

There is no 'humiliated Israeli masculinity'



Carol Gilligan

by Phyllis Chesler

My esteemed colleague, American feminist psychologist [Carol Gilligan](#), was wrong about girls and women being more moral, more compassionate and more sociable than boys and men—and she's wrong now about the IDF's motives for entering Gaza.

Yael Hallak interviewed Gilligan in the pages of [Haaretz](#) on Dec. 15. Unbelievably, the interview was titled "What Happened on October 7 Humiliated Israeli Masculinity. The Response is Violence."

What the IDF is doing in Gaza has nothing to do with “humiliated Israeli masculinity.” It has everything to do with Israel’s determination to rescue Israeli hostages and to finally destroy Hamas: The sadistic, Jew-hating death cult funded by Iran that flourishes in a labyrinth of underground tunnels only a quarter of a mile away from southern Israel and has vowed to cleanse the entire region of Jews.

Israel is not a shame-and-honor society, but Arab and Muslim society is. In this society, women are honor-killed for allegedly shaming family “honor.” Perhaps Gilligan is unfamiliar with the practices of Islamic [gender apartheid](#).

Like the rest of us, Gilligan is not perfect, but to her credit, she reveals what the larger world misinterprets or simplifies in terms of her findings. Thus, little girls go along to get along, they “lose voice;” not because of the “patriarchy” or because boys are bullying them, but because they are afraid of offending other little “mean” girls by disagreeing with the party line. Girls are terrified of being cut off, ostracized by their female intimates. Therefore, they give up thinking independently. They do their dirty, non-compassionate, rather immoral gossiping [behind others’ backs](#).

Gilligan asks of Oct. 7: “How is it possible to live alongside the people who planned and did this? I also ask: What brings people to a point where they act this way?”

Oct. 7 was not a form of heroic “resistance” to being “occupied” or trapped in an “open-air prison” or a Warsaw-like “ghetto,” as [Masha Gessen](#) outrageously suggested in the pages of *The New Yorker*. The only group that is “occupying” Gaza is Hamas. Israel left in 2005.

(My God! How many times must one point this out? And to no avail?)

What’s more, if Gaza civilians are now tragically trapped, it’s because neither Egypt nor Jordan will grant them even

temporary shelter; nor will any other Muslim country. Given Gilligan's claim in her *Haaretz* interview to be a "complex" thinker, one would think she would consider "complex" facts. For example, she would at least mention the long history of exile and population exchanges in the world century after century. The only group in the world that has remained "refugees" for 75 years are the Arab Palestinians.

Gilligan does not seem to understand what Asra Nomani, in her important new book [*Woke Army: The Red-Green Alliance That Is Destroying America's Freedom*](#), has written about. Nomani charts the hair-raising history of Islamist terrorists who have planted themselves both within our borders and globally in order to target freedom, women, dissidents, "infidels" and gays. They are patient, cunning, long-term planners. They want a worldwide caliphate; one that is *Judenrein*.

Islamists have appropriated every aspect of Jewish life and history, claiming a "Holocaust" of their own. They have sold the false concept of "Islamophobia" to silence criticism of Islamic antisemitism and homophobia; planted their acolytes in American government, academia and the media at every level; and managed to indoctrinate countless generations of Americans into pro-Islamist ideas. They are as clever as they are evil.

Gilligan's example of female moral superiority is the peacenik Vivian Silver, who was murdered by Hamas on Oct. 7. For some time, people believed that Silver had been kidnapped. Gilligan says, "She's probably making peace in the tunnels; she's talking to those around her and forging connections. ... She wasn't afraid—she would run daily (picking up Gazans in need of medical care in Israel) despite the rockets coming from Gaza. Vivian was filled with hope."

Does Gilligan imagine that such conversations took place between the Nazi guards at Auschwitz and their Jewish, Roma or homosexual prisoners standing in line for the gas chambers? It is a legitimate question, given that Hamas and its allies are

the closest things to Nazis in the world today.

I received an invitation to the memorial service for Silver via Zoom. The invite stated: "Vivian was taken from us too soon." Not kidnapped by Hamas. Not murdered by Hamas. This is the language of opium-eaters, of toxic utopianism.

Gilligan blames "the patriarchy" for dividing everything into "masculine or feminine" and for "preferring the former over the latter." She evaluates Israel in Gaza in these simplistic terms.

But Gilligan cannot, in good conscience, explain Israel's response to Oct 7 in terms of "masculinity" (bad) and "femininity" (good). Doing so reminds me of an Israeli feminist psychiatrist, Ruchama Marton. Speaking at a conference on peace in the Middle East, Marton compared Israel to a "batterer" and the Arab Palestinians to "battered wives."

She was cheered by the feminist audience. I was there. I included this anecdote in my 2003 book [The New Antisemitism](#).

I once described psychiatry and psychology's overreach as "psychiatric imperialism." A perfect example of this is reducing a complex geopolitical and historical issue to a psychologically abstract paradigm. It is both reductive and a misuse of clinical morality.

I am sorry to see that Gilligan and *Haaretz* have indulged in precisely such imperialism.

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