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EDUCATION

2019   Syracuse University, Ph.D. in Philosophy.
        Dissertation Title: *Issues in the Metaphysics of Material Objects*.
        Advisor: Mark Heller.
        Defense date: June 12, 2019.
2013   National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), B.A. in Philosophy.

AREA OF SPECIALIZATION

Metaphysics.

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Ethics (Normative and Metaethics).

AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCE

Logic and Philosophy of Feminism.

PUBLICATIONS

2019   "Quantifier Variance, Ontological Pluralism, and Ideal Languages."
        Philosophical Quarterly 69(275): 277-293.
2016   "Duplication and Collapse." *Thought: A Journal of Philosophy* 5(3): 196-202.
2014   "Some Challenges to a Contrastive Treatment of Grounding." *Thought: A Journal of Philosophy* 3(3): 184-92.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Awards
    2017   Syracuse University Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award.

Independent Instructor
Spring 2020   Metaphysics.
Spring 2020   Introduction to Moral Theory.
Spring 2019   Introduction to Logic.
Fall   2018   Introduction to Moral Theory.
Spring 2018   Theories of Knowledge and Reality.
Fall   2017   Introduction to Moral Theory.
Spring 2017   Introduction to Moral Theory.
Fall   2016   Introduction to Logic.

Teaching Assistant at Syracuse University
Fall   2019   Media Ethics.
Spring 2016   Introduction to Logic.
Fall   2015   Philosophy of Feminism.
Spring 2015   Theories of Knowledge and Reality.
Fall   2014   Introduction to Moral Theory.

Spring   2014   Introduction to Logic.
Fall   2013   Theories of Knowledge and Reality.

Teaching Assistant at UNAM
Spring   2013   Introduction to Logic II.
Fall   2012   Introduction to Logic I.

PRESENTATIONS

Refereed

2018   "A Counterpart-Theoretic Response to Heller's Argument Against Metaphysical Indeterminacy." The Creighton Club New York State Philosophical Association 164th Meeting, Syracuse University.

2018   "Two 3D Cohabitants Are One Too Many Thinkers." American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting. San Diego, California.

2017   "Spontaneous Loss of Parts and the Grounding Problem." American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting. Seattle, Washington.

2016   "Universalism, Modal Realism and Junk." 2nd IIFs-UNAM Philosophy Graduate Conference. Mexico City, Mexico.

2015   "Some Challenges to a Contrastive Treatment of Grounding." American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting. St. Louis, Missouri.

Invited

2017   "Belief in Ordinary Objects: Vindication Without Apprehension?" Syracuse University ABD Workshop.

2016   "Two 3D Cohabitants Are One Too Many Thinkers." Syracuse University ABD Workshop.

2016   "Spontaneous Loss of Parts and the Grounding Problem." American Association of Mexican Philosophers 9th Annual Conference. Syracuse University.

2015   "What Is So Bad About Claiming that the Vast Majority of People Are Dead Wrong About Tables?" Philosophy Working Papers Group at Syracuse University.

2014   "Metaethical Contextualism, Moral Judgments, and Judgments of Etiquette." Philosophy Working Papers Group at Syracuse University.

2011   "Tres argumentos lockeanos en favor del convencionalismo sobre las clases naturales." 3rd Colloquium on Contemporary Philosophy at the Acatlán School of Higher Studies, UNAM.

Invited Commentary

2017   On Agustin Rayo's "On the Open-Endedness of Logical Space." American Association of Mexican Philosophers 10th Annual Conference, CU Boulder.

2016   On Kolja Keller's "Vagueness and Luminosity." The Creighton Club New York State Philosophical Association 162nd Meeting, Syracuse University.

2016   On Travis Timmerman's "Doomsday Is Not So Bad (but You Should Probably Lament It Anyways)." Syracuse University ABD Workshop.

2015   On Byron Simmons' "Fundamental Non-Qualitative Properties." Syracuse University ABD Workshop.

2014   On Anthony Adrian's "Of Time's Dependence on Change." American Association of Mexican Philosophers 7th Annual Conference, Stanford University.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

"On a Tension between Some Anti-Universalist Intuitions and a Diachronic Duplication Principle" (under review).

"Should the Number of Overlapping Thinkers Count?" (under review)

"A Counterpart-Theoretic Response to Heller's Argument Against Metaphysical Indeterminacy."

"Towards a Non-Rationalist Vindication of Ordinary Objects."

RESEARCH GRANTS & AWARDS

2019   Syracuse University Philosophy Department Summer Research Grant.

2018   The Creighton Club Graduate Student Presentation Award.

2017   Syracuse University Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award.

GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Summer Courses

2017   Summer   Ontology and Metaontology at the Central European University with Mark Balaguer, Ferenc Huoranszki, Ned Markosian, Michaela McSweeney, Kate Ritchie, and Raul Saucedo.

