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**Byrd, Anne Justice**

THE DECISION TO REMARRY AND THE ETHIC OF CARE: A QUALITATIVE  
STUDY OF FORMERLY DIVORCED FEMALES

*The University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

PH.D. 1986

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THE DECISION TO REMARRY AND THE ETHIC OF CARE: A QUALITATIVE  
STUDY OF FORMERLY DIVORCED FEMALES

by

Anne Justice Byrd

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Approved by

  
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APPROVAL PAGE

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine commitment processes for second marriages for females. Gilligan's ethic of care developmental stage model provided the theoretical framework for the analysis of the data. This framework assumes that as individuals are confronted with new experiences, they move from a cognitive level of caring for self first, to caring for others first, to caring for self and others equally.

The primary research question focused on whether females used qualitatively different cognitive levels of care in deciding to marry the first time and deciding to marry the second time. Other research questions were concerned with whether levels of ambivalence and conflict surrounding commitment during the courtship relationship in second marriages would be different for females who showed such a qualitative shift and those who did not.

The data were gathered from 23 formerly divorced females who had been remarried less than three years. Through an intensive interview, interviewees were asked to reconstruct their reasons for deciding to marry the first time and their reasons for deciding to marry the second time. Using a scoring manual developed for the research project, three independent judges classified the responses as representing one of five levels of care. Objective measures of conflict and ambivalence about commitment to the relationship in second marriages were also obtained at the time of the interview.

The results strongly supported an advancement in levels of care as females move from their first marriage decision to their second marriage decision. Research questions regarding conflict and ambivalence could not be addressed adequately since 21 of the 23 respondents made a positive shift in the level of care from the first marriage decision to the second marriage decision.

This study suggests that an ethic of care framework is a viable way to understand the processes people use in deciding to marry and to remarry. This cognitive developmental perspective adds a new dimension to the sociological approach to remarriage.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

During the last decade, remarriage has become an increasingly important social phenomenon. Glick (1980) showed that over 40% of the current marriage ceremonies involve at least one partner who had been married previously. Cherlin and McCarthy (1985) reported that of all married couple families under 50, 21% are remarried. They also found that over 57% of remarried couples bring children to their new marital relationships thereby making remarriage a social process which affects large numbers of men, women, and children. Despite the large numbers of persons involved, very little is known about the factors involved in the decision to remarry or the basic desire to remarry (Murstein, 1980). In particular, the process by which individuals make a commitment to remarry after divorce is a topic which has received limited attention in the research literature.

Even though there are speculations about how the remarriage commitment process occurs, most of the variables used in the research are demographic. Furstenberg and Spanier (1984) used a qualitative analysis of remarriage to challenge Cherlin's (1981) hypothesis that remarriage has a high rate of dissolution because it is an incomplete institution, a sociological notion that assumes people need norms. Instead of supporting Cherlin's proposition, Furstenberg and Spanier argued that people go into a remarriage after divorce with a perceptual change from their decision to marry the first time. They believe that



people are committed to marriage the first time for its own sake but not so for remarriage. Their remarried couples "were unwilling to be miserable again simply for the sake of preserving the union" (p. 440).

The purpose of the current study was to examine commitment processes for first and second marriages for females. Using a qualitative approach, recently remarried females whose previous marriages ended in divorce were asked to reconstruct their reasons for marrying the first time and the second time.

In studying the reasons for commitment in second marriages, a more homogeneous sample than had previously been used in the research literature was needed. Although dynamics for males in similar situations would have been of interest, a decision was made to limit the current study to females in order to keep the sample homogeneous. In addition, this study used an ethic of care (Gilligan, 1977, 1982) theoretical framework for studying remarital commitment. A scoring manual for applying Gilligan's ethic of care framework to decisions to marry and remarry was developed.

### Review of Research on Remarriage

#### Sociological Factors

Most of the existing research on remarriage focused on the impact of broader sociological variables on the probability that an individual will remarry. For example, divorced women were somewhat less likely to remarry than divorced men. The most common remarriage history was one in which only the husband was previously divorced while the least common remarriage history was one in which only the wife was previously divorced (Cherlin & McCarthy, 1985).

Spanier and Glick (1980) used data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census to analyze the remarriage patterns of all women who were divorced between 1950 and 1970. The median time between divorce and remarriage was found to be approximately three years, and significant relationships were reported between the length of time between divorce and remarriage and such demographic variables as race, age, number of children, educational level, and the length of the first marriage. Young women, white women, women without children, less-educated women, and women with shorter first marriages were reported to be significantly more likely to remarry.

Koo and Suchindran (1980) focused specifically on how the presence or absence of children affected the probability that a woman will remarry. The major finding of their analysis was that, contrary to widely held beliefs, the age of the youngest child at the time of divorce did not significantly alter the probability that a woman would eventually remarry. Their research questioned the folk wisdom that women who have young children have greater motivation to seek a supportive relationship than women with older children. This demographic analysis highlighted the importance of considering the interactional effect of the age of the divorced female, the presence of children, and the ages of the children involved in the remarital situation. For women under 25, the absence of children significantly enhanced the probability of remarriage while women from 25 to 35 were significantly more likely to remarry if children were present.

The impact of economic factors on the decision to remarry has also been considered. The adverse effect of divorce on the economic

circumstances of women is well-documented in the literature. These effects have been found to be significant and to be greater over time for divorced females than for divorced males (Espenshade, 1979; Hoffman, 1977).

Using primarily economic data, White (1979) reported that the more favorable economic status of divorced men as compared to divorced women might have an impact on the process of deciding to remarry. Specifically, White speculated that perhaps men chose to remarry out of desire while women chose to remarry to escape economic adversity. While studies of broad context variables may be of value, there is a need to analyze the marital recommitment process at a more fundamental level---the decision-making process of the individual who chooses to remarry.

#### Commitment Processes in First Marriages

Although addressing methodological issues in first courtships, Bolton's (1961) suggestion concerning the appropriate approach to courtship and mate selection is relevant:

Perhaps mate selection must be studied not only in terms of variables brought into the interaction situation but also as a process in which the transactions between individuals in certain societal contexts are determinants of turning points and commitments out of which marriage emerges (p. 235).

Bolton's suggestion that relationship transactions should be the critical focal point in analyzing commitments has not been seriously pursued in the remarriage literature by most researchers.

Prior research has focused on the emotional patterns of those who have never been married during the courtship period. For example, using a sample of college students, Hill, Rubin, and Peplau (1976) reported

that women were more likely to perceive problems in premarital relationships and were more likely to initiate breakups prior to marriage.

Premarital emotional patterns in the courtships of first marrieds and interactional patterns which preceded a commitment to marriage have been studied. Braiker and Kelley (1979) studied the development of close relationships among first married couples. Couples worked together to identify three phases of their courtship. Courtships were divided into periods of casual dating, serious dating, and engagement. Then, self-administered questionnaires were designed to measure dimensions of conflict, ambivalence, love, and maintenance behavior in the development of the relationship. Using a sample of 22 first married couples who had been married less than three years, Braiker and Kelley (1979) reported that these relationship dimensions showed significant linear development over time. However, using an analysis of variance procedure (sex by stage of relationship), no significant main effects for sex or interactions with sex of respondent were found.

Cate (1979) used the Braiker and Kelley (1979) Relationship Questionnaire to study the courtship patterns of 50 newlyweds. Using retrospective techniques, Cate reported major changes over time in the close relationship dimensions identified by Braiker and Kelley. With increased involvement, there was an increase in love, maintenance behaviors, and conflict in the relationship. After marriage, conflict was reported to decrease. In contrast, ambivalence showed a consistent decline over time as couples moved through courtship and into marriage. Cate (1979) also reported sex differences in patterns of commitment.

Men indicated more love and greater efforts to maintain the relationship at the earliest level of involvement while women reported engaging in significantly more maintenance behavior in early marriage.

#### Commitment Processes in Remarriage

Garfield (1981) summarized some of the existing studies in the area of remarriage and grouped the limited literature into four areas of concern: (a) the types of persons divorced individuals are attracted to (Hunt & Hunt, 1977; Westoff, 1977) (b) the rationale for remarriage (Westoff, 1977) (c) remarital success studies and (d) studies of pre-remarital emotional patterns. On the basis of limited empirical support, Garfield (1981) suggested that the relationships of divorced persons who remarry appeared to proceed at a gradual pace, alternated between extremes of emotional closeness and distance, and tended to be practical as opposed to romantic.

Fitzgerald's (1981) work focused on the dimensions of developing relationships among the remarried. Using a sample of 50 remarried couples, spouses were asked to construct a graph which identified periods of casual dating, serious dating, and engagement. The Braiker and Kelley (1979) Relationship Questionnaire was then used individually with all participants to obtain measures of love, ambivalence, conflict, and maintenance behaviors. Responses were compared to similar data for first marrieds. Fitzgerald concluded that the response patterns of the remarried were highly similar to patterns of the first marrieds. Sex-linked differences in premarital behavior were also reported. For example, females reported significantly greater effort to maintain the relationship. Females also reported greater amounts of perceived

conflict in the relationship than did men. Using the dimensions of love, conflict, ambivalence, and maintenance efforts, the developmental trends and premarital relationships for first married and remarrieds appeared virtually identical. However, Fitzgerald's study included persons whose previous marriages ended in divorce as well as those whose previous marriages ended because of the death of a spouse. Eight percent of the sample involved couples in which the husband or wife was divorced more than twice, and 10% of the sample was comprised of couples in which one or both of the partners were previously widowed. As Bernard (1956) pointed out in one of the earliest systematic studies of remarriage, "death and divorce select different kinds of people" (p.5). Thus, the dynamics of courtship in second marriages following divorce might have been obscured by the inclusion of marital situations which might well have dynamics which were very different from second marriage courtships.

In summary, there are no well-developed theoretical frameworks for studying commitment in remarriage (Mott and Moore, 1983; Murstein, 1980). Most research dealing with why individuals remarry has focused on economic and demographic variables. However, as Mott and Moore (1983) reported, such research has had limited success in predicting the process of remarital commitment.

Some recent literature has attempted to specify the emotional components of developing relationships (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Fitzgerald, 1981; Kelley, 1983). Such research has focused on variables such as conflict in the emerging relationship and ambivalence about commitment to the relationship. What is missing in the research

literature are studies which explore the importance of cognitive variables such as level of care in remarital decision-making.

An Ethic of Care Framework and a Model  
of Remarriage Commitment

No existing research has attempted to study the level of care used in deciding to enter a second marriage and to integrate this variable into a recommitment model. The work of Gilligan (Gilligan, 1977, 1982; Gilligan & Belenky, 1980) might well provide a useful theoretical stance from which to view remarital decision-making. According to Gilligan, decisions about the right path for one's life may be made at one of three developmental stages. These stages revolve around the "ethic of care" and are differentiated by the degree to which caring for self and caring for others are important in the decision-making process.

At Level I (the lowest level), a decision is made based primarily on self-related concerns. As the individual begins to believe that being concerned with only personal needs is selfish, transition to Level II becomes possible. At this level, there is extensive concern with meeting the needs of others. Decisions are made on the basis of the impact the decision will have on others in one's immediate social network. As the individual functions at Level II, a sense of martyrdom and self-sacrifice may set in. Such feelings may lead the person to decision-making at Level III, the highest level of care. At Level III, the individual believes that decisions must integrate the needs of self and the needs of others. There is the recognition that it is impossible to fully care for others at the highest level without also considering one's personal needs.

Gilligan's framework augmented the work of Kohlberg (1981) in the area of moral reasoning. Kohlberg formulated a stage theory of moral development which described individuals as moving through qualitatively different stages of moral growth. The model described these growth patterns as an invariant sequence of stages which are hierarchial in nature. There may be variance in the speed at which individuals move through these stages of moral reasoning or in the final stage an individual reaches (Emmerich, 1968), but the developmental sequence is the same across individuals.

Kohlberg's work was based on the idea that the individual's social perspective changed over time as moral development occurred. Building on Piaget's (1965) concepts of cognitive development, Kohlberg saw moral dilemmas that challenged the existing moral structures as providing the impetus for growth and development. As the individual develops, the social perspective shifts from what is good for self to what is good for society. At the highest stage, the individual moves beyond meeting the conventional expectations of society to considering what is good for humanity. The organizing principle for Kohlberg's framework is justice --- deciding what is fair and just from different social perspectives.

Kohlberg's theory was built on a research methodology which used hypothetical moral dilemmas and asked respondents what decisions they would make in these situations. Gilligan (1977, 1982) broadened the empirical base of Kohlberg's work by studying real life dilemmas and by focusing on women. While Kohlberg stressed the theme of rights in moral decision-making, Gilligan concluded that women seemed to define themselves in a context of human relationships and evaluate themselves



in terms of their ability to care. Care described as "an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need..." (Gilligan, 1982, p. 62). Gilligan maintained that using rights as the organizing principle rather than care had resulted in a lower moral reasoning classification for women within the Kohlberg model.

Rather than focusing on isolated behaviors, Gilligan's model like Kohlberg's focuses on patterns of behavior or stages of human development. Such stages are not simply quantitative increases in the repertoire of individual behavior. Rather the stages differ qualitatively and represent new higher levels of cognitive integration and behavior.

A primary focus of Gilligan's model is the way in which males and females make decisions. Gilligan maintained that men and women made decisions differently because they have different cognitive perspectives of social situations and their relationship to these situations. According to Gilligan, these divergent perspectives resulted from basic differences in the socialization process for males and for females. The theoretical framework which she presents was derived primarily from studies using intensive interviews (Gilligan, 1977, 1982). On the basis of these observations and other moral decision-making literature, Gilligan concluded that males and females made moral decisions differently because they saw problems differently and engaged in two distinct modes of thought (Belenky, 1978; Lyons, 1983).

Although Gilligan stated that her theoretical position was not pressing for an absolute association between these two modes of thought as male and female perspectives, she indicated that there was a clear

empirical association between one type of thinking in women and another type of thinking in men (Gilligan, 1977, 1982). The starting point for developmental differences in males and females from Gilligan's perspective was the traditional division of labor in society by sex roles and a description of how males and females attained identity which was heavily influenced by the work of Freud. Women are seen as universally bearing the primary responsibility for early child care. As males attempt to establish a separate sex role identity, an identity different from that of the primary caretaker, a process of individuation occurs in which males gain a clear sense of self. On the other hand, female children identify with the female caretaker, develop a stronger sense of empathy through their identification with the mother, and develop a sense of self which is embedded in relationships. Gender identity is thus intertwined with the development of a cognitive view of the world which has a life long impact on the decision-making process. As Gilligan (1982) summarized this developmental process:

For boys and men, separation and individuation are critically tied to gender identity since separation from the mother is essential for the development of masculinity. For girls and women, issues of femininity or feminine identity do not depend on the achievement of separation from the mother or on the process of individuation. Since masculinity is defined through separation while femininity is defined through attachment, male gender identity is threatened by intimacy while female gender identity is threatened by separation. Thus males tend to have difficulty with relationships, while females tend to have problems with individuation (p. 8).

