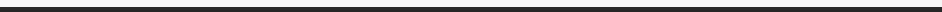


# *CARE AND VIOLENCE:*

*Using Disability to Show Why the Two Are Hard to Disentangle*

*Stacy Clifford Simplican  
Women's and Gender Studies*

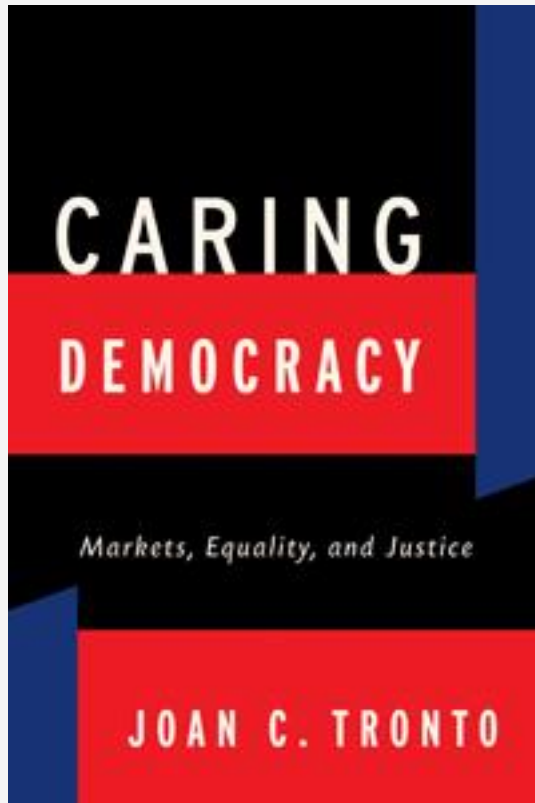
*What is the relationship  
between care and violence?*



Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (1982)

*“WHILE AN ETHIC OF JUSTICE PROCEEDS  
FROM THE PREMISE OF EQUALITY—THAT  
EVERYONE SHOULD BE TREATED THE  
SAME—AN ETHIC OF CARE RESTS ON THE  
PREMISE OF NONVIOLENCE—THAT NO  
ONE SHOULD BE HURT.*

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- **Anyone interested in promoting a democratic ethic of care should care about violence. Why?**
  - “First, violence ... seems to be the antithesis of care. Inflicting harm on others seems to be at the other end of the spectrum from caring for others. Yet, if care is central to human life, how can it account for the nature of, and existence of, violence?”
  - “Second, ... there is actually a great deal of violence inflicted in intimate settings; in the places where we expect to find care, we often find violence, and often violence and care are intertwined. How, especially if I am right that they are at opposite ends of a spectrum of how humans should treat one another, can violence and care cohabit intimate space?” (76)

*Joan Tronto:*

*What is the  
relationship  
between violence  
and vulnerability?*

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- How do we promote a more caring democracy?
  - “The first step that citizens need to take, and the one that requires considerable bravery, is for each person to admit human vulnerability. *We are care receivers, all.*” (146)
  - Can the recognition of shared human vulnerability disrupt the violence in care settings?



# *VIOLENT CARE*

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# *My inspiration*

Itard stuffed Victor's nose with snuff, fired pistols near his ear, exposed him naked to the cold, administered electric shocks as the boy scrambled to get away, and suspended Victor face-first out a fourth story window until the boy trembled in sweat and tears.

Itard thought the stakes of failure for Victor were too high—abandonment and dehumanization—that any intervention seemed just.

Violence become an act of care.

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Der Wilde von Aveyron.

