Elizabeth Schechter

## Curriculum Vitae

Indiana University, Bloomington esschech@iu.edu

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**Academic Positions**

Associate Professor of Philosophy and of Cognitive Science 2019—

Indiana University, Bloomington

Assistant Professor of Philosophy 2011 – 2019

Washington University in St. Louis

Faculty Fellow 2014 – 2015

National Humanities Center

Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Philosophy of Cognitive Science 2009 – 2011

University of Oxford

**Education**

*PhD* in Philosophy University of Maryland 2009

*BA* in English Vassar College 2001

**Areas of Specialization**

Philosophy of Psychology, Philosophy of Cognitive Science, Philosophy of Mind

### Areas of Competence

Philosophy of Science, Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy of Law, Applied Ethics

# Research

**Works in progress**

* Self-deception without evidence
* Plurals and plural identities
* The folk psychology of multiple mindedness [with Shaun Nichols]
* Consciousness after split-brain surgery: The recent challenge to the classical picture. [with Tim Bayne] (under review at *Neuropsychologia*)

# Monograph

# *Self-Consciousness and “Split” Brains: The Minds’ I.* Oxford University Press. 2018

# Academic articles

# Split-brain: What we know now and why this is important to understanding consciousness. *Neuropsychology Review* https://doi.org/10.1007/s11065-020-09439-3. [With Edward de Haan, Victor Lamme, Yair Pinto, Paul Corballis, Steven Hillyard, Carlo Marzi, Anil Seth, Lukas Volz, Mara Fabri, and Tim Bayne.]

* The unity of consciousness. 2018

In R. Gennaro (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Consciousness,* pp. 366-378.

* Split brains. 2017

*Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*

* The subject in neuropsychology: Individuating minds in the split-brain case. 2015

*Mind and Language* 30: 501-525.

* Partial unity of consciousness: A preliminary defense. 2014

In D. Bennett and C. Hill (Eds.), *The Unity of Consciousness and Sensory Integration*,

pp. 347-373. MIT Press.

* The unity of consciousness: Subjects and objectivity. 2013

*Philosophical Studies* 165: 671-692.

* Intentions and unified agency: Insights from the split-brain phenomenon. 2012

*Mind and Language* 27: 570-594.

* The switch model of split-brain consciousness. 2012

*Philosophical Psychology* 25: 203-226.

* Two unities of consciousness. 2010

*The* *European Journal of Philosophy* 21: 197-218.

* Killing with kindness: Nature, nurture, and the female serial killer. 2010

In S. Waller (Ed.), *Serial Killers and Philosophy.* Blackwell. [with Harold Schechter]

* Individuating mental tokens: The split-brain case. 2010

*Philosophia* 38: 195-216.

* Persons and psychological frameworks: A critique of Tye. 2009

*Journal of Consciousness Studies* 16: 141-163.

* Can panpsychism bridge the explanatory gap? 2006

*Journal of Consciousness Studies* 13: 32-39. [with Peter Carruthers]

**Popular media articles**

* What we can learn about respect and identity from ‘plurals’. 2020

*Aeon,* April 20, 2020, https://aeon.co/ideas/what-we-can-learn-about-respect-and-identity-from-plurals.

**Workshops and lecture series**

Visiting lecturer on split-brain consciousness (3 talk series)

University of Tokyo Winter 2017

Author, Workshop on m.s.-in-progress: *Self-consciousness and “Split” Brains*

UC Santa Barbara Spring 2016

Washington University in St. Louis Spring 2016

**Talks**

*Self-Consciousness and “Split” Brains: The Minds’ I*

Symposium: Author Meets Critics, Pacific APA Spring 2020

*Self-consciousness in the Split-brain Subject*

Symposium: Personhood and the Unity of Mental Life, Central APA Winter 2020

Morris Colloquium, UC Boulder (invited talk) Summer 2018

SPAWN Conference, Syracuse University (invited talk) Summer 2015

*Plural Identities*

Symposium: Philosophical Psychiatry, Eastern APA Winter 2020

*Consciousness After Split-brain Surgery*

Cog Lunch, Indiana University, Bloomington Fall 2019

Guest Lecture for Grad Seminar of Ned Block and Ian Phillips, NYU Spring 2018

*How Many Minds?*

Split-brain Debate (with Joseph LeDoux and Yair Pinto), NYU Fall 2018

Consciousness and Cognition Workshop, U Louisville (invited talk) Fall 2015

*Consciousness and Co-Embodied Agency*

Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness, Krakow Summer 2018

(Symposium with Adam Barrett, Victor Lamme, and Yair Pinto)

