

RESEARCH THEMES

Broadly speaking, my work in ethics and philosophy of action defends the view that agents are self-governing when they act in accordance with their commitments. I argue that integrity—the unification of our commitments into a coherent, consistent whole—is an ideal for agency, while being sensitive to various ways that we tend to fall short of this ideal.

Here are four themes that run through my research:

1. **INTEGRITY:** what does it mean for a person to be "whole," for the various facets of her agency to be integrated so that she is "one"?
2. **SELF-GOVERNANCE:** what does it mean to be self-governing, both at a time and over time? What is the relationship between being self-governing and staying true to one's commitments?
3. **COMMITMENTS:** in virtue of what do our commitments (both moral and personal) exert normativity?
4. **THE WISDOM IN LITERATURE:** what philosophical and psychological insights can we gain from fiction and memoir? How can literature be used in philosophical methodology?

I also have a research program in aesthetics. I am interested in the explanations and justifications we offer in defense of our aesthetic judgments and in the social dimensions of art, including the high/low art distinction.

ARTICLES

1. **THE NORMATIVE POWER OF RESOLUTIONS:** a paper that argues that when an agent resolves to ϕ , she incurs a normative reason to ϕ over and above the reasons that led her to resolve to ϕ in the first place. (Invited to a special issue of *The Monist* on duties to the self; [here](#) is a draft.)
2. **COUNTERFACTUAL REASONING IN ART CRITICISM:** a paper that describes a way we explain our aesthetic judgments involving comparisons between actual artworks and hypothetical variations of those works. (Forthcoming in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*; [here](#) is the paper.)

CURRENT PROJECTS (NEXT TWO YEARS)

Here are papers I am currently working on:

1. **PRACTICAL DEATH**: a paper that argues that when an agent violates her core commitments, she ceases to be integrated and experiences a cluster of psychological and physiological symptoms called "practical death" that threaten her autonomous agency. (Under review; [here](#) is a draft.)
2. **STARTING OVER**: a paper that examines a phenomenon where, after a period of depression or personal turmoil, people sometimes express a desire for a "clean slate" and pursue experiences that facilitate "practical restructuring."
3. **CAN CONSENT BE IRREVOCABLE?**: a paper that argues that morally valid consent must be revocable because we do not have the diachronic agential authority to strip our future selves of the right to revoke consent.
4. **PROCRASTINATION AND SELF-MANAGEMENT**: a paper that shows how thinking about different kinds of procrastination (including idle, overactive, and productive procrastination) can yield insights about self-management: the ability to carry out our plans in the face of temptation and shifting preferences.
5. **PRETENTIOUSNESS**: a paper that argues that pretentiousness should not be understood in terms of pretense, but accessibility: a person is pretentious when she hoards hoards valuable experiences and prevents others from accessing them.

LONGER RUN

Here are some papers in development that I plan on writing in the future:

1. **SELF-GOVERNANCE, OTHER PEOPLE**: a paper that compares individual-focused conceptions of integrity in Western philosophy to conceptions of integrity in non-Western traditions (especially African philosophy and Confucianism) that emphasize the unification of community rather than of the individual.
2. **PRACTICAL SAINTS**: a paper that argues that someone whose agency is fully integrated will probably not live as well as someone who experiences some incoherence, despite being fully self-governing.
3. **SAFE LOVE**: a paper that defends a safety condition on love, such that an agent loves someone only if she could not have easily not loved them.
4. **ON BEING INCONSOLABLE**: a paper that provides an account of what makes something a consolation, and why we sometimes find ourselves to be inconsolable.