

## STATEMENT OF RESEARCH INTERESTS AND PLANS

EUGENE MARSHALL

I study the history of modern philosophy, focusing on issues in moral psychology. My current work investigates the nature, role, and function of belief, desire, and judgment in such phenomena as weakness of will and the passions, as seen in the work of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century philosophers. These thinkers propose fascinating and underappreciated theories on a variety of psychological issues.

I have several articles in progress currently and several larger projects underway. At the moment I am finishing several articles on Spinoza's moral psychology that grew out of my dissertation on his theory of *akrasia*. In one article, I argue that scholars have critically misconstrued Spinoza's concept of human freedom. In a second article, I set Spinoza's thoughts on the mind and those on the state side by side and find striking similarities. A third article investigates his widespread use of the law of the association of ideas, a principle normally associated with empiricist thought. I also have several articles concerning the moral psychology of other thinkers of the period, such as Hobbes and Descartes, in mind.

Beyond these articles, I am currently laying the groundwork for two book-length projects. First of all, I plan to write a book, tentatively titled, ***Spinoza's Moral Psychology***, a topic has not been addressed in any book length work in English since the 1940s. This book would continue, deepen, broaden, and systematize the work I have already done and am currently undertaking on the topic of Spinoza's moral psychology, but would also connect with surrounding issues, such as his philosophy of mind, epistemology, ethics, and so on.

This first book-length project will be a tightly focused philosophical investigation of a particular topic in one thinker. My second book-length project, on the other hand, is broader. That book, tentatively titled, ***Thinking With the Body in the Seventeenth Century***, would look at the physiological and material basis and foundation for conscious experience and thought in general among several thinkers. Readers of the seventeenth Century tend to overlook the fact that most writers took nearly all of conscious experience to be bodily, including thinkers such as Descartes and Gassendi, who are usually read as being quite opposed to this view. By a close reading of several important passages in the works of Descartes, Gassendi, Hobbes, Spinoza, and others, a continuity is revealed, one according to which the mind is seen as being, in part if not in whole, a physical thing.

Though my work primarily concerns figures and texts in the history of philosophy, I intend much of it to be accessible and interesting to a wider philosophical audience. For example, my project on thinking with the body could be of great interest to philosophers of mind and my work on Spinoza's theory of *akrasia* may be informative for meta-ethicists. I look forward to the opportunity to be a resource to colleagues and a contributor to the research of the department.