

Research Statement

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My research is in ethics, the branch of philosophy concerned with how one should live. I investigate this question in the context of oppression—a form of structural injustice that includes sexism, racism, and colonialism. More specifically, I examine the role that resistance plays in living well under oppressive conditions. A central theme of my work is that oppression systematically constrains people's options, and that these constraints shape both what resistance can look like and what gives it moral value. I employ a case-driven methodology that begins with the lived experiences of people confronting oppression and uses those cases to identify blind spots in prevailing philosophical theories. Drawing on literature, film, the social sciences, and diverse cultural and political contexts, I develop philosophical accounts that are responsive to the complexities of life under oppression. My research program is organized around three interconnected questions.

1. What Counts as Resistance?

My work on this question began in my dissertation and has developed across three subsequent publications. While dominant accounts model resistance on paradigms of democratic public address, such as protest and civil disobedience, I introduced the concept of *Quiet Resistance* to capture forms of resistance that occur when people sustain activities, relationships, and ways of life that oppressive forces seek to suppress. The concept highlights forms of resistance available when public dissent is constrained or prohibitively costly and challenges the assumption that resistance must be public or overtly communicative in order to count. A range of recent debates have engaged with my concept of *Quiet Resistance*, including discussions of duties to resist, the limits of protest, reproductive autonomy, trans resistance, and ethical veganism. It has also generated international engagement, including invited talks at the American University of Beirut and Notre Dame's Global Center in Ireland, and reached public audiences through the *Hotel Bar Sessions* podcast and the American Association of University Women.

2. What Makes Resistance Valuable?

Quiet Resistance marked the beginning of a broader research program. In three publications, I examine why people resist, what moral capacities are required to resist oppression well, and how we should evaluate violent and other morally fraught actions. A recurring theme in these articles is that both the reasons people have to resist and the values relevant to evaluating their actions are more diverse than typically recognized. Whereas much of the literature evaluates resistance primarily in terms of the political ends it advances, I argue that resistance is also a deeply personal phenomenon. Its moral value lies not only in the political ends it advances but also in what it expresses about a person's character and commitments and in the relationships and ways of life it enables them to sustain under oppression. My work on these issues received support from a CLA Tenure-Track Single-Semester Leave in Fall 2023 and has generated national and international engagement, including talks at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, Princeton University, the University of North Carolina, the University of Kansas, and Colorado College, as well as a public interview with the *Minnesota Reformer*.

3. How Should We Navigate Ethical Conflicts in Resistance?

Recognizing the plurality of values that can guide resistance led me to consider what happens when those values conflict. This question animates both my work on double binds, in which every available option risks reproducing injustice, and my work on radical choices, where resistance may require sacrificing cherished commitments or engaging in morally troubling acts. Across two publications and one article under review, I show how oppression often places people in situations where important values cannot all be preserved and where every available response carries significant moral or prudential costs. In such cases, understanding resistance requires moving beyond simple judgments of justification or blame to examine the difficult practical choices people are forced to make under oppression. This body of work has received significant recognition. My article, “How to Resist a Double Bind,” won the 2025 Bill Gay Award from Concerned Philosophers for Peace. Together with my work on radical choices, it has also led to invitations to present on multiple APA panels. More recently, I was invited to submit a proposal for *Rethinking Resistance*, now under contract with Cambridge University Press as part of its *Elements in the Philosophy of War and Peace* series.

4. Future Research

These three strands of inquiry are now converging in two book projects that will shape my research agenda over the next five years. The first, *Reasons to Resist* (under contract with Oxford University Press), brings together my work on the nature of resistance, the reasons that motivate it, and the moral challenges it can pose. It argues that resistance should be understood not only as a response to injustice but also as an important dimension of living well under oppressive conditions. Forms of resistance often dismissed as too private, morally imperfect, or politically limited can nevertheless play an important role in a good and meaningful life. A residential fellowship with the University of Minnesota’s Institute for Advanced Study will support my work on this project in Fall 2026. The second book, *Rethinking Resistance* (under contract with Cambridge University Press as part of their *Philosophy of War and Peace* series), extends these ideas to colonial and wartime contexts. It highlights forms of resistance that arise when public dissent is impossible or prohibitively costly and considers their implications for dominant theories.