*Multiple Identities: Memory, Identity, and Self-conception*

Colloquium, University of Cincinnati (invited talk) Fall 2016

Colloquium, Southern Methodist University, TX (invited talk) Fall 2016

Moral Psychology Research Group, Tulane University Fall 2014

*On the Psychosocial Possibility of Plural Personhood*

Philosophy and Psychiatry Reading Group, UNC Spring 2015

Empirically Oriented Philosophy of Mind Workshop, NYC Summer 2014

*Self-consciousness and Psychological Subjects*

Consciousness Workshop, University of Manchester, U.K. (invited talk) Summer 2014

Colloquium, University of Missouri, Columbia (invited talk) Spring 2014

Colloquium, University of Michigan, Flint (invited talk) Fall 2013

Colloquium, University of Maryland, College Park (invited talk) Fall 2013

Society for Philosophy and Psychology Summer 2013

Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology Spring 2013

University of Missouri, Saint Louis (invited talk) Winter 2013

Georgia State University (invited talk) Fall 2012

PNP Colloquium, Washington University in St. Louis Spring 2012

*Partial Unity of Consciousness*

Unity of Consciousness Conference, Brown University (invited talk) Fall 2011

*Intentions and Unified Agency*

Colloquium, Washington University in St. Louis Spring 2012

The Mentoring Project, University of Massachusetts Summer 2011 Mind Network Meeting, Warwick University (invited talk) Spring 2011

Philosophy of Cognitive Science Workshop, Oxford University Spring 2011

Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association Winter 2011

*Two Unities of Consciousness*

Philosophy of Cognitive Science Workshop, Oxford University Summer 2010

Corpus Christi Philosophy Lecture Series (invited talk) Spring 2010

*The Switch Model of Split-Brain Consciousness*

Colloquium, Washington University in St. Louis Winter 2010

Philosophy of Cognitive Science Workshop, Oxford University Fall 2009

*The Phenomenal Contents of the Global Workspace*

Pacific APA Spring 2009

**Commentaries provided**

on Hunter Gentry’s “Pay attention to yourself: An alternative explanation of patient RB”

Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology Spring 2020

on Nick Shea & Chris Frith’s “Dual process theories and consciousness”

the *Brains Blog*  Summer 2017

on Michelle Maiese’s *Embodied Selves and Divided Minds*

Central APA Spring 2017

on Zac Irving’s “Is mind-wandering unified or disunified?”

Pacific APA Spring 2016

on Peter Langland-Hassan’s “Craniopagus twins and the possibility of introspective

misidentification”

Online Consciousness Conference Spring 2013

on Tim Bayne’s *The Unity of Consciousness*

at the University of Oxford Winter 2011

on Rocco Gennaro’s “Conceptualism, HOT Theory, and the Richness Argument”

Eastern APA Winter 2009

**Honors and Awards**

Templeton Grant Recipient (730,508 Euros, PI Yair Pinto) 2019 – 2022

National Humanities Center Fellowship 2014 – 2015

Summer Seed Grant, Center for the Humanities, WUSTL 2013

Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of Oxford 2009 – 2011

Wylie Dissertation Fellowship, UMD 2008

**Teaching**

**Courses Taught at Indiana University, Bloomington**

COGS-Q 101: Introduction to Cognitive Science Spring 2020

PHIL-P 370: Topics in Philosophy—Philosophical Issues in Psychiatry Spring 2020

PHIL-P 780: Graduate Seminar on Consciousness Fall 2019

**Courses Taught at Washington University in St. Louis**

Philosophy of Mind many semesters

MBB 122: Mind, Brain, & Behavior 2 Spring 2017, Spring 2014

PNP 200: Introduction to Cognitive Science several semesters

PNP 390: PNP Senior Reading Class: Parenting and Development Spring 2019

PNP 390: PNP Senior Reading Class: Reasoning and Rationality Spring 2018

PNP 495: PNP Seminar: Consciousness Fall 2017

PHIL 419: Philosophy of Psychology Fall 2016

PNP 495: PNP Seminar: Self-Knowledge Spring 2013

PNP 495: PNP Seminar: Varieties of Dissociation Spring 2012, Fall 2011

PHIL 519: Graduate seminar: Philosophical & Moral Psychology [with Charlie Kurth] Fall 2015

