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My research is mainly in the philosophy of mind, with substantive intersections into ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and cognitive science. My work is divisible into three interconnected research projects. The first—*The Structure of Experience*—addresses questions about how conscious experiences are structured and how to model that structure. The second—*Consciousness and Value*—examines the ethics and metaethics of consciousness. The third—*The Epistemology of Experience*—examines how knowledge of our own experiences differs from knowledge of the external world.

THE STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE

Conscious experiences are structured. Consider how your perceptual experience breaks down into sensory modalities, how your pain experiences come in different magnitudes, and how your color experiences have hue, saturation, and brightness as dimensions of variation. However, while it is obvious that experiences have structure, there has been little consensus on basic questions about that structure: Do experiences have parts? Are experiences discrete or continuous? How can we formally model experiences? My research develops philosophical tools and frameworks that enable us to answer such questions.

The questions my work focuses on are underexplored in both philosophy and cognitive science. While there is plenty of empirical and theoretical work yielding piecemeal knowledge of the structures of particular kinds of experiences (such as color experiences), I am focused on general questions that concern all kinds of experiences. And while there is plenty of philosophical work on the mind-body problem, the nature of perception, and the physical correlates of consciousness, my research remains neutral on these familiar problems while identifying a new set of philosophical questions. In other words, my work yields new ways of making progress in our understanding of consciousness that do not require resolving long-standing philosophical disputes about the mind.

My research begins with “Objective Phenomenology” [under review], where I argue that the structure of experience is the key to solving a puzzle famously set forth by Thomas Nagel: is it possible to understand what it is like to be a bat without having had bat experiences? I argue that even though we cannot grasp the qualitative character of bat experiences, we could still understand models of how bat experiences are structured. More generally, I argue that facts that are purely about how conscious experiences are structured

are objective, in that they can be understood given any set of experiential capacities. As a result, the structure of experience is epistemically tractable, even when we examine creatures radically different from ourselves.

From there, my research examines how conscious experiences are structured and how to model that structure. In “The Microstructure of Experience” [*Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, 2019], I defend the view that experiences have microstructures, where the macrophenomenal properties we introspect are realized by non-introspectable microphenomenal properties. In “Modeling Mental Qualities” [Revise & Resubmit, *Philosophical Review*], I develop a formal framework for modeling the mental qualities of experiences and argue that the structure of mental qualities is fundamentally different from the structure of physical qualities. I am also currently working on a collaborative project, “The Structure of Analog Representation” [in progress, with Josh Myers & Gabriel Rabin], which examines the structure of analog (as opposed to symbolic) representation and which applies my work on the structure of experience to seemingly unrelated debates in cognitive science and aesthetics.

I view these papers as the start of a broader research arc. In future work, I plan to continue identifying structural features of experiences and developing formal models of those structural features. The overarching goal of my research project is to develop a systematic framework that maps all structural features of conscious experiences.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND VALUE

My second research project examines the ethics and metaethics of conscious experiences. This includes issues about whether or not consciousness itself is intrinsically valuable, how we know which kinds of experiences are good or bad, whether all conscious subjects can be harmed and benefitted, and what all this tells us about the nature of value itself. A guiding goal of this research project is to show how identifying the connections between consciousness and value can yield new solutions to some central challenges in metaethics, such as how it is possible to acquire knowledge of objective ethical facts.

My work on consciousness and value begins, somewhat ironically, with a paper arguing that consciousness has no intrinsic value. In “Is Consciousness Intrinsically Valuable?” (*Philosophical Studies*, 2018), I explain why prior arguments that consciousness is intrinsically valuable are methodologically flawed and I argue that consciousness itself is value neutral. Nevertheless, there are still systematic connections between consciousness

and value. In “The Metaethics of Mind” [in progress], I argue that value facts about experiences (such as the fact that pain is bad) are wholly explained by phenomenal facts (such as the fact that pain hurts). A surprising consequence is that some ethical conclusions are genuinely derivable from purely descriptive premises, bridging the explanatory gap from the descriptive to the normative. In “Consciousness Makes Things Matter” [in progress], I argue that all and only conscious subjects are welfare subjects, in the sense of being able to be better or worse off. This continues my work of identifying systematic connections between consciousness and value (even while holding that consciousness itself has no value).

EPISTEMOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE

My work on the epistemology of conscious experiences has arisen naturally through my other research projects: in particular, thinking about how we know the structures and values of experiences has led to thinking about how we know the phenomenal characters of experiences. My research here is guided by the following question: how is the epistemology of our own experiences different from the epistemology of the external world?

I develop the foundations for this project in “Thinking about Experiences” [in progress], where I argue that knowing what it is like to have an experience is a matter of degree, rather than a matter of kind. Then in “The Epistemic Structure of Introspection” [under review], I argue for the thesis that introspective evidence is never misleading, and I show how this principle is both modest (in that it leaves open issues about infallibility, justification, and luminosity) and powerful (in that it explains facts about skepticism, rationality, and hallucination). In “First-Person Technology” [Revise & Resubmit, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*], I discuss how technology (such as brain-machine interfaces) could enhance first-person investigation of consciousness in ways analogous to how technology has enhanced third-person investigation of the external world. A recurring theme is that the epistemology of experience is significantly different from the epistemology of the external world, but often not in ways that philosophers have traditionally thought.

Consciousness lies at the center of my research interests, but most of my work intersects with either cognitive science or other core areas of philosophy, especially ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of science. In other words, my unified focus on consciousness has led to diverse and wide-ranging research interests.