

# **Ema Sullivan-Bissett BA MA PhD (York)**

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## **Education**

### **University of York**

BA in Philosophy, 1<sup>st</sup> class. July 2009

MA in Philosophy, with Distinction.  
Dissertation: 'A Defence of Physicalist Epiphenomenalism' January 2011

PhD in Philosophy, awarded with no corrections.  
'Belief, Truth, and Biological Function'  
Examiners: Gregory Currie and David Papineau. July 2014

Preparing Future Academics Programme (equivalent to one third of PGCAP). July 2012

### **University of Birmingham**

Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy Pending

## **Academic Posts**

Research Fellow 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013–30<sup>th</sup> August 2014  
Epistemic Innocence Project  
University of Birmingham

Research Fellow 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014–31<sup>st</sup> August 2016  
Project PERFECT  
University of Birmingham

Lecturer in Philosophy 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016–  
University of Birmingham

## **Areas of Specialisation and Competence**

**AoS:** Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Psychology, Philosophy of Biology.

**AoC:** Epistemology, Logic, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion.

## **Publications**

### **Books**

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema; Bradley, Helen; and Noordhof, Paul (eds.) 2017: *Art and Belief*. Oxford University Press.

### **Journal articles**

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema *forthcoming*: 'Monothematic Delusion: A Case of Innocence from Experience'. *Philosophical Psychology*. DOI: 10.1080/09515089.2018.1468024.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema *forthcoming*: 'Explaining Doxastic Transparency: Aim, Norm, or Function?' *Synthese*. DOI: 10.1007/s11229-017-1377-0.

Bortolotti, Lisa and Sullivan-Bissett, Ema *forthcoming*: 'The Epistemic Innocence of Clinical Memory Distortions'. *Mind and Language*. Vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 263–79.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2017: 'Aims and Exclusivity'. *European Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 721–31.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2017: 'Biological Function and Epistemic Normativity'. *Philosophical Explorations*. Vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 94–110.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema and Noordhof, Paul 2017: 'Another Defence of Owens's Exclusivity Objection to Beliefs Having Aims'. *Logos and Episteme*. Vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 147–53.

Stoneham, Tom and Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2017: 'Another Failed Refutation of Scepticism'. *Teorema*. Vol. 36, no. 2.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2017: 'Malfunction Defended'. *Synthese*. Vol. 194, no. 7, pp. 2501–22.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2015: 'Implicit Bias, Confabulation, and Epistemic Innocence'. *Consciousness and Cognition*. Vol. 33, pp. 548–60.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema and Noordhof, Paul 2013: 'A Defence of Owens' Exclusivity Objection to Beliefs Having Aims'. *Philosophical Studies*. Vol. 163, no. 2, pp. 453–57.

McGregor, Rafe and Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2012: 'Better No Longer to Be: The Harm of Continued Existence'. *South African Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 55–68.

### **Book chapters**

Bortolotti, Lisa, Antrobus, Magdalena, and Sullivan-Bissett, Ema *forthcoming*: 'Are Self-enhancing Beliefs Epistemically Innocent?' In Balcerak Jackson, Brendan and Balcerak Jackson, Magdalena (eds.) *Reasoning*. Oxford University Press.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema, and Bortolotti, Lisa 2017: 'Fictional Persuasion, Transparency, and the Aim of Belief'. In Sullivan-Bissett, Ema, Bradley, Helen, and Noordhof, Paul (eds.) *Art and Belief*. Oxford University Press, pp. 153–73.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema, Bortolotti, Lisa, Broome, Matthew and Mamei, Matteo 2017: 'The Boundaries of Mental Illness: Moral and Legal Implications'. In Keil, Geert et al. (ed.) *Vagueness in Psychiatry*. Oxford University Press, pp. 191–210.

Bortolotti, Lisa, Gunn, Rachel, and Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2016: 'What Makes a Belief Delusional?' In Mac Carthy, Ita, Sellevold, Kirsti, and Smith, Olivia (eds.) *Cognitive Confusions*. Legenda, pp. 37–51.

## Edited journal issues

*Philosophical Explorations* on False but Useful Beliefs (with Lisa Bortolotti, April 2017).

*Consciousness and Cognition* on the Costs and Benefits of Imperfect Cognitions (with Lisa Bortolotti, May 2015).

