PHI1801, Ethics in Global Society

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Professor

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Assignment 2

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### *Developmental Readings*

Create Developmental Readings from seminal sources and scholarly peer-reviewed

journal articles. Review instructions for Assignment #3, the course essential elements,

and course readings to identify selections of books and journals to create entries.

* Refer to the “[Student Guide to Developmental Readings](https://drive.google.com/file/d/161V_FaYR2BnNGCSFUlWPjUSIQzcH04Hq/view?usp=share_link)” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Feminist Care Ethics and Christian Ethics: Moral decision-making, Women, Work and Care**

**Source One:** Mannering, H. (2020). A Rapprochement between Feminist Ethics of Care and Contemporary Theology. *Religions (Basel, Switzerland)*, *11*(4), 185. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11040185

**Comment 1**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “Ethics of care is a relatively new approach to morality, first developed as a feminist ethical theory in the 1980s by Carol Gilligan, Sara Ruddick, and Nel Noddings. It is based on the experience and responsibility of providing care and is distinct from other popular moral philosophies including Kantian moral theory, utilitarianism, or virtue ethics, although it has some similarities to virtue ethics. Founded on a relational ontology, it offers a deeply incisive critique of liberal individualism through ethical reflection. It is also committed to a particularism which recognizes the importance of addressing moral problems in the context of lived experience.” pp. 1

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of Ethics of care. Ethics of care was developed by Gilligan, Ruddick and Noddings in the 1980s and was initially aligned with feminist thought. It is an approach to morality based on the experiences of care and though similar to virtue ethics is distinctive from rationality ethics. It is by nature a relational ethical approach that addresses morality through the lived experience.

**Contextualization:**  Ethic of care as a moral approach to moral decision making, motherhood and care are highly experiential. It comes from a notion of moral decision making that is based on empathy, mental labour, care for children, the elderly and disabled. In my work with strengthening families, it is apparent that women in particular make decisions based on the needs of those in her care- a mother may leave a job for example, if it does not allow adequate paid leave to care for her children and her family. There are elements of rationality and virtue but often it is based on emotions and love that are evident in an ethic of care.

**Comment 2**

Quote/Paraphrase: “Ultimately, ethics of care provides an opening which may enable feminist thought to break out of the corrupting circle of the mimetic desire for perceived male power and domination. If ethics of care is strengthened and purified by recognizing Christ as the archetype of care and the relationship with Christ as the paradigmatic relationship, it can empower women to read kenosis through an alternate lens, not as a disenfranchisement or defeatist attitude toward seeking earthly power, but as a union with the one who modelled the fullness of kenosis—Christ, the model of care, who, though equal with God, did not hesitate to empty himself and die on the cross, an innocent scapegoat and sacrificial victim.” pp. 11

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Compare the different approaches of traditional ethical systems to Christian

ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of Christ as the model of morality in understanding care ethics. Ethics of care originally started with a feminist notion of mirroring dominance and power in order to ‘take up space.’ The passage speaks to reimaging and reshaping this thinking through an understanding that Christ as model and ultimate carer can empower women to follow in his example and be like Christ through self-emptying and being selfless. This will allow women to see themselves through not defeatist eyes when they fail to measure up to masculinist thought but be aligned with Christ. This aspect of the passage however is variant to my worldview, given its ontological assumption that kenosis is aligned with powerlessness and othering. Additionally, the expression of scapegoating and sacrificial victim seems to take away agency from women using a misrepresentation of Christian ethics. It also portrays Christ as a victim rather than presenting his sacrifice as a powerful act of love.

**Contextualization:** As a feminist, the researcher’s experience of women’s othering in religion is of great concern. The church remains one of only a few institutions that continue to exclude women from positions of power and relate them to subservient caring roles in the church. This Christianized othering in the church is of concern, given how the bible has been taken out of context to devalue the work and worth of women in some context. It must be expressed however that some denominations have broken the mold and women have broken the glass ceiling but there needs to be greater policy and advocacy in this area.The ethic of care comes from a position of relational and emotional power and not one of debasement or devaluation.

