

URI ERAN
Curriculum Vitae
Updated: January 29, 2020

PERSONAL DETAILS

Date of Birth: 03.07.1982
Country of Birth: Israel
ID no.: 065631707
Nationality: Israeli, German
Military Service: Translator (2001-2004)
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HIGHER EDUCATION

2008 B.A., Behavioral Sciences, Ben Gurion University, *cum laude*
2012 M.A., Philosophy, Tel Aviv University, *magna cum laude*
2020 Ph.D. Candidate, Philosophy, Indiana University (expected to be awarded by June 2020, see 'Confirmation of Eligibility' letter). Supervisor: Allen Wood. Dissertation Title: "Kant's Theory of Emotion: A Systematic Reconstruction"

Areas of Specialty: Kant; Kant's moral philosophy; Kant's moral psychology.

Areas of Competence: Ethics; moral psychology; philosophy of emotions.

DISSERTATION SUMMARY

In recent decades, considerable scholarly work has been done in order to relate Kant's philosophy to contemporary theories of emotion and to use it as a means for improving our understanding of emotions and their role in the virtuous life. Unfortunately, Kant has no German term that is an obvious equivalent of 'emotion' as used in English nowadays, and theorists disagree about the nature of emotions. My dissertation aims to reconstruct Kant's theory of emotion while taking these two constraints seriously.

I first argue that what we call 'emotions' refers in Kant to mental states that originate in the feeling of pleasure and displeasure and / or in the faculty of desire, and so what we call 'emotions' are species of actual or expected pleasure or displeasure in Kant. Far from being 'raw' or 'blind' sensations, however, pleasure and displeasure in Kant are complex phenomena, that consist in non-cognitive evaluations that have a felt quality, and dispose their agent to maintain or change her state. I proceed to examine a key term in discussions of Kant's theory of emotion, namely, inclination. On my proposed developmental account, the acquisition of inclinations depends on acquiring certain cognitive capacities, and while natural inclinations are the property of both rational and non-rational animals, cultural inclinations are the property of rational animals alone. Finally, I examine the kind of treatment that Kant recommends with respect to our emotions. Feelings which are not affects, I argue, require cultivation, while inclinations generally require discipline. The proper treatment for an emotion, I propose, depends on its susceptibility to rational constraint and on the threat it poses for rational deliberation.

My reconstruction has the advantages that it depends neither on a particular contested conception of emotions nor on the assumption that emotion is a natural kind. Moreover, on my proposed reading, Kant's theory is compatible with moral responsibility for having some emotions.

PUBLICATIONS

Which Emotions Should Kantians Cultivate (and Which Ones Should They Discipline)?, forthcoming in *Kantian Review*

Under review: Does Kant Define Emotions as Feelings? A Response to Alix Cohen (*British Journal for the History of Philosophy*); Kant On Inclination: A Developmental Account (*Journal of the History of Philosophy*); Kant's Hybrid Model of Pleasure (*Canadian Journal of Philosophy*); Kantian Emotions as Pleasures and Displeasures (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*)

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

May 2014, 17th Annual Meeting of the Israeli Philosophy Association: *Leaving Akrasia Behind: Kant on Weakness of Will*

April 2016, Eastern Study Group of the North American Kant Society Meeting at Yale University, *The Trouble with Happiness: Kant's Purification of the Moral Incentive* (also accepted to the Biennial Meeting of the NAKS, could not attend)

June 2016, Leuven Kant Conference, *The Trouble with Happiness: Kant's Purification of the Moral Incentive*

March 2018, Universität Siegen (Schönecker Colloquium): *How Cognitively Complex Are Kantian Emotions?*

May 2018, Humboldt University (Rosefeldt Colloquium): *Kantian Desires: The Cultural and the Natural*

(October 2018, Multilateral Kant Colloquium at Cantina, Italy, Kant and Emotions: The Importance of the Feeling-Desire Distinction, **could not attend**)

April 2019, Indiana University (Dissertation Group Colloquium): Why Kant May Have a Hybrid Model of Pleasure: A Response to Guyer

September 2019, Universität Siegen (Schönecker Colloquium): Does Kant Define Emotions as Feelings? A Response to Alix Cohen

December 2019, FU Berlin (Emundts Colloquium): Kant's Hybrid Model of Pleasure

AWARDS AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

2009, 2011 Tel Aviv University's "Poesis" Prize for Academic Excellence
2011-2013 Fellow at the Program for the Study of the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant

and its Legacy (held jointly by Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion University)

