

NWANA EKUNWA'S INFLUENCE ON CHILD'S MORAL DEVELOPMENT: EXPANDING CAROL GILLIGAN'S *ETHICS OF CARE*

Jude I. Onebunne*

Abstracts

Care of the other, especially the young ones, is one of the characteristics of animals with soul. Aristotle and other philosophers of Metaphysical Anthropology maintain that the soul is the faculty of existence or principle of life¹. However, specialized care as well as formalized aid (attention or concern) is the identity of human beings as rational, thinking and social animals. In a very strict sense, human beings are care-giving and caring animals. In *lato sensu*, care giving is very fundamental to the nature of human beings as animals that are so much limited in physical constitution. Through care, human beings complement each others shortcomings. Therefore, parenting seems to be a duty humanity owes to humankind if they are to be really humans. We live in a secular society where responsibilities abound with regard to this form of parenting. Looking after a child is duty parents owe the child as well as a basic part of parenting which every child needs. The concept of *nwanaekunwa* is exposed as it complements *via* care ethics the moral formation of a child. This theoretical paper tries to evaluate the possible challenges meted on the nurturer, in her inexperience, and nurtured, the baby, in her fragile stage. However, the questions are: can a child nurture a child? To what extent can the nurturer influence the nurtured? Can the practice of *nwanaekunwa* in anyway be likened to what is obtainable globally as regards parenting or child-minding? The researcher amongst using available child development theories discovered that the idea of *nwanaekunwa* in complementing these theories, expands Carol Gilligan's *care ethics*. *Nwanaekuna* makes up for the lack of the mother's care and enduring significant presence. More so, during parenting the mother renders ethics of care while the helper(*nwanaekunwa*) renders ethics of service. It was recommended among other things that since a mother's love is unquantifiable, in choosing our career, we must take into consideration our primary role, and get a more experienced person to do the job of *nwanaekunwa* (ethics of service or service ethics).

Keywords: *Nwankeekunwa*, *nwa ana-eku*, theories of moral formation, traditional Igbo society.

Introduction

Unfortunately parenting has gone wrong today as many untrained children are fast becoming parents. In addition, most parents are too busy for their children, hence, the idea and need for a helper or *nwanaekunwa*. Parenting nevertheless entails a lot of maternal care which necessitates the practice of maternity-leave (and currently the burning idea of paternity-leave) for some of them in civil service. Most parents are either engaged in a civil service work or in a private enterprise. Hence, the need for a helper especially with particular reference to the idea of *nwanaekunwa*. *Nwanaekunwa* is an Igbo concept that

¹ Wikipedia (n.d.) explains that the faculties of the soul are the individual characteristics attributed to a soul. Plato defined the faculties of the soul in terms of a three-fold division: the intellect (*noûs*)-representing the human soul, the nobler affections (*thumós*)-representing animal soul, and the appetites or passions (*epithumetikón*)-representing the vegetative soul. The human soul possess the powers of the animal and plant faculties while the animal soul possesses only the animal and plant faculties. However, the plant possesses only the plant faculties. Aristotle also made a three-fold division of natural faculties, into vegetative, appetitive and rational elements, though he later distinguished further divisions in the rational faculty, such as the faculty of judgement and that of cleverness (*deinotes*). Krause, Paul (2019) writes that Aquinas argues that what distinguishes souls is not objects but its abilities. Thus we see from Aquinas the three powers of the soul. Plant life; animal life; and rational life. Each level of life has powers particular to its ends which intersect together, in their own ways, to reflect and embody the beauty, love, and goodness of God (see *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3.97-98). What permeates the cosmos is love that link the powers of the soul to their particular ends as it generates, enjoys, understands and calls all things to it through their distinctive abilities. Love, then, is the World-Soul for Aquinas which moves all things in the symphonic waltz of life. Catholic Answers. (n.d.) maintains that o the Question: *Do animals have souls like human beings* came the answer from the *Catholic Answers* thus: Animals have souls—and so do plants but not in the sense in which human beings have souls. Our souls are rational hence possess conceptional intelligence like abstract notion of justice. Plant and animal soul are material, cease to exist at death, therefore lack a moral sense, cannot a sin since they act on *instinct*. Animals and plants cannot do anything which transcends the limitations of matter even though they have specialized senses. Human souls, being spiritual with two chief faculties can know (intellect) and love (will). Ethics of care simply boils down to human activities based on love.

means a *child that nurtures a baby*. Often, such a person is a child or an adult who is equally referred to as *odibobunne*. It is an old traditional Igbo practice where a child, sometimes from a different sociocultural background, is brought into a family for the purpose of nurturing another child. Often *nwanaekunwa* influences the child more than the mother as she likely spends more time with the child. It is noteworthy that *nwanaekunwa* is not a nanny nor a babysitter, neither a childminder nor a governess. Such concepts are more refined in their approach and duty. *Nwanaekunwa* is most often timid and uncultured. Some of them are simply illiterate without much exposition to good life. Unfortunately, *nwa ana-eku* (the baby being nurtured), at the end of the day develops double moral standards: that of the mother and that of *nwanaekunwa*.

