assumptions and whose work has influenced others to support this view. A more detailed look at Gilligan follows below, but as mentioned above, Stack's own work suggests that these assumptions have not been analyzed deeply enough when accounting for differences of race and class.

[41]Graham, "Caring: A Labour...," p. 18. Graham is citing Chodorow here, who has also used the terms "doing" and "being" to describe the nature of men and women respectively. M. Mead and S. de Beauvoir see this division reflected in the social as well as the sexual arena, as men have to re-earn their sexual identity every day. Graham, p. 19. Also see Chodorow, "Being and Doing: a Cross-cultural Examination of the Socialization of Males and Females," in *Women in Sexist Society*, eds. Gornick & Moran (New York: Basic Books, 1971): 173-97.

femininity, since it is seen as representing the belief that both men and women can raise children and go to war.[42]

It should be noted again that there are men who also do caring labour. However, the way this work is evaluated and the "opportunity cost" to men is not the same as for women. Men tend to have more choice about the caring work they do, they are not held to some male equivalent of "maternal bonding," they are more easily able to separate the caring *about* from the caring *for* since they are more often able to pay for help. Men are praised for going beyond the call of duty when they take on familial responsibilities, whereas even if women are lauded it is still "expected" of them; it is assumed the cost is higher for the man when he gives up employment because his wages tend to be higher. Women are socialized to help which seems to remove the element of choice in decision-making and any consequent claim to moral worth.[43]

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[42]Wendy Kaminer, "Feminism's Identity Crisis," *The Atlantic Monthly* vol. 272 no. 4 (October, 1993): 56.

[43]Baines et el., p. 22; Neysmith, p. 294. Phyllis Mack has written an interesting article about three radical religious movements which share the fact that their respective leaders and adherents were ascribed with feminine characteristics. Francis of Assisi was known for his gentleness and domesticity, Gandhi spun cloth and fussed over his family's diet and was called *Bapu* (my mother), and the early Quakers whose missionaries were called "Mothers in Israel." Using the typology of Victor Turner, she proposes a way of overcoming the polarity in describing human behaviour as male or female. These three movements/leaders "sought spiritual salvation and social reform by focusing on domestic virtues and personal relationships rather than formal public authority, church organization, or monastic rule, and by adhering to a fluid strategy of negotiation and self sacrifice....[they] raised the principle of interrelatedness of all people to a higher level in that they succeeded in projecting the personal, affective relationships of everyday existence to the public sphere." "Feminine Behaviour and Radical Action," *Signs* 11 (Spring 1986):

How gender is constructed, however, also needs to be critiqued if implicit ideological and essentialist assumptions are to be questioned instead of reproduced under different guises. Caring work and definitions of femininity must be seen in a context broader than traditional, heterosexual, middle-class confines; social and economic forces affect equally smaller family groups and the larger community. The being/doing distinction "masks the way in which the categories through which we define gender are social constructs and not psychological entities. What counts as caring is determined as much by who does it as by what is done."[44] Graham cites Janet Sayers who argues that psychological accounts of women's role tend to seek to assert the value not only of caring but of femininity itself; the popular assumption that men and women enjoy "equality in difference" can slip easily into supporting the ideological justification of women's subordination.[45]

The construction of gender and femininity is associated not only with the ethic of care, but also an ideology of motherhood. Chodorow's thesis partly explains how relational norms and values that are associated with maternal work are transmitted, but as

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469. Of note here and in connection with the next chapter on peace, Ruddick in "Pacifying the Forces," (*Signs* 8 (Spring 1983): 479) comments: "It is interesting to explore the maternal identifications of male pacifists and anti-militarists. Gandhi, Wilfred Owen, André Trocme, and Randall Jarrell are each examples is different ways, of 'maternal men.'"

[44]Graham, p. 20-1.

[45]Sayers, "Psychoanalysis and Personal Politics: a Reply to Elizabeth Wilson," *Feminist Review* 10 (1982): 91-5, cited by Graham, p. 22. See also Ruth Smith, "Moral Transcendence and Moral Space," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4 (Fall 1988): 23.

stated above, it cannot tell us why they have attached themselves to women and not men.[46] There may be more vocational options for women in today's society, but the choice is almost always described over against accepting or rejecting the traditional role of wife and mother.

The idealization of women's nurturing "nature" and maternal qualities are linked with women's reproductive capacity, an image which is increasingly disparate from the ordinary experience of women and men.[47] Cahill notes that the feminist emphasis on embodiment as a tool of critique proves a double-edged sword in this matter since the reproductive capacity of women has also grounded the stereotypes. It is virtually impossible to untangle the biological "givens" of reproduction from the elaborate symbol systems and institutions through which their human meaning is transmitted.[48]

Moreover, motherhood in practice is sometimes full of disorder and messiness, quite different from the romanticized image of the "perfect mother" which holds sway under patriarchy. "Joint idealization of disinterested love and self-sacrificing motherhood

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[46]Baines et al., p. 19.

[47]This is the critique raised by Catholic feminists who have studied church documents on women's roles such as the papal statement *Mulieres dignitatem*. Lisa S. Cahill, "Current Theology," *Theological Studies* 51 (March 1990): 49. Kohn-Roelin notes that the bourgeois and religious ideal of motherhood also works against working, lesbian, and unmarried women. "Mother-Daughter-God," *Motherhood: Experience, Institution, Theology*, Carr & Fiorenza, eds., Concilium 206 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Dec. 1989): 66.

[48]Cahill, "Current Theology," p. 53.

130

creates virtues impossible to achieve; worse, it completely distorts relationships between parent and child, mother and father."[49] The experience of mothering is not straightforward but ambivalent; the child is nurtured but also experiences denial and separation. The more disparity between a mother's social position of powerlessness and the sometimes enormous influence she seems to have in the private sphere, the more mythical and irrational maternal power appears to the child and to the mother herself.[50] The private, conflict-free, idealized home and family is a powerful image that has at times hidden the existence of abuse from public acknowledgement.

Gilligan: Women's Moral Development and the Ethic of Care

The oppositions between maleness and femaleness continue to invite research in psychology, anthropology, sociology and other disciplines addressed by feminist critics. The debate which has had the most far-reaching influence in academic and popular circles is the study of moral development associated with Lawrence Kohlberg and its critique by Carol Gilligan.[51] By outlining some of the

[49]Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Epistemology or Bust," *Journal of Religion* 72 (April 92): 236.

[50]Ursala Pfäfflin, "Mothers in a Patriarchal World," *Motherhood*, p. 18.

[51]There is at least one other work which is often cited by critics who wish to counter the traditional emphasis on justice and rights with an emphasis on relationship and care, the work by Nell Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). (See chapter 2 "Agape and Altruism: Some Proposals" above). Briefly, Noddings

features of this important debate, issues related to an understanding of care, morality and women's lives will also be highlighted.

Supporters of Carol Gilligan's work hail it as evidence which bolsters the popular wisdom that, given the different respective views and constitutions of the self, women and men "think" differently about ethical problems. Male moral development is linked to fairness, rights and rules, and male identity is forged in relation to the external world as men strive for personal autonomy. "In Gilligan's model, women are more inclined to link morality to responsibility and relationships and to their ability to maintain ongoing social ties than are men. They achieve power and prestige through caring for others...."[52] Many women felt that finally their experience was validated and backed up by scientific study.

The storm of debate which the Kohlberg-Gilligan studies eli-

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takes as ontologically basic the relationship between the one-caring and the one-cared-for, and maintains that the affective response in a relationship is the heart of the moral life. For Noddings, the experience of caring in motherhood proves that the impulse to care is natural/innate and available to everyone since we are either mothers or have been one-cared-for by our mothers. When the impulse to care fails us we still have recourse to the ethical ideal of caring. A number of concerns connected to this model should be noted. The ideal is presented as abstract without reference to the social conditions under which caring is practised; it is the ideal of the powerless. Moreover, it overlooks the human tendency to refuse to care, whether for other people or in wider issues of economic justice or environmental threats. See Mullet in *Feminist Perspectives*, Held in *Women and Moral Theory* and Housten in *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory* for more critique of Noddings. To read someone who has built on Noddings with the goal of also listening to the voice of justice, see Rita Manning, "Just Caring," in *Explorations in Feminist Ethics*.

[52]Stack, "The Culture of Gender," p. 108.

cited has virtually produced a mini-publishing industry all on its own. Numerous conferences and panels have taken Gilligan's work, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982), as the subject of their study. Some of the negative criticism has come from developmental psychologists, but it has also come from within the broader feminist critique, although these counter-arguments have not received the same wide dissemination in the popular arena outside more academic circles.[53]

In the 1960s, Kohlberg and his colleagues began publishing works that claimed to trace developmental changes in moral reasoning. The stage development paradigm was modeled on the cognitive development studies of Piaget. Originally, Kohlberg distinguished six universal levels of moral reasoning; the number of levels has been modified and the Piagetian stages have been softened to chart adult moral development. The highest level remains a hypothetical ideal (Jesus and Gandhi are said to have attained this level). The levels indicate developmental progress, with stage 3 or 4 (depending on how the stages are delineated) marking the first, conventional stage of adult moral reasoning (concern

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[53]Kaminer, "Feminism's Identity Crisis," p. 59. Kaminer coins the term "Gilliganism" to describe what she calls a modern-day version of Victorian True Womanhood which pays tribute to women's allegedly superior nurturing and relational skills and their general "ethic of caring." Since there is some anxiety around the notion that advocating feminist ideas will be interpreted as a rejection of or a compromise of female sexuality, at least for heterosexual women, Kaminer and others speculate that Gilligan's work which valorizes women's separate emotional sphere helps make it possible for feminists to be angry at men and challenge their hegemony without feeling unwomanly. The idealization of motherhood reduces popular feminism to the notion that "women are nicer than men." p. 62.

with maintaining bonds of trust, striving to be a "good" person),

and the higher level(s) marking moral reasoning which takes a more

"societal" account of justice and the good of society. In general,

the stages are marked by greater abstraction. New stages do not

supplant lower levels, but evidences of higher level thinking are

considered the more mature.[54]

Many critics have noted that Kohlberg's theory identifies

moral progress with ever closer approximations to the justice

tradition of Locke, Kant and Rawls. Indeed, Kohlberg has received

much attention from philosophy due to his attempt to wed descrip-

tive psychology with prescriptive ethical analysis.[55] Gilligan,

a colleague of Kohlberg at Harvard, noted that women seemed to

remain at level three (conventional reasoning) more often than

men. Through her studies beginning in the late 1970s she concluded

that this was due to the androcentric coding system used by Kohl-

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[54]C. Greeno & E. Maccoby, "How Different is the 'Different Voice'?" in Larrabee, p. 194. Colin Grant, "Why Care? The Basis and Implications of Care Morality" *Studies in Religion* 24 (Summer 1995): 337-9. The work by Piaget which has strongly influenced Kohlberg is his *The Moral Judgement of the Child* (1932), but Kohlberg extends Piaget by separating judgement from action, making moral development a matter of cognition alone. Gilligan critiques Kohlberg here because he relies on presenting hypothetical moral dilemmas leaving the ethical as an ideal. When context of de-cision-making is taken seriously, she argues, action becomes central and an orientation to care emerges. Darlene Ehinger, "Toward an Ethic of Mutuality," *Sewanee Theological Review* 36 (Pentecost 1993): 404. However, Gilligan and Kohlberg can both be critiqued in that they both base their studies on how people *describe* their moral response, not on how people have *in fact* acted.

[55]Some would even go so far as to read him as a disguised apology for a form of Kantian-Rawlsian ethical theory. Owen J. Flanagan, Jr. "Virtue, Sex, and Gender: Some Philosophical Re-flections on the Moral Psychology Debate," *Ethics* 92 (April 1982): 499.

berg (the studies he used to develop his theory used all male subjects), and that women were not in fact less mature in their moral reasoning, but rather women followed a different path of development which the standard model failed to detect and/or validate. If the Kohlberg model could be described as an "ethic of justice," the alternative model proposed by Gilligan was an "ethic of care."

Gilligan supports the suggestion that due to the early experiences of childhood, girls and boys are socialized differently and hence are guided by different views of the self. These differences are reflected in "the images of hierarchy and web, drawn from the texts of men's and women's fantasies and thoughts, [which] convey different ways of structuring relationships and are associated with different views of morality and self."[56] The web analogy is often used in describing women's immersion in a network of relationships in contrast to the liberal ideal of autonomous, solitary actors in society which is associated with the hierarchical model.

> The contextuality, narrativity and specificity of women's moral judgment is not a sign of weakness or deficiency, but a manifestation of a vision of moral maturity that views the self as a being immersed in a network of relationships with others. According to this vision, the respect for each other's needs and the mutuality of effort to satisfy them sustain moral growth and development.[57]

In order to form another way of looking at moral development,

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[56]Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Harvard: University Press, 1982): 62.

[57]Seyla Benhabib, "The Generalized and Concrete Other," in *Feminism as Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987): 78.

135

Gilligan initially used three studies, relying on interviews and including the same set of questions in each study about conceptions of self and morality and about experiences of conflict and choice. A college student study included 25 students selected at random from a second year university course on moral and political choice who were interviewed as seniors and then five years after graduation. A second study interviewed 29 women, ranging from 15 through 33 years of age, who were referred during their first trimester of pregnancy at a time when they were considering an abortion. Twenty-one of the women were interviewed again one year later. The third study involved a sample of male and females matched for age, intelligence, education, occupation, and social class across nine points on the life cycle for a total of 144 subjects, with 36 being interviewed in more depth.[58]

Gilligan's theory of a care perspective can be described as a six stage series [divided into three levels of development] which mirror the six levels of Kohlberg's theory. The first level (containing two stages) is the "pre-conventional," which focuses on individual survival with a transition advancing from selfishness at stage one, to a more responsible perspective in stage two. The second, "conventional" level focuses on care and conformity and a desire to please others. At stage three (the initial stage of this level) caring for others, frequently equated with self-sacrifice, is considered good. The transition to stage four marks the ability to distinguish goodness from truth, as the illogic of the

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[58]Gilligan, *Different Voice*, pp. 2-3.

136

inequality between the self and the other becomes evident. In the "post-conventional" level the individual finally takes care as a self-chosen principle, recognizing the interdependency of the self and the other, and condemning exploitation and hurt.[59] Like Kohlberg's model, progress through the stages marks an increasingly more mature stance.

The ideological understanding of care discussed in previous sections would correspond to Gilligan's second (conventional) level of moral development. Here,

> a woman's sense of what is good is completely intertwined with taking care of others. Disguising the passivity of dependence through the activities of care, the woman at this stage believes she is motivated only by her sensitivity to the needs of others. But underlying her caretaking is the hope that she will be loved and protected in return. This is a hope that she tries to ensure by being "extra good," by nurturing, but also by being submissive, compliant, and self-sacrificing.[60]

When she makes the transition from stage three to stages four and five, she begins to become aware of her own needs and abilities. She chooses actions which balance her responsibilities to others with those to herself.

Contrary to Kohlberg's central focus on justice and rights, Gilligan's alternative places relationships as a central moral consideration. Moral reasoning is permeated by "contextual rela-

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[59]The above outline is taken from the introduction to *Women and Moral Theory* (Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987): 7-8 by Diana Meyers and Eve Kittay. I have not come across such an exact description of 6 stages by Gilligan herself, although she does give a general outline of the three levels on p. 105 *A Different Voice*.

[60]Sharon Berlin & Craig Johnson, "Women and Autonomy," *Psychiatry* 52 (Feb. 1989): 92.

tivism," that is, with a greater sensitivity to the details of a situation.[61] "Self" and "other" are particular, not general and abstract. Moral decisions can, indeed must, be informed by care, love, empathy and compassion as well as cognition. Instead of considering right actions as applicable to all, Gilligan has a notion of "appropriate response," which can still carry universalistic implications since care and responsibility can presumably provide non-subjective standards by which the appropriateness of a particular response can be evaluated. Considering actions on the basis of care does not imply that a particular response would be the "right" action for everyone in that situation, however.[62]

The role of justice in Gilligan's theory, and how strongly the perspectives of care and of justice are tied to female and male gender respectively, are not consistently reported by her critics. Some writers present the connection between women and care as almost essentially connected, whereas others are quick to point out that both men and women use, or are capable of using, care language to describe moral dilemmas and their solutions. Indeed, Gilligan's writings can be read, and are read, to support a spectrum of views. At a conference in March 1985 to discuss Gilligan's work, "Women and Moral Theory," later published as a book, Gilligan herself tried to clarify some of these questions. On the relationship between justice and care she writes:

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[61]Marilyn Friedman, "Care and Context in Moral Reasoning," in *Women and Moral Theory*, p. 191.

[62]Lawrence Blum, "Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for Moral Theory," in Larrabee, *An Ethic of Care*, p. 50-2.

138

> Like the figure-ground shift in ambiguous figure perception, justice and care as moral perspectives are not opposites or mirror-images of one another, with justice uncaring and care unjust. Instead these perspectives denote different ways of organizing the basic elements of moral judgment: self, others, and the relationship between them. With the shift in perspective from justice to care, the organizing dimension of relationship changes from inequality/equality to attachment/detachment....so that the images or metaphors of relationship shift from hierarchy or balance to network or web.[63]

In a reply to critics published in an interdisciplinary forum in the journal *Signs* (reprinted in Larrabee, *An Ethic of Care*), Gilligan reiterates from the introduction of *In a Different Voice* that she was writings about a *different* voice, not a *woman's* voice, that the moral perspective she describes is identified by theme and not by gender. "[The] contrast 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."[64] "Thus the care perspective in my rendition is neither biologically determined nor unique to women. It is, however, a moral perspective different from that currently embedded in psychological theories and measures, and it is a perspective that was defined by listening to both women and men describe their own experience."[65] Yet it is very clear that Gilligan does want to say something about women, about women's psychology and about women's moral development:

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[63]Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development," pp. 22-3.

[64]Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, p.2; "Reply to Critics," in Larrabee, p. 209.

[65]Gilligan, "Reply," in Larrabee, p. 209.

> My work offers a different perspective, on psychology and on women. It calls into question the values placed on detachment and separation in development theories and measures, values that create a false sense of objectivity and render female development problematic. My studies of women locate the problem in female development not in the values of care and connection or in the relationship definition of self, but in the tendency for women, in the name of virtue, to give care only to others and to consider it "selfish" to care for themselves. The inclusion of women's experience dispels the view of care as selfless and passive and reveals the activities that constitute care and lead to responsiveness in human relationships.[66]

The disclaimer of Gilligan's introduction is never repeated in the text of *In a Different Voice*, and statements such as the one above allows one to see why those writers who hail Gilligan's work consistently link women with care and men with justice, and why those feminist critics who fear a return to oppressive stereotypes and the temptation of female essentialism are at times uneasy with Gilligan's work, even if the virtue of care and women's experience are acknowledged to be neglected and in need of (nonideological) retrieval.

Justice and Care: The Righteousness of Abraham or the Wisdom of Solomon?

Owen Flanagan is a theorist who has used Gilligan in his critique of Kohlberg's claims about philosophy and moral development, in particular Kohlberg's move from descriptive to prescriptive claims that research on "sex" and virtue seems to challenge. Flanagan calls upon two biblical accounts, Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac and the women who come before Solomon with the

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[66]Gilligan, "Reply," in Larrabee, p. 213.

child they both claim, which he feels illustrate that our culture promotes and respects different styles of moral reasoning and attention to different moral problem areas for men and women, and which show that there are "family resemblances" between sexually differentiated biblical conceptions of morality and those which our society prescribes.[67] Acknowledging that there are many interpretations of the tale of Abraham, Flanagan proposes a secular version of the traditional one:

> Solomon's wisdom...consists in this: he generated a seemingly infallible criterion for maternity by sheer force of psychological insight into the nature of motherhood....I suggest that we read the story of Abraham as a story about ultimate value--as a story extolling the highest stage of morality, where "principle" always wins out in conflicts with even the strongest affiliative instincts and familial obligations....Principled morality is portrayed biblically as the special virtue of males, and affiliative, context-sensitive morality as the special virtue of females....[The] moral orientation of males [in the bible] is clearly superior, Abraham, after all, is the father of all Israel. The women in Solomon's tale do not even have names.[68]

The discussion of justice and care in the Kohlberg-Gilligan argument which is taken up by its various critics is important for

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[67]Flanagan, "Virtue, Sex and Gender," pp. 500-02; "A Reply to Lawrence Kohlberg," p. 529. Gilligan also raises the discussion of Abraham in the context of outlining Erik Erikson's view of Gandhi; both men, in the limitations of their fatherhood, stand in contrast to the woman before Solomon who is willing to relinquish the truth in order to save the life of her child. *Different Voice*, pp. 104-5.