By adulthood, Gilligan envisioned men and women dealing with the dilemma of what is right in a situation from two distinct philosophical stances. According to this framework, men make decisions based on the primacy and universality of individual rights without interfering with

the rights of others. In contrast, with women the problem becomes "how to lead a moral life which includes obligations to myself and my family and people in general" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 21). Gilligan concluded that there is a need for empirical research to clarify the effects of these different cognitive perspectives on marriage and family relationships. Her own interpretation of the data suggested that men and women speak two different languages while believing that they are speaking the same language. This disparity creates a social situation ripe for miscommunication and misunderstanding in decision-making.

The current research related Gilligan's framework to recommitment in second marriages. The importance of factors related to self and factors related to the needs of others in the decision to remarry was considered. This research, thus, provided empirical data related to Gilligan's framework. The semi-structured methodology of the study was designed to generate data and insights which would help to incorporate levels of care into a remarital commitment model.

#### Research Questions

The present study was exploratory in nature and recommended a theoretical approach which could be used to study recommitment to second marriages. Three specific research questions were addressed. These questions were as follows:

1. Will females show a shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time from the level of care used in deciding to marry the first time?
2. Will females who shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time report different levels of conflict surrounding

the recommitment decision from females who do not show such a positive change?

3. Will females who shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time report different levels ambivalence surrounding the recommitment decision from females who do not show such a positive change?

The overall goal of the present research was to use a new theoretical approach to study the differences between the decision to marry and the decision to remarry. There are many unanswered questions in relation to remarriage and no specific theoretical base from which to generate fruitful questions. The current research developed procedures to study recommitment in second marriages.

## CHAPTER II PROCEDURES

### Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

Since there were no objective research instruments available which could measure the concept of level of care in commitment to remarriage, a qualitative methodology was selected. The intensive open-ended interview was used to obtain the retrospective data needed. In fact, shifts in levels of care, which are shifts in cognitive reasoning levels, can be measured only through observing the process as people describe their experiences and thoughts over time.

Good qualitative methodology follows a series of steps that begin with a preliminary framework and continue through iterative data collection and analysis (Becker, 1970; Miles and Huberman, 1984). Since commitment to marriage and to remarriage was envisioned as a cognitive process in reasoning about care and human relationships, the data collection methodology was planned to encourage the respondents to reveal their reasons and circumstances for committing to a first and second marriage. The richness of such data gave ample context for understanding the process of shifts in levels of care. No objective instrument has yet to be constructed to tap the process of cognitive shifts over time.

### Subjects

#### Sample Limitations

This purposive sample consisted of 23 formerly divorced females who

had remarried within the last three years. In all cases, the current marriage was a second marriage. Persons who had more than one divorce or who had lost a spouse through death were not included in the study sample. The dynamics of recommitment for a third or fourth marriage or a marriage which followed the death of a spouse might be different from those of a second marriage following divorce. Because remarried respondents meeting specific criteria are difficult to find, much of the past research on remarriage had grouped several types of remarriage together. For example, Fitzgerald's (1981) study of remarital courtships included couples representing the remarriage combinations of divorced-single, divorced-divorced, widowed-divorced, widowed-single, and widowed-widowed. To avoid confounding the data with these issues, the remarriage population for the current study was more highly specified than in the previous research literature.

Participants in the study could range in age from 25 to 55. This particular age range was selected considering that the median age for first marriage is in the mid twenties while the median age for remarriage after divorce is in the mid thirties (Cherlin and McCarthy, 1985; Glick, 1980). The range was believed to be broad enough to be used to realistically find respondents while narrow enough to avoid confusing the data with any possible special dynamics of much younger remarriages and much older remarriages.

The restriction of the sample to remarriage of three years or less was designed to improve the accuracy of information obtained using retrospective techniques. Including individuals who have been married for longer periods of time might have lessened the respondent's ability

to recall accurately the salient events related to remarital commitment. The selection criteria were closely specified in order to obtain as homogeneous a sample as possible. A sample which varied less on demographic variables was seen as desirable since the basic intent of the study to focus on process variables.

### Sampling Procedures

Interviewees were recruited for the study using a modified snowball sampling technique. Interview participants were asked to suggest others who might meet the criteria for inclusion in the sample. However, most respondents did not know of other individuals who fell within the specified research category. The principal investigator, therefore, had to employ a variety of additional strategies to find eligible participants.

Approximately 400 letters were sent to individuals and institutions in the Piedmont area of North Carolina. These letters specified the general purpose of the current research and the sample criteria. This strategy did not prove to be an effective recruitment technique, and only two members of the final sample group were located using this method.

The remainder of the study sample was found through personal contacts by the principal investigator. A wide range of organizations and individuals within central North Carolina were contacted seeking volunteers for the study. The investigator indicated that the research was part of her doctoral program and that the individual identity of the respondents would be protected. When a contact knew a person who might be eligible, the researcher requested that the possible participant be

contacted by the referrers or that the referrers give permission to the investigator to use their name in contacting the potential participant. The investigator, rather than the person making the referral, explained both the purpose and the conditions of the study to the potential interviewee. These person-to-person contacts and referrals were the most effective strategy in locating participants.

Finding interviewees who fell within the specified sample limits required a great deal of time and energy. Physicians, social workers, college professors, plant supervisors, business leaders, community leaders, public school teachers, friends, educational administrators, ministers, factory workers, and college students in a five county area were approached for help in finding an appropriate sample. After six months of active searching and approximately 200 personal contacts by the principal investigator, 32 possible participants were located. In the course of the interview procedures, three were found to be married for the third rather than the second time. One interview was unusable because of audiotape difficulties, and the data from one interview were not used in the analysis because of very serious family problems. Four declined to be interviewed leaving a final sample of 23.

These modified snowball sampling techniques were considered acceptable given the homogeneous nature of the desired sample, the qualitative emphasis of the study, and the small pool of available individuals who met the sample criteria. Relying on personal contacts by the principal investigator did result in a study sample that was influenced by the personal characteristics of the researcher. As a result of this sampling strategy, the interviewees were predominantly



white, well-educated, middle-income, and in professional positions. The selective nature of the data available to the qualitative researcher is, however, not a methodological consideration unique to this study. For example, Easterday et al. (1982) reported that the personal characteristics of the field researcher were related to the role of the participant observer and the types of data which are accessible to the field researcher.

Despite the possible advantages of random sampling techniques, snowball sampling appeared to be a realistic way of obtaining a homogeneous sample falling within fairly narrowly defined limits. Since the study focused on process variables rather than being demographic in nature, there was less concern that the sample be perfectly representative of the total divorced-remarried population.

#### Description of Final Sample

The 23 participants came from 11 different towns and cities in five counties in the Piedmont area of North Carolina. All respondents were currently married for the second time, and the second marriage was less than three years in duration with 14 having been married less than one year.

They ranged in age from 25 to 50 with a median age of 35. Sixteen of the respondents fell within an age range of 30 to 39 while five of the respondents fell within the age range of 25 to 29. Two of the interviewees were 50 years old. Twenty-one of the respondents were white, and two were black.

Twenty-two of the women interviewed were employed while one participant was a fulltime homemaker. Types of employment included

banking, college teaching, nursing, research technology, high school teaching, marketing, secretarial positions, and school administration. Considering the occupation of both the respondent and the respondent's husband, 22 of the interviewees were judged to be middle-class while one respondent was classified as working class.

Educationally, the sample ranged from two persons who were high school graduates to four persons who held graduate degrees. Three respondents had had some graduate work beyond the four-year degree. Six of the interviewees were college graduates, and eight indicated that they had had some college courses.

Considering all sources of family income, 17 of the 23 respondents had total family incomes of above \$35,000 per year. More specifically, 10 interviewees had total family incomes of above \$40,000 per year. Seven participants indicated a total family income of between \$35,000 to \$39,000. Two respondents had family incomes of between \$30,000 to \$34,000 while two other participants reported incomes of between \$25,000 to \$29,000. One respondent indicated a total income of between \$20,000 to \$24,000, and one interviewee had a total income between \$10,000 and \$14,000.

At the time of the first marriage, respondents ranged in age from 16 to 23 with a median age of 20. At the time of the second marriage, the age range was 23 to 49 with a median remarriage age of 34. First marriages ranged in length from 2 years to 22 years. The median length for the respondents' first marriage was 9 years and 9 months. The length of time between the end of the first marriage and the beginning of the second marriage ranged from three days to twelve years with a

median time of 2 years and 7 months. The length of the second marriage varied from 1 month to 2 years and 11 months with a median duration time of 9 months.

The current spouse of 16 of the respondents had one previous marriage which had ended in divorce. In one case, the respondent's current husband had two previous marriages with both of these marriages ending in divorce. Six of the respondents married males who had not been married previously.

Only three of the participants had children from their current marriage. Thirteen of the respondents had children from their first marriage, and in nine cases these children currently lived with the respondent. Eleven of the current spouses had children from a previous marriage. However, there were only three cases in which any of these children lived with the current couple. Overall, 13 of the respondents had children from their previous marriage, the spouses' previous marriage, or from their current marriage who lived with them. Seven respondents had two children currently living with them, while six respondents currently had one child living with them. Ten of the respondents had no children living with them at the present time.

During the time between their first and second marriage, one respondent reported an annual income of over \$25,000, and three respondents reported incomes of between \$20,000 to \$24,000 per year. Ten participants had annual incomes which ranged from \$15,000 to \$19,000, and six interviewees reported incomes from \$10,000 to \$14,000. Two respondents' incomes were in the \$5,000 to \$9,000 range while one respondent, who was in school during this time, had an annual income of

less than \$5,000.

When asked about the perceived adequacy of income during the time between the first and second marriage, only one interviewee described her income as very adequate. Seventeen participants indicated that their income was adequate. Four respondents believed their income was inadequate, and one interviewee described her income as very inadequate.

Overall, the 23 females in the final sample were articulate and willing to share their feelings and perceptions about their decisions to marry and to remarry. Their openness enabled the researcher to gather the qualitative data necessary to analyze these decisions within an ethic of care framework.

#### Preliminary Study of Remarried Persons

The original concept that the commitment to marry and remarry might be based on different levels of care came from eight informal interviews with remarried individuals conducted by the researcher. These interviews focused on the reasons for deciding to marry the first time and the reasons for deciding to marry the second time. Summaries of interviews with over 40 remarried persons conducted by 18 graduate students for a project in a divorce and remarriage class were also used in the pilot study. These preliminary data were analyzed to identify the themes and reasoning which related to decisions to marry and remarry and were used in the construction of the scoring manual used in the present research.

#### Ethic of Care Scoring Manual

Prior to actual data collection, the ethic of care scoring manual for the decisions to marry and remarry was developed by the researcher. The

model followed was that used for the development of a manual for the measurement of moral judgment based on Kohlberg's theory (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, Candee, Hewer, Power, & Speicher-Dubin, 1984). For each stage of moral development, the manual gives the stage structure, criterion judgments, and match examples. A stage structure is an abstract description of the qualitative phenomenon which differentiates structure from content. The basic developmental concept underlying stage sequence is the level of sociomoral perspective from which the individual formulates a moral judgment. A criterion judgment is a statement that describes a stage but uses concepts directly from the content of the issue being studied. Match examples are illustrative quotations from interviews that would be scored in that stage of moral reasoning.

The procedure used in developing the Kohlberg scoring manual was first to state the stage structure for each stage and each transition between stages. Then a global stage score was given to over 30 interviews about the same hypothetical moral dilemma (Colby, Kohlberg, & Lieberman, 1983). Scorable statements called "interview judgments" were selected from these interviews and were scored. A scorable statement is one in which the decision made is accompanied with a prescriptive moral judgment. These interview judgments were the basis for making the criterion judgments which were entered into the manual. The stage score for each criterion judgment was derived from the conceptual analysis of the idea it embodied.

When Kohlberg's manual was used for scoring subsequent interviews, the interview judgments (scorable statements) were compared with these

criterion judgments and match examples. Since an individual verbalizes several reasons for decisions, there may be a variety of stages represented in one interview. Where only one stage is represented by the comparison of interview judgments, that stage score is given. If two or more stages or transitions are represented each by 25% or more of the scores, the one most frequently used is the major stage. This scoring method is given in more detail in the manual. There is also a method for computing a continuous moral maturity score rather than the ordinal stage score.

Reliability and validity of the Kohlberg manual is considered to be very good. Test-retest reliability ranged from .96 to .99. Internal consistency ranged from .92 to .96. Interrater agreement ranged from 75% to 88% on a nine-point scale (five stages and four transitions). The appropriate validity was considered construct validity rather than criterion validity. Construct validity was established through support of the assumptions of stage theory, invariance of stage sequence and generality of stages across issues (internal consistency).

Gilligan and Belenky (1980) compared the scores on a hypothetical dilemma and a real-life dilemma by using the Kohlberg scoring manual described above. They found a reliability between the scores on the hypothetical and real-life dilemmas to be .83 at time 1 and .92 at time 2. Gilligan (1977 & 1982) developed a theory of an ethic of care and responsibility, as opposed to Kohlberg's (1981) theory of an ethic of rights, in which she described the stage structures for three levels and two transitions.

The scoring manual developed for the present research about

decisions to marry and remarry began with Gilligan's theory of an ethic of care and responsibility. For the purposes of scoring, these three levels and two transitions were changed to five levels as follows:

- Level I: Care for Self First,  
Orientation to Individual Survival
- Level I/II: First Transition,  
From Selfishness to Responsibility
- Level II: Care for Others First,  
Goodness as Self Sacrifice
- Level II/III: Second Transition,  
From Self Sacrifice to Acknowledgment
- Level III: Care for Self and Others,  
Responsibility for the Consequences

Descriptions of the structure for each level were developed for the scoring instrument. The stage structure or level structure is a description of the reasoning processes which were used at that particular level of care. Using the eight pilot interviews, a criterion judgment in the specific area of decision to marry and remarry was stated for each level. Criterion judgments help differentiate among the levels. Three match statements and two vignettes illustrating the application of these reasoning processes to the decision to marry or remarry were also included in the manual. Both match examples and vignettes were based on data from the preliminary study of remarried persons. Three persons trained in Kohlberg scoring showed 100% agreement with the stage structure criterion judgment. The descriptions of the structures of the levels of care, the criterion judgments, match examples, and the vignettes provided the criteria used by independent judges to classify interviewee statements according to the Gilligan

framework. A complete copy of the scoring manual is included in Appendix A. Prior to using the manual, 23 graduate students in a course on moral reasoning, read and discussed the stage structures, criterion judgments, and match examples. Their comments were used in refining the manual.

#### Procedures for Collecting Data

The principal investigator contacted possible participants by telephone. If they were prospective interviewees, they were asked if they would be willing to participate in a research project concerned with reasons for deciding to marry, reasons for deciding to remarry, and with certain aspects of the courtship which preceded the second marriage. The general purpose of the study was described as learning more about the way in which individual's make a decision to marry and remarry.

The investigator indicated that the project involved individual interview procedures which would take approximately one and one-half hours. The potential respondents were assured that they would not be identified by name in any future publication of the results. The researcher also indicated that the project was co-sponsored by the Department of Child Development and Family Relations at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the Department of Sociology and Social Work at Pfeiffer College, a small private liberal arts college in central North Carolina. During the telephone contact, the researcher indicated that, in the past in similar studies, recently remarried individuals had found talking about their courtships and their decision to remarry a pleasant, enjoyable experience. Each potential interviewee



was also told that if she were to decide to participate, she would receive a summary of the final results of the study if she wanted one.

