

# Dr Anastasia Berg

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## Employment

2017- | Dorothy and Gaylord Donnelley Postdoctoral Junior Research Fellow in Philosophy,  
Corpus Christi College, The University of Cambridge (three-year appointment)

## Education

2017 | PhD The Committee on Social Thought and the Department of Philosophy, University of  
Chicago (August 2017)  
2013 | MA Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago  
2009 | BA with Honors in English and American Literature and Language, Harvard University

## Specialization

AOS | Kant, Moral Psychology (esp. Theory of the Emotions), Ethics  
AOC | 19<sup>th</sup> Century German Philosophy, Ancient Philosophy, Early Modern Philosophy

## Dissertation

Title	<i>Freedom, Feeling and Character: The Unity of Reason and Sensibility in Kant's Practical Philosophy</i>
Committee	Robert Pippin (Chair), James Conant, Matthew Boyle, Stephen Engstrom
Abstract	The dominant reception of Kant accords him the view that our capacities for feeling and for self-determination are essentially independent of one another. The negative aim of the dissertation is to argue against this standard interpretation; the positive aim is to offer an alternative. I argue that the standard interpretation is not only alien to our ordinary self-understanding but that it moreover threatens the internal coherence of Kant's account. I develop an alternative by examining Kant's account of how reason <i>motivates</i> the agent: first, in his account of the feeling of moral respect, and, second, in his account of moral character. I argue that moral respect does not name one particular feeling among many but that implicit in Kant's account is idea that human feeling is a unique kind of practical self-consciousness. In the first instance moral respect discloses to the subject her own rationality and efficaciousness, i.e., discloses her to herself as a moral agent. The distinctively human capacity for feeling emerges therefore as the form of self-consciousness <i>constitutive of practical agency</i> , i.e., of freedom. This understanding of feeling allows us to reevaluate Kant's account of moral character. I argue that character is the <i>activity</i> of constituting one's identity as a practical agent. On the alternative interpretation of Kant's account that I propose, feeling and character emerge not as threats to rationality and freedom, but the very manifestation of reason in us.

## **Publications**

“Kant on Moral Self-Opacity,” forthcoming in *European Journal of Philosophy* (2020)

“Kant on Moral Respect,” forthcoming in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* (2020)

“Evil or Only Immature? Reconciling Freedom and the Complexity of Moral Evil in Kant,” forthcoming in *Rethinking Kant*, Edgar Valdez, ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2020)

“Desire: between Action and Passion,” forthcoming in *Practical Reason: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, James Conant and Dawa Ometto, eds. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020)

“‘Language is Critical’: On Kimhi’s Radicalization of the Kantian Project,” forthcoming in *Essays on Irad Kimhi’s Thinking and Being* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2021)

## **Reviews**

Review of Melissa Merritt, *Kant on Reflection and Virtue*, in *British Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 2019

Review of Philip Pettit, *The Birth of Ethics – The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, forthcoming in *Mind*

## **Work in Progress**

“Kant on The Freedom to do What we Want” *Under Review*

“The Emotions as Modes of Practical Self-Consciousness” (in progress)

## **Non-Academic Journal Publications**

TBD, On Katrina Forrester's *In the Shadow of Justice: Postwar Liberalism and the Remaking of Political Philosophy*, *The Times Literary Supplement* (forthcoming)

“On Choosing Life,” *The Point* (September 7, 2019)

“Finite Variety: On Martin Hägglund’s *This Life: Why mortality makes us free*,” *The Times Literary Supplement* (October 1, 2019)

“The Case for Admissions Lotteries,” *Chronicle of Higher Education Review* (September 13, 2019)

“Confession is Just a Special Form of Bragging: On Fleabag,” *Los Angeles Review of Books* (July 30, 2019)

“Fanning the Flames while the Humanities Burn,” *Chronicle of Higher Education Review* (May 20, 2019)

“On Left Straussianism,” *The Point* (May, 2019)

