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Article

# Wittgenstein and Care Ethics as a Plea for Realism

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to bring together the appeal to the ordinary in the ethics of care and the ‘destruction’ or philosophical subversion which Wittgenstein references in his *Philosophical Investigations*: Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems to destroy everything interesting, all that is great and important? What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards. The paper pursues a connection between the ethics of care and ordinary language philosophy as represented by Wittgenstein, Austin and Cavell, in particular in a feminist perspective. The central point of Carol Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice* may not be the idea of a ‘feminine morality’ but a claim for an alternative form of morality. Gilligan’s essay seeks to capture a different, hitherto neglected yet universally present alternative ethical perspective, one easy to ignore because it relates to women and women’s activities. The ethics of care recalls a plea for ‘realism’; in the sense given to it in Cora Diamond’s *The Realistic Spirit* to mean the necessity of seeing (or attending to) what lies close at hand. Reflection on care brings ethics back to *everyday practice* much as Wittgenstein sought to bring language back from the metaphysical level to its everyday use.

**Keywords:** ethics of care; moral philosophy; Wittgenstein L.; Diamond C.; Gilligan C.; ordinary language philosophy



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## 1. Introduction

In recent moral philosophy, the importance of care has come into its own, both in relation to the moral attitudes upon which it draws, such as solicitude, attentiveness, and responsiveness, and to the practice of care in attending to the needs of others in everyday contexts. Yet the central point of Carol Gilligan’s work, first established in her seminal study, *In a Different Voice*, remains to be fully appreciated. The idea of a ‘feminine morality’ is at once so provocative and so reasonable that we forget it is first and foremost feminist, and that it stakes a claim for an alternative form of morality. In searching for the latter, Gilligan’s treatise seeks to capture a different, hitherto neglected yet universally present alternative ethical perspective, one easy to ignore because it relates to women and women’s activities. In this respect, Gilligan’s approach is not essentialist, but plainly ordinary, imbued with the perspective of the everyday.

The ethics of care recalls a plea for ‘realism’, in the sense given to it in Cora Diamond’s *The Realistic Spirit* to mean the necessity of seeing (or attending to) what lies close at hand [1]. Reflections on care brings ethics back to its proper domain in *everyday practice*—much as Wittgenstein sought to bring language back from the metaphysical level to its everyday use, where words have ordinary meanings grasped by the speakers of the language.

According to this perspective, ethics is not grasped by reference to an enumerable set of preexistent rules—nor by attending to a metaphysically independent moral realm. Rather, it is embedded in human situations, affects and practices. The ethics of care affirms the importance of care and of paying attention to others; in particular, it concerns those whose life and well-being depend on particularized and sustained everyday patterns of care. Moreover, the ethics of care is based on an analysis of the historical conditions that have promoted a division of moral labor in which the activities of care are socially and morally devalORIZED. The relegation of women to the domestic sphere translates into the

demotion of legitimate acts and concerns to the status of mere ‘private’ sentiments lacking moral and political weight. It is because the work and activities of care have traditionally fallen to women that care is first and foremost a women’s issue.

By proposing to valorize moral values such as caring, attention to others, and solicitude, the ethics of care has contributed to modifying the dominant conception of ethics and how we understand morality. Moreover, the ethics of care introduces ethical stakes into politics by effecting a critique of prominent theories of justice [1]. However, most significantly, it has given due representation to *the ethically ordinary*. The ethics of care draws our attention to what we are unable to see, not because it is hidden or secret but sometimes because it is right before our eyes.

To locate this discussion, observe that the ethics of care as rooted in the ordinary adumbrates Wittgenstein’s definition of *the ordinary*: “What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings . . . observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes” [2] (§415). Wittgenstein addresses the question of what is ‘important’ and the fact—concretely substantiated by the ethics of care—that what seems the most important often is not so in the least:

Where does our investigation get its importance from, since it seems to destroy everything interesting, all that is great and important? What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards [2] (§118).

This paper aims to bring together the ‘destruction’ or ‘philosophical subversion’ to which Wittgenstein refers and the appeal to the ordinary in the ethics of care. The paper pursues a connection between the ethics of care and my longstanding interest in ordinary language philosophy as represented by Wittgenstein, Austin, and Cavell, in particular in drawing upon their ideas to illustrate a feminist perspective.

## 2. Sensitive Subject

The subject of care is sensitive—it requires delicacy in its handling. In a first sense, broadly presented, reflection on care tends to give rise to objections or even to outright rejection. It is thus a ‘sensitive’ subject matter. At first encounter, it seems to oppose a ‘feminine’ and a ‘masculine’ conception of ethics. As discussed by Gilligan and Noddings, feminine ethics is defined by the concepts of attentiveness, concern for others, and a sense of responsibility reflecting close personal ties, while masculine ethics is defined by the concepts of rights, justice, autonomy. Much has been said about the difficulty of opposing feminine and masculine ethics as the ethics of care and the ethics of justice, respectively, which incurs the risk of reproducing the very ingrained prejudices that the ethics of care are meant to counter. As proposed by Gilligan (1987), one can argue that far from being opposite concepts, care and justice are, in fact, complementary perspectives, the choice of which depends on the context of the application (in this respect, recalling the famous Wittgensteinian duck–rabbit model involving the voluntary switch of perspective from one possible representation to another). In another sense, then, the subject of care is a sensitive subject. Thus, care is fundamentally embedded in the form of life unfolding in a context of relationships—in the latter sense, the subject is defined as attentive and *caring*.

In addition to forming a new point of departure, reflection on care affects a transformation of the very status of ethics. The question of *sensitivity* is indeed at the core of care. It is therefore urgently necessary to understand what is meant by this important concept and what kind of sensitivity is involved in the ethics of care. Indeed, it is not so much *feeling*—in the sense of Hume, for example, to be contrasted with rationality—as *perception*. Yet it is but an *ordinary* perception. It is here that we must look for the starting point for a modification of the ethical framework.

