Most of us are familiar with the idea that we should respect ourselves. I’ve argued that this duty of self-respect means that people who are oppressed have a duty to resist their oppression. But what happens when this duty of self-respecting resistance comes into conflict with other duties you have—say, the duty to cultivate solidarity with other members of your oppressed group? I’ll argue that in addition to its more familiar harms, oppression can harm you by imposing certain kinds of moral dilemmas, placing its victims in unfair situations where it’s impossible to fulfill their multiple competing commitments. Oppression has been famously described as like being caught in a birdcage, as being trapped, constrained, closed in on all sides. What I want to suggest is that in some cases oppression is better thought of as akin to a rack—a torture device that rips its victims apart by pulling their limbs in opposite directions.

Thursday, March 22, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.
Tribble Hall B316

Supported by the Thomas Jack Lynch Fund

For special assistance, please call 336-758-5359 so reasonable accommodations can be made.