

CURRICULUM VITA

Susan A. Stark

45 Stapleford Drive
Falmouth, ME 04105
207 899 0448
sstark@bates.edu

75 Campus Avenue
Bates College
Lewiston, ME. 04240
207 786 6147 (w)

EMPLOYMENT

Associate Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, Bates College,
1999-present. I shared the position with my spouse Frank Chessa, from Winter 2001
through Spring, 2005.

Visiting Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of California, Davis, 1998-1999.

EDUCATION

Georgetown University
Ph.D., Philosophy, May 1999.
Dissertation: "Morality and Emotion"
M.A., Philosophy, 1994.

Brown University
B.A., Biomedical Ethics, with Honors, 1991.
Thesis: "Autonomy vs. Beneficence: Whose Concerns Override in a Pregnancy
Complicated by Placenta Previa?"

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Ethics, Moral Psychology, Feminist Ethics.

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Ancient Greek Philosophy, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy of Psychology, Social Philosophy.

PUBLICATIONS

"Virtue and the Value of Affective Transformation," Sex, Love, and Friendship: Studies of the Society
for the Philosophy of Sex and Love 1993 - 2003, Value Inquiry Book Series, Volume II, forthcoming,
Rodopi Press. (Invited submission.)

"Emotions and the Ontology of Moral Value," The Journal of Value Inquiry, 2004.

"Taking Responsibility for Oppression: Affirmative Action and Racial Injustice," Public Affairs
Quarterly, July 2004.

"A Change of Heart: Moral Emotions, transformation and moral virtue," Journal of Moral
Philosophy, April 2004.

"Virtue and Emotion," Nous, September 2001.

"Review of Jaegwon Kim's Mind in a Physical World," co-authored with Frank Chessa,
Metapsychology Website, May, 2001.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

“White Privilege and Shame” argues that the emotion shame, experienced by a white person in response to white privilege, provides a powerful personal reason for a white person to work against institutional racism and white privilege. When one sees that a person of color fares badly because of institutionalized racism and as a result feels shame, this feeling binds our good to that of the other. This feeling of shame can be a powerful motivator for change. So in addition to having a powerful moral reason to change the system of white privilege – namely that such a system is unjust – a person also has a compelling personal reason to work for change.

“Emotions and the Character of Virtue.” Virtue theory has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in the past several decades. And unlike utilitarianism and Kantianism, virtue theory promises a moral outlook with an orientation neither to action nor to maxims, but instead to character. This has seemed to many to give emotions a more central place in morality. But many prominent defenders of virtue theory have modeled their views on utilitarianism and Kantianism in that they have regarded states of character as dispositions to correct action. And this, once again, relegates emotions to a subsidiary role. Following Aristotle, I argue, by contrast, that states of character are, themselves, actions and emotions. An agent possesses courage when she meets the following conditions: she must feel fear and confidence appropriately, as these are dictated by her circumstances; she must perform courageous actions; and finally, she must feel the emotions appropriately and do the actions correctly across all the trait-relevant situations. And only this, I argue, gives emotions the central place that is their due in morality. (In progress and due in September, 2009; Invited to appear in: Morality and Emotions, Oxford University Press, 2010.)

The Character of Virtue. Dating back to influential critics of contemporary ethics by G.E.M. Anscombe and Michael Stocker, many philosophers have argued that utilitarianism and Kantianism are too demanding. This claim has taken many forms, but among them it has been argued that these two theories cause psychological incoherence or schizophrenia, and are thus psychologically unrealistic. Further, many of these same theorists urge a return to the study of Aristotelian virtue. I argue that this line of objection to these theories is unpromising. Nevertheless I agree that virtue theory has important advantages over these two, still more dominant, moral theories. However, I argue that many virtue theorists (and their critics) spawned by this debate have misunderstood the character of virtue. Many have incorrectly seen virtue ethics as fundamentally action oriented. This concern with action is often reflected in a focus on criteria of right action. I argue that the focus of virtue theory is appropriately on character and emotion, not action. On this view, action is not thoroughly unimportant, but it is fundamentally derivative on these two other notions. Moreover, I argue that particularist virtue theories – theories that, on my interpretation of particularism, make justification dependent on particular features of situations rather than on moral rules – avoid problems that beset non-particularist virtue theories (among others, the problem of self-effacement). Thus, particularist virtue theories can achieve something that other moral theories cannot claim: they can provide a high degree of psychological coherence along with an account of moral development and in turn a story of how, in the words of Iris Murdoch, we can become good.