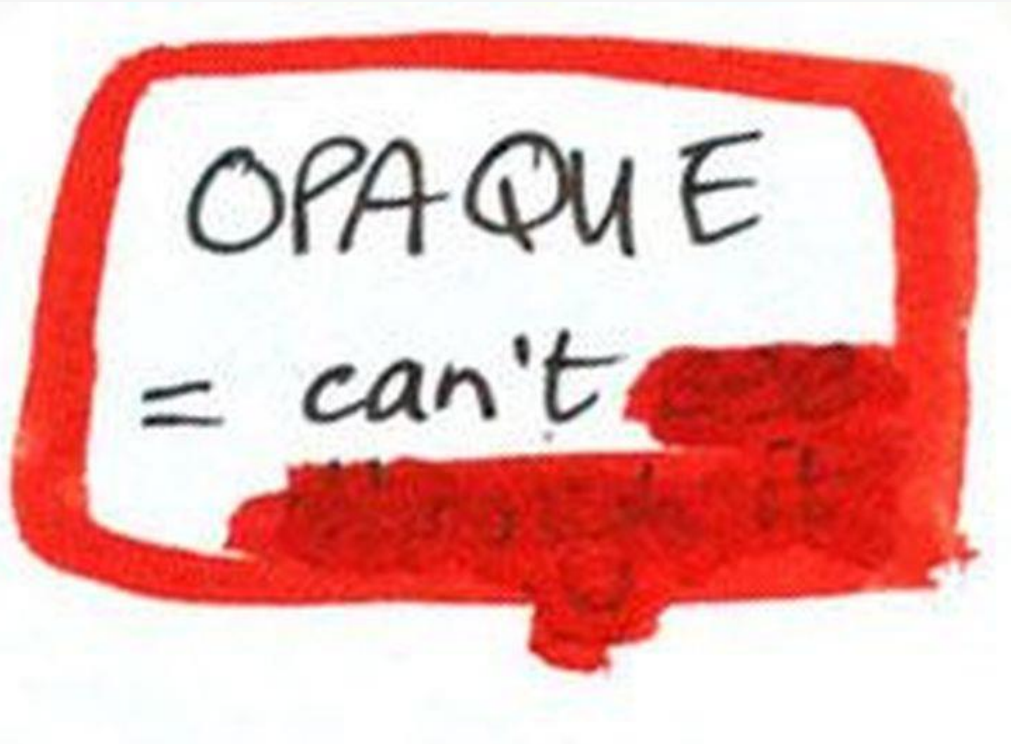
*Part 1*

*CONSEQUENCES  
OF COGNITIVE  
VULNERABILITY*

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# *Vulnerability=* *Opacity*



- **Why might vulnerability make care violent?**
  - How do people care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who exhibit aggression?
  - Eva Feder Kittay theorizes disability as extreme vulnerability
  - I offer a conception of complex vulnerability
  - This builds on Butler's theory of opacity:
    - Reasons course through me that I cannot fully recuperate, that remain enigmatic, that abide with me as my own familiar alterity, my own private, or not so private, opacity. I speak as an "I," but do not make the mistake of thinking that I know precisely all that I am doing when I speak in that way. (Butler 2005, 84)

# *Vulnerability=* *Undecidability*



- Butler, Tronto, and Stephen King understand that humans share ontological vulnerability
- But King uses vulnerability to frighten us, in part, by exploiting undecidability
- Undecidability, “a nonsovereign account of human agency,” refers to the ways in which our identities and lives are unknowable and uncertain (Butler and Athanasiou 2013, x)
- Care actors must act amid uncertainty, sometimes even aggressively


*Part 2*

*NEW  
CARE  
PRACTICES*

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# *Vulnerability=* *Risky Care*

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- Tronto defines care through three activities:
    - maintaining,
    - continuing, and
    - Repairing
  - Care workers in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities may constrain the quality of life of PWIDDs because they fear risk and harm.
  - “To play, to fulfill a desire, to market a new product, or to create a work of art, is not care” (1993, 104).
  - But care also requires creating new worlds, particularly in cases of systemic oppression
    - Creative care
    - Disruptive care
    - Playful care
- 

Part 3

*CARE*  
&  
*AFFECT*

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*Cheerful denial*

*Melancholy*

&

*Resilient  
good humour*

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- Sara Ruddick “Nature’s indifference—illness, death, and damage to the child or its closest loved ones—can frustrate the best of maternal efforts” (343).
  - “If in the face of danger, disappointment, and unpredictability, mothers are liable to melancholy, they are also aware that a kind, resilient good humor is a virtue” (351).
  - Butler refers to the binding power of grief for communities, and she worries about which lives are never grieved because of the failure to recognize mutual vulnerability and dignity
- 