“On Denialism,” *The Point* (January, 2019)

“I Am Madame Bovary: ‘Cat Person’ and the Dark Pleasures of Empathy,” (April, 2018)

## Invited Talks

- Jun 2020 | *TBD*, keynote  
The Loxbridge Kant Series, Oxford University
- Apr 2020 | “Desire: Between Passion and Action”  
Moral Sciences Club, Cambridge University
- Apr 2020 | “Kant and Moral Luck”  
German Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago
- Feb 2020 | “Meritocracy and Higher Education,” Panel Discussion with Ross Douthat  
The UNC Program for Public Discourse, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- Jan 2020 | *TBD*,  
Colloquium Lecture Series, Central European University, Budapest
- Jun 2019 | “Self-Knowledge, Self-Deception and Self-Opacity”  
Stephen Hales Lecture Series, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University
- Mar 2019 | “Kant on the Freedom to do Evil”  
German Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago
- Mar 2019 | “‘Language is Critical’: On Irad Kimhi’s Radicalization of the Kantian Project”  
Workshop on Irad Kimhi’s *Thinking and Being*, University of Chicago
- Dec 2018 | “The Origin of Practical Reason in the Transcendental Power of Imagination: Heidegger on Kant”  
Conference on Neo Kantianism and Jewish Thought, Tel Aviv University
- Dec 2018 | “Overcoming the Opposition of Freedom and Nature in Kant’s Practical Philosophy: A Critique of the Incorporation Thesis”  
King’s History of Philosophy Seminar, King’s College London
- Nov 2018 | “Kant’s Feeling of Moral Respect as Practical Self-Consciousness”  
Kant’s Scots Seminar, Edinburgh University
- Jun 2018 | “Kant on The Human Capacity for Feeling,”  
Conference on Additive vs. Transformative Conceptions of Rationality, University of Patras
- Jun 2018 | “Evil or Only Immature? Reconciling Freedom and the Complexity Of Moral Evil”  
Conference on Kant’s Religionsschrift, Leipzig University
- Jun 2018 | “The Emotions as Modes of Practical Self-Consciousness”  
Philosophy of Mind Seminar, University of Cambridge
- Jun 2018 | “Kant’s Feeling of Moral Respect as Practical Self-Consciousness”  
Conceptions of Kantian Unity Workshop, University of Cambridge
- Feb 2018 | “Kant on The Human Capacity for Feeling”  
Society of German Idealism and Romanticism, APA Session on Conceptions of Matter and Form, 2018 meeting of the Central Division of the APA

- Feb 2018 “Practical Reason in Kant: Self-Conscious or Self-Opaque?”  
German Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago
- Feb 2018 “‘For All I know...’ On the Infallibility of Our capacity for Judgment”  
A Workshop on Andrea Kern’s *Sources of Knowledge*, University of Chicago
- Nov 2017 “Feeling and Absolute Value in Wittgenstein’s Lecture on Ethics”  
Robinson College, Cambridge University
- Jun 2017 “Feeling”  
Summer Conference on Irad Kimhi’s *Thinking and Being*, Leipzig University
- Jun 2017 “An Argument Against the Incorporation Thesis”  
Hylomorphism in Kant and German Idealism Workshop, Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung (ZfL), Berlin