Odibo-bu-nne otherwise called *nwanaekunwa* is the Igbo concept of a babysitter or nanny. Babysitting means to temporally care for a child, that is, a child who nurtures a baby. It can be a paid job for all ages. In most Western countries, the type of work for babysitters varies from watching a sleeping child, changing diapers, playing games, preparing meals for the child and often teaching the child to read or even write (if the age is right). All these depend on the agreement between parents and babysitters. However, there are various organizations who have professionalized this kind of job by producing courses for them (baby-sitters, nannies), many focusing on child safety, proper first aid for the infants and children, knowledge of the developmental stages of every child, (Kuti, F., 2006). On the other hand, all information about babysitters are taken including personality details, biodata, criminal records and so on. This is to ward off possible hebephiles, pedophiles and other unsuitable applicants. All of these are done to ensure safety for both the child, parents, babysitters and their employer, (Okafor, E.E., 2009).

In the Igbo setting, *nwanaekunwa* performs many engaging roles and more. The majority of them, (*nwanaekunwa* or *ndi odibobunne*), tend to be adolescent young boys or girls from age 7 to 15. Many of them are from a very poor background, usually brought from a village to the city on the promise for a better life, (Okafor, E.E & Amayo, O.E., (2006). In Igbo setting, *odibobunne* is usually an in-home child-care taker. The type of work they do includes but not usually limited to cooking for the whole family, cleaning the house, taking care of the children, washing and other domestic tasks in a household. In many homes they run the home in the cause of attending to the child for which he or she came. Rarely *nwanaekunwa* is informally instructed and trained to take care of the home and the child, oftentimes to the detriment of the sons and daughters of the home. Unfortunately the dressing of *nwanaekunwa* and ill-treatments she receives from such unfortunate homes singles her out as such. It is worthy to note that most household, prefer female *nwanaekunwa* or *odibobunne* in their homes. They receive no salary and in most situations, they are not sent to school, often, as promised. The common Nigerian would refer to them as *maid*. They are uncared for and the females are unfortunately left at the mercy of the male master as they oftentimes get sexually molested in all forms. The level of maltreatment meted out on them is classified as inhuman by human rights. Hence, it is considered as the most common form of child-abuse and slavery in the modern times (Adizie, J.D., 2017).

Nwanaekunwa in Igbo Weltanschauung

The lexicon *nwanaekunwa* is a concept of four words: *nwa* (child), *na* (action/verb) *eku* (carrying/sitting) and *nwa* (baby/child). It literally means a *child who carries a child*. *Nwanaekunwa* is simply a babysitter. It is a traditional practice amongst the Igbo people. The Igbo people are an ethnic group in Nigeria. They are primarily found in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. A sizeable Igbo population is also outside their country. More so, they can be found in Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, as resident-migrants as well as outside the Continental Africa. In Jamaica the Igbo people were often referred to as Eboe or Ibo. There are a substantial number of Igbo language loanwords in Jamaican Patois, (Wikipedia, n.d.). Some Igbos are also found outside Africa as a result of slave trade. Many have migrated to other parts of the world for many reasons within the ambience of greener pasture and of professionalism. Nevertheless, there has been much speculation about the origins of the Igbo people,

which are largely unknown. However, King Eri, like many, claims that the Igbo are the Jews of West Africa. The global presence of the Ndigbo community has sparked significant interest, as their unique characteristics and contributions have undeniably left an indelible mark on the societies they inhabit. The Ndigbo people, an ethnic group from Southeast Nigeria, have a rich history of migration, demonstrating their unique characteristics, tradition and culture as a people (Onebunne, 2024).

Onebunne is of the opinion that “Ndigbo or Igbo nationalism in Nigeria is not questionable nor doubtful. However, their patriotism is negotiable. More so Ndigbo are the most significant patriots among other members of Nigerian nations. Ndigbo as a national *cum* political entity in Nigeria are indeed true Nigerians by all standard. That is to say, Ndigbo are characteristically known for their ubiquitous lifestyle and gumptious spirit as they remain the genuine symbols of true citizens of Nigeria in their gypsy-tic ordination, versatile orientation and influencing enterprise”, (Onebunne, 2023). Ndigbo nevertheless in spite of their profession and global dispersions and taunted as being a *dot* maintains the needed patriotism amongst other Nigerian nations. It is a verifiable fact and truism of a sort that any part of Nigeria you get to and you fail to find an Igbo-man just know that the place is not habitable as such. Ndigbo are the gypsies of our time, (Onebunne, 2023). Ndigbo are ubiquitous in Nigeria with unique celebrated culture and styles of life. One of such cultural and traditional practices is within the bounds of family-hood and communalism. An extension of this is seen in the extended family system that has chanced the idea and practice of *nwanekunwa* which colours the life of Ndigbo as *animal culturalis*. Nevertheless, there ought to be a comprehensive exploration of the rich varieties of Igbo realities within the interconnectedness and frame work of Igbo tradition and culture. There is, therefore, an intricate relationship between Igbo society, individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds that coexist with the African spirit infrequently expressed in the spirit of brotherhood, a communal spirit deep-rooted in her extended family system.

