

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY  
SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL THEORY  
AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
MAY 17-19, 2007



CONFERENCE PROGRAM



The program cover photos can be found at:

<http://www.mech.northwestern.edu/web/home/whynu.htm>

<http://www.cnn.com/interactive/allpolitics/0401/gallery.northwestern/content.1.html>

**THURSDAY, MAY 17**  
**PARKES HALL 122**

---

**9:05-10:25**

**“CONSENT AND THE FORMULA OF HUMANITY”**

**SPEAKER: JAPA PALLIKKATHAYIL, HARVARD  
UNIVERSITY**

**COMMENTATOR: KATIE PADGETT WALSH,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**10:40-12:00**

**“THE NATURE OF INCLINATION”**

**SPEAKER: PROF. TAMAR SCHAPIRO, STANFORD  
UNIVERSITY**

**COMMENTATOR: PROF. MARYA SCHECHTMAN,  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO**

**2:05-3:25**

**“UTILITY, AUTONOMY, AND THE HARM  
PRINCIPLE”**

**SPEAKER: JAMES SHERMAN, UNIVERSITY OF  
TEXAS AT AUSTIN**

**COMMENTATOR: MELISSA YATES,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**3:40-5:00**

**“GOVERNING WITHOUT COERCION”**

**SPEAKER: ROB HUGHES, UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES**

**COMMENTATOR: CHIKE JEFFERS,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**FRIDAY, MAY 18**  
**HARRIS HALL 108**

**9:05-10:25**

**“ALL TOO HUMAN”**

**SPEAKER: PROF. JULIE TANNENBAUM,  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
COMMENTATOR: PROF. RICHARD KRAUT,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**10:40-12:00**

**“AUTHORITY, SECOND PERSONAL REASONS,  
AND VALUE”**

**SPEAKER: DANIEL GROLL, UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO  
COMMENTATOR: BRAD COKELET,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**1:40-3:00**

**“INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS”**

**SPEAKER: PROF. HELGA VARDEN, UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN  
COMMENTATOR: PROF. KYLA EBELS DUGGAN,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**3:15-5:00**

**“AUTHORITY AND SECOND-PERSONAL  
REASONS FOR ACTING”**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: PROF. STEPHEN DARWALL,  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
COMMENTATOR: PROF. MARK LEBAR, OHIO  
UNIVERSITY**



**SATURDAY, MAY 19**  
**HARRIS HALL 108**

**9:05-10:25**

**“ON THE KANTIAN DISTINCTION BETWEEN  
PRUDENTIAL AND MORAL COMMANDS”**

**SPEAKER: PROF. TAMRA FREI, MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

**COMMENTATOR: PROF. TAD BRENNAN,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**10:40-12:00**

**“A DEFENSE OF A PARTICULARIST RESEARCH  
PROGRAM”**

**SPEAKER: URI LEIBOWITZ, UNIVERSITY OF  
MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST**

**COMMENTATOR: TUSHAR IRANI,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**1:40-3:00**

**“ACTING FOR THE RIGHT REASONS”**

**SPEAKER: PROF. JULIA MARKOVITS, HARVARD  
UNIVERSITY**

**COMMENTATOR: PROF. JON GARTHOFF,  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**3:15-5:00**

**“MORALITY UNBOUNDED”**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: PROF. BARBARA HERMAN,  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES**

**COMMENTATOR: PROF. DAVID SUSSMAN,  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**

## **SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES AND PAPER ABSTRACTS**

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE ON THE PROGRAM)

---

### **JAPA PALLIKKATHAYIL** HARVARD UNIVERSITY, PH.D. CANDIDATE

PALLIKKATHAYIL'S RESEARCH INTERESTS ARE IN MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN THE TWO. HER DISSERTATION EXAMINES THE NORMATIVE STATUS OF COERCION IN MORAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS.