Gilligan herself, in returning to the antithesis of care and justice perspectives in 1987, starts from the paradigmatic duck–rabbit illustration of perspectival switching ([3], p. 31). Like Wittgenstein, by drawing attention to it, she does not aim to introduce a relativism of moral perspectives but rather to indicate several important observations. First, it indicates

the possibility of changing viewpoints, even if one viewpoint necessarily dominates the choice. Moreover, it indicates the necessity of attending to only one perspective at any given time (in other words, the impossibility of mastering both at any given instance). In the third place, it indicates the importance of context to the representation of choice. By analogy, ethics is a matter of highlighting, for each moral situation we examine, not only different visual ‘orientations’, but a *framework* of perception ([3], p. 32). Gilligan suggests a *Gestalt* approach to ethics, insisting, as did Wittgenstein, on the necessity of choosing aspects of salience against a given background.

Cora Diamond defines the *specificity* of this approach as follows:

Our *particular* moral conceptions emerge against a more general background of thought and sensibility. We differ in the way we allow (or do not allow) moral concepts to shape our lives and our relationships with others, in the way these concepts structure our accounts of what we have done or experienced [4].

Such a perceptual approach will be not only situational and dynamic but particularistic. It is only through attending to the particular, as opposed to the general, aspects of a situation that we will find the right perspective in ethics—as in aesthetics, for that matter. Here there is a further reference to Wittgenstein, beyond the seminal duck–rabbit *Gestalt*, but to his particularism, the ‘attention to the particular’.

He illustrated this with the example of the word ‘game’, in relation to which he observed (1) that even if there is something common to all games, it does not follow that this is what we have in mind when we call a particular game a game, and (2) that the reason why we call so many different activities games does not require that there be anything in common between them, but only, from one use to another, a ‘gradual transition’. With regard to the word ‘good’, he observed that the different way in which one person, A, manages to convince another, B, that a certain thing is good, fixes, each time, what the meaning according to which ‘good’ is used in this discussion ([5], p. 104).

This observation is surprising if one considers that Wittgenstein’s published writings contain relatively little that could pass for moral philosophy. In the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1922), Wittgenstein took a firm stand against the very existence of moral philosophy, given that the purpose of philosophy is said to be the logical clarification of propositions. Philosophy itself is not a body of doctrine, but an activity, which consists in making our thoughts clear (*Tractatus*, [6] 4.112). From this description of the central task of philosophy, it follows that there can only be such a thing as ‘moral philosophy’ if there is a body of propositions such that it is the task of moral philosophy to clarify them. However, Wittgenstein also maintained, for reasons beyond the scope of this paper, that there can be no ethical propositions [6] (6.42). Yet taking a Wittgensteinian approach to morality does not entail subscribing to a relativistic or skeptical program. Wittgenstein described the *Tractatus*, which denied the existence of moral philosophy and ethical propositions, as having an ethical aim. In thus maintaining an ethical aim, he did not intend to represent the *Tractatus* as entirely silent on moral philosophy. Rather, Diamond writes, the point is that ethics does not arise from theorizing.

His position was (then and later) that work, for example, a novel or a short story, could have a moral purpose even in the absence of any moral teaching or theorizing. Such work could help us to tackle the tasks of life in the required spirit. This was to be the effect of the *Tractatus* [7].

The aim of such thinking is not to reject the idea of morality, nor of moral philosophy understood in a specific sense, but of a systematic moral theory. It should be noted that a certain number of anti-theoretical thinkers will nevertheless find in these remarks a specific form of realism. This is evinced, for example, by John McDowell in his essays on Wittgenstein [8] and by Diamond herself in *The Realist Spirit* [1]. Even so, the proposed realism is to be discovered not in a metaphysical reality or a realm of moral objectivity but is produced by attention to details, to what is before your eyes Diamond and McDowell thus criticize the view *from sideways on* (as they term it). For example, we seek to determine

the nature of the obligation inherent in a rule by relating it to something in reality rather than by looking at the ordinary way of saying what a rule requires. As Diamond puts it:

We have, for example, the idea that we look at the human activity of *following a rule* ‘from the side’, and ask from this point of view whether or not there is something *objectively* determined that the rule requires to be done in the next application ([9], p. 30).

Thus, an examination of our particular moral practices is more *realistic* (in the sense proposed by Diamond) than the theoretical search for a moral reality. We are dealing here with a moral philosophy inscribed in our ordinary practices and emerging from particular questions. By proposing to valorize moral values such as caring and attention to others, the ethics of care has contributed to modifying a dominant conception of ethics and has profoundly changed the way we look at it. It has given voice to the ordinary. The ethics of care draws our attention to the ordinary, to what we are unable to see, to what is right before our eyes and is, for this very reason, invisible to us (see [10]). It is an ethics that gives voice and attention to humans who are undervalued precisely because they perform unnoticed, invisible tasks.

### 3. Ordinary Realism

Diamond’s aim, drawing on Wittgenstein, is to define an ethics of (attention to) the particular, and this is a perspective shared by the ethics of care: attention to ordinary life. Realism in ethics, on this view, consists in *returning to* ordinary language, examining our words and paying attention to them, and taking care of them: taking care of our words and expressions, as well as of ordinary others.

Ordinary Language Philosophy teaches us indeed that our ethical lives cannot be captured with the traditional concepts of moral philosophy. In his later works, which converge with Diamond’s ideas, Hilary Putnam proposed to abandon a certain form of realism in ethics and the possibility of a common ground for ethical discussions:

Our ethical life cannot be captured by half a dozen words like ‘ought’, ‘right’, ‘duty’, ‘fairness’, ‘responsibility’, ‘justice’, and the ethical problems that concern us cannot be reduced to debates between the metaphysical propositions of the proponents of natural law, utilitarianism, common sense and so on [11].

Putnam, like Diamond, reflects Murdoch’s legacy, which is to be careful what *we* say.

There are ethical propositions which, while being more than descriptions, are also descriptions. One is then ‘entangled’ by descriptive words like ‘cruel’, ‘impertinent’, ‘inconsiderate’ [11].

These *entangled* terms, which are ‘both evaluative and descriptive’ and *ordinary*, are, for Putnam, at the heart of our ethical life: the elucidation of their uses is part of moral knowledge, which is knowledge or ethics without ontology or metaphysics. “J. McDowell and I have both stressed this, and we are both aware of our debt to Iris Murdoch” [11].

We will return below to Murdoch’s legacy and her reliance on the *vision* and ordinary *texture* of language. In contrast to metaphysics, the ethical approach should bring us back to the rough ground of ordinary language. There is nothing ontological in this realist approach to ethics: “logic as well as ethics can be found *there*, in what we do, and something like a fantasy prevents us from seeing it” [11]. The elements of an ethical vocabulary only make sense in the context of our uses, given a particular form of life; they may be said to ‘come to life’ against the background of a specific *praxis*. Context gives words their meaning; a meaning that is never fixed and always particular. “Only in the practice of language can a word have meaning” ([12], p. 344).