[68]Flanagan, "Virtue," pp. 500-02. It should be noted that Kohlberg differs with Flanagan and places Abraham only at the conventional reasoning stage four, that is, action which is based on reasoning that the morally right is defined by authority, in this case, God. "A Reply to Owen Flanagan...," *Ethics* 92 (April 1982): 520. Flanagan counters that Kohlberg has missed his point about the general affinity styles of reasoning have to gender associations as promoted by our culture.

141

helping us articulate what we mean by our terms and to identify the extent of the feminist challenge to traditional canons of philosophy, psychology, anthropology and moral thinking. Before turning to some of the criticisms levelled against Gilligan or the ethic of care perspective generally, some of the positive contributions arising from this debate which aid our task of retrieval and transformation will be outlined.

First, the discussion of Gilligan's work has prodded thinkers to take seriously concerns and spheres of activity not previously considered, at least not at any great length. In the past, women as moral actors have either been elevated so high that femininity becomes an unrealizable ideal or, more commonly, denigrated as deficient against alleged universal standards or dismissed as possessing a complementary but ultimately inferior virtue. Women's experience has become a resource for moral theory, whether these insights become the basis for a new, comprehensive theory incorporating justice and care, or the basis for an independent theory with women's concerns at its core.[69]

Second, the degree and extent of the gender gap is discussed and debated in endless volumes, but even if none exists, "a substantial bias in Kohlberg's framework seems to have been uncovered by Gilligan's work, not necessarily a bias toward male moral reasoning, but a bias toward certain particular moral considerations that comprise only a part of the whole range of our moral

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[69]Meyers & Kittay, "Introduction," *Women and Moral Theory*, pp. 13-14.

reasoning."[70]   Indeed, there is no reason to rule out *numerous* philosophically and psychologically distinct voices; even together, care and impartiality do not encompass all there is to morality, moral maturity or moral excellence/virtue.[71]

The care perspective broadens and enlarges the discussion of moral dilemmas; no one is saying that justice is not important. Indeed, "[it] remains to be seen whether the concrete reasoning style emphasized in the care literature can be turned to complex social and economic structures without loss of explanatory power."[72]   What is being challenged is the priority of justice and sole reliance on universal principles. On the one hand, social justice issues must remain in view to ensure care-givers are not burdened with harmful self-sacrificial expectations by family members or society; on the other, caring for particular persons plays a role in knowing *how* to apply principles and what form caring will take. The qualities of character and sensibility which the particularized, caring understanding of morality promotes are themselves morally significant and vital to adequately meet the needs of others.[73]   The dilemma is revealed to be not the tension between self and universal so much as the artificial division between self and all others. The feminist emphasis on particular

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[70]Friedman, "Care and Context," p. 192.

[71]Lawrence Blum, "Gilligan and Kohlberg," in Larrabee, *An Ethic of Care*, p. 58.

[72]Andolsen, "Justice, Gender...," p. 141.

[73]Blum, "Gilligan and Kohlberg," p. 59-60.

143

selves-in-relation with particular others in actual contexts refocuses the organization of moral thought. Sometimes, although certainly not always, considerations of justice and rights are and should be over-ridden by the considerations of special relationships.[74]

Third, when relationality and human sociality are emphasized as the feminist perspective has advocated, a new understanding of justice, care and mutuality can work together. Indeed, "[without]...cares and attachments, first to those one loves and secondarily to some wider community to which one's projects and prospects are intimately joined, the moral disposition to justice--as opposed to the purely prudential dispositions to justice--has no place to take root."[75] A justice ethic has historically been important for many liberation movements, and remains an important component for feminists, including religious feminist ethicists grounded in the biblical and theological tradition of justice.[76]

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[74]Marilyn Friedman tests this proposal by asking the reader to consider a series of variations on the classic Heinz dilemma [is a man justified in stealing a drug to save his dying wife]. What if we change Heinz to a woman and the druggist is a woman, would the two women talk and work something out? What if the person in need was not a spouse but a sympathetic stranger? This latter consideration makes us realize that we have presumed that the husband's response arises out of his particular relationship to his wife. "Considerations of justice and rights do not necessarily lead to the conclusion that we owe all persons the special treatment that is due to our families and friends. It may not be 'fair'; but, as I have been trying to suggest, fairness may not be our only moral concern." "Care and Context in Moral Reasoning," in *Women and Moral Theory*, p. 199.

[75]Owen Flanagan; Kathryn Jackson, "Justice, Care and Gender," in *An Ethic of Care*, p. 78.

[76]Ehinger, "Toward an Ethic of Mutuality," p. 400.

Justice needs care in situations where the relationship between persons or institutions is unequal so that the solution is not merely a promotion of the weaker party to give the appearance of, but not the reality of, equality. Liberal rules alone do not protect the young, feed the starving or ensure an education for the next generation.[77] Likewise, as we have been reminded above, the potential exploitation of women in caring relationships means that justice continues to be an important safeguard against enforced self-sacrifice on the part of women.[78]

The debate over Gilligan's thesis and the ethic of care generally has provoked a much needed challenge to traditional accounts of moral theory and of women's psychology and social location. The difference between "care" and "justice" is not singular but involves numerous issues: the relation between abstract reasoning and concrete dilemmas, the relation between rational and emotional processes in moral reasoning, the question of what constitutes objectivity/impartiality and its necessity, and the connection between the right and the good.[79] Many, however, have voiced their concerns and critiques; some claim that Gilligan has not gone far enough to disentangle her claim from the liberal paradigms and

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[77]Annette Baier, "The Need for More than Justice," in *Science, Morality and Feminist Theory*, p. 53.

[78]A number of writers have proposed an integrated ethic of justice and care, often under the term mutuality. For example, see Ehinger, cited above, or Robin Dillon, "Care and Respect," in *Explorations in Feminist Ethics*, Cole & McQuin, eds. (Bloomington: University Press, 1992): 69-81.

[79]Crysdale, "Gilligan and the Ethics of Care," p. 23.

145

assumptions also found in Kohlberg, others that she is in danger of going too far in her assertion of women's virtues and thereby reinforcing the very stereotypes which have served to marginalize and oppress women. A brief outline of some of the critiques follows here.

One group of criticisms levelled against Gilligan has to do with matters of empirical data, research methodology and the way conclusions were drawn from her studies. Studies are produced which say yes, women are more likely to choose a more "caring" response to moral dilemmas, while others show men and women are equally likely to choose a justice or a care response depending on the moral question under consideration, that is a "personal" situation will more likely draw a care orientation response and an "impersonal" situation a justice consideration.[80] Indeed, John Broughton has pointed out that in Gilligan's own transcripts of the interviews conducted, one of the subjects interviewed at greater length (#63) who is often cited in support of the values and beliefs Gilligan associates with women, also uses "rational" concepts attributed more often to men, and male subject #32 seems to espouse an ethic of responsibility in his response.[81]

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[80]Lawrence Walker, a professor at the University of British Columbia, has written extensively to counter the empirical evidence supporting Gilligan's thesis. See Walker's "Sex Differences in the Development of Moral Reasoning: A Critical Review" in *An Ethic of Care*, as well as the other bibliographic entries in that volume. Also, Crysdale, "Gilligan and the Ethics of Care: An Update."

[81]John Broughton, "Women's Rationality and Men's Virtues," in *An Ethic of Care*, pp. 116-18 et passim. Gilligan, of course, admits in her introduction and in articles defending her work that men also use the care orientation in their moral deliberations, but

Related to the empirical critique are the concerns about whether the number of subjects studied is adequate and how the responses are presented.[82] Zella Luria, for one, complains that Gilligan's sample specification is inadequate to justify her group characterizations and that there is not enough information on how the various responses were categorized. Moreover, there is no matching study for men to the complement the abortion study and women; the very nature of the dilemma on whether to have an abortion is quite particular to women.[83] When pressed, Gilligan has given more information to assure her critics that her subjects were matched for age and education, but questions are still raised whether this is enough to erase other socio-economic, racial, ethnic and religious differences.[84]

Broughton implies that the data presented in the body of her work reports a consistent gender difference. This is an example which illustrates some of the confusion which emerges in this debate as to how far Gilligan wants to argue the association between women and care.

[82]Bill Puka writes: "[Gilligan's] writings do not illustrate the holistic structure or functioning of care levels in any *one* respondent. Rather Gilligan reconstructs the care sequence of development *conceptually* in her book, by glimpsing a small interval of development in eight respondents. Care at each level, and as a general orientation, is presented as a reconstructed composite of responses across respondents." "The Liberation of Caring," *An Ethic of Care*, p. 236.

[83]Zella Luria, "A Methodological Critique," *An Ethic of Care*, pp. 199-203.

[84]Gilligan, "Moral Orientation," in *Women and Moral Theory*; Sharon Meagher, "Histories, Herstories and Moral Traditions," *Social Theory and Practice* 16 (Spring 1990): 73; n.22 p. 83. Meagher reiterates the problem in feminist theory generally when differences are glossed over because it tends to give priority to white, heterosexual, middle-class women, who, as it turns out, make up most of Gilligan's research subjects.

One of the most serious dangers, of course, is that old stereotypes and essentialist assumptions about women and women's culture will be reinforced by those citing Gilligan's study. The development of gender as it interacts with the complex relation of other factors of life is still not fully understood. Certainly women have a greater reputation for altruism and empathy, and the sexual division of labour reinforces the tendency for women to find themselves concerned with their relationships with and care for particular others. However, there is no area of human thought and action or feeling where the two sexes are entirely distinct.[85] Gilligan does say she is not making a biologically determined ascription of certain virtues to women, but too many of her other statements lend themselves too easily to just such a romantic view of women's nature.[86]

One of the contributions of the "different voice" discussion mentioned above is the way that a new understanding of justice and care might work together. How Gilligan herself understands these two concepts, however, has not always satisfied her critics. In part, this can be attributed to Gilligan's lack of critical reflection on her own assumptions which are in keeping with the

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[85]Greeno & Maccoby, "How Different," p. 197.

[86]Paul Lauritzen writes: "When human emotions are considered to be biologically determined, when emotions are thought to stand outside of, and to be immune to, cultural prescription, it is a very short step from saying that women are emotionally more caring and compassionate to saying that women have no choice but to occupy caring and nurturing roles and that such roles require little in the way of rational intelligence." "Reflections on the Nether World," *Soundings* 75 (Sum/Fall 1992): 393.

very liberal tradition she seeks to critique. Gilligan has assumed the public/private split without locating it in its social, political, historical and economic context and thereby not challenging the terms themselves.

> [Gilligan's research subjects] recognize themselves as social, that is, their interpersonal relationships are important and make a difference in the way they make moral decisions. But Gilligan's care morality tends to neglect the impersonal or social context that situates or qualifies all special relations....The political difficulty in Gilligan's story stems from the silencing of those voices which have predominated in the public domain, and from situating of those voices we do hear in a context emptied of its social/political circumstances.[87]

Not only does Gilligan not challenge the "male voice" but she glosses over the tones of anger and frustration in her subject's reports, i.e., silencing the voice of anger so the voice of care might be heard. Meagher asks: "To what extent is [the construction of the 'woman's voice'] a replication of certain exclusionary patterns present in the dominant narrative of sexist, racist, class society?"[88]

Gilligan describes the relationship between justice and care like an ambiguous face-vase or duck-rabbit drawing, denoting different ways of organizing the basic elements of moral judgement. Flanagan and Jackson suggest this may be misleading in that, just as not all visual stimuli are ambiguous, not all moral issues are so open to alternative construals. It may be impossible to see the

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[87]Meagher, "Herstories," pp. 71, 72.

[88]Meagher, "Herstories," p. 73. See also "The Feminist Critique" in chapter 1 above on the relationship between private and public.

duck and the rabbit at the same time, but it is not impossible to see both issues of justice and care in moral problems and to integrate these two approaches. "It is the differences in origin and underlying cognitive and motivational structure which make integration of the two orientations in particular moral agents hard to realize and which, at the same time, explain the data on gender differences."[89]

Gilligan remains tied to assumptions she shares with Kohlberg. Neither Gilligan nor Kohlberg in their analysis of the Heinz dilemma come up with an answer that threatens the status quo of liberal society, for example examining the wider implications of how social justice plays a role in the delivery of health care, etc.[90] Nor does Gilligan challenge the fact that Kohlberg links moral development with a model of cognitive ability. Moral conceptions are essentially different from the spatial, temporal, and causal conceptions to which Piaget's scheme applies; failure to develop in these latter areas is largely physiological. The social context determines how an individual learns to explore moral questions, and that context changes depending on gender, class, race, religion, ethnicity, etc. and cannot claim to be universal in the way biology can.[91] Moreover, as Colin Grant points out, the sequential pattern of women's moral development from egocentric through selfless caring for others to an independent self who cares

[89]Flanagan & Jackson, "Justice, Care and Gender," p. 76.

[90]Friedman, "Care," p. 202.

[91]Flanagan, "Reply to Lawrence Kohlberg," pp. 530-31.

150

but protects a sense of self is typical of the development theory also endorsed by Kohlberg and the view assumed in justice morality. Gilligan's work may, as suggested in the previous chapter, provide the basis for a transformed sense of autonomy [see Berlin and Johnson], but until this new view is worked out more fully, the mature moral agent is defined primarily in terms of independence as the justice outlook assumes. It is not clear whether Gilligan does not in the end assume the prevailing male understanding of humanity, and "contrary to the charges of her critics, the problem is not that she focuses on the distinctiveness of women's experience, but that she does not do this consistently enough."[92] Gilligan recognizes that women experience life in terms of care, but she seems to draw back from this insight except to acknowledge that women's caring is an imposition of patriarchal social structures.[93]

Finally, as noted above, neither Gilligan nor Kohlberg can make conclusions about how people *behave* morally, only about what people *say*.

Women's Voices: Care and Virtue

An ethic of care and its association with women and women's experience is not to be embraced uncritically. There are numerous points on which more discussion needs to take place, and only some of those have been mentioned here. However, all this is not to say

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[92]Colin Grant, "Why Care?" p. 340.

[93]Grant, "Why Care?" p. 341.

that there is no value or no validity to the existence of alternative voices to those which have dominated in our western liberal tradition. The strong, intuitive identification of women with care, compassion and peace which has been made throughout the centuries is enough to make at least a qualified association a beginning point. There needs to be careful attention to the distinctive experiences of women which have elicited the traits discussed here without once again falling back on the vision and terms of the traditional justice perspective.

One contribution related to this debate is an interesting connection between the issues raised by the challenge of a care perspective to the justice tradition and the critique of the liberal tradition found in the studies of virtue ethics and narrative. Even though in many ways Gilligan follows Kohlberg's strategies, she implicitly has shifted the meta-ethical ground of the psychology of normative ethics from a deontological approach to one that is oriented to virtues, that is, describing the qualities of the ideal person and the good life rather than prescribing the rights and obligations that comprise a just society.[94] Gilligan's thesis and the feminist critique of moral theory joins those critics of impartial, universal morality by arguing that other elements, like care and responsibility, are equally important. Moreover, feminists have also pointed to the connection between social practices and the virtues which sustain them, and to an emphasis on a narrative, contextual approach to ethics.

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[94]Broughton, "Women's Rationality," p. 127.

152

Sharon Meagher has written an interesting exploration comparing the proposals of Carol Gilligan and Alisdair MacIntyre, a leading thinker in the contemporary revival of virtue ethics, pointing out their common concerns as well as areas where they differ and might inform each other. Both, she argues, make important contributions to our understanding of narrative and ethics, but Gilligan focuses on individual histories while MacIntyre analyses social histories. "MacIntyre could tell Gilligan how history, tradition and institutions inform the individual stories she relates. Likewise Gilligan could tell MacIntyre how certain voices are deflected, silenced, or ignored by his histories, traditions, and institutions, and that this is a danger of his concept of narrative."[95] Both Gilligan and MacIntyre see narrative as the key to making human action intelligible, and indeed each present their respective arguments in a style which could be described as narrative in form, MacIntyre in his account of the development of the concept of virtue and Gilligan in her report of how women's reasoning is narrative-contextual. MacIntyre rightly critiques contemporary liberal society's assumption that all members are equally free to express and pursue their own good; Gilligan and others remind us that women, even relatively privileged women, do not have the same bargaining resources as those holding predominant positions in the public sphere. However, it should be noted again that Gilligan herself also omits different

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[95]Meagher, "Histories, Herstories, and Moral Traditions," p. 63.

female voices and glosses over dissonance.

> There is a real danger...that voices which do not fit dominant interpretative paradigms are not heard. Even among those white, middle class women who speak in harmony with Gilligan's "women's voice" construct, certain tones, those of anger and frustration, are muted so that the tone of care can be highlighted....[Reading between the lines] is achieved through an analysis of the dissonance between the voices of individual research subjects and the narrative voice which doubles as "the woman's voice."[96]

There are important differences between the two critics, too. Gilligan is criticized for having no formal "adequacy theory" which parallels Kohlberg's reliance on a Kantian liberal moral theory as the measure of mature moral reasoning. She does not mention virtue or virtue theory and although her framing of moral dilemmas resembles MacIntyre's concept of "practice," explicit ties to excellence or virtue are absent. Again, this difference stems from Gilligan's overemphasis on individual histories without situating them in their social and institutional context, even as MacIntyre overlooks how tradition can silence dissenting voices. Both, according to Meagher, need to realize that narratives require dialogue and conflict if they are not to become mere apologues. Dialogue includes story-listening as well as story-telling. Where the dialogue takes place, under what social and historical conditions, is part of the conversation too.

Maternal Thinking: Feminine Symbols and Paradigms

Caring labour is a practice central to mothering. Even though

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[96]Meagher, "Histories," pp. 73-4.

caring varies in its practice across culture, race and class, there are enough commonalities to allow critics to propose alternative paradigms based on women's experience. Some have looked to women's emphasis on embodiment, specifically the experience of pregnancy and birth, to represent a distinct perspective which may evoke particular ways of perceiving and thinking.[97] Others, like Sara Ruddick, have seen mothering and the attendant caring for others as a social category, practised in particular social contexts, and which suggests a kind of "rationality of care" which is concrete, respects complexity, connection, particularity and ambiguity.[98]

The association of women and nature has meant that birth has been relegated to the realm of the natural, and mothering thus as an extension of this biological event, unlike death which men have reflected on through arts and culture as a distinctively human event. Virginia Held has proposed that birth, too, is a central event in human experience; women can give birth, or refuse to give birth, from all kinds of motives--loyalty, duty, commitment, a better future, etc. She writes:

> If [human childbirth] is not primarily a biological event but a distinctly human event, then a woman, in choosing to give birth to a new human being, can engage in transcendence. No human person is a mere biological replica of any other. Every human person is a culturally created entity as well as a biological entity. To give

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[97]Miller-McLemore, "Epistemology or Bust," p. 231.

[98]See Ruddick, "The Rationality of Care," in *Women, Militarism and War*, J. B. Elshtain, S. Tobias, eds. (Savage: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990), and "Preservative Love and Military Destruction," in *Mothering: Essays in Feminist Theory*, J. Trebilcot, ed. (Totowa: Rowman & Allanheld Publ., 1983). Also, see "Epistemology and Gender," chapter 1 above.

birth to a new human being capable of contributing to the transformation of human culture is to transcend what existed before. And the activity of mothering, as it shapes a human child into a distinctive social person, is even more clearly capable of transcendence.[99]

Since mothering involves shaping the language, culture and personhood of a child, it is clearly a *human* activity which transcends merely biological survival. Norms for the domain of mothering are as least as important and relevant for our actions as those which have traditionally comprised what is known as morality.

Sara Ruddick has gone furthest in suggesting a link between maternal thinking and caring labour and its related virtues in a way that also acknowledges the individual, social, cultural and historical variations under which caring and mothering take place. Ruddick emphasizes that caretaking is potentially genderless. It is a *human* activity open not only to women, and as such men who enter into a maternal practice may also learn to identify the kind of thinking which caring labour seems to call forth.[100]

"Maternal practice is governed by 'interests' in satisfying 'demands' for the preservation, growth and acceptability of child-

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[99]Virginia Held, "Birth and Death," *Ethics* 99 (Jan. 1989): 376. She illustrates the disanalogy of man thinking about his birth and his death by citing Thomas Nagel's observation on the different attitude we have to our nonexistence before birth and the question of existence after death. p. 368, n. 10.

