**CURRICULUM VITAE**

Lorraine L. Besser

Department of Philosophy

Middlebury College

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EMPLOYMENT

Middlebury College, Professor (2019-present), Associate Professor (2014-2019), Assistant Professor (2008-2014)

University of Waterloo, Assistant Professor (2005 –2008)

Stanford University, Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow (2003 – 2005)

EDUCATION

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, PhD. in Philosophy, 2003.

Claremont Graduate School, M.A. in Philosophy, 1997

Tulane University: B.A. with honors in Philosophy, 1995

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

*The Art of the Interesting: What we miss in our pursuit of the good life and how to cultivate it.*  [trade book] (GCP Balance/Hachette Book Group, 2024).

*The Philosophy of Happiness: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (New York: Routledge Press, 2021)

*The Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics* (New York: Routledge Press, 2015). Co-edited with Michael Slote.

*Eudaimonic Ethics: The Philosophy and Psychology of Living Well* (New York: Routledge Press, 2014).

Articles and Book Chapters:

“Why is the Boring Bad?” *Perspectives on Ill-Being*, ed. C. Tappolet and M. Rossi, Oxford University Press (in press).

“Attachment in the Wake of Impermanence: A Comparison of Hume and Buddhism on the Practical Implications of having “No-Self”. *History of Philosophy Quarterly* (40)4 (2023), pp. 338-358.

“Re-Imagining the Quality of Life” *Journal of Philosophical Research* 48 (2023), pp. 233-245.

“Engagement, Experience, and Value: A Reply to Critics” *Journal of Philosophical Research* 48 (2023), pp. 259-269.

“The Interesting and the Pleasant” *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy.* 24(1) 2023, pp. 58-80.

“Virtue” Oxford Handbook of Moral Psychology, ed. John Doris and Manuel Vargas. (Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 158-176.

“Virtue and Moral Psychology in Hume’s Enquiry” Critical Guide to *Hume’s Enquiry Concerning Principles of Morals*, ed. Esther Kroeker and Willem Lemmens. (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

“Happiness”*.* *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philos*ophy (online), first published 2021.

“Happiness, Meaning, and Psychological Richness” (with Oishi, S., Choi, H., Koo, M. and Besser). *Affective Science* 1 (2020), pp. 107-115.

“The Psychologically Rich Life.” (lead author, with S. Oishi) *Philosophical Psychology*, 33(8) 2020, pp. 1053-1071.

“Learning Virtue” *Journal of Moral Education.* Special Issue on Self-Determination Theory, Morality, and Virtue. Ed. Randall Curren and Tobias Krettenauer. 49(3) (2020), pp. 282-294.

“The Psychologically Rich Life Questionnaire” (with Oishi, Choi, Buttrick, Heintzelman, Kushlev, Westgate, Tucker, Ebersole, Axt, Gilbert, Ng, and Besser) *Journal of Research in Personality* 89 (2019), pp. 257-270.

“Hume’s Moral Philosophy and Contemporary Moral Psychology” The Humean Mind, ed. Angela Coventry and Alex Sager (New York: Routledge Press, 2019) pp. 458-469.

“Empathy, Intersubjectivity, and Morality: Building from Hume’s Account.” Humean Value Theory and Contemporary Psychology, ed. Rico Vitz and Phil Reed. (New York: Routledge Press, 2018), pp. 209-225.

“Virtue of Self-Regulation.” Ethical Theory and Moral Practice, 20(3), (2017), pp. 505-517. Special Issue on New Directions of Character and Virtue, ed. Nancy Snow.

“Virtue Traits and Personality Traits.” in Moral Psychology, vol 5: Virtues and Vices, ed Walter Sinnott-Armstrong and Christian Miller (MIT Press, 2017), pp. 105-112.

“Conceptual Challenges for a Science of Eudaimonic Well-Being.” Handbook of Eudaimonic Well-Being, ed. Joar Vittersø (New York: Springer, 2016, 85-91).

“Eudaimonism.” Routledge Companion to Well-Being, ed. Guy Fletcher (New York: Routledge Press, 2016), pp. 187-196.

