

JEREMY DAVID FIX**Curriculum Vitae**

09.29.15

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Education 2008-2016 HARVARD UNIVERSITY PHD expected 2016
2006-2008 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE MA 05.2008
2002-2006 COLGATE UNIVERSITY AB 05.2006
Jan 2006-May 2006 UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS, Off-Campus Study Program
Jun 2005-July 2005 RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEW BRUNSWICK, Summer Session

AOS Ethics, Practical Reason, Philosophy of Action and Agency, Metaphysics
AOC History of Ethics, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind

Dissertation *ACTING FROM THOUGHT ABOUT ACTION*
Committee: Christine Korsgaard, Ned Hall, Richard Moran, and Matthew Boyle
Human action is unique. It is metaphysically unique because we can act self-consciously. It is normatively unique because we are subject to prudential, moral, and rational standards in action, whereas other agents are not. What is the relationship between these aspects of our action? I argue that familiar views of practical reason and action are incompatible with the normative uniqueness of our action because they are incompatible with its metaphysical uniqueness. I then argue that a constitutivist account of practical reason shows that the metaphysical uniqueness of our action explains its normative uniqueness.

Papers 'Intellectual Isolation' (*under review*)

Talks 'Intellectual Isolation'
-9.5.15 4th Annual Tennessee Value and Agency Conference, University of Tennessee

Presentations at Harvard Graduate Student Workshops

'The House of Goodness'	Fall 2015
'Intellectual Isolation'	Spring 2015
'The House of Goodness'	Fall 2014
'The Empty 'I''	Spring 2014
'What and Why'	Fall 2013
'How Does It Make Me Feel?'	Spring 2013
'Intellectual Isolation'	Fall 2012
'Mystic Metaphysics'	Spring 2012
'I Do. What Happens?'	Fall 2011

Presentations at the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics Graduate Fellows Seminar
 ‘The House of Goodness’ Spring 2015
 Comments on Michele Rapaport’s ‘Obedience to the Law One Prescribes to Oneself is
 Freedom’ Winter 2015
 ‘Intellectual Isolation’ Fall 2014

Awards

GSAS Dissertation Completion Fellowship, 2015-6
 Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics Graduate Fellowship, 2014-5.
 Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Fall 2013
 Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Fall 2012
 Harvard Summer School Tuition Waiver, Summer 2010
 Chancellor’s Fellowship Award, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2006-7
 M. Holmes Hartshorne Award, Colgate University, 2006

Teaching

Harvard University as Sole Instructor (tutorials for junior philosophy concentrators)

Phil 98d Self-Consciousness in Action	F13
Phil 98c Korsgaard, now and then	S13
Phil 98b Self-Consciousness and Self-Knowledge	F12
Phil 98a Intentional Action: Reduction and Constitution	F12

Harvard University as Teaching Fellow

Phil 168 Kant’s Ethical Theory	S14 Chris Korsgaard
Phil 178 Equality and Liberty	F13 T.M. Scanlon
Phil 137 The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein	S13 Richard Moran
Phil 012 Introduction to the Philosophy of Law	S12 Douglas Lavin
Phil 173 Metaethics	F11 Selim Berker
Phil 161 Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity	S11 Cheryl Chen
Phil 007 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy	F10 Russell Jones

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Phil 101 Introduction to Philosophy (INS)	F07 S08
Phil 101 Introduction to Philosophy (TA)	S07 John Koethe
Phil 101 Introduction to Philosophy (TA)	F06 Edward Hinchman

Activities

Research Assistant to Edward Hall, Summer 2013, Summer 2014
 Coordinator, Harvard Practical Philosophy Workshop, 2011-12
 Research Assistant to Christine Korsgaard, Spring 2011
 Referee for Harvard-MIT Graduate Philosophy Conference 2010-15

- References**
- Christine M. Korsgaard (korsgaard@fas.harvard.edu)
Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Philosophy
Harvard University
- Edward J. Hall (ehall@fas.harvard.edu)
Norman E. Vuilleumier Professor of Philosophy
Harvard University
- Richard A. Moran (moran@fas.harvard.edu)
Brian D. Young Professor of Philosophy
Harvard University
- Matthew Boyle (boyle2@fas.harvard.edu)
Professor of Philosophy
Harvard University
- Douglas Lavin (d.lavin@ucl.ac.uk)
Lecturer
University College London
- Warren Goldfarb (goldfarb@fas.harvard.edu) (Teaching Reference)
W. B. Pearson Professor of Modern Mathematics and Mathematical Logic
Harvard University

Graduate Coursework (* indicates an audit)*Practical Philosophy*

*Normative and Metanormative Questions	Selim Berker and Derek Parfit
*The Moral Sentiments	David Sussman
*Seminar on <i>On What Matters</i>	Derek Parfit
*Constitutivism	Douglas Lavin
*Practical Reason and Ethics	Derek Parfit and Thomas Scanlon
*Recent Ethical Theory	Christine Korsgaard
*Understanding Actions (at Brown University)	Jaegwon Kim
Philosophy of Action	Christine Korsgaard
Intersubjectivity	Richard Moran and Douglas Lavin
First Year Colloquium: Metaphysics in Ethics	Douglas Lavin
*Contemporary Kantian Ethical Theory	Christine Korsgaard
Ethics and Action	Matthew Boyle and Douglas Lavin
Moral Objectivity (at UW-Milwaukee)	Carla Bagnoli
Virtue Ethics (at UW-Milwaukee)	Andrea Westlund
Metaethics (at UW-Milwaukee)	Gary Jaeger
Moral Emotions (at UW-Milwaukee)	Carla Bagnoli