Conceptual Appreciation of Morality

In the metaphysics of human beings (Mondin, 2011), humankind is a moral animal as result of values he places on things that affect him. And in line with his constitution as an animal, human being has the heart as seat of emotions, conscience as the voice of God and soul as the faculty of existence. Morality is all about rules concerning the difference between right and wrong or good and bad behaviour or despicable attitude. Wikipedia (n.d.) defines morality as “the categorization of intentions, decisions and actions into those that are proper and those that are improper”. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) explains that morality is “a moral discourse, statement, or lesson; a literary or other imaginative work teaching a moral lesson as well as a doctrine or system of moral conduct”. It is a set of personal principles or social standards for good or bad behaviour and character as well as the quality of being right, honest, or acceptable (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). The concept of morality seems to be subjective because people tend to have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong. Morals, as values, equally seems to vary from person to person and culture to culture. However, morality is universal because they result from basic human emotions and fundamental value orientation.

The term morality (derived from the Latin word *moralis*) means manner, character, value, proper behaviour, the differentiation of intentions, decisions and action between those that are distinguished as proper and those that are improper. Morality can be a body of standards or ethics from a code of conduct, from a certain religion or culture. Equally, morality can also be seen to be a standard that have been accepted and believes should be universal. One cannot be talking about the moral formation of a child without looking at the moral developmental processes that every child undergoes, from birth (infancy) to adulthood. Moral development is concerned with the emergence and understanding of morality from infancy through adulthood. Therefore, the concept of moral development focuses on the role of parents and *nwanaekunwa* in facilitating moral development. In other words, moral development focuses on questions of origins and changes in morality across the life span, in the developmental stages of life of the child and the mother and or *nwanaekunwa*. Our task is to view properly the concept of development and

in particular, moral development within the bounds of mother morality of care and *nwanaekunwa* service of care.

Summarily, morality refers to the principles and standards that help individuals distinguish between right and wrong or good and bad behaviour. It encompasses a set of values and rules that guide how people should act in various situations. The key aspects of ethical morality borders so much on principles of right and wrong, ethical standards, moral reasoning, cultural and social norms. However, there are several theories used in explaining how morality develops and functions: Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory (that focuses on the role of the superego in moral development), Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis, B. F. Skinner Classical Conditioning, Ivan Pavlov Classical Conditioning, Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory (that describes stages of moral reasoning based on cognitive growth), Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development (that proposes six stages of moral reasoning within three levels) and Carol Gilligan's Ethics of Care (which emphasizes the importance of relationships and care in moral reasoning). Morality is very essential as a social cohesion (helps maintain order and harmony within societies); boosts personal integrity (that fosters a sense of responsibility and ethical behaviour) and helps resolve conflict resolution (while providing frame work for fair and just decisions).

Understanding the Idea of Development

Development is as old as man. In the chequered history of man, every one of man's activities is tailored towards development. From the dawn of creation, man was mandated by God to conquer the earth (Gen. 1:27ff. So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female, He created them. God blessed them and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth). Man is, therefore, ordered to *manipulate* nature to his very advantage. Development is in line with the *Old Testament Divine mandated mission of man* with regard to taking charge of the earth and subduing it as *homo faber*, tools man. *Homo faber* is a concept articulated by Hannah Arendt and Max Scheler referring to humans as controlling the environment through tools (Akam, 1991). Development, therefore, is part of man's fulfilment as *animal laborans*, a working animal, that is, a labouring animal. However, development has many meanings as it tries to bring forth another reality from a given reality as a result of creativity. Development means a process by which an inner principle, which is the first hidden, comes to light (the development of an idea by a speaker). Equally, it may be a slow, step by step transformation (which is not necessarily directed to one definite goal: like many historical developments). Development means a transformation that is guided in a definite direction, a transformation that leads from unformed and less determined to the formed and fully determined; and such transformation is from one form or species to another. Development, therefore, is a process of *transformational agenda* within the context of a people in relation to their level of growth as well as the progress of individual members of a human family within the natural society. Hence, there are broad categories of development as: *Natural Development*, *Human Development* and *Societal (National) Development*. However, the primary aim of development is human well-being. The broader concept of development places man at the centre of development. Our concern, however, is moral development. Development at this point transcends physical and economic advancement. It is a holistic development of the human person. In the book, *Problem of Humanism in the Philosophy of Pope John Paul II*, humanism is simply defined as the development of human value in all its forms and to its fullest extent.

