BETH PRESTON

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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophy of Technology
Philosophy of Mind

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Epistemology/Metaphysics
Philosophy of Action
Continental Philosophy
History of Philosophy (especially 19th and 20th century Contintental)
Social and Political Philosophy

EDUCATION

1988   PhD, Philosophy, Boston University
1978   MA, Philosophy, New School for Social Research
1973   BA, Philosophy, Reed College

DISSERTATION

Representational and Non-Representational Intentionality: Husserl, Heidegger, and Artificial Intelligence

Advisors: Erazim Kohák and Judson Webb

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

2017–	Interim Head, Department of Philosophy, University of Georgia
2007–	Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Georgia
1996–2007	Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Georgia
1990–1996	Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Georgia
1989–1990	Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh
1989	Adjunct Faculty, Bentley College
1983	Lecturer, College of Communications, Boston University
1982	Lecturer, Metropolitan College of Boston University
1979–1982	Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy, Boston University

ACADEMIC AFFILIATIONS

2014–	Affiliate, Center for Integrated Conservation Research, University of Georgia
1990–2004	Faculty Fellow, Institute for Artificial Intelligence, University of Georgia
1989–1990	Visiting Fellow, Center for Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh

AWARDS

2012	University of Georgia Research Foundation (UGARF) Senior Faculty Research Grant, Fall 2012
2006–2007	University of Georgia Study in a Second Discipline Program (Anthropology)
2004	University of Georgia Center for Humanities and Arts Research Fellowship, Spring 2004
2003	University of Georgia Research Foundation (UGARF) Senior Faculty Research Grant, Spring 2003
2002	M. G. Michael Award (University of Georgia College of Arts & Sciences award for excellence in research)
2001	Center for Humanities and Arts (UGA) 2000–2001 Visiting International Scholar Award to bring Alan Costall (Psychology, University of Portsmouth, UK) to UGA for two weeks in Spring 2001. Co-sponsored with Stuart Katz (Psychology).
1996	Humanities Center Research Fellow, University of Georgia
1992	University of Georgia Research Foundation (UGARF) Junior Faculty Research Grant
1985	Peter Bertocci Scholarship, Boston University,
1982	Borden Parker Bowne Fellowship, Boston University
1980	Matchette Prize, Boston University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Undergraduate	Introduction to Philosophy, Existentialism, Theory of Knowledge, Nineteenth Century European Philosophy, Modern Philosophy
Graduate/Undergraduate	Philosophy of Technology, Philosophy of Mind, Contemporary Continental Tradition, Artificial Intelligence
Graduate	Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology, History of Philosophy (Modern and Contemporary)
Directed Reading Undergraduate	Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Nietzsche, Contemporary European Philosophy, Husserl and Heidegger, Structuralism
Directed Reading Graduate	Philosophy of Technology, Husserl's *Logical Investigations,* Contemporary French Philosophy, Consciousness, Genetic Algorithms and Evolution, Arendt's Political Thought, Dennett's Philosophy of Mind, Marx, Foucault, Sociology of Science
BENTLEY COLLEGE	Problems of Philosophy
BOSTON UNIVERSITY	Logic and Language, Semantics

GRADUATE DIRECTION

Current	Christopher Byron, PhD Program in Philosophy Brooke Schueneman, PhD Program in Philosophy Justin Simpson, PhD Program in Philosophy
2017	Tony Chackal, PhD in Philosophy
1998	John Fennel, PhD in Philosophy
1990–	Advisory Committee member for graduate students in Philosophy,

Artificial Intelligence, Speech Communications, English, Education, and Music

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division
- Society for Philosophy and Technology

MEDIA

Podcast

2013   **Beth Preston A Philosophy of Material Culture: Action, Function, and Mind** (Routledge, 2013)
Interview with Carrie Figdor, New Books in Philosophy Network, February 15, 2013

http://newbooksinphilosophy.com/2013/02/15/beth-preston-a-philosophy-of-material-culture-action-function-and-mind-routledge-2012/

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2013   *A Philosophy of Material Culture: Action, Function, and Mind.* New York: Routledge.