**Source Two:** Konyana, E. (2024). Women and care ethics during the COVID-19 pandemic: Who cares for the care-givers? *Pharos Journal of Theology*, *105*(105(4)). <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.105.49>

**Comment 3**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Caring is a general ethical responsibility that makes human existence worthwhile and fulfilling. Whenever society is distressed be it by a famine, war, poverty or a pandemic, the impact falls hard on women,

children and people living with disabilities. We all need to be cared for and we owe the same obligation to others, especially those who care for us. However, during crises, the ethics of care becomes integral and, more often, men are not readily available to offer it. Arguably, the duty to care is one of the most compelling obligations that make human and non-human beings survive any form of distress. However, it is unfortunate that women face more of the brunt of the requirements of the duty to care than their male counterparts, particularly in the home front.” pp. 1

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the ethic of care in challenging times. The quote highlights that care falls to the woman in particular in times of distress such as a pandemic, famine and war. The duty of care is extremely important in times of distress and often the men are not available to provide care.

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**Contextualization:** My passion project for the action research and my life’s work is around care and inequitable distribution of care and domestic labour in the home. The mental load and imbalance that women carry with work, reflects socio-cultural factors such as gender role socialization, expression of societal norms and values that perpetuate gender inequality. My calling is around education and edification in this discourse. Equally moral and ethical decision making around care is an important consideration for gender equality. During the covid-19 pandemic, there were many factors around ethical decision making in relation to care- who stays home with the children and who generally cares for the family. What was morally right or wrong was dependent upon the family and their lived experience.

**Source Three:** Alacovska, A., & Bissonnette, J. (2021). Care-ful Work: An Ethics of Care Approach to Contingent Labour in the Creative Industries. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *169*(1),

135–151. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04316-3>

**Comment 4**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The ethics of care approach presupposes a relational interpersonal configuration of everyday life and work and thus necessitates a systematic understanding of the nature, quality and dynamics of relationships of care. In contrast with traditional ethical theories—including the moral economy approach—that privilege abstract principles, formal rules, impersonal duties and deliberative justice to sanction relational conduct, however, the ethics of care

approach concentrates on the specificities of practices, virtues and feelings (kindness, empathy, compassion) as these arise from concrete life situations that are themselves infused in relational infrastructures and local webs of

interdependencies (Gilligan 1982; Noddings 2010; Tronto 1993). Through this lens, care itself structures the practical, emotional and affective everydayness of human life (Archer 2000). Acting ‘other-wise’ instead of ‘self-wise’

thus becomes central to care-ful, reflexive living and working (Lynch 2007). According to Tronto (1993), the crucial ethical elements of care are other-centred and necessitate attentiveness, i.e. suspending one’s self-interest while recognizing the unmet needs of the other, as well as responsibility, which implies assuming responsibility for hands-on care outside of formally prescribed rules of obligation and duties, driven by a desire for a ‘better world’ .” pp. 138

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of traditional ethics and care ethics. In contrast to traditional normative ethics with its formal rules and impersonal approach to moral decision making, ethics of care approaches life and decisions from a relational interpersonal perspective using thought and feelings such as empathy and compassion. Care ethics looks at moral decision making through reflective practices looking to help others rather from a place of selfishness and self-interest not from duty (deontological) or from obligation or rules.

**Contextualization:** The quote highlights important differences with traditional normative and care ethics. My worldview is that ethics of care and traditional ethical principles put forward by Kant and Kohlberg for example can be taken together for use in different life situations. In an understanding of care and work in the household for example, Piaget's principles of moral development are important.

**Comment 5**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “All participants noted that they, as women, were the ones primarily responsible for unpaid care work in their families and that unpaid care work had increased dramatically due to COVID-19 related childcare, schooling and service interruptions, as well as due to the increased needs of vulnerable family members, especially the elderly and those living with disabilities. These perceptions are supported by earlier research indicating that, while men took on more care responsibilities during the initial COVID-19 related lockdown than previously, women continued to do the majority of unpaid care work (Scheibling et al.,2020). Participants who were mothers described increased unpaid care as not only adding to their work burden, but also to experiences of moral constraints over their perceived inability to adequately support their children’s wellbeing and education.” pp. 5

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of unpaid care work and moral constraint. In this study, all the participants (women) admitted that they were the main caregivers in the home. Covid-19 further exacerbated the challenge of care as children were not at school and the increased needs of other vulnerable members of the family such as the elderly and disabled. Men had increased responsibilities during this pandemic but it was clear that women were still the primary caregivers. The increased unpaid care work also impacted the moral strain and dilemmas over inability to support the education and wellbeing of their children.