If the possible respondent expressed an interest in participation, a wide range of day and evening interview times were suggested. Interviews took place at a location convenient to the participant. Each respondent had the choice of being interviewed in her own home, at her office, at the researcher's home, at the researcher's office, or at a mutually convenient private place. If the respondent made a commitment to participate in the project, the researcher reviewed the eligibility criteria to be certain that the respondent was, in fact, eligible to participate in the study.

All interviews were conducted by the principal investigator who holds a master's degree in social work and has had experience in clinical situations. This qualification appeared to be important in effectively conducting the interviews. Due to the topics explored and the unstructured nature of the interview, several interviews contained emotional content which required desensitization during the interview and following the interview.

Twelve of the 23 interviews took place in the home of the respondent. For six of the interviews, the participant chose to be interviewed in her own office. Three of the interviews took place in the home of the principal researcher and two interviews in office space which was available to the principal researcher. In all cases, interviews were conducted in a private area with no other persons present. Interviews ranged in length from one hour to three hours with a median interview time of one hour and thirty minutes. Median total

contact time with participants was approximately two hours.

### Preliminary Interview Procedures

At the beginning of the interview procedures, the interviewer reminded the participant that the general purpose of the research was to study the factors which were important in deciding to marry the first time and to look at the courtship which preceded the second marriage. All interviewees were told that the principal investigator was divorced and remarried in an effort to increase rapport and encourage open responses to the unstructured questions. Sharing this information, in the judgment of the researcher, did create a shared bond which encouraged the free flow of information during the course of the interview.

The respondent was then asked to sign a consent form which: (a) specified the approximate length of the interview, (b) stated that the respondent was free to refuse any questions and withdraw from the interview at any time, (c) promised to protect the anonymity of the interviewee in any future publications, (d) asked permission to audiotape certain portions of the interview, (e) indicated that all audiotapes and interview materials would be destroyed within a reasonable time after the research was finished, and (f) offered the respondent an opportunity to receive a summary of the final results if she desired one. A copy of the consent form appears in Appendix B.

### The Research Interview

The research procedures employed a four section semi-structured interview with the following components:

1. Obtaining background information

2. Describing the rationale for the first marriage
3. Describing the commitment preceding the second marriage
4. Describing the rationale for the second marriage

A complete description of the interview procedures is included in Appendix C.

In the first part of the interview procedure, the interviewer asked the participant to respond to background data questions. An interview format rather than a self-administered questionnaire was selected for this section to provide an opportunity to establish rapport and to insure obtaining accurate information about the respondent's marital history. The background questionnaire also asked for information regarding family income, education, occupation, children, and marital history of current spouse (see Appendix C). The primary objective of this section was to provide adequate descriptive information about the sample population.

In the second part of the interview, the respondent was asked to reconstruct the reasons for deciding to marry the first time. The primary objective of this section of the interview was to gather data which could be used to determine the level of care which the respondent used in deciding to marry for the first time.

In the third part of the interview procedure, the respondent was asked to construct a chronology of the courtship relationship preceding the second marriage. This procedure was an adaptation of the Retrospective Interview Technique as employed by Fitzgerald and Surra (1981). This section of the procedure is described in detail in Appendix C, and a sample chronology is included in Appendix D. The

purpose of the chronology was to provide retrospective cues for answering questions about the commitment process to the second marriage. The chronology construction was included because there is evidence that the quality of retrospective data is enhanced by the provision of such cues (Bahrick, Bahrick, & Wittlinger, 1975).

The respondent was then asked to identify the point during the courtship preceding the second marriage at which she felt deeply committed to the relationship. Operationally, a deep commitment was defined for the participant as a point at which she was willing to put a great deal of time and energy into the relationship and planned to stay in the relationship for the foreseeable future. The definition contained dimensions previously linked to the nature of commitment in close relationships (Kelley, 1983). The respondent was then asked to consider that time period during which the decision to make a deep commitment to the relationship was being made and to complete a modified version of the Relationship Questionnaire developed by Braiker and Kelley (1979). The primary objective of this section of the interview was to obtain measures of ambivalence and conflict about making a deep commitment to the relationship with the second spouse.

The fourth phase of the interview focused on the rationale for the second marriage. The major objective for this portion of the interview was to obtain data to classify the respondents level of care used in the second marriage decision. A summary of the individual interview procedures is shown in Table 1.

#### Ending the Interview

At the end of each interview, topic discussions were continued with

Table 1

Format of the Research Interview

Interview Sections	Description
Section 1	Background Information Interview
Section 2	Discussion of Reasons for First Marriage
Section 3	Scales Measuring Ambivalence and Conflict in Second Commitment
Section 4	Discussion of Reasons for Second Marriage

the respondent if necessary to desensitize any emotional issues which might have been raised in the course of the interview. If no such topics had been introduced during the procedures, the researcher and the participant simply talked informally for a few minutes at the end of the interview. In all cases, each interviewee was thanked for her participation in the research project and reminded that she would receive a summary of the final results of the study. All participants were given the choice of receiving or not receiving a summary of the research results. All of the interviewees indicated that they would like to receive this summary statement.

#### Rationale for Interview Order

Three considerations affected the ordering of the interview procedures. First, placing background information at the beginning offered a neutral, reasonably nonthreatening way to begin the interview and to establish rapport with the respondent. In addition to asking the questions contained in the background section of the interview, the questions provided an opportunity to establish a communicative relationship with the respondent. For example, the questions related to the number of children provided an opportunity to talk briefly about the children. Second, the ordering of sections two, three, and four of the interview were arranged in chronological order. The respondent moved from the reasons for marrying the first time to the courtship which preceded the second marriage and then talked about the reasons for deciding to marry the second time. This ordering seemed to be the logical patterning of questions that Lofland and Lofland (1984) considered to be essential to qualitative research. The sequence of the

interview created a situation in which there was a high probability that the interview would end with discussion of topics which the respondent would consider pleasant and positive. In carrying out the interviews, the researcher observed that the order of the interview did seem to provide a constructive ending to the procedures for the respondents. Most interviewees appeared to be less comfortable in discussing the reasons for their first marriage than in describing their second marriage courtships or their reasons for deciding to marry the second time. The researcher consistently observed both verbal and nonverbal cues that most respondents felt relieved when the interview focus shifted from the first to the second marriage and that discussing the courtship preceding the second marriage and the reasons for the second marriage was a more pleasant experience for all interviewees.

#### Interview Guide

The sections of the interview which explored the reasons for marriage and remarriage (Sections 2 and 4) were structured to some degree by a guide which suggested general questions to be covered and possible prompts and probes.

The interview guide included the following areas:

1. Factors which were important in deciding to marry (remarry)
  - a. Family attitudes toward the decision
  - b. Friends' attitudes toward the decision
  - c. How economic factors affected the decision
2. Expectations about the marriage (remarriage)
  - a. Expectations about the husband's role
  - b. Expectations about the interviewee's role

- c. Expectations about decision-making in the marriage (remarriage)
  - d. Expectations about the marital (remarital relationship)
3. Advantages and disadvantages of getting married (remarried)
- a. Most important advantage
  - b. Disadvantages of getting married (remarried)
  - c. Factors which made interviewee hesitate to marry (remarry)

Although responses to each area were sought, the questions were not necessarily asked directly. Also, questions were not always asked in the same order or phrased exactly the same way. Sometimes prompts and open-ended questions not included in the guide were used in order to obtain the qualitative data needed for the study. In a research area lacking in empirical data, it was believed that a less-structured more qualitative approach was appropriate. As Kidder (1981) points out, a less-structured interview can permit full, detailed expression and elicit the social context of beliefs and feelings.

The selected topics were designed to provide respondents an opportunity to describe how they defined the social relationship with their spouse at the time they were deciding to marry and remarry. Probes sought to elicit responses which might deal with conflicts between the needs of self and the needs of others. Such information could then be used to determine the respondent's level of care. Future replications would need to include the same content areas as the current study.



### Procedure for Scoring Interview Data

The sections of the interview which focused on the reasons for deciding to marry the first time and the reasons for deciding to marry the second time were audiotaped and transcribed (see Sections 2 and 4 of the Individual Interview Procedure, Appendix C). Open-ended questions and a variety of probes generated transcripts for each respondent which varied in length from approximately 5 to 15 pages. The researcher identified blocks of material which were considered to be scorable using the Gilligan framework and the scoring manual which had been developed for use in this research (see Appendix A). An effort was made to identify all scorable statements. (Another independent judge who participated in the coding procedures confirmed that the selection of material for coding seemed to be unbiased and to represent logical breaks in the transcriptions.) An effort was made to select paragraph to half-page blocks of material in order to be certain that individual sentences were judged in context. This procedure was recommended in previously developed scoring materials for use with decision-making dilemmas (Colby et al., 1984).

Using the theoretical framework developed by Gilligan (1977; 1982), the level of care used in making the decision to marry and the level of care used in making the decision to remarry were coded. Three judges independently classified all identified statements according to Gilligan's ethic of care levels as Level I, Level I/II, Level II, Level II/III, or Level III. All three judges had been trained to score moral reasoning interviews using standardized procedures (Colby et al., 1984) and had specialized graduate coursework in the area of moral reasoning

and Gilligan's ethic of care framework. Statements were also categorized by the judges according to one of four time periods: deciding to marry, during the first marriage, deciding to remarry, and during the second marriage.

#### Reliability of Interview Scoring Procedures

A total of 244 statements regarding the reasons for first marriages and the reasons for second marriages across the 23 interviews were coded independently by the three judges. Before any discussion of coding disagreements, two of the three judges agreed on the level of care classification for 95% of the statements coded. Two of the three judges' agreement was not reached on 11 of the statements. However, after meeting to discuss disagreements, two of three judges agreed on 100% of the statements. Making totally independent judgments, without any discussion of disagreements, all three judges agreed on the Gilligan reasoning level for 159 of the 244 statements for an agreement level of 65%.

#### Relationship Questionnaire

The modified version of the relationship questionnaire (Braiker & Kelley, 1979) used two of four subscales from the original instrument. The selected subscales were designed to measure ambivalence about the deepening commitment and conflict in the relationship. These subscales consisted of 9-point scales on which the respondent selected the number which best represented her feelings about the relationship. Five questions comprised the ambivalence scale, and five questions were in the conflict scale. Scores on both conflict and ambivalence were the means of the responses to the individual questions used to tap these

components. A copy of the instrument used in the present research is included in Appendix E.

In developing these self-administered scales, Braiker and Kelley interviewed a wide range of couples involved in close relationships and qualitatively assessed the major dimensions of relationship development which these couples identified. Factor analysis techniques identified at least four important clusters in their developing relationship: love, ambivalence, efforts to maintain the relationship, and conflict. Braiker and Kelley then developed questions which were designed to operationalize each of these concepts.

In the present research, these written self-report instruments were used to measure the dimensions of ambivalence about commitment and conflict in the relationship just before a deep commitment was made to the present relationship. The extent to which selecting two of the four subscales affected the validity of the instrument is uncertain but must be considered in analyzing the data.

#### Summary

Respondents were asked to participate in a four part semi-structured interview. In addition to gathering demographic information, open-ended questions explored the decision-making process in marriage and remarriage. Independent judges classified responses related to first and second marriage decision-making according to Gilligan's (1977, 1982) ethic of care framework. Using a modified version of the Braiker and Kelley (1979) Relationship Questionnaire, measures of ambivalence and conflict surrounding the commitment to the second spouse were obtained.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The theoretical perspective which guided the analysis of the data was the ethic of care framework proposed by Gilligan (1977; 1982). This approach suggested that qualitatively different levels of reasoning might be used in approaching decisions which involved people in social relationships. These levels varied in the degree to which one emphasized one's own rights and responsibilities in the relationship and the degree to which one considered the rights and responsibilities of others as important factors in the development of an intimate relationship. Simply put, these levels represent judgments as to what the individual views as a fair balance of give and take in the social relationship.

In the present research, the social relationships of interest were first and second marriage relationships. Gilligan's model would predict that the first marriage decisions and the second marriage decisions of the respondents who were interviewed would be qualitatively different. As with other stage theories (Emmerich, 1968; Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1965), the interviewees would be expected to vary in terms of the speed at which they moved through the proposed levels. However, the changes in the reasoning patterns of the respondents would be expected to follow an invariant sequence and to be hierarchical in nature.

At Gilligan's (1977) Level I the decision-maker is a "taker" who believes fair decisions are those which meet her own needs. In the Level I/II transition, the respondent believes that this type of decision-making is really self-centered and selfish. In Level II decision-making, the individual redefines her social world and concludes that the highest level decisions are those which put the needs of others first in the decision-making process. At this Level, the decision-maker has become a "giver" whose primary focus is on meeting the needs of others. During the Level II/III transitions the wisdom of consistently giving to others to be the good wife, the good mother, the good daughter, and the self-sacrificing person is questioned. The decision-maker no longer feels that goodness can be equated with caring for others if that caring involves high costs to the decision-maker. In Level III decision-making, the definition of what is right and fair in social relationships is again reformulated. The best decision becomes the decision which integrates and balances the needs of self and others. At this Level, the decision-maker is both "a giver and a taker" in social relationships.

#### Research Questions

The current research was qualitative and exploratory in nature and examined whether Gilligan's model might be a useful theoretical approach to remarital decision-making. Three specific research questions were addressed:

1. Will females show a shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time from the level of care used in deciding to marry the first time?

2. Will females who shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time report different levels of conflict surrounding the recommitment decision from females who do not show such a positive change?

3. Will females who shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time report different levels of ambivalence surrounding the recommitment decision than females who do not show such a positive change?

A positive change in level of care was defined as a shift from the lowest level of the Gilligan framework in the direction of the highest level of the framework. Movement from the lowest level of care to the highest level of care would proceed from Level I to Level I/II, Level II, Level II/III, and to Level III, the highest level of care.

#### Level of Care for Decisions to Marry First and Second Times

The approach in this research used a thematic analysis and a process analysis. The data were the respondents' expressions of the perceptions, interpretations, and actions. In order to verify the results through a sense of frequency and spread of these expressions, several tables are presented in this chapter. Miles and Huberman (1984) claim that words and numbers have to be shown together. Words in context give meaning to concepts; frequency and distribution of these concepts give information about their importance. In fact, they maintain that words and numbers used together keep researchers analytically honest. They go on to say that quantities show the difference in degree in a concept, but differences in kind defy quantitative analysis. These qualitative differences in kind are what

stage theorists have claimed when they build their models.

In analyzing the qualitative interview data, the 23 respondents and any other persons mentioned in the interview were assigned code names. Numbers used to identify respondents were randomly assigned and do not represent the order in which they were interviewed. Specific identifying information mentioned in the course of the interview was altered to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

The first research question to be examined was whether the interviewees tended to make a positive shift (from a lower to a higher) in level of care as they moved from first marriage decisions to second marriage. The data were analyzed in relation to this question in three ways: level of care by number of respondents, level of care by total number of statements, and level of care by each respondent.

