

Caring from Afar: Expanding our Concept of Care in the Professions¹

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Since the publication of Carol Gilligan's *In A Different Voice*, and more recently, Nel Noddings seminal work *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, the concept of care and, more generally, care theory, have secured a place in contemporary discussions about the nature of morality. According to its strongest advocates, caring is a moral attitude with epistemological and practical significance in our moral life. It is a moral attitude that traditional deontological, utilitarian and virtue theories have either ignored or subordinated to more individualistic centered values such as autonomy and justice. While these concepts should not be ignored, the attention they have received at the cost of ignoring a concept that figures so prominently into traditionally women-dominated occupations results in a false, or at best, incomplete picture of the fabric of moral life. The goal of many care theorists is to revisit discussions of ethical problems emphasizing the particularity and partiality essential to caring relationships in addition to the ineliminability of trust, shared knowledge and shared responsibility in both the private and public domain.

One might be inclined to think that while the shift in attention toward care theory should have an impact on academic discussions in moral philosophy, there is relatively little new to say for its place in a discussion

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