

Feminism(s) and Antifoundationalism: Okin, Gilligan, Tronto, Rorty

Q) What are some different 'kinds' of feminism that come to mind?

- Distinguishing first, second, and third wave/generation feminism

Pretty much everything we've learned to date "functions so as to set up and reinforce clear distinctions and **dichotomies**" in a way that privileges one side of the discussion. Examples? What are some ways in which our language, history, religion, etc. are "gendered"?

Okin's liberal (equality) feminism: *Justice, Gender, and the Family*

- **Patriarchy, gender roles**, and the sexual division of labor
 - What counts as 'work' in most of what we've looked at so far? What doesn't 'count', and why?
- Is this a fair indictment of pretty much everything we've read so far?: "a tradition of political theory which has been based, almost without exception, upon the belief that women must be defined exclusively by their role within the family, and which has defined them...as outside the political" (Okin)
- Rather than being virtues, "gender-based thought has tended to take the traditional, patriarchal understandings of workers and citizen and simply treat them as if they now cover women as well as men." (IPT)
- Okin endorses a 'modified original position' that properly accounts for gendered power relations (273) and which distinguishes child-bearing (a function of sex) from child-rearing (a function of gender)
- "A just future would be one without gender". What does she mean by this, and what does she propose? (274-5)

'Difference' feminism: Carol Gilligan, Joan Tronto, and the ethic of care

- Carol Gilligan's "**ethic of care**" (as against the 'ethic of justice' we've seen to date), developed in response to work by Lawrence Kohlberg on a six-stage process of moral development (276)
- What does the text, paraphrasing Tronto, mean when it says "moral decisions come instead in various shades of grey where whatever we do is wrong" (278-9)...why does **particularism** (rather than universalism) suit this view?
- How does our vision of the 'good society' change if we supplement (but don't replace...) the ethic of justice with the ethic of care? (280)
- Note that the 'different voice' needn't necessarily be gendered (although some thinkers do think so—this is an area of substantial controversy that hinges on "essentializing difference" and thus possibly reinforcing patriarchal domination): Tronto argues that the ethic of care is "instead a function of marginalization and exclusion"

Rorty's pragmatist antifoundationalism (a variant of postmodernism)

- Other prominent antifoundationalists: Michel Foucault, Friedrich Nietzsche, Ludwig Wittgenstein
- Rorty's critique of all systematic or foundationalist philosophy's (from Hobbes to Rawls) search for 'the truth'
 - The goal of foundationalism is impossible
 - § See Rorty's critique of 'truth' on 285-6
 - § "The idea that philosophy is a voyage of discovery rather than creation is the very thing that Rorty wishes to debunk" (this is an example of **positive existentialism**)
 - § We should "manipulate[e] sentiments, on **sentimental education**", not...search for pie-in-the-sky absolutes that have little practical use [cf. the reason/sympathy 'divide']
 - The implementation of foundationalism is historically catastrophic
 - § Rorty's speech (comparing Serb torturers to Jefferson...) on the danger of 'purity' and 'wholeness' in the inherent dualism of foundational thought
- Rorty's alternative: the postmodern **ironist** (Rorty's definition at 288). Is the ironist different from the cultural relativist? Similar? What is Rorty's response to this claim?
- What is Rorty's view of the post-Holocaust 'human-rights culture's causes and effects? (290)