#### **"CONSENT AND THE FORMULA OF HUMANITY"**

**ABSTRACT:** KANT FAMOUSLY ARGUED THAT ONE OUGHT NEVER TO TREAT OTHERS MERELY AS A MEANS. IT IS UNCLEAR, HOWEVER, WHAT EXACTLY THIS COMES TO. I EXPLORE ONE PROMINENT APPROACH TO EXPLICATING THIS IDEA. THIS APPROACH, ADVANCED BY CHRISTINE KORSGAARD AND ONORA O'NEILL, SUGGESTS THAT ONE TREATS ANOTHER MERELY AS A MEANS IF ONE TREATS THE OTHER IN A WAY THE OTHER COULD NOT POSSIBLY CONSENT TO BEING TREATED. I ARGUE THAT THIS INTERPRETATION INVOLVES ATTRIBUTING TO KANT AN IMPLAUSIBLE VIEW, ONE THAT WE HAVE GOOD EVIDENCE HE DID NOT ESPOUSE. I NEXT ARGUE THAT KORSGAARD'S ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THE IMPLAUSIBILITY OF THE VIEW BEING ATTRIBUTED TO KANT IS INADEQUATE. I THEN ARGUE THAT WHEN THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE POSSIBLE CONSENT INTERPRETATION IS MADE CLEAR, THE VIEW HAS IMPLAUSIBLE IMPLICATIONS THAT HAVE THUS FAR GONE UNNOTICED. FINALLY, I OFFER A SUGGESTION REGARDING HOW WE MIGHT TRY TO DEVELOP AN ALTERNATE INTERPRETATION.

---

### **TAMAR SCHAPIRO** PH.D., HARVARD UNIVERSITY

SCHAPIRO IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY AND A VISITING PROFESSOR AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY THIS YEAR (06'-07'). IN A SERIES OF PAPERS THAT

APPEARED IN *ETHICS*, *THE ARIZONA LAW REVIEW*, *NOUS*, AND *THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY*, SHE HAS ATTEMPTED TO SHOW THAT KANT'S ETHICS NEED NOT BE INTERPRETED RIGORISTICALLY. HER CURRENT WORK ON MORAL PSYCHOLOGY IS CONTINUOUS WITH HER INTEREST IN SOLVING PROBLEMS THAT ARISE WHEN CERTAIN DISTINCTIONS FUNDAMENTAL TO ETHICS ARE DRAWN TOO STARKLY (E.G., PERSON/NONPERSON, RIGHT/WRONG, ACTION/HAPPENING).

### "THE NATURE OF INCLINATION"

ABSTRACT: KANTIAN AND RATIONALIST CONCEPTIONS OF HUMAN AGENCY HOLD THAT DESIRES AND AVERSIONS "INCLINE" BUT DO NOT "DETERMINE" THE HUMAN WILL. CALL ANY MOTIVATIONAL STATE THAT PLAYS THIS ROLE IN RELATION TO THE WILL AN "INCLINATION." WHAT MUST AN INCLINATION BE, SUCH THAT IT CAN PLAY THIS ROLE? IS INCLINING SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS TO US, OR IS IT SOMETHING WE DO? I ARGUE THAT AN ADEQUATE THEORY OF INCLINATION HAS TO AVOID TWO PITFALLS: THE NONCOGNITIVIST MISTAKE OF ASSIMILATING INCLINATION TO A HAPPENING, AND THE COGNITIVIST MISTAKE OF ASSIMILATING INCLINATION TO ACTION ITSELF. I OFFER AN ACCOUNT ACCORDING TO WHICH INCLINATION IS THE ACTION OF A PART OF THE SELF, THE EXERCISE OF A CAPACITY FOR NONRATIONAL AGENCY THAT WE (MAY) SHARE WITH NONHUMAN ANIMALS. THIS CAPACITY IS DISTINCT FROM THE WILL BUT IS NEVERTHELESS A CONSTITUENT SOURCE OF OUR AGENCY.