**Contextualization:** During covid-19 there were many moral challenges and decision making that impacted care not just in the private space (home) but also the public space. In Jamaica, hospitals were at times crowded with covid-19 patients, and other patients had to be turned away from hospital care. Additionally, when there were not enough ventilators, ethical decision making was critical to patient care. Who gets a ventilator? In some situations such as this an ethic of care approach may prove burdening. A Christian ethic or traditional ethical practice may have proven more appropriate.

**Source Four:** Posadas, J. (2020). Reproductive Justice Re-Constructs Christian Ethics of Work. *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, *40*(1), 109–126. <https://doi.org/10.5840/jsce202052028>

**Comment 6**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “And most interpretation of work by Christian ethicists and theologians has, indeed, been based on assumptions that uphold capitalism’s moral system. This leads them to observe, across confessional boundaries, a set of rules for Christian discourse on work (again, explicated further in the above-mentioned article): 1) that ethicists and theologians should define work in a transcendental way, as some notion of work-in-its-essence, of which waged employment is a manifestation; 2) that work (at least work-in-its-essence) is one of the things that defines human being as such—I term this the assumption of work’s ontological necessity; 3) that work-in-its-essence has an intrinsic goodness; 4) that God’s activity can and should be interpreted as work—and that

work is part of what it means to be human because work is part of what

it means to be divine; 5) that where waged employment is degrading and immiserating, it is not because work-in-its-essence is bad, but because it has been incorrectly structured, and with the right adjustments, it can be redeemed to properly reflect work-in-its-essence.” pp. 115

**Essential Element**: This comment is associated with the essential element, Evaluate the secular ethical standards concerning current world events and

respond with a Christian ethical application.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of work and Christian ethics. Often work is understood by Christian ethicist and theologians based on assumptions that uphold the capitalist system of work. These assumptions are that work should be seen as not a means to an end but should be meaning itself and should be purposeful, it should define human existence based on that purpose; work is essentially good, working is of God and doing God’s work is important; where paid work is unfulfilling, this is due to the way work is structured and adjustments can be made to reflect meaningful work.

**Contextualization:** In contemporary society, work is sometimes seen as dreary and a “painful duty.” From a faith based perspective, work as a form of stewardship over the earth as God commanded in Genesis is a great reminder. This perspective helps to center and align us as workers for God and for his cause as opposed to work as a means to an end in a technology facilitated fast paced rat race society that often forgets about a purpose greater than ourselves.

Society’s definition of work has been thwarted and has recreated strain for the society and the modern day Christians who have forgotten the faith based purpose of work. From a personal standpoint and from my worldview as a social work Christian scholar, ‘work’ needs to be redefined and reconceptualized to maintain the balance and alignment with family, the Christian household and communion with God. Within a feminist contextualization, women’s work and worth has been devalued and ‘othered’ within the discourse.

**Comment 7**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Earlier I defined care as all the tasks humans must do in order to sustain the life of humanity in society from one day and one generation to the next. This is largely synonymous with what feminist analysts of capitalism call social reproduction, the best formulation of which is Nancy Fraser’s: all those “activities of provisioning, caregiving, and interaction that produce and maintain social bonds. The work of birthing and socializing the young is central to this

process, as is caring for the old, maintaining households and family members,

building communities, and sustaining the shared meanings, affective dispositions,

and horizons of value that underpin social cooperation.” Now, it is crucial to

remember that although social reproduction is necessary for capitalism to succeed

on its own terms, capitalism is not necessary for social reproduction. Human

history is filled with examples of societies in which social reproduction is not

forced to be an instrument for capital accumulation (some of them, to be sure,

are just as exploitative, yet others are non-trivially more equitable). Capitalism

is a parasite that infects human communities and forces their webs of care to

produce the workforce it needs in order to generate the profits it craves; that

human bodies and bonds are steadily degraded in the process is simply budgeted

by capitalism as “labor costs.” pp. 121.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive and variant to my understanding of capitalism and social reproduction. Care is about sustaining life through acts of service to children, elderly, and disabled and the entire household community and society. This is social reproduction based on feminist analysis of capitalism. Though social production is needed for the system of capitalism to be sustained, social reproduction does not need capitalism. This means that capitalism depends on social reproduction to produce workers in order to sustain profits on the backs of burned out employees. The author does take a really dim view of capitalism, while I mostly agree with the comments, there is an ideology that capitalism also produces what we need for survival. Otherwise we go back to a hunter gatherer society, as some off the grid persons globally have been deciding to live.