[100]Ruddick does recognize, however, that "in a society where primary parents are still likely to be mothers and other women, and where so many women eventually become mothers, it is impossible to separate practically or conceptually the maternal from the womanly." Moreover, "not all women are mothers, nor is maternal thinking the whole of women's thought. Equally important, maternal thinking is not the whole of a *mother's* thought any more than maternity is the whole of a mother's life." "Preservative Love," p. 236.

ren."[101] At times, certain traits have been *misidentified* as virtues in women (inauthenticity, harmful self-sacrifice, passivity, etc.), but here maternal practice identifies certain strengths and virtues appropriate to this work, even if mothers know that they do not always possess these traits, that they sometimes hate their work, and some days mothers even resent their children. Among others, the related virtues would include compassion, trustworthiness, humility, resistance in the face of poverty or injustice, and resilient cheerfulness which at the same time does not falsely protect the child from anger or sadness. In recognizing a virtue, maternal thinkers do not so much pick out a trait mothers should acquire as identify a struggle they experience.[102]

Christian and other religious feminists have examined the tradition in order to find and reclaim new or overlooked images and paradigms for speaking about God which resonate with women's experience. "God as Mother" has been explored by many writers with rich and varied results, suggesting a God of intimacy, nurture and caring. Patricia Johnson has found Ruddick's writing on maternal

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[101]Ruddick, "Preservative Love," p. 233. By "acceptability" she is referring to training the child to be accepted by society by internalizing certain values, etc.

[102]Ruddick, "Preservative Love," p. 287. See also her *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989) for a fuller discussion of the virtues of maternal work. Critics have emphasized, as noted above and elsewhere, that the context of race, class, etc. profoundly affects how these virtues are understood and practised. See Alison Bailey's critique of Ruddick in "Feminist Ambivalence Over Mothering" in chapter four below.

thinking important; "[if] God is our mother, then we are imaging Mother-God as carrying out certain practices and thinking in ways similar to humans who carry out these practices."[103] The first demand of maternal practice explored by Ruddick, preservative love, means for Christians that we would not expect our Mother-God to protect us from all evil but we would expect a hopeful and supportive presence to help us face and cope with our lives. In fostering growth, the second demand of maternal practice, one of the cognitive practices is the storytelling which shapes our lives together, helping foster growth and change.[104] The image of Mother-God as storyteller is consistent with the image of the Christian scriptures which present the *Heilsgeschichte* of the presence and activity of the divine in and with human history. The third demand, training for social acceptance, is a training of conscience. "If Mother-God is our trainer, our guide in coming to conscience, then she is one who is our help in the ongoing struggle to develop our human goodness and trust. We look to her not as a source of all answers or as a dominating rule to be obeyed. She is

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[103]Patricia Johnson, " Feminist Christian Philosophy?" *Faith and Philosophy* 9 (July 1992): 329.

[104]Here again we find a common ground with the emphasis on narrative in feminism and virtue ethics. About storytelling Ruddick writes: "Through good stories, mothers and children connect their understandings of a shared experience. They come to know and, to a degree, accept each other through stories of the fear, love, anxiety, pride, and shame they shared or provoked....Children who learn about themselves through compassionate stories may develop a maternal generosity toward their lives, learning from their mothers the capacity to appreciate the complex humanness of their plight, to forgive themselves as they have been forgiven." *Maternal Thinking*, pp. 98, 100.

a help, a guide, a refuge."[105]

Other writers and volumes could be cited which look to the experience of mothering and motherhood as a source for critical feminist theological reflection.[106] Many, however, also point out that there is a danger that motherhood will be idealized. The papal encyclical *Mulieries dignitatem* links women who become mothers to God's covenant with humans through the motherhood of God's mother, but this "special service" of motherhood does not mean that women are offered any corresponding important liturgical service or ordination to the ministries of the Catholic church; "[even] when feminine images are used to symbolize the divine, paradoxically these images convey something highly valued but subordinate."[107]

More than re-interpreting the Christian tradition or re-claiming female names for God, there must be a transformation of reality which frees women and men from oppression, racism, and sexism. To do this, however, means that women need to recognize their own likeness in our images of God through our use of feminine symbols, language and recognizing women in the Biblical narrative. More importantly, it means that we "investigate what relevance a theology shows in the different actual work situations and lives of women, whether it contributes to theological analysis and reflec-

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[105]Johnson, "Feminist Christian Philosophy," p. 331.

[106]For example see Cahill, Grey, Gudorf, Mack, Miller-McLemore, Purvis, and Rike cited in the bibliography.

[107]Kohn-Roelin, "Mother-Daughter-God," p. 66.

159

tion on this situation and provides a stimulus to liberating change."[108]

The opposition between work and love noted above reflects the dualisms and fragmentation which the feminist critique seeks to overcome. It would be a step backwards to simply reverse a hierarchical dualism with a matriarchal model of God. Sallie McFague has outlined some of the pitfalls of using a model or metaphor of God as mother. Rather than a new hierarchy, the intention is to investigate a rich source for "expressing some aspects of the God/world relationship in our time, most specifically, the interdependence and mutuality of all life."[109] A second danger is that we sentimentalize maternal imagery. As Ruddick and others remind us, mother work is sometimes ambivalent and messy work. The stereotypes which society constructs about the "good mother" belie the fact that mothers are not naturally loving, comforting, or self-sacrificing. Lastly, maternal language can be oppressive and dangerous.

> It poses problems for women because it suggests that women who are not mothers are not true or fulfilled women; it gives power to the one role that has probably oppressed women more than any other over the centuries....[We] must be careful to see this model of God as only *one* model and by no means one that would eliminate speaking of God as sister, as midwife, or in other female terms.[110]

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[108]Schaumberger, "Sharing and Feeding," *Women, Work and Poverty*, Concilium 194, p. 123.

[109]Sallie McFague, "Mother God," *Motherhood: Experience, Institution, Theology*, Concilium 206, p. 139.

[110]McFague, "Mother God," p. 139.

Mutuality is another related, important theme among those emphasized by Christian feminist writers on this topic. It is connected to the ethic of care in that it emphasizes relationship which is positive, reciprocal and mutual, even when one member is strong and the other is in need. In the related discussion of self-sacrifice in the previous chapter, we saw that mutuality has sometimes been dismissed in theological studies because our traditionally understood model of *agape*, God's sacrificing love for unworthy humanity, makes mutual relationships less "Christian." Feminist critics have challenged this understanding. Beverly Harrison describes the practice of true mutuality and radical love as the true reason why Jesus was crucified.

> One senses that persons who [warn others not to confuse real, Christian love with "mere mutuality"] have yet to experience the power of love as the real pleasure of mutual vulnerability, the experience of truly being cared for or of actively caring for another. Mutual love, I submit, is love in its deepest radicality....Like Jesus, we are called to a radical activity of love, to a way of being in the world that deepens relation, embodies and extends community, passes on the gift of life.[111]

To see life as whole and not fragmented by dualisms, consistent with the feminist Christian critique, would restore mutuality as a norm applicable for political and economic life as well as family life. "Ethicists need to imagine radically new ways of organizing social life so that work, politics, and personal life are meshed in

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[111]Beverly W. Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love," in *Making the Connections*, C. Robb, ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985): 18.

a fashion which enhances the possibilities for mutuality."[112]

Conclusion

Care involves real labour; it is not to be confused with an emotional attachment to someone else, nor can it be reduced to "mothering." The activities of caring labour can be said to constitute a "practice," open to men and women, which fosters the virtues and traits associated with an ethic of care. The socialization of girls has tended in the past to encourage them more than boys to value connection and relationship. For women, the duties and relationships of care are intimately connected to their psychological nature and their position within the social, political, economic and racial context of their lives. The care practised by women has been invisible and undervalued; the cost to women in lower or lost wages, or in terms of education and employment opportunities, can be high, eg. economic dependence and/or poverty.

Care, as much as gender, is socially constructed and tied to economic and political relations. Conceptual separation of public and private has contributed to the way care is undervalued in the public sphere and is sentimentalized in the private, domestic realm. "When the virtues of care and sympathy are idealized with-

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[112]Barbara Andolsen, "Agape in Feminist Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 9 (Spring 1981): 79.

out reference to the social relations in which they are expressed, we simply idealize the private sphere itself, abstracting it from historical life."[113] Economic and political forces as well as psychological processes shape the consciousness of women (and men); to avoid a reified picture of care, social *and* psychological perspectives are needed.

The fact remains that no woman's life is entirely "private;" interpersonal connections are tied to wider social bonds. Care is more than just preserving a "healthy" nuclear family but extends in a web of relationships from the family to the wider community. The contours which care takes change with the abilities, resources and economic and ideological climate in which the needs of dependents and the responsibilities of the carers are defined.[114] Issues of social justice pertain to all spheres, and the concept of care needs to be reevaluated, whether at home or at the workplace. The ideological aspects of the construction of gender, care and motherhood are linked. When these connections are uncovered, new possibilities in our understanding of moral personhood and of an ethic of care, open to men and women, becomes possible.

The debate surrounding an "ethic of care" illustrates the continuing tension within the feminist critique over the role of justice and the demand for equality, and the desire to affirm the virtues which arise out of the practice of care which is tradi-

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[113]Ruth Smith, "Moral Transcendence and Moral Space in the Historical Experiences of Women," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 4 (Fall 1988): 33.

[114]Graham, "Caring," pp. 25-6.

tionally assigned to women. Important contributions of this discussion include the attention to context and the recognition of particular selves facing moral decisions. Care, empathy and compassion are not irrelevant considerations, even in questions previously considered strictly related to "justice." The way boys and girls are socialized and complex, and gender cannot be isolated from the elements of race and class in this process. Values of care and connection associated with the development of girls would seem to be important to include in the upbringing of boys as well.

The "different voice" might be better expressed as "voices" since variations are found among women too, and not just between women and men. All voices need to be heard. The concerns raised, however, do offer an important critique of liberal paradigms and traditional understandings of philosophy and moral theory. Despite liberal theory's assertion to the contrary, all voices, all stories, have not had an equal say in shaping our society and our moral values. These voices, however, are always particular and historically located and affected by social and institutional forces.

Both secular and religious feminist critics wish to affirm an understanding of persons which is relational and social, and which helps us look at our relationships with each other and with God in a way which undermines oppression and inequality. As the Christian feminist examination of self-sacrifice discussed in the previous chapter notes, care should not be reduced to a "natural feminine virtue" but rather care should be valued and emphasized as

164

important for men and women to build relationships of true mutuality and to furthering God's reign. The parables of Jesus, such as the Good Samaritan, support actions modelled on maternal love and care, even for the stranger and the enemy. God is beyond gender, neither male nor female, but women have been denied their experiences as valid frameworks of reference in speaking to and about God. For this reason, work by many Christian feminist theologians who explore images and paradigms such as "God as Mother" are important contributions to theology and ethics. The goal is to transform reality, freeing men and women from the oppression of gendered expectations of moral personhood and moral worth.

The next chapter turns to the third virtue, peace or peace-making. If self-sacrifice was examined as it relates to our construction of moral agency and ideas of personhood, and the discussion of care highlighted how women's understanding of personhood cannot be separated from the actual labour/work that women (or society's caretakers) do, the chapter on peace will show how this analysis can also be connected to the broader social construction of women/mothers' association with peace, home and hearth, and of men's association with soldiering and violence. Peace, like care, can be understood as connected to the practice of maternal work and an understanding of selves-in-relation.

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166-168

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The discussion of women and the virtue of peace is related to
a whole constellation of cultural and ideological constructions.
If war is masculine and abstract, peace is seen as feminine and
domestic. Women have been and continue to be more actively
involved in peace movements; in opinion polls women show a greater
orientation to peaceful resolutions to disputes, with a 15 - 20 %
"gender gap" on issues of military involvement and use of force.[1]

Examples can be found through history noting the supposed
affinity between women, peace and related images; in the modern era
this connection was strengthened by liberal assumptions regarding
the binary split of private-domestic/public-political domains and
by the activity and virtues considered appropriate to each
respective realm. Critics like Virginia Woolf have pointed out
that the corollary separation of the genders into spheres of
activity underlines the connection between patriarchy and mili-
tarism and war. Women's peacefulness often begins with women's
experience of negation and alienation "outside" the narratives of
war,[2] even as they stand to the side as protesters, cheerleaders,
mourners or victims. The danger exists, of course, that feminists

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[1]Lucinda Peach, "An Alternative to Pacifism? Feminism and
Just-War Theory," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): 153.

[2]Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*,
(New York: Ballantine Books, 1989): 146-7. This citation comes
from a chapter published as "Mothers and Men's Wars," in *Rocking
the Ship of State*, A. Harris, Y. King, eds., (Boulder: Westview
Press, 1989): 80.

who contribute to the women and peace debate will find themselves endorsing the old binary oppositions, merely inverting the ranking of the private world, with its ideals of equilibrium and harmony, to transform a now feminized public world.[3] Moreover, in the current literature on women and war and peace, there are numerous authors who emphasize those instances where women have acted *counter* to pacific expectations, not to mention the fact that if men really were so eager for war, there would be no need for drafts and conscriptions.

Furthermore, the terms of the debate itself need to be carefully considered for their symbolic and potentially ideological definitions and uses. Not only does there need to be attention drawn to the association of women with peace, but also to how masculinity is tied to war and aggression, how militarism is conceived and is dependent on gendered spheres of activity, and the problem of conceptualizing peace itself. Pacifism, for example, cannot be defined except by using some theory of conflict.

Just as "feminism" encompasses a broad range of approaches and issues, a feminist conception of peace can be viewed along a continuum,

> from feminist perspectives on intrapersonal violence (e.g., suicide, eating disorders), to interpersonal violence (e.g., rape, incest, sexual harassment), to covert and overt institutional structural violence (e.g.,

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[3]Jean Bethke Elshtain, "The Problem with Peace," in *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory,* J. Elshtain, S. Tobias, eds., (Savage: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990): 265.

economic injustice, poverty, racism, militarism, and warism.)[4]

There are a number of strategies and positions which feminists have developed in their claims for or against women's distinctive position on violence and peace. At one end, there are women who insist that equal rights must extend to the right to bear arms, the last bastion of male privilege and power. At the other end of the spectrum are those who so strongly identify their femaleness with peace that they support a kind of essentialist view of the sexes, and who might then work against militarism in all-women activist groups.[5] Those who may be described as somewhere in between have explored at least two bases for their critique of violence and militarism, one being motherhood and maternal imagery, and the other women's exclusion from power and her place in the margins of society.

This chapter will examine the virtue of peace as it is associated with women. First some of the key words will be examined, including our understanding of peace, militarism and the construction of masculine and feminine gender as these are associated with war and peace. The next section looks at the connection between women and peace in terms of some of its historical, con-

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[4]Karen J. Warren, Duane Cady, "Introduction," *Hypatia* 9, Special Issue: Feminism and Peace (Spring 1994): 2. The authors define "warism" as the view, or a cultural disposition, which holds that war is both morally justifiable in principle and often morally justified in fact. "Feminism and Peace: Seeing the Connections," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): n.4, p. 17.

[5]Although, this is by no means the only reason women choose to partake in, for example, the Greenham Commons peace-camp.

ceptual, and psychological manifestations. Feminist studies on women and peace have sometimes looked at how the position of woman as marginalized, "outsider," has formed the basis of her advocating peace, others have once more invoked the image of woman as caretaker and maternal praxis in connection with peace and peacemaking. Following the study of outsider/caretaker proposals, Sara Ruddick's thesis connecting the practice of care with peacemaking will receive particular attention. Some theological reflections on women and peace make up the final segment. An addendum chapter will follow which explores the issue of women and the virtue(s) examined here in the context of this author's Mennonite heritage and a feminist critique of peace theology.

Peace, War and Gender

The social construction of masculine and feminine has meant that the politics of gender are closely linked with the politics of war and violence. Almost from the beginning, images of peace and war have been closely connected to the feminine, whether as harmony or disorder, and the masculine, that is with power and man as warrior.

The ancient Greeks, for example, represented peace as *Eirene*, a female deity subordinate to the dominant god *Ares* who is associated with war and power. The founding myths of the Greeks were accounts of brutal battles with the Titans; war was considered a natural state and the basis of society. Manly valour was shown

172

by the spirit with which men pursued honour and fame.[6] The Romans also had some vague association of peace with *Terra Mater*, a goddess depicted surrounded by fruits of the fields, children and domesticated animals. The goddesses *Eirene* and *Terra Mater* were relatively minor in the overall mythology, dominated by the father figure and by war.

Christianity took up the earlier Hebrew concept of *shalom*, peace; the meaning of *shalom* went beyond an absence of violence to encompass material as well as spiritual blessings and a state of well-being. In the early days of the church Hellenic culture regarded peace as something which was not reducible to any earthly order, particularly not to that of the *pax Romana*. Peace was the vision of an era filled by perfect justice. For the first few centuries of the Common Era at least, there was on the part of believers a resistance to public power and a refusal of military service; the warrior-god and the warrior were devalourised and suffering was exalted. "The model for Christian love, *agape*, was the mother's unconditional love for her child, marking a feminization of Christian ideals of fellowship and community. The qualities most often associated with maternal imperatives were urged above all."[7]

After a conditional acceptance of violence was initiated in the Constantinian era and beyond, the model of a nurturing, gentle

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[6]Elshtain, "Problem with Peace," p. 256.

[7]Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York: Basic Books, 1987): 126.

173

Christ shifted to one of Christ as victorious ruler who defeats the dragon, the serpent and the lion. Contrary to earlier practice, Christians were found in the military ranks, a few as early as 173 C.E. Residual pacifist ideals tended to be located either among orders of monks or in pacific representations of Christian mothers as a Madonna figure.[8]

Very early modern understandings of nation states and militarized citizenship, like that of Machiavelli, reinforced a masculinized discourse "revolving around a public-private split in and through which women are constituted either as "mirrors" to male war making (a kind of civic cheerleading) or as a collective Other, embodying the softer values and virtues out of place within, and subversive of, *realpolitik.*"[9] Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation did not counter this development, but instead "masculinized" theology by stressing the family, not the public world, as the locus of compassion and concern, and by deconstructing powerful female images such as the Madonna and the feminized construction of the *mater ecclesiae* herself.[10]

The Enlightenment era witnessed the development of modern nation-states, patriotic armed civic virtue and the concept of standing armies. Women continued in their role as "mirror" or as

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[8]Kristen Herzog, "Peacemaker Woman? Theological Perspectives on Women, War and Peace," *Reformed World* 41 (June 1990): 46-8. More discussion of theological shifts in the understanding of peace will follow below.

[9]Elshtain, *Women and War,* p. 58.

[10]Elshtain, *Women and War,* p. 143.

mothers with the civic duty to provide sons to fill the ranks of soldiers. Shifts in scientific paradigms included metaphors of nature as feminine, the object of study and control by male dominated and defined culture. If for Rousseau the transition from a private to a public person was to be ritualized as a rite of passage, in a similar way for Hegel the state only comes fully to life and maturity in the test of war and struggle.[11] Social divisions between home life and public life were sealed in bourgeois culture.

As discussed elsewhere above, the cult of domesticity associated with Victorian morality which solidified in the nineteenth century dictated that women embody the "gentle virtues," insulated as they were from the sordid details of political and commercial society. Even if this vision held no correspondence to daily life for the majority of women, this idealized picture became the ideological norm, and the association of peace with the feminine was given wide credibility. However, as much as the feminine has been linked to peace through social, political and institutional forces, it must also be emphasized that masculinity is also bound by ideological constructions. These constructions consist of:

> ...a set of cultural institutions and practices that constitutes the norms and standards of masculinity, a set of ideals to which few men can measure up....[Masculinity] has been centrally structured by a linked fear of and fascination with the problems of death, mortality and oblivion. These fears and fascinations have emerged in the West in many areas of social life but nowhere more

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[11]Elshtain, *Women and War*, pp. 60, 74-5.

importantly and dangerously than in politics and war.[12]

Historically, virility, violence, and the emphasis on heroic action are linked with men who have been painted as the initiators and perpetuators of war, experiencing and relating its narratives as "insiders," while women are left in the background, inferentially involved as observers and mourners. Moreover, "[military] services and the battles they fight are governed by a masculinist ideology not just because the fighters happen to be men but because commanders enforce or at least permit attitudes and actions by exploiting masculine pride and identity."[13] One of the worst things a soldier in basic training could be called is a "woman" or a "girl;" to be a soldier is, clearly, to be a man.

Hartsock has outlined some features of early Greek tales which have helped define heroism and its masculine embodiment. As the hero confronts and overcomes death, several themes emerge: women are excluded as participants, the competition must have one clear winner at the expense of the other, there is the risk of loss of

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[12]Nancy C. Hartsock, "Masculinity, Heroism, and the Making of War," in *Rocking the Ship of State*, p. 135. Hartsock notes some women, most famously Margaret Thatcher, have been identified as fitting this masculine set of ideals, etc. She goes on to argue that "the specific configuration of violence, masculinity, and militarism extant in the modern West represents a legacy of collective efforts by small groups of men -- men privileged by their race, class, and gender -- to resolve several fundamental problems of human existence. Most centrally these are (1) how to deal with mortality, (2) how to understand the limits of human power..., and (3) how to define the nature of human relations...." Ibid. She does this by examining among other things the warrior-hero of Greek myth and legend, discussed below.