Language, Epistemology and Metaphysics

2015   Fall   Independent Study (Location and Mereology) with Mark Heller.

2015   Spring   Topics in Metaphysics with Karen Bennett.

2015   Spring   Ontology with Mark Heller.

2014   Fall   Proseminar: Language, Epistemology, Mind and Metaphysics with Kris McDaniel.

2014   Fall   A priori and Philosophical Intuitions with Andre Gallois.

2014   Spring   Deontic Modals with Janice Dowell.

2014   Spring   Philosophy of Action with Kim Frost.

2013   Fall   Proseminar: Logic and Language with Michael Caie.

2013   Fall   Hyperintensionality with Kris McDaniel.

Value Theory

2015   Fall   Population Ethics with Ben Bradley.

2015   Spring   Independent Study (Death) with Ben Bradley.

2014   Spring   Proseminar: Moral and Political Philosophy with Ben Bradley.

History

2015   Fall   Kant's Critique of Pure Reason with Kris McDaniel.

2014   Fall   Descartes' Metaphysics with Kara Richardson & Kris McDaniel.

2013   Fall   Proseminar: History of Philosophy with Fred Beiser.

SERVICE

Referee Service

Ergo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy.

International Service

2015-   Co-president. American Association of Mexican Philosophers.
2016

Departmental Service

2017	External Speaker Committee member. Syracuse University Philosophy Graduate Student Conference.
2016	Co-Organizer. "Minorities in the Media" MAP Undergraduate Event.
2016	Assistant Organizer. Syracuse Philosophy Annual Workshop and Networking (SPAWN).
2015	Guest Instructor. Syracuse University's Philosophy for Children Program with Southside Academy Charter School.
2015 - 2016	President. Syracuse Philosophy Graduate Student Organization.
2014 - 2015	Co-organizer. Syracuse University's Working Papers Workshop.
2014 - present	Submission Referee. Syracuse University Philosophy Graduate Student Conference.

TRAVEL GRANTS & OTHER AWARDS

2018	American Philosophical Association Graduate Student Travel Grant.
2017	Central European University Ontology and Metaontology Summer Course Tuition Waiver.
2017	American Philosophical Association Graduate Student Travel Grant.
2017	Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization Travel Grant.
2017	Syracuse University Philosophy Department Travel Grant.
2016	Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization Travel Grant.
2016	Syracuse University Philosophy Department Travel Grant.
2015	American Philosophical Association Graduate Student Travel Grant.

SHORT DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Many mainstream philosophical views arguably entail that wherever there is a human person, there are multiple overlapping thinkers. According to a standard linguistic account of vagueness, for instance, the name "David" is indeterminate in reference among multiple overlapping thinkers. I argue that these views face a moral version of the too-many-thinkers problem: when someone experiences pain, other things equal, the more thinkers she overlaps with, the more reason there is to alleviate that person's pain. I then discuss alternative accounts of vagueness intended to avoid the problem. I argue against non-standard linguistic accounts, and defend metaphysical accounts from underappreciated objections.

REFERENCES

Research

Mark Heller, Professor, Syracuse University (heller [at] syr [dot] edu)
Kris McDaniel, Professor, University of Notre Dame (kmcdani1 [at] nd [dot] edu)
Daniel Nolan, McMahon-Hank Professor of Philosophy, University of Notre Dame, (daniel [dot] p [dot] nolan [dot] 66 [at] nd [dot] edu)
Ned Markosian, Professor, University of Massachusetts Amherst, (markosian [at] umass [dot] edu)

Teaching

Kevan Edwards, Associate Professor, Syracuse University, (kedwar02 [at] syr [dot] edu)

LONG DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

My dissertation discusses various issues in the metaphysics of material objects, but the main thread running through most chapters is that there is a moral version of the too-many-thinkers problem that afflicts a wide range of views.

A central debate in the literature on material objects concerns the Special Composition Question: under what circumstances do some objects compose a whole? We may ask an analogous question concerning diachronic composition. Roughly, under what circumstances does a series of objects existing at different times compose a whole over time? According to diachronic universalism (or "universalism" for short), every series of objects, no matter how disparate, composes a whole over time. This view entails the existence of all sorts of strange objects—for instance, an object shaped just like me which came into existence at the beginning of the week, and will continuously overlap with me until it goes out of existence at the end of the week. Thus, the view is highly revisionary. Nevertheless, there are powerful arguments in its favor. According to the influential argument from vagueness, every series must compose because otherwise it could be vague whether a certain series composes, which is allegedly impossible. In Chapter 1, I aim to make headway by taking a somewhat oblique route to the issue. Instead of defending the argument from vagueness directly, I consider what reasons there are for resisting the argument in the first place. Why do the universalist's objects strike us as strange? What exactly is so objectionable about these objects? I articulate several intuitions that tell against these objects and proceed to undermine them.

