

Merrick Anderson

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EMPLOYMENT

Keeling Research Fellow University College London, Department of Philosophy	2019-
Postgraduate Research Associate and Lecturer Princeton University, Department of Philosophy	2018-2019

EDUCATION

Princeton University Ph.D. in Philosophy	07.2018
University of Toronto M.A. in Political Theory	08.2012
University of Toronto B.A. in Philosophy; Graduated with High Distinction	06.2011

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Ancient Philosophy, Normative Ethics

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Metaethics, Nietzsche, Political Philosophy

PAPERS

“What are the Wages of Justice? Rethinking Plato’s Division of Goods”
(forthcoming in 2020). *Phronesis* [11939 words]

“*Legein* to What End?”
(forthcoming in 2020). *Australasian Philosophical Review* [3969 words]

“Immorality or Immortality? An Argument for Virtue”
Rhetorica 37.2: 97-119 (2019)

“Thrasymachus’ Sophistic Account of Justice in *Republic* i”
Ancient Philosophy 36.1: 151-72 (2016)

BOOK REVIEWS

“Review of Dixsaut, *Plato-Nietzsche: Philosophy the Other Way*
Bryn Mawr Classical Review (2018)

BOOK IN PROGRESS

Just Prospering? An Ancient Debate about the Nature and Value of Justice

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

At Princeton University

Mildred W. and Alfred T. Carton, Class of 1905 Fellowship	
<i>Competitive named fellowship for outstanding research</i>	2017-18
Laurance S. Rockefeller Graduate Prize Fellowship	
<i>For promising interdisciplinary work on human values</i>	2016-17
University Center for Human Values Travel Grant	2014-17
Paul Elmer More Fellowship	2013-18
Stanley J. Seeger Graduate Fellowship	2013-18
Stanley J. Seeger Summer Fellowship	2013-17, 2019

At University of Toronto

Hertog Political Studies Program Fellowship	2012
Socrates Project Fellowship	2010-11
Registrars Graduation Award in the Humanities	
<i>For having the highest GPA of my graduating class</i>	2007-11

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Structure and Anatomy of the Platonic Virtues	
<i>Institute for Classical Studies, London</i>	10.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i>	
<i>Philosophy Department, University College London</i>	06.2019
The Moral Philosophy of the Anonymous Iamblich and its Influence	
<i>Department of Classics, Durham University</i>	06.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i>	
<i>Pennsylvania Circle of Ancient Philosophy, Villanova University</i>	04.2019
The Ethics of Comedy and Offense	
<i>Human Values Forum, Princeton University</i>	03.2019
The Power of Justice: <i>Dunamis</i> in the <i>Republic</i>	
<i>Philosophy Department, Brown University</i>	01.2019
Comments on Chiara Capelletto’s “On Sympathy, or how to Escape Empathy”	
<i>Workshop of the Postclassicisms Initiative, Mumbai</i>	07.2018
Comments on Mikhail Silian’s “Shapes as Objects of Mathematics in Ptolemy”	
<i>6th LMU-HU Joint Graduate Workshop, Berlin</i>	04.2018
How Does Justice Pay? An Analysis of Plato’s <i>Republic</i>	

<i>Classical Philosophy Works in Progress Seminar, Princeton University</i>	10.2017
Democritus on Eudaimonia	
<i>5th Biannual International Association of Presocratic Studies, Austin</i>	06.2016
Immortality or Immortality? An Argument for Virtue	
<i>Princeton Philosophical Society, Princeton University</i>	10.2015
Comments on Mi-Kyoung Lee's "The Sophists on Greek Morality"	
<i>Toronto Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, University of Toronto</i>	03.2015
The Sophistic Socrates in the <i>Euthydemus</i>	
<i>Cambridge University Graduate Conference, Cambridge University</i>	03.2014

