Schedule, Morris Colloquium, *The Self and Its Realizations*
June 16–18, 2018, University of Colorado, Boulder

June 16th

5:00–6:30: Keynote Lecture: Robert Cummins, "Three Ways of Spilling Philosophy OR: Philosophy's Three Deadly Sins." In Duane Physics G125.

6:30–9:00: Reception, Physics Common Room, Gamow Tower

June 17th, all talks in Benson 380

9:30–10:30: Thomas Polger, "Resonance and Extended Cognition"

10:30–11:30: Heather Demarest, "Relativistic Persons: What Special and General Relativity Can Tell Us about Who We Are"

11:30–11:45: Coffee Break

11:45–12:45: Lawrence Shapiro, "What Is It Like to Feel Like a Self?"

12:45–2:15: Lunch

2:15–3:15: Lena Kästner, "Network Models in Psychiatry: Same but Different?"

3:15–4:15: Kenneth Aizawa, "Polger and Shapiro's Concepts of Realization"

4:15–4:30: Coffee break

4:30–5:30: Carrie Figdor, "Audience Participation Meets Epistemology: A Model of Active Processing of Testimony"

6:30–9:00: Workshop dinner at Salt (1047 Pearl St.)

June 18th, all talks will be in Benson 380

9:30–10:30: Zoe Drayson, "The Fragmented Self: Varieties of Implicit Cognition"

10:30–11:30: Rob Rupert, "Epistemic Value in the Subpersonal Vale" (joint work with J. Adam Carter)

11:30–11:45: Coffee Break

11:45–12:45: Beate Krickel, “Self-Image-Defense, Repression, and the Meaning of ‘Unconscious’”

12:45–2:15: Lunch

2:15–3:15: Sarah Robins, “The Mnemonic Puzzle”

3:15–4:15: Elizabeth Schechter, “Self-Consciousness in the Split-Brain Subject”

4:15–4:30: Coffee Break

4:30–5:30: Fred Adams, “Global Aphasia and the Language of Thought”

Abstracts

Fred Adams (U. of Delaware), “Global Aphasia and the Language of Thought”
In 1975 Jerry Fodor proposed that there must be a Language of Thought (L.O.T. , in his book of that title). In 1987 he re-iterated his claim that there is a language of thought. His arguments are largely theoretical based upon inference to the best explanation for our productive and systematic cognitive abilities. However, is there any independent empirical evidence for the existence of a language of thought? Recent studies of persons with global aphasia might well be empirical support for Fodor's claims. I will present some data from the work of Rosemary Varley who studies the cognitive abilities of persons with global aphasia. I will give her criteria for what she calls "agrammaticism" which define what she deems a loss of significant linguistic capacity. Then I will explain the kinds of cognitive capacity demonstrated by individuals with global aphasia. Varley's own conclusions are that there are two separate systems at work in the human mind—a linguistic system and a cognitive system. She explains that she believes these two systems come apart in subjects with global aphasia. In these subjects, their cognitive systems take over and allow them to perform as well as anyone on many cognitive tasks. If she is right, her work may supply important empirical support for the existence of a language of thought (L.O.T.).

Ken Aizawa (Rutgers U., Newark), “Polger and Shapiro’s Concepts of Realization”
Polger and Shapiro have two principal concepts of realization: an individual being a member of a kind is a species of realization and a kind being a member of a kind is a species of realization. This duality in their thinking has important ramifications for some of their other views and for their critiques of the work of others. For one thing, by their own lights, Polger and Shapiro should not count kind membership as a realization relation. For another, their critique of Dimensioned realization fails to engage that view.

Robert Cummins (Emeritus, U. of California, Davis), “Three Ways of Spilling Philosophy OR: Philosophy’s Three Deadly Sins”
Philosophers—especially philosophers who take science seriously – need to be cautious of three aspects of mainstream philosophical methodology that threaten to undermine their project. (1) Reliance on intuitions and reflective equilibrium. (2) Semantic Poaching, and (3) Puzzle philosophy. Instead, philosophy should seek to situate the science in a conceptual framework that helps us to understand its implications.