**Contextualization:**  Since capitalism needs social reproduction, my worldview is that it should morally and economically support its sustainability. Supporting women and needs to care is a start, more daycare facilities aligned with employment at minimal or no cost to the employee, paid family leave where they don't exist and other assistance. The governments are also important in capitalist societies ensuring that care and family policies are implemented to ensure establishing a minimum of care supportive action throughout countries. I have also taken note in the past few days of what is currently happening in the US around social reproduction and women’s reproductive policies. There are indeed ethical and moral standards in examining care across the world.

**Source Five:** Orlov Vilimonović, L.(2022). The Ethics of Care in the Late Antique Christian Discourse: (Trans) historical Perspectives on the Social, Political and Philosophical Value of Care.*Philosophy and Society* , *33*(4), 910–933. [https://doi.org/10.2298/FID2204910](https://doi.org/10.2298/FID2204910O)

**Comment 8**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The Christian epistemology and ontology were founded upon the ethics of care. Care for other people beyond the family, for those in need, and for marginalized and vulnerable groups was a prerequisite for the formation of a Christian community, which was rooted in shared experiences of victimization and suffering. This shared history of victimization has fostered an empathic solidarity within the Christian community, which has fostered the ethics of care as its fundamental principle of social being” pp. 930

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Compare the different approaches of traditional ethical systems to Christian

ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the ethics of Care and Christian epistemology and ontology. Christian knowledge and understanding are aligned to the ethic of care; care of others outside the family, the vulnerable, needy, victimized and marginalized. Christian ethics and care ethics are therefore aligned through “empathic solidarity” and principles of social being.

**Contextualization:** This quote aligns with my worldview as a Christian scholar practitioner and as a social worker (a care/helping profession). Christian ways of being are essentially based on a culture of care. Every example I can think of presents God as our model of care as he was observed in the bible feeding, healing and caring for others.

**Comment 9**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Christian ethics of care were disseminated not only through Roman laws, but also through public discourse and homilies that equated it with

God’s love and its return. Consequently, it became a primary virtue for

the truly moral and righteous individual…5. The Christian ethics of care embedded in the concept of agape, in which all people were equated, facilitated the actualization of the concept of between the sexes that dominated public discourse. 6. The Christian ethics of care used the concept of a mother’s care for her offspring to evoke natural empathy and compassion in people who were

all born and surviving due to the care of Mother and her Son and God. 7. The degendering of care ethics in the discourse of a genderless God’s care, Christ’s care, John’s care, and Joseph’s care for the Theotokos increased the gender-neutrality of care, which was conceptualized as a relational experience of mutual care between men and women, mother and her children, children and their mother respectively, and between young and elderly. All these caring relations were placed at the center of the human economy of salvation.” pp. 931

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Compare the different approaches of traditional ethical systems to Christian

ethics.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of Christian ethics of care. A Christian ethic of care aligns with God's love and care for his people. He is the standard for moral virtue. There are some important principles here; Christian ethics of care is about agape- God’s love, Christian ethics of care used the principle of a mother’s care for her Son (Jesus) through love, empathy and compassion and that Christian ethics of care discourse promotes a degendering of care promoting a relational experience, as men care for women and women for men, mother care for her child, children for a mother, young for old and I would add, as God’s people care for strangers and others in the community.

**Contextualization**: The passage speaks about a degendering of care and this is critical from a secular socio-economic stance to ease the strain that women have that cause them to have moral dilemmas and feel burdened with work at home and at the office. Degenderizing care would refer to a more egalitarian society, one that sees care, ethically and morally as not women’s work but work for all.