In Chapter 2, I discuss a moral version of the too-many-thinkers problem. The problem afflicts a wide range of views, but here I focus on the cohabitation account of fission, according to which all the persons that result from a fission event cohabit the same body prior to fission. Suppose I am scheduled to undergo fission; the doctors will split my brain and transplant each half into a different body. According to the cohabitation account, there are now two persons cohabiting my body. The view is obviously controversial, but it enjoys certain advantages over its rivals. According to a prominent rival, nobody can survive fission—in fission cases, the original person goes out of existence and is replaced by two persons biologically or psychologically continuous with the original. The problem is that the fission process may be intrinsically just like a process that, in a different set of circumstances, results in survival. Given the rival view, therefore, whether someone will survive a given process may depend on extrinsic factors, and this runs against the intuition that survival is intrinsic. By contrast, the cohabitation account accommodates this intuition, and is therefore a major contender in the fission debate. The question whether the cohabitation account faces a too-many-thinkers problem is therefore interesting in its own sake, but also because it illustrates a more general problem.

Suppose there is one person sitting to your right, and one to your left. They are suffering from an equally bad migraine, and there are no morally salient differences between them. Unlike the person on your left, however, the person on your right will undergo fission. If you had only one painkiller with you, who should you give it to? Intuitively, you have no more reason to give it to one or the other. The problem is that the cohabitation account is in tension with this intuition. According to the cohabitation account, there are actually two persons on your right. But then you should give them the pill, since doing so alleviates the pain of more persons. In response, some have argued that the persons on your right share one pain. Thus, giving the pill to the two persons on your right alleviates the same quantity of pain as giving it to the one person on your left. Since what matters is the quantity of pain, you have no more reason to do one thing or the other. I argue that this response has implausible consequences with respect to certain conjoined twinning cases, and that it presupposes an objectionably fetishistic view of pain.

In the next two chapters, I return to the issue of vagueness. Intuitively, it may be vague whether an object is a part of another object. For instance, it may be vague whether a certain hangnail is a part of David. Why? Because "David" is indeterminate in reference among multiple person-like beings, only some of which include the hangnail—or so the standard linguistic account says. The account is largely motivated by the desire to avoid metaphysical vagueness—vagueness in the world. On the standard linguistic account, the world itself is crisp and precise. Vagueness results from our use of language. For instance, our use of "David" does not settle which of many candidate referents "David" picks out. Many philosophers find metaphysical vagueness unintelligible or otherwise problematic, and are therefore drawn to the standard linguistic account. However, the account presupposes that there are multiple person-like beings that serve as candidate referents for "David"; these beings are arguably overlapping thinkers, and the account therefore faces a version of too-many-thinkers problem discussed in Chapter 2—or so I argue. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss alternative accounts intended to avoid the problem.

I take the too-many-thinkers problem to motivate a metaphysical account of vagueness. On this account, vagueness has its source not in our use of language, but in the world itself. "David" has a determinate referent; it is simply indeterminate whether the object in question has the hangnail as a part. Since the account does not posit referential indeterminacy in "David", it does not presuppose the existence of multiple candidate referents for "David". Thus, the account avoids the too-many-thinkers problem. However, some have argued that unlike the standard linguistic account, the metaphysical account has no good explanation of certain linguistic phenomena. In Chapter 3, I defend the metaphysical account by developing a counterpart-theoretic explanation.

In Chapter 4, I discuss a non-standard linguistic account, according to which it is vague whether the hangnail is a part of David because "part of" is indeterminate in meaning—there are multiple parthood relations, only some of which hold between the hangnail and David, but none of them is determinately the meaning of "part of." Like the metaphysical account, this account does not presuppose the existence of multiple candidate referents for "David." On this account, however, the world itself is crisp and precise; there is no vagueness in which objects there are, which properties they instantiate, or which relations they stand in—it's just that our use of "part of" does not determine which of a range of precise relations is the meaning of "part of". Thus, the account promises to avoid the too-many-thinkers problem while steering clear of metaphysical vagueness as well. Nevertheless, the account is committed to various controversial claims—in particular, the claim that, fundamentally, there are no composites—or so I argue.

In Chapter 5, I turn to certain second-order issues in metaphysics. Many debates in metaphysics are debates over what reality is fundamentally like. Is reality fundamentally tensed? Is modality a fundamental feature of the world, or is it reducible to something else? These debates raise a second-order question: how should we best understand talk of fundamentality? What sort of conceptual tools do we need to make sense of this sort of questions? Several conceptual tools have been proposed. One is the notion of a fundamental expression—an expression that carves reality at its joints. To say that reality is fundamentally modal is to say that some modal notions are fundamental. Another conceptual tool is the notion of an ideal language—a maximally metaphysically perspicuous language. To say that reality is fundamentally modal is to say that the ideal language has primitive modal expressions. Presumably, these notions are not unrelated, but how exactly are they related? Can we analyze one in terms of the other? The standard approach is to analyze ideality in terms of fundamentality. In Chapter 5, I propose reversing the direction of analysis: what makes an expression fundamental is that it is a primitive of some ideal language. I argue that my proposal better captures the difference between certain views about what exists.