

# INSTITUT FÜR PHILOSOPHIE HUMBOLDT-KOLLOQUIUM

## PostDoc Job Talks



Rory O'Connell completed his BA (2008) and M.Phil (2011) at King's College London.

He is currently completing his doctoral thesis, 'The Efficacy of the Good', at the University of Chicago.

His interests are primarily in ethics, the philosophy of action and the philosophy of mind.

## Rory O'CONNELL

### An Argument Against the Possibility of an Instrumental Being

Is the concept of an instrumental being, a being possessing instrumental reason but lacking a rational comprehension of its ends, an intelligible one? I argue that a proper account of the logical character of instrumental reasoning—an account I give in this paper—reveals that it is not. The significance of this is twofold. Firstly, it directly undermines the Humean contention that we are such beings. Secondly, it has ramifications for our conception of human agency: Many philosophers trenchantly opposed to Humeanism have, I argue, failed to liberate themselves from an impoverished conception of instrumental reason, in virtue of retaining the very assumptions that render the concept of an instrumental being apparently intelligible. Moreover, in jettisoning these assumptions, we can better illuminate the relation between, on the one hand, pleasure and sensible desire, and, on the other hand, practical reason.

**26. 2. 2018**  
**11:00 - 13:00**  
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