“Two Objections to Virtue Ethics.” Ethics and Politics, XVII (2), (2015), pp. 60-73.

“The Situationist Critique” Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics, ed. Lorraine Besser-Jones and Michael Slote (New York: Routledge Press, 2015), pp. 375-384.

“The Pursuit and Nature of Happiness.” Philosophical Topics, 41(1), (2013), pp. 103-122.

“The Role of Practical Reason in an Empirically Informed Moral Theory.” Ethical Theory and Moral Practice 15(2), (2012), pp. 202-220.

“The Motivational State of the Virtuous Agent.” Philosophical Psychology, 25(1), (2012), pp. 93-108.

“Virtue and Flourishing in Our Interpersonal Relationships.” Philosophic Exchange, 42 (2011-2012), pp. 5-29.

“Drawn to the Good? Brewer on Dialectical Activities.” Journal of Moral Philosophy, 8 (2011), pp. 621-631.

“Hume on Pride-in-Virtue: A Reliable Motive?” Hume Studies 36(2), (2010), pp. 171-193.

“Social Psychology, Moral Character, and Moral Fallibility.” Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 76(2), (2008), pp. 310-332.

“Personal Integrity, Morality, and Psychological Well-Being.” Journal of Moral Philosophy 5(3), (2008), pp. 361-383.

“The Role of Justice in Hume’s Theory of Psychological Development.” Hume Studies 32(2), (2006), pp. 253-276.

“Just War Theory, Legitimate Authority, and the ‘War’ on Terror” in Philosophy 9/11: Philosophers Look at Terrorism, ed. Timothy Shanahan (Open Court Press: La Salle, IL 2005).

TEACHING (Middlebury College)

Courses Taught:

Contemporary Moral Problems

Introduction to Value Theory

Mortal Questions/Intro to Philosophy

Human Nature and Ethics

History of Ethics

Medical Ethics

Early Modern Philosophy

Philosophy of Happiness

Moral Psychology

Moral Emotions (senior seminar)

Empathy and Sympathy (senior seminar)

The Good Life (senior seminar)

Morality and its Critics (senior seminar)

Visions of Mortality (first year seminar)

Happiness (first year seminar)

Dimensions of the good life (first year seminar)

Senior Thesis Writing Seminar

Senior Thesis& Independent Projects:

Naturalism and Normativity in Hume’s Theory of Belief

Authenticity and the Importance of Happiness in our Lives

The Self, The Other and Covid-19

The Elusive Ideal of Perfectionism

The Economics of Happiness

Philosophy of Psychiatry

Stoicism and Psychotherapy

Aristotle, Love, and Agape

Ethical Problems in Neuroscience

Virtue Ethics and Moral Dilemmas

Moral Psychology of the British Empiricists

Happiness and The Paradox of Choice

Responsibility and Neuroethics

A Theory of Informed Consent

Empathy and Justice

Natural Law Theory in the 17th and 18th century

PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

Book:

*The Art of the Interesting: What we miss in our pursuit of the good life and how to cultivate it.*  GCP Balance (Hachette), 2024.

Articles:

“A New Way to Look at the Good Life” Psychology Today, February 14, 2025.

“Ready to Life your Best Possible Life?” Psychology Today, January 27, 2025.

“Transform the Daily Grind to Make Life More Interesting: A Philosopher Shares 3 Strategies to help you Attain the Good Life” The Conversation. Dec 26, 2024.

“How the Art of the Interesting Makes for a Good Life” Next Big Idea Magazine. Nov 6,

2024. (in print and audio)

“Being Interesting is not an objective feature of the world” Aeon Magazine, Oct 2018. Republished on Erraticus.co; Fast Company

“Abortion”, “Interacting with Others”, and “Government”, in What Should I Do? Philosophers on the Good, the Bad, and the Puzzling. ed. Alexander George (Oxford University Press: New York, 2011).

Public Talks & Webinars:

"The Good Life Debate: A Life of Ikagai or A Life of Wonder and Adventure" Mizuho India Japan Study Centre (MIJSC), Indian Institute of Management (Bangalore, India), February 25, 2025.

