

# Jake Wojtowicz

## Curriculum Vitae

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UK Citizen. US Permanent Resident.

**Area of specialization** Ethics

**Areas of competence** Applied Ethics, History of Ethics, Philosophy of Law,  
Philosophy of Sport, Epistemology

### Education

2019. PhD, King's College London

*Agent-Regret in Our Lives* (for abstract, see final page)

Supervised by David Owens and Massimo Renzo

Examined by Antony Duff and Ulrike Heuer

2016. Visiting PhD student, Cornell University

2015. Master of Philosophical Studies, King's College London

*Why Knowledge is Not Merely True Belief*

Supervised by David Galloway

2013. BA Philosophy, King's College London

### Publications

#### *Journal articles*

forth. "Fans, Identity, and Punishment," *Sport, Ethics & Philosophy*

2019. "Agent-Regret and Sporting Glory," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 46, no. 2 (2019): 162–76

2018. "Bernard Williams on Regarding One's Own Action Purely Externally," *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 4, no. 1 (2018): 49–66

#### *Public philosophy*

2020. "The Witcher and the Lesser of Two Evils," *Prindle Post*

2019. "Judging Judy: Truth and Redemption on Netflix," *Phi Magazine*

2018. "What Football Can Teach Us About the Philosophy of Regret," *Prospect Magazine*

#### *Reviews & shorter pieces*

forth. "Todd May – A Decent Life: Morality for the Rest of Us," *Philosophy*

forth. "Erin C Tarver – The I in Team: Sports Fandom and the Reproduction of Identity," *The Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*

2016. "Bernard Williams – Essays and Reviews 1959-2002," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 19(4)

2015. "Disagreeing and Getting to the Truth: A Reply to Sartwell," *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* 4, no. 9 (2015): 46-50.

## **Essay Prize**

2019. *The Institute of Philosophy's* Jacobsen Essay Prize for "The Narcissism of Agent-Regret"

## **Talks and presentations**

2019. "Agent-regret and Punishment," Criminal Law Discussion Group, Edinburgh University Law School
2019. "Agent-regret in our Lives," Hale Lecture, Rochester Institute of Technology
2019. Comments on Joe Campbell's "Compatibilist Mysterianism," Rocky Mountain Ethics Conference, University of Colorado
2019. "Regret and Identity," poster presentation at Rocky Mountain Ethics Conference, University of Colorado
2019. "Agent-regret and Punishment," Emotions & Punishment. University of Kent
2019. Comments on Camil Golub's "Making peace with moral imperfection," CNY Moral Psychology Workshop, Le Moyne University
2018. "The Narcissism of Agent-Regret," Cumberland Lodge, King's College London
2018. "The Narcissism of Agent-Regret," Advanced Research Seminar, King's College London
2018. "The Expression of Agent-Regret," Annual Conference of the European Philosophical Society for the Study of Emotions, Tallinn University
2018. "Bernard Williams on Regarding One's Own Action Purely Externally," London-Berkeley Graduate Conference, University of London
2018. "Outcome Responsibility and Identity," Advanced Research Seminar, King's College London
2018. "Reasons and Remedy: Exploring the Continuity Thesis," London Graduate Moral and Political Philosophy Workshop, King's College London
2017. "Reasons and Remedy: Exploring the Continuity Thesis," London Intercollegiate Graduate Conference, University of London
2017. "Agent-Regret and Reasons," XI Inter-University Workshop on Mind Art and Morality, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid
2017. "Reasons and Remedy: Exploring the Continuity Thesis," Start-of-Year Graduate Conference, King's College London
2017. "Agent-Regret and Reasons," KCL-UNC Workshop on Reasons, UNC-Chapel Hill
2017. "On Susan Wolf's 'Moral Saints,'" Susan Wolf Summerschool, Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities, Essen
2017. "Agent-Regret and Reasons," Advanced Research Seminar, King's College London
2016. "Agent-Regret and Reasons," Graduate Workshop, Cornell University
2016. "Pleasure in the 1950s," Staff-Student Seminar on Pleasure, King's College London
2016. "On Shame," Advanced Research Seminar, King's College London
2016. Comments on "Dorothea Debus's 'Temporal Perspectives in Imagination: On the Nature and Value of Imagining the Future,'" Mind Metaphysics and Psychology Seminar, King's College London
2015. "Dispersing Doubt: Peirce, Fallibilism, and the Aim of Inquiry," Arts & Humanities Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference, King's College London
2014. "Williams on Integrity," Advanced Research Seminar, King's College London
2013. "On Epistemic Justification," First-Year Research Seminar, King's College London

## **Teaching**

*Graduate assistant*

- 2018. Topics in Applied Ethics and Politics (David Galloway)
- 2017. Ethics II: History of Ethical Philosophy: Hume and the British Moralists (Thomas Pink)
- 2016. Ethics II: History of Ethical Philosophy: Hume and the British Moralists (Thomas Pink)
- 2015. Skepticism (David Galloway)
- 2015. Political I: Introduction to Political Philosophy (John William Devine)
- 2015. Ethics II: Contemporary Ethics (Nadine Elzein)
- 2014. Ethics II: Contemporary Ethics (Maria Alvarez)
- 2014-15. General philosophy for intercalating medical students (David Galloway)
- 2014. Ethics I: Introduction to Ethics (Thomas Pink)

