Quinn Hiroshi Gibson

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Philosophy
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DOB: September 18, 1987
Citizenship: Canadian

Employment

Postdoctoctoral Teaching Fellow, NYU Shanghai. Starting Fall '17

Associate Instructor, Department of Philosophy, University of California, Berkeley. 2011-2017

Education

Ph.D. in Philosophy, University of California, Berkeley, in progress.
Advancement to candidacy 2013; expected completion 2017

B.A.(Hons), *First Class*, in Philosophy, University of Calgary, 2010
Thesis Advisor: Allen Habib

B.A. in Linguistics, *With Distinction*, University of Calgary, 2010

Areas of Specialization

Ethics (esp. Moral Psychology)

Philosophy of Mind (esp. Philosophical Psychology and Philosophy of Psychiatry)

Political Philosophy

Areas of Competence

Applied Ethics

Ancient Philosophy

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Awards and Honours

Dissertation Completion Fellowship, UC Berkeley, Spring 2015, Spring 2016

Graduate Division Summer Grant, UC Berkeley, Summer 2014

Ralph W. Church Fellowship, UC Berkeley, Fall 2010 and Spring 2011

Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC) Joseph-Armand Bombardier CGS Masters Fellowship, Fall 2010 (declined)

University of Calgary Philosophy Department Convocation Medallion, Spring 2010

Dissertation

On the Fringes of Moral Responsibility: Skepticism, self-deception, addiction, and delusion.

My dissertation is a collection of essays under the theme of moral responsibility 'at the margins'. I begin with a chapter defending and developing a theory of morally responsible agency (a version of so-called 'reasons responsiveness' theories). In the second chapter I develop and defend a novel philosophical account of self-deception which both addresses difficulties present in competing views and makes sense of self-deception as an intentional phenomenon for which self-deceivers are responsible. In the third chapter I leverage my theory of self-deception to ask about the extent to which there is overlap between self-deception and clinical delusion. I conclude that there is a significant overlap, and that this sheds valuable light on the form of epistemic agency involved in the dynamics of delusion maintenance, and does so in such a way that allows responsibility judgements to get a toehold. In the fourth chapter I turn to addiction, appealing to results from the previous chapters to articulate a nuanced position concerning the extent to which addicts are morally responsible agents and the extent to which they share features with the self-deceived.

Committee: R. Jay Wallace & John Campbell (co-chairs, philosophy), and Tania Lombrozo (outside member, psychology).

Work In Progress

'Self-Deception as Omission'
Under Review

'Self-Deception In and Out of Illness: Are some subjects responsible for their delusions?'
Under Review

'Addiction as Desensitizing Vulnerability: A framework for excuse'
In Preparation

'In Defense of Conditional Forgiveness'
In Preparation

Selected Presentations

'Self-Deception in and out of Illness: Are some subjects responsible for their delusions?'
Graduate Research Colloquium, UC Berkeley, December 6th, 2016

'Nozick's critique of Rawls and the Illiberalism of Libertarianism'
Series of three guest lectures at UC Berkeley, November 7, 9, and 11, 2017

'Self-Deception in and out of Illness: Are some subjects responsible for their delusions?'
The Richard Wollheim Society, UC Berkeley, October 7th, 2016

'The Brain Disease Theory of Addiction, Responsibility, and Causal Exclusion'
43rd annual meeting of The Society for Philosophy and Psychology, University of Texas, Austin, June 2016

Comments on Rachelle Bascara's 'A Unified Theory of Oppression'
13th Annual Berkeley-London Graduate conference. University College London, May 2016

Comments on Jason D'Cruz's 'Self-Deception as Unwitting Pretense'
The American Philosophical Association Eastern Division, Washington DC, January 2016

'Self-Deception and Dual-Process Theory' (poster)
42nd annual meeting of The Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Duke University, June 2015

'The Analysis of Self-Deception'
The Philosophy Forum, UC Berkeley, Spring 2014

'Self-Deception, Intentionality, and Psychological Division'
The Philosophy Forum, UC Berkeley, Fall, 2014

'Personal Identity and the Possibility of Resurrection'
Guest Lecture to Lara Buchak's Philosophy of Religion course, UC Berkeley, Spring 2013