Meaning is defined not only by use or context (as many philosophers have recognized) but is inscribed and perceptible only in the dynamic background of language practice, which is modified *by what we do with it*.

‘Beautiful’ is linked to a particular game. Similarly in ethics: the meaning of the word ‘good’ is linked to the very act it modifies. We can only establish the meaning of the word ‘beauty’ by considering how we use it ([13], p. 35).

One might then be tempted to connect ethics with a particularistic ontology, which would put abstract particulars (e.g., from perception) at the center of a value theory or realism of particulars. However, this would be to lose the meaning of the idea of family resemblance, which is precisely the negation of an ontology, including abstract particulars. Wittgenstein criticizes the craving for generality—the tendency to look for something common to all entities that we standardly subsume under a general term. The idea that a general concept is a property common to its particular cases is related to other primitive and overly simple ideas about the structure of language ([14], pp. 57–58). What is needed, as Hilary Putnam has suggested, is an ethics without ontology rather than an ontology of the particular [15].

Realism in ethics rather requires exploration of the way our ethical preoccupations are embedded in our language and our life, in clusters of words that extend beyond our ethical vocabulary itself and sustain complex connections with a variety of institutions and practices. In order to describe ethical understanding, we would have to describe all of this, all these particular uses of words, of which a general definition cannot be given. From an ordinary language’s perspective, the elements of moral vocabulary have no meaning except within the context of our customs and form of life. In other words, they *come to life* against the background that “gives our words their meaning”.

For Wittgenstein, meaning is not only determined by use or “context” (as many analyses of language have recognized) but is embedded in, and only perceptible against, the background of the practice of language. To redefine ethics by starting off with what is important means paying this “attention to particulars”. A whole cluster of terms, a language game of the particular—attention, care, importance, and what matters—is common to ordinary language philosophy and the ethics of care. Attention to detail is the source of a realistic shift of perspective in moral philosophy: from the examination of general concepts and norms of moral choice to the examination of particular visions, of individual “configurations” of thought. The ethics of care merges with this sensitivity to words and the “realistic spirit” by drawing our attention to the place of ordinary words in the weave and details of our lives and our relation to/distance from our words.

But what kind of interest do we have in particular? The philosophical drive for generality is ‘contempt for the particular.’ By contrast, moral perception is care for the particular. In her important essay, *Vision and choice in morality*, Murdoch, a disciple of Wittgenstein, invokes the importance of attention in morality [16]. According to her interpretation, the first way of expressing care is to pay attention to something, that is, to be attentive. The word attention is a possible translation of the term care, perhaps drawing it a little too much from the perceptual side but highlighting the anticipatory dynamics of this perception. Murdoch also evokes the differences in morality in terms of differences in Gestalt. She wants to avoid the classical idea of perceiving an object via a concept:

Moral differences here are less like differences in choice, and more like differences in *vision*. In other words, a moral concept is less like a movable and expandable ring placed over a certain domain of facts, and more like a *Gestalt* difference. We differ, not only because we select different objects from the same world, but because we *see* different worlds. (...)

Here the communication of a new moral concept cannot necessarily be accomplished by the specification of a factual criterion open to any observer (‘Approve *this* field!’) but involves the communication of a completely new vision [16].

Here again, Murdoch operates a critique of the *general* in ethics. There are no univocal moral concepts that can only be applied to reality to delimit objects. Nevertheless, our concepts depend on it through their application relative to a domain of interest, a given narrative or description, and our personal interest and desire to explore these in terms

of what is important to us. In the idea of importance, we discover the means for another formulation of the concept of care, as attending to what is important or matters to us: what counts.

#### 4. Importance of Importance

This relationship of care to *what matters* was highlighted by Harry Frankfurt in *The Importance of What We Care About* (1988). In an analogous spirit, Cavell discusses cinema and the films that *matter* to us, which are the objects of our attention and care, requiring the education of perception and attentive vision:

The moral I draw is the following: to answer the question ‘what happens to objects when they are filmed and projected?’—as well as ‘what happens to particular people, places, subjects and motives, when they are filmed by this or that filmmaker?’—There is only one source of data, namely the appearance and meaning of these objects, these people, which we will in fact find in the sequence of films, or passages of films, that matter to us ([17], p. 79).

The importance of cinema lies in the way it brings out visually what matters, in order, as Cavell puts it, “to magnify the feeling and meaning of a moment”. However:

... it is also his task to go against this tendency and, instead, to recognise this tragic reality of human life: the importance of its moments is not usually given to us with the moments while we are living them, so that it can take a lifetime’s work to determine the important crossroads of a life ([17], p. 79).

It is possible to understand the concept of care by adverting to the specific attention to the *unseen* importance of things and moments required by the appreciation of filmic art. ‘The inherent concealment of importance’ is part of what cinema also teaches us about our ordinary life. Redefining morality on the basis of importance, and its link to the structural vulnerability of experience produces the necessary elements to constitute the ethics of care. The notion of care is inseparable from a whole cluster of cognate terms, which constitute a language game of the particular. Among these are *attention*, *concern*, *importance*, *significance*, and *matting*. Our capacity for care becomes, according to Murdoch, “a detached, non-sentimental, non-selfish, objective version of care”. The emergent attention is the result of the development of a perceptual capacity. It is rooted in the ability to see the detachment of detail, of expressive gesture, against a background, without undue ontological reification. We can now see more clearly the contribution made by the ethics of care to transforming ethics into attention to the human form of life.

This particularism of attention to detail has also been propounded by Diamond, notably in her important essay *Getting a Rough Idea of What Moral Philosophy Is*, which closes *The Realist Spirit* ([1], pp. 495–515). According to her construal, moral philosophy needs to shift its focus from examining general concepts to examining particular visions, the ‘configurations’ of thought of individuals. On this point, Murdoch is radical:

We consider something more elusive which may be called their total view of life, as manifested in the way they speak or remain silent, their choice of words, their ways of appreciating others, their conception of their own lives, what they find attractive or praiseworthy, what they find amusing: in short, the configurations of their thinking which are continually manifested in their reactions and conversations. These things, which may be shown openly and intelligibly or elaborated intimately and guessed at, constitute what may be called a man’s texture of being, or the nature of his personal vision ([18], p. 49).