## Book reviews and commentaries

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema *forthcoming*: 'Review of David Benatar's *The Human Predicament: A Candid Guide to Life's Biggest Questions*'. *American Journal of Bioethics*.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2018: 'Belief-like Biases and Concept Centrality'. Symposium on Guillermo Del Pinal and Shannon Spaulding's 'Conceptual Centrality and Implicit Bias'. *The Brains Blog*.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2017: 'Transparency Defended'. Symposium on Miriam McCormick's *Believing Against the Evidence: Agency and the Ethics of Belief*. *Syndicate Philosophy*.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2017: 'The Role of Emotions and Values in Competence'. *Journal of Medical Ethics*. Vol. 43, pp. 379–80.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2015: 'Review of *The Aim of Belief*, edited by Timothy Chan'. *Mind*. Vol. 124, no. 496, pp. 1258–64.

Bortolotti, Lisa and Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2014: 'Review of *New Essays on Belief: Constitution, Content and Structure* by Nikolaj Nottelmann'. *Dialectica*. Vol. 68, no. 1, pp. 141–6.

Sullivan-Bissett, Ema 2012: 'Changing Approaches to Blindsight: Relevant, but not Decisive: Reply to Foley'. *Philosophical Writings; Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual British Postgraduate Philosophy Conference*. pp. 56–60.

## **Other work**

### **Under review**

‘Transparent Failure of Norms to Keep Up Standards of Belief’, with Paul Noordhof.

‘Unimpaired Abduction to Alien Abduction: Lessons on Delusion Formation’

### **At R&R stage**

‘Biased by Our Imaginings’

### **In progress**

‘Choice Blindness and the Fluidity of the Self’ (with Lisa Bortolotti)

*Deluded by Experience*, with Paul Noordhof.

‘Etiology, Malfunction, and Normal Conditions’

‘Making Sense of Delusional Experience’, with Paul Noordhof.

‘The Clinical Significance of Anomalous Experiences in the Explanation of Monothematic Delusions’  
(with Paul Noordhof)

## **Grants and Awards**

University of York: Mind fee waiver, 2009–10.

University of York: AHRC PhD Scholarship, 2010–13.

Prize for Outstanding Preparing Future Academics Teaching Portfolio, July 2012.

AHRC Travel Award, £850, March 2013.

British Society of Aesthetics, Major Conference Grants: £3000, March 2013; £3000 November 2014; £3000 November 2017.

Mind Association, Major Conference Grants: £2000, April 2013; £1000 December 2014; £1500 December 2017.

British Society for the Philosophy of Science, Minor Conference Grants: £500 April 2015; £750 June 2017.

‘3 Minute Thesis’ competition: 1<sup>st</sup> place, June 2013.

Royal Institute of Philosophy Bursary, £3000, for academic year 2013–2014.

## **Talks**

### **Invited**

- ‘Make-Believe and Belief Change’, Gargnano, September 2012.
- ‘Making Sense of Delusional Experience’ (with Paul Noordhof), Gargano, September 2013.
- ‘The Epistemic Innocence of Delusions and the One-Stage Account’, Edinburgh, January 2014.
- ‘The Epistemic Status of Confabulatory Explanations’, Birmingham, May 2014.
- ‘Epistemic Innocence and Delusion Formation’, Macquarie, August 2014.
- ‘Delusion Formation: Lessons from Alien Abduction’, Nottingham, February 2015.
- ‘Aberrant Experience, Delusion Formation, and Alien Abduction Belief’, Birmingham, April 2015.
- ‘Being a Research Fellow’, York, June 2015.
- ‘Unimpaired Abduction to Alien Abduction’, Monash, August 2015.
- ‘Implicit Bias and Unconscious Imagining’, Dortmund, January 2016.
- ‘The Biological Function of Epistemic Normativity’, Open University, February 2016.
- ‘False but Useful Beliefs about Epistemic Normativity’ London, February 2016.
- ‘Delusional Experience and Relationist Accounts of Perception’, St. Andrews, June 2016.
- ‘Delusional Experience and Relationist Accounts of Perception’, Durham, September 2016.
- ‘Explaining Doxastic Transparency: Aim, Norm, or Function?’, Sussex, September 2016.
- ‘Implicit Bias and Unconscious Imagination’, Warwick, March 2017.
- ‘Implicit Bias and Unconscious Imagination’, Glasgow, March 2017.
- ‘Implicit Bias and Unconscious Imagination’, Edinburgh, March 2017.
- ‘Implicit Bias and Unconscious Imagination’, Leuven, May 2017.
- ‘A Defence of Biological Answers to Philosophical Questions’, Reading, June 2017.
- ‘Belief, Truth, and Biological Function’, Glasgow, August 2017.
- ‘Etiology, Malfunction, and Normal Conditions’, Bielefeld, September 2017.
- ‘The Transparent Failure of Norms to Keep Up Standards of Belief’, Luxembourg, March 2018.
- ‘Imagining Our Biases’, Leeds, May 2018.