On Moral Development

Moral development refers to the process through which individuals develop the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to engage in moral reasoning. This process involves changes in thoughts, feelings and behaviours regarding standards of right and wrong. Moral development is influenced by a variety of factors, including: family and parenting, peers and social interactions, cultural and societal norms. Cherry, K. (2022) gave out some key points about moral development as: cognitive development. However, moral

reasoning evolves as children's cognitive abilities to develop. These include understanding rules, recognizing the perspectives of others and applying ethical principles, stages of development (various theorists have proposed stages through which moral reasoning progresses). Moral development is essential for social functioning, personal growth and conflict resolution. Understanding moral development can help parents, educators, *nwanaekunwa* and society support the growth of ethical, responsible and response-able individuals, (Cherry, K., 2022). Development refers to the process of growth, progress, or evolution in various contexts expressed in personal development: Learning new skills, gaining knowledge and improving personal attributes; community development: initiatives aimed at improving the living conditions and well-being of a community and product development: the process of creating and bringing new products to market. Development is of great importance as it helps in: improving quality of life (enhancing living standards and access to essential services), economic growth (creating jobs, increasing income, and boosting economic stability) and social progress (promoting equality, justice, and social cohesion).

Theories of Moral Development

Theory is defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.) as “a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena”. It is a policy or procedure proposed or followed as the basis of action as well as an ideal or hypothetical set of facts, principles, or circumstances -often used in the phrase, a hypothesis assumed for the sake of argument or investigation, (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). There are hypotheses with regard to development of ones morality. Our interest is in morality which encompasses many disciplines (e.g, philosophy, biology, economics, and political science) with its specializations in psychology (e.g social, cognitive and cultural). A critical look at the theories shows how morality is developed as such. Hence, the theories of moral development in a human beings as a child. Some of such theories are: Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis, B. F. Skinner Classical Conditioning, Ivan Pavlov Classical Conditioning, Jean Piaget Cognitive Development Theory, Lawrence Kohlberg Theory of Development and Carol Gilligan's theory of Moral Development.

Burrhus Frederic Skinner Operant Conditioning

Burrhus Frederic Skinner (March 20, 1904 – August 18, 1990) was an American psychologist, behaviourist, inventor and social philosopher. He was the Edgar Pierce Professor of Psychology at Harvard University from 1958 until his retirement in 1974, (Wikipedia, n.d.). B. F. Skinner, a prominent behaviourist, developed the theory of operant conditioning which plays a significant role in understanding moral development in children. Therefore, Firstdiscoverers (n.d.) reiterates that operant conditioning is a process by which behaviours are shaped by their consequences. For Skinner, behaviour is fundamentally one's activity with some consequences, often learnt and acquired *via* reinforcement or punishment. Hence, Skinner identified three types of responses that can follow behaviour. These (re-enforcement or punishment) can be positive (adding an unfavourable outcome) or negative (removing a favourable outcome). Moreover, the key issues in his classical theory according to Firstdiscoverers (n.d.) are: *neutral operants* (responses from the environment that neither increase nor decrease the likelihood of a behaviour being repeated), *reinforcers* (responses that increase the probability of a behaviour being repeated. These can be positive -adding a favourable outcome- or negative-(removing an unfavourable outcome), *punishers* (responses that decrease the likelihood of a behaviour being repeated). B. F. Skinner's theory suggests that moral behaviours in children are learned through the same processes of reinforcement and punishment. The cardinal issues in operant conditioning can be understood as such:

- *Positive Reinforcement*: Strengthens behaviour with reward after the desired behaviour is performed.
- *Negative Reinforcement*: Strengthens behaviour with removal of unpleasant stimulus when the desired behaviour is performed.
- *Positive Punishment*: Weakens behaviour by presenting an unfavourable outcome after the behaviour.
- *Negative Punishment*: Weakens behaviour by removing a favourable outcome after the behaviour.

The implication of Skinner's theory is enormous as his approach implies that moral education can be effectively managed by carefully structuring the environment to provide appropriate reinforcements and punishments. This method will be of great help as children learn desirable attitudes and understand the consequences of their actions, (Firstdiscoverers, n.d.).

Ivan Pavlov Classical Conditioning

McLeod, S. (2024) defines classical conditioning, (also known as Pavlovian or respondent conditioning) as a learning process discovered by Ivan Pavlov, a Russian physiologist. Classical conditioning entails having an associations between a neutral stimulus and an unconditioned stimulus in order to produce a conditioned or desired response, (Cherry, K., 2024). Hence, the key aspects of classical conditioning are:

- *Unconditioned Stimulus (UCS)*: A stimulus that naturally and automatically triggers a response without any prior learning. For example, food causing a dog to salivate.
- *Unconditioned Response (UCR)*: The natural, unlearned reaction to the unconditioned stimulus. In the previous example, the dog's salivation in response to food.
- *Neutral Stimulus (NS)*: A stimulus that initially does not trigger any intrinsic response. For instance, a bell ringing.
- *Conditioned Stimulus (CS)*: The previously neutral stimulus that, after being associated with the unconditioned stimulus, triggers a conditioned response. The bell becomes a conditioned stimulus after being paired with food.
- *Conditioned Response (CR)*: The learned response to the conditioned stimulus. The dog salivating in response to the bell alone.

