

Reid Blackman

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Areas of Specialization

Ethics (esp. history and meta-ethics), Moral Psychology (esp. emotions), Nietzsche

Areas of Competence

Philosophy of Mind, Environmental Ethics, Bio-Ethics, Social & Political Philosophy

Employment

Colgate University, Visiting Assistant Professor, January 2009 – present

Courses taught: Practical Reason, Meta-ethics, Philosophy of Mind, Ethics, Environmental Ethics, Social & Political Philosophy, Introduction to Philosophy

Misc.: Academic Advisor for 25 students, chair and/or member of 13 honors committees, organizer of undergraduate reading group on bio-ethics, coach for Ethics Bowl team

Education

University of Texas-Austin, Ph.D. Philosophy, December 2008

Role Aristotelianism: An Explication and Defense

Committee chairs: Jonathan Dancy, John Deigh

Northwestern University, M.A. Philosophy, 2003

Cornell University, B.A. Philosophy, 2001

Publications

- “Meta-Ethical Realism with Good of a Kind,” in *The European Journal of Philosophy* (forthcoming).
- “Intentionality and Compound Accounts of the Emotions,” in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* (forthcoming).
- “Nietzsche’s ‘Interpretation’ in the *Genealogy*,” *The British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 18 (4) 2010: 693-711.
- Review of The Nature of Intrinsic Value, by Michael Zimmerman, *Ethics*, January 2008.

Papers Under Review (abstracts can be found at www.reidblackman.com)

- Two Varieties of Aristotelianism
- What is an Ideal?
- Intrinsic Value without Final Value
- In Defense of Cognitivism about the Emotions
- Yes We Can: Arguments in Defense of Compatibilism

Professional Service: Referee for: *Erkenntnis*, *The Journal of Value Inquiry* (x2)

Presentations

Comments on “A Posteriori Reduction of Moral Judgment”

- Pacific Meeting, APA April 2012

Comments on Nomy Arpaly's and Timothy Schroeder's 'Deliberation and Acting for Reasons'

- Northwestern Society for the Theory of Ethics 5th Annual Conference, May 2011

Comments on Travis Rieder's 'Why Parity Arguments Cannot Save Normative Realism'

- Pacific Meeting, APA, April 2011

"Nonconceptual Content and the Philosophy of Emotion"

- Colgate University, October 2010

"What Should We Learn from Nietzsche's Ethics?"

- Pacific Meeting, APA, April 2010

"Rousseau and the Universal Healthcare Debate"

- Northern Michigan University, April 2010

"Meta-Ethical Realism with Good of a Kind"

- SUNY-Oneonta, April 2009

"Two Kinds of Goodness"

- UT-Austin Graduate Colloquium, November 2007

Reply to Ken Gemes's "Nietzsche on Free Will, Autonomy, and the Sovereign Individual"

- Conference on Nietzsche, UT-Austin, February 2007

"Intrinsic and Extrinsic Final Value"

- UT-Austin Graduate Colloquium, January 2007

"Non-Instrumentally Valuing Persons"

- UT-Austin Graduate Colloquium, March 2006

"Philosophy of Emotion and Neurobiology"

- Neurobiology Graduate Student Conference, UT-Austin, 2000

Extra-Academic Philosophy Venture

- Founder, The Driving Philosopher, at www.thedrivingphilosopher.com, January 2012
 - A video blog dedicated to explaining various philosophical positions, arguments, and ideas, to the non-academic community.
- Co-Founder, Co-President, Co-Writer, *Let's Think About It!*, 1998-present
 - A non-profit organization that writes and sells books for children, teaching how to think about issues of ethical import from a variety of perspectives (grades 2-8).
 - Website: <http://www.intellikit.com>

Graduate Courses Taken ("*" indicates the class was audited)

University of Texas-Austin

- Meta-ethics, John Deigh, Fall 2007*
- Practicality of Moral Judgment, Jonathan Dancy, Spring 2007*
- Ethics in the Twentieth Century, Jonathan Dancy, Spring 2006*
- Philosophy of Emotion, John Deigh and Robert Solomon, Fall 2004*
- Nietzsche and Foucault, Brian Leiter, Fall 2004*
- Logic, Nicholas Asher, Spring 2004
- Moral Psychology, John Deigh, Spring 2004

- Concept of Rights, David Braybrooke, Spring 2004
- Virtue Ethics, Tara Smith, Fall 2003
- Nietzsche and Ethics, Brian Leiter, Fall 2003
- Ontological Commitment, Joshua Dever, Fall 2003