[13]Sara Ruddick, "Pacifying the Forces: Drafting Women in the Interests of Peace," *Signs* 8 (Spring 1983): 478.

life, the moment of battle is abstracted and focused away from daily existence, and there is a "second birth" to immortality/fame, a homosocial birth that overcomes the defects of the original heterosexual one.[14] In modern warfare and politics, the exclusion of women is obvious, issues of honour and pre-eminence are common in the rhetoric of leaders, and brinkmanship tactics with the threat of nuclear war recalls the "heroic" flirtation with death. There is also among militarists an obsession with the division between male and female bodies and upholding a model of manliness; for the most part, only males are considered suitable for battle even though modern technically sophisticated weapons do not depend on any particular body strength.

The abstract thinking and language associated with the masculine discourse of war is often critiqued by feminist thinkers addressing this area. From ancient Greek times to modern thinkers like Kant and Hegel, the argument has run that women

> were incapable of transcending their particularistic
> interests, rooted in the care of their families, to
> sacrifice themselves for the 'Common Good.' Only men were
> considered capable of achieving the degree of ethical
> abstraction necessary to see the whole, and the proof of
> their ethical consciousness was their willingness to lay
> down their lives.[15]

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[14]Hartsock "Masculinity, Heroism," pp.140-1.

[15]Mary Condren, "To Bear Children for the Fatherland: Mothers and Militarism," in *Motherhood: Experience, Institution, Theology*, Carr & Fiorenza, eds., Concilium 206 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989): 86. However, Jean Elshtain also notes interesting parallels that are made between soldiering and mothering, at just this point, that is in the expectation of sacrifice. The soldier is expected to sacrifice for his country and the mother is expected to sacrifice for her children, even if the latter does not usually include the sacrifice of life itself. Both experiences are bound by a

177

The constructed connection between reason, war and masculinity has been honoured in the Western philosophical tradition; philosophy and war require transcending particular affections and concrete complexities of material and domestic life. Human bodies are abstracted and labelled civilian/soldier, enemy/ally, or "us" versus "them."[16] "[Military] thinking provides identifiable techniques of redescription and evasion that focus the mind on strategy rather than on suffering; on sacrifice rather than on killing; and on the cause rather than on the bodies torn apart in its name."[17]

Carol Cohn, a feminist author who has spent time among professional strategists to study their particular, specialized language, found that the language coerces the discussion of war and its art due to embedded values of the language that focus on the weapons, not humans. Techno-strategic language and rationality, used among defense industry intellectuals and government advisors, is filled with phallic imagery, allusions to hetero- and homoerotic excitement, and abstraction. The words "peace" and "human death" are absent except by abstract circumlocution, as for example "collateral damage."[18] Ruddick notes: "When Olive Schreiner [a

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sense of duty and a sense of guilt over doing what they think is the right thing. See "Structures of Experience: The Good Soldier/The Good Mother," in *Women and War*, pp. 221-5.

[16]Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989): 145-6.

[17]Sara Ruddick, "The Rationality of Care," *Women, Militarism, and War*, pp. 242-3.

[18]Carol Cohn, "'Clean Bombs' and Clean Language," in *Women, Militarism, and War*, pp. 33-56; "Emasculating America's Linguistic Deterrent," in *Rocking the Ship of State*, pp. 153-70; "Sex and

South African peace activist of early this century] claimed that 'no woman would say of a human body it is nothing,' implying that militarists are committed to exactly this denial, she was contrasting woman's speech with the strategic discourse of 'conventional' militarists preparing for the first world war."[19]

If roles of men and women are at least in part culturally constructed, then so too is "militarism," another key word in this discussion. Militarism is an ideology that rests on the dualism of separate gendered spheres, and which is in fact dependent on women's complicity and cooperation, as much as male militarists may deny this fact. Women have supported militarism and war in their roles as prostitutes, military wives, nurses, official soldiers, guerilla soldiers, and defense industry workers.[20] Defining where "the front" is denies the presence of women at the scene of battle: "camp follower" carries a morally pejorative meaning; field nursing may place women near the danger zone, "but not in the thick of

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Death and the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," in *Women on War: Essential Voices for the Nuclear Age*, Daniela Gioseffi, ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), pp. 84-99. The abstract thinking which characterizes military strategy or even modern professional political discourse is, of course, not limited to men, as some women are just as eager to take their place in the academy or government.

[19]Ibid., p. 146. Olive Schreiner, *Women and Labour* (1911; London: Virago, 1978): 173. Some argue, notes Mary Condren, that the patriarchal discourses generated by W.W. 1 "were a direct response to the early suffragist movement, the first serious threat that patriarchal social relations had experienced, and that had threatened the 'manhood' of the society...." "To Bear Children," *Motherhood*, p. 85.

[20]Cynthia Enloe discusses each of these roles in *Does Khaki Become You?: The Militarisation of Women's Lives* (London: Pluto Press, 1983).

things, locating them figuratively in a familiar (family) way in relation to the dead and dying: women succour, soothe, heal, tend, offer solace."[21]

Yet, the military could not function without the exploitation of women's labour. For example, women's labour was exploited during American war efforts in World War II. Both managers and male shop stewards resisted the integration of women labourers in non-traditional occupations in 1941-2. However, with the peak of the war effort in 1943 there occurred a split, albeit still on the basis of perpetuating male privilege. Management was willing to dilute the shop-floor sexual divisions because they could incor-porate women at lower wages, whereas the unions saw this as a threat to their hard earned wage scales.[22] Militarism cannot admit its fundamental reliance on women and the gender ideology on which it exists.

> The processes of military manpower acquisition are *gendered* processes. Military forces past and present have not been able to get, keep and reproduce the sorts of soldiers they imagine they need without drawing on ideological beliefs concerning the different and strat-ified roles of women and men. Without assurance that women will play their "proper" roles, the military cannot provide men with the incentives to enlist, obey orders, give orders, fight, kill, re-enlist, and convince their sons to enlist.[23]

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[21]Elshtain, *Women and War*, p. 183.

[22]Cynthia Enloe, "Was it "The Good War" for Women" [Rev. D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era*, Cambridge, 1984]" *American Quarterly* 37 (Fall 1985): 631.

[23]Cynthia Enloe, "Feminism and Militarism," *Does Khaki Become You?* p. 212. Karen Anderson points out that support for militarism is the price that men pay to reproduce patriarchal systems, but their sacrifice in war is what justifies their claims to women's

To root out the effects of gendered ideologies, such as militarism and the masculinized discourse of war, means to go beyond the specific conditions of men as soldiers or women as victims of war to examining how dominance, control and violence (in general and against women in particular) have come to be seen as "natural" ordering principles in relations between men and women.[24]

Women's Connection to Peace

The deep connection between women, feminism and peace is promoted by women's groups, and not necessarily by peace movement organisations themselves, which are often run by men. Yet, "[almost] all of the women's rights organizations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw world peace as part of their vision for a new society."[25] To see the link between women and peace, it is necessary to go beyond "adding" women to conventional discussions of peace. Women's association with peace is conceptual, psychological, historical and political.[26]

Conceptually, the liberal philosophical legacy of western industrialized society raises a number of issues for feminists who

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services and subordination. Conversely, women's sacrifices and contributions in the home raise male anxiety regarding masculine prerogatives in the home and women's place in the state system. "[Rev.] R. R. Pierson, *Women and Peace*," *Signs* 15 (Aut. 1989): 185.

[24]Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, pp. 208-10.

[25]Rosemary Ruether, "Feminism and Peace," in *Women's Consciousness, Women's Conscience: A Reader in Feminist Ethics*, B. Andolsen et al, eds. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985): 63.

[26]Warren and Cady in "Feminism and Peace," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): 4-20 suggest these four points of connection.

have critiqued the connection between women and peace. One is the equation of rationality with abstract, dichotomized thinking and the other is the related tendency of one side of the dualism to dominate over the other.

Lucinda Peach outlines some feminist criticisms of just-war theory, including its relation to realism and its tendency to abstraction and to dichotomize reality in accordance with gender distinctions. The realist view of human nature is seen as limited, that is as pessimistic and defined by "male" notions. War comes to be seen as the only solution to conflict. The reliance of this view on hypothetical rather than actual conflicts means that the real horrors of war and its effects on individuals are neglected, it reduces the enemy to the "Other," and its focus on justice and rights rather than on the needs and interests of specific persons in particular conflicts ignores that people exist in complex social relations and structures.[27]

Power and domination are related to the historical liberal construction of the self and the world as antagonistic; "otherness" is manifest in divisions of gender, but also race, class and religion. Domination in this Cartesian dualism marks phallocentric society and social theory.[28] In this sense,

[feminism] and peace share an important conceptual

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[27]Peach, "Alternative to Pacifism," pp. 155-60. Interestingly, in the end Peach herself wants to argue that feminist concerns can actually suggest ways of *strengthening* just war theory.

[28]Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminine Standpoint," in *Discovering Reality*, Harding et al., eds. (Boston: D. Reidel, 1983): 296-7. See also "The Legacy of Liberalism," chapter one.

connection: both are critical of, and committed to the elimination of, coercive power-over privilege systems of domination as a basis of interaction between individuals and groups. A feminist critique and development of any peace politics, therefore, ultimately is a critique of systems of unjustified domination.[29]

Warren and Cady list five characteristics of oppressive conceptual frameworks. These frameworks: (1)value hierarchical thinking, (2)value dualisms, (3)view power as power-over, as opposed to power-with/-within/-toward etc., (4)privilege interests of what is considered "higher," and (5)contain a logic which assumes superiority justifies subordination. In patriarchy, it is the male gender which is identified as standing in the dominant/superior position.[30] In contrast, the contribution of women to peacemaking is attributed both to their experience of mothering, which fosters the ability to deal with problems concretely, to integrate affectivity into moral judgments, and to acknowledge and face conflict, as well as to their consciousness of being oppressed and made invisible through the power of abstract language and rationalization.[31]

Psychologically, the association of women with peace, like the other virtues discussed in this thesis, can be traced to early socialization patterns which link gender formation with particular

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[29]K. Warren, D. Cady, "Feminism and Peace: Seeing Connections," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): 6.

[30]Warren and Cady, "Feminism and Peace," p. 6.

[31]Mary Segers, "The Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," *Feminist Studies* 11 (Fall 1985): 630-32. More discussion on how woman as outsider and woman as caretaker inform the feminist critique on peace follows below.

relational capacities, namely the attribution of altruism, caring and peacemaking to women due to patterns of activity which the sexual division of labour reinforces.[32] In contrast to a girl's identification with her mother in terms of her psychic growth, "the boy's construction of self in opposition to unity with the mother, his construction of identity as differentiation from the other, sets a hostile and combative dualism at the heart of both the community men construct and the masculinist world view by means of which they understand their lives."[33]

Barbara Andrew has written how gender constructs "promote and

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[32]Nancy Chodorow's thesis in *The Reproduction of Motherhood* and that of Gilligan in *In a Different Voice* as discussed above, support this view. For a critical discussion, see especially chapter 3 above. A discussion of peace and women addressed from the perspective of psychoanalysis and Freudian theory can be found in Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Peaceable Sex: On Aggression in Women and Men* (New York: Fromm Intl., 1987). Mitscherlich argues that women are not less aggressive than men, but women's drives and impulses are expressed differently. "In social practice, there is a separation into a male mentality of achievement and conquest (with all its well-known...destructive consequences) on the one hand, and a protective, self-sacrificing, serving mentality for women (also with its unmistakable consequences for the internal and external conduct of life) on the other. If this kind of sado-masochistic relationship between the sexes is linked to pleasure-- that is, if men's pleasure in conquering and giving orders is tied to women's pleasure in being dominated and satisfying those who give the orders--then only constantly renewed efforts to make these miserable psychic entanglements conscious can liberate people from them." p. 225.

[33]Hartsock, "Feminist Standpoint," p. 296. As mentioned above and elsewhere here, and as Hartsock also notes, I do not wish to argue that object-relations theory or psychoanalysis can be the total explanation for gender formation or the attribution of certain virtues to one sex or the other. There is, however, a strong parallel between male experience, the construction of self in opposition to another who threatens one's being, and the dualist and hierarchical institutions of western, liberal class society which is also supported in the philosophical tradition.

participate in the psychological conditions necessary for war" by examining the critiques of Mary Wollstonecraft and Virginia Woolf.[34]   Both these authors agree that the tyrannies and attachments of private life affects public life by example or perhaps as an unconscious paradigm for the domination and greed which lead to war. "In addition, these private tyrannies reflect patriarchy and the cultural valuation of heroic virtues and war. Patriarchal families teach these virtues, and hence, create the psychological conditions that encourage war."[35]   Wollstonecraft sees the solution in the economic independence and education of women; the public spirit must be nurtured by private virtues without valorizing subordination which denies independence and thereby denies the development of virtue. Woolf is critical of women's participation in any war effort because it defeats their long-term interests of gaining recognition as equals; rather, it makes women the protected objects of men. She, too, advocates the eduction of women, pointing out that their exclusive role in childrearing can replicate the dynamics of domination and submission.

Historically, virtues of peace and love are linked with women's nature, not just in women's self-defined familial roles, but in many of the reform and women's rights movements of the last century or more. The inauguration of an autonomous women's peace

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[34]Barbara Andrew, "The Psychology of Tyranny: Wollstonecraft and Woolf on the Gendered Dimension of War," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): 85-101. She bases her study on Wollstonecraft's 1792 *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* and Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938).

[35]Andrew, "The Psychology of Tyranny," p. 86.

movement is often dated 1915 with the Women's Peace Party in New York, but in fact peace had been a priority in the campaigns of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) as early as 1887.[36] The WCTU promoted a "Department of Peace and Arbitration" and was firmly linked to the 19th century Christian peace movement. They published pamphlets, sponsored lecture tours and lobbied government, developing a unique female peace ideology. Although the WCTU literature idealized home and motherhood, as did some suffragists and others in the women's movement, the central metaphor was the "Prince of Peace" and the model of Jesus. Men were portrayed as brutish and susceptible to violence, and since women had learned to control their wills and temper, they were truly following Jesus' example and had a role to help men overcome their violent tendencies and hasten Christ's reign.

> The WCTU's analysis of male aggression moved well beyond the domestic sphere and generated a critique of militarism in international relations....Christian homemakers were expected to work for disarmament which, like prohibition, would remove from society an important source of temptation for men.[37]

One of the WCTU's writers and speakers, Frances Willard, declared late in the 19th century:

> We are one world of tempted humanity; the mission...is to organize the motherhood of the world for the peace and purity...of its homes....We must be no longer hedged about by the artificial boundaries of states and nations. We must utter as women what great and good men long ago

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[36]Susan Zeiger, "Finding a Cure for War: Women's Politics and the Peace Movement in the 1920s," *Journal of Social History* 24 (Fall 1990): 71.

[37]Zeiger, "Finding a Cure," p. 71.

declared...'The whole world is my parish.'[38]

Women's organizations between 1880-1915 generally connected suffrage with peace. They took the ideology of domestic virtues out of the home in their campaign to influence public life. Like the declaration of Willard cited, the suffragists and peace activists saw a connection between women's rights, peace, and a new concept of citizenship and nationalism. Further, as Jane Addams argued in *Newer Ideals of Peace*,

> citizenship based on bearing arms fostered a hostile, competitive, chauvinistic concept of patriotism, which precluded international solidarity between national groups. The giving of citizenship to women would demand a new definition of citizenship based on nonviolent political methods of resolving conflict.[39]

Not all feminists were pacifists, and vice-versa, but there was much overlap in theory and membership. Although the church was also an outlet for women's moral energies, probably no other feminist nongender issue (except perhaps the abolition of slavery) came to be as closely linked with the women's movement than did pacifism. "Indeed, in France, pacifist beliefs became the criterion for screening membership in the mainstream, liberal-feminist move-

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[38]Cited in Zeiger, pp. 72-73, note 23. There is a striking similarity here to Virginia Woolf's famous phrase from her 1938 *Three Guineas*, taken up as a slogan by many feminists working for peace: "As a woman my country is the whole world." (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, (1938) 1966): 109. See more below.

[39]Ruether, "Feminism and Peace," p. 65. The early suffragettes, of course, did not question the transfer of "private" virtues to the public realm. See "The Feminist Critique" in chapter one.

187

ment."[40]

After 1889, peace organizations, like the Union Internationale des Femmes pour la Paix, L'Alliance Universelles des Femmes pour la Paix, etc. proliferated. The International Conference on Women at the Hague in 1915 lead to the establishment of the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace. In the U.S., the Committee on the Cause and Cure of War (CCCW) became the largest women's peace organization in the 1920s, a coalition of women's groups whose members' involvement dated to the pre-war legacy of feminine moral reform. The CCCW's peace politics were part of the centrist, internationalist mainstream, but its internationalism was recast in gendered terms, choosing peace self-consciously as women who could play a special mediating role in resolving conflict between nations. For example, the Kellog-Briand pact was worthy of support because it embodied the CCCW's moral vision applied to foreign policy. [41]

Women have continued to be prominent and active in the peace movements of the nuclear age up until the present. Advocating world peace by women is no longer closely tied to Christianity, but some do continue to use maternal and nurturing images to undermine the efforts of war. In the 1950s, members of the Women's Strike for Peace evoked traditional assumptions about women in their testimony to the House Committee on Un-American Activity. Pleading

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[40]Joyce Berkman, "Feminism, War and Peace Politics: The Case of World War I," in *Women, Militarism and War*, p. 146.

[41]Zeiger, p. 70.

for the safety of their children in domestic terms, they countered the Committee's contention that communism was the greatest threat to the family with the fact that nuclear war was by far a greater danger. Motherhood, which subverted anti-communism, was seen here in its social and communal function, rather than a purely private role.[42]

Politically, women are involved in grassroots organizations, addressing violence in its widest spectrum by working on issues of the environment, health, and development and technology, as well as antimilitarism. All-women peace protests and camps have used elements of carnival and confrontation to enrich a feminist consciousness of nonviolence.[43] Examples from outside North America would include *Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* in Argentina and the work of Rigoberta Menchú, which has received a Nobel prize. The "guns and butter" argument against war, that is, the more money that is diverted to the military the less there is available for social programs, is only one way that women are linked to the effects of war since they are hardest hit by cuts to education, welfare and health care.[44]

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[42]Amy Swerdlow, "Motherhood and the Subversion of the Military State, " in *Women, Militarism and War*, p. 24.

[43]See for example Gwyn Kirk, "Our Greenham Common: Feminism and Nonviolence," in *Rocking the Ship*, pp. 115-30.

[44]A recent report by the Canadian Red Cross Society, *Women in War: Soft Targets*, states that 80 % of the world's war refugees are women and children, growing by an average of 8000 per day. Conservative estimates say 850 women and children are maimed or killed by land mines every month, not surprising when they are most often gathering wood or tending animals, etc. Sexual violence has also grown on a hitherto unwitnessed scale due to the escalation of

In current literature on women and war and peace, however, there are numerous authors who emphasize those instances in history where women acted counter to pacific expectations. Indeed, the events around World War I, at least in England, served to highlight pre-war differences between militant suffragettes who did not eschew occasional violent measures to gain their ends and those suffragettes who opposed any use of violence.[45] Moreover, despite a huge mobilization of women marching for peace in New York, August 1914, a short while later many had given up their peace politics in favour of the war; a deep schism developed between pro- and anti-war camps.[46] There was some correlation between political consciousness and behaviour in terms of class, race, marital status, etc., but there was no rule; divisions even cut across families like the famous Pankhursts.[47]

Some women who supported the war argued on the basis of the "justness" of the war, others wanted to prove the legitimacy of

ethnically based conflict. *The Vancouver Sun*, Friday, May 5, 1995. However, looking *only* at social-economic factors explaining militarisation's effect on women, as Cynthia Enloe reminds us, leaves unchallenged and unexplained the powerful ideological processes that perpetuate militarism. Disarmed militarism is still militarism, especially when men's dominance and women's subservience (i.e. patriarchy) remains. "Feminism and Militarism," p. 208.

[45]Elshtain, *Women and War*, p. 233.

[46]For instance, most of the executive of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, who were anti-war, resigned, leaving the pro-war members to continue. Berkman, "Feminism, War and Peace Politics," p. 147.