'The Epistemic Problem of Religious Diversity'
Guest Lecture to Lara Buchak's Philosophy of Religion course, UC Berkeley, Spring 2013

'Aristotle on How To Acquire the Virtues'
Dorothea Frede's seminar on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, UC Berkeley, Fall 2010

'Nagel on Equality and Partiality'
Véronique Munoz-Dardé's seminar on Equality, UC Berkeley, Fall 2010

Teaching Experience

Primary Instructor, UC Berkeley

Ancient Philosophy	Summer 2016
	Summer 2015
Individual Morality and Social Justice	Summer 2014

Volunteer Instructor with the Prison University Project at San Quentin State Prison

Introduction to Philosophy (with Melissa Fusco)	Spring 2016

Graduate Student Instructor, UC Berkeley*

Moral Psychology∗ (Kwong-loi Shun)	Spring 2017
Political Philosophy∗ (Véronique Munoz-Dardé)	Fall 2016
	Fall 2013
Philosophy of Perception∗ (Michael Martin)	Fall 2015
Ancient Philosophy (Klaus Corcilius)	Fall 2014
Political Philosophy∗ (Florian Grosser)	Summer 2014
Philosophical Methods∗ (Seth Yalcin)	Spring 2014
Aristotle∗ (Klaus Corcilius)	Summer 2013
Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion (Lara Buchak)	Spring 2013
The Nature of Mind (John Campbell)	Fall 2012
	Fall 2011
Individual Morality and Social Justice (Jeremy Carey)	Summer 2012
Early Modern Philosophy (Hannah Ginsborg)	Spring 2012
Introduction to Logic (Michael Rieppel)	Summer 2011

Graduate Coursework

Courses Taken and Audited†

Agency, Responsibility, and Context† (Manuel Vargas)	Spring 2016
Dissertation Seminar† (John Campbell)	Fall 2015
Dissertation Seminar† (John Campbell)	Spring 2015
Does the Mind Have a Causal Structure?† (John Campbell)	Fall 2014
Primary and Secondary Qualities in Early Modern Philosophy† (Daniel Warren)	Spring 2014
Philosophy of Perception (Michael Martin)	Fall 2013
Recent work on Reasons and Normativity† (R. Jay Wallace)	Spring 2013
Plato (Klaus Corcilius)	Fall 2012
Judgement, Competence, and 'Practical Knowledge'† (Barry Stroud)	Spring 2012
Promises and Promissory Obligation† (R. Jay Wallace and Niko Kolodny)	Spring 2012
The Philosophy of History† (Hans Sluga)	Spring 2012
Kant (Daniel Warren)	Fall 2011
Ethical Theories (R. Jay Wallace)	Fall 2011
Later Wittgenstein (Barry Stroud)	Spring 2011
Philosophical Logic (John MacFarlane)	Spring 2011
Science and Religion (Lara Buchak)	Spring 2011
First Year Graduate Seminar† (Barry Stroud and Michael Martin)	Fall 2010
Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics† (Dorothea Frede)	Fall 2010
A Society of Equals?† (Véronique Munoz-Dardé)	Fall 2010

Qualifying Examination Topics

Internal and External Reasons (supervised by R. Jay Wallace)

Plato on the Parts of the Soul (supervised by Klaus Corcilius)

Interpretationism and Irrationality (supervised by John Campbell)

Memberships and Professional Service

Member, American Philosophical Association

Member, Canadian Philosophical Association

∗Indicates an upper division course
†Indicates a graduate seminar

Member, Society for Philosophy and Psychology

Session Chair for Sergio Tenenbaum's 'What is Special about Disagreement about Value?' at *Epistemology After Sextus Empiricus*, UC Berkeley, March 18, 2017

Referee for 43rd Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, May 2016

Session Chair, Berkeley-London Philosophy Conference, May 2015

Organizer, Richard Wollheim Society, UC Berkeley, Fall 2010, Spring 2011

Referee for Berkeley-Stanford-Davis Graduate Conference, Spring 2010-present (various occasions)