TEACHING

At University College London – Instructor

PHIL0001: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy Fall.2019

At Princeton University – Instructor

PHI/CLA205: Introduction to Ancient Philosophy Fall.2018

At Princeton University – Assistant Instructor

PHI385: Practical Ethics Fall.2017

PHI300: Plato and his Predecessors Spring.2016

PHI306: Nietzsche Fall.2014

At University of Toronto – Teaching Assistant

PHL385: Ethics and Mental Health Spring.2013

PHL105: Introduction to Philosophy Spring.2012

PHL271: Law and Morality Fall.2011

PHL100: Introduction to Philosophy AY.2010-11

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Justice and Prospering: Ancient Debates, Disagreements and Dilemmas

My dissertation is about justice and the nature of its value. In what way is justice valuable? Is it absolutely valuable, such that its very existence makes the world a better place? Or is it only valuable as a means to living a satisfying and happy life? Perhaps neither of these categories capture the value it possesses or, then again, perhaps cynics are correct to suggest that real virtue has no value and only the appearance of virtue does us any good. These questions preoccupied the ancient Greeks and they were the first to engage in a theoretical debate about the nature of justice's value. In my dissertation, I offer an historically informed interpretation of several important works to show that the earliest philosophers had diverse, sophisticated and relevant insights into the nature of justice's value.

The culminating chapters present a new interpretation of Plato's *Republic*. Engaging with a thorny scholarly debate about the division of goods in Book II, I argue against the now-standard interpretation that Plato understands justice to be

an intrinsic good, valuable totally independently of its effects. I show instead that, according to Plato, justice is valuable in virtue of the fact that it contributes to human happiness through its unique *dunamis* – its power or capacity – which has specific effects on the just agent’s soul. The idea that justice has a unique power or capacity, the effects of which contribute to our happiness in specific and determinate ways, was an important innovation in moral philosophy at the time the *Republic* was written. Moreover, the account of justice’s value that Plato develops in this seminal text remains compelling and philosophically profound.

The beginning chapters of the dissertation set the stage for my analysis of the *Republic* by surveying an earlier debate regarding justice. I begin 300 years before the time of Plato with what I call the Traditional View of Justice as articulated by the didactic poet Hesiod. I then show that a group of sophists sought to undermine the Traditional View by arguing that justice does not truly exist and, to the extent that it does, it does not serve the happiness of the intelligent agent. Finally, I show that yet another group of sophists responded to the first group and argued that the life of justice was in fact the best and happiest life. Not only are the arguments of the second group of sophists interesting, but Plato incorporates insights from them into his own defense of justice in the *Republic*. For this reason, understanding the earlier debate is important for fully appreciating Plato’s philosophy.

REFERENCES

Research

Hendrik Lorenz (Primary Supervisor), Professor of Philosophy
Princeton University, Philosophy
+1 (609) 258 4300, hlorenz@princeton.edu

Alexander Nehamas, Class of 1943 Professor in Humanities
Princeton University, Philosophy
+1 (609) 258 4309, nehamas@princeton.edu

Melissa Lane, Class of 1943 Professor of Politics and Director of the UCHV
Princeton University, Politics
+1 (609) 258 4860, mslane@princeton.edu

John Cooper, Henry Putnam Professor of Philosophy
Princeton University, Philosophy (Emeritus)
+1 (609) 258 4297, johncoop@princeton.edu

Rachel Barney (External), Professor of Philosophy and Director of CPAMP
University of Toronto, Philosophy
+1 (416) 978 8513, rachel.barney@utoronto.ca

Teaching

Benjamin Morison, Professor of Philosophy and Director Program in Classical Philosophy
Princeton University, Philosophy
+1 (609) 258 4304, bmorison@princeton.edu

Service

David Stirk, Dean of Butler College
Princeton University, Butler College
+1 (609) 258 4954, dstirk@princeton.edu

RESEARCH LANGUAGES

Ancient Greek, Latin, German, French (beginner)

OTHER SERVICE

At Princeton University

Senior Thesis supervision for Simeon Lane and Elizabeth Jobson	2018-19
Conference Moderator	2017, 2019
Resident Graduate Student, Butler College	2014-18

At University of Toronto

Volunteer Instructor for <i>Humanities for Humanity</i>	2010-11
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