“Supporting K-12 students in cultivating the Art of the Interesting” Explo, webinar, January 15, 2025.

“Strive for Better Lives” National Society for Leadership and Success Summit, Keynote webinar, November 8, 2024.

“The Art of the Interesting”, Scarsdale Adult School, webinar, September 26, 2024.

“On the Art of the Interesting: A Conversation Between Lorraine Besser and Soshana Simons” CIIS Public Programs, webinar, air date Sept 19, 2024.

“The Missing Piece of the Good Life” Vermont Public Philosophy Week (Middlebury, VT) April 2024.

“Psychological Richness and a Good Life” Green Mountain Academy Continuing Education Program (Manchester, VT) January 2022.

“Experiencing Nature: Arousal, Interest, and Aesthetics”, A Night of Philosophy and Ideas, sponsored by the French Embassy. (Houston, TX) January 2019.

--------. Vermont Public Philosophy Week (Middlebury, VT), April 2019.

“Food Ethics” Panel. Vermont Public Philosophy Week (Cornwall, VT) April 2018.

“Agency and Patiency: Understanding the Philosophy of Well-Being” Public Lecture. (Burlington, VT) Vermont Public Philosophy Week, April 2017.

Podcast and Radio Interviews:

* Authentic Parenting, “Unlocking the Good Life: The Power of Psychological Richness” airdate Feb 6, 2025.
* Mindvalley Book Club, “The Art of the Interesting” airdate Feb 5 2025.
* Seize the Moment, “Beyond Happiness and Meaning: The Missing Key to the Good Life” airdate Jan 26, 2025.
* The Vermont Edition, Vermont Public Radio, live, January 30, 2024.
* “How to Build a Good Life”, 10 Seconds to Air Podcast, airdate January 16, 2025.
* “How to make life more interesting” Hot Flashes/Cool Topics Podcast, airdate November 24, 2024.
* “The Missing Ingredient to the “Good Life”, The Courageous Life Podcast, airdate November 20, 2024.
* “What is the Art of the Interesting? How to find Happiness. . . beyond Aristotle.” Classical Wisdom Podcast, airdate November 20, 2024.
* “The Interesting: How to Live a Good Life” Next Big Idea Podcast, airdate November 18, 2024.
* “On the Art of the Interesting”, The Retirement Wisdom Podcast, air date November 11, 2024
* “On the Art of the Interesting”, The Jim Rutt Show, airdate November 5, 2024.
* “Living a Richer Life” Curious Minds at Work podcast, airdate November 3, 2024.
* “Interesting?” Philosophy v Improv podcast, airdate November 3, 2024.
* “The Good Life isn’t an Easy One”, Life Examined, podcast, air date September 22, 2024.
* “On The Art of the Interesting with Lorraine Besser”, Psychologists off the Clock, podcast, episode #372, airdate September 11, 2024

Media

* “The Restorative Power of the “Interesting”” by Rufus Griscom,  *Book of the Day from the Next Big Idea Club* (substack), November 24, 2024.
* “The Better-than-Good Life” by Marie Sherlock, *New Avenue* , October 24, 2024.
* “Lorraine Besser, la filósofa que contradice a Aristóteles sobre cómo alcanzar el buen vivir” [The philosopher who contradicts Aristotle on how to live a good life], by Jonás Preller Roldán, *La Tercera*, daily national newspaper (Santiago, Chile), October 8, 2024.
* “What if you pursued what’s interesting instead of happiness?” *The Greater Good Science Magazine.* Sept 10, 2024
* “How novelty positively impacts your brain” *Fast Company* *Magazine* Sept 16, 2024
* “Recipe for a Good Life: Look for the Interesting” *The Addison Independent,* Sept 26, 2024
* “Perspective-changing experiences, good or bad, can lead to richer lives” by Sujata Gupta, *Science News*, Sept 1, 2021.
* “A Good Life Doesn’t Mean an Easy One” by Alison Gopnik, *The Wall Street Journal,* Aug 28, 2020.