“Character and Moral Luck.” Recently the notion of character has come under attack by moral psychologists. It has been argued that many philosophical discussions of character presume a notion of character that is not empirically supported, namely that individuals have dispositions to act that are stable over time and that lead consistently to virtuous or vicious behavior, respectively. Several striking psychological studies undermine the idea of a stable character because altering morally insignificant aspects of a situation appears to change a potential action from virtuous to vicious or vice versa. Philosophers have also argued that these findings count strongly against moral theories that emphasize character over correct action. On the contrary, neither of these conclusions is warranted. What the psychological literature show is that virtues are exceedingly difficult to attain and that moral luck is a recalcitrant problem for moral theorists emphasizing character and for those emphasizing action. I argue that these studies should lead moral theorists and moral agents to refocus their attention on character in the hopes of insulating us as much as possible from moral luck. (This paper is a chapter in The Character of Virtue.)

“Female Circumcision, Cultural Criticism, and Cultural Imperialism” argues that it is not possible, at this point in history, for western feminists to criticize the practice of female circumcision. There have been few philosophical treatments of female circumcision of late and the ones that exist are unsatisfactory. Some writers attempt to analogize female circumcision to elements in western culture, like cosmetic surgery. But I argue that this analogy is too morally thin. Other Western feminists are highly critical of the practice. But this, I shall argue is problematic because of the vice of cultural imperialism. This dilemma can only be resolved by rejecting the assumption that Westerners *can* legitimately assess the practice. I argue that an assessment of the practice can only be made against the background of just relations between Westerners and the Developing world.

PRESENTATIONS

“White Privilege and Shame,” Northern New England Philosophy Association, Bates College, October 2006.

“Commentary on Troy Jollimore’s “Second-Order Desert and the Problem of Moral Luck,” Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, March 2004.

“A Change of Heart: Moral Emotions, transformation and moral virtue,” invited presentation at the Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, December 2003.

“A Change of Heart: Moral emotions, transformation, and moral virtue,” Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, March, 2003.

“Emotions and Virtue,” talk given at the Woodrow Wilson Career Enhancement Fellowship Retreat, October 2002.

“Emotions and Moral Motivation,” Brown Bag Lunch, Bates College, November, 2001.

"Sympathy and Moral Worth," colloquium paper, Royal Institute of Philosophy Conference, July 2001; earlier version presented as a colloquium paper, Pacific Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, April, 2000; invited paper, University of Southern Maine Colloquium, April, 2000.

"Virtue and Emotion," Maine Philosophical Institute meeting, Bowdoin College, April, 2000; invited paper, University of California, Davis Colloquium, December 1998.

"Breasts, Bodies, and Norms," invited paper, Dowling College, March, 2000; colloquium paper, Far West Popular and American Culture Association, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, February, 2000; invited paper, Nammour Symposium, California State University, Sacramento, April 1999.

"Why Equal Protection *Requires* Exclusionary Practices," invited paper, UNLV, Feb., 2000.

AWARDS

Woodrow Wilson Career Enhancement Fellowship, 2002-2003.

Dissertation Fellowship Award, Philosophy Department, Georgetown University, 1995-1996.

Mensa Education and Research Foundation Scholarship, 1994-1995.

Philosophy Department Teaching and Research Fellowship, 1991-1994.

Fellow, Georgetown University, Writing Fellows Program, 1992.

Thomas J. Watson Memorial Scholarship, 1987-1991.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Anonymous Reviewer for the Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal, 2008.

Session chair and organizer, Northern New England Philosophy Association Meeting, Bates College, October, 2006.

