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Department of Philosophy



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Action and Rationalization

Guest Lecture: March 18 2019, 17:00 - 19:00

Room 3A, Neues Institutsgebäude (NIG)

Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Vienna

Organization: Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Herlinde Pauer-Studer

ERC-Project: "The Normative and Moral Foundations of Group Agency" no. 740922



Samuel Asarnow

Free Admission.

Should you plan to attend this guest lecture, please send an e-mail to:
florian.kolowrat@univie.ac.at

Assistant Professor of
Philosophy at Macalester
College in St. Paul, MN



Assistant Professor Samuel Asarnow

Professor Asarnow works at the intersection of moral philosophy, action theory, and metaethics. His research concerns foundational questions about reasoning, rationality, and the nature of intentional action, with particular focus on the idea of acting for a reason. In addition to teaching in these areas, he teaches courses in applied ethics and biomedical ethics.

Academic Interests

AOS Ethics, Action Theory, Metaethics

AOC Bioethics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Law, Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Race and Gender, Political Philosophy

Academic Employment

2015- Macalester College, St. Paul, MN

Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Education

2015 Stanford University, Stanford, CA

Ph.D. in Philosophy

Dissertation: Practical Reasons, Practical Reasoning

Committee: Michael Bratman (chair), Anna-Sara Malmgren, Tamar Schapiro

2008 Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA

B.A. in Philosophy (with High Honors)

Published Papers

2018 "On Not Getting Out of Bed" *Philosophical Studies* (vol. and pages TBA)

2017 "The Reasoning View and Defeasible Practical Reasoning," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 95, 3 (614-636)

2016 "Rational Internalism," *Ethics* 127, 1 (147-178)

Awards, Honors, Fellowships

2018 Wallace Scholarly Activities Grant (\$2480, Macalester College)

2018 Nominated by students for the Educator of the Year Award (Macalester College)

2015-2016 Mellon Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (Declined)

2015 Pacific APA Graduate Student Travel Stipend

2012-2014 Ric Weiland Graduate Fellowship (Stanford University)

2012 Centennial Teaching Assistant Award (Stanford University)

2009-2015 Graduate Fellowship (Stanford University)

2008 Phi Beta Kappa (Swarthmore College)

Assistant Professor Samuel Asarnow

Abstract

According to the “standard story” in the philosophy of action, actions are those movements of a creature’s body that are caused and rationalized by the creature’s mental states. The attractions of the causal condition have been widely discussed. The rationalization condition is just as ubiquitous, but it is notoriously obscure, and its motivation has rarely been made explicit. This paper studies the role of the rationalization condition in the context of the causal-psychological theory of action. Replying to ideas of Kieran Setiya’s, I provide a novel action-theoretic argument for the rationalization condition, and show how to construct a plausible and informative theory of rationalization. The paper concludes with discussions of whether the resulting theory of action is normative in any objectionable sense, and how to understand the relationship between motivating reasons and normative reasons.

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