

Dr David Jacob Harrison

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RESEARCH AREA & INTERESTS

Areas of Specialisation: Philosophy of Cognitive Science; Philosophy of Biology; Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence; Bio-inspired Artificial Intelligence.

Areas of Competency: History of Biology; Ethics of Artificial Intelligence; Phenomenology; 20th century Continental Philosophy.

CURRENT POSITION

Hong Kong Catastrophic Risk Centre, Hong Kong – January 2025 – Present

Research Assistant Professor focusing on the Ethics and Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence.

Department of Philosophy, Lingnan University, Hong Kong – January 2025 – Present

Research Assistant Professor for Masters in Artificial Intelligence and the Future in the Department of Philosophy, Lingnan University.

EDUCATION

The University of Cambridge, Ph.D. – October 2019 – May 2024

Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science

Dissertation Title: Mind the Matter: Active Matter, Basal Cognition, and the Making of Bio-Inspired Artificial Intelligence

Supervisor: Marta Halina

Advisor: Tim Lewens

- Recipient of HPS Trust Stipend (2019-2022).
- Lead author on published paper that ranks in top 10% of all research outputs ever tracked by Altmetric (93rd percentile).

King's College London, Master – September 2018 - August 2019

MA, Philosophy of Psychology - Graduated with *Distinction* (Grade: 74)

Specialization: Philosophy of Psychiatry

The University of Edinburgh, Master of Science – September 2017 - August 2018

MSc, Philosophy of Cognitive Sciences - Graduated with *Distinction* (Grade: 76)

- Graduated top of class for degree program.
- Departmental Representative for the Edinburgh School of Psychology, Philosophy, and Language Sciences.

Georgia State University – September 2012 - May 2016

B.A., English Language with French Language Minor - Graduated Honours with *Magna cum laude* (GPA: 3.83)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

AI Consultant and Digital Writer at Giotto Artificial Intelligence (Giotto A.I.) Software Development Company, Lausanne, Switzerland – February 2024-April 2024

- Advise and consult on technical and conceptual problems pertaining to the company's proprietary technology.
- Work on the Abstraction and Reasoning Corpus (ARC), a foundational issue in A.I. concerning Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and the creation of human-like intelligence.
- Craft presentation delivered to the entire team pulling from my Ph.D. research, consulting on different proposals for what could meet the conditions of human-like intelligence.
- Extensive researching into the ARC to develop my specific proposal, delivered to the team in Lausanne, Switzerland, over two days (March 27th & March 28th, 2024). AI Consultant and Digital Writer at Giotto Artificial Intelligence (Giotto A.I.) Software Development Company, Lausanne, Switzerland – February 2024-April 2024

Consultant at Literacy Tree Educational Consultancy, London, United Kingdom January 2024- March 2024

- Write and compile Impact Report for the company's platform, totaling 15 pages of extensively researched product impact and engagement.
- Compose Survey Questions to maximise user engagement and response rate in order to receive more precise data to construct the Impact Report.
- Explore how to incorporate advancements in AI technology into the company's platform to improve business analytics and increase consumer base.

Research Assistant at the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence [CFI] Cambridge, United Kingdom – November 2021 - Present (Part Time)

Project Title: 'The Major Transitions in the Evolution of Cognition'.

- Coordinate and co-manage research activities for a 7-12 team member project.
- Schedule and plan monthly meetings with team members.
- Edit grant reports and provide updates for project funders monthly.
- Organizing several international workshops and conferences of between 10 and 70 people, the most recently as a lead organizer for a conference at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia (approx. 65 people).
- Conduct literature reviews.
- Manage, edit, and update website (using Squarespace).

REASERCH FELLOWSHIPS

Fellow at Diverse Intelligences Summer Institute, Saint Andrews, Scotland – Summer 2025

Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research, Writing-Up Fellow Vienna, Austria – October 2022 - April 2023 (Full Time)

Fellow at Diverse Intelligences Summer Institute Saint Andrews, Scotland (Online due to Covid Pandemic) – Summer 2021

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Georgia Student Finance Commission: HOPE Scholarship Recipient, 2013-2016

History and Philosophy of Science Trust Stipend, 2019-2022

Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research: **Fully funded Writing Up Fellowship, 2022-2023.**

Diverse Intelligences Summer Institute Grant (with Urte Laukaityte, Wiktor Rorot, and Taylor Beck) to help cover conference fees at the British Society for Philosophy of Science.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Harrison, D. 2026. "The Message Hidden Within the Pattern: A Reverse Alignment Problem for Debates in Artificial Intelligence". *AI & Society*.

Harrison, D. 2026. "Rethinking the Nature of Matter: Active Matter Physics and the Naturalization of Teleology". *Erkenntnis*.

Forss, S., Ciria, A., Clark, F., Galusca, C., Harrison, D., & Lee, S. 2024. A Transdisciplinary View on Curiosity Beyond Linguistic Humans: Animals, Infants, and Artificial Intelligence. *Biological Review*.

Harrison, D., Rorot, W., & Laukaityte, U. 2022. Mind the Matter: Soft Robotics, Active Matter, and the Making of Bio-Inspired Artificial Intelligence. *Frontiers in Neurorobotics*.