However, in three stages, classical conditioning is displayed sequentially thus: *before conditioning* (the unconditioned stimulus, food, produces an unconditioned response (salivation). The neutral stimulus, bell, does not produce any response, *during conditioning* (the neutral stimulus {bell} is repeatedly paired with the unconditioned stimulus {food}. The dog begins to associate the bell with the food) and *after conditioning* (the neutral stimulus, bell, becomes a conditioned stimulus and it now triggers a conditioned response ,salivation, even without the presence of food), (McLeod, S., 2024).

Jean Piaget Cognitive Development Theory

Moral development refers to the process through which children develop the standards of right and wrong within their society, based on social and cultural norms and laws. Piaget (1932) was principally interested not in what children do (*id est*, whether they break the rules or not) but in what they think, (Piaget, 1965). In other words, Piaget was interested in children's moral reasoning: how children think about moral issues rather than their actual behaviour. He believed that moral reasoning evolves as children's cognitive abilities develop. He conceptualizes moral development as a constructivist process, whereby the interplay of action and thought builds moral concepts, (McLeod, S., 2024). Jean Piaget's theory of moral development focuses on how children develop a sense of right and wrong. Accordingly, McLeod, S. (2024) maintains that Piaget held two stages of moral development thus: heteronomous morality (5-9yrs) and autonomous morality (9-10yrs). They are explained thus:

Heteronomous Morality (Ages 5-9):

- **Moral Realism**: Children view rules as fixed and unchangeable, handed down by authority figures like parents or teachers.
- **Immanent Justice**: They believe that breaking rules will lead to immediate and severe punishment.
- **Focus on Consequences**: Actions are judged based on their outcomes rather than intentions. For example, a child might think that accidentally breaking several cups is worse than deliberately breaking one.

Autonomous Morality (Ages 9-10 and older)

- **Moral Relativism:** Children start to understand that rules are created by people and can be changed through mutual agreement.
- **Intentions Matter:** They begin to consider the intentions behind actions when making moral judgements. For instance, they might see a deliberate act of harm as worse than an accidental one, even if the accidental act caused more damage.
- **Fairness and Justice:** Children develop a sense of fairness and justice, recognizing that rules should be applied consistently but can be adapted to specific situations.

Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development is a well-known framework in psychology that explains how children develop moral reasoning, (Kohlberg, 1963). Piaget's work laid the foundation for later theories of moral development, including those by Lawrence Kohlberg, (McLeod, S., 2024). More so, Cherry, K. (2022) maintains that Kohlberg simply expanded on Piaget's work with his proposal that moral development occurs in six stages. Kohlberg gave Levels and Stages of Moral Development thus:

- **Pre-Conventional Level**

Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment Orientation

Children see rules as fixed and absolute. Obeying rules is important to avoid punishment.

Stage 2: Individualism and Exchange

Children recognize that there is not just one right view handed down by authorities. Different individuals have different viewpoints.

- **Conventional Level**

Stage 3: Good Interpersonal Relationships

Children believe that people should live up to the expectations of the family and community and behave in "good" ways. Good behaviour means having good motives and interpersonal feelings such as love, empathy, trust, and concern for others.

Stage 4: Maintaining Social Order

The focus shifts to obeying laws, respecting authority, and performing one's duties so that the social order is maintained.

- **Post-Conventional Level**

Stage 5: Social Contract and Individual Rights

People begin to account for the differing values, opinions, and beliefs of other people. Rules of law are important for maintaining a society, but members of the society should agree upon these standards.

Stage 6: Universal Principles

Moral reasoning is based on abstract reasoning using universal ethical principles. Laws are only valid if they are grounded in justice and a commitment to justice carries with it an obligation to disobey unjust laws.

Summarily, Cherry, K. (2022) maintains that Kohlberg uses moral dilemmas and progression to study how people reason about moral issues, individuals progress through these stages in a fixed order, and not everyone reaches the highest stages.