Chair of a Colloquium Session, Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association Meeting, March 2006.

Anonymous Reviewer for the Journal of Moral Philosophy, 2004-present.

Organized the Maine Philosophical Institute Meeting at Bates College, May 2001.

Member, Ethics and Political Philosophy Reading Group, participating faculty from Colby, Bates, Bowdoin, and USM, 1999-present.

Member, American Philosophical Association, 1997-present.

BATES COLLEGE TEACHING

Fall, 2008: Philosophy and Feminism.

Winter, 2009: Virtue Ethics (seminar), Ancient Greek Philosophy.

Spring, 2009: Philosophy of Psychology.

Spring, 2008: Ethics of Care, taught for the first time as a W1.

Fall, 2007: Moral Luck, Virtue Ethics (seminar)

Spring, 2007: Ethics of Care (new course, including a substantial field work component).

Winter, 2007: Greek Philosophy, Philosophy of Psychology

Fall, 2006: Introduction to Ethics: Moral Luck (two sections)

Spring, 2006: Philosophy of Psychology

Winter 2006: Seminar: Virtue Ethics (new course); Philosophy and Feminism

Fall 2005: Moral Luck (FYS); Ancient Greek Philosophy

Spring 2004: Philosophy of Psychology
Winter 2004: Ancient Greek Philosophy, Philosophy and Feminism
Fall 2003: Moral Luck (FYS)
Winter 2002: Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy of Psychology (new course)
Fall 2001: Introduction to Philosophy (two sections), Seminar: Moral Particularism (new course)
Winter 2001: Ancient Greek Philosophy
Fall 2000: Contemporary Moral Disputes (two sections); Feminist Ethics (FYS) (new course)
Spring 2000: The De/Op Pressed Muse: Creating and Analyzing Images (new course)
Winter 2000: Ancient Greek Philosophy, Seminar: Luck and the Moral Life
Fall 1999: Contemporary Moral Disputes (two sections), Philosophy and Feminism

BATES COLLEGE SERVICE

*Chair, First Year Seminar and Writing Committee, 2008-2009.
*Member, Director of Writing Search Committee, 2008-2009.
*Member, Philosophy Department Search Committee, 2008-2009.
*Facilitator, two day Faculty workshop on first year writing and assessment of writing, June, 2009.
*Member of planning committee for the two day Faculty workshop on first year writing and assessment of writing (along with Judy Head, Joanne Cole, Pat Hager, and Ellen Peters), 2008-2009.
Member, Davis Foundation Grant Application Committee, Spring and Summer 2007.
Member, Peer Writing Tutor Program Oversight Committee, 2007-2008.
Member, Registrar Search Committee, 2006-2008.
Member, Bates General Education Implementation Committee, 2006-2009.
Co-Chair First Year Seminar and Writing Committee, 2006-2008.
Member, Medical Studies Committee, Bates College 2005-2006, 2006-2007.
Member, Teaching Development Committee, Bates College, 2004.
Member, Philosophy Department search committee, Bates College 2002-2003.
Member, Cognitive Psychology Search Committee, Bates College 2001-2002
Member, Committee on the Writing Workshop and First Year Seminars, Bates College, 2001-2002
Member, Committee on Academic Standing, Bates College, 2000 - 2002.
Member, Chaplain's Advisory Committee, Bates College, 2000 - 2002, 2003-2004.
Member, Committee on Eating Concerns, Bates College, 2000 - 2001.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Volunteer for Ballard House, Maine's only freestanding birth center. Do mailings, lead tour and information night, help coordinate mother's lunch, 2002-2004.
Volunteer available to the Maine Humanities Council to lead a discussion on the events of 9/11, October, 2001.
"An Introduction to Philosophical Thinking," a lecture given with Frank Chessa to high school students, Pine Bush High School, Pine Bush, New York, November 2001.
"The Problem of Moral Luck," a lecture given with Frank Chessa to high school students, Highland High School, New Paltz, New York, November 2000.

