

Introduction to Ethics
Dr. Heather Salazar
Main Theses, Week 13

James Sterba: “Feminism”

1. “The conclusion that Gillian draws from this research is that the care perspective is an equally valid moral perspective that has tended to be disregarded in moral theory and psychological research alike because of male bias.” (52)
2. Virginia Held has argued that the care and justice perspectives are different and that sometimes the care perspective should be prioritized over the justice perspective, but “it is not clear that this is a case where care has a priority over justice” and it is furthermore dubious whether these two perspectives are distinctive. (53-55)
3. However, “even theoretically adequate conceptions of justice tend to be applied in practice in ways that do not properly take into account the interests of women.”(55)
4. Rawls’ theory is missing an account of just families, but “from a feminist perspective, however, the absence of any account of the nature of just families is a significant failing for a theory of justice. (56)
5. “Yet, at least in the United States, to guarantee equal opportunity for women and men would require that we continue to radically modify traditional family structures.” (Explain why they need to be modified) (57)
6. Explain how Sterba suggests that the families be modified. (58-62)
7. “[I]f women’s interests are to be adequately taken into account, a number of changes in the way that the law controls and regulates family life within the public domain are clearly required.” (64)
8. “Furthermore, if family structures are to be just, there is a need to ensure that women’s opportunities to work outside of the home are just as good as men’s.” (List the ways in which Sterba thinks that we should guarantee equality of opportunity.) (64-67)
9. “Love and affection within families can and should go beyond fairness or equal opportunity, but they should not go against them.” (67)
10. “In addition,..we need to reduce the high incidence of violence, perpetrated against women, in the forms of rape, assault, and sexual abuse. [I]t would also help to ban hard-core pornography.” (Explain why there is reason to think that hard-core pornography leads to violence towards women.) (67)
11. What are the three reasons that Sterba thinks have contributed to our hesitancy to ban hard-core pornography and why are they bad reasons according to Sterba? (70)