Public Awards, Honors, and Reviews for *The Art of the Interesting*:

* Porchlight 2024 Business Book Awards [longlist]
* Must Read Happiness Books of 2024, The Next Big Idea Book Club
* #1 Top Psychology Book of 2024, The New Big Idea Book Club
* #3 Top Happiness Book of 2024, The New Big Idea Club
* Favorite Books of the Year (2024), Greater Good Science Center.
* Non-Obvious Book of the Year Award, 2024, [shortlist]
* “10 Game-Changing Books for a happier, less stressful life” *TimesNow*  (India)
* “Book Gift ideas for 2024” *The Globe and Mail* (Canada)

Public Philosophy Grants:

* Berry Fund for Public Scholarship Grant, American Philosophical Association, “Teaching Public Writing”, 2024.
* New England Humanities Council Grant. “Public Philosophy Workshop”. Organized a writing course for New England area philosophers. (Averill, VT) 2022.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

“Lessons from the Sage: The Influence of Stoicism on Hume’s Moral Ideal” International Hume Society Group Session, American Philosophical Association (New York, NY) January 2025.

“Happiness and Well-Being: Philosophical Underpinnings” Keynote Speaker. UDD Conference on Happiness and Well-Being (Santiago, Chile) October 2024.

“Resonance: The Common Ground” Invited Symposium. American Philosophical Association, Central Division (New Orleans, LA) March 2024.

“Re-reading the Sensible Knave: What if we’ve all been wrong?” Keynote Panel*.* International Hume Society (Provo, UT), July 2023.

“Re-Imagining the Quality of Life.” Symposium Presentation. American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division (San Francisco, CA) April 2023.

----. Bled Ethics Conference (Bled, Slovenia), June 2022.

“Comments on Harmony, The Virtue of Loyalty”. International Hume Society, Prague, CR, July 2022.

“Hume’s Practical Conception of the Self” Princeton-Bucharest Virtual Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy. March 2022.

“Why is the Boring Bad?” Washington University (St. Louis), March 2022.

“Practical Selves in the Wake of No-Selves: Defending the Humean Approach”. Invited session; American Philosophical Association (Chicago, IL) February 2022.

Comments on Welchman and Wilburn, *Why Hume’s Censure of the Monkish Virtues*

*Isn’t Question Begging.* 47th International Hume Society. Online. July 2021

“The Role of Empathy in Oral History”. Middlebury College, VT May 2021. Invited.

“The Virtue of Curiosity”. SUNY Potsdam. April 2021. Invited.

“Anxiety and Emotional Extremes”. Washington University, St Louis. October 2020. Invited.

“Compassion”. Kansas Workshop on Well-Being. (Lawrence, KS) July 2019. Invited.

“A Humean Theory of Compassion” Workshop in honor of Jerry Postema (Chapel Hill, NC) May 2019. Invited.

“The Value of the Interesting” Invited Symposium. American Philosophical Association (Vancouver, BC) 2019.

“Agency, Character, and Virtue in Hume’s Enquiry Concerning Principles of Morals” Workshop on Hume’s Enquiry (Williamsburg, VA) October 2018. Invited.

“A Humean Theory of Compassion” 45th International Hume Conference (Budapest, Hungary), July 2018. Presented in absentia.

“The Interesting and the Pleasant” Bled Conference in Ethics (Bled, Slovenia), June 2018. Invited.

“Compassion and Happiness” Montreal Workshop on Happiness and Affective States (Montreal, Quebec), March 2018. Invited.

----. Philosophical Moral Psychology: An International Meeting of Classic and

Empirically Informed Philosophy (Munich, Germany) July 2018. Presented in

absentia.

“The Psychologically Rich Life” Kansas Workshop on Well-Being (Lawrence, Kansas), July 2017. Invited.

“What is the Good Life?” (with Shige Oishi) Happiness and Well-Being Project Midpoint Conference (St. Louis, MS), June 2017. Invited.

Comments on Reed, “The Rarity of Virtue”, 44th International Hume Conference (Providence, RI) July 2017. Invited.