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory

Sigmund Freud's theories on psychoanalysis and child development are foundational in psychology. Freud's psychoanalysis is a method for treating mental illness and also a theory which explains human behaviour. His theory is based on the idea that our behaviours and feelings are powerfully affected by unconscious motives, (Freud, S., 1962). Freud believed that childhood experiences significantly shape our

personalities and behaviours as adults. Accordingly, through psychoanalysis, Freud tries to show how a child develops his or her appreciation of values and regards to value oriented issues against the inherent crisis that beclouds the human mind. Sigmund Freud maintains that moral development occurs when people regulate themselves, that is, considering other people's need before theirs. Greed and self-serving motivations are repressed and societal views become ingrained as a sense of what is right and what is wrong. Deeksha, S. (n.d.) avers that there are key concepts in Psychoanalysis as: the *unconscious mind* (Freud proposed that much of our behaviour is driven by unconscious desires and fears), *defense mechanisms* (these are strategies used by the ego to protect itself from anxiety e.g., repression, denial) and *psychosexual stages* (Freud suggested that children pass through a series of stages centered on erogenous zones (oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital stages). Freud's theory of moral development is closely tied to his concept of the *superego* (the moral conscience that incorporates the value and morals of society which are learned from one's parents and others), which is one of the three components of personality, along with the *id* (the primitive and instinctual part of the mind that contains sexual and aggressive drives and hidden memories) and the *ego* (the realistic part that mediates between the desires of the *id* and the *superego*), (Deeksha, S., n.d.). Deeksha, S. (n.d.) equally opined that each stage of the Freudian psychosexual stages involves the satisfaction of libidinal and has a significant impact on personality development.

Summary of the Theories

Summarily, Cherry, K. (2022) maintains that B. F. Skinner's operant conditioning, Ivan Pavlov classical conditioning, Jean Piaget identified two stages: *heteronomous morality* (rules are seen as fixed and unchangeable) and *autonomous morality* (rules are seen as flexible and based on mutual agreement) are proposals for moral development of a child. Lawrence Kohlberg proposed six stages on three levels: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional, each representing increasingly complex forms of moral reasoning. Carol Gilligan introduces amongst the above ideas the *ethics of care* with emphasises that moral development can also be understood through relationships and care for others, highlighting potential gender difference in moral reasoning (Wikipedia, n.d.). These theories of Sigmund Freud Psychoanalysis, B. F. Skinner Classical Conditioning, Pavlovian Conditioning, Jean Piaget Cognitive Development Theory and Lawrence Kohlberg were very eloquent in the general discussion of the child's moral development via their personality and age. However, Carol Gilligan's theory of moral development went a little further to discuss the personality of women, mothers precisely, with their ethics of care in raising and helping a child develop his or her moral standard.

Carol Gilligan's *Ethics of Care*

Carol Gilligan is a psychologist best known for her expertise and innovative views on the development of women morality and sense of self. Gilligan's theory of moral development was created in response to the theory of moral development proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg, which according to her was biased based on male chauvinism which she criticized for ignoring women's perspectives and roles in dealing with children. Indeed, Vianney, C. (2023) opined that Gilligan proposed that women come to prioritize an "ethics of care" as their sense of morality evolves along with their sense of self while men prioritize an "ethics of justice." More so, Vianney, C. (2023) discloses that men, she said, prioritize an "ethics of justice" where morality is centred on abstract principles and rules that can be applied equally to everyone. Meanwhile, women prioritize an "ethics of care," where morality is centered on interpersonal relationships and moral judgement is based on the context of an issue. Gilligan didn't identify specific ages when the levels of moral development would be reached but its *ad rem* for children from birth.

Gilligan conducted several interview studies with girls and women, including one with women who were deciding whether to have an abortion, in order to buttress her ideas about women's morality. However, Vianney, C. (2023) is of the view that the goal of her work was to demonstrate that women don't necessarily stop developing morally before men do, but that their moral development follows a different

trajectory than that outlined in Kohlberg's theory and other theorists with this special act of womanhood and of course the milk of motherhood. The stages in Gilligan's Theory of Moral Development are:

- *Pre-conventional morality*: At this level, moral judgement is entirely focused on the self and the need to survive. When a conflict arises between the needs of the self and the needs of others, a woman will choose to address her own needs after on in line with the child. The woman always realizes that she has a responsibility to others. It is the first time that she realizes her previous moral perspective could be characterized as selfish.
- *Conventional morality*: At the level, moral judgement becomes concentrated on caring for others. The woman starts to see herself as a participant in society whose claim to being a good citizen relies on helping and protecting others. This concern for others overrides her concern for herself, leading to a morality focused on self-sacrifice. The woman starts to experience tension between the needs of others and the needs of the self. She begins to realize she must strike a better balance between her needs and the needs of others. The responsibility for others stares at her at this stage.
- *Post-conventional morality*: At the post-conventional Level, moral judgement is dictated by the principle of non-violence. The needs of the self are just as important as the needs of others, which causes the woman to arrive at a universal ethic of care and concern. Adhering to the obligation of care while avoiding harm or exploitation to herself and others enables the woman to accept responsibility for her choices.

