

☐ Contemporary
Literary Criticism

CLC 208

Volume 208

Contemporary Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works
of Today's Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, Scriptwriters, and
Other Creative Writers



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Preface

Named “one of the twenty-five most distinguished reference titles published during the past twenty-five years” by *Reference Quarterly*, the *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)* series provides readers with critical commentary and general information on more than 2,000 authors now living or who died after December 31, 1999. Volumes published from 1973 through 1999 include authors who died after December 31, 1959. Previous to the publication of the first volume of *CLC* in 1973, there was no ongoing digest monitoring scholarly and popular sources of critical opinion and explication of modern literature. *CLC*, therefore, has fulfilled an essential need, particularly since the complexity and variety of contemporary literature makes the function of criticism especially important to today’s reader.

Scope of the Series

CLC provides significant passages from published criticism of works by creative writers. Since many of the authors covered in *CLC* inspire continual critical commentary, writers are often represented in more than one volume. There is, of course, no duplication of reprinted criticism.

Authors are selected for inclusion for a variety of reasons, among them the publication or dramatic production of a critically acclaimed new work, the reception of a major literary award, revival of interest in past writings, or the adaptation of a literary work to film or television.

Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science fiction writers, literary and social critics, foreign authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each *CLC* volume contains individual essays and reviews taken from hundreds of book review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning from the beginning of an author’s career to the most current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other published writings that offer insight into the author’s works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in *CLC* provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

Organization of the Book

A *CLC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author’s actual name given in parenthesis on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the original date of composition.
- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.

- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.
- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- Whenever possible, a recent **Author Interview** accompanies each entry.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Thomson Gale.

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A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by Thomson Gale, including *CLC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

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In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Thomson Gale also produces an annual cumulative title index that alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in *CLC* and is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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Carol Gilligan

1936-

(Born Carol Friedman) American nonfiction writer and playwright.

The following entry presents criticism on Gilligan's career through 2004.

INTRODUCTION

A psychologist, educator, and author, Gilligan is considered the founder of "difference feminism." Her groundbreaking study *In a Different Voice* (1982) put forth a feminist theory of childhood and adolescent development that describes differences in moral reasoning between girls and boys. Accessible to both academic and general readers, *In a Different Voice* had enormous impact in the fields of psychology and women's studies. Her subsequent book-length studies, including *Meeting at the Crossroads* (1992) and *Between Voice and Silence* (1995), further consider the psychological and social development of girls from a feminist perspective. Gilligan's contributions to feminist thought and the field of psychology were acknowledged when *Ms.* magazine named her 1984's Woman of the Year and *Time* magazine in 1996 named her one of the 25 most influential Americans.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gilligan was born Carol Friedman on November 28, 1936, in New York City. Her father was a lawyer and her mother a teacher. Gilligan attended Swarthmore College, graduating with a B.A. in literature in 1958. She went on to earn an M.A. in clinical psychology from Radcliffe College in 1960 and a Ph.D. in social psychology from Harvard University in 1964. While working as a graduate student research assistant for Lawrence Kohlberg, a prominent developmental psychologist, Gilligan noticed that most theories of developmental psychology were based on studies of boys and men, and that studies of moral reasoning in children were based on models derived from male subjects. Gilligan thus resolved to formulate a theory of moral development inclusive of the experiences of girls. This led her to a research project which eventually resulted in *In a Different Voice*. She began teaching at Harvard in 1967, and achieved the status of full professor there in 1986. From 1992 to 1994 she taught at the



University of Cambridge in England; following her return, she taught at Harvard for another several years. In 1997, she became the university's first professor of Gender Studies. She is a founding member of the Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and the Development of Girls, and co-founder of The Company of Women and Girls, an all-female theater company. In 2002, her play adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 novel *The Scarlet Letter* was produced onstage. Since 2002, Gilligan has been a fulltime professor at New York University. Gilligan is married to fellow psychologist James Frederick Gilligan, with whom she has three children.