- 2012 - Present Co-Editor of *Mafte'akh: Lexical Review of Political Thought*
- 2012-2014 Coordinator, book review series, Minerva Humanities Center, Tel Aviv University
- 2014 Indiana University, Philosophy Department Fellowship
- 2017 Indiana University's Irving and Shirley Brand Graduate Fellowship
Indiana University's Philosophy Department's Academic Excellence Award
- 2017 Indiana University - Freie Universität, Berlin, Foreign Exchange Fellowship
- 2019 Minerva Stiftung Doctoral Fellowship. Project Title: "What (Else) Can Kant Teach Us About Emotions?". Hosted by Prof. Dina Emundts at Freie Universität, Berlin

TEACHING AT ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

- 2009 Guided Reading in Descartes' *Meditations* (Tel Aviv University)
- 2010 Guided Reading in Hume's *Treatise*, Book I (Tel Aviv University)
- 2011 Guided Reading in Plato's *Gorgias* and Kant's *Groundwork* (Tel Aviv University)
- 2014 Kant's Categorical Imperative (Assistant Instructor to Prof. Ido Geiger, Ben Gurion University)
- 2015-16 Introduction to Philosophy (Assistant Instructor to Prof. Gary Ebbs, Indiana University)
- Introduction to Ethics (Assistant Instructor to Prof. Timothy O'Connor, Indiana University)
- 2016-17 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy (grader and substitute lecturer for Prof. Pieter Sjoerd Hasper, Indiana University)
- Introduction to Philosophy (Assistant Instructor to Prof. Fredrick F. Schmitt, Indiana University)
- 2019 Introduction to Ethics (Instructor, Indiana University)

LANGUAGES

- English – fluent (reading, writing, and speaking)
- Hebrew – native (reading, writing, and speaking)
- German - fluent reading, intermediate writing and speaking
- French – elementary (reading)
- Farsi - intermediate (reading, writing)
- Arabic - elementary (reading, writing)

Faculty of Philosophy
Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy
Oude Boteringestraat 52
9712 GL Groningen
The Netherlands

Prof. Dr. Pauline Kleingeld
Professor of Philosophy (Ethics and its History)
Faculty of Philosophy

Dear Prof. Dr. Kleingeld,

I am writing to apply for a 2-year postdoc position in Kant and/or Kantian Ethics at the University of Groningen. I am currently completing my PhD dissertation at Indiana University's Philosophy Department and a Minerva Fellow affiliated with FU Berlin. I expect to be awarded with my PhD by June 30, 2020 (see 'Confirmation of Eligibility' letter). My research focuses on Kant's theory of emotion and its relation to his moral philosophy. I am also very competent with respect to Kant's ethics broadly construed, and I am interested in moral psychology, and in theories of action and practical reason.

The post-doc position at the University of Groningen is an ideal match for my philosophical interests, and I expect to be able to significantly contribute to the project by pointing to the psychological underpinnings of Kant's universalists ethics. Moreover, before embarking on my PhD dissertation I had worked on the more classical issues in Kant's ethics (in particular on acting from duty and on the highest good), and I have a rich teaching experience in this domain (teaching my own ethics course and serving as an assistant instructor for a course on Kant's Categorical Imperative). I am certain that my experience and expertise will come in very handy in examining the key concepts in Kant's ethical theory, as well as the classical objections to it. I expect to be able to make significant progress during this time toward publishing my projected monograph (*Emotions and Moral Progress in Kant*, see 'Research Plan'). And I would be honored and delighted to teach at Groningen advanced courses on Kant, as well as introductory courses in ethics.

For any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you soon, and to working together on what promises to be an exciting and fruitful project.

Sincerely,

Uri Eran
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Research Plan: Emotions and Moral Progress in Kant

In the past four decades or so, commentators have come to reject many misguided received views on Kant's understanding of emotions and their relation to morality. They have argued that Kant may be used as a resource with which we can enrich our understanding of emotions, and that emotions play an indispensable role in the virtuous life, according to Kant. My PhD dissertation contributes to this effort to improve our understanding of emotions in Kant, in a way that sheds new light on Kant's ethical theory and brings out Kant's relevance for contemporary theories of emotion. My next project is to write and publish a monograph that further develops ideas from my dissertation, titled *Emotions and Moral Progress in Kant*.

The first four chapters of the projected book will rework elaborate on materials from my dissertation, defending my reading of emotions in Kant. The two new chapters, to be written during my postdoc term, will explore the conflicting roles that emotions play in the moral progress of individual agents on the one hand, and of the human race on the other hand. I will first examine Kant's response to Mendelssohn's pessimism regarding the prospects of moral progress of the human race, and place it within the context of Kant's natural teleology. According to Kant, I will argue, although at the level of the ontogenetic development of the individual agent emotions may conflict with morality, they are nonetheless nature's means for securing moral progress at the phylogenetic level of the species. I will then propose that feelings and desires can both promote moral progress and conflict with morality, according to Kant, because they are directed toward natural non-moral ends, that is, toward ends that promote natural development but may differ from those of morality.