---

### JAMES SHERMAN

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, PH.D. CANDIDATE

SHERMAN EARNED AN A. B. (2004) FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. HIS INTERESTS INCLUDE MORAL, LEGAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

### "UTILITY, AUTONOMY, AND THE HARM PRINCIPLE"

ABSTRACT: JOHN STUART MILL'S HARM PRINCIPLE STRICTLY LIMITS STATE INTERFERENCE IN THE LIVES AND ACTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS. THE UTILITARIAN ARGUMENT WITH WHICH HE SUPPORTS THE PRINCIPLE, HOWEVER, GIVES TO THE TERM "HARM" AN ALARMINGLY WIDE RANGE OF MEANINGS. THIS POSSIBILITY RUNS COUNTER TO THE SPIRIT OF LIBERALISM, AND EXCLUDING IT IS ONE OF THE GOALS OF JOSEPH RAZ'S



ALTERNATIVE AUTONOMY-BASED ARGUMENT IN "AUTONOMY, TOLERATION, AND THE HARM PRINCIPLE." RAZ'S PERFECTIONISM, HOWEVER, PREVENTS HIM FROM GIVING AUTONOMY ANY INDEPENDENT VALUE, AND HIS ARGUMENT REMAINS VULNERABLE TO A COMMITMENT TO EXTENSIVE STATE CONTROL. AFTER DISCUSSING THE PROBLEMS IN MILL'S ARGUMENT, I WILL ELICIT THIS "EFFICIENCY PROBLEM," AS I SHALL CALL IT, FROM RAZ'S ARGUMENT. RAZ BRIEFLY INDICATES IN A FEW PLACES HOW HE MIGHT RESPOND TO THIS PROBLEM, BUT NONE OF THESE INDICATIONS IS SUFFICIENT TO DEFUSE IT. I WILL THEN SUGGEST THAT RAZ'S PERFECTIONISM DOES CONTAIN THE RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM.

---

### ROB HUGHES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES,  
PH.D. CANDIDATE

HUGHES IS A FOURTH-YEAR GRADUATE STUDENT WITH INTERESTS IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY OF LAW, AND KANT. HIS CURRENT RESEARCH CONCERNS THE NATURE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY.

#### "GOVERNING WITHOUT COERCION"

ABSTRACT: MANY POLITICAL PHILOSOPHERS HAVE NOT SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF LAWS AND GOVERNMENTAL ORDERS THAT ARE NOT COERCIVELY ENFORCED. I ARGUE THAT ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT, ITS ROLE IN COORDINATING IMPORTANT COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES, CAN AND SOMETIMES SHOULD BE PERFORMED USING DIRECTIVES THAT ARE NOT COERCIVELY ENFORCED. A REASON TO PARTICIPATE IN A COORDINATED ACTIVITY IS INDETERMINATE IF IT IS CLEARLY IMPORTANT TO SETTLE ON ONE OF SEVERAL POSSIBLE SCHEMES OF COOPERATION, NONE OF WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY BEST. GOVERNMENTS SPECIFY HOW WE ARE TO ACT ON CERTAIN IMPORTANT INDETERMINATE REASONS, MOST NOTABLY THE REASON TO RESPECT A SYSTEM OF PROPERTY RULES. UNDER THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES, THIS FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT CAN BE PERFORMED USING DIRECTIVES THAT ARE NOT COERCIVELY ENFORCED. IN SOME SITUATIONS, SUCH NON-COERCIVE GOVERNMENTAL DIRECTIVES ARE DESIRABLE.



## **JULIE TANNENBAUM**

**PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES**

TANNENBAUM IS CURRENTLY A POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL BIOETHICS AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH. PRIOR TO HER FELLOWSHIP SHE WAS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ AND A VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES. HER RESEARCH FALLS INTO THREE AREAS: ETHICAL THEORY, MORAL PSYCHOLOGY, AND BIOETHICS.