It is indeed in the use of language, in the choice of words, style of conversation, etc., that the moral vision of a person is openly shown or intimately elaborated, which for Murdoch is not so much a theoretical point of view as a *texture of being*—which is still a Gestalt term since texture can appear in various modalities, visual, aural and tactile. This texture

has nothing to do with moral choices or ethical argumentation. Rather, it once again pertains to 'what matters' and what makes and expresses the differences between individuals.

We cannot see the moral interest of literature unless we recognise gestures, manners, habits, turns of speech, turns of thought, styles of face, as morally expressive—of an individual or a people. The intelligent description of these things is part of the sharp, intelligent description of life, of what *matters*, what makes a difference, in human lives ([1], p. 507).

It is these differences that are to be the object of 'the intelligent, sharp description of life'. The idea of a human life alludes to the Wittgensteinian form of life, which similarly defines a texture. Texture, then, designates an unstable reality, which cannot be pinned down by concepts or by particular determined objects, but is nevertheless accessible through the recognition and identification of gestures, manners, styles, etc. The form of life is, from an ethical point of view, defined by perception. In literature, the paradigmatic exploration of attention to moral textures or patterns belongs to Henry James's novels, described by Diamond and Nussbaum in their essays on James's magnificent oeuvre. Jamesian motifs are, of course, perceived as 'morally expressive', as no doubt they were intended to be. What is perceived, moreover, is not an objective realm of moral values or moral concepts but the moral expression itself, which is only possible and indeed apprehensible in relation to the life forms depicted in the background of the novel. Literature is, arguably, the privileged place for moral perception, which at its culmination in the later Jamesian novel, achieves its aims by creating a background that makes the significant differences between life forms appear in bold outline. We return to the use of *Gestalt* later on, in reflecting on the direct perception of meaning—yet with a lighter emphasis on the constitution of an object as on the perception of its 'possibilities', which we are invited to explore. To perceive is always to give oneself with the perceived object an immediate opening onto an anticipatory perspective whose guidelines call for acts of exploration. Attention to ordinary expression and human voice and texture leads to re-considering the question of women's expression, which has been stifled or neglected by philosophy. Once again, ordinary language is not to be envisioned as having only a descriptive or even agentive function but as a perceptual instrument that allows for subtlety and adjustment in perceptions and actions.

## 5. Moral Competence and Education

The definition of ethical competence in terms of refined and active perception (versus the ability to judge, argue and choose) is taken up by Nussbaum [19]. For Nussbaum, morality is substantively a matter of perception and attention and not of moral argument. One immediate objection to Nussbaum is that her arguments reinstate a schematic and dubious opposition between feeling and reason. Yet Nussbaum's discussion is relevant in terms of the refocusing of the ethical question on a form of moral psychology rooted in a fine and intelligently educated perception.

According to Nussbaum, moral competence is not only a matter of knowledge or reasoning but also a matter of learning the right expression and educating the sensibility. A truly artistically successful author is capable of educating the reader's sensibility by rendering particular characters or situations perceptible to the reader through the apt choice of literary frame. A literary education of sensibility is one that is capable of generating meanings. See, for example, Diamond's chosen illustration of the life of Hobart Wilson in her 'Differences and Distances in Morals'; or any of James's characters, who, in the course of his endlessly subtle narratives, never fail to teach the reader the correct and clear apprehension of things. In his preface to *What Maisie Knew*, James notes: "The effort to see really and paint really is no small thing in the face of the *constant* force that works to confuse everything" ([20], pp. 165–166). This novel, Diamond notes, is entirely a critique of perception through the description of "a social world where the perception of life is characterised by the inability to see or gauge Maisie's alertness" ([20], p. 418).

For these reasons, the idea of description or vision (qua the orthodox or objectivist model of perception) no longer suffices to account for moral vision: it consists in seeing not

objects or situations but the possibilities and meanings that emerge in things; in anticipating, in *improvising* (says Diamond) at every moment in perception. Perception is then active, not in the Kantian sense of being conceptualized, but because it involves a constantly changing perspective. We thus rediscover the alternation of ‘duck’ and ‘rabbit’ that Gilligan adverts to in the wake of Wittgenstein. We think, moreover, of Nussbaum and Diamond’s analysis of Henry James: the novel teaches us to look at moral life as ‘the scene of adventure and improvisation’, which transforms the idea we have of moral *agency* and makes visible to us the values that reside in moral improvisation.

There are thus constraints on perception, not because it is voluntary, but because it is necessary to see the emergence of dynamics and apprehend the possibilities inherent in things. As Diamond observes, “[s]eeing the possibilities in things is a matter of a transformation in one’s perception of them” ([20], p. 418). Wittgenstein [2] (§90) similarly notes that we are dealing not with phenomena but with the “*possibilities* of phenomena”.

Learning a language is learning to perceive the possibilities of phenomena, or the possibilities in things, which form the background to moral expression. This is an essential point, which comes out clearly in *The Claim of Reason*:

In ‘learning language’ you learn not only what the names of things are, but what a name is; not only what the form of expression suitable for the expression of a desire is, but what it is to express a desire; not only what the word for ‘father’ is, but what a father is; not only the word ‘love’, but what love is ([21], p. 271).

Thus, according to Cavell, the learning of morality is inseparable from the learning of language and of the accompanying form of life. When construed on these lines, care is not a subordinate or marginal element of ethics but lies at its very root. Integration into a form of life is in itself important to us, and it consists in learning what is important in terms of *significance* as well as meaning [22,23]:

Rather than saying that we *tell* beginners what words mean, or teach them what objects are, I would say: we *introduce* them to the relevant forms of life contained in language and gathered around the objects and persons of the world we live in [22,23].

