

Alessandra BUCCELLA

Curriculum Vitae

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Department of Philosophy
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AOS: Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Cognitive Science.

AOC: Philosophy of Science (general), M&E, Phenomenology, Aesthetics (especially music).

Research summary:

When we look at a red cup from a fixed vantage point, we 'see' it as possessing a uniform color despite the fact that the reflected light is quite varied, consisting in different shades and highlights. This quite impressive perceptual capacity is called 'color constancy', and it is only one of the many perceptual constancy capacities we possess. But how does it operate? A traditional approach maintains that the visual system attributes an invariant 'color tag' to the object and holds that evaluation fixed as our perceptual clues vary, for example when we change location. Recent cognitive research has suggested a different approach: color constancy depends on a more complicated set of environmental factors. In particular, the visual system keeps track of how the central colored surfaces in a situation *relate to one another* as the observer's own context changes (e.g. if she changes position, the light source alters, etc.). Relying upon this recent scientific research, I develop a general, 'relation-focused' treatment of perceptual constancy that underwrites many older perceptual themes in a more systematic and far-reaching way. Indeed, this approach is reminiscent of the views advanced by earlier authors such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, John Dewey, and James Gibson. Their insights (in my opinion) have still a lot to contribute to contemporary theories of perception. Furthermore, an intriguing application of my account that I hope to explore lies in the realm of musical aesthetics (some of my initial interests in perception began there). One of the most puzzling features of musical experience is our ability to recognize passages as reoccurrences of earlier motifs, despite the fact that the component notes are often quite different, have shifted in key or have become assigned to different instruments. Perhaps the phenomenal experience of 'hearing the same melody' depends upon tracking musical relationships in a manner analogous to what the new scientific work claims about color constancy?

EDUCATION

2020 (exp.) PhD in Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh (USA)

Dissertation title: Perceptual Constancy

Advisor: Prof. Mazviita Chirimuuta (University of Pittsburgh, HPS)

2019 Visiting scholar, Department of Philosophy, University of Cincinnati (USA)

2013 M.A. in Philosophical Sciences, State University of Milan (Italy)
Thesis title: The nature and perception of sounds.

2013 M.A. in Analytic Philosophy, University of Barcelona (Spain)
Thesis title: Issues on the nature of sounds.

2011 B.A. in Philosophy, State University of Milan (Italy).

PUBLICATIONS

2017 "Naturalizing Qualia", *Phenomenology and Mind*, 12, 152 – 161.

2014 "Suoni", *Aphex – Portale Italiano di Filosofia Analitica* (www.aphex.it), 9, 83-111.

2012 "Music and Emotion. The Dispositional or Arousal theory", *Rivista Italiana di Filosofia Analitica Junior*, 3 (1), 19 – 36.

Under review (drafts available upon request):

"Enactivism and the 'problem' of perceptual presence"

"Putting the Interface theory of perception in perspective"

"Reconsidering Perceptual Constancy" (co-authored with Tony Chemero)

"Perceptual constancy is dead, long live perceptual constancy!"

HONORS & AWARDS

2019 Connected Academics Fellowship, Graduate Institute for the Engaged & Public Humanities, Georgetown University.

2017, 2019 Nominated for Elizabeth Baranger Excellence in Teaching Award, University of Pittsburgh's Arts & Sciences Graduate Student Organization (A&S GSO).

2018 Diversity award, Society for Philosophy and Psychology (SPP).

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Talks (selection):

2019 "Perceptual constancy is dead, long live perceptual constancy!", Society for the Metaphysics of Science (SMS), November 7-9, Toronto, ON, Canada.

"Two approaches to Perceptual Constancy", Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology (SSPP), March 7-9, Cincinnati, OH, USA.

2018 "Olympians and Vampires – talent, practice, and why 'mortals' don't get it", European Society for Philosophy and Psychology (ESPP), September 10-13, Rijeka, Croatia.

2018 "Perceptual constancy is dead, long live perceptual constancy!", Società Italiana di Filosofia Analitica (SIFA), September 4-7, Novara, Italy.

2017 "How should we think about perceptual presence?", Philosophers' Forum Graduate Gateway Conference, April 27-28, St. Louis, MO, USA.

2016 "Intentionality and Experience between Phenomenology and Enactivism", 2nd International Conference in Philosophy of Mind, September 21-22, Braga, Portugal.

"A new look at the intentionality of phenomenology", Pragmatism and the Brain Conference, June 2-4, Asheville, NC, USA.

2015 "Thinking with the body", Northwest Philosophy Conference, October 9-10, Coeur D'Alene, ID, USA.

Posters (selection):

- 2018** "Enactivism and Indeterminacy", Enactivism: Theory and Performance, March 15-17, Memphis, TN, USA.
- 2018** "How should we think about perceptual presence?", American Philosophical Association (APA) – Eastern Division, January 3-6, Savannah, GA, USA.
- 2016** "Naturalizing Qualia", European Society of Philosophy and Psychology (ESPP), August 10-13, St. Andrews, UK.

TEACHING **(University of Pittsburgh, USA)**

Instructor:

- 2019** Philosophy of Psychology (upper-level undergrad).
2018 Concepts of Human Nature.

Teaching assistant:

- 2019** Knowledge & Reality.
2017 Introduction to Philosophical Problems.
2016 Philosophy and Science.
Philosophy of Mind.
2015 Introduction to Philosophical Problems.

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- 2018** Graduate student member of Faculty hiring committee (Metaphysics, Epistemology, Logic, Science).
2015 – 2017 Departmental representative, Graduate Student Organization (GSO), Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, 2015-2017.

EXTRA TRAINING

- 2019** Invited participant at **Gathering of Higher Ed Changemakers**, November 15-16, Wayfinding Academy, Portland, OR, USA
Graduate Certificate in Engaged & Public Humanities. Graduate Institute for the Engaged & Public Humanities, Georgetown University.
- 2017** **Achievement in Pedagogy badge**. University Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Pittsburgh. Concentrations: Pedagogy, Diversity, Educational Technology.

LANGUAGES

Italian: native
English: fluent
Spanish: good
French: can read with dictionary

REFERENCES

Mazviita Chirimuuta

Associate Professor, History and Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh (USA).
Email: mac298@pitt.edu

Wayne Wu

Associate Professor, Philosophy, Carnegie Mellon University (USA).
Email: waynewu@andrew.cmu.edu

Anil Gupta

Alan Ross Anderson Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh (USA).
Email: agupta@pitt.edu

Robert Brandom

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh (USA).
Email: rbrandom@pitt.edu

Anthony Chemero

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and Psychology, University of Cincinnati (USA).
Email: chemeray@ucmail.uc.edu

Clotilde Calabi

Associate Professor, Philosophy, Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy).
Email: clotilde.calabi@unimi.it

Thomas Berry (teaching reference)

Senior Lecturer, Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh (USA).
Email: tberry@pitt.edu