

# Joshua J Johnston

## Curriculum Vitae

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### Research

**AOS:** Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art; Ethics

**AOC:** Bioethics, Early Modern Philosophy (esp. Hume), Ancient Philosophy (esp. Plato and Aristotle)

### Employment

2019 – Instructor at Seattle University

2012–2017

Philosophy Instructor, Auburn University

### Education

2005–2013

PhD, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

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

Degree awarded May 2013

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

- At Seattle University
  - Phil 2920: Ethics and the Health Sciences
  - Phil 2500: Philosophy of the Human Person (Life, Death, and Meaning)

## Teaching (con't)

- At Auburn University
  - Phil 1020: Introduction to Ethics (multiple courses)
  - Phil 1030: Ethics and the Health Sciences (multiple courses)
  - Phil 1030: Ethics and the Health Sciences: The Philosophy of Death
- At The University of British Columbia
  - 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)
  - Phil 435: Environmental Ethics. Fall 2009 (Online Course)
    - As Teaching Assistant for UBC
      - Phil 310: Philosophy of Plato
      - Phil 311: Philosophy of Aristotle
      - Phil 338: Philosophy of Law
      - Phil 330: Social and Political Philosophy
      - 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

## 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

- “In Defense of the Agency View” with Oisín Deery
  - Alabama Philosophical Society, October 2013
- “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
- “How to Judge Art Correctly”  
Green College Member Speaker Series, UBC, December 2006

**Awards  
Scholarships  
Fellowships**

- 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
  - Oxford University Press
  - Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics
  - Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism
- Research Assistant to the American Society for Aesthetics 2007, 2012
- Graduate Representative to the Philosophy Department 2009-2010
- 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 Priority of the Particular*

Recent work at the intersection between ethics and aesthetics has focused on the interaction between ethical value and moral value. The philosophical work being done here arises from asking the interaction question: what is the interaction between moral and aesthetic judgment and value? Some questions are asked regarding the possible interaction between ethical de(merits) and aesthetic (de)merits; for instance, can an ethical flaw ever count as an aesthetic flaw in an artwork? While the work done here has paid off in interesting new positions and has also enlightened the long debate between the possible legitimacy of the ethical criticism of art, much of the work misses out on a more primary question.

This dissertation, while at the intersection between ethics and aesthetics, will put to the side the interaction question in favour of the structural question: what, if any, structural features are shared between moral and aesthetic judgment? I believe there are three such structural similarities. The first is that ethical and aesthetic reasons share a common metaphysics: holism of reasons

is true in both ethics and aesthetics. Ethical and aesthetic reasons are capable of changing their evaluative polarity across cases. The second similarity is that, given holism, the particular should be given priority when making appreciative moral and aesthetic judgments. Our appreciative judgments should be informed by the particulars of the case before us. Third, moral and aesthetic emotionism is true: ethical and aesthetic concepts are essentially related to the emotions.

Given these three structural similarities, this dissertation argues that the skill of fine discernment is required in order to make appreciative judgments. Fine discernment makes good on the demand that the priority of the particular requires: in order to apprehend the evaluative property of the ethical situation or aesthetic object, we must discriminate and unify the discrete particulars into a coherent whole.

## References

Dominic Mclver Lopes, Professor of Philosophy and PhD Supervisor  
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