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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Michigan State University, Department of Philosophy

Visiting Assistant Professor
August 2014 – present

Boston University, Department of Philosophy

Lecturer, Full-time
September 2013 – May 2014

EDUCATION

Boston University, Ph.D. (2006-2012)

Dissertation Title: "Spinoza's Account of Composition"

Dissertation Committee: Aaron Garrett
Michael Della Rocca
David Liebesman
Amelie Rorty

University of Minnesota, B.A. (2002-2006)

Majors: Philosophy, Computer Science (Cum Laude)

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION AND COMPETENCE

AOS: Early Modern Philosophy

AOC: Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics

PUBLICATIONS

Review of Roger Ariew, *Descartes and the First Cartesians*. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, forthcoming.

"Reason and Knowledge in Spinoza." In *Spinoza: Basic Concepts*, ed. André Santos Campos. Exeter: Imprint Academic, forthcoming.

"Semantic and Pragmatic Stances toward Emerging Media." In *Philosophy of Emerging Media*, ed. Juliet Floyd and James Katz. New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Review of Tad Schmaltz (ed.), *Efficient Causation: A History*. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*. 4 March (2015).

"Spinoza: Moral Philosophy." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 24 May (2015).

"Spinoza on Composition, Causation, and the Mind's Eternity." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22 no. 3 (2014).

"'Use Them At Our Pleasure': Spinoza on Animal Ethics." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 30 no. 4 (2013).

UNDER REVIEW OR INVITED

"Anne Conway's Objection to Cartesian Ontology." (Under review)

"Spinoza's Causal Account of Composition." (Under review)

"You are what you eat, but should you eat what you are?: Modern philosophical dietetics" (with Aaron Garrett). In *Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics*, ed. Anne Barnhill, Tyler Doggett, and Andy Egan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming. (Invited)

PRESENTATIONS

REFEREED

"Tracing Reason's Arc: Sufficient Reason from Leibniz to Kant" (with Elizabeth Robinson)
Leibniz Society of North America Conference
The Ohio State University, Fall 2015

"Tracing Reason's Arc: Sufficient Reason from Leibniz to Kant" (with Elizabeth Robinson)
International Kant Congress
University of Vienna, Fall 2015

"Necessitarianism and Divine Self-Causation in Spinoza"
Eastern Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Symposium session)
Philadelphia, Fall 2014

"Tracing the Arc from Leibniz to Kant" (with Elizabeth Robinson)
New England Colloquium on Early Modern Philosophy
Brown University, Summer 2014

"Spinoza on Reason, Freedom, and the Composition of the Body"
Israel-Atlantic Canada Seminar on Early Modern Philosophy
Tel Aviv University, Summer 2013

"Representation and Intentionality in Berkeley's Master Argument"
Eastern Conference of the American Philosophical Association (Berkeley Society)
Atlanta, Fall 2012

"Reconsidering Spinoza on the Lower Animals"
Margaret Wilson Conference
Dartmouth University, Summer 2012

"Spinoza's Analogy of Parthood in *Ethics* V"
Conference of the British Society for the History of Philosophy
University of Dundee, Summer 2012

"Reconsidering Spinoza on the Lower Animals"
Princeton-Penn-Columbia Graduate Conference in History of Philosophy
Princeton University, Spring 2011

"A Contradiction in Spinoza's *Ethics*"
New England Colloquium on Early Modern Philosophy
Yale University, Summer 2010

"Proofs and Explanations: Wittgenstein's Influence on Kuhn's Philosophy of Science"
 Macalester Undergraduate Philosophy Conference
 Macalester College, Spring 2005

INVITED

"Spinoza's Metaphysics of Suicide"
 The Undergraduate Philosophy Club
 Michigan State University, Fall 2015

"That Exceptional Order of Things': Anne Conway's Criticism of Cartesian Ontology"
 Philosophy Department Colloquium
 Michigan State University, Spring 2015

"What Am I?: Doing Philosophy with Descartes"
 The Undergraduate Philosophy Club
 Michigan State University, Spring 2015

"The Divided Mind: Some Ancient and Modern Recipes"
 The Ancient Circle
 Michigan State University, Fall 2014

"Philosophy of Mind"
 The Undergraduate Philosophy Club
 Michigan State University, Fall 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD

Michigan State University	Reason & Passion in Early Modern Philosophy	Fall 2015
	Introduction to Logic (two sections)	Fall 2015
	Modern Philosophy	Spring 2015
	Introduction to Logic (two sections)	Spring 2015
	Time & Eternity in Early Modern Philosophy	Fall 2014
	Introduction to Logic (two sections)	Fall 2014
Boston University	Introduction to Philosophy	Spring 2014
	Introduction to Ethics	Spring 2014
	Introduction to Philosophy (two sections)	Fall 2013
	Introduction to Ethics	Fall 2013
	Introduction to Philosophy	Spring 2012
	Reasoning and Argumentation	Fall 2011
Suffolk University	Contemporary Moral Problems	Fall 2012

