

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, Ethics, Moral Psychology (esp. Theory of the Emotions)
AOC | Early Modern Philosophy, 19th Century German Philosophy, Ancient 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 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.

Work in Progress

“Kant on Feeling as Practical Self-Consciousness” *Under Review*

“The Freedom to do Evil: A Critique of the Incorporation Thesis” *Under Review*

“Evil or Only Immature? Reconciling Freedom and the Complexity of Moral Evil in Kant”

“Practical Reason in Kant: Self-Conscious or Self-Opaque?”

“The Emotions as Modes of Practical Self-Consciousness”

Reviews

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

Invited Presentations

Mar 2018	“Kant’s Schematism and Kimhi’s Sign Repeatability” Workshop on Irad Kimhi’s <i>Thinking and Being</i> , 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 Conference, Tel Aviv University
Dec 2018	TBD 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, 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”
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

- Apr 2018 | “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,” 2016 APA Central Division Meeting

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| 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

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| 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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University Workshop Presentations

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| May 2017 | “Habit and Responsibility, An Aristotelian Proposal,” Practical Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago |
| Apr 2017 | “Evil or Only Immature? On Acquiring Character in Kant,” German Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago |
| Jun 2016 | “The Unity of Logos and Erōs in Plato’s Phaedrus—The unity of Soul and Body of a Living Being,” Literature and Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago |
| Mar 2016 | “Imputation of Moral Constitution,” Practical Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago |
| Nov 2015 | “Moral Respect, A Case for Non-Pathological feeling,” German Philosophy Workshop, University of Chicago |

Honours

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| 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

Supervision Topics at the University of Cambridge

S 2018		<i>Philosophy of Mind (Emotion)</i>
F 2018		<i>European Philosophy from Kant</i>

Stand-alone Instructor at the University of Chicago

S 2016		<i>The Emotions: Philosophy and Psychoanalysis</i> Self-designed upper-level undergraduate course
W 2015		<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

Service

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

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

Research Languages

Native	English, Hebrew, Russian
Professional	German

Non-Academic Editorial Work

Senior Contributing Editor for the Point Magazine, Co-host of the Point Magazine Podcast “Rather be Reading”

Graduate Coursework (* denotes audit)

Ancient Philosophy	Plato, <i>Laws</i> : N. Tarcov (A 09) Plato’s Aesthetics: G. R. Lear (A 09)* Plato on Beauty and Truth: G. R. Lear (A 12)* Plato’s <i>Sophist</i> : I. Kimhi (W12)*
Philosophy of Mind	Self-Consciousness / Unconsciousness: J. Lear & S. Rödl (W 10)* Subjects, Consciousness and Self-Consciousness: C. Peacock (W 11)* Thinking and Being I: I. Kimhi (W 12)* Thinking and Being II: I. Kimhi (S 12)* Language and Self-Consciousness: D. Finkelstein & I. Kimhi (S 14)* Theories of Judgments and Propositions, I. Kimhi (W 14)*
Kant and 19 th C. German philosophy	Kant’s Ethics: C. Vogler (A 10) History of Philosophy, Kant and the 19 th Century: M. Forster (S 10)* Kant’s Transcendental Deduction: R. Pippin & J. Conant (S 10) Practical Reason: S. Engstrom (W 14)* Hegel’s <i>Science of Logic</i> : R. Pippin (W 12) Hegel’s <i>Science of Logic</i> : R. Pippin (W 14)* Hegel’s <i>Science of Subjective Logic</i> : R. Pippin (W 15)* Birth and Death of the Metaphysical Proof of the Existence of God, Descartes and Kant: J. L. Marion (S 10)*
Analytic Philosophy	Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy: D. Finkelstein (S 11) Wittgenstein’s <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> : J. Conant (W 12)* Wittgenstein’s <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> : I. Kimhi (A 14)* Forms of Philosophical Skepticism: J. Conant (W 11)

References

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Studies, Comparative Literature, Committee on
Social Thought, and the College
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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.