#### Level of Care by Total Number of Respondents

The number of respondents using the framework levels for first marriage decisions and for second marriage decisions was examined. A person who can think on a higher level may also make statements on a lower level in general conversation. Therefore, the overlap of respondents in each level of care for each marriage decision was expected. A summary of this analysis is shown in Table 2. Of the 23 women who were interviewed, 21 of these respondents used some statements of Level I reasoning to describe their first marriage decisions. In contrast, only 11 of the interviewees employed Level I reasoning to describe their second marriage decisions. Reasons which focused on the needs of self appeared to be the predominant response mode for first marriage decisions.

**Table 2****Number of Respondents Making Statements in Each Level of Care for  
Decision to Marry First and Second Time**

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<b>Level of Care</b>	<b>First Marriage Decision</b>	<b>Second Marriage Decision</b>
I. Care of Self First	21	11
I/II. First Transition	1	2
II. Care for Others First	9	11
II/III. Second Transition	1	14
III. Care for Self and Others	4	17

---



Level I/II was the least used type of reasoning in both first and second marriage decisions. This Level deals with feelings of guilt about being self-centered and feelings that one should be more concerned with the needs of others. The reasons for the low number of responses in this category were not clear. Since the data were retrospective, it is possible that respondents did not verbalize the guilt which might have surrounded these past transitions. A second possibility is that the open-ended format of the interview did not provide an adequate opportunity for respondents to discuss these particular types of transitions. If the latter was the case, the interview format might need to be modified for future research.

The number of interviewees responding with Level II reasoning remained relatively constant from first marriage decisions to second marriage decisions. Nine respondents indicated that Level II considerations were part of their first marriage decisions while 11 respondents employed Level II reasoning in their second marriage decisions. The constancy of this response level provides support for Gilligan's (1982) position that women are socialized to believe that the needs of others should be considered to be more important than one's own needs.

Of particular significance was the response pattern observed for the Level II/III transition. Only one respondent used Level II/III reasoning in describing her rationale for her first marriage whereas 14 of the 23 interviewees described the reasons for their second marriage in terms of the Level II/III transition. The divorce experience may, in fact, create disequilibrium and provide an opportunity for change.

Of equal importance were the Level III reasoning patterns. Only 4 interviewees used the highest reasoning pattern in describing their first marriage decision whereas 17 of the respondents used Level III reasoning in discussing their rationale for their second marriage decision. The summary data in Table 2 indicate that the interviewees as a group did make a positive shift in level of care as they moved from their first marriage decision to their second marriage decision.

#### Level of Care by Total Number of Statements

In Table 3, the total numbers of statements that all respondents gave for each level provides another way to see that there was a shift from lower levels of care in making the first marriage decision to higher levels of care for the second marriage decision. Note that the greater majority of first marriage decisions were scored in Level I, whereas the majority of second marriage decisions were scored in Level II/III transitions or Level III. Since some respondents were more articulate, it might appear that their verbosity made the difference. However, looking at each individual's change in Table 4 shows that greater amounts of talking did not necessarily affect the positive shift. Even when data were analyzed by each respondent, the positive shift was still evident.

In computing the total number of statements of each level for this presentation, the decision was made to leave out all statements originally classified as having been made during the first marriage and during the second marriage for all levels of care except the Level II/III second transition. For this total number, in Level II/III, all statements about circumstances during the first marriage were collapsed

Table 3

Total Number of Statements in Each Level of Care in Decision to Marry  
and Remarry

Level of Care	First Marriage Decision	Second Marriage Decision
I. Care of Self First	66	23
I/II. First Transition	1	2
II. Care for Others First	17	16
II/III. Second Transition	1	51
III. Care for Self and Others	5	41

Table 4

Highest Level of Care in Decision to Marry and Remarry, by Respondent

Respondent	<u>Highest Level of Care</u>	
	First Marriage	Second Marriage
1	I	III
2	I	III
3	I	III
4	I	III
5	I	III
6	I	III
7	I/II	III
8	II	III
9	II	III
10	II	III
11	II	III
12	II	III
13	II	III
14	III	III
15	III	III
16	III	III
17	III	III
18	I	II/III
19	I	II/III
20	I	II/III
21	I	II/III
22	II	II/III
23	II	I

with all statements about the decision to remarry. This judgment was made because the arrival of a feeling of self-sacrifice in the first marriage was a precursor to the decision never to get caught in a marriage again in which the wife would be the victim. Therefore, the total number of statements shown in Table 3 is 223 instead the 244 used to calculate reliability.

#### Level of Care by Individual Respondent

Tables 4 and 5 show the shift in levels of care for each respondent. Using the highest level of care expressed by each person, Table 4 shows that all but one interviewee used a higher level of care or the same level of care in describing her second marriage decision than when describing her first marriage decision. Although Respondent #23 did not shift in the direction predicted by Gilligan's ethic of care framework, there was substantial evidence that such a shift did occur approximately a year after her second marriage. This interviewee described a realization that the problems of her first marriage were recurring in her second marriage. With a conscious effort and hard work on her part and her husband's, she was able to move to what appeared to be Level III relationship which was based on mutual caring and what the respondent described as successful intimacy. Thus, this respondent's shift occurred at a later point than the other participants, but she still followed the invariant sequence predicted by the ethic of care framework.

Table 5 shows the total number of statements that each respondent made within each level of care for the decision to marry the first time and for the second time. This table illustrates how one person made

Table 5

Total Number of Statements in Each Level of Care for First Marriage  
Decisions and Second Marriage Decisions

Respondent	Level of Care									
	First Marriage Decision					Second Marriage Decision				
	I	I/II	II	II/III	III	I	I/II	II	II/III	III
1	1							2	7	3
2	2							1	2	2
3	2					2			3	3
4	3							1	1	4
5	2									1
6	4									1
7	5	1						3	1	4
8	1		2			2			1	3
9	6		2			1	1	2	2	2
10	4		1					1	1	2
11	3		1						4	2
12	3		3			1			2	1
13	7		2					2	6	4
14			2		1				1	3
15					1	2				3
16	2			1	1				4	2
17					2	1				1
18	5		1			1	1	1	4	
19	4					1		1	2	
20	1					2			4	
21	6					4		1	5	
22	1			1		4		1	1	
23	4			2		2				

statements of many levels of care as she was describing her decision.

The data were also evaluated qualitatively by two independent judges to ascertain if individual respondents showed a positive gain in their moral reasoning level from the first marriage decision to the second marriage decision. Each interview was evaluated as a whole by these independent judges and categorized as showing a positive shift in level of care staying at the same level of moral reasoning, or using an earlier level of care. Judgments were made comparing the reasons for the first marriage decision and the reasons for the second marriage decision in the context of the whole interview experience.

These judges agreed that 21 of the 23 women interviewed showed a positive gain in level of care from the first marriage decision to the second marriage decision. One respondent appeared to have made no gain from the first to second marriage decision, while one participant seemed to have maintained the same ethic of care level from the first to the second decision. These assessments of interviews as individual entities by independent judges also provided evidence that there was a qualitative forward shift.

#### Analysis of Responses by Levels of Care

The data from all interviews were analyzed for reasoning in each level of care (Gilligan, 1977, 1982). Representative statements were found which could be scored in each of the five levels for the decision to marry the first time and the second time. In fact one respondent gave statements that could be scored in more than one level for each marriage decision (see Table 5). As previously indicated all but one respondent appeared to stay at the same level of care or move to a

higher level of care from the first to the second marriage decision.

Level I: Care of Self First, Orientation

to Individual Survival

Level I responses were more likely to have been made in the decision to marry the first time than the second time. Of the total 244 statements which were classified according to the Gilligan framework, 93 were considered to be Level I responses. Sixty-six referred to decisions to marry the first time, and 23 were made describing decisions to marry the second time. These responses centered on the needs of self and were often quite pragmatic. Level I responses focused on bringing pleasure to the self, protecting the self from a hostile environment, and, in some cases, individual survival. Examples from first marriage decisions included:

I wanted someone who could make me feel like I was the number one person forever. (#5)

A lifestyle [reason for first marriage] that I was looking for that I wouldn't have to struggle to buy furniture. I wouldn't have to struggle to do anything. I could go out and buy all the clothes I wanted. (#7)

It would take care of a lot of things that I would have to deal with [getting married for the first time]....I did not want to face the fact of being on my own and of having to worry about where the money was going to come from. And having to support myself and making all these tough decisions. (#11)

The following statements provide illustrations of Level I statement in second marriage decisions:

And I knew that I did not want to spend the rest of my life alone...I had gone to enough single places to find that I was getting nowhere. Even in a year's time, it was becoming old. And I guess I should also say security. That had to be part of it. (#8)

And I was pretty much shaken. I was surprised. And I told him so. I said I really need a little bit more of your company and stuff.



Now that Emily is gone. I didn't realize I was going to be this lonely. [Emily is the respondent's only daughter who has left for college at this point.] (#9)

Well, I think at the point that I really felt serious about Frank and wanted it to develop into a permanent relationship or remarriage, I would say that at that point ---the fear of being alone and the feelings of insecurity were still with me. Even though I initiated the divorce from Jerry [first husband] and wanted to be independent, I still had those old theories in me. I had to have a man in my life to be whole and to be secure and, you know, to have someone to take care of me. (#21)

### Level I/II: First Transition, From Selfishness

#### to Responsibility

According to the Gilligan framework, the individual begins to regard previous decision-making as selfish during this transitional period. This level is characterized by feelings of guilt that one ought to feel more responsibility for others.

Only three statements made by respondents were classified as Level I/II responses. Perhaps without direct probes dealing with this transition, interviewees were unlikely to describe these past transitional periods. Future research designs may need to consider this possibility.

### Level II: Care for Others First, Goodness

#### as Self-Sacrifice

Almost the same number of Level II responses were identified for first marriage decisions as for second marriage decisions with 17 coded statements occurring for first marriage decisions and 16 statements coded for second marriage decisions (see Table 3). Level II responses were characterized by caring for others and concern for the feelings of others. These statements reflected an adoption of societal values and

an attempt to carry out one's role in a societally acceptable manner. At this level, interviewees attempted to be the good wife and were willing, if necessary to sacrifice their own needs for the sake of others. Examples from first marriage decisions included:

...[I expected] to be the kind wife, to basically go along with what he believed and keep the house up, work, and provide part of the income. (#8)

...[I expected] to be a good wife, you know, to be perfect. Really, I had spent my whole life aiming to perfection.. to always be trim. And to always look pretty. Be a good cook. To always be understanding and supportive. (#23)

Level II statements in reference to second marriages included the following:

And I knew what he'd been through and what he wanted out of life. Because he really wanted somebody to be there for him, to take care of the house and the children, and you know, to share his life with him, the things that we wanted to do. (#1)

...[I expected to be] more of a nurturing person. Doug is someone who needs to be nurtured. You know I did and still do see myself in that role...kind of taking care of him and helping him out with, you know, meals and things around the house. (#19)

#### Level II/III: Second Transition, From Self-Sacrifice to Acknowledgment

In this transitional period respondents began to question the wisdom of self-sacrifice in the service of others. Interviewees began to include their own needs in decision-making and to express an awareness of what they were doing. There were 51 level II/III responses made which implied a disenchantment with self-sacrifice in the first marriage and which may have provided impetus for making a shift upward in making the decision about the second marriage. These data support

the theoretical concept that individuals tend to move into transitions when confronted with new experiences and information. In the case of these respondents, one might argue that transitions occurred in response to discontent in the first marriage and in response to making a decision to remarry. Both times might represent periods of disequilibrium for the participants. Examples included:

As problems would come up, it became---more and more---I handled it than he did [in first marriage]. I didn't want to feel like---I guess basically I wanted to feel that someone was taking care of me. I was tired of taking care of everybody else. (#20)

[My first husband] was the baby in his family, and he liked being babied. So I babied him. And for him I was the mother image in a way. And so it just worked out...And then later on I got tired of it. (#23)

...I believe I thought every man would be a natural father and just super-dad type person. And Brad [first husband] was not that type. He was a company man and very work-oriented. In fact, he was a workoholic....And I'm sure that's why he became so successful with his job...That---it was important, but I soon grew very tired of playing second fiddle to work. (#2)

Level III: Care for Self and Others, Equality  
of Rights for All

At the highest level of the Gilligan framework, respondents described a balance between the needs of self and the needs of others. Interviewees were concerned with equality and fairness in relationships. Statements reflected an equality between the needs of self and the needs of others. At times, Level I themes such as security were reiterated, but there was a new concern with reciprocity and the need to give security as well as receive security. A total of 58 interviewee statements were coded as Level III responses. Only seven of these responses were made in reference to first marriage decision-making or

the time during the first marriage. Forty-one of the Level III responses referred to the second marriage decision-making process. Again, these data strongly support the idea of a qualitative shift which occurred for most respondents between first marriage decision-making and second marriage decision-making. These statements are representative of Level III statements made in reference to second marriages:

So, from an economic point, it was more of a joining together than it was--hey, I can quit work and that sort of thing. (#7)

But that was the only thing that I told him that I expected. I expected it to be 50-50. I would help with the financial support, but I need help in the home. He agreed wholeheartedly. (#10)

...We are---we make very joint decisions in things. And I feel very independent and dependent with Walter...I mean because I am dependent on him as far as our relationship goes and our love. And I can lean to him now and share with him. But I still feel very independent as my own person. (#6)

..[Expected to be] just an equal. Straight down the middle type thing. I don't mind taking orders. I don't mind giving orders. And I think he's basically the same way. (#3)

I don't want to be the dominant one, and I don't want him to be. I want it to balance out. (#16)

Some of the same individuals spoke of being resentful of the self sacrifice in the first marriage as a prelude to moving to concern for self and others, the third and highest level. In second marriage decisions, there are still concerns with the needs of self, and 12 respondents used at least one Level I statement in describing their second marriage decision. However, six of these respondents also gave a Level III response to describe the second marriage decision (see Table 5). This overlap emphasizes that a positive shift in level of care does not imply the absence of Level I responses. Needs of self are still important, but there is an equality between the needs of self and the

needs of others. At Level III, the respondent chooses a morality of nonviolence. That is, neither self nor other should be hurt in a marital relationship.

#### Levels of Care: A Case Illustration

To illustrate the kind of qualitative shift which was described in this chapter, excerpts from one of the transcribed interviews are provided in Appendix F. Respondent #12 (coded as Carolyn) illustrates the kinds of perceptual changes which often occurred as respondents moved from their first marriage decision to their second marriage decision. The following presentation illustrates how the transitions in levels of care occur.

At the beginning of the interview, Carolyn described the self-related needs which formed the basis for her first marriage decision. She described herself as seeking a legitimate sexual relationship by following a societal script which implies that getting married was part of doing "everything in the proper order." Carolyn also saw money as an important part of the first decision. As she described the economic factor in this case, her responses were coded as Level I. She was seeking money for herself and was hoping the wealth of the family of her first spouse would "spill over" to her and her husband. Her sociomoral perspective centered on herself.

Carolyn then described herself as playing the traditional role which society expected at that time. She planned to "work a few years, have a family, and stay at home." At this point, she was concerned with being the good wife and meeting the needs and expectations of others. This pattern showed her change from self as center to self as part of a

society which is a higher level of thinking.