Luppi, A., Mediano, P., Rosas, F., Harrison, D., Carhart-Harris, R., Bor, D. & Stamatakis, E. 2021. What is it like to be a bit: An Integrated Information Decomposition Account of Emergent Mental Phenomena. *Neuroscience of Consciousness*, vol. 2021(2).

Halina, M., Harrison, D., Klein, C. 2022. Major Transition Markers and the Origins of Consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, Vol19(3).

Birch, J., Broom, D., Browning, H., Crump, A., Ginsburg, S., Halina, M., Harrison, D., Jablonka, E. Lee, A., Kammerer, F., Klein, C., Lamme, V., Michel, M., Wemelsfelder, F., Zacks, O. 2022. How should we study animal consciousness scientifically? *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol.29 (3): 8-28.

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

2021 History and Philosophy of Science Departmental Workshop (Cambridge, United Kingdom). "Major Problems for Major Transitions in the Evolution of Cognition?" Joint seminar with Marta

2021 Italian Association for Cognitive Science (Noto, Italy). “The Rise of Basal Cognition and its Relevance for the Cognitive Sciences” (Head organizer of the symposium and conference presentation).

2022 Cambridge Embodied Intelligences Conference (Cambridge, United Kingdom). “Soft Robots and the Biogenic Approach to Life and Mind” (Joint presentation with Urte Laukaityte & Wiktor Rorot).

2022 Kinds of Intelligences International Workshop (Cambridge, United Kingdom). “The biogenic approach to life and mind”.

2022 British Society for Philosophy of Science (Exeter, United Kingdom). “Mind the Matter: The biogenic approach to life and mind” (Head organizer of the symposium and conference presentation).

2022 Major Transitions in the Evolution of Cognition Workshop (Cambridge, United Kingdom). “The Major Transitions in the Evolution of Cognition: A view from the cell”.

2022 Philosophy of Biology and Cognitive Sciences XI (Salamanca, Spain) “Top-Down Causation in Biology: Strong emergentism and epiphenomenalism”.

2023 Kinds of Minds Workshop on the Major Transitions in the Evolution of Cognition (Sydney, Australia). “Introducing Major Transitions in the Evolution of Cognition: Programs, promises, perils”.

2023 Konrad Lorentz Institute Fellowship Workshop (Vienna, Austria). “Mind the Matter: The biogenic approach to life and mind”.

2023 Major Transitions in Evolution, University of Bristol (Bristol, United Kingdom). “Transitions in Teleological Systems: Extending the Major Transitions Framework to Cognitive Evolution”.

2023 European Society for Philosophy and Psychology (Prague, Czech Republic). “The Physiological Basis of Self: Affective Neuroscience and the Biogenic Approach to Mind” (Symposium with Urte Laukaityte and Matthew Sims).

2025 Work in Progress Talk at the Department of Philosophy, Lingnan University (Hong Kong). “The Message Hidden Within the Pattern: A Reverse Alignment Problem for Debates on Artificial Intelligence and the Future”.

2025 Diverse Intelligences Summer Institute Presentation. (Saint Andrews University, Scotland). “The Reverse Alignment Problem and Thick Human Compatibility”.

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

March 2023 Kinds of Minds Workshop on Major Transitions in the Evolution of Cognition (Macquarie University, Sydney): Principal Organizer.

August 2022 Workshop on Major Transitions in the Evolution of Cognition: Principal Organizer.

March 2022 Workshop on Translating Entropy: Entropy in the Arts and Humanities:

Principal Organizer.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2026 Spring Term. 'Anticipating AI Futures', Masters in Artificial Intelligence and the Future, Department of Philosophy, Lingnan University.

2025 Autumn Term. 'Minds & Machines', Masters in Artificial Intelligence and the Future, Department of Philosophy, Lingnan University.

2025, Spring Term. 'Anticipating AI Futures', Masters in Artificial Intelligence and the Future, Department of Philosophy, Lingnan University.

2022 Lent & Easter Term Supervisions in the Philosophy of Cognitive Science, University of Cambridge.

2021 Lent & Easter Term Supervisions in the Ethics and Politics of Technology, University of Cambridge.

2021 Lent & Easter Term Supervisions in the Philosophy of Cognitive Science, University of Cambridge.

PEER REVIEW & JOURNAL EXPERIENCE

Philosophy of Science: Provided peer-review for submitted work.

European Journal of Philosophy of Science: Provided peer-review for submitted work.

Biology and Philosophy: Provided peer-review for submitted work.

Biological Review: Provided peer-review for submitted work.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCIES

English (Native)

French (Fluent/Second Language): Undergraduate Minor degree—including one year study abroad at the University of Versailles, 2014-2015.

Japanese (Upper Intermediate): Courses during undergraduate degree and multiple visits to the country. Currently enrolled in courses to improve proficiency.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Active in LGBT Community; Rock climber and boulderer; Short-Middle Distance Runner with a focus on 400 Meters, 3K and 5K; Holds a skydiving license and have completed 55 independent jumps.

REFERENCES

Dr Marta Halina: Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. mh801@cam.ac.uk

Dr Tim Lewens: Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. tml1000@cam.ac.uk

Dr Guido Caniglia: Scientific Director, Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research. Guido.caniglia@helsinki.fi