PNP 595: PNP Seminar: Folk Psychology Fall 2013

**Courses Taught at the University of Maryland**

PHIL 140 Contemporary Moral Issues Summer 2009, Winter 2005

PHIL 250: Philosophy of Science Spring 2009

PHIL 308C: Philosophy and Feminism several semesters

PHIL 308J: Sex and Death Summer 2008, Summer 2007

PHIL 347: Philosophy of Law Spring 2008, Summer 2006

**Courses Tutored at the University of Oxford**

Philosophy of Mind Spring 2010 – Spring 2011

Philosophy of Science, Neuroscience, and Psychology Spring 2010 – Spring 2011

**Independent Studies**

Katy Hutson: *Executive Functions* Fall 2017 Maria Doulatova: *Conscious Unity and the Self*  Spring 2017

Matthew Chan: *Functional Connectivity and Brain Injury* Fall 2015

Shaadee Samimy: *Philosophy of Psychology* Spring 2013

#### Service and Professional Activities

**Departmental and University Service**

*Indiana University, Bloomington*

Chair, Colloquium Committee (Philosophy) Fall 2019—

Member, M & E Area Committee (Philosophy) Fall 2019—

Member, Graduate Admissions Committee (Philosophy) Spring 2000

Member, Colloquium Committee (Cognitive Science) Fall 2019

Member, Graduate Admissions Committee (Cognitive Science) Winter 2020

Organizer, Cog Lunch Series (Cognitive Science) Spring 2020

*Washington University in St. Louis*

Coordinator, PNP Honors Program Spring 2016—

Organizer, Cross-Dept Phil Sci Reading Group Spring 2017—

Organizer, Women in Philosophy Fall 2012-Spring 2014; Fall 2016-Spring 2017

Host, Welcome Dinner for First-Year Graduate Students 2012-2016

PNP Faculty Representative, Arts & Sciences Orientation Fall 2015, Fall 2016

Participant, Orientation Panel for Transfer and Exchange Students Fall 2017, 2015, 2013

Speaker, Workshop on External Funding in the Humanities Fall 2015

Speaker, Panel Presentation of the PNP Program Spring 2014

to the Spouses of the Members of the Board of Trustees Spring 2014

Member, “Nudge” Committee on Exit and QP Policies Spring 2016 – Fall 2016

Member, Graduate Admissions Committee Spring 2017, Spring 2013

Chair, Committee on the State of the Graduate Program Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

Member, PNP Faculty Search Committee, Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

Member, Philosophy Faculty Search Committee, Fall 2012 – Spring 2013

**Advising and Supervision**

*Indiana University, Bloomington*

PhD student advisor/mentor:

to Zara Anwarzai Fall 2019—

to Alexander Web Fall 2019—

Member, Dissertation Committee: Autumn Averitt Fall 2019—

“On cognitive phenomenology”

Member, Disssertation Committee: Dan Dake Fall 2019—

“Judgmentalism as a vice of attention”

*Washington University in St. Louis*

Member, dissertation committee: Christiane Merritt 2015—

“Nouns that cut slices: The ontology and ethics of stereotypes and implicit bias”

Member, dissertation committee: Nazim Keven 2012 – 2016

“A story to remember: Narrativity, memory, and the self”

Member, dissertation committee: Maria Doulatova

“Agential participation and the self-defeating cycle of identification” 2019—

Member, prospectus committee: Maria Doulatova 2017 – 2019

“Agential participation and the self-defeating cycle of identification”

Secondary supervisor, PNP Honors Thesis of Jeremy Fine: 2018 – 2019

“Schizophrenic risk following cannabis exposure *in utero*”

Secondary supervisor, PNP Honors Thesis of Haley Crosby: 2017 – 2018

“The effect of sleep on microglial synaptic elimination: exploring microglial

synaptic engulfment as a possible mechanism through which sleep facilitates learning”

Secondary supervisor, PNP Honors Thesis of Justin Vincent: 2017 – 2018

“Learning efficiency: Is it generalizable? Is it durable?

Primary supervisor, PNP Honors Thesis of Ben Lazarus: 2015 – 2016

“Measuring consciousness in persistent vegetative state.”

Secondary supervisor, PNP Honors Thesis of Harry Kainen: 2013 – 2014

“Using new evidence on the psychology of racial prejudice to create

a practical model of how to respond to racial injustice.”

Primary supervisor, PNP Honors Thesis of Laura Levin: 2012 – 2013

“Mindreading and Metarepresentation: Role in the Ontogeny and

Expression of Human Language Capacity.”