Northwestern University

- Aesthetics, Richard Wollheim, Spring 2003
- The Self (Psychology department), Wendi Gardner, Spring 2003
- Hegel's Philosophy of Right II, Terry Pinkard, Spring 2003
- Hegel's Philosophy of Right I, Terry Pinkard, Winter 2003
- German Philosophy from Kant to Nietzsche, Terry Pinkard, Winter 2003
- Virtue Ethics, Richard Kraut, Winter 2003
- Expressivism and Sensibility Theory, John Deigh, Fall 2002
- Philosophy of Mind, Ariela Lazar, Fall 2002
- Multiculturalism and Constitutional Limits, Jurgen Habermas, Fall 2002
- Reasons for Action, Jonathan Dancy, Spring 2002
- Modern Philosophy, Bob Gooding-Williams, Spring 2002
- Kant's Ethics II, Derrick Darby, Spring 2002
- Kant's Ethics I, Derrick Darby, Winter, 2002
- Heidegger, Cristina LaFont, Winter 2002
- Ethical Theory, John Deigh, Winter 2002
- Philosophy of Language, Cristina LaFont, Fall 2001
- Philosophy of Emotion, John Deigh, Fall 2001
- Ancient Philosophy, Richard Kraut, Fall 2001

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Role Aristotelianism: An Explication and Defense

(note: The core of my thesis, and arguments for that thesis, can be found in my "Meta-Ethical Realism with Good of a Kind", in *The European Journal of Philosophy*)

I think we ought to be Aristotelians about ethics, but not because people are members of a biological kind, human being, in which there are implicit standards for what counts as a good member of the kind. Instead, I think evaluations of people and their lives are grounded in people's memberships in various role kinds, e.g. philosopher, citizen, and moral agent, where these evaluations are truth evaluable and at least sometimes true; I am an Aristotelian cognitive realist.

Before defending this view in my dissertation, I try to weaken the grip other views about the good might have on us. First, I argue, along with Hume, Peter Geach, J.L. Mackie, Richard Kraut, Richard Joyce, and others, that we ought to be anti-realists about the property of being good simpliciter (or good "full stop", "period" or "sans phrase"), and second, I argue against Philippa Foot's, Michael Thompson's, and Rosalind Hursthouse's view that we can ground evaluations of people and their lives in their membership in the biological kind 'human being'. From the criticisms I offer I draw two important lesson: i) claims about something being a good member of its kind does not give rise to the skeptical worries we have about good simpliciter, and ii) our evaluations of people and their lives often concern their memberships in non-biological kinds, or as I prefer to put it, *role kinds*. The challenge, then, is this: to conceive of what it is to be a good person, and what it is to lead a good life, in terms of people's memberships in role kinds and *not at all* in terms of what is good simpliciter. The core of my dissertation is concerned with illustrating how this can be done.

As regards how to conceive of the goodness of a life, I argue as follows. First, people are members of various role kinds, sometimes voluntarily and sometimes involuntarily, and people attain various levels of goodness as members, e.g. good philosopher, bad citizen, etc.

Second, one is not only a member of a role kind, but lives the life of a member of that kind, and that life may be a good or bad one of that kind. Lastly, a person's life is, in large part, a set of different role kinds of lives; one lives not just a philosopher's life, but a philosopher's, parent's, thrill-seeker's life, and one's life goes well to the extent one lives a good life of each of the kinds of which one is a member, viz. by achieving the ends that are appropriate to members of those kinds. Put differently, it is not the good life of a human being that is of ethical interest – since there is no such thing – but the good life of, for example, a philosopher/citizen/moral agent that is of ethical interest.

As regards how to conceive of the goodness of a person, or as I prefer to put it, the goodness of a person qua moral agent, we may extend the structure of our understanding of 'good philosopher' to 'good moral agent'. We understand that a good-making feature of a philosopher is open-mindedness; open-mindedness is a virtue of a philosopher qua philosopher. More generally, 'philosopher virtue' means 'good-philosopher-making' and refers to those traits that make a philosopher a good one. Similarly, we understand that a good-making feature of a moral agent is being compassionate; being compassionate is a virtue of a moral agent. More generally 'moral virtue' means 'good-moral-agent-making' and refers to those traits that make a moral agent a good one. As with a philosopher, what the moral virtues are is a function of the ends of a moral agent, and what those ends are is a matter of great dispute. In fact, that is exactly the dispute with which normative ethicists are concerned, and it is a virtue of the meta-ethical view I defend that it is neutral as regards what that end is (or what those ends are).

My dissertation concludes with an analysis of what it is to have an ideal, which I take to be a central part of an agent's psychology. I argue that having an ideal is a matter of various facts striking the agent as reasons for action and emotion, where those facts relate to her being a good member of the kinds of which she is a member. Having the ideal of being a good philosopher, for example, involves seeing the fact that studying Plato would sharpen one's philosophical skills as a reason for studying Plato, and having the ideal of being a good moral agent is constituted, in part, by seeing the fact that she is suffering as a reason to help her.

Academic References

Ethics and Philosophy of Emotion

- **Jonathan Dancy**, jdancy@mail.utexas.edu
- **John Deigh**, jdeigh@law.utexas.edu
- **Robert Kane**, rkane@uts.cc.utexas.edu
- **Richard Kraut**, rkraut1@northwestern.edu
- **Gary Watson**, gary.watson@ucr.edu

Nietzsche

- **Maudemarie Clark**, mclark@mail.colgate.edu
- **Brian Leiter**, bleiter@law.utexas.edu

Teaching

- **David McCabe**, dmccabe@colgate.edu
- **David Dudrick**, ddudrick@colgate.edu