“The Self as Social Agent: Hume’s Theory of Pride, Agency, and the Self” Humean Readings Conference (Rome, Italy) June 2016. Invited.

“Bridging Gaps between Hume’s Moral Psychology and Contemporary Psychological Research” American Philosophical Association, Hume Society Group Session, Pacific Division (San Francisco, CA) April 2016. Invited.

“Hume’s Practical Conception of the Self”. Panel on “Women who work in the History of Philosophy”, American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division (Washington, DC) January 2016. Invited.

“The Pursuit of Happiness” University of Vermont (Burlington, VT), October 2015. Invited

“The Self as Social Agent.” Plenary Panel. 42nd International Hume Conference (Stockholm) July 2015. Invited.

“Virtue Ethics as Social Science: How naturalistic can it get?” Varieties of Virtue Ethics in Philosophy, Social Science and Theology, (Oxford, UK) January 2015. Invited.

----. Colloquium Presentation, Department of Philosophy, SMU (Dallas, TX), January 2015.

Comments on Dorsey, “Hume’s Qualitative Hedonism.” American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division (San Diego, CA) April 2014.

“Objectivity and Well-Being.” The Normative Implications of Moral Psychology Workshop (Birmingham, AL) November 2011.

“Virtue and Flourishing in our Interpersonal Relationships”. Center for Philosophic Exchange, SUNY College (Brockport, NY) November 2011. Invited.

“The Motivational State of the Virtuous Agent” SUNY Brockport, November 2011. Invited.

“Needing Others.” Northern New England Philosophical Association (Burlington, VT) October 2011.

“Autonomy, Identification, and Morality.” The Mentoring Workshop (Amherst, MA) June 2011.

“What Drives the Virtuous?” American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division (Boston, MA) December 2010.

“Hume on the Enjoyment of Character.” 37th International Hume Conference (Antwerp, Belgium) July 2010.

“The Motivational State of the Virtuous Agent” Faculty Lecture Series, Middlebury College, April 2010.

“On Being Virtuous and Acting Well.” Northern New England Philosophical Association (Durham, NH) October 2009.

Comments on “Character Naturalized: Hume's Distinction Between Artificial and Natural Virtues and the Rejection of Traditional Ethics" by Kenneth Henley. Hume Society (Halifax, NS) August 2009.

“Virtue, not Jealousy: Hume’s View of Social Dependency.” American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division (Vancouver, BC) April 2009.

“Contingency and Comparison in Hume’s Enjoyment of Character View: A Commentary on Michael Gill’s The British Moralists on Human Nature and the Birth of Secular Ethics.” Author –Meets- Critics Session, 35th International Hume Conference, (Iceland) August 2008. Invited.

“Driven By Comparison? An Analysis of Pride and Amour-Propre.” Canadian Philosophical Association (Vancouver, BC) June 2008.

“Foundationalism and the Criteria of Just War Theory.” (co-authored with Colleen Murphy). Canadian Philosophical Association (Vancouver, BC) June 2008.

“The Efﬁcacy and Plausibility of Aristotelian and Kantian Accounts of Moral Motivation: Is It Really Better to Enjoy What We Do?” Society for Philosophy in the Contemporary World Session at the American Philosophical Association, Central Division (Chicago, IL) April 2008.

Comments on “What Fittingness Isn't Fit To Do: The Assessment of Emotional Intensity” by Remy Debes. Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology (New Orleans, LA) March 2008.

“The Role of Practical Reason in an Empirically-Informed Moral Theory” Department of Philosophy, University of Guelph, November 2007.

“Praise, Blame, and the Desire-Myth.” Western Canadian Philosophical Association (Vancouver, BC) October 2006.

“Clarke’s Theory of Obligation: A Hybrid Theory of Practical Reason and Intuitionism.” Canadian Philosophical Association (York, ON) May 2006.

“The Implications of Social Psychology for Corporate Responsibility”, Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (Portland, OR) March 2006.

“The Empirical Foundations of Moral Behavior”, Virtue Ethics and Moral Psychology: The Situationism Debate (Denver, CO) October 2005. Invited.