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

2014   Ethnotechnology: A Manifesto, in *Artefact Kinds: Ontology and the Human-Made World*, Maarten Franssen, Peter Kroes, Thomas A.C. Reydon and Pieter E. Vermaas, eds., Synthese Library 365, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-00801-1_9, Cham: Springer International Publishing.

2013   Synthetic Biology as Red Herring. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science, Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences.*

Volume 44, Issue 4, Part B, December 2013: 649–659.

2009a   Philosophical Theories of Artifact Function, in *Handbooks of Philosophy of Science*, series editors Dov Gabbay, Paul Thagard, and John Woods; *The Handbook of the Philosophy of Technological Sciences*, Anthonie Meijers, ed., Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2009.

2009b   Biological and Cultural Proper Functions in Comparative Perspective, in *Functions in Biological and Artificial Worlds: Comparative Philosophical Perspectives* (*Vienna Studies in Theoretical Biology, Volume 9)*, Ulrich Krohs and Peter Kroes, eds. MIT Press, 2009.

2008   The Shrinkage Factor: Comment on Lynne Rudder Baker's 'The Shrinking Difference Between Artifacts and Natural Objects,' *American Philosophical Association: Newsletter on Philosophy and Computers* 8 (1) (Fall 2008). http://www.apaonline.org/publications/newsletters/v08n1_Computers_12.aspx

2006a   The Case of the Recalcitrant Prototype, in *Doing Things with Things: The Design and Use of Everyday Objects*, Ole Dreier and Alan Costall, eds., Ashgate, 2006: 15–27.

2006b   Social Context and Artefact Function, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 37 (2006): 37–41.

2003   Of Marigold Beer – A Reply to Vermaas and Houkes, *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 54 (2003): 601–612.

2000   The Functions of Things: A Philosophical Perspective on Material Culture, in *Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture*, Paul Graves-Brown, ed., Routledge, 2000: 22–49.

1998a   Cognition and Tool Use, *Mind & Language* 13 (4), December 1998: 513–547.

1998b   Why is a Wing Like a Spoon? A Pluralist Theory of Function, *The Journal of Philosophy* 95 (5), May 1998: 215–254.

1996   Merleau-Ponty and Feminine Embodied Existence, *Continental Philosophy Review* (formerly *Man and World*) 29 (2), April 1996: 167–186.

1995   The Ontological Argument Against the Mind-Machine Hypothesis, *Philosophical Studies* 80 (2), November 1995: 131–157.

1994a   Behaviorism and Mentalism: Is There a Third Alternative? *Synthese* 100 (2), August 1994: 167–196.

1994b   Husserl's Non-Representational Theory of Mind, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 32 (2), Summer 1994: 209–232.

1993   Heidegger and Artificial Intelligence, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 53 (1), March 1993: 43–69.

1991   AI, Anthropocentrism, and the Evolution of 'Intelligence,' *Minds and Machines* 1 (3), August 1991: 259–277.

Book Reviews

2014   *Tool Use and Causal Cognition*, Teresa McCormack, Christoph Hoerl, and Stephen Butterfill (eds.), Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011, *Mind*, Vol. 123 (492), October 2014, 1212–1218

2008   *Creations of the Mind: Theories of Artifacts and Their Representation*, Eric Margolis and Stephen Laurence (eds.), Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, May 14, 2008. http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=13083

2002   *What Functions Explain: Functional Explanation and Self-Reproducing Systems,* Peter McLaughlin, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Biology), 2001, *Mind* 111, No. 444 (October 2002): 888–91.

          Principles of Cognition, Language and Action: Essays on the Foundations of a Science of Psychology, Nini Praetorius*,* Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000, *The British Journal of Psychology* 93, No. 3 (August 2002): 425–27.

1997   *Mind and Morals: Essays on Ethics and Cognitive Science*, Larry May, Marilyn Friedman and Andy Clark, eds., MIT Press, (with Victoria Davion), *Minds and Machines* 7(3), August 1997: 447–51.

1994   *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience,* Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch (MIT Press), *Philosophical Psychology* 7 (4), 1994: 503–5.

          Being-In-The-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, *Division I,* Hubert L. Dreyfus (MIT Press), *Minds and Machines* 4 (3), August 1994: 353–57.

