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Employment

Current: Emmanuel College (Fall 2019-Spring 2020) Lecturer

Past: Emmanuel College (Fall 2018-Spring 2019) Visiting Assistant Professor

Emmanuel College, (Spring 2012-Spring 2018), Adjunct Professor
Salem State University, (Fall 2015-Spring 2018), Adjunct Professor
Simmons College (Spring 2016 – Spring 2017), Adjunct Professor
Dean College, (Fall 2012-Spring 2015), Adjunct Professor

Education

Ph.D. (Philosophy) University of Iowa (2011)
Dissertation title: *The Skeptic's Dogmatism: A Constructive Response to the Skeptical Problem*
Dissertation advisor: Evan Fales
M.A. (Philosophy), Colorado State University (2006)
B.A. *cum laude* (Philosophy), Colorado State University (2003)

Areas of Specialization Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology

Areas of Competence Philosophy of Science, 20th Century Analytic Philosophy

Publications

(2018) "Accounting for the Specious Present: A Defense of Enactivism," *Journal of Mind and Behavior* 39:3, 181-204.

I argue that conscious visual experience is essentially a non-representational demonstration of a skill. The explication and defense of this position depends on both phenomenological and empirical considerations. The central phenomenological claim is this: as a matter of human psychology, it is impossible to produce a conscious visual experience of a mind-independent object that is sufficiently like typical cases, without including concomitant proprioceptive sensations of the sort of extra-neural behavior that allows us to there and then competently detect such objects. I then argue that this view, which is a version of enactivism, best explains the temporality of conscious experience—what is often called the specious present.

(2016) "Against the Conditional Correctness of Scepticism" *South African Journal of Philosophy* 35:1, 82-91.

Stroud has argued for many years that skepticism is conditionally correct. We cannot, he claims, both undergo a Cartesian-style examination of the extent of our knowledge as well as avoid skepticism. One reason Stroud's position appears quite plausible is the so-called "totality condition" imposed for this kind of examination: as inquiring philosophers we are called upon to assess all of our knowledge, all at once. However, in this paper it is argued that Stroud's understanding of the totality condition is ambiguous between the following two conceptions: i) as the requirement that we initially assume that we don't know anything about external reality; versus ii) as the requirement that we initially not assume that we know anything about external reality. I argue that this ambiguity is important for two reasons. First, only the second interpretation of totality is suitable for the kind of philosophical examination that Stroud seems to have in mind. Secondly, according to this same understanding of totality, skepticism is not conditionally correct.

(2016) "A Non-Representational Understanding of Perceptual Experience" *Journal of Mind and Behavior* 37, 271-286.

This paper argues that various phenomenological considerations support a non-representational causal account of visual experience. This position claims that visual experiences serve as a non-representational causally efficacious medium for the production of beliefs concerning the external world. The arguments are centered on defending a non-representational causal account's understanding of the cognitive significance of visual experience. Among other things, such an account can easily explain the inextricable role that background beliefs and conceptual capacities play in perceptually-based external world belief-formation processes, the fact that visual mental states constrain beliefs because of their presentational phenomenology, and the phenomenon known as the transparency of visual experience.

Works in Progress

Book project (under contract with Lexington Books, a division of Rowman and Littlefield. The manuscript is due in June, 2020)

A Biophenomenological Defense of Enactivism

In this monograph, I defend the idea that visual experience is fundamentally a skillful action. This position, known as enactivism, challenges the currently dominant computationalist approach to understanding cognition. At the outset, I argue that there is a glaring problem with the traditional methodology enshrined by the Argument from Hallucination. To reason as such is to commit a *pawnshop fallacy*—I argue that it involves improperly treating a degenerate case such as a possible hallucination as if it were an exemplar. Just as it would be wrong for a pawnshop owner to devalue a piece the provenance of which has already been verified merely based upon recognizing the