Theoretical Philosophy

*The Ethics of Belief	Susanna Rinard
*Philosophy of Science	Ned Hall
*Other Minds	Richard Moran and Matthew Boyle
*Classics of Philosophical Psychology	Susanna Siegel
*Rationality and Irrationality	Matthew Boyle
*Metaphysical Grounding	Selim Berker
*Self, Body, Other	Matthew Boyle
*Intersubjectivity and Speech	Richard Moran
*Epistemic Normativity	Selim Berker
*Explanatory Structure	Ned Hall
*Philosophy of Mind and Perception	Susanna Siegel
*Self-Consciousness and Self-Knowledge	Matthew Boyle
Deductive Logic	Warren Goldfarb and Peter Koellner
Empirical Content	Cheryl Chen
First Year Colloquium: Causation Now and Then	Ned Hall and Alison Simmons
Skepticism (at UW-Milwaukee)	John Koethe
Personal Identity (at UW-Milwaukee)	Luca Ferrero
Belief and the Will (at UW-Milwaukee)	Edward Hinchman

History of Philosophy

*Plato and Aristotle on Desire and Friendship	Russell Jones
*Hume's Ethical Theory	Christine Korsgaard
*Aristotle's Ethics and Politics	Gisela Striker
*History of Modern Moral Philosophy	Christine Korsgaard
*Kant's Ethical Thought (Multiple Times)	Christine Korsgaard
*Hegel and Kant	Matthew Boyle
Plato's Epistemology and Metaphysics	Gisela Striker
Leibniz	Alison Simmons and Jeffrey McDonough
Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> (twice)	Matthew Boyle
*Frege, Russell, and the Early Wittgenstein	Warren Goldfarb
*The Self in Kant and Fichte (at UW-Milwaukee)	William Bristow
Hegel (at UW-Milwaukee)	Julius Sensat
Kant (at UW-Milwaukee)	Julius Sensat
Descartes (at UW-Milwaukee)	Margaret Atherton
Wittgenstein (Ind. Study) (at UW-Milwaukee)	John Koethe

Other

Harvard Moral and Political Philosophy Graduate Workshop	2011-15, Spring 2016
Harvard Metaphysics and Epistemology Graduate Workshop	Fall 2015
Pedagogy Seminar	Ned Hall and Alison Simmons
Graduate Writing Workshop (at UW-Milwaukee)	Gerhard Nuffer

Long Dissertation Abstract

'HOW AM I TO ACT?' As far as we know, only human beings can ask this question and act from our answers to it. The other animals can act in ways that are good or bad for themselves or others. I can act in some way, though, because I understand so acting to be good for myself or others. I am practically rational. Likewise, we are distinctively subject to certain normative standards in action such as moral, prudential, and rational requirements because we can guide ourselves by them in action. I argue that the only way to explain these features of our action is to endorse a kind of *constitutivism* that says that the capacities of living beings are the source of all normativity. Within this metaphysics, I argue that practical reason is the form that the will takes in a self-conscious being and thus differs from theoretical reason formally.

Whereas I argue that there is a distinctively practical form of reason, most philosophers think that reason plays only a theoretical role in our agency. Instrumentalists think that it just forms means-ends beliefs and to evaluate ends in light of other ends. A non-rational capacity gives the ends. It works out consequences from them. Intellectualists, in contrast, think that reason supplies ends for our action. These exercises of reason are theoretical, though, distinguished from others by their objects: reasons to act. On both views, then, all exercises of reason are theoretical in nature.

I argue that neither view can account for our action. Against intellectualism, I argue that if practical reason is a species of theoretical reason, practical judgments cannot have authority over the will. Without that authority, though, I cannot act from my representation of a reason to act. I then argue that if I cannot act from those representations, those reasons and a species of theoretical reason about them cannot exist. Against instrumentalism, I argue that its claims about how to decide are ambiguous between descriptive claims and normative claims. Neither disambiguation does the needed explanatory work. Instrumentalists should endorse the reduction of agency prominent in action theory under the name *the causal theory of action* in order to try to avoid this problem. However, I argue that the causal theory cannot meet its explanatory burdens. Every account of action must invoke a means-end belief, which is a belief about what I can self-consciously do in order to achieve my end. A reduction of action cannot invoke the idea of what I can self-consciously do, though, since that is what it means to explain.

Practical reason thereby must be a basic capacity of ours. I offer a general metaphysics of capacities and a specific account of practical reason in order to explain this idea. A capacity is such that a single principle describes its nature and is thereby normative for its development and exercises. I argue that this view is the only way to explain the possibility of internal normative standards, and I show how it partitions normative standards into various distinct kinds. I then turn specifically to our capacity to act self-consciously or from thought about action. It is our capacity of practical reason. I derive an instrumental requirement and a prudential requirement from the idea of acting self-consciously. Most philosophers assume that this kind of view must say that we are subject to moral requirements only if we can also derive them from the idea of acting self-consciously. I argue, though, that this kind of derivation is unnecessary and does not fit with the idea that our capacity to act is the capacity of a living being just like any other. Just as the genus of a capacity for digestion can have different species whose bearers are subject to different normative standards in their exercises of those capacities as such, so the genus of a capacity to self-consciously act can have different species whose bearers are subject to different normative standards in their exercises of those capacities as such. Just as we cannot derive all the

substantive normative standards that govern our digestion from the idea of digestion, so we cannot derive all the substantive normative standards that govern our action from the mere idea of acting self-consciously. Practical reason is thus a genus with different species, and beings with different species are subject to different normative standards. I explain why this fact should not worry us when we wonder whether we are moral beings—that is, whether we are subject to moral requirements in action as such.