Molly Brown

Department of Philosophy University of Chicago 1115 E. 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637 616.516.6273 mollybrown@uchicago.edu

Academic 2022 - Humanities Teaching Fellow, Dept. of Philosophy and the College,

Employment Present University of Chicago

Education 2022 - Phd, Department of Philosophy, University of Chicago

2018 - MA, Department of Philosophy, University of Chicago

2014 - BA, Calvin College (Major: Philosophy, Minor: Gender Studies)

Areas of Epistemology, Feminist and Social Philosophy

Specialization

Areas of Competence

Philosophy of Science, Pragmatism,

Dissertation Title: On Starting Points

Abstract: The central claim of this dissertation is that there is a genuine "logic of discovery". The work as a whole strives to lay the groundwork and carve out concepts necessary to develop such a logic. My arguments focus on reclaiming and clarifying C.S. Peirce's concept of abduction. Drawing on Peirce, I argue that the fundamental nature of abductive reasoning is conjectural. The output of abductive reasoning is, therefore, to be regarded as strictly untried conjecture: propositions that are paradigmatically put forward for the purpose of starting an inquiry, as opposed to propositions that are either confirmed or disconfirmed and thereby close an inquiry. I call this the "starting point thesis". My defense of the "starting point thesis" pushes us to re-evaluate the traditional model of rationality, on which the rational element in any mental activity is indexed to alethic notions. On my view, rationality is developed on the model of a cognitive mechanism designed to resolve different kinds of intellectual dissatisfactions. Accordingly the rational element in abduction is located in what it takes for an abductive agent to call for explanation and how they go about resolving that call, and grounds for adopting and criticizing the quality of a hypothesis are found in the dynamic interplay between these two epistemic states. The result is a first step toward a general epistemological reorientation—a starting point oriented

epistemology concerned not just with what we can claim to know or are justified in believing but which makes room for questions about what sorts of claims (and *whose* claims) engender in us the imperative to investigate and which potential discoveries we deem worthy of investment.

Committee: Anubav Vasudevan and Kevin Davey (co-chairs), Michael Kremer, and Meghan Page (Loyola University, Maryland).

Publications

"Cooperation and Competition between Plots and Principles." Co-authored with Saul Levmore and Martha Nussbaum, in *Power, Prose, Purse: Law, Literature, and Economic Transformation*. Edited by A. LaCroix, S. Levmore, M. Nussbaum. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (2019)

Refereed Presentations

2018 - "Mill's Feminist Epistemology"6th Annual General Meeting of SWIP-Ireland.University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Invited Presentations

2018 - "J.S. Mill on Inductive Skepticism and Social Categories" WIPHICA Conference Northwestern University, Chicago IL

2014 - "Kant on Testimonial Knowledge and Epistemic Virtue". Jefferson Scholars Foundation Conference University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

Fellowships and Awards

2021 - Ames Fund Dissertation Completion Award

2021 - Graduation Fellowship

2020 - Stuart Tave Teaching Fellowship

2018 - Graduate Student Travel Stipend, SWIP-Ireland

2017 - Ernst Freund Fellowship in Law & Philosophy, University of Chicago

2014 - Jefferson Foundation Fellowship, University of Virginia, Declined

2014 - Kenneth J. Konyndyk, Jr. Scholarship, Calvin College

2013 - Bouwsma Memorial Scholarship, Calvin College

Teaching Experience

2021 - Elementary Logic, Primary Instructor

2021 - Gut Feelings and Fake News, Primary Instructor

2020 - Creativity and the Logic of Discovery, Primary Instructor

2020 - Elementary Logic, Course Assistant (with Michael Kremer)

2020 - Elementary Logic, Course Assistant (with Ginger Schultheis)

2019 - American Pragmatism, Course Assistant (with Anubav Vasudevan) 2019 - The Problem of Evil, Course Assistant (with Michael Kremer) 2018 - Elementary Logic, Course Assistant (with Malte Willer) 2018 - Introduction to Ethics, Course Assistant (with Candace Vogler) 2017 - Research Assistant to Martha Nussbaum, University of Chicago Assisted with research for upcoming books and lectures. 2014 - Research Assistant to Christina Van Dyke, Calvin College 2015 Assisted with research for upcoming books, edited volumes, and classes. 2009 - Professional Writing Tutor, Grand Rapids Community College 2011 Aided ESL students gaining competency in writing English language essays; provided feedback on student essays of varying skill levels from developmental to advanced writing; gave classroom presentations advocating for writing center and its services; wrote and designed lab resources and structure. 2019 - Journal Referee, Ergo 2020 - Chair, "Anti-Vaxx, Anti-Evidence: The Troubled Epistemologies of the New Anti-Science Movements" APA Central Divisional Meeting, Chicago, IL 2016 - Chair, "Identity and Social Ontology" APA Central Divisional Meeting, Chicago, IL (March 2016) 2017 - Coordinator, Practical Philosophy Workshop 2019 Faculty Sponsors: Jason Bridges, Matthias Haase

Departmental Service

Professional

Service

Professional

Development

2015 - Organizer, Women in Philosophy

2022

2018 - Organizer/Mentor, Minorities and Philosophy

2022

2016 - Coordinator, Society of Fools

2017

2015 - Coordinator, M & E Reading Group Faculty Sponsor: Anubav Vasudevan

References

Anubav Vasudevan Associate Professor University of Chicago anubav@uchicago.edu

Michael Kremer Mary R. Morton Distinguished Service Professor University of Chicago kremer@uchicago.edu Kevin Davey Associate Professor University of Chicago kjdavey@uchicago.edu

Meghan Page Associate Professor Loyola University, Maryland mpage1@loyola.edu