Other Publications

1992   An Ethics of Reasoning, *The Times of London Higher Education Supplement*, July 24, 1992.

IN PROGRESS

- ❖ 'Artifact' – invited entry for *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; submitted January 2018; currently under review by the SEP editors.

- ❖ Artifacts and Engineers – invited chapter for *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Engineering*, Neelke Doorn and Diane Michelfelder, eds., initial draft due April 1, 2018.

- ❖ The Epistemic Role of Technical Functions – invited chapter for *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Technology*, Oxford University Press, Shannon Vallor, ed.; first draft accepted by editor, revised draft due August 2018.

- ❖ Sustainability in Action: Sustainable Technologies and Human Agency – under revision for submission to *Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology*.

  Abstract: What makes a technology sustainable? It is tempting to think about this question only in terms of the things involved. Are their materials recyclable? Their operations energy efficient? However, as philosophers of technology have long insisted, technology is not just things but techniques—activities involved in making and using things. These activities have a separate bearing on sustainability, for erstwhile sustainable technologies are often used in unsustainable ways. Responses to such problems typically focus either on education of users or on design aimed at suppressing undesirable uses—so-called behavior-steering technologies. In Section One I argue that there is an important class of intractable cases which are not typically manageable in either of these ways. In Section Two I diagnose the causes of this intractability, tracing it to an ineluctable interaction between the improvisational nature of human agency and the multiple realizability of artifact functions. Section Three connects the theoretical results of Section Two with the practical and policy concerns of Section One to sketch some elements of a way forward towards more sustainable, technologically mediated human activity.

- ❖ The Artifact Problem: A Category and Its Vicissitudes

  Abstract: There is increasing interest in the metaphysics of artifacts. However, an important question has been neglected—what is the status of the category 'artifact'

itself? Does it mark a joint in nature? Dan Sperber (2007) argues against this on the grounds that there is a demonstrable continuum of cases between natural and human-made objects. He concludes that 'artifact' is not a theoretically useful category. However, the category 'species' remains theoretically robust in the face of similar continua between biological organisms. Discussions of the species problem in philosophy of biology indicate that categories may be epistemically—and therefore theoretically— useful even when they do not mark joints in nature. Thus Sperber's conclusion requires additional support. I argue that 'artifact' is epistemically counterproductive. It derails crucial analyses in the philosophy of technology and environmental philosophy; and it threatens important methodological considerations for the study of material culture, particularly where that study is interdisciplinary. I conclude that 'artifact' is indeed not a theoretically useful category—it does not mark a joint in nature, nor does it serve our current epistemic goals.

PRESENTATIONS

2017   Sustainability in Action: Sustainable Technology and Human Agency. Society for Philosophy and Technology Conference, 'The Grammar of Things.' Darmstadt, Germany, June 14–17, 2017.

Social Functions as a Function Kind: Categorizing Functions and the Function of Categorization. Keynote address; Workshop—Artifactual, Biological, and Social Functions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. University of Bern, Switzerland, June 12–13, 2017.

2015   How to Improvise: Adventures in Sustainable Action. ICON Brownbag, University of Georgia, March 22, 2015.

Sustainable Technology Meets the Improvisational Animal. Sustainability Science Symposium, University of Georgia, January 23, 2015.

2013   Philosophical Implications of Synthetic Biology: A Deflationary Account Opening address, 3rd Annual Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, Department of Philosophy, Athens, Georgia, March 22, 2013.

2010   The Artifact Problem: A Category and its Vicissitudes. Keynote address, Georgia Philosophical Society fall meeting at Oglethorpe College, Atlanta, Georgia, December 4, 2010.

How to Improvise. *Memory-Media-Movement, Cognition-Culture-Collaboration*,

Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, October 18–19, 2010.

Ethnotechnology: A Manifesto. *Artefacts, Kinds and Knowledge: Issues in the Metaphysics and Epistemology of Artefacts,*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, June 17–18, 2010.

2006   Proper Function, Selection, and Fitness in Comparative Perspective
15th Altenberg Workshop in Theoretical Biology – Comparative Philosophy of Technical Artifacts and Biological Organisms, Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research, Altenberg, Austria, September 21–24, 2006.

2004   Function and Physical Structure in Material Culture. Artefacts in Philosophy Workshop, Department of Philosophy, Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands, October 4, 2004.