Primary supervisor, PNP Honors Thesis of Owen Footer: 2011 – 2012

“The Whole Loop: Folk Psychology, the Adaptive Unconscious, and Complications for a Naturalistic Account of Human Agency.”

**Service to the Profession**

Mentor, Mentoring Program for Women in Philosophy Fall 2016

Journals refereed for: *Australasian Journal of Philosophy; Mind; Philosophers’ Imprint;*

*Philosophical Psychology; Philosophical Quarterly; Philosophical Studies;*

*Philosophy of Science; Synthese*

Organizer, Writing Retreat for Female Philosophers of Mind & Psych Summer 2017, 2016

**Other Professional Activities**

Member, Phil Dept Workshopping Group (IUB) Fall 2019—

Member, Faculty Writing Group (IUB) Fall 2019

Radio interview on split-brains for the Consciousness Podcast Spring 2019

Radio interview on split-brains for NB Philosophy Podcast Spring 2019

Member, Cross-Dept Phil Sci Reading Group (WUSTL) Fall 2011 – Spring 2019

Member,St. Louis Female Philosophers Workshopping Group Fall 2015 – Spring 2018

Public lecture on split-brains at the National Humanities Center Winter 2015

Radio interviewon split-brains for Frank Stasio’s *The State of Things*, WUNC March 5, 2015

**Summary of Research Program**

The main question driving my research is whether and in what sense the mind is unified. Psychological unity of one form or another is often claimed to be essential to our ordinary self-understanding and to our relationships, social practices, political philosophies, legal institutions—to human life as we know it. At the same time, it is also often said that the sciences of the mind/brain undercut all our claims to being unified. One major strand of my work investigates claims of the former sort, that is, whether and in what sense we assume we are unified. A second strand investigates claims of the latter sort, that is, whether and in what sense science reveals us to be disunified. My research program thus draws from psychological science while speaking to traditional philosophical concerns, including personal identity, self-knowledge, the unity of consciousness, and the nature of belief.

A number of my works concern conscious disunity in particular, which is often viewed as a uniquely puzzling or problematic sort of psychic disunity. Understanding why requires first homing in on the particular kind of conscious unity—phenomenal unity—that bears a strong conceptual relationship to being unitary *qua* subject of experience, a connection that, I have argued, is mediated by our first-personal ways of thinking about consciousness.

Most contemporary works on consciousness explicitly adopt a third-person perspective that casts subjects of experience as experiencing animals.Many of these same works nevertheless simultaneously and implicitly employ a second, specifically first-personal concept of the experiencing subject and then use this latter concept to rule out the possibility that consciousness might be disunified within an animal. Its use for this purpose is wholly circular, however, since unlike the biological subject targeted by the third-person perspective, the logical subject visible only from the first-person perspectivecannot be reduced to anything independent of the structure of consciousness itself. Many philosophical works on conscious thought and perception thus rest upon assumptions about consciousness informed by introspective acts that cannot justify them.

My research into the unity of consciousness has taken the form of several independent articles as well as a chapter in my book on the so-called *split-brain phenomenon*. The split-brain phenomenon is the product of a neurosurgery that cuts through the corpus callosum. The condition has gripped philosophers because, on the one hand, split-brain subjects behave, under experimental conditions, as if they had two conscious minds apiece, and, on the other hand, a split-brain subject nonetheless seems like just *one* of us,at the end of the day. Philosophers have overwhelmingly argued that either the impression of *mental duality* or that of *personal unity* must be mistaken, because where there is one person there can be no more than one mind or thinker.

Although this is surely right as a general rule, I argue that split-brain subjects constitute a principled exception to it. A split-brain subject is indeed composed of two conscious thinkers and intentional agents. These psychological beings do not recognize each other’s existence, however, but instead take the split-brain human being to be one person, as whom *both* self-identify. In so doing, they come to *make* themselves one person. The puzzle of the split-brain phenomenon is thus resolved by articulating subtle aspects of the relationship between self-consciousness, personhood, and social identity.This research has resulted in several papers as well as a monograph published with OUP. One of my works-in-progress, with Tim Bayne, concerns recent split-brain empirical work by Yair Pinto and colleagues, who argue that their results show that split-brain subjects retain a unified consciousness because they remain unitary as agents. Excitingly, we have also received a Templeton Grant (with Pinto as the Primary Investigator) to do further empirical studies with a new series of split-brain subjects outside the United States.