MAJOR WORKS

Though she has published several subsequent studies, Gilligan is still best known for *In a Different Voice*. Gilligan notes in this work that earlier studies of moral and ethical development in children and adolescents unfairly judged girls based on male systems of reasoning. When researchers presented both boys and girls with scenarios

calling for a moral decision, girls tended to formulate more complex and less predictable solutions to these problems than boys, and thus their moral reasoning was determined either inferior or simply unusable as statistical data. Whereas these early studies concluded that girls are less mature in their moral development than boys, Gilligan reinterpreted the data to demonstrate that girls develop systems of moral reasoning that are “different” from—but not inferior to—that of boys. While boys tend to make moral decisions based on abstract principles of “justice” which they apply to specific situations, girls tend to make moral decisions based on a principle of “caring” in interrelationships between individuals, which is always contextual and thus varies with each situation. Gilligan concludes that these different approaches to moral reasoning, the “care” perspective and the “justice” perspective, are equally valid, and that the female “care” perspective has been unfairly silenced by patriarchal culture. Gilligan further argues that childhood development has been judged by earlier psychologists according to the masculine value of individuation as a measure of maturity, whereas girls tend to mature within a context of connectedness and interrelationships. As with moral reasoning, Gilligan argues that girls’ valuation of connectedness should be acknowledged as a valid path to maturity, rather than being denigrated as a less mature stage of development. *Making Connections* (1989), co-authored with Nona P. Lyons and Trudy J. Hanmer, is based on a study of girls between the ages of 15 and 18 enrolled in the Emma Willard School, a girls’ boarding school in Troy, New York. From interviews with students and their teachers, Gilligan and her colleagues draw a variety of conclusions about the experience of female adolescence, particularly in terms of their sense of connectedness to and relationships with others. The researchers’ interviews with these girls focused on “the ways in which girls orchestrate themes of connection and separation and concerns about care and justice in speaking about themselves, about their relationships, and about experiences of conflict.” *Meeting at the Crossroads*, co-authored with Lyn Mikel Brown, is based on a study of 100 girls, aged 7 to 18, at the Laurel School for Girls in Cleveland, Ohio. The researchers set out to examine the transition from girlhood to adolescence, and the psychological changes girls undergo during this process, posing the question, “On the way to womanhood, what does a girl give up?” Gilligan and Brown conclude that girls lose their “voice” in the course of this transition, becoming reluctant to express their true feelings and opinions. The transition to womanhood is thus a “journey into silence, disconnection, and dissembling.” *Meeting at the Crossroads* includes a Listener’s Guide which describes the methodology Gilligan and her colleagues developed for interviewing girls and listening to their responses. *Between Voice and Silence*, co-authored with Jill McLean Taylor and Amy M. Sulli-

van, is based on a three-year study of “difference, voice, and relationship” in 26 Boston public schoolgirls, interviewed over a period from eighth through tenth grade. These subjects, from poor or working-class families and a variety of ethnic backgrounds, were considered “at risk” for teen pregnancy and dropping out of high school. The researchers interviewed their subjects about issues of self-esteem and social perceptions, tracking the girls’ tendencies to choose between “voice” and “silence” in their social behavior. The researchers assert that, in negotiating the transition from girlhood to adolescence, girls face a crisis in which maintaining a strong sense of self conflicts with maintaining a strong sense of connection to others. They conclude that developing a strong, trusting, open relationship with an adult woman is a key factor in preventing early pregnancy and dropping out of high school. *Between Voice and Silence* includes discussion of six “retreats” organized by the researchers, in which they met with a group of female educators to discuss the methodology and results of their study. In *The Birth of Pleasure* (2002) Gilligan aims to generate “a new mapping of love.” Writing in a flowing, literary style rather than an academic mode, Gilligan puts forth her insights into problems of love in modern relationships, interweaving examples from her experiences as a couples counselor, her research on adolescent girls, and world literature. Gilligan explores the ways in which patriarchal culture raises girls and boys to “dissociate” from their true feelings, thus creating problems in adult relationships. She suggests as an alternative model for relationships the myth of Eros and Psyche from Greek mythology, whose union produced a daughter named Pleasure. Other literary sources for Gilligan’s observations on love, joy, and pleasure include Shakespeare, Sigmund Freud, Anne Frank, and Michael Ondaatje, among others.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Gilligan’s study of moral reasoning and adolescent female development in *In a Different Voice* has generated extensive commentary by scholars and critics from fields including psychology, philosophy, theology, gender studies, rhetoric, politics, education, and social work. Calling *In a Different Voice* an “extraordinarily influential book,” Judith Stacey asserted that it “challenged the false universalism in scholarly narratives about (putatively human) moral development that were rooted exclusively in studies of the experiences and subjectivities of males.” With more than half a million copies sold, *In a Different Voice* also succeeded in maintaining a broad-based appeal with the general reader. Gilligan’s prominence is in part due to her writing style, which renders her scholarly research accessible to a general readership. Joan Jacobs Brumberg noted, “Gilligan’s ideas about female difference are made all the