Heather Demarest (U. of Colorado, Boulder), “Relativistic Persons: What Special and General Relativity Can Tell Us about Who We Are”
I present some arguments from special and general relativity that suggest people do not exist at times, except perhaps derivatively. Special relativity teaches us that there are many incompatible--but equally good--ways to foliate spacetime into spaces at times. One consequence is that there are many incompatible--but equally good--ways to foliate brains into brain-states-at-times. I present the results as a dilemma: either people do not exist fundamentally at times, but only in regions of spacetime, or they do exist fundamentally at times, but for each intuitive person, there are potentially infinitely many overlappers. General

relativity teaches us that time objectively moves more slowly closer to gravitational objects. This difference in temporal rate implies that there can be no consistent persons-at-times.

Zoe Drayson (U. of California, Davis), "The Fragmented Self: Varieties of Implicit Cognition"
The prediction and explanation of human action seems to require the assumption of a rational self; in particular, the assumption that the self has a single consistent set of beliefs. In some cases, however, philosophers and psychologists advocate thinking of the self as fragmented or compartmentalized rather than unified. In this paper, I argue that this talk of mental fragmentation is often ambiguous between (1) the rational fragmentation of the unified self, and (2) the causal or informational fragmentation of the mechanisms that realize the self. Rational fragmentation (1) is a strategy (associated with e.g. Lewis, Stalnaker) used to argue that seemingly irrational agents are in fact rational. Causal fragmentation (2) is a strategy (associated with e.g. modularity theorists, dual-process theorists) for showing *how* the mechanisms that cause rational action can also cause irrational action. I explore the relationship between these two forms of fragmentation and emphasize the importance of distinguishing them, particularly in the current debates over implicit bias and belief-discordant behavior.

Carrie Figdor (U. of Iowa), "Audience Participation Meets Epistemology: A Model of Active Processing of Testimony"
In the epistemology of testimony, a speaker tells a hearer or audience that P; said hearer believes that P, is or is not justified in her belief, and risks harboring a false belief. How pathetic is this model? Very. Drawing on research in communication and psychology, I propose a model of testimonial acceptance in which hearers are active participants in information transfer, not passive recipients of propositions.

Lena Kästner (Ruhr U., Bochum), "Network Models in Psychiatry: Same But Different?"
Network models in psychiatry promise to offer integrative accounts of mental disorders by combining cognitive, behavioral, genetic, environmental, and neurophysiological factors into a holistic picture. They thus highlight that focusing exclusively on the brain to explain psychopathology is too limited. While recognizing this is overdue, integrating many different factors under different descriptions does not come without challenges. For instance, we must make sure to separate psychopathology from its background conditions and not let our network models become overly inclusive. Another challenge is to ensure we acknowledge that while many different factors are relevant to psychopathology, they are not all relevant in the same way. These issues are not unfamiliar to philosophers; in fact, analogous problems are well-known from discussions in other philosophical contexts, e.g. situated cognition and mechanistic explanation. In this talk, I will investigate to what extent we can address the issues for network models in psychiatry by drawing on strategies employed in other debates--and whether this delivers satisfying solutions.

Beate Krickel (Ruhr U., Bochum), “Self-Image Defense, Repression and the Meaning of ‘Unconscious’”

A central claim of Freudian psychoanalysis is that, in order to protect our self-image from conflict or cognitive inconsistency, we repress desires, beliefs, memories, or emotions. Many philosophers and psychologists have argued that the notion of repression is inconsistent, and thus cannot be a real phenomenon. Nowadays, the notion of repression reappears in a scientific guise in the context of so-called neuropsychoanalysis. Neuropsychoanalysts aim at finding neural mechanisms for psychoanalytic phenomena, such as repression, dream, trauma, or transference. It is surprising that, still, no coherent approach to repression could be presented that would allow for a systematic neuroscientific investigation of repression. In this talk, I will present different approaches to repression that have been suggested and highlight their differences. I will argue that none of them is successful. I will show that a consistent theory of repression depends on a clarified account of the notion of unconscious. Furthermore, I will highlight how cognitive psychology (e.g., implicit bias research) and philosophy (e.g., theories of self-deception) can profit from integrating the notion of repression.