### **“ALL TOO HUMAN”**

**ABSTRACT:** IN THIS TALK I EXAMINE AND CRITIQUE THE VIEW THAT ALL WE CAN REALLY DEMAND OF ONE ANOTHER IS THAT WE TRY OUR BEST; THAT IS, WE SHOULD DO OUR PART, BY ACTING WITH THE APPROPRIATE INTENTIONS AND EFFORT. THE STOICS, KANT, AND KANTIANS ARE OFTEN INTERPRETED AS HOLDING SUCH A VIEW, THOUGH ONE FINDS THIS VIEW IN OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS AS WELL. IN CONTRAST TO THIS VIEW I ARGUE THAT (A) IN SOME SITUATIONS ONE HAS AN OBLIGATION TO HELP, AND NOT MERELY TO ACT WITH THE APPROPRIATE INTENTIONS AND EFFORT AND (B) SUCCESS IN HELPING IS A NECESSARY CONDITION OF SATISFYING ONE'S OBLIGATION TO HELP. MOREOVER, I SHOW THAT ACCEPTING (A) AND (B) ALLOW US TO EXPLAIN THE APPROPRIATENESS OF FEELING BAD WHEN ONE NON-NEGLIGENTLY FAILS TO HELP ANOTHER.

---

## **DANIEL GROLL**

**UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, PH.D. CANDIDATE**

GROLL IS A FIFTH YEAR GRADUATE STUDENT AND IS WRITING HIS DISSERTATION ON THE VALUE OF AUTONOMY AND THE DUTY TO RESPECT THE CHOICES OF OTHERS EVEN WHEN THEY ARE BAD.

### **“AUTHORITY, SECOND PERSONAL REASONS, AND VALUE”**

**ABSTRACT:** IN HIS MOST RECENT BOOK *THE SECOND-PERSON STANDPOINT* STEPHEN DARWALL ARGUES THAT IN UNDERSTANDING THE PRACTICE OF MAKING AND RESPONDING

TO DEMANDS IN THE CONTEXT OF AUTHORITY RELATIONS WE COME TO SEE THAT THERE IS A KIND OF *SUI GENERIS* PRACTICAL REASON, THE EXISTENCE OF WHICH ENTAILS A BASIC AUTHORITY TO MAKE CLAIMS ON ONE ANOTHER THAT WE ENJOY SIMPLY AS RATIONAL AGENTS. THESE CLAIMS, DARWALL ARGUES, HAVE NORMATIVE FORCE APART FROM ANY CONSIDERATION OF VALUE. IN THIS PAPER I ARGUE THAT EVEN IF DARWALL IS RIGHT ABOUT THE "FELICITY CONDITIONS" THAT MUST BE MET FOR SUCCESSFUL SECOND-PERSONAL ADDRESS, THERE IS STILL REASON TO THINK THAT AUTHORITY RELATIONS ARE ULTIMATELY GROUNDED BY, AND JUSTIFIED IN TERMS OF, THIRD PERSONAL REASONS.

---

**HELGA VARDEN**  
PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

VARDEN IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN. HER MAIN WORK IS IN POLITICAL AND FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY. IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, SHE CURRENTLY WORKS ON ISSUES CONCERNING AUTHORITY AND COERCION IN THE LIBERAL TRADITION IN GENERAL AND KANTIAN AND LOCKEAN CONCEPTIONS OF RIGHTFUL RELATIONS IN PARTICULAR. IN FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY, HER WORK HAS BEEN CONCENTRATED ON ISSUES OF VARIOUS DEPENDENCY RELATIONS, AND CURRENTLY SHE IS WORKING ON A LIBERAL CRITIQUE OF THE CARE TRADITION'S CONCEPTION OF CARE RELATIONS.