more attractive by her delivery, both in person and in print. She is impassioned, articulate and humanistic while much of contemporary social science is dull, laden with obscure jargon and decidedly detached from the human condition. She uses metaphors more readily than statistics, and her references are often literary and musical. . . . All of this makes her work comprehensible and attractive to those outside academic psychology." Much critical debate surrounding Gilligan's work revolves around the question of whether women should be regarded as different from, or equal to, men. Some feminist critics asserted that Gilligan's work represents an important intervention in feminist debate over gender and difference. Brumberg observed, "At the moment when feminist literary and historical studies were rediscovering the strength of women's culture, Gilligan's work supported the idea of gender difference. This was a significant landmark in the history of modern feminism because women had for so long been pilloried on the notion of sexual difference; now many of them embraced it." Others argued that Gilligan merely reinforces age-old stereotypes of women as more sensitive and caring and less logical than men. Likewise, some asserted that Gilligan exaggerates the differences between boys and girls, thus inaccurately representing the "gender gap" as greater than it really is. Others questioned Gilligan's methodology and argumentation, and the scientific validity of her work. Margaret Talbot, for example, opined, "Gilligan's contentions are not provable or disprovable, because they are not anything like science."

PRINCIPAL WORKS

In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (nonfiction) 1982

Mapping the Moral Domain: A Contribution of Women's Thinking to Psychological Theory and Education [editor; with Janie Victoria Ward, Jill McLean Taylor, and Betty Bardige] (nonfiction) 1988

Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School [with Nona P. Lyons and Trudy J. Hanmer] (nonfiction) 1989

Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development [with Lyn Mikel Brown] (nonfiction) 1992

Between Voice and Silence: Women and Girls, Race and Relationship [with Jill McLean Taylor and Amy M. Sullivan] (nonfiction) 1995

Woman: A Celebration to Benefit the Ms. Foundation for Women (nonfiction) 2000

The Birth of Pleasure (nonfiction) 2002

The Scarlet Letter [adaptor; from the novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne] (play) 2002

CRITICISM

Ketayun H. Gould (essay date September-October 1988)

SOURCE: Gould, Ketayun H. "Old Wine in New Bottles: A Feminist Perspective on Gilligan's Theory." *Social Work* 33, no. 5 (September-October 1988): 411-15.

[In the following essay, Gould critiques Gilligan's theories of moral development and offers an alternative feminist paradigm for interpreting gender-based perspectives which she deems more useful to the field of social work.]

The resurgence of the women's movement in the past two decades has renewed interest in various fields to review some persistent disciplinary issues through a feminist perspective. The awareness that gender may be one of the basic organizing principles in the structuring of professional problems has added a new dimension that has made gender itself the issue that must be addressed to achieve satisfactory solutions. Recent articles from the social work literature demonstrate the two-way benefit of applying a gender perspective to restructure old professional debates (Davis, 1985; Rhodes, 1985). Using Gilligan's (1982) theory about the differences in moral development between men and women, these authors apply the gender framework creatively to analyze persistent social work concerns such as the rift between practitioners and academic researchers, dissatisfaction with the ascendent form of research paradigm in the field, and conflict between the two moral traditions of rights and needs as an ethical base for the profession.

Although the author applauds inquiry that can illuminate significant concerns of both women and the profession, she has serious concerns about the implications Rhodes (1985) and Davis (1985) draw about gender-based differences. In fact, because these articles present arguments that are built on Gilligan's analysis, this author's unease starts with what an uncritical acceptance of Gilligan's theory can mean for charting the course of the "woman question" and the social work profession. In this article, a feminist perspective on Gilligan's conception of a "different voice" is presented to demonstrate its problematic application in developing a vision of gender in social work and society. Specifically, some of the main ideas and value imperatives of Gilligan's theory that should be scrutinized are outlined. Next, some reasons for the attractiveness and the inadequacies of these concepts in the American and social work value systems will be discussed, particularly the inability of Gilligan's theory to provide strategies for

gender-based transformation of professional and societal roles. The discussion is followed by a rationale for considering an alternative vision—a feminist rather than a strictly feminine vision—that can provide a prescriptive rather than a descriptive model for restructuring professional and social reality. Finally, an argument is made that professional rifts that may be gender-based might be narrowed more easily by adopting a paradigm that replaces, rather than preserves, a parallel structure with traditional sex-appropriate activities and roles.