“In Defense of Character”, Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (Boston, MA) December 2004.

“A Problem of Moral Motivation” Society of Ethics and Normative Theory (SENT), Stanford University, November 2004.

“In Defense of Character”, Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society and Mind Association (Canterbury, UK) July 2004.

“In Defense of Character”, A Special Conference on Values: Values, Rational Choice, and the Will (Stevens Point, Wisconsin) April 2004.

“Hume’s Account of the Motivation to be Just”, Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (Pasadena, CA) March 2004.

“Just War Theory, Legitimate Authority, and the ‘War’ on Terror”, Understanding Terrorism Conference (Los Angeles, CA) September 2003.

“A Virtue Theory for Imperfect People”, The 31st Annual Conference on Value Inquiry (Grand Forks, ND) April 2003.

“Paving the Ground for a More Competitive Virtue Theory: The Nature of Our Moral Reasons”, Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association (San Francisco, CA) March 2003.

“A New Look at Hume’s Circle Argument”, Southeastern Seminar in Early Modern Philosophy (Chapel Hill, NC) November 2002

“Understanding Overridingness: Breaking Free from the Kantian Dichotomy of Reasons”, Joint Meeting of the North Carolina Philosophical Society and the South Carolina Society for Philosophy (Charleston, SC) January 2002. (Prize for best paper by a graduate student or untenured faculty member)

BOOK REVIEWS

“Review of Julian Baggini’s The Great Guide: What David Hume can teach us about being human and living well” *Hume Studies*, 47(2) 2022, pp. 311-314.

“Review of Anna Alexandrova’s A Philosophy for the Science of Well-Being.” Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews. January, 2018.

“Review of Christian B. Miller’s Moral Character: An Empirical Theory.” Journal of Moral Philosophy 13 (5), (2016), pp. 631-635.

“Review of Christian B. Miller’s Character and Moral Psychology” Ethics 126 (2) 2016, 521-525.

“Review of Simon Blackburn’s Mirror Mirror: The Uses and Abuses of Self-Love.” Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews. September, 2014.

“Review of Lawrence C. Becker’s Habilitation, Health, and Agency: A Framework for Basic Justice.” Social Theory and Practice, 40 (2), (2014), pp. 353-357.

“Review of Annette Baier’s The Cautious Jealous Virtue.” Journal of the History of Philosophy, 50 (3), (2012), pp. 461-462.

“Review of Jordan Howard Sobel’s Walls and Vaults: A Natural Science of Morals.” Philosophical Review 121 (4), (2012), pp. 634-636.

“Review of Christopher J. Finlay’s Hume's Social Philosophy: Human Nature and Commercial Sociability in A Treatise of Human Nature.” Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews, April 2008.

“Review of Håkan Salwén’s Hume’s Law: An Essay in Moral Reasoning.” Hume Studies 31(1), 2005.

ACADEMIC GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Co –PI, with Shige Oishi (Psychology, UVA), “What is the Good Life: A Happy Life, A Perfectionist Life, or a Psychologically Rich Life?”, Happiness and Well-Being Project: Integrating Research Across the Disciplines, Templeton Foundation. $217,989 July 2016-July 2018.

UW/SSRHC Seed Grant, June 2006-June 2007.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Referee: Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Columbia University Press, Routledge Press, *Ergo, Ethics,* *The Monist, Philosophical Psychology,* *Hume Studies*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Theoria*, *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of the History of Philosophy, Journal of Happiness Studies, Res Philosophica, Journal of Moral Philosophy, Canadian Journal of Philosophy,* Blackwell Publishing, Canadian Philosophical Association, Hume Society, *Journal of Moral Education.*

Mentor, Hume Society Mentoring Program for Early Career Women, 2018.

Hume Society Session Organizer for the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meetings. 2012-2015

Panelist, AskPhilosophers.org, 2008-2009

SERVICE TO MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Promotions Committee, 2022-2025

Department Chair, 2015-2017; 2019-2020, 2025

Academic Judicial Board 2021-2023

Institutional Review Board, 2014-2017

Community Judicial Board, 2010-2013; 2018-2019