In summary, the movement through Gilligan's stages of moral development hinges on an evolving sense of self. Vianney, C. (2023) noted that, at the pre-conventional level, only the needs of the self are recognized; at the Conventional level, the needs of others are prioritized while the needs of the self are denied and at the post-conventional level, a balance is struck between the needs of the self and others. Transition through these levels is based on a woman's reconsideration of what she considers selfish. Throughout these levels, women's sense of self and the sense of morality that arises because of it, are driven by their feelings of connection and responsibility toward others, which gradually evolve to encompass others and then expand to encompass everyone, including the self, (Vianney, C., 2023).

Beyond Other Theories and the Ethics of Care

Man a psycho-social animal develops amongst other things his values, that is, his ethical morality. Our interest has been on the moral development of the child who ought to be a grown up. Freud's theory viewed moral behaviour to be under the control of psychological compulsion. To Freud, parents help to mould a child's moral development. Skinner's theory stressed on the observational learning by which children learn to identify with their parents or others. Piaget and Kohlberg placed emphasis on the role of thoughts and judgement in moral development. Gilligan placed emphasis was on a mother's care giving attitude towards the child. Hence, Carol Gilligan developed a theory on *morality of care* where she challenged the earlier psychologists for narrowing sexism in studying (in most cases) men, and then generalizing their results to both genders. Gilligan in her book (*In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*) argued that women and men differ in their conceptions of moral understanding. She claimed that men and boys are concerned with a morality based on rules and abstract principle of justice, woman and girls are based on care ethics and compassion. Children's interactions with care givers and peers have been shown to influence their development of moral understanding and behaviour. Researchers have addressed the influence of interpersonal interactions on children's moral development from two primary perspectives: socialization and internalization. It focuses on the ways in which adults pass down standards of behaviour to children through parenting techniques. We must note that Carol Gilligan's women's role, which the mother, *nwanaekunwa* or a trained nanny plays, is very important. Gilligan failed to define the women in questions as she presumes that every woman has that milk of motherhood shown in their emotional equipoise a mother. This presumption extends to the fact that some women are masculine in nature with traces of rigidity and atoms of wickedness. Her ethics of

care is of course questionable. Equally some cultures have abused women to the extent that they don't care much as they are seen as beast of burden and object of mere pleasures. More, some Weltanschauungs and human cultures leave the care of children to the fellow children or to an unkempt and untrained maid. But in my sociocultural milieu and environment, the type of women's role proposed by Gilligan in her ethics of care is performed by children or young adults often referred to as *nwanaekunwa* or *odibobunne*.

Expanding Gilligan's *Ethics of Care* with *Nwanaekunwa*

Our point of departure in this paper has been the moral formation of a child in the true sense of the concepts. The morality of care theory summarized in ethics of care of Gilligan is expanded by the servant care theory expressed in my idea of *nwanaekunwa*. These theories centre on child value formation. An appreciation of the concept of child makes sense of the *child that nurtures a child*, that is, *nwanaekunwa*. A child is one within the moment and opportunity of puerility or childhood at the stage of human development. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) defines a child as "a young human being below the age of puberty or below the legal age of majority". Continuing, Wikipedia (n.d.) states that "a child is a human being between the stages of birth and puberty, or between the developmental period of infancy and puberty. It may also refer to an unborn human being". Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) defines a child as a "young person especially between infancy and puberty; it's a person not yet of the age of majority". A child is a minor. Being a child is synonymous with being childlike or childish person. A child definitively is a son or daughter and not otherwise. Continuing, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus (2023) defines a child as "a boy or girl from the time of birth until he or she is an adult, or a son or daughter of any age; a person from the time of birth until he or she is an adult, or a son or daughter of any age". The idea of a child speaks volume as children are sure signs of the continuity of the human race. In children, humanity is reassured that God has not lost confidence in them (cf. St. Pope John Paul II). In all these, a child has been regarded, in many cultures and institution, as a blessing to the community and then, to humanity. Hence, the raising of a child with regard to his or her psycho-moral formation and other aspects of his or her personality is very important for the sustenance and good of humanity. Such training in standard of living is for the responsibilities and response-abilities that await him or her in the future as a being towards becoming this or belonging to that.

Raising a healthy child is the desire of every parent no matter how busy the parents may be. This is why one of the greatest decisions parents do make in life is where to train their children. Training a child is very imperative in raising a child. Every aspects of child-minding is very crucial with regard to the formation of the morality of the child which occurs within the years of child's fragile period. The theories of Sigmund Freud (Psychoanalysis), B. F. Skinner (Classical Conditioning), Pavlovian Conditioning, Jean Piaget (Cognitive Development Theory), and Lawrence Kohlberg (theory of development) were very significant. But Carol Gilligan's care ethics in her theory of moral development of a child is profoundly enduring. An adaptation in our environment especially as Africans and Igbos where we have *nwanaekunwa* or *odibobunne* (popularly referred as maid) as against the formal nanny gives a great concern. The idea of *nwanaekunwa* who most often stays with the child than the mother even when the mother is home or away is very crucial. *Nwanaekunwa's* influence on such a child has an abiding outcome. Whom the child later becomes is always a matter of value orientation and general outlook on the child. From the concept of *nwanaekunwa* or *odibobunne* (babysitter/nanny) and the variety of roles they play out in family system, mostly in the lives of the children, one can say *nwanaekunwa* performs more of parental functions for the child than his or her biological parent who rarely have time for him or her. Having seen that they are in charge of taking care of their children from toddler to school-age, it is evident that the child's level of moral development comes from *nwanaekunwa*. With this assumption, one can say that Gilligan theory on "morality of care" should be directed to *nwanaekunwa* or *odibo- bu- nne's* "service of care" rather than just the mothers.