GRADUATE SCHOOL TEACHING

University of California, Davis:

Spring 1999: Ethical Theories, Problems of Normative Ethics

Winter 1999: Introduction to Philosophy, History of Ethics

Fall 1998: Ethical and Social Problems in Contemporary Society, Partial Morality
(Graduate Seminar)

Georgetown University (with full responsibility for course design, content, lectures, and grading):

1997-1998: Luck and the Moral Life (Fall 1997, Spring 1998),

Bioethics (Georgetown College of Medicine, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998)

1996-1997: Introduction to Logic, (team-taught, Summers of 1996, 1997),

Ethics and Public Policy (Spring 1997)

1995-1996: Ethics, (Fall 1995, Spring 1996, Summer 1996), Introduction to Philosophy,
(team-taught, Summer 1995), Feminist Philosophy, (non-credit course, Spring 1996),

Bioethics, (non-credit course, Fall 1995, Spring, 1996)

RELATED EMPLOYMENT

Research Assistant to Margaret Little, Ph.D., Georgetown University: Feminist Bioethics, 1995.

Research Assistant to F. Barbara Orlans, Ph.D. and Tom L. Beauchamp, Ph.D., *The Human Use of Animals: Case Studies in Ethical Choice*, 1995.

Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy, Georgetown University: Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics, and Introduction to Biomedical Ethics, 1991-1994, 1996.

Research Assistant, *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, second edition, 1994.

Research Assistant to John Hasnas, Ph.D., Georgetown Univ.: The Nature of Rights, 1991-1992.

Teaching Assistant, Brown University, Persuasion and Argument in Writing, 1991.

Teaching and Research Assistant, Brown University: Topics in Biomedical Ethics, 1991.

REFERENCES

Margaret Little, Ph.D. (Dissertation Director)
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Georgetown University
Tel: 202 687 2312

Nancy Sherman, Ph.D. (Dissertation Reader)
Professor
Department of Philosophy
Georgetown University
Tel: 202 687 7487

Madison Powers, J.D., Ph.D. (Dissertation
Reader)
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Georgetown University
Tel: 202 687 6821

Alisa Carse, Ph.D., (Teaching Mentor)
Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Georgetown University
Tel: 202 687 4521

Wayne A. Davis, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Chair
Department of Philosophy
Georgetown University
Tel: 202 687 7487

Jeffrey C. King, Ph.D.
Professor and Department Chair
Department of Philosophy
University of California, Davis
Tel: 530 752 8987

David Cummiskey, Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy and Religion
Bates College
Tel: 207 786 6286

ANNOTATION FOR PUBLISHED ARTICLES

“Virtue and the Value of Affective Transformation,” (forthcoming Sex, Love and Friendship, 2009): Despite the philosophical convergence around the importance of moral emotions, the precise details of how, when, and to what extent emotions matter to morality has remained contentious. Aristotelians claim that moral virtue is constituted both by correct action and by correct emotion. Feeling emotions properly is necessary to virtue. But Kantians require solely that an agent do a morally correct action from the motive of respect for the moral law. There is a crucial philosophical disagreement between the Aristotelian and Kantian moral outlooks: namely, is feeling the correct emotions necessary to moral virtue (or moral worth) or is it merely an optional extra that is permitted but not required. I believe that there are good philosophical reasons for siding with the Aristotelians. I argue that a kind of transformation is necessary to the highest level of moral goodness, or, what I henceforth call, moral virtue. This transformation includes a transformation of the moral agent’s beliefs. But while cognitive transformation is necessary to virtue, affective transformation is necessary as well.

“Emotions and the Ontology of Moral Value,” (Journal of Value Inquiry, 2004): This paper aims to show the inadequacy of many of the prominent arguments for the role of the emotions in moral theory. I take on the Kantian argument concerning the role of emotions in morality and then consider four arguments broadly inspired by Aristotle: the eudaimonistic argument (that emotions are valuable components of a flourishing life), the instrumental argument (that emotions are valuable instruments to achieving some other good like accurate moral judgment or reliable moral motivation), the action-centered argument (that emotions are necessary components of fully correct action), and the view that emotions are essential to virtue, where emotions are understood as abstractions (loving the good and hating the bad). After revealing difficulties in each of these five views, I argue that emotions are important to morality because they bind us to the concrete good and ill of people, animals, communities, and things. Emotions, felt toward particular people in concrete circumstances, constitute our moral concern, our interest in and concern for morality, *for its own sake*. An agent who fails to feel emotions will have no location for moral concern in the many common cases in which no actions are morally required. Emotions, I argue, directed at particular people, animals, communities, and things constitute the ontological basis of our values.