*Guest lectures*

- 2016. “Introduction to Ethics” for high school students, King’s College London
- 2016. Sartwell and True Belief” for MA students and advanced undergraduates, Birkbeck, University of London (Nils Kurbis)
- 2015. “Sartwell and True Belief” for first-year students, Birkbeck, University of London (Nils Kurbis)

**Teaching awards and nominations**

- 2018. Teaching Excellence Award (Honorable Mention), King’s College London
- 2018. Departmental Graduate Teaching Assistant Award (Honorable Mention), King’s College London
- 2017. Departmental Graduate Teaching Assistant Award (Winner), King’s College London

**Funding and fellowships**

- 2018. Aristotelian Society Student Bursary
- 2018. Department of Philosophy Peter Goldie Award, King’s College London
- 2015-18. Full Fees and Stipend PhD Funding, London Arts and Humanities Partnership/Arts and Humanities Research Council
- 2016. Norman Malcolm Fellowship funding to visit Cornell University, Cornell University/King’s College London
- 2014-15. Department of Philosophy Bursary, King’s College London

**Work in progress**

*Titles modified for review purposes*

- “The Narcissism of Agent-Regret”
- “Outcome Responsibility and Identity”
- “Agent-Regret and Punishment”

*Book reviews of*

- Breivik (ed.) – *Skills, Knowledge, and Expertise in Sports* (Journal of the Philosophy of Sport)
- Yaffe – *The Age of Culpability* (Journal of Moral Philosophy)

**Service**

- 2018. Reviewer for *Inquiry*
- 2016. External marker for Ethics and Law module in Imperial College School of Medicine
- 2014-15. External Speaker program organizer for King’s College London Philosophy Society

## References

Prof. David Owens  
Department of Philosophy  
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Dickson Poon School of Law  
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Dr. Ulrike Heuer  
Department of Philosophy  
19 Gordon Square  
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Prof. Tom Pink  
Department of Philosophy  
King's College London  
Strand, WC2R 2LS  
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Dr. David Galloway (teaching reference)  
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## Dissertation Abstract – *Agent-Regret in Our Lives*

I analyse the emotion of agent-regret, defend our propensity to feel it, and consider its role in our lives; I do this by arguing that agent-regret concerns one's responsibility for outcomes, explain *why* we are responsible for unintended outcomes, and explore the ways that our responsibility *matters*.

My dissertation has two main parts. In the first, I offer an analysis—considerably more detailed than existing discussions—that clearly articulates the precise nature of agent-regret and the distinction between agent-regret, ordinary regret, “external” regret, and guilt. I suggest that the object of agent-regret is best understood using Honoré's notion of *outcome responsibility*: one is responsible for an outcome if it arises because one has tried to do something, even if one didn't intend to do *that thing* and wasn't at *fault* in doing it. I distinguish agent-regret from guilt by noting that guilt, specifically “the guilt of the morality system”, concerns intentional and faulty action; ordinary regret can apply to any state of affairs or action; and “external” regret involves regretting something one just so happened to be responsible for, *not* regretting one's responsibility. To feel agent-regret is to regret *one's own responsibility* for an outcome.

I then argue for a novel thesis concerning what I call “pure” agent-regret: one *might* regret being responsible for an outcome without regretting the outcome. For instance, I might regret that I killed an enemy even though I do not think this enemy being killed is regrettable. I draw parallels with revenge and explore Williams's work on integrity to make clear that one's assessment of one's responsibility for an outcome can differ radically from one's assessment of the outcome itself.

In part II, I consider the compelling idea (Wallace, Jacobson, Crisp) that we should not feel agent-regret because either we are *not* responsible for unintended outcomes or such responsibility is *unimportant*. I argue we are responsible because agency presupposes *fallible abilities*: in order to bring about any outcome, one must use these abilities; but the nature of these abilities means that, when we exercise them, we sometimes fail to bring about the intended outcome and bring about unintended outcomes instead. The best way of making sense of our relation to these failures is by admitting that although these failures are not *authored* by us—they do not manifest our values in the world—they still come about *because* of our exercises of agency. Drawing on Williams, I suggest that a “mature agent” comes to see the unintended effects of her agency as nonetheless *hers*.

This shows *that* we are responsible for unintended outcomes, but it does not show us the way in which responsibility for particular outcomes matters. Both Honoré and Williams suggested that one's responsibility for an outcome affects one's *identity*; I explore what this means and how it influences our picture of agent-regret. Outcome responsibility does not affect one's *metaphysical* identity, it affects one's *ethical identity*. I argue (against Dan-Cohen) that it does this in a *non-essentialist* way: were I not responsible for this outcome I would still be me, but my responsibility for this outcome affects how I see myself and how others interact with me. Outcome responsibility is important, and responsibility for different outcomes matters in different ways, *because* of this effect on our identities. Further, killing a child or smashing a vase each affect our identities in different ways, and this is reflected in the quality and severity of the respective cases of agent-regret.

I end by sketching several ways in which agent-regret and responsibility for unintended outcomes underpin valuable parts of our lives, like our achievements. My picture makes sense of various aspects of agent-regret, including the wish that things were otherwise, the desire to make amends, and pure cases. In the most extreme pure case, one might respond by trying to alter one's identity without attempting to make amends for the harm one caused. The killer's regret might urge him to change how people see him without urging him to make amends for, say, how his actions left his enemy's family distraught. Agent-regret is self-directed, sometimes entirely so. My dissertation is an attempt to shed light on the nature and importance of this ill-understood emotion.