Learning a language thus defines ethics both as attention to reality and to others—in short, to a form of life. Language learning is the grasping of an expressive structure, specifying adequate modes of expression as well as the *meaning* of words. It is an initiation into a form of life that undertakes the training of the quality of sensitivity (and affiliated faculties) through exemplarity. Morality, then, also concerns our capacity to interpret moral expression—not only the capacity to elicit and form a moral judgment and moral choice but their various moral readings. However, this expressive capacity is not purely instinctive or affective. It is also conceptual and linguistic—it is our ability to make good use of words and to use them in new contexts, enabling us to respond or react correctly to the moral aspects we encounter. Diamond adverts to Murdoch’s construal of moral thinking to argue that despite its renunciation of non-cognitivism, contemporary moral philosophy is still insouciant to language, as well as blind to moral expression:

We obsess again and again over ‘evaluations’, ‘judgements’, explicit moral reasoning leading to the conclusion that something is worthwhile, or is a duty, or is wrong, or should be done; our idea of what is at stake in moral thinking is again and again ‘it is wrong to do x’ versus ‘it is permissible to do x’; the abortion debate is our paradigm of moral debate. ‘Distrust of language’ has become the inability to see all that is involved in using it well, responding to it well, tuning into it well; the inability, then, to see the kind of failure that can be involved in using it badly. How do our words, our thoughts, our descriptions, our philosophical styles let us down? How do they, used to their fullest extent, enlighten us? [Cora Diamond, *The Realistic Spirit*] (pp. 379–380).

The capacity for moral expression is rooted in a plastic form of life, as it is vulnerable to good and bad uses of language. It is the form of life in the natural as well as the social sense that determines the ethical structure of expression, which in turn reworks it and gives it form [24]. Our relationship with others, reflecting the kind of interest and concern we invest in them and their importance to us, exist only in the possibility of the unveiling of oneself in expression, be it successful or failed, voluntary or involuntary.

In order to recognise each other's readiness to communicate, which is presupposed in all our expressive activities, we must be able to 'read' each other. Our desires must be manifest to others. This is the natural level of expression, on which true expression is based. Mimicry and style are based on this (. . .). But there would be nothing to rely on if our desires were not embodied in the public space, in what we do and try to do, in the natural background of self-disclosure, which human expression works endlessly [25].

What is described in a skeptical mode by Cavell, alluding to the difficulty of self-expression and of recognizing and reading the self-expressions of others, is captured in the hermeneutic mode by Charles Taylor. Both Cavell's and Taylor's accounts lead to a moral questioning of mutual expression, the experience of meaning, the constitution of style, and of self and mutual education through learning to pay attention to the range of human expressions: "Human expressions, the human figure must, in order to be grasped, be *read*" ([21], p. 508). In other words, the reading of human expression, which makes it possible to *respond*, is a product of attention and care. It is the result of learning to be sensitive. We find in these remarks the Cavellian theme of education throughout all the stages of adult life. By recognizing that education does not cease upon reaching adulthood, we understand that education is not only a matter of the acquisition of factual knowledge but of further refinements and attunements, a life-long process rather than an early stage in development. This, as it happens, is also the point of Wittgenstein's insistence, from early on in the *Investigations*, on the idea of learning a language. The latter process consists in grasping not meanings but a set of practices that are not 'founded' in a language or causally linked to a social or natural background but learned at the same time as the language itself and which constitute the shifting texture of our life.<sup>12</sup> The relation to others, the type of interest and care we have for them, the importance we give them, take on their meaning within the context of a possible expression and/or unveiling of oneself (Laugier, [26]).

As Lovibond has shown, moral education consists of acquiring mastery of the contexts, connections, and backgrounds of moral actions so as to perceive moral reality and expression directly [27]. Lovibond's realist approach is in line with McDowell's emphasis on *Bildung* and second nature: a specific linguistic competence is developed in the field of morality, as the acquisition through moral education of particular sensitivity to appropriate ethical reasons [28]. Then, says Lovibond, "sensitivity to the force of ethical reasons becomes a component of our second nature" ([27], p. 61). In short, we *learn* to see in ethics.

However, beyond these realistic approaches and the alternative model of virtue ethics, it must be understood that learning moral language is also based on a certain authority and a form of blindness, of trust. In Cavell's reading of Wittgenstein, the question of education is permeated by skepticism: learning does not guarantee the validity of what one does since only the approval of one's moral 'masters' can vouchsafe validity. Nothing, therefore, grounds our practice of language except that practice itself—"the whirl of organism which Wittgenstein calls *forms of life*," noted Cavell in *Must We Mean What We Say?*

We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and we are then expected to be able to project them into other contexts. (...). Human speech and activity, sanity and community, are based on nothing more than this, but also on nothing less. It is a vision as simple as it is difficult and as difficult as it is terrifying ([29], p. 52).

The vision is 'terrifying' because it posits that learning is always infinitely extensible and that once we have learned a word by exposure to a few typical contexts of use, we are expected to project it into new contexts and so to improvise constantly. The stakes involved

in the expectation of endlessly fluid improvisation are moral stakes, relating to the ‘sanity’ or the possibility of sharing and learning a form of life. This goes further than the reference to Aristotelian moral education found in virtue ethics: to learn a word is to learn, and to imagine a form of life ([21], p. 125) [30]. An ethics of the ordinary life, which would simply refer to the authority of ‘our practices’ against theory, would be hopeless. Ethics does not refer to a description of our practices: “Our practices are exploratory, and it is really only through such exploration that we come to a full view of what we ourselves thought, or meant” ([1], p. 39). We are able to understand what ethics is not, namely, a set of principles or rules, or general concepts. However, ethics cannot be purely descriptive, insofar as our ethical concepts also work on our practices, our form of life; concepts are also a form our life takes.

Considering use can help us see that ethics is not what we think it should be. But our idea of what it should be has necessarily *shaped* what it is, as well as what we do; and considering use, as such, is not enough ([1], p. 39).

Such a recourse to practice is once again borrowed from Wittgenstein, and in particular from his approach to the concept of a ‘rule’, conceived not as a determinant of practices but as *visible* against a background of human practices. Normativity is woven into the texture of life:

We are not just trained to do ‘446, 448, 450’ and so on; we are brought into a life in which we depend on people following rules of all kinds, and they depend on us: the rules, the agreement in how to follow them, the confidence in that agreement, the ways of criticising or correcting those who do not follow them properly—all these are woven into the texture of life ([10], pp. 27–28).

Instead of the perceptual, and perhaps static, theme of background, we might prefer the themes of texture and pattern. Wittgenstein, for one, speaks of a “pattern in the tapestry of life” and of a “vital swarming”; or, as in *Zettel*, of *place* and *connections*: “Pain occupies *such and such* a place in our life, it has *such and such* connections” [31] (§§532–533).