“Taking Responsibility for Oppression: Affirmative Action and Racial Injustice,” (Public Affairs Quarterly, 2004): This paper takes as its focus the public policy issue of affirmative action in a society in which white culture is dominant. The Supreme Court recently handed down a controversial ruling on affirmative action, when it was asked to rule on the legality of the University of Michigan’s admissions policies. Ironically, both the defendants and the plaintiffs in the Supreme Court case claimed victory. The plaintiffs claimed to have won because the University of Michigan’s undergraduate admissions policy was deemed unconstitutional because the admissions office assigned points to applicants from underrepresented minorities to assist them in gaining admission. The defendants claimed victory because the University’s Law School policy was decided to be constitutionally acceptable. This admissions policy considers the applicant’s race, along with all the other aspects of the applicant’s background, such as writing skills, in the University’s effort to have a diverse student body. I argue that this decision does more harm than good to affirmative action policies because it pushes further underground the notion that it is acceptable to consider an applicant’s race, or gender, or sexual orientation, etc., all by itself, as a decisive factor in making an admissions decision. Of course, to argue that race or gender or sexual orientation ought to be a factor introduces another important consideration: namely that it seems paradoxical to allow race or gender or sexual orientation to be a factor in order to promote *equality*. Using race or gender or sexual orientation as a factor seems in many ways to undermine rather than promote equality. This is because it seems unfair to white applicants or men or straight people who have done nothing to deserve the harm of being denied admission. In response to this, I argue that we must reform our notion of responsibility to include a role for moral luck. I argue that

any adequate moral theory ought to include a notion of responsibility on which people can be held accountable for events (largely) beyond their control.

“A Change of Heart: Moral Emotions, Transformation, and Moral Virtue,” (Journal of Moral Philosophy, 2004): This paper, along with “Virtue and the Value of Affective Transformation,” takes the faithful Kantian as its foil and aims to show the inadequacy of many of the contemporary Kantian attempts to accommodate the emotions in moral theory. These Kantian attempts at accommodation, I argue, make some gains, but ultimately sacrifice important elements of the emotions in their deference to moral duty. I then argue, with Aristotelians, that affective transformation is a necessary part of moral virtue. Specifically, I argue that an unsympathetic benefactor (someone who does good but fails to feel the requisite emotions) fails to respond appropriately to all of the moral features that are present. Furthermore, I argue that such an agent cannot even fully understand the nature of virtue. Without an affective transformation, even a cognitive grasp of a moral situation is incomplete.

“Virtue and Emotion,” (Nous, 2001): Here I argue that some virtue theorists have not been sufficiently attentive to the way emotions function in virtue. Because of this, they have developed counter-intuitive and inaccurate accounts of what virtue is, arguing with Socrates, that a fully virtuous person is fully immune to harm. But I argue that a more intuitive view of virtue (and of the possibility of harm in virtue) can be gained by emphasizing the emotions of the virtuous person. Emotions are crucial to virtue in that they embody the virtuous person’s perception of the full complexity of moral situations – for example, that a situation of battle is a threat to life and limb, yet it is nonetheless courageous to proceed. On my view, the courageous person recognizes the possibility of harm in battle through feeling the emotion fear, even though she nonetheless proceeds courageously into battle. Courage, then, sometimes involves feeling fear. The virtuous person can thus be motivationally unified as she proceeds with the required action but in her emotions she can be mixed: courage can involve feeling both confidence and fear. This blocks the counter-intuitive view that the virtuous person must believe that in being courageous she cannot be harmed.