**"INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS"**

ABSTRACT: IN THIS PAPER I ARGUE THAT THE LIBERAL IDEAL OF POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE IS NON-VOLUNTARIST IN NATURE. I ARGUE WITH KANT THAT THE IMPARTIAL FORM OF THE INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY GIVES IT, AND NO ONE ELSE, RIGHTFUL STANDING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS OF ASSURANCE AND SPECIFICATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE. THE LEGITIMACY OF THE INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY STEMS FROM HOW IT REPRESENTS EACH INTERACTING STATE, STATELESS PERSON, AND MEMBER OF AN OPPRESSIVE STATE — AND YET NONE OF THEM INDIVIDUALLY. ANY STATE THAT INSISTS ON PROVIDING ASSURANCE OR APPLYING INTERNATIONAL LAW ON ITS OWN COMMITS WRONGDOING IN THE HIGHEST DEGREE, SINCE IT THEREBY FAILS TO RESPECT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF OTHER STATES AND THE RIGHTS OF



STATELESS INDIVIDUALS. BECAUSE INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE IS POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY, I CONCLUDE THAT THE INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY HAS A SPECIAL STATUS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THAT INDIVIDUAL STATES CANNOT POSSIBLY HAVE.

---

**STEPHEN DARWALL**  
PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

DARWALL BEGAN HIS TEACHING CAREER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL. SINCE 1984 HE HAS BEEN PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, AND IN 2000 HE WAS NAMED JOHN DEWEY COLLEGIATE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY THERE. HE HAS WRITTEN MORE THAN SEVENTY ARTICLES AND SEVERAL IMPORTANT BOOKS IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE HISTORY OF ETHICS. HIS BOOKS INCLUDE IMPARTIAL REASON, THE BRITISH MORALISTS AND THE INTERNAL "OUGHT", WELFARE AND RATIONAL CARE, AND, MOST RECENTLY, THE SECOND-PERSON STANDPOINT: MORALITY, RESPECT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY, IN WHICH HE ARGUES THAT MORAL PHILOSOPHERS HAVE IGNORED THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF DISTINCTIVELY SECOND-PERSONAL CONCEPTS IN ETHICS. HE HAS ALSO EDITED COLLECTIONS OF ARTICLES IN VIRTUE ETHICS, DEONTOLOGY, CONSEQUENTIALISM, AND CONTRACTUALISM, AND HAS RECEIVED GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS FROM, AMONG OTHERS, THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, AND THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUST.

**"AUTHORITY AND SECOND-PERSONAL REASONS  
FOR ACTING"**

ABSTRACT: IN *THE SECOND-PERSON STANDPOINT*, I ARGUE THAT A NUMBER OF CENTRAL MORAL NOTIONS—THE IDEAS OF A RIGHT, MORAL RESPONSIBILITY, MORAL OBLIGATION, AND THE DIGNITY OF PERSONS—ARE ALL IRREDUCIBLY SECOND-PERSONAL IN THAT THEY INVOLVE THE NOTION OF THE AUTHORITY TO ADDRESS A CLAIM OR DEMAND TO SOMEONE. I THEN ARGUE THAT THERE IS A CIRCLE OF SECOND-PERSONAL NOTIONS, EACH OF WHICH INVOLVES THE OTHERS: THE AUTHORITY TO CLAIM, A VALID CLAIM, ANSWERABILITY TO (SOMEONE WITH THE AUTHORITY TO CLAIM), AND A DISTINCTIVE

KIND OF REASON FOR ACTING, A SECOND-PERSONAL REASON, THAT DERIVES FROM SUCH AN AUTHORITY. JOSEPH RAZ'S "NORMAL JUSTIFICATION THESIS" IS A THREAT TO THESE CLAIMS, SINCE IT PURPORTS TO SHOW THAT THE RELEVANT AUTHORITY CAN BE JUSTIFIED BY REASONS THAT ARE NOT SECOND-PERSONAL. I ARGUE THAT RAZ'S THESIS IS FALSE IN ANY SENSE THAT THREATENS MY CLAIMS IN *THE SECOND-PERSON STANDPOINT*.

---

**TAMRA FREI**

PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT  
CHAPEL HILL

FREI IS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY. HER MAIN AREAS OF RESEARCH INCLUDE KANTIAN MORAL THEORY, METAETHICS, AND ISSUES CONCERNING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MORALITY AND RATIONALITY.