An important part of the reason why split-brain subjects are not dual *qua* person is that that is not how they think of themselves. But what if they did? Some of my works-in-progress concern a different sort of psychological disunity: a feeling of being psychologically multiple somehow, which characterizes dissociative identity disorder and distinguishes it from several other mental illnesses which it otherwise shares a number of features. But the population of human beings with dissociative identity disorder merely overlaps with and is yet distinct from the population of human beings I call *plurals,* on whom there is not yet a philosophical literature*.* Plurals (some of whom do and some of whom do not have dissociative identity disorder) do not just experience themselves as psychologically multiple but actually self-identify as multiples: that is, they conceive of themselves as one of multiple persons inhabiting their bodies. Some of them request social recognition as multiple persons. I address the possibility of plural personhood from a social perspective, arguing for inner-connections plurals’ own plural identities, their recognition as plurals by second parties, and their actually *being* multiple qua persons.

Thinking of other people as psychologically multiple is not foreign to ordinary thought. On the contrary, “multiple minds models” are familiar from drama and literature and from ancient theories of character, motivation and the self, and we may also construct such models on-the-fly, in the course of ordinary social interaction. But under what condition are we inclined to conceptualize a single human animal as somehow constituting or containing multiple psychological beings? According to the most prominent view, people are motivated to see a human being as psychologically multiple only when he appears to possess highly inconsistent preferences and personality traits. Empirical work in progress with Shaun Nichols, though, suggests that the necessity claim inherent in this prominent view may be false: lack of psychic integration alone appears sufficient to give rise to the *intuition* of multiple mindedness, even in the absence of inconsistent preferences or personalities. Interestingly, though, something further may be required in order to turn that intuition into true *belief* in multiple mindedness. In the split-brain case, I argue that this further thing may be certain neuroanatomical knowledge (together with the assumption that the brain is the organ of the mind). In the case of plurals, I argue that this further thing is knowledge that plurals themselves see themselves as multiple.

It’s a difficult question, though, whether second parties are capable of fully *believing* that a plural is multiple persons, or whether they are instead only capable of *accepting*—for some circumscribed purposes—that she is. The question is difficult partly because of disagreement on the nature of belief. Is what someone truly believes revealed most clearly in, say, her automatic emotional responses? Or instead in her self-regulating practices, her deliberate reasoning? There are certainly people who know plurals and who take themselves to believe that plurals are multiple persons. Does their taking themselves to believe this make it the case that they *do*—even if they sometimes act as though they don’t?

Such questions about the nature of belief are also pursued in a work-in-progress on self-deception. Here, I defend a version of the so-called *avowal view*, according to which the agent who is self-deceived that *p* believes *~p* yet is speaking sincerely when she asserts *p.* Since the conditions of sincerity are attitudinal, I argue that there is a sense in which she believes *p,* too. The sense in which she believes that *p,* though,is that she is committed to believing it, and this commitment governs not only what she says and does but also what she thinks and even feels—though it does so only via her own higher-order beliefs and her own normative views about what believing that *p* requires from her. The most obvious strength of the avowal view’s distinction between *basic beliefs* and *beliefs as commitments* is its sensitivity to the asymmetry between the grounds for self-attributing a belief versus those for attributing beliefs to others. Because its dual account of belief accommodates this asymmetry, the avowal view is uniquely positioned to explain what I argue there is independent reason to believe: that there are cases in which the primary mechanism of self-deception isn’t the biased evaluation of evidence.

You could see the self-deceived individual as attempting to exert more rigid control over her mind than she should. From this perspective, the capacity for self-deception is the byproduct of our having the capacity to control our minds at all. This capacity is the focus of my next major research project. *An Ordered Mind: Self-Discipline and the Scaffolding of Human Psychology* will pursue an account of the acts and habits of thought and attention that give the human mind its dynamic organization. The book will do this in part by looking at ADHD, a condition characterized by deficits in the operations of just those capacities whose exercise brings willed order to the mind’s activities: response inhibition, interference control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility (“set switching”). By comparing ADHD to neurotypical patterns of thought and by examining, especially, behavioral treatments for the condition, *The Ordered Mind* will articulate the underlying systems, the hacks and habits, and the willful mental actions responsible for what is often viewed as a uniquely *human* mind—one capable of long-term planning, imagination, effortful attention, and self-discipline. The book thus offers an account of the metacognitive aspects of human agency.