Emotions and Moral Progress in Kant would therefore provide an innovative contribution to the ongoing debate on the nature of emotions in Kant, and on Kant's relevance for contemporary philosophy of emotion. It would present an original account of Kant's

theory of the mental states we call 'emotions', and bring out the conflicted relation between emotions and morality in Kant. In place of oversimplified pictures on which they are either the enemies or the allies of morality, Kantian emotions, as directed at natural non-moral ends, would be revealed as nature's way of securing moral progress 'behind our backs', as it were.

In reconstructing Kant's conception of emotion and revealing its intricate relation to morality, my project would fit in nicely with the *Universal Moral Laws* research program's aim to 'shed new light on central notions of Kant's ethics'; and in stressing emotions' role as vehicles for the moral progress of humanity, my project would reveal that Kant's universalists ethics may be defended from the objection that it would never bring about such progress.

Granted, my project is focused on Kant's moral psychology rather than on his normative or metaethical theory. In my research, however, I draw not only on Kant's anthropological writings and lectures but also on Kant's foundational ethical works (*Groundwork for The Metaphysics of Morals*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *The Metaphysics of Morals*), and I have taught my own Introduction to Ethics course (at IU), and have assisted in teaching a course on the Categorical Imperative. I therefore have a strong background and deep interest in Kant's ethics broadly construed, as well as a close familiarity with the pertinent secondary literature, and would be happy to further explore this terrain in Groningen, both as a fellow researcher and as a teacher.

Given my research and teaching experience, I expect to be able to make significant progress in my research during my time as a postdoc in Groningen, and to significantly contribute to the *Universal Moral Laws* project. This contribution will consist both in bringing out the psychological underpinnings of Kant's ethics, and by critically examining and assessing the a priori aspects of this universalist ethical theory in light of some of the classical objections to it.

Professors' Teaching Evaluations

Uri Eran

1) Prof. Ebbs' Evaluation

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Associate Instructor Evaluation Sheet

Name of Associate Instructor: Uri Eran

Name of Evaluator: Gary Ebbs

Course Supervised: A weekly discussion section of P100, with main lectures taught by Ebbs

Date of Class Visits: 11/13/2015

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| 1) Associate Instructor's Presentation of the Problem for Discussion | EXCELLENT |
| 2) Quality of the discussion | VERY GOOD |
| 3) Reaction of Associate Instructor to questions asked by members of the class | EXCELLENT |

I visited Uri's section meeting on November 13, 2013. The main topic from the P100 lectures that week was utilitarianism, especially the version of it developed by J. S. Mill. Uri prepared a detailed handout with four "active-learning" exercises (each with several parts) designed to help students understand, or discover for themselves, central distinctions or problems associated with several of the main topics covered in lectures earlier in the week. Uri made short introductory remarks before each exercise. The students worked on the exercises in small groups. Uri elicited student comments once the students had written their answers to the exercises. Each exercise was pitched at a level appropriate for the students—not too easy and not too difficult—and each exercise led naturally to the next one; the progression of the exercises helped students to develop a deeper understanding of central points from the lectures earlier in the week; some of the exercises also introduced helpful refinements of points made in the lectures.

The students seemed to be getting all the main points that the exercises were designed to highlight. Uri's presentation of key points and his rapport with the students were excellent.

In sum: Uri helped his students understand several inter-connected topics by engaging them in active learning exercises, and following those exercises with in-class discussion. He is an excellent discussion-section leader.

2) Prof. O'Connor's Evaluation

Class Visit for: Uri Eran
Visitor: Tim O'Connor
Date: 4/29/16

I visited a Friday discussion section led by Uri Eran for a P140 Introduction to Ethics course for which I am the instructor.

The topic for the lectures that week was meaning in and of life. We discussed both secular views (Richard Taylor, Susan Wolf) and religious views (C.S. Lewis, Robert Nozick). Uri had 13 students this day. Uri had an outline for the day's topics written on the board. After giving the weekly simple quiz, he played a short (2:30) clip from the obvious Monty Python film, which was a nice set up to the discussion, as it evoked the sense of cosmic scale of space and time and how that can engender a feeling of human insignificance. He then used powerpoint to guide the discussion, and started things off with an overarching question to be addressed to each of three theorists: Taylor, Wolf, and Aristotle (from earlier in the term). Early on, three students did all the talking. But others chimed in near the end.

As a discussion leader, Uri is animated, projects his voice well, and is confident. And he organized the discussion extremely well. He had a tendency to perhaps make overly long remarks of his own in response to student comments, but the content was good and clear. I judged the class to have been a success with a challenging group.