### Refereed Conference Presentations

- Feb 2020 “Kant on Moral Self-Opacity”  
Symposium Presentation, 2019 APA Central Division Meeting
- Apr 2019 “Evil and the Problem of Moral Self Knowledge”  
British Society for the History of Philosophy Annual Conference, King’s College London
- Sep 2018 “Overcoming the Opposition of Freedom and Nature in Kant’s Practical Philosophy: A Critique of the Incorporation Thesis” UK Kant Society Annual Conference on “The Nature of Freedom and the Freedom of Nature”, Cardiff University
- Nov 2017 “Evil or Only Immature? Reconciling Freedom and the Complexity Of Moral Evil,”  
2017 Southern North American Kant Society Study Group, Tulane University
- Jun 2017 “You Can’t Move without Being Moved: On the Moral Significance of The Human Capacity for Feeling,” Leuven Kant Conference, KU Leuven
- Apr 2017 “You Can’t Move without Being Moved: On the Moral Significance of The Human Capacity for Feeling,” Eastern Study Group Meeting of the North American Kant Society, George Washington University
- Apr 2017 “Evil or Only Immature? On Acquiring Moral Character in Kant,” The Conference on the Problem Evil in European Modern and Contemporary Philosophy, Bishop’s University
- Mar 2017 “You Can’t Move without Being Moved: On the Moral Significance of The Human Capacity for Feeling,” The Northwestern Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics (NUSTEP), Eleventh Annual Conference, Northwestern University
- Jun 2016 “Moral Character, Kant’s *Gesinnung* and Aristotle’s *Hexis*,” Summer Conference on the work of Aryeh Kosman, Leipzig University
- Apr 2016 “How Can There Be Rational Feeling? Monistic Critique of the Incorporation

	Thesis,” The 2016 Graduate Philosophy Conference at UIUC
Mar 2016	“Making Sense of Kant’s Moral Respect: A Case for Non-Pathological Feeling,” Colloquium Presentation, 2016 APA Central Division Meeting
Sep 2015	“Kant’s <i>Gesinnung</i> as Aristotelian <i>Energeia</i> : the Deed Outside Time,” UK Kant Society Annual Conference jointly organized by North American Kant Society, on “Kant on Politics and Religion”
Jul 2015	“On The Unity of Sensibility and Reason in Practical Life in Engstrom’s Kant,” Summer Conference on the work of Stephen Engstrom, Leipzig University

### Commentaries

May 2016	Comments on Garrett Bredeson’s “Reinach, Natorp, and Early Phenomenology’s Engagement with the Kantian Tradition” North American Kant Society Third Biennial Meeting, Emory University (Invited)
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### Honours

Nov 2017	Travel Prize for best graduate student paper, Southern Reading Group, North American Kant Society (Candidate for the 2017 national Marcus Herz prize)
May 2017	Travel Prize for best graduate student paper, Eastern Reading Group, North American Kant Society (Candidate for the 2017 national Marcus Herz prize)
2016-2017	William Rainey Harper Dissertation Year Fellowship Dissertation Completion Fellowship, University of Chicago
2016-2017	John U. Nef Fellowship, University of Chicago Dissertation Writing Fellowship (Declined)
2016	Graduate Student Travel Stipend to Central APA
2015-2016	John U. Nef Fellowship, University of Chicago Dissertation Writing Fellowship
2015	Division of the Social Sciences Summer Research Grant
2014-2015	Marshall and Deborah Wais Fellowship, University of Chicago Dissertation Writing Fellowship
2014	John U. Nef Summer Language Study Fellowship
2009-2014	University of Chicago Fellowship, University of Chicago Tuition and stipend for five years of graduate study
2011	John U. Nef Summer Language Study Fellowship

### Teaching Experience

#### *Lecturing at the University of Cambridge*

F 2019	<i>Moral Responsibility</i> Advanced Undergraduates Lecture Series
W 2020	<i>Moral Motivation</i> Advanced Undergraduates Lecture Series

*Supervision Topics at the University of Cambridge:* European Philosophy from Kant, Philosophy of Mind, Ethics

*Stand-alone Instructor at the University of Chicago*

S 2016	<i>The Emotions: Philosophy and Psychoanalysis</i> Self-designed upper-level undergraduate course
W 2016	<i>Philosophical Perspectives on The Humanities II</i> Humanities Core Course: Early Modern Philosophy and Literature
F 2015	<i>Philosophical Perspectives on The Humanities I</i> Humanities Core Course: Ancient Philosophy and Literature

