

In recent years, sentimental care ethics has been developed and defended as a normative ethical theory alongside and in opposition to Kantian liberalism. Carol Gilligan introduced the idea of a woman's moral perspective that emphasizes maintaining relationships and responding to need, and saw it as a different way of framing moral issues. Care ethics is no longer associated only with women, and it is presented as a theory for both men and women that has its own distinctive accounts of ethical notions like justice and autonomy. These accounts have developed from analyses of injustice towards women and uncaring attitudes that they face in patriarchal societies, but ironically, care ethics has failed to discuss women's anger at their own mistreatment, and their inability to deal with that anger. This notable lacuna in the care ethics literature is of philosophical importance because analyzing the phenomenon of women's anger uncovers epistemic issues that have not been addressed.

In my dissertation I discuss women's inability to trust their judgments concerning their anger over their own mistreatment. This reflects a lack of what I call epistemic personhood, which is the ability to think autonomously, reflect on and evaluate one's judgments, and to trust those judgments rather than deferring to others. Many women lack the epistemic personhood to trust their anger and do something about their own mistreatment, which creates problems for feminist standpoint theory [FST], which is a recently prominent feminist approach to epistemology that argues that women's unique role or class position gives them a special epistemic standpoint. According to FST, women have unique knowledge of oppression that they can use to critique society, but that knowledge is useless if women lack the epistemic personhood required to trust their judgments.

Understanding women's lack of epistemic personhood also allows for a care ethical account of self-respect that counters the Kantian account. Self-respect, according to Kantians, requires respecting or considering one's moral rights, but this fails to include the importance of one's own welfare, taking care of oneself, which is an essential part of what it means to respect oneself. In contrast, self-respect in care ethical terms requires epistemic personhood to trust one's judgments concerning one's own wellbeing. The only thing that can make someone neglect their own desires and wellbeing, given how naturally it comes to a person to pursue these things, is something that makes one doubt one's own desires. And this is caused by epistemic non-personhood resulting from patriarchal mistreatment. I claim that anyone who trusts their judgment will acknowledge and then, as a result, give some weight to their self-regarding desires; and this is essential to self-respect.

After developing my care ethical account of self-respect, I offer a care ethical account of Rawlsian contractualism that involves taking into account the harms of oppression, and for future research I want to explore further this role of the oppressed in issues of social justice. I am interested in whether what Rawls says can be brought together with feminist insights. His notion of accounting for the "worst-off" is a comparative notion that doesn't fully capture the kind of compassion that a care ethical theory of justice would require. By focusing on the oppressed, who experience absolute bad conditions and not just conditions that are worse than those

experienced by the privileged, hopefully we can understand and root out injustice more effectively.

I plan to adapt the arguments of my dissertation into a book, in which I will discuss how my account differs from not only the Kantian approach, but also from other care ethical accounts in the literature. I am also eager to explore how the idea of epistemic personhood can be applied to other forms of oppression, particularly racism. Minority feminists complain that affluent white feminists ignore how other forms of oppression besides sexism affect women and men; in an effort to avoid this failure, I want to explore whether or not persons who experience racism also lack the epistemic personhood to assert their anger over their own mistreatment. I want to see if racist pressures contribute to one's self-doubt in the way that I believe patriarchal pressures do. I could then do the same for other forms of oppression, including classism, heterosexism, and ableism.