[47]Berkman, p. 149. Sylvia and Adele were pro-peace, while Christabel and the mother of all three, Emmeline, supported the war effort.

190

their claim to the vote and full citizenship by loyalty to a government which would later have to reward them. Of note is that *both* pro- and anti-war sides used maternal images to support their claims;[48] the pro-peace camp continued their pre-war view of women's proclivity for peace and opposed bearing children for cannon fodder, while those supporting the war made the protection of their families coterminous with the borders of their nation. Indeed, there is nothing about a general definition of feminism which commits it to antimilitarism; there is also "a revolutionary feminism which asserts women's equal right with men to take up arms against militarily enforced social, political, and economic injustice."[49]

Feminist scholars who bring up counter examples of militant women invoke not only better known figures like Joan of Arc, but also supposed Amazons in ancient Greece, cross-cultural studies of various tribal practices, or women in the military of countries like Israel. In the end, though, exceptional women in terms of battle activity do not overturn our culturally received notions:

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[48]The equivocal use of maternal images in peace work will be discussed further below.

[49]Pierson, "Did Your Mother," p. 224. She goes on: "In the case of women's participation in the Nicaraguan revolution, the two main sources of a distinct women's position on war and peace -- motherhood and powerlessness--have led to support for revolutionary violence." Ruether notes that even though feminists who explore the connection between patriarchy, violence and war might champion women's self-defence, few are anxious to engage in aggressive violence or emulate male war-making. Peacemaking women in solidarity with third-world or women of colour who have repudiated non-violent methods of social change are placed in a complicated position. Ruether, "Feminism," p. 68.

> The woman fighter is, for us, an identity *in extremis*, not an expectation. Joan of Arc proves this truism through her challenge to it....Her martyrdom figured centrally. So did her virginity. She may have donned male garb, but she was a *pure* woman whose violence, or leadership of violence, was sanctioned officially once others granted her voices the epistemological privilege she gave them.[50]

Women may on occasion "cross over" to defend their homes and children, and numerous examples of female fighters could be cited, especially in "unofficial" wars of resistance and guerilla tactics, but the construction of women as life-giving and men as life-taking is the dominant narrative in western society.

The Feminist Critique:
Woman as Outsider/Woman as Caretaker

There are two bases from which feminists have argued their claims for a distinctive woman's opposition to organized violence of all kinds. The first is women's general exclusion from formal social apparatuses of power, and the second is the involvement of most women in motherhood. At some points these arguments overlap due to the devaluation and marginalisation of the private sphere of domestic activity associated with maternal practice and care.

The first position, women as outsiders, received its most famous articulation by Virginia Woolf, particularly in her work of 1938, *Three Guineas*. Written as it was during the Spanish Civil War and on the brink of World War II, Woolf sought to articulate the connections between patriarchy, fascism, militarism and war. While patriarchical tyranny was now most openly to the fore in Italy and Germany, Woolf repeatedly made clear the parallels

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[50]Elshtain, *Women and War*, p. 173.

between the Führer and the Duce with the dictates of Englishmen, whether clergy, civil servants or heads of households, opposing the equality of women and determining what they could or could not do.[51] For Woolf, the connection between private and public was inseparable. The seed of male dictatorship and female hero-worship was the hierarchical division of labour which is fundamentally gendered and dependent on men's domination. The prevention of war would mean the dismantling of the whole patriarchal sex-gender system.[52]

Woolf did not deny that women could be fighters nor that men might promote pacifist ideals (she cites, for example, Wilfred Owen on p.8), but for social historical reasons, women's greater potential for opposition to war was located in not motherhood, but in their exclusion from power and wealth.[53] The daughters of educated men, writes Woolf, would form an "Outsiders' Society" who would refuse to make munitions or to nurse the wounded; they would maintain "indifference" to calls of patriotism, for as the outsider will say, "in fact, as a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world."[54] The

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[51]Woolf, *Three Guineas*, pp. 140-43.

[52]Pierson, "Did Your Mother," pp. 219-20.

[53]Pierson, "Did Your Mother," p. 220; Woolf, *Three Guineas*, pp. 104-5.

[54]Woolf, *Three Guineas*, pp. 106-9. Woolf is also sensitive to the class dynamics in her argument. She acknowledges that most of the munitions factory work and nursing was done by the daughters of working class men, and the refusal of this work would affect "daughters of educated men" less. These same women, however, are in a position to influence the opinion of those men in power. The

193

powerlessness, vulnerability, and/or poverty of most women means that they have little investment in any particular country. By refusing the need to be protected, women refute the justification for war and liberate men from militarism.

The second basis of the feminist critique of war and militarism, the symbolic linking of women with reproduction, children, and nature, has been invoked by women past and present, although not without some ambivalence. Indeed, as will be discussed further below, many reject any "moral mother" argument because of the fear that drawing attention to traditional conceptions of femininity will once again silence women.

Many have emphasized the life taking of men's wars and the life-giving and -sustaining work of mothers.

> The representative heroine of maternal peacefulness is the *mater dolorosa* ("mother of sorrows")....Scrounging for food to keep her children alive, weeping over the body of her son, nursing survivors, sadly rebuilding her home, reweaving the connections that war has destroyed -- as she grieves over her particular loss, she mourns war itself. Where she gives birth and sustains life, his war only hurts and destroys.[55]

Others note that feminist philosophy in general has been more concerned with birth and life than with death. Ruddick and Elshtain note Hannah Arendt's discussion of natality, Virginia Held argues that birth, not only death, is a uniquely *human* event as opposed to merely one of nature, and Mary O'Brien stresses the

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"three guineas" of the title refer to a subscription appeal in the support of women's education which Woolf states in the form of three letters to a fictional male reader.

[55]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 142. Ruddick mentions the famous lithographs of Käthe Kollwitz as illustrative.

importance of birth for structuring human consciousness and social relations [see bibliography]. Women as diverse as Olive Schreiner and Petra Kelly have linked women's involvement in reproduction with teaching them the cost of life which precludes their unqualified support for war, imparting their voices with moral authority.[56]

Di Leonardo identifies the theme of "Moral Mother" in a number of writings by feminists and non-feminists on women and militarism. The associated image of the mother is nurturant, compassionate and irreproachable; it is representative of the vision of woman as innately pacific and man as innately war-mongering. The Moral Mother is a central symbolic figure in debates over gender and militarism taking place at three levels: (1) the assessment of material reality, that is the relationship between gender and militarism in terms of how women are affected by war in their daily lives or how they (indirectly) support militarism; (2) an analysis of culture and ideology, examining how "Moral Mother" and "Woman Warrior" are used rhetorically; and (3) in determining the best strategy of analysis for organizing women and men for encouraging

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[56]Selections from Schreiner, Kelly and other women's writings can be found in Daniela Gioseffi, ed., *Women on War: Essential Voices for the Nuclear Age*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988). Schreiner writes in *Women and Labour*: "It is especially in the domain of war that we, the bearers of men's bodies, who supply its most valuable munition, who not amid the clamour and ardour of battle, but, singly, and alone, with a three-in-the-morning courage, shed blood and face death that the battle-field may have its food, a food more precious to us than our heart's blood; it is we especially, who in the domain of war, have our word to say, a word no man can say for us. It is our intention to enter into the domain of war and to labour there till in the course of generations we have extinguished it." Gioseffi, p. 162.

cohesion and effectiveness in feminist and antimilitarist groups.[57]
Di Leonardo herself has serious reservations about placing too much
weight on women's role as mothers as an effective image for such
organizing. Women have many vested interests in militarized states
by virtue of their role as citizens, workers, soldiers and
soldier's kin. Their short-term and long-term material interests
in military functioning need to be recognized, or we are left with
a specious image of mothers and children only threatened by, but
not participating in, military processes.[58] The use of the Moral
Mother image makes it difficult for men to join feminist
antimilitarism, glorifies a heterosexual, middle-class ideal, and
is vulnerable to contradiction since women/mothers are *not* entirely
peaceable beings.

There have been, however, serious attempts to critically
analyze maternal practice with a view to identifying a liberatory
standpoint consistent with feminist politics. Sara Ruddick has
written numerous articles and a book which support her conviction
that "some maternal practices are sufficiently governed by prin-
ciples of nonviolence to offer one model for nonviolent relation-
ships. This does not mean that in these practices mothers achieve
the nonviolence to which they aspire....It is the maternal *commit-
ment* to care for rather than assault or abandon children...that

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[57]Micaela Di Leonardo, "[Rev. Essay] Morals, Mothers and
Militarism: Antimilitarism and Feminist Theory," *Feminist Studies*
11 (Fall 1985): 603.

[58]Di Leonardo, "Morals, Mothers," p. 611-12.

illuminates more public struggles to live nonviolently."[59] Ruddick combines feminist standpoint theory with an analysis of maternal practice which is consistent with the relationship between praxis and virtue explored in this dissertation. The following section will outline some of Ruddick's thesis.[60]

Maternal Praxis and Peace

Ruddick is influenced by Nancy Hartsock's work on a feminist standpoint because it gives "maternal thinking" an epistemological and political base and it helped deepen her understanding of maternal practice as a characteristic of caring labour which Hartsock outlines.[61] Maternal thinking reveals militarist thinking to be abstract and destructive and, looking and acting from a feminist standpoint and politic, it becomes an engaged critical and visionary perspective.[62] Ruddick warns against claiming an absolute position as well as against endorsing any kind of dualistic ordering or formulations.

> It would be...easy to slip into a formulation of a
> feminine/feminist standpoint as an achievement rather

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[59]Sara Ruddick, "From Maternal Thinking to Peace Politics," in *Explorations in Feminist Ethics: Theory and Practice*, E. B. Cole, S. Coultrap-McQuin, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana U. P., 1992): 143.

[60]See also "Maternal Thinking: Feminine Symbols and Paradigms" in chapter three above.

[61]Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in *Discovering Reality* also appears as the final chapter in her book *Money, Sex and Power*, (New York: Longman, 1983). See also "Epistemology and Gender" in chapter one above.

[62]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 131, 136.

than a place from which to create a sturdy, sane vision of the natural and social world. Perhaps most worrisome, being on the side of good can foster a repressive self-righteousness that legitimates killing or, alternatively, condemns violence without attending to the despair and abuse from which it arises. ... [Dualistic] righteousness encourages a mythic division between women's peacefulness and men's wars that is belied by history and obscures the flawed, complex peacefulness that is latent in maternal practice and thinking.[63]

The feminist standpoint, like an antimilitarist maternal perspective, is achieved through struggle and change; it is through maternal *efforts* to be peaceful, rather than achieved peacefulness, that Ruddick finds resources for creating a less violent world. The distinctive kind of thinking that arises out of maternal practice gives a real basis to the conventional and symbolic association between women and peace, but by itself the peacefulness of mothers is not reliable. Mothers can also be militant. "In order for motherly peacefulness to be publicly significant, maternal practice must respect and extend its pacifism. For this to happen, maternal thinking would have to be transformed by a feminist politics."[64]

Maternal practice is like any other human collective activity distinguished by particular aims and the consequent demands made on its practitioners committed to those aims. Understanding shapes

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[63]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 135.

[64]Ruddick, "Preservative Love and Military Destruction: Some Reflections on Mothering and Peace," in *Mothering*, J. Trebilcot, ed. (Totowa: Rowman & Allenheld Publ., 1983): 233. As noted elsewhere in this thesis, according to Ruddick women *and men* can perform work associated with maternal practice and acquire virtues like care and peacemaking. "Mother" refers to all those involved in the praxis of maternal work.

the end even as the practical pursuit of the end shapes the understanding.[65] The demands imposed on those doing maternal work is to preserve the life of children and to foster their growth in a manner that is socially acceptable within context of whatever kinship or broader group they live. "These three demands -- for *preservation, growth,* and *social acceptability* -- constitute maternal work; to be a mother is to be committed to meeting these demands by works of preservative love, nurturance, and training."[66] Out of this work a certain discipline arises that asks certain questions, accepts certain criteria for truth, sets certain priorities, and identifies virtues that are required. Mothers respond to the changeable, growing children in an open way, training themselves to look at and to respond to complex individuals inseparable from the relations in which they grow.

Many have pointed out that it is women's work -- sheltering, nursing, feeding, kin work, teaching young children and caring for the frail elderly -- that is most directly threatened and destroyed by war. However, the task of a peacemaker is to identify violences wherever they occur, whether in the boardroom or the bedroom, the factory or the classroom, or on the battlefield.[67] As a whole, maternal thinking stands in striking contrast to militaristic or abstract thinking, for instance in how issues of control and domination are understood.

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[65]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, pp. 13-14.

[66]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 17.

[67]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 137.

199

Ruddick defines the nonviolent activism of peacemaking by identifying four ideals: *renunciation* of "violent" strategies, *resistance* as the act of discerning and then courageously fighting violences, *reconciliation* as the only acceptable end to battle, and *peace as a way of living* that includes ambivalences and comprom-ise.[68] Peace, like mothering, is sentimentally honoured and often secretly despised, but a critical understanding of both will lead to their reconception. Mothers and their children are not equal; power relationships are shifting and complex; mothers often fail in their task. Yet,

> the radical inequality of mother-child relations does not preclude a mutuality and respect for another's lively being. Without being atypically unselfish, a mother may measure her power in terms of her ability to nurture a child whom she *cannot* dominate ....It would be sentimen-tally foolish to claim for all mother-child relations such mutuality. It would be equally sentimental cynicism to deny that many mothers and children create together an ongoing, changing approximation of mutuality. Out of their failures as well as successes, mothers develop a conception of relationships that undermines the dominant conception of individuality that fuels conquest as well as provocative "defense." They not only modify aggres-sion in the interest of connection but develop connec-tions that limit aggression before it arises.[69]

Mothers have an alternative theory of conflict distinct from the militarist's account, as they learn in a daily way to choose peace over combat, and if peace fails, to fight most battles without resorting to violence, despite the temptation to do oth-erwise. Like pacifists, maternal thinking refuses to separate means from ends; "both wish to treat 'enemies' as opponents with

[68]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, pp. 161-82.

[69]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 182.

200

whom one struggles, to risk trust rather than trusting suspicion, and to seek reconciliation rather than victory."[70] Ruddick does not deny that abuse can and does exist between mothers and children, and sometimes abuse is even culturally sanctioned. However, she maintains that maternal practices are sufficiently governed by principles of nonviolence to offer us a model for nonviolent relationships. Even if mothers do not always achieve nonviolence, it their commitment which is exemplary.

Like others mentioned above, Ruddick includes a maternal conception of bodiliness, natality, and sexuality as a resource for rejecting militarism and its resulting destruction of human flesh. Militarism constructs an ideology of the mind separate from the body which is appropriate for the "techno-strategic rationality" of nuclear reasoning. "In maternal practice there is a real, unromantic, material basis for a revisionist history of the body, both realistic and celebratory. To tell a maternal history, it is necessary to look again, with trusting eyes, at sexuality and birth....Every body, and therefore every death, counts; the promise of birth includes a dying well tended and a death well mourned."[71] Death's reality is not denied, but birth is weighed over death.

There is also a complex relationship between maternity, sex and violence. Not only are soldiers trained in a masculinist ideology which blatantly endorses contempt for women, but destruction and violence are eroticized. Ruddick suggests that there may

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[70]Ruddick, "Pacifying the Forces," p. 482.

[71]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 206.

201

be reason to believe that female sexuality is different from the sexuality ascribed to soldiers on the battlefield. "When women do eroticize combat, they may be more apt to eroticize submission than conquest. If women do tend to eroticize reconciliation and, in combat, submission, then female libidinal energy will hardly ignite the lust for battle."[72] There is also a maternal sexuality which has been mostly overlooked, the diffuse eroticism that arises from and is shaped by caring for children. A mother watches as a child develops a sexuality independent of her own; when this emerging sexuality is protected and welcomed, it fosters a sexual freedom and pleasure at odds with a rigid, dichotomous gender ideology imposed by monolithic military control. Further, she can discourage in her children the sexualization of conquest, cruelty, destruction and domination.[73]

As Ruddick looks at mothering through the lens of nonviolence, she discovers, even with undisputed evidence that sometimes children are abandoned and assaulted, a typical maternal struggle to create nonviolent forms of cooperation and conflict.

> Feminist, maternal peacemakers draw on the history and traditions of women to create a *politics* of peace. They are inspired by the act and symbol of birth and by the passionate labour of women who through most of history have borne the primary responsibility for protection and care. Yet because they are feminist, these peacemakers subvert mythical divisions between women and men, private care and public justice, that hobble both mothering and peacemaking. Men become mothers and mothers invent new models and styles of public, nonviolent resistance and cooperation that are suitable to their particular temp-

[72]Ruddick, "Pacifying the Forces," p. 484.

[73]Ruddick, "Preservative Love," pp. 256-6.

erament, personal history, social location, and economic resources.[74]

Feminist Ambivalence over Mothering

It is not surprising that writings on mothers and maternal practice by feminists are at times uneasy with looking to images associated with traditional femininity as a basis for new patterns of gender relationships in the private and the public sphere. Not only have women been unreliable in extending a practice of care and peace beyond those in their immediate family, class, race or religion, and thereby showing that women's values and relationships are not reliably feminist. There is also a kind of "matrophobia" in feminist writings which grows out of a history where so many women's bodies and dreams have been destroyed by enforced and repressive "motherhood."[75]

First, there is an ideology of motherhood which is oppressive to women. It sentimentalizes the caretaking work mothers do and ascribes an uncritical natural goodness to them which in the end inspires contempt for their work, not respect. "Sometimes feminists seem to confirm the cultural silencing of mothers' voices. A few seem to share the romantic view of the mother-home outside of men's languages and cultures. For many other women, becoming feminist is inseparable from breaking with a tradition of oppres-

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[74]Ruddick, "From Maternal Thinking," p. 153.

[75]Ruddick, "From Maternal Thinking," pp. 144, 149. Ruddick cites Adrienne Rich as probably being the first one to name this feminist fear of mothering.

203

sive maternal self-sacrifice."[76] Many fear the temptation of reinforcing old stereotypes of femininity or of endorsing essentialist views of male and female. Ironically, the archetype of caretaker woman can actually be exploited in the service of war.

> The ideal of caretaking women helps exclude women from the public institutions by reminding women that their first responsibility is to family. The ideal helps co-opt women's resistance to war by convincing women that their immediate responsibility to ameliorate the effects of war takes precedence over organized public action against war.[77]

For women's work as caretaker, kinworker, shelterer, etc. to serve as a source of strength and antimilitarist politics, it will have to be submitted to critical reflection in keeping with a politics of resistance.

Secondly, there is the fear that the dualisms of the liberal tradition will be reinforced, rather than overcome, in the attempt to promote a kind of feminized and transformed public world. Liberalism seeks to overcome otherness, and presumes that the preconditions of peace include cultural and political homogeneity. Elshtain writes that women have much at stake in this understanding of peace:

> If peace...requires various ontological endorsements that

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[76]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 38. The "romantic view of the mother-home" is described by Ruddick as the nostalgia for a "'paradise lost,' an original mother-tongue, mother-home, mother-landscape that was sacrificed to the father's symbolic, oedipal order. It is not surprising that nostalgic fantasies for mothers or their bodies abound in feminist critiques of technocratic, patriarchal societies or that as *daughters*, mothers may participate in them."

[77]Laura Duhan Kaplan, "Woman as Caretaker: An Archetype that Supports Patriarchal Militarism," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): 131.

cover up difference and project a world of ongoing equilibrium, harmony, and perfect order, it would seem to make enormous good sense for women -- especially feminists -- to eschew its blandishments. For this peace traffics in binary opposites and Manichean constructions that have long relied upon particular constructions of the "feminine"....[78]

A number of feminists have raised the concern that received notions of femininity and motherhood be rejected because these images have no power or public credibility and hence they will be used against women to keep them silent and as second class citizens.[79] Not challenging the dualisms merely creates an inversion and a reinforcement of previous hierarchies of values without addressing the deeper ontological and epistemological questions, such as theories of the constitution of the self which entail devaluing the other. Moreover, dualistic constructions leave out men as co-workers and as co-responsible in the work of peace.

Thirdly, there are also strong connections in history with mothers and the endorsement of military actions, as well as unexa-

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[78]Elshtain, "Problem with Peace," pp. 264-5. Elshtain's point about our understanding of peace itself, that is as absolutized, is also well taken. She writes: "The problem is this: peace is...an ontologically suspicious concept. Peace never appears without its violent *doppelgänger*, War, lurking in the shadows. Peace is *inside*, not outside, a frame with war -- most especially in the most powerful and absolute...expressions of its desirability and realizability. War is threatening disorder, Peace is healing order." "The Problem with Peace," p. 258. See also *Women and War* pp. 253-5.