**Source Six** : Held, V. (2005). *The ethics of care: Personal, political, and global*. Oxford university press.

**Comment 10**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The ethic of care is sometimes seen as a potential moral theory to be substituted for such dominant moral theories as Kantian ethics, utilitarianism or Aristotelian virtue ethics. It is sometimes seen as a form of virtue ethics. It is almost always developed as emphasizing neglected moral considerations of at least as much importance as the considerations central to moralities of justice and rights or of utility and preference satisfaction. And many who contribute to the understanding of the ethics of care seek to integrate the moral considerations such as justice, which other moral theories have clarified, satisfactorily with those of care, though they often see the need to reconceptualize those considerations ” pp. 9

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the ethic of care. Ethics of care can be seen as utilitarian Kantian or virtue ethics. It oftentimes emphasizes morality of justice and rights.

**Contextualization**: Within my action research, the discourse often centers on gender justice and care work. How can society create equity across genders when it comes to unpaid care in the home? This becomes an issue of morality in two-income households in particular where both parents/partners have equal work in organizations, yet one over 71% carry the mental load and care of the household.

**Comment 11**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “...In the epistemological process of trying to understand what morality would recommend and what it would be morally best for us to do and to be, the ethics of care values emotions rather than rejects it. Not all emotion is valued, of course, but in contrast with the dominant rationalist approaches such emotions as sympathy, empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness are seen as the kind of moral emotions that need to be cultivated not only to help in the implementation of the dictates of reason but to better what morality recommends. Even anger may be a component of the moral indignation that should be felt when people are treated unjustly or inhumanely, and it may contribute to (rather than interfere with) an appropriate interpretation of moral wrong. This is not to say that raw emotion can be a guide to morality; feelings need to be reflected on and educated. But from the care perspective, moral inquiries that rely entirely on reason and rationalistic deductions or calculations are seen as deficient. ” pp. 10.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of ethics of care and emotions. In understanding morality and what we ought to be and do, an ethic of care values emotions over rationality. It uses empathy, sensitivity and compassion. Though not always clear, it may even use anger as an ethical tool for unjust and inhumane actions, as may be done for use in advocacy campaigns. Feelings and emotions however need to be reflected on, regulated and used with intelligence. Notwithstanding all of this, moral decision making with only rational thinking, guidelines and rules are seen as lacking when examining ethics of care.

**Contextualization**: As a feminist researcher, a feminist ethic of care is useful in reflecting on everyday life. Ethics of care as a moral approach to moral decision making, motherhood and care are highly important in this respect. It comes from a notion of moral decision making that is based on empathy, mental labour, care for children, the elderly, disabled, the entire family and community. In my work with strengthening families, women in particular make decisions based on the needs of others - a mother may take unpaid leave to support a child at school on sports day or for a major project. Ethics of care therefore come from a powerful place of love.

**Source Seven:**

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| Tronto, J. (2020). *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care*. Routledge. |
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**Comment 12**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The content of this "women's morality" is never precisely set, but the term refers loosely to a collection of ideas:2 values placed on caring and nurturance, the importance of mother’s love, a stress on the value of sustaining human relationships, the overriding value of peace.3 It is also not clear if women's greater moral sensitivity derives from simply being female, from being a mother or a potential mother,4 or from women's particular cultural role and setting, for example, that women can be more moral because they are outside of the marketplace. ” pp 1.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element, Understand ethics as the philosophy and methodology of behavior and the conducting of human activities.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of gender and morality. Women have been seen as more moral than men throughout history, for example through the suffragist campaign “if more women voted there would be less wars” and other notions of why women are more moral. It is believed that because women are carers and nurturers and their value of social sustenance; whether a woman is morally sensitive because she is female or other ideas that because of the cultural role they play they are more socially moral.

**Contextualization:** Contextually, it is my opinion and worldview that morality is not a gendered notion but a choice. In God’s example for his people he lived a moral virtuous life for us to follow but we have been given choice. For equitable care and labour in the household to be a reality there has to be a moral, ethical decision; a choice. I believe it can and will happen by God’s grace and leading in our lives.

**References**

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Contingent Labour in the Creative Industries. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *169*(1),

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| Tronto, J. (2020). *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care*. Routledge. |
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