Tom Polger (U. of Cincinnati), “Resonance and Extended Cognition”

Resonance is a central notion in neo-Gibsonian “ecological” psychology that has been taken up by supporters of embodied cognition and “radical” embodied cognitive science. Here I explore whether the idea of resonance can be deployed to address questions about the hypothesis of extended cognition. To the extent that it can be, thinking in terms of resonance might provide a continuity between embodied and extended cognition.

Sarah Robins (U. of Kansas), “The Mnemonic Puzzle”

That mnemonic devices help us remember is hardly a claim in need of defense. That philosophers and cognitive scientists can learn about the nature of memory and cognition by studying mnemonics is more controversial. Mnemonics have not received much attention, for (at least) two reasons. First, philosophers and scientists of memory have spent the last several decades focused on memory errors rather than memory’s successes. Second, mnemonics are often portrayed as gimmicky “get smart quick” devices rather than general cognitive tools. Neither of these is a good reason, or so I shall argue.

Reflecting on how mnemonics work introduces a challenge, which I call the mnemonic puzzle. The puzzle is this: to remember X, it is easier to encode more information rather than less. This is, on its face, counterintuitive. Remembering is effortful. Shouldn’t remembering more information require more effort? When it comes to cognitive effort, mnemonics are about working smarter, not harder. There are two lessons that can be drawn from this apparent puzzle. First, when it comes to memory storage, not all vehicles of mental content are created equal. There is evidence to support the idea that some are more numerous, reliable, or fundamental—and so better facilitate encoding, storage, and retrieval. Second, mnemonic success reveals how impressive instances of remembering can be: reciting 70,000 digits of pi or recalling the order of several shuffled decks of cards in less than a minute. These mnemonic feats challenge standard assumptions of how limitations on memory’s overall capacity bear on the nature and extent of individual memories.

Rob Rupert (U. of Colorado, Boulder), “Epistemic Value in the Subpersonal Vale”
A vexing problem in contemporary epistemology concerns the value of knowledge, and, in particular, whether and how the value of knowledge exceeds the value of mere (unknown) true belief. The recent literature is deeply divided on the matter of how best to address the problem. One point, however, remains unquestioned: that if a solution is to be found, it will be found at the personal level, the level at which states of whole persons, as such, appear. We take exception to this orthodoxy, or at least to its unquestioned status. We argue that subpersonal states play a significant – arguably, primary – role in much epistemically relevant cognition and thus constitute a domain in which we might reasonably expect to locate the “missing source” of epistemic value, beyond the value attached to mere true belief. We then identify two specific ways – both to do with the subpersonal fixation and maintenance of beliefs – in which the subpersonal appears to serve as a source of epistemic value. (This is joint work with J. Adam Carter, Glasgow.)

Elizabeth Schechter (Washington U. of St. Louis), “Self-Consciousness in the Split-Brain Subject”
Split-brain surgery results in dual consciousness and dual agency: one center of conscious agency associated with each cerebral hemisphere. These claims, while controversial, have received much philosophical attention. Philosophers have seldom explicitly considered the structure of self-consciousness after split-brain surgery, however. In this paper, I argue, first, that after the corpus callosum that connects them is fully sectioned, the two hemispheres are associated with distinct centers of self-conscious cognition. On the other hand there is nonetheless something about the operation of self-consciousness after split-brain surgery that makes each split-brain subject more like one of us than like two of us together.

Larry Shapiro (U. of Wisconsin, Madison), “What Is It Like to Feel Like a Self?”
The advent of virtual reality technology has created new opportunities for investigating the phenomenology of selfhood. Drawing on this research, Blanke and Metzinger (2009) offer the minimal phenomenal self (MPS) as an analysis of the feeling of selfhood. In this paper I clarify an imprecision in the statement of conditions for minimal phenomenal selfhood and argue for an even more minimal conception of selves. I also point out a number of ambiguities in the questionnaires that provide data about feelings of selfhood, explaining how they undermine efforts to understand the self’s relationship to the body. I close with some recommendations for future empirical studies of selfhood.