**"ON THE KANTIAN DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRUDENTIAL  
AND MORAL COMMANDS"**

ABSTRACT: ALTHOUGH KANT IDENTIFIES DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE, HE IS COMMITTED TO THE IDEA THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE CATEGORICAL DEMAND OF PRACTICAL REASON. I ARGUE THAT THIS INTERPRETATION IS FALSE. A CORRECT READING OF KANT REVEALS THAT THERE IS ANOTHER NON-MORAL CATEGORICAL DEMAND OF PRACTICAL RATIONALITY, NAMELY THE HYPOTHETICAL IMPERATIVE. THIS IMPERATIVE ADJURES US TO TAKE WHAT WE KNOW TO BE THE NECESSARY AND AVAILABLE MEANS TO OUR ENDS OR ELSE GIVE UP THOSE ENDS. MOREOVER, I ARGUE THAT BECAUSE THE HYPOTHETICAL IMPERATIVE IS THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF ALL MEANS-ENDS REASONING THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF DISTINGUISHING MORAL FROM PRUDENTIAL OBLIGATIONS FAILS.

---

**URI LEIBOWITZ**

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST,  
PH.D. CANDIDATE

LEIBOWITZ IS CURRENTLY WRITING A DISSERTATION ON MORAL PARTICULARISM.



## “A DEFENSE OF A PARTICULARIST RESEARCH PROGRAM”

ABSTRACT: WHAT MAKES SOME ACTS MORALLY RIGHT AND OTHERS MORALLY WRONG? TRADITIONALLY, PHILOSOPHERS HAVE TRIED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION BY IDENTIFYING EXCEPTIONLESS MORAL PRINCIPLES—PRINCIPLES THAT CAPTURE ALL AND ONLY MORALLY RIGHT ACTIONS. UTILITARIANISM AND KANTIANISM ARE PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLES OF SUCH ATTEMPTS. IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A GROWING INTEREST IN A NOVEL APPROACH—PARTICULARISM. IN THIS PAPER I ARGUE THAT SOME OF THE MOST COMMON OBJECTIONS TO PARTICULARISM RESULT FROM A MISCONCEPTION OF THE NATURE OF PARTICULARISM, AND I OFFER A NEW FORMULATION OF THE VIEW. I ARGUE THAT PARTICULARISM IS BEST UNDERSTOOD AS A RESEARCH PROGRAM CHARACTERIZED BY THE CORE HYPOTHESIS THAT MORALITY CAN BE EXPLAINED WITHOUT APPEAL TO EXCEPTIONLESS MORAL PRINCIPLES, AND I EXPLICATE SOME OF THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS FORMULATION. FINALLY, I ARGUE THAT PARTICULARISM SHOWS ENOUGH PROMISE TO WARRANT FURTHER EXPLORATION.

---

**JULIA MARKOVITS**  
PH.D., OXFORD UNIVERSITY

MARKOVITS STUDIED PHILOSOPHY AS AN UNDERGRAD AT YALE, THEN MOVED TO OXFORD TO PURSUE A B.PHIL AND THEN A D.PHIL IN PHILOSOPHY, FOCUSING ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND WORKING WITH DEREK PARFIT. HER THESIS IS ENTITLED *KANTIAN INTERNALISM* AND ATTEMPTS TO PROVIDE AN INTERNALIST DEFENSE OF OBJECTIVITY IN ETHICS. SHE COMPLETED HER DOCTORATE IN 2006 AND IS CURRENTLY IN HER FIRST YEAR OF A THREE-YEAR JUNIOR FELLOWSHIP AT THE HARVARD SOCIETY OF FELLOWS.