The steady growth of women in the labour market in the past decades worldwide (The Worlds Women, 2010) reflects the efforts women have put in to retain their jobs. The Nigerian women of working status are determined to participate fully in the labour market. This increase in participation is a welcome phenomenon as it has economic values, helps eradicate poverty, raises women's status in the family, community and nation at large. It is in a bid to fulfil all these responsibilities that women majorly employ an *nwanaekunwa* or *odibo- bu- nne* (domestic servitude) to reduce their loads of work. The *nwanaekunwa* or *odibo-bu-nne* who are under-aged stand in the gap of these women in their homes as carers. Rural children dominate the so called under-aged servitudes as *ndi nwanaekunwa*. Rendering of domestic services are necessitated by economic compulsions of the parents for so many reasons. It ranges from survival strategy and source of family income as well as sustenance of the child's education. The bottom-line for *nwanaekunwa* or *odibobuunne* borders on assistance, that is, *service of care*.

From the above illustrations, it is pertinent to state that a lot of these servitudes, being under-aged, are still passing through the early process of their moral development. One may want to ask the possible impact of these servitudes to the children. The impact of domestic servitudes to children's development could be positive as in teaching the child of good behaviour or equally mistreats the child. The age of these servitudes remain a factor of interest because a lot of them are under aged (8-15years) and an under-aged child has little or nothing to offer that could aid a child's moral development. It is, therefore, paramount that there will be an influence which can either take a positive form or negative form. Children are at a stage where they absorb everything that is done and said to them. In the end, they internalize it and reproduce what is being said depending on their level of development.

Conclusion

Gilligan Carol in her "morality of care" theory argued that children are more influenced by their mothers than adult due to the mother-child attachment. Inculcating morality on the children is every parents' priority. However, the economic situation of the nation has made it less a priority. Building characters in children is now approached as merely a goal than a priority. Gilligan opined that mothers' interactions with their children increases their developmental potentials. In other words, mothers contribute more to the moral development of their children than any other adult. The morality of care theory has placed major emphasis on mother's attachment to the child without prejudice to the concept of the "servant care" of *nwanaekunwa* with its degree of influence on the children. With more and more women taking up full time jobs, getting a domestic servant to take care of their children is then becoming a norm. The way the *nwanaekunwa* or *odibo-bu-nne* behaves, speaks and acts is keenly observed by the child in her care. This brings about behavioural issues in the child and sometimes hurdles in the child's development.

Research has it that it is only natural for children to copy and imitate everything they see because they are in the learning process and formative stage of life. If *nwanaekunwa* or *odibo-bu-nne* is the only one the child sees and interacts with for hours, the child will do whatever he or she does. Unfortunately, most of them are under-aged with no proper training. Ironically and properly put, *nwanaekunwa* is a child placed with the responsibility of taking care of another child. However, there are some basic positive and negative character or attitudes the child could possibly learn from the personality of *nwanaekunwa*. It's obvious that the child does not only learn from the mother's ethics of care but also from *nwanaekunwa's* service of care for those who have such people in their homes. In most instances servant-care-closeness is known to have reduced parent-child-bonding. Nevertheless, the domestic servant as *nwanaekunwa* or *odibobunne* does not entirely replace the mother but helps in bringing up the child in his or her moral development.

Nwanaekunwa as childminder or babysitter can significantly influence the moral development of any child through various means especially through modelling of behaviour (as role model, demonstrating positive behaviour and negative dispositions). Equally, through consistent guidance and personalized care often expressed in appreciating rules and boundaries. *Nwanaekunwa* offers emotional security,

affectionate security and compassionate support to the child as well as social equipoise as there exists human interaction and communication. This genuine communication between the child and the childminders and or parents ensures the inculcation of moral values and expectations are reinforced both at home and in the childminder's care. *Nwanaekunwa* definitely has enormous significant impact on the child being looked after. The overall influence of *nwanaekunwa* can be transformative, shaping various aspects of a child's development: from emotional and social skills to cognitive and moral growth. Carol Gilligan's ethics of care is a significant theory. *Nwanaekunwa* expands it as such with service of care.

***Jude I. Onebunne, PhD**

Department of Philosophy
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
juno.anyi@gmail.com , 08034074664
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-89956097

Conference

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