*Course Assistant at the University of Chicago*

S 2015	<i>Introduction to Ethics</i> , Dr. Ben Callard
W 2014	<i>Greek Thought and Literature II</i> , Prof. Alain Bresson
S 2013	<i>Philosophical Perspectives on The Humanities III</i> (Hume, Kant, Nietzsche), Prof. Anubav Vasudevan
W 2013	<i>Human Being and Citizen II</i> (Aristotle, Augustine), Prof. Justin Steinberg
S 2011	<i>Classics of Social and Political Thought III</i> , Prof. Lisa Wedeen
W 2010	<i>Classics of Social and Political Thought II</i> , Dr. Mara Marin

**Pedagogical Training** (at the University of Chicago)

July 2016	<i>Seminar on Course Design</i> , Center for Teaching & Learning
Winter 2016	Individual Teaching Consultation, Center for Teaching & Learning Observed and taped by a professional teaching consultant
Mar 2015	<i>Climate-focused pedagogy workshop</i> : diversity and inclusion, Department of Philosophy,
Sep 2015	<i>Workshop on Teaching in the College</i> (for lecturers), Center for Teaching & Learning
Sep 2014	<i>Workshop on Teaching in the College</i> (for course assistants), Center for Teaching & Learning,
Spring 2013	<i>Pedagogies of Writing</i> , Writing Center, University of Chicago Quarter-long course on teaching effective writing in humanities core classes

**Courses Prepared to Teach**

*Introductory Undergraduate Courses*

Kant and Post-Kantian Philosophy  
Introduction to Ethics  
Introduction to Ancient Philosophy  
Introduction to Early Modern Philosophy

*Advanced Undergraduate Courses*

Kant's Theoretical Philosophy  
Kant's Practical Philosophy  
The Emotions: Historical and Contemporary perspectives  
Moral Motivation  
Moral Responsibility  
Evil and Moral Failure

*Graduate Courses*

Conceptualism vs Non-Conceptualism in Kant  
Kant on Practical Reason and Practical Sensibility

Unity of Reason: Parallel Issues in Kant's Theoretical and Practical Philosophy  
Neo-Kantian Accounts of Moral Motivation and Practical Agency  
Contemporary Theories of Desire  
Irad Kimhi's *Thinking and Being*

### **Service**

Article Referee for *Kantian Review*, *European Journal of Philosophy*, *Erkenntnis*

2018-	MA Thesis Examiner, Cambridge University
2018-	Undergraduate Philosophy Admissions, Cambridge University
2016-2017	Coordinator, German Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago
2015-2017	Student Affairs Coordinator, Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago Chair-student liaison, fielded prospective students' inquiries, coordinated visits, maintained department website
2014-2016	Coordinator, Committee on Social Thought Colloquium, University of Chicago Invited visiting speakers, students and faculty to present, made travel arrangements, organized dinners and receptions, advertised events

### **Research Languages**

Native	English, Russian, Hebrew
Professional	German
Basic	Ancient Greek, Latin, French

### **Non-Academic Editorial Work**

Senior Contributing Editor for the *Point* magazine

## References

**Robert Pippin** (Dissertation Committee Chair)  
Evelyn Stefansson Nef Distinguished Service  
Professor of Social Thought, Philosophy, and in the  
College  
University of Chicago  
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**James Conant** (Dissertation Committee member)  
Chester D. Tripp Professor of Humanities, Professor  
of Philosophy, and Professor in the College  
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**Jason Bridges** (teaching reference)  
Associate Professor of Philosophy  
University of Chicago  
[bridges@uchicago.edu](mailto:bridges@uchicago.edu)