possibility of an indistinguishable rival, I argue that it is similarly misguided for anyone to doubt that normal experiences essentially involve a bodily-mediated relationship to mind-and-body-independent reality based merely upon the psychological possibility of perfect hallucinations. I then argue that enactivism is the most plausible position to emerge when one pursues an empirically informed and (Heideggarian) phenomenologically focused methodology that avoids any such fallacy. I show how this form of enactivism, so motivated, avoids the problems that arguably continue to plague other forms of enactivism. I also argue for a novel, enactivist account of hallucinations that construes them in derivative fashion, which properly treats them as degenerate cases rather than as exemplars of perceptual experience. In the latter part of the book, I then argue that computationalism and representationalism more generally speaking are either similarly motivated by a pawnshop fallacy, or else ad hoc when compared to my version of enactivism. Finally, in addition to defending enactivism and arguing against computationalism and representationalism, I explore some of the other implications that enactivism has for philosophy of mind, and the cognitive sciences more generally. More specifically, among other matters, I try to lay the groundwork for how an enactivist understanding of human development provides a promising avenue for understanding intentionality in a non-representational, skill-based fashion.

Presented Papers

- “Your Brain is Not Like a Computer: A Defense of Enactivism” (invited presentation)
Emmanuel College, School of Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Lecture Series, November 2018
- “Vision is an Action: A Defense of Enactivism”
North Carolina Philosophical Society and South Carolina Society for Philosophy – Joint Meeting, 2018
- “What is it like to be a Hallucinating Bat?: How to be a Naïve Realist that Denies Disjunctivism” *North Carolina Philosophical Society and South Carolina Society for Philosophy – Joint Meeting, 2016*
- “The Phenomenological Case against Perceptual Content” *Northwest Philosophy Conference 2014* (unable to attend due to lack of travel funding)
- “Is Skepticism Conditionally Correct?” *New Jersey Regional Philosophical Association Conference 2012*
- “Why Fallibilism?” *LSU Philosophy Conference 2012*
- “Are the Skeptical Scenarios Epistemically Possible?” *Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Conference 2010*, (unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict)
- “On the Inadequacy of the Contextualist Answer to Skepticism” *Alabama Philosophical Society Annual Conference 2009*
- “The Excluded Middle of Precision: A Critique of Epistemic Scientific Realism” *American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting 2007*
- “The Presence of Rule-Following in Language Use: A Response to Wittgenstein” *Illinois Philosophical Association Annual Conference 2007*
- “Defending Thomas Nagel’s Argument for the Requirement of Objectivity in Ethics” *Iowa Philosophical Society Annual Conference 2007*
- “Externalist Justification with Internalist Aspects: A Response to Timothy Williamson” *Athens Institute for Education and Research, 2nd International Conference on Philosophy 2007* (unable to attend due to lack of travel funding)

"A Defense of Gilbert Ryle's Concept of a Disposition" *Iowa Philosophical Society Annual Conference 2006*

"The Failure of Sartre's Distinction between Pure and Impure Reflection" *University of Iowa Graduate Student Conference 2006*

Fellowships, Academic Honors

University of Iowa Presidential Graduate Fellowship (2006-2011) that includes:

Dissertation Year Fellowship (8/2010 - 6/2011)

Dissertation Data Collection Fellowship (8/2009 - 6/2010)

First Year Fellowship (8/2006 - 6/2007)

Annual Summer Research Stipend (Awarded for July & August of 2007-2011)

Honors Societies:

Gamma Beta Phi Honors Society; National Society of Collegiate Scholars;
Golden Key Honors Society

Professional Service

Senior Distinction Advisor – Brandon Fitzpatrick, Spring 2019

(involving a directed study, paper, oral presentation, and an award of academic distinction)

Senior Distinction Reader – Mollie Bourne, Spring 2019

(involving providing feedback and approving the project, giving comments on drafts, and approving the paper and presentation itself as worthy of receiving distinction)

Senior Seminar Reader – Michael Noonan, Spring 2019

(involving providing feedback on the project, meeting regularly with the student, and commenting on drafts)

Emmanuel College Philosophy Club – Club Advisor (Spring 2012 to present)

Co-Organizer *Emmanuel College Boston Area Undergraduate Philosophy Conference*, Spring 2018 and Spring 2019

Chaperone for a student service trip – building homes for Habitat for Humanity in Amarillo, TX, Spring 2018

Curriculum Work for Dean College (revising course outlines for Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Ethics, and Business Ethics. Creating course outline and design for a new course at Dean called *Human Nature*)

Commentator on Jessica Pepp's "Two Conceptions of Semantic Reference" *University of Iowa Graduate Philosophical Society Conference 2009*

Submission Referee for *U of Iowa Graduate Philosophical Society Conference 2009, 2011*

Professional References

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