'Implicit Bias and Unconscious Imagination', Antwerp, May 2018.

### **Peer reviewed**

'The Case of Self-Deception: Reviving the Teleologist's Dilemma', Rhodes, April 2011.

'You *Cannot* Weigh the Aim of Belief' (with Paul Noordhof), Sussex, July 2011.

'Changing Approaches to Blindsight: Relevant but Not Decisive', Reading, September 2011.

'Epistemic and Practical Reasons: A Lingerin Conflict', Southampton, September 2011.

'Better No Longer to Be: The Harm of Continued Existence' (with Rafe McGregor), Johannesburg, November 2011.

'Do the Delusional Aim at the Truth?' Manchester, June 2012.

'No Truth Norm Needed: A Biological Approach to the Teleologist's Dilemma', Sheffield, July 2012.

'Delusional Belief: Making Trouble for the Teleologist', London, August 2012.

'Why It's Contingent That You Can't Believe at Will', Edinburgh, September 2012.

'Are Beliefs Based on Implicit Bias Against Women in Philosophy Epistemically Innocent?', Oxford, March 2014.

'The Possibility of Historical Malfunction', Cambridge, March 2014.

'The Epistemic Status of Confabulatory Explanations', Birmingham, May 2014.

'Epistemic Innocence and Delusion Formation', Cambridge, July 2014.

'Response to Asbjørn Steglich-Petersen's "Epistemic Normativity: Absolutist or Instrumental?"', Southampton, January 2015.

'Unimpaired Abduction to Alien Abduction', Amherst, June 2015.

'Unimpaired Abduction to Alien Abduction', Warwick, July 2015.

'The Transparent Failure of Norms to Keep Up Standards of Belief', Oviedo, November 2015.

'Implicit Biases as Unconscious Imaginings', Cardiff, July 2016.

'Explaining Doxastic Transparency: Aim, Norm, or Function?', Cambridge, August 2016.

'Why do People Become Delusional?', Bedales School, September 2016.

'Explaining Doxastic Transparency: Aim, Norm, or Function?', Sussex, September 2016.

'Implicit Bias as Unconscious Imagination', Warwick, March 2017.

'Implicit Bias as Unconscious Imagination', Glasgow, March 2017.

'Implicit Bias as Unconscious Imagination', Edinburgh, 2017.

'History, Malfunction, and Normal Conditions', Edinburgh, July 2017.

'Belief-like Biases and Concept Centrality', Oxford, July 2018.

## **Upcoming**

'Epistemic Innocence and Delusion Formation', Rijeka, September 2018

'Why Do Some People Believe Such Strange Things?' London, September 2018

## **Teaching Experience**

### **Undergraduate Teaching**

*Reason and Argument (Introduction to Formal Logic)* (York)  
Seminars.  
First year module, Autumn 2011 and Autumn 2012.

*Scepticism.* (York)  
Lectures and seminars.  
Second year module, Autumn 2013, Autumn 2014.

*Topics in the Philosophy of Religion* (Birmingham)  
Lectures and seminars.  
Final year module, Autumn 2016, Autumn 2017.

*Logic Through Language* (Birmingham)  
Lectures and seminars.  
First year module, Spring 2017, Spring 2018.

*Key Readings*  
Lectures and seminars.  
First year module, Autumn 2018.

*Fantastic Beasts and How to Understand Them: Topics in Philosophy of Biology*  
Lectures and seminars.  
Final year module, Spring 2019.