**Lucy Allais**  
Henry E. Allison Chair of the History of Philosophy  
The University of California, San Diego  
and Professor of Philosophy  
University of the Witwatersrand  
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**Stephen Engstrom** (Dissertation Committee  
member)  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Pittsburgh  
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**Matthew Boyle** (Dissertation Committee member)  
Professor of Philosophy  
University of Chicago  
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**David Wellbery**  
LeRoy T. and Margaret Deffenbaugh Carlson  
University Professor in the Department of Germanic  
Studies, Comparative Literature, Committee on  
Social Thought, and the College  
University of Chicago  
[wellbery@uchicago.edu](mailto:wellbery@uchicago.edu)



## Dissertation Overview

### *Freedom, Feeling and Character: The Unity of Reason and Sensibility in Kant's Practical Philosophy*

Kant's moral philosophy is often interpreted as turning on a sharp opposition between freedom and feeling. This interpretative line ignores two key moments in Kant's account where reason and feeling—activity and receptivity—are portrayed as interdependent constituents of a unified capacity to act well: the feeling of moral respect and the constitution of character. In each case the standard picture raises a puzzle about the text: First, how can moral respect be a feeling and yet be integral for rational motivation? And second, how can I be held responsible for actions that are grounded in character, something I don't choose or do in any ordinary sense? In answering these questions, it emerges that Kant is not only a forceful critic of a dualistic conception of reason and feeling but that he is moreover an insightful guide toward a coherent non-dualistic view of their relationship.

The dominant reception of Kant attributes to him an account in which we are essentially rational, free beings capable of self-determination, *and yet* are also subject to our feelings—the latter, products of nature and habituation, which are both outside of our “rational control.” This putative dualism, I argue in Chapter 1, is not only alien to our ordinary self-understanding but also threatens the internal coherence of the Kantian account. I examine the dominant interpretation of the relation between the rational will and feeling, namely, Henry Allison's Incorporation Thesis (endorsed by Guyer, Wood, Korsgaard and Baron, among others), according to which an agent is responsible for acting on contingent desire insofar as that agent has freely “incorporated” that desire into her principle of action by deeming the desire a reason to act. I argue however that as long as desire is understood as a brute fact, it cannot itself ever come to be considered as a reason to act. This reading, I argue, therefore leaves it mysterious how agents can be said to freely act on their desires, and therefore be responsible for acting morally badly.

While commentators have previously considered that the feeling of moral respect might hold the key to Kant's understanding of the relation between reason and feeling, I argue that they have nevertheless failed to appreciate what is philosophically most distinctive and profound in Kant's account of the role of feeling in the life of a practically rational agent. In Chapter 2, I argue that implicit in Kant's account of the feeling of moral respect is the remarkable idea that human emotion is a unique mode of self-consciousness, one which discloses the subject to herself as rational, embodied and capable of freely determining herself to act in the world. Human feeling emerges on this account as the form of self-consciousness *constitutive of practical agency*, i.e., of freedom.

This reading of moral respect opens a new perspective on the topic of *moral character*. On standard accounts of Kant's practical philosophy character is interpreted as an aggregate of dispositions to act that result from mere empirical habituation. This renders mysterious how character is supposed to play the role that it does on Kant's account: as the object of moral valuation. I argue in Chapter 3, that character is instead the *activity* of maintaining oneself as a self-conscious practical agent. I further argue that maintaining one's practical self-consciousness depends on the cultivation of capacities for feeling. This is why, I conclude, Kant can claim that the cultivation of a capacity for moral feeling is a necessary condition of our being subject to the demands of reason. Finally, in Chapter 4, I attend to the apparent tension between Kant's rigorism—the claim that an agent is of either wholly good or wholly evil character—and his nuanced account of the grades of moral imperfection. To do this, I argue, we must recognize the *acquisition* of moral character as a form of rational accomplishment: the development and determination of our rational capacities for feeling.

The resulting account of feeling and moral character does not only resolve the problem of moral motivation that has vexed much Kant commentary, it also offers an account of practical cognition according to which nothing could be further from the truth than the idea that our capacity of feeling is a threat to our freedom and an obstacle to ethical life; feeling, instead, is the manifestation of reason in human beings, the rational, finite and dependent beings that we are.