During the first marriage, Carolyn moved into a Level II/III transition and began to question the way she had defined her social relationship with her first husband. She indicated that she began to feel that her independence was being stifled by the relationship and that she was sacrificing important opportunities when she could not attend her favorite cousin's wedding. Carolyn expressed her growing discontent with the fact that decisions made in her first marriage were for the benefit of others. She described her unhappiness at decisions such as buying the motorcycle which disregarded her needs and point of view. Her new realization of her own worth as an equally important family member showed the beginning of a higher level of thinking.

In summarizing at the end of the interview, Carolyn described herself as "a victim of the Cinderella syndrome." She indicated that her most important reason for getting married the first time was "to have somebody to look after me." Carolyn's first marriage decision was based on Level I reasoning. During her marriage, she defined her role using Level II reasoning and attempted to meet the expectations of society by playing what she described as a traditional role. Later in the marriage, she moved into a state of disequilibrium and was discontent with her role in the decision-making process and the amount of self-sacrifice which was required to sustain the relationship with her first husband.

Carolyn's second marriage decision differed from her first in a number of important ways. She described the decreased importance of the economic factor in making the decision. Carolyn also described her

personal independence as being greater in the second marriage relationship. The role of societal pressures and peer pressures are considered less important in this decision. She indicated:

I think I really made this decision. I think probably the first marriage societal pressures, peer pressures of what a marriage is supposed to be, played more of a role in that marriage. In this one [second marriage], there wasn't any of that.

Rather than seeking to be cared for, Carolyn's expectations of her second marriage were described using the term "a helpmeet." She expected the relationship to be one in which "we would just help each other."

Carolyn's second decision used Level III type reasoning. She was concerned with her own personal needs, but these have been integrated into a perception of marriage which involves being helped and helping, being cared for and caring for others. Her second marriage decision balanced the needs of self with the needs of others.

#### Conflict and Ambivalence by Level of Care

The second and third research questions were designed to explore the relationship between the shift or lack of shift in the level of care and the amount of conflict and ambivalence which surrounded the commitment to the second marriage relationship. The data which were obtained from the present research could not be used to answer these questions. The original questions were based on the assumption that the women who were interviewed could be compared as two groups: those who showed a positive gain in level of care from the first to the second marriage and those who did not show a positive gain in level of care from the first to the second marriage. As previously indicated, when

the respondents were categorized in this manner, only two of the interviewees did not show a gain in the level of care used to describe the first marriage decision and the level of care used to describe the second marriage decision. Since the no gain group was too small to be compared to the group that showed a positive gain, the data could not be analyzed to answer these specific research questions.

However, since measures of conflict and ambivalence were obtained using the Braiker and Kelley (1979) subscales, these measures were summarized. Two of four subscales were selected from the original instrumentation used by Braiker and Kelley to study the dimensions of close relationships. The two subscales which were used consisted of five questions which were designed to measure conflict in the developing relationship and five questions which were designed to measure ambivalence about the developing relationship. A copy of the instrument used in the current study is included in Appendix E. The format for all questions used was a 9 point scale with "1" representing the lowest level of conflict or ambivalence and "9" representing the highest level of conflict or ambivalence. Operationally, the mean score of the sum of responses on items 1, 5, 7, 8, and 10 was used as a measure of ambivalence while the mean score the sum of responses to on items 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9 was used as a measure of conflict. After constructing a courtship chronology in the manner described in Appendix D, the respondent was asked to identify the point at which she felt she had made a deep commitment to the developing relationship. Operationally, a deep commitment was defined as the point in the relationship at which the participant was willing to invest considerable time and energy in



the relationship and planned to stay involved in the relationship for the foreseeable future.

The time before making a deep commitment varied considerably among respondents with a range from 2 weeks to 128 months. Seventeen respondents indicated that they were deeply committed to the relationship in a year or less while 6 indicated that deep commitments occurred after the developing relationship had continued more than a year. The median time for making a deep commitment within the study sample was seven months. The length of the total months of courtship among the interviewees ranged from 3 months to 128 months with a median courtship time of 15 months.

Overall, respondents reported low levels of both conflict and ambivalence during the time they were deciding to make a deep commitment to the developing relationship. Individual ambivalence mean scores ranged from 1.0 to 6.6 with a median group score of 2.8. Individual conflict mean scores ranged from 2.0 to 7.4 with a median group score of 3.2. Only five respondents had a mean score for conflict or ambivalence which fell above 5.0, the middle of the 9 point scale. The respondent who appeared to have made no gain in level of care had the second highest conflict score in the group and the third highest ambivalence score.

The consistently positive (low scores) interviewee responses on the conflict and ambivalence scales might be interpreted in at least two different ways. One interpretation was that women who marry for the second time do, in fact, experience relatively low levels of ambivalence and conflict in making a commitment to the second marriage

relationships. Another possibility was, however, equally likely. The original Braiker and Kelley (1979) instrumentation consisted of 25 items and contained four subscales which were designed to measure ambivalence, conflict, love, and maintenance in developing relationships. Only the ten items designed to measure ambivalence and conflict were selected for use in the current research. The love and maintenance subscales provide an opportunity to respond to more positive aspects of the developing relationship. Therefore, the results which were obtained may reflect the impact of social desirability on the responses of the interviewees.

#### Reasons for Decisions to Marry and Remarry

In addition to addressing the research questions posed by the current study, the respondents' reasons for deciding to marry the first time and reasons for deciding to marry the second time are described and contrasted. A summary of the types of reasons is shown in Table 6. This analysis suggested that in this particular sample of women the reasons for first and second marriages were substantially different.

#### Reasons for First Marriage Decisions

The most common reason respondents gave for first marriage decision was the influence of societal pressures and expectations. Ten of the 23 respondents indicated that in their first marriage they believed that they were doing what was expected of them. Marriage was viewed as the next logical step in a predetermined sequence of events which women were supposed to follow. Examples of the types of interview statements which were made include the following:

And as far as the other reasons, I think that girls wanted to have a diamond, to have parties before they got married, and gifts...And all those things had a great deal to do in the '50s with any girl deciding to get married. It was not so much an individual

Table 6

Number of Respondents Identifying Reasons  
Affecting the Decision to Marry and Remarry

Reasons	First Marriage	Second Marriage
Felt pressure from society	10	4
Wanted to escape from a negative situation	9	0
Influenced by peers**	9	4
Influenced by family**	8	4
Wanted a fairy tale life	8	2
Wanted a legitimate sexual relationship	7	0
Wanted to be taken care of	6	2
Wanted money/economic improvement	6	5
Was afraid of handling the future	4	0
Wanted security	4	5
Wanted companionship	3	10
Found spouse physically attractive	3	0
Wanted to be a good wife	3	1
Was lonely or afraid of loneliness	1	11
Wanted a mutually helpful relationship	0	7
Wanted a lasting commitment	0	6
Needed help with specific problems	0	3
Wanted a good sex life	0	1
Wanted a good stepparent	*	5
Was tired of single life	*	4
Wanted to remove stigma of divorce	*	1

\*Does not apply to a first marriage decision.

\*\*Both positively and negatively.

decision. And I don't know how other courtships were, but that was mainly---it was mainly social pressure. (#19)

Well, Don and I had dated through high school and college. And I think we were to the point that we thought marriage was just the next step...I don't think that we ever stopped to consider how much we loved or didn't love each other. I think we were at the point it was just the next thing to do. (#8)

And I did everything in the proper order. Got out of high school, was engaged, went to college, and got married. So everything was in the proper order. They just don't tell you what happens afterwards. (#12)

Respondents reported that not only did pressures come from society in general but also from peers and from family members. Nine of the 23 interviewees indicated that peer pressure had affected their first decisions while eight of the respondents said that family members influenced their decision to marry the first time.

I think one of the things that was important was at the time I was 23 and I was looking and saying---Hey, I'm 23 and most of the folks I know are married. (#22)

I would think that it was basically peer pressure if I want to call it that. I was in school. I was about to finish school. Everybody was getting married. It was like the thing to do. (#11)

I think I looked around and saw my friends and what they were doing. And you come back from Christmas vacation, and it was who got the biggest diamond....You, know, everyone subscribed to Bride magazine, and you would spend your afternoons walking down to the gift shops picking out silver and china patterns. Everyone was caught up in it. (#17)

Over one-third of the women interviewed described either general encouragement from their families to marry or specific ways in which their families had influenced their decisions to marry.

Because I was pregnant and afraid and just out of high school...My mother gave me the impression that that was the only choice I had...If she had given me another choice, I would have probably taken it. (#9)

And Sam was the only one my daddy liked, and I thought---this is

it. I better jump on it while I can. I knew my daddy---and if he thought Sam wanted to marry me and I wouldn't marry him---he may not let me date who I want to after that---even though I was working and living at home out of school. I still didn't feel he would continue to let me do like I wanted to do unless I married him. (#10)

And I spent most of my life trying to please them [the respondent's family] and be good enough and stuff. And my mother really liked Chas a lot...And so part of why I chose him was to still be trying to get her approval. (#23)

Nine of the respondents indicated that one of their major reasons for choosing to marry the first time was to escape from unpleasant, frightening, or stressful circumstances. Types of negative situations included making failing grades in college and unhappy family relationships. The following interviewee statements were illustrative of reasons for choosing to marry which reflected the escape theme:

Probably that I wanted to get away from home...I had a very bad relationship with my father and a recent break-up with a guy that I had gone with since the 7th grade. (#9)

Well, I had a bad home life---not with my parents. But I had a brother who was in a lot of trouble with drugs, and it provided for a bad atmosphere. I was always scared of him. You never knew when he was going to come in high and things like that...I thought it [getting married] was just a way out. (#10)

Well, I expected to get out from under my parents' negative influence. They were very constrictive. They were just---I'm not sure what the word I want to use is---whatever. I wanted to get away from that. (#19)

Seeking a fairy tale and pursuing a fantasy-like existence represented another major theme in first decision marriages. Although the interview procedure did not include any direct questions or references to fairy tales, eight of the respondents specifically mentioned that they married the first time seeking to live out fairy tales and to construct a perfect, problem-free life.

I was in Cinderella world. Oh, man. I thought you get married, and you know, you settle down and you live happily everafter. (#4)

You know, you're so caught up in like the fairy tale image of marriage when you're almost twenty...And it was like still---the generation that I was in---it was like the husband was to provide, and the husband was gonna whisk you off...That was the whole idea of marriage that I had at that point. (#12)

Along with the fairy-tale images of marriage which appeared to influence many first decisions was the belief that marriage would provide a permanent means of being taken care of. Again, without direct references to being cared for in the interview format, six of the respondents specifically mentioned that wanting "to be taken care of" was a major factor in deciding to marry for the first time.

Yes, I think that I looked to him to take care of me. It was---I was scared. I mean---my confidence was not that great, and it was just the natural thing in life to have a man take care of you. My dad had taken care of me all my life. And the thought of being alone and getting out and working was frightening to me. And I looked to this person to be someone who I thought would be a good provider and take care of me. (#21)

Subconsciously, I expected him to take care of me, to be a provider the way my father had been. I probably went into the marriage expecting the same thing that I had seen in my parents' marriage. (#20)

Looking back on it, he was very, very much paternal and just a very strong person. And I had never lived away from home. I moved right from home to in with him. And I think it was someone---he was older than me---he was someone who would look after me, take care of me. The role that we played was very much that of a parent and child. (#13)

In relation to first marriages, seven of the interviewees indicated that wanting a legitimate sexual relationship or intimate physical companionship played an important role in their decision. These statements fall into this category:

Well, I don't know. [laughter] I guess---sex. Being able to snuggle up together at night and sleep instead of having to go our

separate ways. That seemed important. (#22)

It just occurred to me that part of the reason that I thought it was a good idea to get married was so I could have legitimate sex. In the 60's in Virginia, especially at the girl's school I was at, nice girls didn't do that. And, of course, nice girls did. But it was fumbling and it was dangerous because of pregnancy and all of that stuff. It just seemed like it would be bliss to be able to be married and have guilt-free sex whenever you wanted it. (#23)

In describing first marriage decisions, six of the respondents stated that seeking a more affluent situation had played a major role in their decision-making. For example:

I had the mistaken belief that the daddy's wealth would spill over to the son. And in some instances it did. (#12)

One of the main things was that he came from an affluent family...The money was the main thing, I think. The main reason that I even thought about marrying him. (#11)

Other less frequently occurring reasons given for first marriage decisions seemed to be the very ones they gave most often for reasons in deciding to remarry. The most frequently given reasons for deciding to marry the second time dealt with commitment and companionship for alleviating loneliness and for helping each other.

In summary, first marriage decisions tended to reflect an external locus of control. Respondents seemed to be influenced heavily by forces outside themselves such as the expectations of society, family, and friends. Unrealistic fantasies were often pursued. Marriage was often a way to escape from an unpleasant or unhappy situation. A life in which one could always be Cinderella or always be cared for seemed possible at the time of the first marriage decision.

#### Reasons for Second Marriage Decisions

Several tentative observations might be made about the differences

in first marriage reasons and second marriage reasons delineated by these particular respondents. Fewer respondents verbalized reasons which related to outside pressures of society, peers, and family members in second marriages (See Table 6). In first marriage decisions, social pressure was described as a general pervasive phenomenon. Phrases such as "the next step," and "the thing to do" were used in interviewee responses. The social pressure described by four respondents in the second marriage was more specific. For example, three of the respondents feared that the children from the first marriage would be discriminated against by the community if the couple simply lived together. One respondent, who had no children, expressed concern that the small community where she lived would disapprove of two persons in professional positions choosing to live together rather than to remarry.

In regard to second marriages, none of the women who were interviewed gave reasons which involved escaping from negative situations. In some cases, the respondents talked explicitly about moving toward a positive situation in their second marriage decision.

I wasn't trying to escape from anything, or I wasn't trying to go into anything that I didn't already have. I had no fears of being an old maid---being alone. I wasn't trying to escape anything evil. It was just something that seemed to be a willing decision.  
(#13)

None of the interviewees indicated that fear of being able to handle the future was part of the rationale for their second marriage. Perhaps greater life experience had eliminated some of these earlier feelings of inadequacy.

Only two respondents said that they married the second time hoping to be taken care of. These same individuals were also the only



interviewees who indicated that they had made their second marriage decisions influenced by fairy tale expectations.

And operating along with that were some of the same old expectations that got me into my first marriage. Which was---here's somebody finally who'll make me happy...Who will cherish me for all the days of my lives. So some of that old stuff was still working. (#23)

Although five respondents indicated that money or economic factors affected their second marriage decision, all five of these responses focused on economic improvement for the male and female rather than the female seeking to be cared for financially.

More respondents gave loneliness or fear of loneliness as a reason for remarriage than any other type of reason. Eleven interviewees indicated that being lonely or fearing that they would eventually be lonely affected their decision to remarry. Three of these respondents specifically mentioned that they were afraid of growing old alone. In contrast, only one respondent mentioned loneliness as part of the decision to marry the first time. Companionship was mentioned by 10 of the interviewees as a reason for the second marriage. Combining these two types of reasons, 17 of the 23 women interviewed gave either wanting companionship or wanting to avoid loneliness as reasons for deciding to remarry.