As Diamond observes, connections ‘in our lives’ are not hidden but have their being right before our eyes. Here she alludes to the well-known simile of the ‘figure in the carpet’ in James’s classic short story (The Figure in the Carpet, by Henry James). We perceive through concepts, including moral ones, because our concepts ‘grasp’ (their referents) in the unfolding of a texture of life, which is dynamic, and where patterns recur and emerge.

If life were a tapestry, this or that pattern (pretending, for example) would not always be complete and would vary in many ways. But we, in our conceptual world, always see the same thing repeated with variations. This is how our concepts *grasp* (*auffassen*) [32] (§672).

## 6. Background and Life Form

The background of the life form is neither causal nor fixed like a set, but living and mobile. Again, we can appeal to *life* forms instead of *forms of life*. The distinction marked is not a definitive or stable form, but the forms that our life *takes* under the attentive gaze—the ‘whirl’ of our life lived within a language, of our ‘visions’, as opposed to a stable body of meanings or social rules.

The term background (*Hintergrund*) appears in Wittgenstein to designate a background of description, which brings out the nature of actions. Pace Searle, it is not intended to *explain* anything. The background cannot have a causal role, for it is language itself in its instability and sensitivity to practice:

We judge an action by its background in human life (...) The background is the train of life; And our concept refers to something in this train [33] (§624–625).

How can the human way of acting be described? Only by showing how the actions of the diversity of human beings blend together in a swarm. It is not what an individual does,

but the whole swarming whole (Gewimmel) that forms the background against which we see the action. [33] (§629); [31] (§567).

We see the action, but we are *caught* in the midst of a ‘swarming life-form’ on which it stands out and becomes sensible and thus important. It is not at all the same to say that the application of the rule is causally *determined* by a background, and to say that it is to be *described in* the background of human actions and connections. This is the difference between a gestalt and descriptive conception of ethics and a ‘conformist’ conception that attempts to provide justification by reference to prior agreement bestowed by the community. The background does not provide or determine ethical meaning since there is none but allows for a clearer view of what is important and meaningful to us in the important moment: the connections in the texture of our lives. Wittgenstein mentions, in *Culture and Value*, “the background against which what I can express receives meaning” ([34], p. 16). The ‘accepted’ or given background does not determine our actions (thus, no causality is involved) but allows us to see them clearly.

If we define ethics by such an immanent caring description, it directs our attention to the moral capacities or competencies of ordinary people. Attention to the everyday, what Cavell calls the ordinary other, is the first definition of caring. The celebrated definition of care by Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher has to be taken seriously as a realistic claim:

In the most general sense, care is a species of activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web ([9], p. 40).

Reflection on care can be construed as a consequence of the turn in moral thought illustrated by the work of Cora Diamond: against what Wittgenstein in the *Blue Book* called the “craving for generality,” it is the attempt to valorize, within morality, attention to the particular(s), to the ordinary details of human life, the aspects of life neglected by philosophy and by us. This descriptive aim transforms morality: care, like OLP, brings our attention back to the rough ground of the ordinary, to the level of everyday life.

As Bernard Williams reminds us, “ethical theories are abstract schemes that are supposed to guide everyone’s judgement on this or that particular problem.” Williams’ formulation proves to be a source of linked difficulties—those of moving from the general to the particular, from the rule to its application, from theory to experience. Beyond these epistemological difficulties, his description raises further pertinent questions: why focus ethical reflection on the question of principles, foundation, and justification? Why should it follow the legislative or scientific model? Why give rules instead of simply describing what we do? These are the difficult questions that the ethics of care must face, insofar as methodologically, it goes against the grain of contemporary moral theories.

The mythology of ‘moral theory’ lies in the idea of elaborating a number of principles that can produce a ‘morally correct answer’ to most moral problems *in all circumstances*. The anti-theoretical, ‘unorthodox’ view, on the other hand, rejects the possibility of substantive and general moral principles or metaethical theories about the nature of moral or normative statements, from which one can develop modes of justification and reasoning that would hold for all situations. Most unorthodox moral philosophers (e.g., Anscombe, Baier, Diamond, Lovibond, Williams, McDowell) are influenced by Wittgenstein’s thinking. Certainly, many will agree that there is a duty, for example, to care for one’s family and friends—but one does not usually want to be loved out of duty, and this very concern not to be loved out of duty would be a more interesting topic for morality than obligation itself (it is, for literature or film). Similarly, as Diamond notes, there may be something mean-spirited and ‘ungenerous’ about a perfectly rigorous person who is consumed by the idea of doing what they consider to be their duty [35]. The *unlikability* in the strong sense that taints the character of the dutiful ethicist is something that should be part of moral reflection rather than consigned to the litter of ethically marginal questions. Baier suggests that one should be interested in a virtue such as *gentleness*, which can only be treated in both descriptive and normative terms, and “resists analysis in terms of rules” ([36], p. 219),

being an appropriate response to the other *according to the circumstances*: it requires an experimental attitude, sensitivity to a situation and the ability to improvise, to ‘move on’ from certain reactions. Baier frequently draws on Hume to define moral attitudes such as expectation or simply waiting to see what happens rather than applying principles. Without these expectation-based attitudes, moral reflection runs the risk of becoming locked into the ‘side view’, of losing sight of *what matters* in morality, what it is we care for and about.

Baier criticizes, as Murdoch, Diamond, and Anscombe did, the idea that moral philosophy is reducible to questions of obligation and choice—as if a moral problem, by being formulated in these terms, becomes thus treatable [37]. Baier takes up the irony in Hacking, directed at the obsession of moral philosophy with the game-theory model [38]. To wit, everyone will have noticed the obligatory chapter on the ‘prisoner’s dilemma’ in any serious book on moral philosophy. We may recall the proposition in the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein defines agreement *in form of life*:

It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. It is not agreement in opinions but in the form of life [2] (§241).

The model of agreement for Wittgenstein is linguistic agreement: we agree *in language*. This allows us to understand the nature of agreement. We may take it that our language usage and practices are given as a set of rules to which we have no choice but to adhere. However, another of Wittgenstein’s discoveries is that usage is not enough. My agreement with or belonging to *this or that* form of life, whether social or moral, is not given. The background is not a priori, but it is modifiable through the practice itself. The acceptance of the form of life as ‘a given for us’—which Wittgenstein advocates—is acceptance of a natural given (“the fact of being a man, therefore with that (extent or scale of) capacity for work, pleasure, endurance, seduction” ([24], pp. 48–49). However, the form of this acceptance—the ‘extent and scale’ of our agreement—is not knowable a priori ‘any more than the extent or scale of a word can be known *a priori*’, because the use of moral language is improvised. Thus, one does not agree to everything in advance. The moral burden is at all times in “*what we should say when*” [39]. The fact that moral language is given to one does not imply that one knows a priori how one is going to get along, to agree *in* this language with one’s fellow language users, to find the right expressions to respond, etc. What constitutes language agreement and moral agreement is the ever-open possibility of rupture, the threat of skepticism, or the loss of moral voice [40] (chp. 5).