[79]Di Leonardo, "Morals, Mothers," p. 615; Duhan Kaplan writes: "[Peace] theories that emphasize the image of women as caretaker do not challenge conceptions of femininity which have served to silence women....Women who conceptualize their peace praxis [in this way]...are reminding others of their femininity, and hence of the need not to respect their perspective, as they enter the political sphere." "Woman as Caretaker," p. 127.

mined connections between women and the part they play in maintaining and reproducing a warist society. Women have not always extended the domain of care beyond their own class, race, neighbourhood or country, and women have exploited the caretaker image to uphold a conservative, heterosexist ideology.[80] Mothers have derived vicarious honour through the heroism of their husband or son, a notion which recruitment propaganda has not failed to exploit. Women, as well as men, want, need and have power, even if they sometimes have difficulty recognizing this fact. As long as the reality of the relative power that each person has is unacknowledged, women will have the potential to distort relationships and at some level to support patriarchal militarism.[81]

Lastly, feminists who have critiqued the use of maternal images charge that there is a danger the very real differences among mothers, whether of race, class, or other oppressions, are ignored in this literature. Alison Bailey has specifically addressed herself to Ruddick's work in *Maternal Thinking*, maintaining that "while [Ruddick] mentions the diversity among mothers and its influence, she never accounts for its implications in her argument. For maternal thinking to offer criticism of military practices, we need to know much more about the many locations from which mothers

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[80]Ruddick, "From Maternal Thinking," p. 144.

[81]Lois Edmund, "Response [to G. Koontz]," in *Peace Theology and Violence Against Women*, ed. Elizabeth Yoder (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1992): 52.

speak."[82]

Bailey claims that Ruddick uses two voices, one speaking from her own location and experience of mothering, while the other voice claims that mothering universally consists of meeting the three demands of preservative love, fostering growth and social training. These voices, according to Bailey, become blurred, structuring Ruddick's argument along her own experience. Bailey explores Patricia Hill Collin's discussion of motherwork which is done from the clearly identifiable location of African-American women; in this context survival, identity and empowerment are the foundation of mothering.[83] "Both racial-ethnic mothers and white mothers may share their anger over the horrors and wastes of their government's preparations for war, but their critiques of dominant/military ways of thinking will be different because of their obviously dissimilar relationships to white men and political power structures."[84]

Bailey's critique points us again to an important issue in feminist writings, that is, the temptation to underemphasize or even disguise differences among women in the interests of pre-senting a unified voice of dissent, and thereby reinforcing a

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[82]Alison Bailey, "Mothering, Diversity, and Peace Politics," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): 188.

[83]Bailey, "Mothering," p. 193. Much of Bailey's discussion is based on a 1992 unpublished paper by Collins, "Shifting the Center: Race, Class and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood," and conver-sations with Collins. She argues that the temptation to make Collins' foundational list a subset of Ruddick's more general list should be resisted because it obliterates the features of racial-ethnic mothering which Collins makes visible.

[84]Bailey, "Mothering," p. 195.

207

white, middle-class, heterosexual, Euro-Canadian/-American version of feminism. The calls of protest from women who stand outside this dominant group should be taken with utmost seriousness and with a view to recognize where repentance might be appropriate. As Bailey notes, "[if] maternal practice is to function as a stable foundation for a feminist peace politics it must do more than just consider the differences between maternal practice and military practice. It must also explore the relationship between militarism and race and class privilege."[85]

Bailey addresses herself mostly to Ruddick's 1989 book *Maternal Thinking* and two earlier articles; in this author's reading of Ruddick's work, many attempts are in fact made to disclaim an absolute universal perspective and to allow that women working in different contexts will have their own experiences of what maternal practice might mean for them. Moreover, Ruddick in a more recent article published in 1992, "From Maternal Thinking to Peace Politics,"[86] seems to be taking challenges like Bailey's seriously in her continuing reflections on this subject. In her reviewing she claims to discern three overlapping moments in the transformation of maternal thinking, that is the move from a "womanly" practice to a liberatory standpoint. The first moment is the heuristic representation of the "womanly" stance, which includes antiracist elements; the second is a diagnosis of flaws, including the

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[85]Bailey, "Mothering," p. 196.

[86]Found in Cole & Coultrap-McQuin, *Explorations in Feminist Ethics*, pp. 141-55.

tendency to racism, within, not apart from, the stance represented;
and the third moment is a transformative encounter with feminism
and women's politics of resistance.[87] She admits:

> Since mothers differ from each other in all the individual and social ways that people differ, it will take many versions of maternal thinking, some radically different from mine, to inspire among varieties of mothers the surprised recognition [of anti-militarist tendencies and principles of nonviolence latent in their work and thought].[88]

A Politics of Peace and Resistance

Ruddick, Woolf and others find hope in the fact that women's
social position makes them inherently "disloyal to the civiliza-
tion" that depends on them; this is a women's politics of resis-
tance.[89] Women may call on images associated with traditional
roles, but with the purpose of resisting oppressive policies and
domination.

When women's politics of resistance is transformed by feminist
politics, it makes clear and readily understood the many kinds of
violence in women's/mother's lives, whether at the hands of lovers,
employers or strangers, or even in the domineering and sadistic
tendencies which are the temptation of maternal violence.[90] After
identifying the forms of violence and analyzing the social,

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[87]Ruddick, "From Maternal Thinking," p. 145.

[88]Ruddick, "From Maternal Thinking," p. 146.

[89]Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, p. 222, 225. The phrase "disloyal to the civilization" is an essay title by Adrienne Rich.

[90]Ruddick, "From Maternal Thinking," p. 150.

economic and political context in which women are struggling, efforts are made to create policies which ensure that women have access to shelter, financial means and physical safety to care for themselves and their dependents. As James Sterba reminds us, one cannot consistently pursue peace without at the same time pursuing "feminine justice." By "feminine justice" Sterba would include restructuring the family in such a way that children are not socialized according to gender expectations but according to natural abilities, women and men having equal opportunity in education and employment, and violence against women in society be eliminated, whether overt (rape, sexual harassment, pornography) or structural, in our own families or at the international level.[91] This is not to say that every woman's experience of oppression is the same, but each will develop alternative ideals based on solidarity with women who have suffered from particular situations of racial, economic, or sexual abuse.

One step dictated by a feminist ideal of solidarity is to question at every level the structures of domination and oppression which are based on the assumption that one side's victory must be the other's defeat. Whether inter-personal or international in scope, "[we] seek an alternative power principle of empowerment in community rather than power over and disabling others. Such enabling in community is based on a recognition of the fundamental interconnectedness of life, of men and women, blacks and whites, -

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[91]James P. Sterba, "Feminist Justice and the Pursuit of Peace," *Hypatia* 9 (Spring 1994): 172.

...human and the nonhuman community of animals, plants, air and water."[92] In Mary Segers's critique of the U.S. Catholic Bishop's pastoral letter on war and peace, she also notes places where the bishops and feminists have similar concerns, one being the concern over power and its uses. Instead of focusing on power as the ability to control and dominate others, feminists focus on alternative measures and conceptions, such as the ability to persuade and facilitate, the ability to enable others to act creatively, the ability to exist in a mutually reciprocal relationship with others. Rather than power being conceived as *power over* others and nature, they stress *power with* others.[93]

Theological Reflections on Women and Peace

In recent years, there has not been the strong connection between theology and the issue of women and peace as there was in the first wave of feminism, the struggle for suffrage, and the moral reform movements in late 19th/early 20th century England and North America. Calls for world peace today are more likely to be based on humanitarian grounds, with only a quasibiological link between values like peace and compassion and women's influence. Pacifism based on radical Christianity, by contrast, is founded on an ethic of peacemaking that links Christian conversion to God's

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[92]Ruether, "Feminism and Peace," p. 72-3.

[93]Segers, "Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter," p. 146. This understanding of power also complements the understanding found in maternal thinking.

will for peace on earth, and which is directed to men and women equally.[94] Some feminist theologians, however, do see peace as part of the enterprise of justice and hence an issue which women can speak to given their position on the margins of the dominant structures, as well as being a virtue arising out of the praxis of most women's lives.

A survey of the biblical understanding of peace and how the church has understood this concept in the tradition reveals both a potential to reclaim peace as central to Christianity but also how the church has to a great extent supported the separation of gender roles. In the Old Testament, Yahweh is a great warrior, but Israel also came to see the God of the peaceable kingdom (Is. 11:6-9, Mic. 4:3-4, Zech. 9:9f). The Suffering Servant and eschatological visions stand in contrast to warrior heroes; in the new kingdom, barriers between nations, generations, classes and genders will be broken (Joel 2: 28f.). Jesus in the New Testament makes no distinction between men and women in his calls to service. Women were found in his close circle of friends, and Jesus did not shun contact with ritually impure, morally disreputable or pagan women. "It bears on women and war, because the myth of a subordinate woman in need of protection and worth dying for could only develop if Jesus' respect for women is being ignored."[95] The ambiguous

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[94]Ruether, "Feminism and Peace," pp. 64, 67. I would argue that this understanding of peacemaking as integral to God's kingdom and will for all peoples is consistent with the radical Anabaptist understanding of peace advocated by some Mennonites. See Addendum chapter for a discussion and feminist critique of peace theology.

[95]Herzog, "Peacemaker Woman," p. 46.

212

position of women in the letters from Paul and others seem at times to reinforce gendered patterns of service, but androcentric hermeneutics have also underemphasized or hidden the important role of women in the early church.

Kristen Herzog notes that the changes in Christian art and iconography in the Constantinian era onward reflect the fact that the so-called feminine virtues associated with Jesus' teachings were no longer emphasized except in restricted areas like monasteries or in the cult of Mary. Instead of the healing, nurturing Jesus of the Gospels, Christ is depicted as the imperial ruler; instead of the miracle worker, good shepherd, giver of bread and fishes, Christ is the conqueror with his foot on the neck of the enemy.[96] In the era of Ambrosius and Augustine the church continued to develop the classic doctrine of Just War, allowing military actions and dying in a just cause to count as "higher service."

The Reformation, early modern period, democratic revolution and rise of nation-states witnessed many devastating wars not unsupported by the churches. "We cannot overlook the fact that the division of gender roles in the dying, heroic male and the living sacrificial female was supported by a patriarchally defined exegesis and church history."[97] The scientific revolution in the 17th century and onward helped perpetuate the association of nature as not nurturing mother, but as disorder to be tamed by reason and

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[96]Herzog, "Peacemaker Woman," p. 46-7.

[97]Herzog, "Peacemaker Woman," p. 51.

213

technology and, by extension, war. Women, blacks, orientals, aboriginals etc. were linked to the dangerous chaotic side of nature. In the 19th century theories of sex differences in the fledgling discipline of sociology gave "scientific" validity to the equation of women with passivity and non-aggression. "In the context of these ideological developments, the association of women with peace and the preservation of life gained credence, as did also its counterpart, the identification of war (indeed most killing) as a male enterprise."[98] Some women, as noted above, did link their reform movements and analysis of the problem of war with Christianity, but often the church did not challenge the concepts being developed in science or public policy.

A theology of peace reexamines the Bible, retrieves the image of the cross and reconciliation, and looks for new images and metaphors. "[Christian] women can no longer support any heroic death 'for God and country'....They will instead make the cause of peace, which patriarchal society assigned to them for the domestic sphere only, their very own cause."[99]

Dorothee Sölle is one theologian who believes "peace needs women." For too long the model of Cain and Abel, executioner or victim, have limited our anthropological models. Women have been largely invisible in this story.

> As long as human being is identified with man, as long as
> human children who are mentioned are only sons, as long
> as God is masculine and not more than that, as long as

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[98]Pierson, "'Did Your Mother Wear Army Boots?'" p. 211-12.

[99]Herzog, "Peacemaker Woman," p. 56.

214

the myth is silent about half of humanity...[and given] the presuppositions of our culture, which is a men's culture, nothing can change. Peace needs other people, and other forms of behaviour, than those which have developed so far. Peace -- if we mean more by the word than the occasional absence of war -- needs women.[100]

Sölle and others do not want to argue that women are more peaceable by "nature," but given that war affects their lives and day to day activities in a dramatic way, and that money is diverted away from the programs that women and their children need in order to support the military machine, women as marginalized and oppressed are natural allies of those who struggle against war and militarism.

There is a great need for new models and new forms of behaviour. The church must recognize that it has supported the dualisms inherent in liberal constructions of personhood which value separation, self-interest and over-against models of power. As discussed in chapter two above, "love is precisely that power which creates and sustains relations between individuals, and so creates persons and community. [This is done] not through the passivity of total self-sacrifice, but in the active receptivity which creates genuine mutuality, and through that mutuality, loves the self in loving the other."[101] Loving the other can and should include loving one's enemies, based on the Christian tradition of divine love which seeks to heal, reconcile and reunite humanity to God, and the models available to us in, for example, maternal care for

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[100]Dorothee Sölle, "Peace Needs Women," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 38 (1983): 86.

[101]Jennifer Rike, "The Lion and the Unicorn," *Encounter* 51 (Summer 1990): 238.

215

children. Our understanding of power has been falsely based on a projected patriarchal deity who wields power as domination. Instead the God who through Christ resists, heals and transforms evil refuses to control or dominate. Power as the capacity to influence undergirds the notion of empowering as opposed to overpowering and is consistent with the goal of mutuality.[102]

The church has also been slow to address violence in all its forms, that is not only against overt military actions but in oppression of the poor, human rights violations, economic or sexual exploitation, unemployment, and social and domestic violence against women. Christian sexual ethics have not adequately taken into account underlying dualisms and the problem of male dominance in relations between the sexes. Sr. Joan Chittester, one of only three women to testify before the Ad Hoc Committee writing the Catholic bishop's pastoral letter on war and peace, comments on the moral schizophrenia which exists in the church's position on use of force. Massive destruction of human life and the environment in the course of warfare can be theologized away, with some people's needs and lives justified as being more important than others. When life is the hands of a woman, however, then taking away life is always morally wrong and never condoned, i.e. in the absolute

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[102]Gayle Gerber Koontz, "Redemptive Resistance to Violation of Women: Christian Power, Justice, and Self-Giving Love," in *Peace Theology and Violence Against Women*, pp. 34-5. Koontz goes on to question if the "power to influence" model is strong enough in the face of profound evil, such as the abuse and suffering of women and children. She uses Wendy Farley's work on the power of compassion to explore this question. See section on Mennonite peace theology below.

repudiation of abortion.[103] This is a clear example of the kind of double standard found in moral judgements according to gender, that is there is an allowance for prudence and relativizing in the public (male) sphere which rationalizes warfare, whereas in the private sphere pregnant women are held to some absolute standard of care and sacrifice.

New ways of resolving conflicts will only be found when we no longer separate mind/body, private/public, rationality/emotion along gender lines. A theology of peace can draw on new images and metaphors to free itself from past implicit support for the division of genders, and the assigning of virtues to one or the other and thereby perpetuating the domination of one over the other. This will entail opening ourselves to others as worthy of "care" in spite of the sexual, social, political and theological differences which may seem to divide us.

Conclusion

The study of peace, war and militarism is deeply connected to the construction of gender and how women are related to each concept socially, politically, economically and ideologically. Constructions of war and peace are themselves split and assigned to one gender or the other, reinforced by the binary constructions of liberal society and the sexual division of labour in western society. Men and women are culturally bound by the definitions of masculine and feminine and the virtues assigned to one or the

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[103]Segers, "Catholic Bishop's," p. 634.

other. Men are historically the actors and perpetuators of war, but women have played their own roles directly and indirectly supporting conflicts between neighbours or between countries. Women have acted as civic cheerleaders and as the collective Other, the representative of nature which is to be controlled, or of the softer values of hearth and home. The stereotypes and cultural expectations attached to masculine and feminine ideals have disguised and promoted domination, control and violence in social and interpersonal relationships. To critique these relationships and to identify alternative ideals is part of the task of feminist (Christian) thinkers.

The connection between women, feminism and peace is deep, linked conceptually, psychologically, historically and politically. Feminists typically point out how dualistic, dichotomized thinking found in liberal conceptual paradigms favours power relationships of strong over weak, with male gender interests associated with the former. Socialization patterns tend to link women with relation-ships and concrete context-specific approach to questions of behaviour and moral dilemmas. This is not to say that the domestic sphere has not also itself perpetuated paradigms of domination. As Woolf and other critics stress, the valorization of subordination has in the past perpetuated gender inequality. Nevertheless, peace has been linked with women and women-led reform movements in the West for over a century, not as a private virtue alone but recog-nizing the broader social and cultural ways that peace is necessary for the flourishing of women and their dependents. The historical

link between women and peace is demonstrated in women's political activism around the globe.

Women's critique of war has tended to rely on either her marginalized position as outsider and as one who along with her children feels the direct suffering which is a consequence of militarism and war, or from her role and work caring for children, cultivating virtues of care and peacemaking and offering alternative rationalities to abstract, techno-strategic discourse. Mothering takes place under diverse historical, geographical, political and social conditions, and poverty, war, and racism have devastating effects on mothers' lives. Women rightly resent it when their work is sentimentalized and trivialized, and the temptation to make arguments about women's essential natures as pacific and nurturing are to be resisted. Maternal images are easily used to support violence, too.

There is, however, an ideology of motherhood which has contributed to the oppression of women. For women's work to be a source of strength and antimilitarist politics, it must also be submitted to critical reflection. The praxis of women's lives, transformed by a feminist politic and liberationist standpoint can offer resources for our thinking about women and about peace. The demands of maternal work, which is related to fostering growth and encouraging the gifts and potentials of those in our care, and not to one gender or another, constitute a practice which encourages certain kinds of thinking, certain kinds of virtues. Violence, whether intrapersonal, interpersonal, between communities or

between countries, threatens maternal practice and inspires women to join the ranks of those who seek the end of violence in all its manifestations. As Ruether has noted,

> [we] seek a new mode of human selfhood that could transcend both aggressive dehumanization of others and timid acquiescence or support of individual or collective violence. For some feminists this idea suggests a new appropriation of the ideal of nonviolence itself, not as passivity but as a courageous resistance to violence and injustice which reaches out to affirm rather than to negate the humanity of the other person.[104]

There must be a new understanding of the dynamic of power in relationships of inequality, whether the difference is gender or race, class, sexual orientation, etc. In this work of renewal and transformation of relationships which support the equality and liberation of all, Christian women and the church as a whole need to participate.

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[104]Ruether, "Feminism and Peace," p. 72.

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221-222

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CHAPTER V: ADDENDUM

A Daughter of Menno Looks At Peace:
A Feminist Critique of Mennonite Peace Theology

Every doctoral thesis has its own story of how the themes, questions and arguments contained within the project came together for the writer. In this instance, reading on the theme of self-sacrifice led me to feminist literature which at the same time spoke of care and caring, maternal labour. The third virtue to be discussed was not a self-evident choice, but my Mennonite heritage compelled me to identify questions around peace-making. In further reading it became clearer that there were interconnections between the three virtues without the need to impose any artificial framework [see "Introduction"]. For Mennonite women, self-sacrifice and care are not just gendered expectations, but the principle means by which they have lived out their peace theology. This addendum chapter reviews how peace (and to some extent self-sacrifice and care) raises questions for myself and other Mennonite critics. Two theologians' work on the topic are reviewed, as well as some more personal reflections.

Like most religious traditions, the Mennonite church is not monolithic in its position on any particular theological or ethical issue. Even the doctrine most closely associated with Mennonites, peace and pacifism, is actively debated and cannot be reduced to one approach.[1] One theologian, however, has remarked that even

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[1]See for instance J. R. Burkholder, B. N. Gingerich, eds., *Mennonite Peace Theology: A Panorama of Types* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office, 1991) or numerous articles in the Fall 1992 edition of *The Conrad Grebel Review* (vol. 10 no. 3) on

given the variety of approaches, a Mennonite approach to peace may be described as having in common a rejection of lethal violence as an option for Anabaptist believers, claiming the authority of Scripture, and positing the church community as a primary loyalty.[2]

On first glance it would seem that the theological and lived-out heritage of Mennonites would have a lot to offer discussions on self-sacrifice, care and peacemaking. Indeed, it was striking to me that beyond an occasional reference to Quakers or Shakers, feminist theologians and critics addressing the related issues of this dissertation did not make more use of the resources of the historical peace churches. Rightly or not, Mennonites have gained a world-wide reputation for their humility of service (self-sacrifice), their work in disaster relief, mutual aid and inter-national development (care), and calling for the end of violent conflict as well as practical peacemaking such as mediation ser-

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the theme of Mennonite peace theology. Note also that the Mennonite church is part of the larger Anabaptist movement of the Radical Reformation, and would include a number of subgroups including Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren, Amish, Brethren in Christ, Old Order Mennonites, Holdeman, and others. These churches can be characterized as holding to, among other principles, adult baptism and nonresistance to violence. Nonresistance is generally seen as entailing as a minimum the refusal of military service, but the wider implications of what Mennonites believe to be the Biblical call to peace have come to include for many a more "active" stance, for example establishing peace and conflict study centres. As an illustration, Mennonite Central Committee (M.C.C.), an inter-Mennonite agency involved in numerous development and relief projects, has a "Peace and Social Concerns" division and M.C.C. was an initiator of Project Ploughshares.