Sincerely,



Timothy O'Connor
Professor of Philosophy

3) Prof. Schmitt's Evaluation

March 26, 2017

Report on Uri Eran's Teaching as AI for P100

Uri Eran is serving as AI for my P100 Introduction to Philosophy, Spring 2017. I visited Uri's section on March 24, at 11:15 pm in Sycamore 106. Uri began class by giving the students a true/false quiz on powerpoint. The quiz concerned the analogical version of the teleological argument for the existence of God. Uri provided the answers to the quiz right away. He then moved on to an outline of versions of the cosmological argument, the topic of today's section. He focused on William Rowe's version of the cosmological argument. He gave a full explication of the notion of dependent objects that figures in this version of the argument. He then turned to an evaluation of the premises of the argument. Uri began largely with his own presentation, an animated one. Uri had a good presence, moving from one side of the room to the other in a measured way. His presentation prompted spontaneous questions from the students, who were clearly all engaged with the material. There was an exchange on the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and Uri's questions prompted suggestions from the students. Uri used the board sparingly but effectively, despite some conflict between the board and the screen induced by the structure of the equipment. Uri got the students talking a lot. He didn't steer the discussion but interjected the right amount of guidance to keep the students talking to one another. He was effective at bringing the discussion back to earlier remarks students had made—he kept pertinent points made earlier in play in the discussion. The effect of this guidance was a gradual accumulation of a spectrum of positions in the course of the discussion. Uri's exchanges with students were skillful, bringing out their thoughts, but applying a gentle pressure to them to prompt reasoning. There was a discussion of the biological version of the teleological argument, and another of the moral version of the teleological argument, which brought forth some expressions of positions on either side of the moral relativism debate. The topics moved by at a rate that kept the students' attention. A sizable fraction of the students participated in the discussions over the course of the class. To sum up the qualities Uri displayed in this class, and to mention some main accomplishments: he prepared thoroughly (both by presentation of succinct powerpoints and by making sure he had mastered the material); he asked large questions and prompted the students to articulate their own positions, all respectfully and fruitfully; he guided the discussion without being obtrusive or interjecting his own view, he covered the most important material pertinent to the subject; he created a tone for the class that was encouraging to the students, and as a consequence he engaged them all. This was a very successful class.

Frederick F. Schmitt

4) Prof. Wood's Evaluation

P140 Introduction to Ethics Uri Eran

Wylie 115 4-6 pm 3/18

AW: Co-ordinator

I stayed for the first half of the 2.5 hour session, from 4 to 5:15

There were 27 students present (17 M 10 F)

Uri lectured using materials projected on a screen

He began with an announcement on behalf of the Philosophy major

The topic for this class was Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and in particular Mill's doctrine in Chapter 2 that there are qualitative differences between pleasures.

Uri located the topic in Mill's presentation of the utilitarian or Epicurean theory of life, which takes happiness or the good to consist in pleasure and the absence of pain.

This is distinct from the utilitarian theory of morality, which is that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong insofar as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.

Class discussion focused on a handout in which Uri raised a series of questions about Mill's view and how it would apply to a series of hypothetical situations. Students were divided into groups and the discussion of each question began within the group. After 5-10 minutes of group discussion, Uri asked students to provide answers to the questions, and their answers were discussed by Uri and by the students. The questions focused on several features of Mill's view about qualitative differences in pleasures.

1. That a pleasure is considered higher in quality than another when all or nearly all those who are acquainted with both prefer it.
2. That a pleasure is higher in quality if it engages the higher faculties.
3. That those who are knowledgeable would not resign the pleasure in favor of any quantity of the pleasure judged lower in quality.
4. Question: Does it affect the judgment of quality if the higher pleasure is accompanied by discontent?
5. Does Mill think people should be legally coerced to experience higher pleasures?

The use of these questions and the group discussion of them was an effective way of drawing out student participation in discussing Mill's views.

Uri's discussion of these points displayed careful and subtle attention to the details of Mill's text, including points that are not obvious but are present in Mill's discussion.

Regarding (5), Uri very sensibly argued that Mill's answer is in the negative, but I think he should have brought in more of Mill's views from *On Liberty* to emphasize the point.

Generally speaking, Uri was a clear and engaging lecturer, during the lecture portion of the class, and he was perceptive and responsive in dealing with student comments.

The second half of the class (for which I did not stay) was to discuss Mill's argument in Chapter 4 that the desirability of happiness can be inferred from the fact that it is desired.

Uri is an effective teacher, and the class, though relatively large, engaged a significant number of students and elicited thoughtful comments.

List of possible referees, Polonsky Fellowship

Uri Eran

1. Allen Wood, PhD supervisor

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2. Marcia Baron, PhD committee member

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3. Sandra Shapshay, PhD committee member

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