### **Postgraduate Teaching**

*Epistemology*  
Masters module, Spring 2017

### *PhD supervision*

Rachel Gunn (Delusion and rationality, six months of 2016)

Federico Bongiorno (Delusional perception, 2016 onwards)

Fidaa Chehayeb (Implicit attitudes, 2017 onwards)

Reiner Schuur (Delusion, 2018 onwards)

### **Centre for Life Long Learning (adult learning, evening courses)**

#### *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*

Ten week learning for pleasure course, Autumn 2011, Summer 2014.

#### *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*

Eight week learning for pleasure course, Summer 2012.

#### *Contemporary Philosophy of Mind*

Eleven week accredited course, Autumn 2012.

### **Public Engagement and Outreach Events**

I have taught sessions in the following Widening Participation/Public Engagement events:

- Philosophy of Religion (University of York, January 2010)
- Environmental Sustainability (University of York, March 2011)
- Science Trail (University of York, March 2011, March 2012, March 2013)
- World of Physics (University of York, June 2011)
- Sixth Form Philosophy Conference (University of York, July 2013, June 2014)
- Mental Illness: Philosophy, Ethics, and Society (University of Birmingham, March 2014)

‘A Strange Encounter: Explaining Alien Abduction Belief’

*Sight, Sound, and Mental Health*, Arts and Science Festival

University of Birmingham, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015

‘Why do (Some) People Believe Such Strange Things?’

Philosophy Society Lecture

Cheltenham Ladies’ College, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015

‘Why do (Some) People Believe Such Strange Things?’

Philosophy of...Festival

Bedales School, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2016

‘Why do (Some) People Believe Such Strange Things?’

Pint of Science Festival

Birmingham, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2017

‘Why do (Some) People Believe Such Strange Things?’

Isiah Berlin Society

St Paul’s School, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018



## **Events organised**

*The Analytic Engagement with Continental Philosophy* (with Rafe McGregor)  
University of York, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2011

*Art and the Nature of Belief* (with Helen Bradley)  
University of York, 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> October 2013

*Costs and Benefits of Imperfect Cognitions* (with Lisa Bortolotti)  
University of Birmingham, 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> May 2014

*Women in Philosophy: A Mentoring and Networking Workshop* (with Helen Bradley and Suki Finn)  
University of York, June 22<sup>nd</sup>–23<sup>rd</sup> 2015

*Belief and Emotion* (with Lisa Bortolotti)  
University of Birmingham, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015

*False but Useful Beliefs* (with Lisa Bortolotti)  
Regent's Park, 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> February 2016

*Head to Head 2017* (with Alisa Mandrigin)  
Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017

*Belief, Imagination, and Delusion*  
University of Birmingham, November 2017

## **Other Academic Activities**

Editorial Assistant  
*Mind*  
September 2011–June 2015.

Research posts editor  
*Imperfect Cognitions blog*  
October 2014–August 2016.

Journal Refereeing  
*Mind*, *Synthese*, *Theoria*, *Consciousness and Cognition*, *Journal of Social Philosophy*, *Philosophical Psychology* (4), *European Journal of Philosophy*, *Ergo* (2), *Phenomenology and Mind*, *Mind and Language*, *Philosophical Papers*, *Philosophical Studies*.

Other refereeing  
NUI Travelling Studentships 2016 round, external examiner for University of Sydney Honours Thesis, November 2017, *Routledge*.

## **Professional Membership**

Category five member of the Aristotelian Society (since April 2010)  
Member of Society for Women in Philosophy (since April 2014)  
Member of British Society for the Philosophy of Science (since April 2017)  
Member of British Society for Aesthetics (since October 2018)

## **Referees**

### **Professor Lisa Bortolotti (PI on Project PERFECT)**

Department of Philosophy  
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University of Birmingham  
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### **Professor Paul Noordhof (PhD supervisor)**

Department of Philosophy  
Sally Baldwin A  
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### **Professor Hanna Pickard Department of Philosophy**

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Department of Philosophy  
University of Birmingham  
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### **Professor Gregory Currie (PhD internal examiner)**

Department of Philosophy  
Sally Baldwin A  
University of York  
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### **Professor David Papineau (PhD external examiner)**

Department of Philosophy  
Room 509  
King's College London  
Strand, London WC2R 2LS  
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### **Professor Tom Stoneham (PhD advisory panel)**

Sally Baldwin A  
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