[2]Gayle Gerber Koontz, "Redemptive Resistance to Violation of Women: Christian Power, Justice, and Self-Giving Love," in *Peace Theology and Violence Against Women*, ed. E. Yoder (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1992): 30.

vices and victim-offender reconciliation. For many Mennonite women and for myself, however, a feminist critique compels a "second glance."

In recent years, Mennonite women struggling with their role inside/outside the home, in the church, and with the reality of violence in their lives have come against the realization that Mennonite theology and its peace stance has often been less than liberating for them. Violence was officially eschewed in the public realm, but arguably flourished in the private: in the home and in the power struggles within the church. The gendered virtues and peaceful expectations of society associated with femininity, which were in the case of Mennonite communities also expected of men due to the stand on pacifism, left church politics as one of the few venues where masculinity might be "proved."

The question of leadership in the church as a gender issue did received some early attention. As more Mennonites moved out of isolated rural communities and interacted in other secular and religious settings, the call by women to be heard in the churches and to be involved in leadership roles became increasingly louder, even if not all churches have chosen to listen to and learn from women's experiences. Mennonite women watched as women from other denominations made their sometimes tentative, sometimes bold moves into non-traditional roles in the church, and sometimes gains were made in some Mennonite churches and conferences. In this way Mennonites were following the debates over the role of women in the public sphere and in the church much like other conservative church

bodies. The connection between church politics, gender roles and peace theology, however, was not initially made.

It took even Mennonite women a long time to see that our very peace theology is implicated in the marginalization of women in our churches. For Mennonite women the virtues of self-sacrifice and care had become the way to live out peace in daily life. The oppressive and ideological interpretations of these virtues reinforced gender inequality in all spheres of women's lives. Mennonites have been said to cultivate a "culture of low self-esteem," which in turn has been doubly imposed on women in the private domestic sphere.[3] In our tradition, story-telling from our history of persecution and migration is full of accounts of heroic and self-sacrificing care by godly, pious mothers, often during times of war or as desperate refugees. These saintly acts never translated into women having a vote in church business meetings, however. Mennonite men have indeed suffered for their refusal of military conscription and service due to their peace stance. Yet some of those same men returned to their homes and physically and sexually abused their spouses and/or children, and never saw the contradiction.

The issue of domestic violence is a significant catalyst in the discussion of peace and women's issues in the Mennonite church. Finally the blatant contradiction between outward peacefulness and inner destruction became too much to bear. As much as we would

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[3]This phrase was used in a sermon given March 5, 1995 by Ron Rempel, the manager and editor of *The Mennonite Reporter*, a Canadian inter-Mennonite publication of news and commentary, at Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, Vancouver, B.C.

like to think otherwise, there is no indication that Mennonite homes are exempt from reported statistical average incidents of abuse found in Canadian or American society.[4] Gayle Gerber Koontz, a theologian and ethicist teaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (AMBS), Elkhart, IN, claims that a paper presented by Vange Willms Thiessen on "Case Study on Domestic Violence: A Theology of Peace and a Theology of Liberation" at a Peace Theology Colloquium in Abbotsford in June of 1991, was one of the first to formally present the connection between violence against women as an issue for reflection in relation to Mennonite peace theology.[5]

Work by feminist scholars in the last 25 years has drawn attention to the fact that systemic sexism in our society has blinded us to violence against and violation of women. As Koontz has noted, yes, Mennonite psychologists and pastors researched family violence, and yes, peace educators emphasized that peace-making should begin with the family, but "most scholarly Mennonite

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[4]Mennonite Central Committee has put out resource packets on this issue. In Canada, *The Purple Packet: Domestic Violence Resources for Pastoring Persons, Wife Abuse* was published in Winnipeg in 1987. In the U.S., M.C.C.'s Taskforce on Domestic Violence published *Broken Boundaries: Resources for Pastoring People, Child Sexual Abuse* in 1989. Dr. Isaak Block, former professor at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, has done a number of studies on Mennonites and domestic abuse. See for example his case study in *Peace Theology and Violence against Women*, E. Yoder, editor, and his book *Assault on God's Image: Domestic Abuse* (Winnipeg: Windflower Communications, 1992).

[5]Vange Thiessen is a family therapist practising in Abbotsford, B.C. A copy of her paper was generously provided to the author. The observation by Dr. Koontz is made in the introduction to the publication *Peace Theology and Violence Against Women*, a collection of papers presented at a gathering of theologians and therapists in October 1991 at AMBS and later published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies in their Occasional Papers series.

work in the theology and ethics of pacifism has focused its attention historically, and continues to focus currently on specific issues other than domestic violence and violence against women."[6] She suggests this important oversight may be due to, first of all, its very ordinariness. As mentioned, statistically Mennonite families show the same level and range of violence as found in broader society, which also has not really recognized violence against women until relatively recently. More significant, however, is the fact that Mennonite peace theology and ethics have engaged in arguments for pacifism in the face of violence being justified by others, for example the "Just War Theory" endorsed by numerous churches. No Christian tradition has explicitly justified the use of violence against women, and since on the surface such violence was wrong, no ethical debate was required, even when actual practice went undenounced or was enabled through self-deception.[7]

Mennonite women are beginning to analyze their own experiences and tradition to identify those elements which have contributed to the blindness regarding violence in personal relationships. Mary Anne Hildebrand identifies gender role models in traditional Mennonite families as a strong factor. Virtues of humility and self-sacrifice were part of what it meant to be a woman living a

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[6]Koontz, "Introduction," *Peace Theology*, p. 1.

[7]Koontz, "Introduction," *Peace Theology*, p. 1. Even if there has been no explicit theological justification for violence against women, Christian and other feminist scholars have duly noted that often theological justifications were used to oppress women or, as in the case of the witch hunts, to persecute them.

life of Christian kindness. She reflects on her two very different grandmothers, one who was praised at her funeral for her silent "acceptance" of her lot which included a "difficult" husband as a sign of her Christian faithfulness. Her other grandmother was recognized for providing endless meals for her 13 children and sometimes poor neighbours, but not for her assertiveness and strong character. "It was the silent long-suffering attitude and uncomplaining disposition in the face of adversity that would surely find women like [her] grandmother favour with God (or was it with man?)."[8] Hildebrand also identifies wider social forces such as the dominator model which functions in our social institutions, including the church. Of Mennonite peace theology she writes:

> [It] has encouraged passivity and acceptance of abuse, especially for its female members. Through self-sacrificing love and self-abnegation we are taught that our suffering is justified, that this is being kind and Christ-like, and that it will somehow redeem us. Faithfulness is measured in terms of how well we are able to put up with our oppression and victimization. The glorification of suffering, servanthood, and the loving-your-enemy model of turning the other cheek have helped to acculturate women to abuse.[9]

Carol Penner has also looked at Mennonite theology, in particular its teaching on suffering, to identify the message which disempowers women suffering from patriarchal violence. For example, she writes, "little effort has been made to distinguish between different kinds of suffering, between the pain of sickness

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[8]Mary Anne Hildebrand, "Domestic Violence: A Challenge to Mennonite Faith and Peace Theology," *Conrad Grebel Review* 10 (Winter 1992): 75.

[9]Hildebrand, "Domestic Violence," pp. 78-9.

and the pain of sexual assault, the anguish of natural disaster and the anguish of family breakdown. The common message...is often that suffering, all suffering, should simply be endured, just as Jesus endured the cross."[10] Penner looks at popular theology as expressed in worship services, Sunday school material, and church newspapers etc. to identify what has shaped our theological understanding. Many hymns credit God with being present in our suffering, but too often in a way which minimizes the pain and emphasizes the Christian response as passive acceptance. Parallels are drawn with discipleship and following Jesus' meek example. The normativity of Jesus life and death has been reinforced by a wide reading in Mennonite circles of John Howard Yoder's book, *The Politics of Jesus*.[11] Suffering is seen as the cost of social nonconformity for Christians; not all suffering is redemptive, that is, only cross-like, freely chosen actions with adverse consequences are the intended subject of Yoder's discussion, but too many women have interpreted their own situation as choosing to accept abuse just as Jesus accepted the cross. Penner does see some signs of hope, however, in various issues of *The Women's*

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[10]Carol Penner, "Content to Suffer: An Exploration of Mennonite Theology from the Context of Violence Against Women," in *Peace Theology and Violence Against Women*, p. 99. Penner is a doctoral student at University of Toronto's St. Michael's College. Her dissertation is entitled "Woman Abuse: Mennonite Silences and Feminist Voices." See also her article "Sowing Seeds of Peace," *Conrad Grebel Review* 10 (Fall 1992): 319-23.

[11](Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1972).

Concerns Report and *The Purple Packet* on domestic abuse.[12]

Vange Thiessen in her work as a family therapist identifies childhood experiences of domestic violence as a violation of personhood which are expressed during adulthood in a form conditioned by our cultural beliefs and practices, including those of the Mennonite church and its teachings on peace. She states that "[for] too long our Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition has separated peace-making as a task from peacemaking as relational....[While] we have focused on the military and political scene, the primary locus of the battle may well be the family."[13] Along with traditional beliefs about original sin, female roles, the Fatherhood of God, and the Christian virtue of suffering, Thiessen identifies beliefs about community (peace and harmony at all costs, conformity equals unity), church discipline (high value placed on purity and unity) and non-resistance (maintaining "peace" can mean the powerful impose their will, powerless members give in) as contributing to an environment where abuse has not been challenged.

Mennonite women have also looked at what a commitment to peace and conscientious objection to war has meant for them by a renewed interest in retrieving and preserving the stories of women whose husbands worked in Civilian Public Service (CPS) camps in the United States or alternative service in Canada during World War II. Mennonite men and women faced much cultural hostility because they

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[12]Both are publications of M.C.C. The *Women's Concerns Report* is published in Akron, PA by M.C.C.'s Committee on Women's Concerns.

[13]Thiessen, "Case Study on Domestic Violence," p. 4.

231

were pacifist; in contrast to the gender-laden stereotype of the male soldier fighting to protect women and children at home, Mennonites found themselves culturally and ideologically isolated from the vast majority of Americans.[14]   For Mennonite women who belonged to those churches who allowed more acculturation in terms of dress and lifestyle, this was particularly painful as these women now found themselves social outcasts.

Sometimes wives followed their husbands to be near their camp, finding whatever nearby meagre employment they could to support themselves and their children; some women (usually single) worked at the camps as nurses, dieticians or support staff. The work of these men and women and the mobilization of war-time and post-war relief efforts were important events which shaped future programs and attitudes to "practical peacemaking."   For some women particularly it was a pivotal time where they realized the gifts they could use in promoting a peace position.[15]

In Canada, the situation was a little different in that it was the government, not a coalition of churches, which sponsored the alternative service work for CO's, and women were less likely to

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[14]Rachel Waltner Goossen, "The 'Second Sex' and the 'Second Milers': Mennonite Women and Civilian Public Service," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66 (Oct. 1992): 529.   The nickname "second milers" was given to Mennonite CO's who translated this New Testament allusion as their willingness to work without pay and without government benefits, such as financial support for their dependents, in CPS work.

[15]Goossen, "The 'Second Sex,'" p. 537. See also the September-October 1994 *Women's Concerns Report* (Akron: M.C.C. Committee on Women's Concerns), a thematic issue which includes eight stories of personal recollections of women who worked in CPS or followed their husbands to live near the camps.

follow their spouses. Many women organized to address relief needs in war-torn Europe. They organized sewing circles, buying fabric in large quantities, or canned food to send overseas. As one woman reported in a "Women's Activity Letter" in 1946, through their giving, "the bonds of peace and Christian fellowship may become stronger throughout the world."[16] A small number of women, usually single, went overseas themselves, for instance to England to work as nurses. The men working in alternative service received very little remuneration in addition to their meagre room and board. Their dependents had to rely on their extended families or churches. The government eventually appropriated some allowances for dependents but some families still experienced financial difficulties.

In all their various activities, whether sewing clothing, sending letters and packages to men in camps or government-arranged work assignments, women were coping with the implications of being part of a peace church. "[They] put into action their own expressions of nonresistant love and thus participated whole-heartedly as conscientious objectors to suffering in the world."[17]

As for myself, questions of peace and what it might mean as a woman to practice the virtues discussed in this thesis have not been tested in the context of war, or even in the daily tasks of

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[16]Marlene Epp, "Canadian Mennonite Women as C.O.'s in World War II," *M.C.C. Women's Concerns Report* (Sept.-Oct. 1994): 12.

[17]Epp, "Canadian Mennonite Women," p. 12. See also Lorraine Roth, "Conscientious Objection: The Experiences of Some Canadian Women During World War II," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66 (Oct. 1992): 539-45.

caring for dependents. I have never had to face a military draft. While I am a first generation Canadian, both parents having been born in the hungry '30's under Stalin, I myself have not lived in a Mennonite colony in Russia or Paraguay, or even in an immigrant community completely sheltered by language and cultural traditions. I am an active member of a Mennonite congregation, but an atypical, small lay-lead church, which goes further than many churches in encouraging women in all areas of ministry.

My childhood memories, which surely have shaped my theology and understanding of peace and the Christian way, include hearing stories of how my grandparents managed to hold true to their faith, fleeing the Russians, living in German refugee camps and emigrating to Canada and South America. My paternal grandmother, Anna Hoeppner Dyck, was separated from her husband in the confusions of war and, with her sister and six children between them, showed true courage and resourcefulness in bringing her family to safety. My maternal grandmother, Maria Braun Neufeld, was often alone while my grandfather was conscripted into labour for the Germans. Her children were at times hungry and sick, while they were forced to move from camp to camp.

Anna died when I was 10, but my maternal grandparents lived well into their 80's and I was privileged to know them as an adult. Their stories and characters were formative of my understanding of the Christian life and virtues. My grandfather was respected in the community as a leader and a man of faith. He guided his family with strict adherence to his views of religion and gender

relations. Indeed, even though I realize he had softened considerably from my mother's account of her childhood, I credit Jacob with much of what drew me to feminism as a critique of what I observed of him, no matter that all was said and done in love. Maria was a dutiful wife who loved to show her care for others through hospitality. For the most part, she acquiesced to Jacob's demands, even if she privately disagreed with the occasional harshness of his decisions. Only when a series of mild strokes affected her did she seem to find her voice to say what she really thought.

My love for my grandparents, like most human affections, contains ambivalence and contradictions. They modelled the virtues I've discussed, and yet the subtle privileging of the male in home, church and work provoked anger and non-conformity. Growing up Mennonite while living in a democratic, liberal western society has meant that my understanding of peace and theology has also been affected by contradictions and ambiguities. Through my years of higher education I encountered the criticism of liberal individualism and its cultural consequences in the writings of theologians who emphasized the community, thinkers who used left-wing principles to critique economic competition and sociologists who emphasized the contextual nature of knowledge. My understanding of Christianity and feminist theology draws on these influences as well as my Mennonite heritage.

A few years ago I gave a sermon on Mennonites and peace (the lack of universal consensus, arguing for a "liberationist" stance,

etc.) and recalled three incidents from my recent past which challenged me to ask what being a peacemaker means for me. I list them here briefly not in chronological order but in order of personal relevance.

The first incident I recalled was attending a rally in Montréal in honour of Nelson Mandela who had just been released from prison. The atmosphere was charged with emotions and many were moved by the singing and the speeches. During the rally, the traditional ANC salute of a raised fist was made numerous times. I felt distinct discomfort joining in because, even if violence was not officially sanctioned by Mandela, the fact remained that violence was used by all sides of the debate, and a closed fist remains a symbol of defiance as well as justified resistance to evil. Would I be seen as condoning violence, even in a "just cause?" How are peace and justice related here?

The second similar moment of self-examination occurred at a protest in response to the massacre of six Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and daughter in El Salvador. I felt compelled to attend the demonstration outside the American consulate not only in outrage at North American complicity in the violence and oppression in Central America, but because I myself knew a young Mennonite woman working with displaced refugees there, a work of real, practical "peacemaking," who was personally acquainted with some of the slain priests. I was naive to the fact that such demonstrations draw all sorts of political organizations who claim alliance with the issues of the protest, but who also have their

own agendas which are by no means always peaceful. Yet here I was publicly participating, again, with others who may have no qualms over the use of violence. (Curiously, attending a Catholic mass in solidarity with El Salvador a few days later held no such dilemma for me!)

The third incident touched on the issue of violence and gender. While I was still living in the city, Montréal and the rest of the country experience the shock and horror of Marc Lépine's massacre of 14 female students at L'École Polytechnique. A few days later I was buying milk in my local convenience store. The French and English headlines blared the word reportedly stated by Lépine: "I hate women/feminists!" The owner had a habit of teasing me because I routinely refused plastic bags for my purchases, but this time he over-rode my protest, turning to a nearby male customer saying, "Yeah, I don't like women either," and they both laughed. By the time I was crossing the street I was shaking because what might be taken as a harmless comment in reality linked me to the horrific act of violence which represents the violence against women in larger society. What is my response as a woman, a Mennonite and a peacemaker?

These examples do not constitute all the issues connected with gender, peace, and (in this addendum) Mennonite faith. They do illustrate some of the complexities of real life examples, demonstrating that expectations of my role as a woman in public and private realms are conflicting and changing. One more very recent event connected for me the issues of power and gendered

expectations.   I am a member of a Mennonite women's planning committee which organized a conference on "Woman and Ministry." A number of (male) pastors criticized our event, and through a campaign of letters, phone calls and networking, succeeded in pressuring the B.C. board of Mennonite Central Committee to with-draw its "blessing," including financial support.   The purported reason was that our speaker, a theologian from the Philippines, and the language and graphics of our brochure, appeared to advocate, at best, some kind of New Age thinking or, at worse, some kind of goddess worship.   What became clear, however, was that most of the threat lay in the discussion of women *and ministry*, which was interpreted as "attacking" one conference's prohibition of women in senior pastor roles.[18]   Some months after our conference, which successfully went ahead anyway, the planning committee met in a face to face discussion with our critics, conference ministers, and M.C.C. personnel to discuss their concerns.   We found ourselves struggling to find the balance between seeking reconciliation, being peacemakers, and yet not at the same time falling back on the gendered expectation that women should give in for the sake of peace, that it is our job to "make things nice again."   The challenge of listening to each other, having our voices heard, representing and supporting women's concerns to a sometimes hostile church, and being true peacemakers continues.

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[18]It may be that we disagree with the Mennonite Brethren conference resolution, but our aim was/is to encourage women in *all* types of ministry, not just pastoral roles, and not to antagonize Mennonite leaders.

More formal writing and reflecting on women, peace and violence from a Mennonite and a Christian perspective is only in its early stages. Two feminist Mennonite scholars have sought to address the issue of violence against women from their respective disciplines. Mary Schertz, a professor of New Testament studies at AMBS, still maintains that the work done in the historic peace church traditions remains an entry point that has integrity for women of the peace church tradition. To begin with, it has at least prepared us to look at the issue of violence against women as a *justice* issue, and hence we have an exegetical and theological base from which we can construct a biblical theology of peace between men and women.[19] If Mennonite women are careful in their use of the tradition they represent, their voices will have value in the larger enterprise of feminist thought and life.

Schertz identifies six cardinal points which need to be integrated with a biblical peace theology. Our view of *creation* helps us gain clarity about ourselves as sexual beings and to recognize where we have institutionalized unhealthy relations between the sexes. The doctrine of *covenant* needs addressing because it is connected with our view of God's sovereignty and a theology of submission; the question of personal autonomy and submission must be examined with a liberating understanding of the sovereignty of God. Mennonites have a rich tradition of emphasizing *community*, but, according to Schertz, in our effort to

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[19]Mary H. Schertz, "Creating Justice in the Space Around Us: Toward a Biblical Theology of Peace Between Women and Men," *Peace Theology and Violence Against Women*," p. 5.

dissociate ourselves from the abuses of western individualism, ideas and practices have been introduced which come close to sacrificing the sanctity of the individual for the good of the community. Pastors have counselled women to stay in abusive homes, seeming to value the permanence of marriage over the sanctity of personhood.[20]

Within the setting of worship, confession, forgiveness and restoring broken relationships (*cult*), Schertz advocates looking at the community as a body to see what constitutes morality/purity, what it means when bodies are violated and at the issue of trust between members of the worshipping community. Our view of the *cross* has produced a theology of suffering which has contributed to or even increased the endangerment of the victims of family violence. Suffering love practised by some wives has not produced shalom, but its opposite. Our hope for the future (*consummation*) means choosing in the midst of despair (here we would name sexism, racism, militarism and economic exploitation) to trust in a God who is larger than ourselves; confronting despair does not mean becoming passive because hope entails the deeper knowledge which grows out of commitment and the practice of activism, and which provides the context of our theology of history.