Languages

English, native

French, reading and speaking proficiency

Italian, reading and speaking competence

German, in progress

References

R. Jay Wallace
Judy Chandler Webb Distinguished Chair
for Innovative Teaching and Research
UC Berkeley

John Campbell
Slusser Professor of Philosophy
UC Berkeley

Michael Martin
Professor of Philosophy
University College London

Véronique Munoz-Dardé
Professor of Philosophy
University College London

Klaus Corcilius
Associate Professor of Philosophy
UC Berkeley

Lara Buchak (teaching)
Associate Professor of Philosophy
UC Berkeley

Dissertation Abstract

My dissertation is a collection of essays under the theme of moral responsibility 'at the margins'. After a brief introduction, I begin with a chapter defending and developing a theory of morally responsible agency (a version of so-called 'reasons-responsiveness' theories). In the third chapter I develop and defend a novel philosophical account of self-deception which both addresses difficulties present in competing views and makes sense of self-deception as an intentional phenomenon for which self-deceivers are blameworthy. In the fourth chapter I leverage my theory of self-deception to ask about the extent to which there is overlap between self-deception and clinical delusion. In the final chapter I turn to addiction, appealing to results from the previous chapters to articulate a nuanced position concerning the extent to which addicts are morally responsible agents and the extent to which they share features with the self-deceived.

In Chapter 2 I develop and defend a reasons-responsiveness theory of responsible agency. Such theories — according to which responsible agency is based in an agent's capacity for recognizing and responding to reasons for action — are not entirely new. However, developed in the right way, they are also well-equipped to respond to a kind of skeptical challenge to morally responsible agency that has somewhat recently come into vogue. This skeptical challenge is motivated by recent findings in social and cognitive psychology that seem to show that much of human behaviour is motivated by considerations which are, from the perspective of justifying action, irrelevant. For example, contributions to a communal office coffee fund can as much as triple when the instructions are accompanied with a pair of watchful 'eyes'. I argue that of all mainstream theories of agency, the reasons-responsiveness theory is least threatened by results such as these. I further respond by addressing a dispute between reasons-responsiveness theorists themselves: what is required for someone to count as responding to reason? I argue for a liberal interpretation of this requirement on independent grounds, and note that such a version of the theory is even better equipped to respond to the skeptic, yielding a theory of agency which is actually enhanced by appeal to the empirical results.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I develop a novel account of self-deception and use that account to address the question: Are some delusional subjects responsible for their delusions? The central difficulty for the philosophical theory of self-deception has been to yield a psychologically plausible description of its dynamics. Self-deception is also paradigmatically intentional behaviour for which agents are typically blameworthy. I argue that no extant account of self-deception can capture both of these features. On my account, what makes a state a self-deceptive one is not determined by how it comes about. Rather, it is determined by how that belief is maintained. Self-deception, on this view, is willful failure, a refusal, to meet epistemic requirements for motivationally biased reasons. Thus, self-deceivers are typically responsible for their self-deception. I further argue that if this account is correct, there will be at least some cases of delusion (e.g., the Reverse Othello and Capgras delusions) for which agents are, in some sense, responsible. Appealing to the distinction between blameworthiness and (what I shall call) 'attributability', I claim that this leads us not to the conclusion that delusional subjects should be blamed, but instead to a more nuanced understanding of the kind of agency involved in the dynamics of delusion, and of the reasons these subjects are excused.

The final chapter is about addiction. Perhaps the central question raised by addiction is: to what extent are addicts responsible agents? Theorists notoriously oscillate between two extreme positions: (1) that addicts are just like unimpaired agents and are fully responsible and (2) that addicts helplessly suffer a condition that leaves them utterly without self-control. I argue against both extreme positions, engaging with current science at both turns. Against (2), I argue that there is no satisfactory understanding of the 'brain disease theory' of addiction that entails that addicts are not responsible agents. I then argue against (1) by considering addicts at different stages of addiction – those who are aware of their predicament vs. those who are not (although they should be). With respect to the unaware, I argue that they share some features with the self-deceived which explains their insensitivity to a rationally circumscribed body of evidence. Concerning the aware, I appeal to empirical work on 'ego-depletion' and willpower — and to Chapter 2's theory of responsibility — to argue that these addicts suffer a graded impairment of the will, one that partially excuses them from blameworthiness.