Second marriage decisions appeared grounded in reality rather than fantasy and to be less influenced by outside forces such as societal pressure. The escape from external situations was no longer a factor. Instead, escape from internal unpleasantness (e.g. loneliness) becomes a predominant theme. "Being taken care of" is no longer an important factor in the decision-making process. In second decisions, fair

relationships involve reciprocal caretaking.

In analyzing these data, the format of the individual interview procedure (see Appendix C) must be considered. With almost all interviewees, probes which dealt with the influence of family, friends, and economic factors on the decision to marry or remarry were used. This procedure increased the probability that the interviewees would, in fact, give responses which related to these categories. However, specific probes were not used to elicit comments in the remaining groups of reasons. Becker's (1970) position that volunteered responses are more valid than answers to direct probes may need to be considered in evaluating these data.

#### Refining the Ethic of Care Scoring Manual

The interview data from the current study can be used to refine the ethic of care scoring manual developed for this research project. Better match examples and vignettes can be taken from the transcribed interviews and added to the existing manual. Specific recommendations for change would include the following.

Match examples which describe peer pressure to remarry should be added since this was an important theme in first marriages. Deciding to remarry out of loneliness or fear of growing old alone was an important second marriage theme which needs to be included in the current manual. In addition, seeking a legitimate sexual relationship in first marriages and remarrying to avoid community disapproval should be added to the list of match examples.

Two frequently given reasons for deciding to marry and remarry need to be refined in a revised manual, economic reasons and security. In

first marriage, economic reasons tended to appear as Level I responses. That is, the respondent specifically sought an improved economic position for herself. In second marriages, economic reasons were often given at a higher level of care reflecting the idea that both would be better off financially as a result of the decision.

The concept of security as a reason for marrying and remarrying also needs clarification. In first marriages, security was described as something which would be provided for the respondent as a result of the marriage. In contrast, security in second marriage decisions was often described as reciprocal. That is, respondents expected to give as well as to receive financial and psychological security. Match examples which differentiate between these differences in kind should be included in a revised version of the scoring manual.

#### Discussion

The results clearly supported the concept of a qualitative shift as women move from first marriage decision-making to second marriage decision-making. Data were analyzed for the interview group as a whole, for individual respondents, by interview themes, and by different levels of care. All of these ways of viewing the data showed an advancement in the levels of care. Almost all respondents moved from a low level of care based on egocentrism to a higher level of care based on equity in relationships with others.

These results stand in contrast to earlier research indicating that courtship and commitment processes in first and second marriages are virtually identical (Fitzgerald, 1981). Perhaps earlier quantitative research cannot gather the essence of events that qualitative data can.

In the past, theory building and the construction of adequate models of remarriage have had limited success (Mott and Moore, 1983; Murstein, 1980). Part of the reason may have been the exclusion of variables which can be defined and identified best by a qualitative approach to remarriage. Perhaps variables such as the perceptual changes which Spanier and Furstenberg (1984) described and variables such as changes in level of care need to be added to such models. Qualitative research which more precisely defines such variables might add insight to phenomena such as success rates of second marriages.

Theoretically, respondents are expected to have a positive shift in their level of care over time. Piaget (1965), Kohlberg (1981), and Gilligan (1977; 1982) predicate their stage theories on the assumption that development progresses as the individual is confronted with experiences which cannot be assimilated into the existing cognitive structures. When old cognitive structures to organize information are inadequate, disequilibrium occurs, and the individual is said to be in transition to higher levels of development. Piaget would say the person accommodates. New qualitatively different cognitive structures emerge to integrate the new life experiences. A cognitive structure here is the same as a level of care structure. That is, a cognitive structure on one level of care is a person's sociomoral perspective from which decisions are made.

In the case of the current study, the event which precipitated the disequilibrium of Level II/III appeared to be the unhappiness with the first marriage or the adaptation which was necessary as a result of the divorce. All but one interviewee made statements which were classified

as Level II/III transitional statements within the Gilligan framework. During the time between the first marriage decision and the second marriage decisions, the respondents had been confronted with a wide range of experiences. Since all divorces were a first divorce, all respondents had dealt with at least one major new life experience. Given that disequilibrium is the change mechanism of the ethic of care framework, the finding that almost all the women in this research advanced in levels of care was not surprising. Gilligan's (1977, 1982) theory predicts that change occurs as people mature and experience life's dilemmas.

Since there is a higher divorce rate in remarriages than in first marriages, it can be assumed from this study that women may be less willing to tolerate a poor marriage. The finding here gives a sociomoral cognitive explanation for Furstenberg and Spanier (1984) suggestion that remarried people are not staying married just to preserve a social institution if it tears apart the individuals.

Divorce and remarriage are, however, only two of the many areas in which decisions about conflicting needs must be made. Levels of care may change with many different kinds of experience. The current findings cannot be interpreted to mean that the divorce-remarriage experience is more likely to lead to a positive shift in level of care than other life experiences. Such shifts may be equally likely to occur in the long-term intact marriage as well (Goodwin, 1986).

The results must also be interpreted within the context of the limitations of the current study. The present research was based on a small, nonrepresentative sample. Most interviewees were well-educated

and perceived that their incomes were adequate during the time period between their first and second marriage. Both the small size and the nonrepresentative nature of the sample limit the degree to which these findings may be generalized to broader populations. However, the data did support the developmental nature of the ethic of care.

The age range of most of the study sample may have confounded the results. Sixteen of the 23 interviewees fell within an age range of 30 to 39 whereas the range was from 25 to 50. The era in which these women made their first and second marriage decisions could have been the explanatory factor. Therefore, the data were examined for era effects, but no patterns in responses by age were found. Only five of the interviews were under 30 years of age and only two were over 40 years of age. Although the patterns were similar in these cases, some of the findings may be confounded by the era effect and be specific to persons who are in their thirties. In particular, first marriage themes expressing feelings of pressure to marry from society, family, and friends may reflect the impact of being born in a specific era.

The use of one interviewer to carry out all the interviews must also be considered a limiting factor. Although the researcher made an effort not to lead the participants and used a semi-structured interview technique to encourage volunteered responses, it is still possible that subtle cues from the interviewer encouraged particular types of responses.

Despite these limitations, the findings indicate that Gilligan's ethic of care is a useful framework from which to view remarital decisions. Since one of the central purposes of the current research

was to develop a manual to apply the Gilligan framework to remarital decision-making, the level of reliability among the three independent judges appeared encouraging. With refinements to the manual and the addition of match statements and vignettes from the actual research interviews, perhaps an even higher degree of reliability will be attained. Thus, one of the central purposes of the current research was accomplished. A valid manual for applying the ethic of care framework to marital and remarital decision-making was developed. This manual could discriminate between levels of care when applied to 23 cases which added to the internal consistency of the ethic of care on which it was based.

Just how widespread the qualitative shifts are among divorced-remarried women is a matter of speculation. This study showed that these women do make cognitive shifts in remarriage decisions, but women in lower socioeconomic groups may be less likely to make transitions because of greater concern over the issue of survival. For the women in the present study, White's (1979) notion that women may remarry out of economic necessity was challenged, because very few interviewees believed that economic factors had played a significant role in their remarriage decisions. The discrepancy between White's ideas and this particular sample highlights the importance of recognizing that divorced women are a diverse group. Adequate theory building must recognize and deal with this diversity.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to determine if decisions to marry and remarry might be analyzed using an ethic of care framework (Gilligan, 1977, 1982). Qualitative interview data were obtained from 23 formerly divorced females who were currently remarried. In-depth interview techniques were used to explore the reasons for deciding to marry the first time and the reasons for deciding to marry the second time. These portions of the interview were audiotaped and transcribed. Three independent judges then used a scoring manual developed for the research project to classify the levels of care which were used in making the marital and remarital decisions. Respondents also completed a modified version of the Braiker and Kelley (1979) Relationship Questionnaire in order to obtain measures of conflict and ambivalence surrounding the decision to make a commitment to the current spouse.

In addition to exploring the usefulness of an ethic of care approach in studying remarriage, three specific research questions were addressed:

1. Will females show a shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time from the level of care used in deciding to marry the first time?
2. Will females who shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time report different levels of conflict surrounding the recommitment decision from females who do not



show such a positive change?

3. Will females who shift to a higher level of care in deciding to marry the second time report different levels ambivalence surrounding the recommitment decision from females who do not show such a positive change?

A total of 244 statements made by respondents were classified by the three independent judges as best representing one of five levels of care within the Gilligan framework. Statements were coded as:

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Level I:      | Care for Self First,<br>Orientation to Individual Survival       |
| Level I/II:   | First Transition,<br>From Selfishness to Responsibility          |
| Level II:     | Care for Others First,<br>Goodness as Self Sacrifice             |
| Level II/III: | Second Transition,<br>From Self Sacrifice to Acknowledgment      |
| Level III:    | Care for Self and Others,<br>Responsibility for the Consequences |

Two of three judge reliability was obtained on 100% of the interviewee statements while a three of three judge agreement yielded a reliability of 65%.

### Results

In relation to the first research question, the results clearly showed an advancement in levels of care from the decision to marry to the decision to remarry. Twenty-one respondents used Level I statements to describe their first marriage decision while only 11 respondents used Level I to describe their second marriage decision. On the other hand, only 4 interviewees made Level III statements in reference to their

first marriage decision while 17 made such statements in reference to their second marriage decision. When the data were analyzed by the total number of statements in each level of care for marriage and remarriage and at the level of individual change, the same conclusion was reached. All analyses strongly supported a positive shift in level of care as respondents moved from the first marriage decision to the second marriage decision. As a group, participants moved from a level of caring for self first, to caring for others first, to caring for self and other equally.

The answers to the second and third research questions were far less definitive. Since there was no previous research of this kind, the number of respondents who might be predicted to make a positive shift in level of care was uncertain. The second and third research questions were predicated on the assumption that some of the respondents would show a positive shift and some would not. It was speculated that the ambivalence and conflict levels surrounding the commitment to the second marriage relationships might be different in these two groups.

In analyzing the data, 21 of the 23 interviewees made a positive shift within the ethic of care framework between the time of the first marriage decision and the second marriage decision. Therefore, the latter two research questions could not be analyzed. The Braiker and Kelley Relationship Questionnaire consists of 9-point scale items and yields an mean score for each relationship dimension which can range from a low score of one to a high score of nine. Overall, the participants reported low levels of both conflict and ambivalence in relationship to making a deep commitment to the relationship which led

to their second marriage. Only five conflict scores and three ambivalence scores were higher than the midpoint of the scale. Since only two subscales of the original scale were used in the current research, it was speculated that selecting two scales which focused on the negative aspects of the developing relationship rather than using the more positive love subscale and maintenance subscale may have affected the results.

A thematic analysis of the reasons for marriage and remarriage suggested that there are significant differences in the two decision-making processes. In first marriages, pressures from society, family, and friends appeared to be more important than in second marriages. Wanting a Cinderella-like existence and a permanent means of being taken care of were strong themes in first marriage decisions but not in second marriage decisions. On the other hand, escaping loneliness, seeking companionship, and wanting a mutually helpful relationship were predominant themes in second marriages which were not important in first marriages. On the basis of this qualitative analysis, several thematic patterns were identified. As the respondents moved from first marriage decisions to second marriage decisions, they also appeared to shift from unrealistic fairy tale expectations to realistic problem discussion. The locus of control is more frequently external in first decisions and more frequently internal in second marriage decisions. Respondents, as a whole, viewed being taken care of as a goal in first marriages and reciprocal caretaking as a goal in second marriages. Escaping from external unpleasant situations was often a reason for first marriage decisions while an escape from

internal unpleasant situations such as loneliness was a frequent theme in second marriage decisions.

Perhaps the most important result of the study was the development of a valid scoring manual which applied the ethic of care theoretical framework to the area of remarriage. On the basis of the current results, changes in the manual developed for this research were suggested. With the implementation of these changes, the manual can be refined into a even more effective research tool.

#### Recommendations

Some of the themes and shifts which occurred in this sample may be specific to this particular group of interviewees. Since sixteen of the 23 respondents were in their thirties, some findings may reflect era effects. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies control for age as a variable. Such studies might lead to additional refinements in the ethic of care scoring manual. Other themes in reasons for marriage and remarriage may emerge with the study of different types of women who differ from the study sample. For example, only one member of the current sample was judged to be working class, and no member of the sample represented the upper class. Future research should also examine impact of social class on shifts in levels of care.

This research project focused on shifts in levels of care for females. Whether these same types of shifts occur in divorced-remarried males is an important question for future research projects to address. Since the most common remarriage pattern is a divorced male remarrying a divorced female, such research could have significant implications in explaining the dissolution rates for second marriages. Perhaps males

experience different kinds of qualitative shifts or no qualitative shift between their first marriage decision and their second marriage decision. If so, males who remarry and females who remarry may be entering relationships with two different sets of expectations about what kind of marriage they will have.

The application of the levels of care framework need not be limited to individuals who divorce and remarry. Couples with stable intact marriages may experience these same kind of qualitative shifts. In fact, the lasting marriage may even be characterized by males and females who jointly redefine their social relationship over time. Because of this possibility, it is recommended that levels of care research be extended to intact marriages as well.

A final recommendation is for future research to explore the clinical applications of the ethic of care approach. Incongruent expectations about caring and being cared for may be a critical issue for marriages in disequilibrium. Helping professionals may find the levels of care framework useful for summarizing and interpreting themes of discontent within the unhappy marriage.

The current study has applied a new theoretical perspective to remarriage research. Applying an ethic of care framework to remarriage may identify important variables which can be incorporated into existing models or generate new ways of looking at remarriage. With innovative qualitative methodology, perhaps more adequate theoretical models of close relationships can be constructed.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Byrd Scoring Manual

#### BASED ON GILLIGAN'S ETHIC OF CARE DECISIONS TO MARRY AND REMARRY

### Introduction

The ethic of care includes five hierarchical cognitive levels used in resolving decision-making dilemmas (Gilligan, 1977). This manual describes each cognitive level with a stage structure, criterion judgment, match examples, and two vignettes typical of the type of reasoning which might be employed at each level of care. All match examples and vignettes are based on field test interviews with divorced persons which focused on reasons for marriage and remarriage. Details have, in some cases, been altered to protect the identity of the respondents. Standard procedures for developing this manual were described in Colby et al. (1984).

THE ETHIC OF CARE: LEVEL I

DILEMMA: Decision to Marry or Remarry

LEVEL I: Care for Self First,  
Orientation to Individual Survival

STAGE STRUCTURE:

The decision centers on the self. The concern is pragmatic, and the issue is individual survival. At this level, "should" is undifferentiated from "would," and others influence the decision only through their power to affect its consequences. The question of right decision would emerge only if one's own needs were in conflict then one would have to decide which need should take precedence.

At this first level, the self, which is the sole object of concern, is constrained by lack of power and the wish "to do a lot of things." The self is constantly belied by the limitations of what, in fact, is being done. Relationships are, for the most part, disappointing. As a result, one may deliberately choose isolation to protect against hurt.