### “ACTING FOR THE RIGHT REASONS”

ABSTRACT: THIS PAPER EXAMINES THE THOUGHT THAT OUR RIGHT ACTIONS HAVE MORAL WORTH ONLY IF WE PERFORM THEM FOR THE RIGHT REASONS. I ARGUE AGAINST THE TRADITIONAL KANTIAN VIEW THAT MORALLY WORTHY ACTIONS MUST BE PERFORMED BECAUSE THEY ARE RIGHT, AND ARGUE THAT KANTIANS OUGHT INSTEAD TO ACCEPT THE VIEW THAT

MORALLY WORTHY ACTIONS ARE THOSE PERFORMED FOR THE REASONS *WHY* THEY ARE RIGHT. IN OTHER WORDS, MORALLY WORTHY ACTIONS ARE THOSE FOR WHICH THE REASONS WHY THEY WERE PERFORMED (THE REASONS *MOTIVATING* THEM) AND THE REASONS WHY THEY OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN PERFORMED (THE REASONS *JUSTIFYING* THEM) COINCIDE. I CALL THIS THE *COINCIDENT REASONS THESIS*, AND ARGUE THAT IT PROVIDES PLAUSIBLE NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS FOR MORALLY WORTHY ACTION, DEFENDING THE CLAIM AGAINST PROPOSED COUNTEREXAMPLES.

---

**BARBARA HERMAN**  
PH.D., HARVARD UNIVERSITY

AFTER TEACHING AT THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HERMAN JOINED THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES IN 1994 AND IS NOW GRIFFIN PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AND LAW. SHE HAS WRITTEN MANY ARTICLES AND SEVERAL BOOKS IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY, KANTIAN ETHICS, HISTORY OF ETHICS, AND SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY. HER BOOKS INCLUDE MORALITY AND RATIONALITY: A STUDY OF KANT'S ETHICS, THE PRACTICE OF MORAL JUDGMENT, AND, PUBLISHED THIS YEAR, MORAL LITERACY. SHE ALSO EDITED JOHN RAWLS'S LECTURES IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY AND A COLLECTION OF ARTICLES ON RAWLS. SHE HAS ALSO RECEIVED GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES AND THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, AMONG OTHERS.

**"MORALITY UNBOUNDED"**

**ABSTRACT:** THE PAPER DISCUSSES CLAIMS THAT WOULD LIMIT MORALITY'S AUTHORITY SOMETIMES MADE BY OR ON BEHALF OF INTERNALLY LEGISLATING GROUPS (CHURCHES, HISTORICAL OR ETHNIC COMMUNITIES, STATES, ETC.). I ARGUE THAT MORALITY IS A SYSTEM THAT HAS AUTHORITY OVER ALL OTHER NORMATIVE SYSTEMS, REGULATING THEIR RELATIONS, AND NECESSARY TO SECURE THEIR INTERNAL AUTHORITY. **WORKING THIS OUT** REQUIRES SOME REVISION OF HOW WE THINK ABOUT MORAL REQUIREMENTS. THE PAPER ENDS WITH AN APPLICATION OF THIS VIEW OF MORAL REQUIREMENT TO INTERGENERATIONAL INJUSTICE AND MORAL REPAIR.

## **SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

**OUR PROGRAM SPEAKERS AND COMMENTATORS.**

**CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:**  
JON GARTHOFF, LAURA PAPISH, AND ALISON PETERMAN

**FACULTY PAPER SELECTION COMMITTEE:**  
TAD BRENNAN, KYLA EBELS DUGGAN, JON GARTHOFF,  
AND RICHARD KRAUT.

**GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER SELECTION COMMITTEE:**  
MAX CHEREM, BRAD COKELET, RYAN DORAN, GUY  
ELGAT, DEBBIE GOLDGABER, KELBY HARRISON, TUSHAR  
IRANI, IVAN IVANOV, CHIKE JEFFERS, LAURA PAPISH,  
ALISON PETERMAN, EMILIE PRATTICO, HANK SOUTHGATE,  
WOLFHART TOTSCHNIG, KATIE PADGETT WALSH, AND  
MELISSA YATES.

**WEBSITE DESIGNER: BRAD COKELET**

**PROGRAM DESIGNER: MELISSA YATES**

**PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT STAFF:**  
CRYSTAL FOSTER, JUDY KASEN, AND BRENNAN PARKS.

**WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, THE  
HUMANITIES INSTITUTE, AND THE PROVOST'S OFFICE  
OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY.**





COURTESY NORTHWESTERN UN