ASSISTANT

Harvard Extension School	Identities of Persons, Amelie Rorty	Spring 2009
Boston University	Introduction to Ethics, Daniel Star	Spring 2009
	Reasoning and Argumentation, Judson Webb	Fall 2008
	Political Philosophy, Aaron Garrett	Spring 2008
	Reasoning and Argumentation, Juliet Floyd	Fall 2007

ACADEMIC SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES

Lead Organizer, Spinoza-Leibniz Workshop at Michigan State University, 2014-present
Referee, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 2015-present
Referee, *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 2014-present
Assistant Director, Center for Philosophy and History of Science, 2012-2013
Organizer, Graduate Student Presentation Series at Boston University, 2011-2012
Referee, *Arche Undergraduate Philosophy Journal*, 2008-2012
Referee, Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference on Consciousness, 2008-2011
President, Philosophy Graduate Student Association at Boston University, 2008-2009
Treasurer, Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference on Consciousness, 2008-2009

GRANTS AND ACADEMIC AWARDS

Undergraduate Research Initiative Grant	MSU Philosophy Department, 2015-16
<i>Project: "Democracy in Hobbes and Spinoza," with advisee Sam Heidenreich.</i>	
Special Foreign Travel Fund Grant	MSU Foreign Languages and Literature, 2015
High-Profile Faculty Travel Grant	MSU Philosophy Department, 2014
Jaakko Hintikka Research Fellowship	Boston University, 2011-12
Angela J. and James J. Rallis Memorial Award	BU Humanities Foundation, 2011
Edwin S. and Ruth M. White Prize	BU Humanities Foundation, 2011
Metcalf Research Fellowship	Boston University, 2006-7
Woodbridge Scholarship in Philosophy	University of Minnesota, 2006

GRADUATE COURSES

<i>Course</i>	<i>Instructor</i>
Continental Rationalism	Aaron Garrett
Spinoza's Political Philosophy	Susan James (Birkbeck University of London)
Spinoza	Aaron Garrett
Plato	David Roochnik
Aristotle's Metaphysics	David Roochnik
Spinoza's Metaphysics	Aaron Garrett (directed study)
Phenomenology	Walter Hopp
Analytic Philosophy	Juliet Floyd
Wittgenstein	Jaakko Hintikka
Philosophy of Physics	Tian Cao
Mathematical Logic	Akihiro Kanamori
Foundations of Mathematics	Akihiro Kanamori
Philosophy and Quantum Information	Alisa Bokulich
Philosophy of Logic and Mathematics	Judson Webb
Computation and Hypercomputation	Judson Webb (directed study)
Randomness in Computing	Peter Gacs
Reading Latin	
Reading German	

LANGUAGES

Reading Latin

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT: "SPINOZA'S ACCOUNT OF COMPOSITION"

The story of early modern philosophy is, by and large, the story of the rise and fall of the substance-mode ontology. Descartes and Hume are often portrayed as the main characters of this story, the alpha and omega of substance-mode metaphysics. But Spinoza's place in this story is important and, until recently, underrated. Where the Cartesian takes the human mind and body to be distinct substances, Spinoza presents minds and bodies as modes of a single, underlying substance, "God or Nature." Yet the Cartesian, like the Scholastic and Aristotelian before him, has a nice explanation for the difference between genuine individuals and mere aggregates: genuine individuals are substances, while mere aggregates are not. The price Spinoza must pay for his monism is to give up this nice explanation.

Instead, I argue, Spinoza accounts for the composition of an individual by appeal to the causal connections among its parts. Many things compose one, on Spinoza's view, just in case the many stand in a pattern [*ratio*] of causal relations to one another. Some commentators have argued that Spinoza does not, and cannot, provide any criterion for distinguishing patterns from mere collections of causal relations. This is mistaken. As I argue, Spinoza's metaphysical thesis that existence is materially equivalent to the possession of causal power gives him a nice way to delineate patterns of causal relations. The causal relations among several individuals constitute a pattern just in case they give rise to some distinct causal power, over and above the causal powers of the individuals.

Aside from its intrinsic interest as an account of composition, Spinoza's view is useful for understanding other parts of his system, including his account of persistence over time and his doctrine of the mind's eternity. It also illustrates Spinoza's strange place in the story of modern philosophy, at once Hume's precursor and his nemesis: in his denial that human beings can be understood as substances, Spinoza prefigures Hume's criticism of Cartesian metaphysics; but in his causal rationalism, nobody is farther from Hume than Spinoza.

REFERENCES

Aaron Garrett
Associate Professor
Boston University
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Michael Della Rocca
Professor
Yale University
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Amelie Rorty
Professor
Tufts University and Harvard University
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