CRITERION JUDGMENT:

The woman decides to marry because she wants to be taken care of. She may choose marriage to escape an aversive situation and may describe outside pressure to marry. She may look to marriage to provide her money, security, and a worry-free life.

MATCH EXAMPLES FOR LEVEL I:

1. I thought that the world was going to be a happy place---that I

would be the Cinderella---would be taken away from all my problems by marrying.

2. Money. I would not have considered marrying again unless that person could add to my life financially. I wanted someone who could improve the quality of my life, give me enough money to take the edge off the other problems of marriage.

3. I really didn't want to get married, but my family kept pushing me. I was tired of feeling their pressure. It was easier to give in---to just go ahead and get married.

#### VIGNETTES ILLUSTRATING LEVEL I REASONING:

1. I thought he would meet all my needs. I thought he would rescue me from a bad family at the time. He was studying to be a minister, and I thought he would be kind and gentle. I was on the verge of being kicked out of my home. There were many problems between me and my daddy, and he [first spouse] listened to me. My relationship with my daddy was abrasive, and there wasn't much love and affection there. I thought he [first spouse] would take away all my problems.

2. Money. I wanted to marry some one would add to my life financially the second time. It sounds like I was looking for a rescuer the second time too, and maybe I was. Maybe if I'd waited until I was old and lonely, there would have been other reasons. But---I know this may sound crass---but the only reason I wanted a second marriage was financial security.

**THE ETHIC OF CARE: LEVEL I/II**

**DILEMMA:** Decision to Marry or Remarry

**LEVEL I/II:** First Transition From Selfishness  
to Responsibility

**STAGE STRUCTURE:**

The words "selfishness" and "responsibility" first appear. Their reference is initially to the self in redefinition of the self interest.

The transitional issue is one of attachment or connection to others. In order to be able to care for another, one must first be able to care responsibly for oneself. The growth from childhood to adulthood is conceived as a move from selfishness to responsibility. There is a contradiction in statements that show a desire for independence and connection at the same time. The dilemma now assumes moral definition as the emergent conflict between wish, and necessity is seen as a disparity between "would" and "should." This transition signals an enhancement in self-worth and the ability to see oneself as having the potential for social acceptance. When such confidence is seriously in doubt, the transitional questions may be raised but development is impeded.

**CRITERION JUDGMENT:**

The woman decides to marry not only to be taken care of but also to assume the responsible role of the married woman. She may describe her past behavior as selfish and state she feels she should play the role society has taught her since childhood.

## MATCH EXAMPLES FOR LEVEL I/II:

1. I had really enjoyed the wild freedom of single life, but it was time to start being the good concerned citizen of the community again.
2. I began to need some stability---you know---the white picket fence. I don't know if I was really ready to get married again, but I began to feel I should be.
3. My mother kept saying she was worried about me, and that she would feel better if I would settle down. At first, I said I didn't want to settle down. Then I started thinking maybe I should.

## VIGNETTES ILLUSTRATING LEVEL I/II REASONING:

1. My neighbor across the street kept saying to me, "I know you. You're the type who's going to want the white picket fence again." What she meant was I was going to get tired of dating different men and sleeping with them. She liked me, but she didn't quite approve of my being single and having such a good time. She thought I should be married again. At first, I laughed---told her I didn't want that little white fence again---that I liked my life exactly the way it was. But after a couple years I started to feel I should get married and build something stable with one person. Of course, my neighbor loved it when she found out I was getting married for the second time. She laughed and said, "See. I told you that you would want that little white fence again some day."
2. At first life was pretty rough for me during my separation. I was in a small town and really didn't know any single men. For six months,

I sat home with a small baby and felt pretty sorry for myself. Then I started going out and started to feel really attractive for the first time in many years. By the time my little boy was four, I started to feel a little guilty that he was missing out on a real home. I liked my life the way it was but that he should have someone like \_\_\_\_\_ [second spouse], someone who could be there every day and help him learn to throw a football.

**THE ETHIC OF CARE: LEVEL II**

**DILEMMA:** Decision to Marry or Remarry

**LEVEL II:** Care for Others First

Goodness as Self-Sacrifice

**STAGE STRUCTURE:**

The transition from selfishness to responsibility is a move toward social participation. Moral judgment comes to rely on shared norms and expectations. One's claim to social membership is through the adoption of societal values. Consensual judgment becomes paramount and goodness, the overriding concern, is now seen to depend on acceptance by others.

One's worth is based on the ability to care for and protect others. The person now constructs the world in terms of the stereotypes of goodness. The strength in this position lies in its capacity for caring; its limitations in the restriction it imposes on direct expression. Concern for the feelings of others imposes a deference which is recognized.

At the second level of judgment, the specific issue is hurting. When no option exists that can be construed as being in the best interests of everybody and when responsibilities conflict and a decision entails the sacrifice of somebody's needs, the person then chooses the victim. At this level, the victim would be the self.

**CRITERION JUDGMENT:**

The woman decides to marry to play the role of the good wife



and mother. She wants to take care of her husband and children even at the expense of her own needs. She judges herself as good if she puts the needs of others first.

#### MATCH EXAMPLES FOR LEVEL II:

1. My children---especially my son---needed a father. I wanted my kids to have the best home I could give them, and I thought the best home should have two parents.
2. Getting married was the accepted practice in the early 60's. You got married. You didn't live together. That was just what everybody expected, and I thought that was what I should do.
3. I wanted children, and I thought I should be married to raise children and give them everything they need. My main goal in my first marriage was to raise my children and to see that they got their education.

#### VIGNETTES ILLUSTRATING LEVEL II REASONING:

1. In deciding to get married the first time, the person had to be accepted by my family. They had a very strong influence on me at that time, and I didn't feel I should do anything that would hurt my family---you know--- anything that would bring them any grief. I guess you could say part of my reasons for marrying my first husband was that he met their standards. He was a college graduate, and my family thought---they had this saying---that he would "make something of himself some day." Marrying someone they were happy with---someone who would get their seal of approval---was very important to me at that time.

2. When I was married the first time, I wanted to be seen by everyone as a good wife. All my good feelings about myself came from my husband or in-laws or friends telling me I was good to my husband and later to my children. I remember fixing elaborate meals on week nights and waiting, hoping my husband would tell me that I'd fixed a good dinner. I remember telling a book club I was in that nothing really meant anything to me unless it brought my family happiness and pleasure. One of the club members said, "What about your needlepoint?" I said that unless I could frame it for my family to enjoy it would mean nothing to me. I guess I married the first time to play the role of the good wife.

**THE ETHIC OF CARE: LEVEL II/III**

**DILEMMA:** Decision to Marry or Remarry

**LEVEL II/II:** Second Transition

Goodness as Self Sacrifice

**STAGE STRUCTURE:**

The second transition begins with the reconsideration of the relationship between self and others. The person begins to question the logic of self-sacrifice in the service of a morality of care. The transition is noted in the reappearance of the word "selfish." The person begins to ask whether it is selfish or responsible, moral or immoral, to include one's own need within the compass of care and concern.

The person asks if it is possible to be responsible to oneself as well as to others and thus reconcile the disparity between hurt and care. This type of judgment requires an acknowledgement of what one is doing. The criterion thus shifts from "goodness" to "truth" and the acceptance of the realities of intention and consequence. There is an acceptance of the responsibility for decisions.

**CRITERION JUDGMENT:**

The woman decides to marry and establish a relationship in which she is not the housewife and mother who does everything for her family to the detriment of her own life. Although she may say she wants mutual companionship, she always refers to what she does not want.

## MATCH EXAMPLES FOR LEVEL II/III:

1. The first time I was seventeen. I was in love, and everybody else was getting married. The second time I wanted to choose a situation that had something in it for me. I knew what I was doing this time.
2. I was tired of taking care of everybody else. I wanted my needs considered important the second time.
3. I had given up things to give my kids an education, summer camp, music lessons--- all that stuff that's supposed to help them turn out O.K. I didn't want to be second anymore. I wanted some things that were special and important to me the second time.

## VIGNETTES ILLUSTRATING LEVEL II/III REASONING:

1. The first marriage I was always doing for others---for my husband and for the children. I ran a taxi service for the kids, worked full-time, and did most of the housework. When I was single, I began to expect the kids to help me more, to assume more responsibility. It was O.K. to come home from work and tell the kids, "It's fix your own sandwich night." When I was deciding to marry the second time, I remember thinking I can't go back and do that old routine. I want to be sure that I don't get caught in that old trap again.
2. What ever my husband wanted or needed, I went along with the first time. We bought a boat and made huge payments, and we really didn't have that kind of money. But he needed it. I didn't want the boat, but since he wanted it, I said O.K. Now that I look back that boat makes me angry as hell. When I decided to marry the second time, I wanted to be

sure there wouldn't be any more boat decisions like that---that I wouldn't always be giving in when I really didn't want to.

**THE ETHIC OF CARE: LEVEL III**

**DILEMMA:** Decision to Marry or Remarry

**LEVEL III:** Care for Self and Others

**Responsibility for Choice**

**STAGE STRUCTURE:**

By elevating nonviolence---the injunction against hurting---to a principle governing all moral judgment and action, one is able to assert a moral equality between self and others. Care, then becomes a universal obligation, the self-chosen ethic that allows the assumption of responsibility for choice.

Once obligation extends to include the self as well as others, the disparity between selfishness and responsibility is reconciled. The willingness to express and take responsibility for judgment stems from the recognition of the psychological and moral necessity for an equation of worth between self and other. Responsibility for care then includes both self and other, and the obligation not to hurt, freed from conventional constraints, is reconstructed as a universal guide to moral choice.

**CRITERION JUDGMENT:**

The woman decides to marry because of the desire to join with another human being in a mutual relationship characterized by reciprocal caretaking. She accepts full responsibility for this choice. Needs of self are balanced with needs of others.

**MATCH EXAMPLES FOR LEVEL III:**

1. I wasn't about to jump into marriage because I wanted my freedom,

but I realized that we could help each other more by getting married, pooling our resources, and knowing that we would both be better off.

2. I wanted to be married, but I wanted to be sure ahead of time that I didn't get the short end of the stick. Neither did I want him or my children to be stuck, so we drew up a prenuptial agreement.

3. I wanted a traditional marriage in which the husband's job is head of the family, and he fulfills that responsibility with loving care. In turn I expect to give the equal job of housewife all it takes. However, I want us both to have some time for ourselves.

#### VIGNETTES ILLUSTRATING LEVEL III REASONING:

1. In my first marriage, I felt he was the heavenly body, and I was the satellite. What I mean is---all my needs were secondary to his. Where we lived depended on where his career took us. We spent money---that is, big purchases---on things that were important to him. When I decided to marry \_\_\_\_\_, one of the nice things that made a difference was a feeling we would both be important in this marriage. I wouldn't have to be a satellite any more. We could both be heavenly bodies.

2. The second time I was looking for a friend for them [the children]. I wanted someone who could fit into our style. I wanted us to make him happy, and him to bring some happiness to us. I guess you could say I looked at remarriage from two directions. Sort of---do we have anything to offer him, and can he fit into our lives and be happy?

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent

This research is concerned with the decision-making process in marriage and remarriage and with certain aspects of the courtship which preceded the second marriage. The study is designed to learn more about the way in which individuals make a decision to marry and remarry.

The interview will last approximately one to one and one-half hours. Your participation in this research project is strictly voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question and may withdraw from the interview at any time.

Your individual responses will be held confidential. Each participant will be assigned an identification number, and this information will be kept in a locked file.

Certain parts of the interview need to be taped in order to look for consistencies in the way individuals respond.

Your permission to record some of your responses is requested. The audiotapes will also be kept in a locked file.

All interview materials and audiotapes will be destroyed within a reasonable time after the research is finished. Materials will be kept no longer than twelve months after the completion of the project.

Thank you for your help in studying this important research area.

---

I have read the above information regarding the research procedures and agree to voluntarily participate in this study and to permit certain portions of the research interview to be taped.

---

Signature of participant

---

Date



\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive a summary of the results of the study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not wish to receive a summary of the results of the study.

Please list your mailing address below if you would like to receive a summary of the results of this research.

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## Appendix C

## Individual Interview Procedure

Section I Background Data

(Although some of these data were gained by telephone, the information is verified and recorded here.)

Record race of respondent

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ White

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ Black

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of first marriage \_\_\_\_\_

Date of divorce \_\_\_\_\_

Date of second marriage \_\_\_\_\_

The interviewer indicated that before talking about the respondent's marriage and remarriage some background information is needed. The following questions were then asked using neutral probes, if necessary, to clarify any ambiguous responses.

1. What is your date of birth? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your spouse's occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which of the following categories best describes your educational background?

(Participant was then shown the following alternatives and asked to select one.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than high school

\_\_\_\_\_ Some high school

\_\_\_\_\_ High school graduate

\_\_\_\_\_ Some college

\_\_\_\_\_ College graduate

\_\_\_\_\_ Some graduate work

\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate degree

5. How many previous marriages have you had? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How did that marriage end? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many previous marriages has your spouse had? \_\_\_\_\_

8. If the spouse has been previously married, ask the following question:

Would you describe how your spouse's previous marriage(s) ended?

First marriage \_\_\_\_\_

Second marriage \_\_\_\_\_

Third marriage \_\_\_\_\_

9. How many children do you have from your current marriage?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. How many children do you have from your previous marriage?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. How many children does your spouse have from previous marriages?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. How many dependent children lived with you at the time of your current marriage? \_\_\_\_\_

(Interviewer probed to identify the number of children in each of the following categories who lived with the respondent at the time of the current marriage and records the information.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of respondent's children from a previous marriage

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of spouse's children from a previous marriage

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of children from the current marriage

13. Including child support and alimony, what was your yearly income at the time you met your current spouse? (Participant was then shown the following categories and asked to select the most appropriate category.)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 or less

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 to \$9,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 to \$14,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15,000 to \$19,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20,000 to \$24,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000 or above

14. Including child support and alimony, which of the following categories best describes your current yearly income? Include your spouse's income in this figure. (Participant was then shown the following categories and then be asked to select one alternative.)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 or less

\_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 to \$9,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000 to \$14,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15,000 to \$19,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20,000 to \$24,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000 to \$29,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$30,000 to \$34,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$35,000 to \$39,999

\_\_\_\_\_ \$40,000 or above

15. In general, how adequate would you say your income was to meet your need during the time between your first and second marriage?

(Participant was then shown the following categories and will be asked to select one alternative.)

       Very adequate

       Adequate

       Inadequate

       Very inadequate

### Section 2      Reasons for First Marriage

This section of the interview was semi-structured and was designed to encourage the respondent to talk about reasons for decision to marry the first time. Some or all of the following questions as well as neutral probes will be used to encourage the participant to talk about reasons for deciding to marry the first time:

What were some of the factors that were important to you in deciding that you wanted to get married?

Probes:

How important would you say your family's attitude was in the decision?

Did your friends' attitudes play a role in the decision?

Would you say economic factors were an important part of the decision?

How would you describe the kind of person you were and how that might have related to your decision to get married?

What do you think were some of the things you might have been expecting to come from the decision to get married?

Probes:

What did you expect your husband's role in the marriage would be, e.g. what did you expect him to do in the marriage?