A form of life can be grasped only by attention to textures or moral patterns, perceived as “morally expressive” in/on the background provided by a form of life. Our capacity for moral expression is rooted in a mutable form of life, vulnerable to our better and worse uses of language. The type of interest, the care that we have for others, and the importance that we give them, do not exist except in the possibility of the display or revelation of the self in its moral expression. The idea of an ethics formulated *in a different voice* and expressed in women’s voices is inseparably an ordinary conception of ethics, an expressivist conception of ethics, and a realistic conception of ethics. This ethics rather starts from experiences of everyday life and the moral problems of real people in their ordinary lives.

### 7. Losing Concepts

According to Diamond, many of the statements found in contemporary moral philosophy are, in Diamond’s own words, “stupid or *insensitive* or delusional”. She gives, as an example, a passage in which Peter Singer argues in favor of the defense of animals:

What I mean by ‘stupid or insensitive or delusional’ can be made clear by a single word, the word ‘even’ in the quotation: ‘We have seen that the experimenter reveals a bias in favour of his own species when he experiments on a non-human in a case where he would not consider it justified to use a human being, even a retarded human being’ ([1], p. 33).

What is wrong with such an argument is not the argument itself but the use of the word ‘even.’ What is wrong is the absence of care. When Diamond says that moral philosophy

has become mostly blind and insensitive, she means it has become insensitive to the human specificity of moral questioning and to ordinary moral life.

What matters in moral perception is not agreement and harmony but the perception (sometimes violent) of contrasts, distances, differences, and their expression; that moment when, as Diamond says, there is a 'loss of concepts', when it no longer works. Cavell describes this difficulty in terms of skepticism, as a sensation and temptation of inexpressiveness, as our inability to go beyond our natural reactions to know the other—to go beyond the limits of my understanding and concepts, but also of my *experience*.

Our ability to communicate with him depends on his 'natural understanding', his 'natural reaction' to our instructions and gestures. It depends, therefore, on our mutual agreement in judgements. This agreement takes us remarkably far along the path of mutual understanding, but it has its limits; limits which, one might say, are not only those of knowledge, but those of experience ([21], pp. 184–185).

What is important in the ethical situation is not just the agreement but the disagreement that the sensitivity to words creates: the exposure of the *loss of our concepts* and the difficulty of applying them in new contexts. Diamond takes the case of animal experimentation, showing that certain forms of argument are unbearable, and create a distance and perplexity fundamental to a definition of ethics:

Suppose someone were to say in a discussion or in an experiment on animals that one of the reasons why it would be wrong to experiment on 'newborns', to put them in cages, to subject them to chemicals or electric shocks or cancer or extreme fright or anguish or to kill them—a reason that is not applicable to animals—is that it would deprive society of the valuable contributions they could make as adults. This argument would obviously not apply to animals because they cannot make the same kind of contribution (...).

My distance from someone like that is not a matter of refusing what they think they can support. It is rather that I would say to myself: 'Who is he, and how can he think that this is what should be claimed in this discussion? What kind of life is he living, in what life can this discussion take place?' [41]

The important point for Diamond is that there is no opposition between sensibility and understanding, but that sensibility is a form of conceptual life. This explains the 'sensitive' reactions we have to conceptual matters, such as the kind illustrated by Diamond above. There is no need to separate argument and feeling in ethics. Rather, Wittgenstein reveals the properly sensitive character of concepts and the perceptive character of conceptual activity that are at work, which allow for the clear apprehension of conceptual contrasts and divergences. For example, it may be possible to know without further ado and without being able to produce a counterargument that what someone is arguing is 'solemnly comical nonsense', or morally repugnant, utterly stupid and delusional, etc. Ultimately, to give the concept of care its due place, we must place it center-stage in the framework of ethics. That is, we must acknowledge that morality as a whole must become sensitive—a 'sensitivity that would envelop the totality of the mind'.

The question is that of the expression of experience: when and how to trust one's experience, to find the validity of the particular. It is the question of finding a subjective expression and finding one's voice. The history of feminism begins precisely with an experience of non-expression, which the theories of care account for in their own full-fledged way, in their ambition to highlight an ignored, unexpressed dimension of experience. This experience, described by Cavell in the film genre he calls 'melodrama of the Unknown Woman' is one of radical alienation, of the impossibility of expressing this experience in language—what is often called today 'gaslighting.' Both movies we are alluding to here reveal the experience of a woman's inexpressiveness, silencing—losing not only self-confidence but language and perception. This is the problem that Gilligan's ethics of care confronts in a theoretical way.

John Stuart Mill was concerned with the problem of lacking the right concepts and theoretical framework, where one has no voice to make oneself heard because one has lost contact with one's own experience, with one's life. Women's inexpressiveness is the stylization of human inexpressiveness.

Thus the mind itself is bent under the yoke: even in what people do for their pleasure, conformity is the first thing they consider ... so much so that their human capacities are atrophied and lifeless; they become incapable of the slightest lively desire or spontaneous pleasure, and they generally lack opinions or feelings of their own, or truly their own. Is this or is it not the desirable condition of human nature? [42] (III, §6).

This is a description that captures all those situations that involve a loss of experience, language, and concepts, and that can motivate a desire to come out of this situation of loss of voice, to take back possession of ordinary language, and to find a world that would be the adequate context for it. Reconnecting with experience and finding a voice for its expression is perhaps the primary aim of ethics. Care, understood as attention and perception, is thus to be differentiated from a sort of suffocation of the self by affect or devotion. It confronts us with our own inabilities and inattentions, but above all, it shows us how these inattentions are then translated into theories and valuations.