This critique does not deny the existence of differences in general between the sexes. Rather, it attempts to demonstrate that ignoring the distinction between gender differences and gender stereotypes can lead the profession to embrace yet another theory that may hinder, rather than help, in hearing both female and male voices.

ASSUMPTIONS, VALUES, AND INTERPRETATIONS

Gilligan presents her work as a corrective effort to broaden Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development and bases her claim on the fact that she provides a new emphasis on charting female moral development. She asserts that Kohlberg largely neglected the important issues involved in female moral development because of his biased samples, theoretical assumptions, and research instruments. It is worthwhile, however, to examine in turn the main ideological assumptions and prescriptions with which Gilligan approaches her data (which was gathered in three diverse studies that provided interview material on how both sexes view moral choices). Although Kohlberg's model is grounded in the cognitive-developmental tradition, Gilligan does not follow the same model to structure her critique. In fact, Gilligan interprets her data strictly within a psychological framework that is heavily influenced by recent adaptations of psychoanalytic and object relations theory, especially the work of Chodorow (1978).

Gilligan's case for a distinct female and male moral development, like Chodorow's reproduction of mothering, hinges on sex-based differences that originate during the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal stages. Although Gilligan does not endorse a biological determinist view of Oedipal relations, its "social" construction of gender differences carries the "same sex/different sex parent-child relationship" thesis (Walker, 1983). Thus, following Chodorow, Gilligan argues that because the primary caretaker for girls but not for boys is a member of the same gender as they, it leads to differences in personality structures that produce general differences in types of moral reasoning. To develop their own identity as masculine, young boys must negate their early identification with their mothers. Young girls, on the contrary, tend to define themselves in terms of their connection

to others. A consequence here is that whereas men fear engulfment by others and value independence, women fear abandonment and are inclined to seek relationships with others.

This dualistic interpretation of the male and female personality structures (which reflects the complementary, bipolar view of traditional male/female traits) then is tied to distinct female and male paths of moral development. The orientation of women toward others is said to be expressed in an ethic of care (responsibility mode of thought) and the orientation of men is expressed supposedly in an ethic of justice (rights mode of thought). Because women feel responsible for others, they experience moral tribulations when there is a choice to be made between competing responsibilities. By contrast, because men's disposition toward other people is based on a premise of autonomy, they experience moral dilemmas when the rights of individuals come in conflict. Gilligan did not look for evidence that her subjects actually are responsible, autonomous, or just. As Broughton (1983) pointed out, "she is satisfied as soon as these qualities are manifested as espoused values in speech" (p. 634). Moreover, Gilligan's particular treatment of moral dilemmas also is worth scrutinizing. Although she concentrated on examining real-life crisis situations, the particular moral dilemmas (such as those involving abortion decisions) never were evaluated in terms of the environmental effects on individual decision making. The situation serves only as the backdrop within which to judge the individual context of moral decision making.

The sex-specific formulations of ethical choices are closely tied to gender-based models of thinking, because the cognitive differences determine how females and males arrive at separate points in moral decision making. Gilligan (1982, p. 19) argued that women supposedly develop a mode of thinking that is "contextual and narrative" because of their reliance on learning personal communication techniques that maintain harmony between people. Men, on the other hand (with their concern for "limiting interference" in interpersonal relations [p. 38]), adopt impersonal modes of thinking by establishing rules and valuing abstract reasoning and decision making. However, Gilligan's support for the sex-linked differences in moral reasoning only are excerpts from interviews that were presented selectively to substantiate the basic premises of the theory. The excerpts themselves also contain examples of reasoning that might be explained in a contradictory manner to Gilligan's interpretations. Such instances, however, were ignored by Gilligan, or explained in line with the theory as "developmental transformation" (Broughton, 1983, p. 608).

Following from such arguments, Gilligan outlined a distinct trend to describe female moral maturity, which