What did you expect your role in the marriage would be, e.g. what did you expect to do in the marriage?

How did you expect important decisions in the marriage to be made?

What kind of relationship did you anticipate after you were married?

What did you see as some of the advantages of getting married?

What did you see as the most important advantage of getting married?

Did you see any important disadvantages in getting married? If so, please describe.

Were there any other factors which made you hesitate in your decision to marry?

Can you add anything else which would help me understand your decision to marry?

Section 3 Courtship Chronology of Second Marriages

In this section of the interview the respondent constructed a chronology of the major events of the courtship which preceded the second marriage. First, the interviewer determined the date the interviewee met her spouse and the date the interviewee and her spouse were married. The interviewer then presented the respondent with blank charts with a line for each month of the courtship. (see Appendix D) The participant was then asked to recall the major events of the

courtship by month, and the interviewer entered brief phrases to represent these events on the chart.

The interviewer encouraged the identification of events and reacted to the identification of specific events in a reinforcing manner. Since there was evidence that retrospective data were enhanced by providing as many cues as possible, the respondent was encouraged to name a variety of events which occurred during the courtship period. Approximately fifteen minutes of interview time was devoted to the construction of the courtship chronology. After the chronology was constructed, the respondent was then asked to identify the point in the courtship at which she considered herself deeply committed to the relationship which led to her second marriage. Then using the chronology as a visual cue, the respondent was asked to complete the modified version of the Braiker and Kelley (1979) Relationship Questionnaire. This instrument was designed to measure the levels of conflict and ambivalence which surrounded the recommitment decision.

#### Section 4    Reasons for Second Marriage

This section of the interview was semi-structured and is designed to encourage second time. The questions and probes included in this section were the same as those used for the first marriage decision rephrased to address the second marriage decision. Some or all of the following questions as well as neutral probes were used to encourage the participant to talk about reasons for deciding to marry the second time:

What were some of the factors that were important to you in deciding that you wanted to remarry?

**Probes:**

How important would you say your family's attitude was in the decision?

Did your friends' attitudes play a role in the decision?

Would you say economic factors were an important part of the decision?

How would you describe the kind of person you were and how that might have related to your decision to get remarried?

What do you think were some of the things you might have been expecting to come from the decision to remarry?

**Probes:**

What did you expect your husband's role in your remarriage would be, e.g. what did you expect him to do in the marriage?

How did you expect important decisions in you remarriage to be made?

What kind of relationship did you anticipate after you were remarried?

What did you see as some of the advantages of getting married again?

**Probes:**

What did you see as the most important advantage of getting married again?

Did you see any important disadvantages in getting married again?

If so, please describe.



Were there any other factors which made you hesitate in your decision to marry?

Were there any differences in your decision to marry the first time and your decision to marry the second time?

Can you add anything else which would help me understand your decision to remarry?

## Appendix D

Sample Courtship Chronology1983-1984

March	<u>Met March 15</u>
April	<u>Sampled French food</u>
May	<u>First big fight</u>
June	<u>Met Tom's child (Sherry)</u>
July	<u>Camping in mountain</u>
August	<u>Lots of swimming and hiking</u>
September	<hr/>
October	<u>Met Tom's former wife</u>
November	<u>Talked about exclusive dating</u>
December	<u>Ski trip and office party</u>
January	<u>Ruth met Tom's family</u>
February	<u>Official engagement</u>
March	<u>Major discussion about children</u>
April	<u>Wedding on April 23</u>

Appendix E  
Relationship Questionnaire

The following questions are items concerning certain aspects of your relationship with your spouse during a specific premarital period. Please answer these questions for the period of time during which you were deciding to make a deep commitment to the relationship. In answering the questions, you are to pick the number from "1" to "9" that best tells how much, or to what extent the statement describes your relationship as it was at this particular time period. The following is an example of how a questions might be answered:

How much did you worry about getting hurt emotionally by (partner's name)---i.e., how emotionally vulnerable did you feel? °

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9

---

Not at all                      Moderately                      Very much

If you worried not at all about being hurt, you would circle the number "1".

If you worried moderately, you would circle the number "5".

If you worried very much, you would circle the number "9".

If your amount of worry were somewhere between "not at all" and "moderately," you would circle either number "2," "3," or "4," depending on the extent of your feeling.

If your amount of worry were somewhere between "very much," and "moderately," you would circle either number "6," "7," or "8," depending on the extent of your feeling.

Please complete the following questions, according to the instructions just given, for the period when you were deciding to make a deep commitment to the relationship.

1. How much did you think about or worry about losing some of your independence by getting involved with (partner's name)?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Not at all

Very much

2. How often did you and (partner's name) argue with one another?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Very infrequently

Very frequently

3. To what extent did you communicate negative feelings toward (partner's name)---e.g. anger, dissatisfaction, frustration, etc.?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Not at all

Very much

4. When you and (partner's name) argued, how serious were the problems or arguments?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Not serious at all

Very serious

5. To what extent did you feel "trapped" or pressured to continue in this relationship?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Not at all

Very much

6. How often did you feel angry or resentful toward (partner's name)?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Never

Very often

7. How ambivalent or unsure were you about continuing in the relationship with (partner's name)?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Not unsure at all

Extremely unsure

8. To what extent did you feel that (partner's name) demanded or required too much of you time and attention?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Not at all

Very much

9. To what extent did you try to change things about (partner's name) that bothered you (e.g., behaviors, attitudes, etc.)?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Not at all

Very much

10. How confused were you about your feelings toward (partner's name)?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

Not at all

Very much

## Appendix F

Sample Transcript ExcerptsFirst Marriage Decision

RESPONDENT #12 - CAROLYN

FIRST HUSBAND - MICHAEL

SECOND HUSBAND - TED

Interviewer...What would you see as some of the factors that were real important to you in deciding to marry for the first time?...

Carolyn: I would have to laugh and say I really wasn't in love. I was in heat. I suspect that part of it was that I missed the revolution of the 60's. I sat it out. Both civil rights and the women's movement. And I honestly believed that I simply couldn't live with somebody or couldn't have an affair with somebody---that I had to marry somebody. And there was something a bit glamorous about Michael. The fact that he came from a wealthy family, and all you have to do is look at their house to see the visual image and the expensive property.... Just all those criteria that women growing up in the 50's were told they were supposed to look for. I didn't go to college to get a degree. I went to get an MRS.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: And I'm sure you've heard that too. And I did everything in the proper order. Got out of high school, was engaged, went to college, and got married. So everything was in the proper order. They just don't tell you what happens afterwards. [laughter]

Interviewer: So you were doing what you thought basically was expected at the time?

Carolyn: Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah....

Interviewer: Now still continuing looking at the decision, would you say that economic factors played any role in your decision?

Carolyn: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Ok. In what way would you see those as entering in?

Carolyn: I had the mistaken belief that the daddy's wealth would spill over to the son. And in some instances it did.... So, yes, economics played a considerable role.

Interviewer: Ok. If you look back, how would you describe the kind of person you saw yourself as being and how that kind of tied in with your decision to marry?

Carolyn: Traditional.

Interviewer: You saw yourself as a traditional person.

Carolyn: Right. I---traditional in the sense I'd work a few years, have a family, and stay at home.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: Well, I had never anticipated that I would enjoy working. It was just a means to an end. The reality was, of course, that I found out I really liked to work.

Interviewer: But you envisioned yourself as playing a traditional role---

Carolyn: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Interviewer: If you can think back to the time when you were married, how would you describe the kind of relationship that you had with Michael--in terms of your roles or the kinds of things that you might have been expecting to come from the marriage?

Carolyn: Well, as far as traditional roles inside the house is concerned, Michael was always good to help. You know, to keep the house clean and he'd cook occasionally...But I think we both had the image of man as power, as breadwinner, as authority.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: And I think that ended up being one of the problems. Because I was enough of my mama that that independence that was being stifled would eventually have to come out.

Interviewer: So you felt your independence was somewhat stifled in your first marriage?

Carolyn: Uh-huh. Yeah....

Interviewer: How did you feel he stifled your independence?

Carolyn: Well, you know. That's really not fair. I stifled it. I wouldn't do things that I would do now. For example, we're trying to get ten women to fly to Washington for the day and spend the night. I would never have done that. I didn't even go to my favorite cousin's wedding in Texas....

Interviewer: Uh-huh.... Ok, I guess we talked a little bit about

what you expected for his role to be. We covered that a little bit, but can you elaborate on what you expected his role in the marriage would be---what you were sort of expecting him to do?

Carolyn: Well, I think Michael is probably in that transition generation---you know---that women's liberation created. I think he envisioned as the breadwinner and therefore aloof...If we had had children, I would have been the primary childrearer of the family.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: I wanted that, but I also wanted the tenderness and caring. Whenever I went into one of my snits or pouted or did whatever I did, I would want him to be able to take me in his arms and say "It's OK."

Interviewer: But you sort of expected him to be the breadwinner?

Carolyn: I wanted a combination role. I really did.... I was depending on him....

Interviewer: But you saw yourself as somewhat dependent---to some degree---in some ways on him in the first marriage?

Carolyn: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Interviewer: And I guess you've already answered this as far as what you expected your role to be---that you thought that basically you were going to be the homemaker.

Carolyn: Uh-huh.

Interviewer: And that if you had had children, you would have been the childrearer.

Carolyn: See. I could envision myself having little bridge parties in the afternoon, and doing little womanly things like that, and thinking how nice it would be to have so much time to call my own.

Interviewer: So, at that time, that was sort of an appealing idea to play that role?

Carolyn: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Interviewer: Ok. Now as far as decision-making, how did you expect that important decisions would be made in your first marriage?

Carolyn: Oh. I expected them to be made jointly. Often they were not.

Interviewer: How would you describe them---as far as the way that they were made?

Carolyn: Basically Michael would make the decisions. I can give you a



really good example of that. He had wanted to buy a motorcycle and I thought yeaaaaaah. Well, he came to school to where I was teaching and brought the papers for me to sign for him to borrow the money to buy that damn motorcycle. Where I was caught totally unaware---in a very vulnerable position and in a place where I really couldn't argue---

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: Because there was too much going on around us. And I didn't like that.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: I didn't like that at all. And he would always make the decisions about the cars.

Interviewer: You mean what kind?

Carolyn: Yeah. What kind we would drive. And I didn't like that either.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: And so when he left, he left me with an old car.... And he hadn't been gone two weeks till traded that thing for a car that I wanted...

Interviewer: And I guess we've hit a little bit of this too---as far as what kind of relationship you anticipated after you were married...

Carolyn: I was a victim of the Cinderella syndrome. You know---they lived happily ever after, but you don't ever hear about the carrying off into the sunset---what happened after that. I think I was the victim of that more than anything else.

Interviewer: Well, now, at the time you got married, what did you see as the most important advantages of getting married?

Carolyn: Security.

Interviewer: Security?

Carolyn: Uh-huh..To have somebody to look after me.

Interviewer: To have somebody to look after you.

Carolyn: Uh-hum.

Interviewer: Ok. Did you see any important disadvantages? At that time?

Carolyn: At that time. No, I don't think I did....

### Second Marriage Decision

Interviewer: Ok. Now, as we said, we'll move into trying to look at some of the reasons for your marriage to Ted---for your second marriage...To start with, as you were looking at deciding to marry Ted, what would you see as some of the factors that were important to you in deciding that you wanted to actually remarry?...

Carolyn: I think most of it was just based on my and Ted's relationship. I think that we had always been decent friends. Sometimes I think that gets lost in a marriage, for whatever reasons.... I liked his caring, his concern for people.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: I always felt that he would be there. You know that in times of crisis, no matter where he was or what he was doing---that I could call.

Interviewer: That he would always be supportive of you.

Carolyn: Yeah. If possible...be there physically...I just generally liked him as a person. You know we have a lot of the same interests intellectually. We have always been able to talk about most anything and to get arguments going. You know, he's take one side and I'd take another. And I like that kind of intellectual stimulation. I really do...

Interviewer: OK. This time would you see economic factors as having played an important role?

Carolyn: It played a role---but certainly not a---I mean---I looked forward to being able to go in and buy a pair of shoes if I wanted to without worrying about blowing the budget.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: And I knew that a second income would help that, but I don't think it had nearly the impact that it did on the first one.

Interviewer: So it was less important factor then?

Carolyn: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: This time around, can you think about describing the kind of person that you saw yourself as being and how that might have related to your decision to marry Ted?

Carolyn: Well, [laughter] I think for one thing I'm probably too damn independent. But that's all right.

Interviewer: So you saw your independence as increasing...

Carolyn: Oh. Certainly.... I think I really made this decision. I think probably the first marriage societal pressures, peer pressures of what a marriage is supposed to be, played more of a role in that marriage. In this one, there wasn't any of that...

Interviewer: Since the societal pressures were not really a factor, what would you say you were really looking for? Why get married? What did you envision as some of the advantages?

Carolyn: Well, security again. I really think that that's not an unrealistic hope in this relationship.

Interviewer: Are you talking about financial or psychological?

Carolyn: No I'm talking about psychological. Financial would be certainly secondary. Probably tertiary to just the comfort that I feel in coming home to Ted or in knowing that he's coming home. I look forward to that. You know...I don't want to use the word companionship...because that makes us sound a lot older than we are, but I think that's important....

Interviewer: OK. Now moving into the area of expectations, what did you expect that Ted's role would be in this marriage---what kinds of things were you expecting of him? You had mentioned that you expected Michael to be the breadwinner.

Carolyn: I think to use an eighteenth century term "a helpmeet." You know, we would just help each other.

Interviewer: A helpmeet?

Carolyn: Uh-huh. That was the original.

Interviewer: M-E-E-T?

Carolyn: Uh-huh. And then it changed into helpmate and all that. But---you know---there's really no role division here.... We just do whatever needs to be done...

Interviewer: Now what about important decisions... How do you expect important decisions to be made?

Carolyn: Jointly. And that's pretty much the way it has been at this point.

Interviewer: So you expected that and that's the way it has pretty much been. And as far as the kind of relationship---I guess you've already talked about that a little bit---a helpmeet.

Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

Carolyn: Well, this one's fun.... There's a kind of casualness, a laid-backness that didn't exist in the first one. Like I say---this one is just fun...

Interviewer: What did you see...having been single for a long time...what did you see as the major advantages of getting married again?

Carolyn: I guess I just wanted to. I think anytime there is a divorce, there is always a feeling of failure. I guess a part of it was just to be sure I was OK...that I could develop that kind of relationship and make it work because it is something that you have to work at daily.

Interviewer: So kind of wanting that success...quote and unquote.

Carolyn: Yeah. Yeah. And OK, I'm middle-aged now. I will be in May.

Interviewer:... You think age played some role?

Carolyn; I think it did. I think that there was that need to be "off the market"---how's that?

Interviewer: OK. Just to make a good decision at the best point.

Carolyn: Yeah. And with a good decent man---which Ted is...

Interviewer: OK. Anything else that you would want to add that would help me understand the decision to decide to marry again?

Carolyn: I can't think of anything else. As I said before, it's not anything I entered into lightly. I thought about it long and hard. And weighed all of what I consider to be the pluses and the minuses. The pluses were really greater than the minuses.