It remains to articulate this subjective expression with the attention to the particular that is also at the heart of care, and thus to define a *knowledge through care*. The moral knowledge, for example, that literature or film brings to light through the education of sensibility (i.e., the training of the virtue of sensitiveness) is not necessarily fully translatable into rational or moral argumentation, but it is nevertheless knowledge. This idea is playfully at work in Nussbaum's ambiguous book title, *Love's Knowledge*. The syntactical play on meanings signals not the knowledge of a general abstract object 'love', but the particular knowledge that the sharpened perception of love grants us through the experience of love itself. As her title wryly suggests, there is no contradiction between sensibility and knowledge, care and rationality.

Hence Diamond's redefinition or redescription of morality from literature. "I have tried", she says, "to describe certain features of what the moral life *looks like*, without saying anything at all about what it *should* look like." This phenomenal description of the moral life allows for a transformation of the field of ethics, the refocusing on sensibility, but also a disappearance of ethics as a specific field:

Just as logic is not, for Wittgenstein, a particular subject, with its own body of truths, but permeates all thought, ethics has no particular subject; an ethical *spirit*, an attitude towards the world and life, can permeate any thought or discourse ([35], p. 153).

In short, ethics is an attention to others and to the way they are caught along with us in connections. The ethics of care is, in this sense, inspired by Hume, Mill, and Wittgenstein.

Cavell and Diamond opposed, as did Murdoch, the non-cognitivist meta-ethics, which analyses moral statements by discerning an emotional or affective component and a factual component (erroneously relying on Wittgenstein and his rejection of the ethical propositions in the *Tractatus*). The problem, as Putnam and Cavell have amply noted, lies in the claim to deliver an *analysis* of moral statements, amounting to a *theory* of the fixed meaning of statements. If we want to analyze these statements, we will obtain a statement of a fact together with an expression of emotion (such as an exclamation or expression of appreciation or disgust). The problem with emotivism in meta-ethics is, therefore, semantic. It is as if a moral statement could be reconstructed as an additive equation relating a statement *plus* a feeling. It is as if the expression was added to the statement and was not the statement itself. This is an untenable philosophy of language, which was questioned by Wittgenstein himself [43]. The meta-ethical theorizing of the 1930s invented the blindness that Diamond wants to criticize in *The Realistic Spirit*:

It is striking that, although this approach in moral philosophy has virtually disappeared, what Murdoch meant by ‘distrust of language’ is as relevant as ever; (it) has become the inability to see all that is involved in making good use of it, responding well to it, tuning in to it; the inability, therefore, to see the kind of failure that may be involved in using it badly ([1], p. 51).

### 8. Adventure of Perception and Agency of Care

The philosophical lines explored so far make it possible to understand a fundamental requirement of the ethics of care. Through a ‘loving and attentive’ and thus *caring* reading, we perceive moral situations differently and actively. This changes our perception of the responsibility of the moral agent and of agency itself. The attention to others, both enjoined and creatively explored by literature and the arts, does not give us new certainties or the literary or artistic equivalent of theories. Rather, it confronts us with uncertainty and skepticism. By focusing on a narrow conception of ethics and perception, one risks *missing the adventure*, in Diamond’s phrasing. That is, one risks missing a dimension of morality, specifically the visible *aspect of moral thinking*, or “what moral life looks like” ([1], p. 36). Moreover, it is owing to a lack of care that we manage to miss this all-important aspect of ethics.

Conceptual adventure is hence a component of moral perception. There is adventure in any situation that mixes uncertainty, instability, and ‘the sharp sense of life.’ Diamond and Nussbaum refer to a passage from James that beautifully makes explicit this adventurous *form* that moral life takes:

A human, personal ‘adventure’ is not an a priori, positive, absolute and inextinguishable thing, but just a matter of relationship and appreciation—in fact, it is a name we give, appropriately, to any passage, any situation that has added the sharp taste of uncertainty to a sharp sense of life. Hence the thing is, quite admirably, a matter of interpretation and of particular conditions; and without a perception of these, the most prodigious adventures may vulgarly count for nothing ([20], p. 307).

Famous passages in James’ novel *The Ambassadors* highlight this adventure of perception. The novel’s hero, the sensitive, aging, sheltered Lambert Strether, comes to acquire a new moral attitude and a “new standard of perception” in the “great swarm” of Parisian life, which turns out to be difficult, uncertain, and dangerous:

*I see it now, I haven’t seen it enough before and now I’m old! Too old for what I see. Oh, but at least I do see* ([44], p. 615).

These troubling moments in the novel define caring as seeing and, conversely, attentive and anticipatory perception as caring. Caring is activity, mobility, and improvisation.

What happens to her becomes an adventure, becomes interesting, exciting, by the nature of the attention she gives it, by the intensity of her awareness, by her imaginative response. (...) The inattentive reader thus misses out doubly: he misses out on the adventure of the characters (for him, ‘they count for nothing’), and he misses out on his own adventure as a reader [1].

Thus, we can see the moral life as an adventure that is both conceptual (one extends one’s concepts) and sensitive (one exposes oneself). Put another way, it is both passive (one allows oneself to be transformed, to be touched) and agentive (one seeks ‘an active sense of life’). There is no need to separate conceptual life and affection, just as there is no need to separate, in moral experience, thought (spontaneity) and receptivity (vulnerability to reality and to others). James adds that it is necessary that nothing escapes the attention: “*Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost.*” With this magisterial Jamesian insight, we have reached our final construal of the ethics of care.

In our times, it is arguably in film and television productions that the Wittgensteinian attention to detail and its proximity to care is most strongly evinced. A number of examples

drawn from recent cinema describe, through the description and fine narration of caring and what the agential dimension of care is within the great diversity of forms of care. It is as if cinema, having exhausted the representations and conversations of *romance* (emblemized in the comedy of remarriage and the melodrama genres of the Golden age of Hollywood), now describes a wider variety of forms and objects of affection. We might think of the accentuation of care in disaster or science-fiction films, whose plots are often centered on the preservation or survival of a family structure (*The Day After Tomorrow*, R. Emmerich, 2004 [45]; *War of the Worlds*, S. Spielberg, 2005 [46]; *Don't Look up*, 2021 [47]). Recent TV series focus on care (*The Leftovers* [48], *This is Us* [49]) and some even present the concrete work of care: *Unbelievable* (2019) [50], *Maid* (2021 [51]) Film and TV have the capacity to highlight the necessity and importance, for all humans, of this dimension of our lives [52])—and to shape both perception and morality altogether.

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