

Joshua J Johnston

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Philosophy
The University of British Columbia
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Research

AOS: Ethics, Metaethics; Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art

AOC: Environmental Ethics, Early Modern Philosophy (Hume), Ancient Philosophy (Plato and Aristotle)

Education

2005 —

PhD Candidate at The University of British Columbia

Committee: Dominic McIver Lopes (chair), Matthew Bedke, Derek Matravers

Degree expected August 2012

2008 (Fall Term)

Visiting Research Student, University of Reading, UK.

Academic Host: Jonathan Dancy

2000—2005

University of Nevada, Reno

BA Philosophy (with distinction); Sociology minor

Publication

- “What is Fantasy?” with Brian Laetz, *Philosophy and Literature* 32 (2008): 161-172

Teaching and Academic Employment

- As Instructor:
 - Phil 339: The Philosophy of Art: Art and Ethics. Summer term 1, 2011
 - Phil 339: The Philosophy of Art: The Philosophy of Film. Summer term 2, 2010
 - Phil 235: Contemporary Moral Issues. Summer term 2, 2009
 - Phil 339: The Philosophy Art (co-instructor with Dominic McIver Lopes)
- As Instructor -- *Online Course*
 - Phil 435: Environmental Ethics. Fall 2009

Teaching and Academic Employment (con't)

- As Teaching Assistant:
For UBC 2006—
 - Phil 310: Philosophy of Plato
 - Phil 311: Philosophy of Aristotle
 - Phil 338: Philosophy of Law
 - Phil 441: Philosophy of Perception
 - Phil 339: Philosophy of Art
 - Phil 335: Power and Oppression
 - Phil 230: Introduction to Moral Theory
 - Phil 100: Introduction to Philosophy

For UNR 2003–2005

- Phil 220: Introduction to the Philosophy of Art
- Phil 100: Introduction to Philosophy

Invited Presentations

- “Art and Ethical Evaluation”
Columbia College, Vancouver BC, October 2010.
- “Moral and Aesthetic Narration”
University of Kent Research Seminar, Kent, UK. October 2008.
- Comment on Emily Brady’s “Ugliness and Nature”
American Philosophical Association, Pacific Meeting, March 2008
- Comment on James Shelley’s “Hume and the Value of the Beautiful”
American Philosophical Association, Pacific Meeting, March 2008

Presentations

- “Aesthetic Judgments: The Agency View” with Oisín Deery
American Society for Aesthetics, Pacific Division, April 2012
- “Does the Artist’s Freedom Matter to Art Appreciation”
Canadian Philosophical Association, June 2010
- “Virtue in Art: Towards Expanding the Value of Education in the Arts” with Aparna Rae
National Art Education Association Convention, April 2010
- “Moderate Moralism and Morally Defective Perspectives” with Jill Fellows
American Society for Aesthetics, Annual Meeting, November 2008
- “Reid and Sibley on Using Aesthetic Adjectives”*
British Society for Aesthetics, Annual Meeting, September 2008
* *Graduate Prize Winner*
- “Moderate Moralism and Morally Defective Perspectives” with Jill Fellows*
Canadian Society for Aesthetics, May 2008
* *Co-Winner of the Annual Graduate Prize*
- “Moral Narration: Ethical Particularism and Testimony”
British Columbia Philosophy Conference, March 2008
- “Against Wide Categories: Aesthetic Adjectives in Judgment”
Western Canadian Philosophy Conference, October 2007
- “On Fantasy” (with Brian Laetz)
American Society for Aesthetics, Pacific Division, March 2007

Awards Scholarships Fellowships

- “How to Judge Art Correctly”
Green College Member Speaker Series, UBC, December 2006
- Pacific Century Scholarship, UBC: 2009-2010
- University Graduate Fellowship, UBC: 2008-2009
- Gertrude Langridge Graduate Scholarship in Humanities, UBC: 2008-2009
- R. Howard Webster Foundation Fellowship, UBC: 2006-2007; 2007-2008
- SSHRC Funded Grant, UBC: 2006-2007; 2007-2008
- Sun Life Financial Fellowship, UBC: 2005-2006
- Graduate Entrance Scholarship, UBC: 2005-2006
- R. Thompson Philosophy Student Award, University of Nevada, Reno: 2005
- Phi Kappa Phi, 2005
- Golden Key International Honor Society, 2005