Gayle Gerber Koontz, also at AMBS, has proposed an ethical response of "redemptive resistance to evil" as one Christian reply to violence against women. Koontz shapes her ethic out of an

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[20]Isaak Block in his book *Assault on God's Image* confirms this attitude in his study of Winnipeg Mennonites and pastors.

approach to peace which might be seen as "liberation pacifism," that is considering issues of justice and taking into account the reality of power. True peace is not surface harmony but is rooted in justice and the desire to stand in solidarity with the poor, oppressed and suffering.[21]

Koontz begins by emphasizing that men *and* women have contributed to the problem of violence against women through our socialization practices and the economic, psychological and social pressures which affect all of society. Being "redemptive" means to "affirm a Mennonite-Christian tradition of compassionate response to those who suffer, transformation and discipleship through grace, and a missionary love of enemy." Redemptive "resistance" does not mean passivity but seeks to resist evil through persuasion without coercion. This ethic "assumes that Christians are called and empowered by God to follow the example of Jesus in seeking justice and loving God, our neighbours, and our enemies."[22]

In the case of violence against and violation of women, Koontz argues we need to attend to the issue of power in our relationships so that the good of all parties is achieved and the foundation for true mutuality is provided. Much of this depends on how we understand God's power. Contrary to a model of the power of domination,

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[21]Koontz, "Redemptive Resistance to Violation of Women," p. 30. The designation "liberation pacifism" is taken from the typology outlined in the 1991 work by Burkholder and Gingerich cited above. It would probably come the closest to describing my own stance as well.

[22]Koontz, "Redemptive Resistance," p. 32, 33.

> [the] understanding of power as the capacity to influence
> and to be influenced focuses and legitimates the notion
> of power within respectful relationships and the exercise
> of power in cooperation with other powers. It undergirds
> the notion of empowering as opposed to overpowering. It
> is compatible with commitment to mutuality in decision-
> making.[23]

In the face of profound evil, this type of power may for some seem to be inadequate. Koontz finds Wendy Farley's work on the power of compassion to be helpful here.[24] Looking to the cross as the ultimate resistance to evil, power is seen as making room for preservation and redemption. Compassion does not stand by but helps those who are suffering to overcome dependence, despair and powerlessness. Compassion is empowering because (1) it gives dignity to sufferers, (2) it mediates courage to resist the causes of suffering and to confront personal guilt, (3) it comforts and strengthens, not giving in to the power of suffering, and (4) it mediates the power of redemption, restoring hope even to sinners and enemies. The relational context of compassion is its strength and its source of vulnerability. The risk, however, is worth it because God's redemptive love is the final power.

What redemptive resistance might look like, however, depends on one's relationship in any particular circumstance, that is whether one is the victim/survivor of abuse, the abuser, or the neighbour of one being abused. Compassion for the survivor does not deny anger, but redemption and forgiveness are the eventual

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[23]Koontz, "Redemptive Resistance," p. 35.

[24]Wendy Farley, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy* (Louisville: Westminster, John Knox, 1990).

goal when healing has been reached. The pacifist commitment to redemptive resistance "is not primarily a negative act (rejection of violence) but a creative act (leaving an opening for the transforming power of God)."[25]

In conclusion, in Mennonite culture the construction of gender has been somewhat different, given past cultural and/or physical isolation of the communities by mainstream culture; "aggressiveness" was not to condoned for women or men and both men and women were called to be loving and life-giving. Men could not "prove" their masculinity through warfare. Yet violence still flourished as overt abuse in the private home or subtle power struggles in the church or community. It is the dichotomy between outward peacefulness and inner destructiveness which has made some Mennonite women so adamant about talking about domestic violence, but at the same time it may be that exposing this hypocrisy has delayed Mennonite critics from looking at life-giving connections to peace found in maternal work.

Anabaptism/Mennonite theology considers that becoming peace-makers, whether one is male or female, is not a vocational option for Christians but that practising the virtue of peace is at the heart of what being a follower of Jesus means. Engaging in the practice of peacemaking is not a discreet action but a life-time commitment which takes place in the context of the community of the church. This implies that the church cannot profess peace while harbouring violence. The Mennonite church has been too slow in

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[25]Koontz, "Redemptive Resistance," p. 43.

seeing domestic violence and abuse is an issue of peace as well as of justice; indeed, our past understanding of peace theology can be seen as contributing to the problem instead of the solution.

Those who have been oppressed and have experienced violence should be told that suffering is not an end in itself, that is, suffering for its own sake is not required, and nothing about peace and a theology of peace requires passive acceptance. God's power as seen in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus preserves and redeems. It resists, heals and transforms evil but refuses to dominate and control. Christians are called to mutual responsibility that empowers and gives dignity to those who suffer and restores hope in a way that violence never can. People of God respond to the graceful acts of God, acts of liberation and transformation, by making peace.

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245

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CONCLUSION

This thesis has conducted a critical survey of selected feminist literature on topics of interest to Christian, feminist thinkers. Specifically, this thesis has examined inter-feminist debates, highlighting those themes related narrowly to the virtues of self-sacrifice, care and peace, and broadly to how these relate to wider themes in Christian theology. This survey is necessarily selective, indicating directions and tendencies within works on virtues connected to women's work and gendered ideological assumptions about public and private spheres, and hence cannot be taken as an exhaustive or authoritative account of work in feminist ethics and theology. The purpose is to relate a conversation, not declare a winner in some contest of analysis and diagnostics.

A summary of the contribution and themes of this thesis includes using critical social theory to uncover ideological distortions such as those perpetuated by patriarchy. The thesis also highlights how a feminist critique contributes to the debate on values and virtues, pointing out biases which previously hid the contributions of women. An important theme uncovered using the tools of critical and feminist theory is the dualist division between the public and the private spheres which reinforce gendered social and moral roles. The discussion is structured around three virtues with an emphasis on praxis, that is since values arise out of shared practices, these values are inherently teachable and able to contribute to an evolving understanding of moral principles

246

which break from and/or enhance traditional liberal understandings of these principles. The relationship between the self and the community is highlighted. Finally, connections are made with the gospel and utopian values grounded in a Christian vision of the kingdom of God.

Critical social theory takes into account both the social context and the dialectical relationship between praxis and knowledge, both of which are necessary to challenge traditional moral understandings and to create living conditions which foster true mutuality. An ideological ethic justifies social relations which require in a systematic way that one group sacrifice human goods in order to elevate others above them. An ethics of domination makes full mutuality impossible. By uncovering how certain perceptions of autonomy, self-interest and individualism mask inequality and the uneven distribution of power, communal life and a positive understanding of the social and relationality are promoted because the definition of the self "over against" another are challenged.

The contribution of a feminist critique reveals unacknowledged assumptions as well, showing how certain social relations have shaped our current philosophical understandings. It too advocates connecting knowing and being as these are linked to ethics, politics and power. Like critical theory, feminist theory argues that the ideals of reason are not neutral. There is no generic self; rather the individual is social and relational in a constitutive sense, making choices in a specific historical,

social, and political context which must be taken into account to make morally responsible judgements. The concrete and the particular, not just abstract universal claims, are taken seriously. Feminists do not advocate a morally privileged standpoint for women, rather they wish to reclaim certain virtues as emancipatory for men and women, and that a distinctively women's morality can contribute to an overall construction of transformative ethics.

A discussion of virtues is appropriate to highlight these themes in (Christian) feminist theory because of the emphasis on the "good life," not principles and norms per se. When concepts are recognized as relational and contextual, then virtues can be seen as more to do with relating to the world rather than the specific "content" of any particular virtue. These theorists advocate a strategy not of abstraction from circumstances to arrive at some table of principles, but rather call for a transformation of society which is in keeping with true justice and mutuality. Thinking about virtues in this way underlines the connection between thinking and practice; activities make sense because the concepts and values which help us make sense of those activities are developed socially. Here, motherwork is a distinctive practice with distinctive thinking which can offer new insights about relationships, caring and anti-militarism.

An important concept challenged in this study is the dichotomy between the public and the private realm. The ideological separation of these two spheres supports the "economic man"/mar-

ketplace paradigm, exempting the public realm from the obligation of social responsibility which is sequestered as care in the domestic arena. When care, self-sacrifice and nurture are relegated to the private sphere alone, these virtues lose their ability to critique systems of inequality and exploitation. In fact, structures of oppression can even be reinforced, making the questioning of hierarchies a "sin." Critical theory and feminist studies emphasize the continuity between these two realms. By taking women's experience seriously, women become the subjects of their own accounts of social, political and moral life. The social location of women becomes morally significant and values and virtues previously denigrated are valued in all spheres of activity.

The study of three virtues surveyed in this thesis contributes to the task of feminist critical theory through its method of negating the ideological aspects of these virtues, retrieving those aspects which foster true mutuality, and transforming these virtues and our moral understanding to aid in the struggle to overcome oppression and exploitation. The "explanatory-diagnostic" analysis is in this thesis the study of women's experience around the practice of self-sacrifice, care and peacemaking, while the "anticipatory-utopian" critique uncovers the underlying visions sustaining and directing our proposals for the liberating of men and women from restricted social and moral roles. The ideal or utopian vision which is the goal of feminist critics stands in contrast to the present reality, and yet is sufficiently grounded

in the "real"/present in its emphasis on social dialogue and consensus building around our moral understandings. By emphasizing a social horizon grounded in the concrete, not the abstract ideals proposed in traditional liberal understandings, the substance of and well as the form of morality is affected. As much as it is about right and wrong, morality is about engaging one another; people make moral decisions not by consulting principles but by consulting each other.[1]

The discussion of each virtue in this thesis generally addressed a number of issues. Each virtue had connections to ways in which we construct personhood epistemologically, philosophically and morally. The sociological context, our work and praxis, was addressed, as was the broader construction of gender and society, and how ideological distortions have devalued women and rendered their moral insights as of less value. In each case, the theological connections and the implications for a utopian vision were highlighted.

In chapter two, the feminist critique of the virtue of self-sacrifice argues that traditional views are inadequate because they fail to highlight the relational character of the self. Unequal power relations are disguised not only epistemologically and socially, but through the very ties of caring women have with those

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[1]Colin Grant, "Why Care? The Basis and Implications of Care Morality," *Studies in Religion* 24 (Summer 1995): 344. Grant also goes on to make the proposal that Christianity has a vision of reality sufficient to ground our utopian vision, that is the gospel as the proclamation of the reality of caring which is turn becomes the imperative to just and truly loving moral actions. This will be discussed further below.

dependent on them. Instead of constructing the self as over-against the other, feminists argue that humans are essentially relational; we see ourselves not as over-against the other, but as overcoming isolation to create community together-with-others. Social and moral meaning must be attached to women's work and activity in both the private and the public sphere. Traditional theological formulations must be critiqued to uncover ways in which religion has reinforced an ideological application of an ethic of self-sacrifice. True mutuality will be gained when we understand our interdependence with others, where living in conformity with the kingdom of God may entail sacrifice, not for the sake of sacrifice itself, but as true acts of love one for another.

In chapter three, the argument of feminist critics dictates that for women, care has in the past defined who they are and what they do. Here, too, the relational character of human personhood is revealed; practising the virtue of care has taught women to develop a capacity to respond to the particular needs of specific others in a web of relationship to them. The cost of caring has been high for women. The sexual division of labour and the ideology of women's place/role in home, society and church have interacted with material conditions to devalue caring and nurture to the detriment of women and men. The practice of motherwork, however, takes place not in the abstract but as relational value lived out in particular relationships under concrete social, cultural and economic contexts. It is potentially genderless, a human activity open to women and men. A radical understanding of

love and caring as modelled in the life of Christ calls us to a way of being in the world which deepens relationship and builds true mutuality. The ideological connections between gender construction, care and motherhood are uncovered and new, "utopian" understandings of moral personhood and an ethic of caring becomes possible.

In chapter four (and addendum), the feminist critique points out the connection between power and domination and traditional understandings of the self and world as antagonistic which underlie the dualistic construction linking the male with war and militarism and women with peace and peacemaking. Critics, such as Virginia Woolf, point out the corollary between the separating the genders into spheres of activity and the connection between patriarchy and militarism. Although mothers can be militant, there are those who see the daily struggle of women to care for the needs of those with whom they live in relationship as a resource for creating a less violent world. The qualities and virtues required to raise and nurture dependents, and new understandings of power which enable the equal nurturing and flourishing of each regardless of race, class or gender can be retrieved. Feminist theologians see peace as part of the enterprise of justice; maternal care reflects the divine model of Love which seeks to heal, reconcile and reunite humanity with God. Peace is not a private virtue but is necessary to the broader social and cultural changes which inform the utopian vision/critique.

Mutuality becomes the basis of community and communion, ex-

pressed in solidarity with all those who are oppressed or marginalized by gender, race or class. Mutuality challenges the traditional understanding of self and personhood which assumes that aggression is at the heart of relations, whether intra-personal, inter-personal or among communities. When self-sacrifice is understood in this light, it becomes apparent that self-sacrifice must also include self-love and affirmation to be free of its ideological distortions. Care is understood relationally, taking into account ties to particular others and exercised with sensitivity to the concrete context in which it is practised. It is a mutual interdependence between the self and the other which is called for; a concern for one's own integrity and sense of self makes genuine voluntary caring possible.[2] For peace and peacemaking to be consistent with mutuality, it must include true justice and reconciliation and not merely surface harmony. Structures of domination and oppression are questioned at every level. Rather than power-*over* others, peacemakers focus on fostering the ability to persuade and facilitate, to enable others to act creatively and to exist in mutually reciprocal relationships with others (power-*with*).

The discussion of feminist ethics and virtues above is consistent with the conclusions of a recent article by Katherine Tanner.[3] There the author identifies two turns in recent scholarly

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[2]Grant, "Why care?" p. 336.

[3]Kathryn Tanner, "The Care that does Justice: Recent Writings in Feminist Ethics and Theology," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 24 (Spring 1996): 171-91.

discussions of gender-specific moral frameworks, that is in the direction of *integration* (moral dualisms are overcome by showing that an ethic of justice and of care are not mutually exclusive but potentially complementary), and in the direction of greater *complexity* (arguing that more than two moral perspectives exist; race and class, to mention but two examples, are as important to discussions of ethics as is gender). The result is an emerging feminist moral vision which many Christian feminist ethicists also share.

> Genuine enlargement of moral vision through respect for the differences of others can come about only in active communicative interchange -- conversation, debate, argumentative struggle -- with others who are able to speak their own minds, and tell of their situations and needs freely....Feminist ethicists replace...ineffective or inappropriate strategies for ensuring impartiality with an open dialogue in which all bring their own highly situated particularities of perspective and concern into a public forum for mutual critique.[4]

The work connected to examining the three virtues studied in this thesis has implications for re-thinking a number of related concepts and qualities in light of feminist critical thinking. Autonomy, an important concept in traditional liberal understandings of the self as radically independent, is potentially transformed. As Tanner and others have noted, bringing a relational ontology together with the ideals of autonomy in an ethic of care

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[4]Tanner, "The Care that does Justice," p. 178. The traditional or inappropriate strategies of impartiality which Tanner rejects include counselling a suppression of self-concern, abstracting from concrete relational specificity, and empathy when the dangers of self-projection are not taken into account. Showing concern for those different from oneself and assuring inclusiveness in one's moral perspective using such strategies in an ethic of justice is ineffective or inadvisable in situations of oppression.

allows us to see that as social beings we need to recognize our dependence on others to care for and nurture us; we can reflect critically on those relationships which have shaped us and have allowed to become ourselves.[5]

Individual rights are also reconceived in light of relationality by feminists. Without regressing into an old paternalism, feminists champion those rights which are rights to well-being (positive/welfare rights); these rights most clearly require the nurture and help of others. Respect for persons in virtue of their common humanity as advocated in an ethic of justice is supplemented by respect for others as the particular people they are. A kind of care respect helps us to discern our responsibilities in light of the rights of others to well-being, whether these are people with whom we have an affective relationship or strangers we never actually meet.[6]

Justice is still important while at the same time reconceived along the lines of an ethic of care. Distributive justice is retained but subordinated to a substantively defined account of justice in terms of social relations that are the opposite of exploitative, dominating, and oppressive. "A just society is a society of mutual aid in which care-giving and care-receiving are reciprocal; the social structures of a just society ensure that both the benefits of care-receiving and the burdens of care-giving

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[5]Tanner, "Care that does Justice," p. 179.

[6]Tanner, "Care that does Justice," p. 180.

are shared equitably among its member."[7]

Lastly, the importance of a gendered sense of self, which is required to counter oppression and further the kind of society consistent with the demands of an ethic of care in the public sphere, is also re-evaluated. Gender is one of the particularized differences among persons which we respect, but as an ethic of care is taken seriously and as oppression on the basis of gender is overcome, gender difference becomes merely one particularity among a multitude of comparable differences. "Indeed, the utopian vision offered by a reconstructed care ethic is a vision of society responsive to individual-specific particularities and needs; a focus on or preoccupation with gender differences, insofar as they are group classifications, would not be particular enough."[8]

In conclusion, this thesis has attempted to support those critics who take women's experience seriously, who allow and encourage an analysis of power in relationships, who respect differences, whether of gender, race, class or other, and who advocate restoring mutuality between men and women. As Ruddick and others have noted, identifying those qualities and virtues associated with a critically retrieved ethic of care is not so much a goal or achievement attained as it is a place to stand and a struggle identified. The objective of feminist ethics here is not to advocate an epistemologically or morally privileged stand-point for women, but rather it is the attempt to reclaim certain virtues

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[7]Tanner, "Care that does Justice," p. 181.

[8]Tanner, "Care that does Justice," p. 185.

256

as emancipatory for women and men, and to articulate what a distinctive women's morality can offer to the construction of a transformative ethic.

Valuing women's experience is to be combined with a censure of gender dualisms; the reconstruction of the spheres of life, which have been gendered through their association with either women's or men's work, must include a process of mutual critique so that, for example, "the family becomes a place of justice and public life an arena dedicated to nurture."[9]

The themes uncovered by critical theory and feminist analysis are important for Christian feminist ethicists and theologians because they identify possibilities for change and move against the ideological distortions and destructive power relationships which have enslaved men and women. An ethic of care uncritically accepted, without negating its ideological distortions and retrieving and reconstructing its emancipatory potential, simply reinforces an ahistorical and apolitical understanding of Christian virtues which maintains the gendered, dualist understanding of moral life. Christian feminist writers have joined in the effort to overcome dualisms in their moral frameworks.

> Socio-economic and political analyses usually contextu-
> alize...the interpretation of differences in moral
> outlook [i.e.differences of race, class, ethnicity,
> nationality, etc., as much as of gender], thereby obvi-
> ating an uncritical affirmation of the values found in an
> unreconstructed care ethic. With this sort of political
> contextualization comes a repudiation of a dualism
> between public and private spheres. The result is a
> vision of moral community suitable for all spheres of

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[9]Tanner, "Care that does Justice," p. 174.

life, not unlike the one at which non-religious feminist ethicists have arrived by integrating care and justice perspectives in a process of mutual critique....[10]

It is in the examination of the sustaining and directing visions which underlie our moral frameworks where Christianity can offer a real grounding for the ideal vision put forward by recent voices in feminist ethics and theology. As Colin Grant notes, Christianity provides an obvious grounding to support the utopian ideals of care morality because of its proclamation of the reality of God's caring on a cosmic level and the gospel admonition to those who embrace it to not only care for one another but to care particularly for those most in need of caring.[11] The important contribution of feminist critics is to uncover Christianity's own poor record of following the imperative to care, as well as the tendency to uncritically use paradigms which ignore women's experience and reinforce an individualistic understanding of the self in the interpreting of religious moral understandings. The goal of true mutuality consistent with the Christian gospel and liberationist feminist ethics calls for the renunciation of traditional power models, a transcending of old paradigms and practices, and promoting a vision of a caring community which respects all particular differences, whether of gender, sexual orientation, race, class or ethnicity.

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[10]Tanner, "Care that does Justice," p. 186.

[11]Grant, "Why Care?" p. 348.

258

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259

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270

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