Function and Physical Structure in Material Culture. Department of Philosophy, University of Georgia, September 24, 2004.

How to Improvise. Philosophy Department, University of Turku, Finland, April 7, 2004.

How to Improvise. Lunch-in-Theory Series, The Center for Humanities and Arts, University of Georgia, April 28, 2004.

2002   The Case of the Recalcitrant Prototype. 2nd Doing Things With Things Conference, Institute For Psychology, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark; November 23, 2002.

Psychology, Philosophy, and Embedded AI (with Adam Goodie). PAIW 2002 (Workshop on Practical Applications of Artificial Intelligence), University of Georgia, April 17, 2002.

Taking Improvisation Seriously. Department of Philosophy, Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands, November 25, 2002.

Taking Improvisation Seriously. *Action Theory and Social Ontology*, The 2002 University of Miami Philosophy Symposium, January 11–12, 2002.

2001   Artifact Function and Creators' Intentions. Doing Things With Things: The Design and Use of Objects, Institute for Psychology, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 31, 2001

Artifact Function and Creators' Intentions. American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting, Minneapolis, May 5, 2001.

Artifact Function and Creators' Intentions. Georgia Philosophical Society, April 21, 2001.

2000   Recipes and Songs: Towards a Theory of Production. Department of Philosophy, State University of New York at Buffalo, November 14, 2000.

1999   The Role of Intentions in the Production of Artifacts. American Philosophical Association, Central Division Meeting, New Orleans, May 6, 1999.

1998   Artifacts and Intention. Lunch-in-Theory Series, The Center for Humanities and Arts, University of Georgia, May 27, 1998.

Tools and Intelligence: A Heideggerian Interpretation. Department of Philosophy, University of Maine, April 9, 1998.

1996   Command and Control: Artifacts and the Understanding of Action. Fall Philosophy Colloquium, Indiana University, October 18–20, 1996.

Creating and Changing Functions: Towards a Philosophy of Material Culture Georgia Philosophical Society, Emory University, May 4, 1996.

1995   How Things Change: Form, Function, and Change of Function. Theoretical Archaeology Group Conference, Reading University, Reading, UK, December 21, 1995.

The Mind-Machine Hypothesis. Department of Scholastic Philosophy, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, December 14, 1995.

Cognition and Tool Use. Society for Philosophy and Psychology, State University of New York at Stony Brook, June, 1995.

1994   Cognition and Tool Use. 3rd In-House Conference, Center for Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh, October, 1994.

Cognition and Tool Use. Philosophy Department Colloquium, University of Georgia, September 16, 1994.

Comment on 'Two Kinds of Content' by Nicholas Georgalis. Southern Society f or Philosophy and Psychology, Atlanta, Georgia, April 1, 1994.

1993   Cognition and Tool Use. Lunch-in-Theory Series, Humanities Center, University of Georgia, February 17, 1993.

1992   What Is a Machine? Society for Machines and Mentality (meeting conjointly with the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association), Washington,

DC, December, 1992.

Cognition Without Representation . Panel presentation for the symposium 'Representation: Who Needs It?' at the Cognitive Science Conference, University of Indiana, July, 1992.

1991   Behaviorism/Mentalism: The Only Game In Town? Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, New York, December, 1991.

Behaviorism and Mentalism: Old Wine in New Bottles. Institute for Behavioral Research, University of Georgia, November, 1991.

Behaviorism and Mentalism: A False Dichotomy and a *Tertium Quid*. Georgia Philosophical Society, Athens, Georgia, February, 1991.

1990   What Is Artificial Intelligence? Classic City Computing Conference, Athens, Georgia, November, 1990.

Husserl and the Computational Theory of Mind. Department of Philosophy, Duquesne University, February, 1990.

1989   Heidegger and Artificial Intelligence. Lunchtime Talk, Center for Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh, November, 1989.

Heidegger and Artificial Intelligence. MIT Artificial Intelligence Laboratory Revolving Seminar, May, 1989.

Heidegger and Artificial Intelligence. Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Tucson, Arizona, April, 1989.

Heidegger and Artificial Intelligence. Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Berkeley, California, March, 1989.