Grants

- Humanities and Social Science Research Grant, UBC
(co-written with Dominic McIver Lopes)

Professional and Departmental Activities

- Reviewer for
 - Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics
- Graduate Representative to the Philosophy Department. 2009-2010
- Research Assistant to the American Society for Aesthetics, 2007
- Conferences Organized:
 - 1st Annual University of British Columbia Philosophy Graduate Conference
(co-chair), April 2006
 - 1st Annual British Columbia Philosophy Graduate Conference
(co-chair), March 2007
- Committee Member of:
 - The University of British Columbia Philosophy Head Search (2009)
 - Cecil and Ida Green Visiting Professor at Green College (2006-2007)
 - Green College Arts (2006-2008)
- Reading Groups Organized:
 - MERG (MetaEthics Reading Group) with Alan Thomas. 2007-2008
 - SURGE (Summer Reading Group in Ethics). 2008
 - NERD (Normative Ethics Reading Group). 2009

Academic Organizations

- Alumni of Green College, UBC
- Member of:
 - American Society for Aesthetics
 - British Society for Aesthetics
 - American Philosophical Association

Graduate Courses Taken

University of British Columbia

* Indicates audit

Phil 530*- Ethical Theory (Ethical Intuitionism); Matthew Bedke
 Phil 539*- Aesthetics (Objectivity in Aesthetic Judgment); Derek Matravers
 Phil 530*- Moral Theory (The Self and Ethics); Scott Anderson
 Phil 551*- Philosophy of Mind; Murat Aydede
 Phil 415*- Philosophy of Immanuel Kant; Alan Richardson
 Phil 539- Aesthetics (the Epistemology of Aesthetic Value); Dom Lopes
 Phil 550- Metaphysics; Paul Russell
 Phil 560- Philosophy of Science (Darwinian Revolution); John Beatty
 Phil 585- Directed Reading: Hume; Paul Russell
 Asia 580- Embodied Cognition; Edward Slingerland
 Phil 510- Ancient Philosophy (Aristotle's Ethics); Sylvia Berryman
 Phil 530- Moral Philosophy; Paul Russell
 Phil 539- Aesthetics (Ontology of Art); Dominic McIver Lopes
 Phil 540- Epistemology (the Epistemology of Testimony); Patrick Rysiew
 Phil 585- Philosophy ProSeminar; Chris Stephens

University of Reading, UK

Seminar on Topics in Moral Philosophy*; Jonathan Dancy

Dissertation Abstract

Fine Discernment and the Particularity of Value

I argue that ethical and aesthetic judgments share common structural features, and further that these features point a way towards moral improvement through the evaluation of art. First, the reasons judgments employ share a common metaphysic. Holism of reasons states that reasons do not retain a consistent evaluative polarity across all cases, so what counts as a reason for a positive judgment in one case may count against a positive judgment in another case. Second, moral and aesthetic concepts employed in judgment share an affective base. This makes our judgments in these two domains essentially related to emotional reactions. Third, moral and aesthetic judgments reflect the priority of the particular. Our judgments in these two domains are particular judgments, and their justification does not arise from general principles, but from the particular nature of the case at hand. This particular view of judgment, combined with holism of reasons, requires a skill—which is partly emotional—in detecting the morally or aesthetically salient features of the situation or object to be judged, and I call this skill fine discernment. These structural similarities then point a way to increasing our skill at moral evaluation. In short, one way to improve moral fine discernment is to engage and evaluative art, particularly narrative art.

Professional References

Dominic McIver Lopes

(supervisor)

Distinguished University Professor
Department of Philosophy, UBC
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Derek Matravers

Professor

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Matthew Bedke

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Paul Russell

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Sylvia Berryman

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