

JEREMY DAVID FIX**Curriculum Vitae**

07.21.16

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Education 2008-2016 HARVARD UNIVERSITY PHD 10.2016¹
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
AOC History of Ethics, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics

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’ (*R&R at Mind*)
‘The House of Goodness’ (*under review*)
‘Practical Possibility’ (*available upon request*)

Talks ‘The House of Goodness’
.02.10.16 University of California, Riverside
‘Intellectual Isolation’
.09.05.15 4th Tennessee Value and Agency Conference, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

At Harvard University
‘Capacities and the Possibility of Error’
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop Spring 2016
‘The House of Goodness’
Nth Year Seminar 11.12.15

1. Defense is scheduled for 08.23.16.

Theoretical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Fall 2015
Safra Center Graduate Fellows Workshop	Spring 2015
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Fall 2014
‘Intellectual Isolation’	
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Spring 2015
Safra Center Graduate Fellows Workshop	Fall 2014
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Fall 2012
‘The Empty ‘I’’	
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Spring 2014
‘What and Why’	
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Fall 2013
‘How Does It Make Me Feel?’	
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Spring 2013
‘Mystic Metaphysics’	
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Spring 2012
‘I Do. What Happens?’	
Practical Philosophy Graduate Student Workshop	Fall 2011

Commentaries

‘Principles for Progressives’ (On Zachary Bachman’s ‘Defusing Korsgaard’s Bad Action Problem’)	
Harvard-MIT Graduate Conference in Philosophy	02.27.16
On Michele Rapaport’s ‘Obedience to the Law One Prescribes to Oneself is Freedom’	
Safra Center Graduate Fellows Workshop	Fall 2014

Awards

Francis Bowen Prize for ‘The House of Goodness’, Harvard University	2016
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

<i>Harvard University as Sole Instructor (tutorials for junior philosophy concentrators)</i>	
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
<i>Harvard University as Teaching Fellow</i>	
Phil 168 Kant’s Ethical Theory	S14 Korsgaard

Phil 178 Equality and Liberty	F13 Scanlon
Phil 137 The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein	S13 Moran
Phil 012 Introduction to the Philosophy of Law	S12 Lavin
Phil 173 Metaethics	F11 Berker
Phil 161 Self-Consciousness and Personal Identity	S11 Chen
Phil 007 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy	F10 Jones

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Phil 101 Introduction to Philosophy (INS)	F07 S08
Phil 101 Introduction to Philosophy (TA)	S07 Koethe
Phil 101 Introduction to Philosophy (TA)	F06 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 2010-16

Service *Refereeing*
Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy (2016)

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
University of Chicago

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	Berker and Parfit	Intersubjectivity	Moran and Lavin
*The Moral Sentiments	Sussman	Colloquium: Metaphysics in Ethics	Lavin
*Seminar on <i>On What Matters</i>	Parfit	*Contemporary Kantian Ethical Theory	Korsgaard
*Constitutivism	Lavin	Ethics and Action	Boyle and Lavin
*Practical Reason and Ethics	Parfit and Scanlon	Moral Objectivity (at UWM)	Bagnoli
*Recent Ethical Theory	Korsgaard	Virtue Ethics (at UWM)	Westlund
*Understanding Actions (at Brown)	Kim	Metaethics (at UWM)	Jaeger
Philosophy of Action	Korsgaard	Moral Emotions (at UWM)	Bagnoli

Theoretical Philosophy

*Philosophy of Action	Moran	*Explanatory Structure	Hall
*The Ethics of Belief	Rinard	*Philosophy of Mind and Perception	Siegel
*Philosophy of Science	Hall	*Self-Consciousness and Self-Knowledge (twice)	Boyle
*Other Minds	Moran and Boyle	Deductive Logic	Goldfarb and Koellner
*Classics of Philosophical Psychology	Siegel	Empirical Content	Chen
*Rationality and Irrationality	Boyle	Colloquium: Causation Now and Then	Hall and Simmons
*Metaphysical Grounding	Berker	Skepticism (at UWM)	Koethe
*Self, Body, Other	Boyle	Personal Identity (at UWM)	Ferrero
*Intersubjectivity and Speech	Moran	Belief and the Will (at UWM)	Hinchman
*Epistemic Normativity	Berker		

History of Philosophy

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

Other

Harvard Practical Philosophy Graduate Workshop	2011-15, Spring 2016
Harvard Theoretical Philosophy Graduate Workshop	Fall 2015
Pedagogy Seminar	Hall and Simmons
Graduate Writing Workshop (at UWM)	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 its only roles are to form means-ends beliefs and 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.