

LISA THOMAS-SMITH

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EDUCATION

PhD Dual PhD in Philosophy and Cognitive Science, 2021
University of Colorado at Boulder
Dissertation Title: "In Praise of Habit"
Committee: Iskra Fileva (Chair), Robert Rupert, Leanne Hirshfield
Tamara Sumner, Ajume Wingo

Abstract: In this interdisciplinary dissertation, I make and support the strong claim that habituation is necessary for consistent moral behavior due to the fact that human attentional capability is too limited to allow for constant and consistent focus on moral matters. The moral consistency we experience requires an explanation beyond knowledge, reflection, and a dedication to doing and being good. Habituation can provide that explanation.

MA University of Colorado at Boulder 2018
Philosophy

BA University of Illinois 2010
Philosophy, Magna cum Laude

AA Georgia Perimeter College 2002
Mathematics

Areas of Specialization: Ethics, Moral Psychology

Areas of Competence: Philosophy of Religion, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind,
Philosophy of Race, Philosophy of Gender, Philosophy and Psychology

HONORS AND AWARDS

University of Colorado at Boulder Teaching Excellence Award Spring 2019

Nominations provided by department faculty to the Graduate School. Under ten awardees are chosen from all graduate part time instructors teaching on campus.

Research Assistantship Spring 2015

Assistantship awarded with the offer to enter the PhD program at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Research in: well-being, desire and motivation theory, responsibility and identity.

Research Assistantship Summer 2015

Awarded for the Summer Philosophy Seminar. The seminar gathered fifteen undergraduate philosophy majors for daily faculty lectures and discussions led by the research assistants.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Dissertation chapters planned for publication:

- “Habits of Morality” - The case for habit’s importance in moral decision making will be made based on current psychological research. Recent studies indicate that we are often unaware of the reasons for our own decisions. Therefore the role of habit in our in-the-moment choices may be much greater than expected.
- “The Habits We Need” - In the service of definition and explanation of habitual moral practice, I will illustrate the methods and conditions in which habits are best formed and broken. Habit as a moral skill, the epistemic environment needed for moral habituation, and the contextual and environmental limitations of habit will be discussed.
- “The Habits We Practice” - Culture, habit, and morality are inextricably intertwined. Societies hold many truths to be obvious, and those attitudes become defining characteristics of the culture and personal habits of the populace. People are therefore quite likely to consistently practice the morality of the culture.
- “Habitual Attitudes” - Attitudes and emotional responses are often habitual, just as actions often are. Our political responses are often related to our habituated relationships with in-groups. Those responses are habituated as well, and unless the response habits are broken, no new ideas will be received.

“Enlightened Empathy” – Despite empathy being a normal human capability, empathy also requires learning. I posit that empathy requires experience, and given that some experiences are impossible to share, the limits of empathetic ability must be understood beyond normal human capacity to empathize.

“The Necessity and Badness of Othering” – Categories are very important to mental functioning and part of that function is to separate ourselves as different and separate from that which is not ourselves. The moral imperative is not to refrain from categories and separations (othering), but to refrain from equating “other” and “badness.”

“The Unjust Necessity of Standard American English” – A standing question among linguists and educators in the United States is the morality of demanding that Standard English be learned by students who speak other dialects or non-standard forms of English. Given the unfortunate reality that people are labeled as competent/incompetent, intelligent/unintelligent, worthy or belief/disbelief, etc. based on the way they use language, I claim that knowing SAE is often necessary for access to cultural institutions within a racialized and unjust society, especially for those from marginalized groups.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- Commentator: Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME), University of Colorado at Boulder, August, 2017. Commented on Amanda Askeff’s and Tyler John’s paper, “Moral Offsetting”
- Commentator: Rocky Mountain Ethics Congress (RoME), University of Colorado at Boulder, August 2018. Commented on Matthias Barker’s paper: “Practical Perception: New and Improved(!)”

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Seminar: Exploring Diversity and Inclusion in College Classrooms – Summer, 2014

University of Colorado at Boulder, Graduate Teacher Program

Certificate in College Teaching, 2021

University of Colorado at Boulder, Graduate Teacher Program

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Clemson University

Lecturer, August 2021 – Present

Courses:

Introduction to Logic (Fall 2021, Summer 2022, Fall 2022, Fall 2023)

Ethics (Fall 2021, Spring 2021, Spring 2022, Spring 2023)

Philosophy and Race (Spring, 2022)

Philosophy of Mind (Fall, 2022)

Introduction to Philosophy (Summer, 2022, Fall 2022, Spring 2023)

Philosophy of Gender and Sexuality (Fall 2023)

University of Colorado at Boulder

Lecturer, January 2021 to May, 2021

Courses:

Philosophy and Psychology (Spring, 2021)

Philosophy and Race (Spring, 2021)

University of Colorado at Boulder

Graduate Part Time Instructor (2015 to present), Instructor of Record

Courses:

Philosophy and Race (Fall, 2020)

Philosophy and Gender (Summer, 2020; Fall 2020)

Critical Thinking (Fall, 2019)

Ethics (Spring, 2019)

Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2018, Fall 2017)

Contemporary Social Problems (Spring 2018)

Reading Writing and Reasoning (Spring 2017)

University of Colorado, Boulder

Teaching Assistant

Courses:

War and Morality (Fall 2016)

Introduction to Philosophy (Spring 2016, Fall 2014)

Philosophy and Society (Fall 2015)

Environmental Ethics (Spring 2014)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Philosophical Association

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Chairs Advisory Committee, 2022-2023

Clemson University, Department of Philosophy and Religion

Teagle Fellow, 2023-2024

Clemson University, Department of Philosophy and Religion

ICS/PSYC Faculty Search Committee (Graduate participant), 2019

University of Colorado at Boulder, Institute of Cognitive Science

ICS Awards Committee, 2018-present

Student run governing board which allocates travel and research funding for graduate students
University of Colorado at Boulder, Institute of Cognitive Science

Conference Co-Organizer

Rocky Mountain Philosophy Conference, April 2016
University of Colorado at Boulder

Philosophy Outreach Program of Colorado

Outreach teaching volunteer for local high-school students, August 2012 to May 2014

Climate Committee

Philosophy Department graduate member of Committee for Climate, August 2015 to May 2016

Mentoring

Undergraduate Philosophy major mentor, 2012 and 2013

PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE

Software Product Manager/Business Analyst (2003-2012) - ISGN

My responsibilities for multiple mortgage software products included:

- ◆ Managing a team of writers, developers, and QA specialists in the U.S. and India for three software offerings
- ◆ Analyzing customer needs and compliance requirements and determine the best method for accommodating the requirements.
- ◆ Analyzing market trends and prioritize changes
- ◆ Writing/Editing functional specifications, help, and readme files for software changes and enhancements
- ◆ Organizing, prioritizing, and managing product changes through the software development life cycle

REFERENCES FURNISHED UPON REQUEST
