

**Charles Phelps Taft Research Center
at the University of Cincinnati
Center Fellowship Grant Application**

Each section (I-IV) should be placed at the start of a new page. All required materials must be included in a single document, uploaded to the electronic submissions system, no later than 5PM on the published day of the deadline. Intradepartmental review and two external letters of support are required for this program. Applicants should submit their application with enough time to receive all letters of support prior to the close of the deadline. Taft does not accept an obligation to review applications that have not received the required letters of support by the close of the deadline.

I. General Information

- a. Name: Heidi Lene Maibom
- b. M#: 070177517
- c. Department: Philosophy
- d. Position: Professor
- e. Project title: Coming to Grips with Perspective Taking
- f. Potential external funding that might arise from this project: Once I have completed this project, I aim to apply for external funding for further research into the social implications of the research, such as the Russell Sage Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.
- g. Intended results of a funded research, e.g., concrete plans for publication or conference presentations: I plan to publish the book with a major publisher (Oxford University Press has already expressed interest, but I will also consider presses that publish science-oriented books for the general public, such as Norton Press, Basic Books, and Random House.)

II. Taft Grant History

- Oct-Dec 2015 Perspective taking and morality. Research Travel Grant. \$3,700.00. Awarded March 30, 2015. Research conducted at the Center for Agency, Values, and Ethics (CAVE), Macquarie University. *I have received additional funding from CAVE, which in combination with the TAFT funding will help cover travel and accommodation.*
- April 1-6 2015 Domestic Travel Grant. \$1,151.70. Awarded March 30, 2015. Present paper (w. graduate student) at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology. New Orleans. *As a result of the presentation, I have been invited to talk in the interdisciplinary seminar series on Mental Health co-convened by the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology at George Washington University next year.*

III. Project Proposal

What do we do when we put ourselves in someone else's situation? What do we hope to achieve? How does our ability to take others' perspectives relate to our empathizing with them, respecting them, understanding what it's like to be them, and acting morally towards them? Do certain perspectives undergird traditional political power structures? These are questions that I address in my current research. Despite its centrality to our lives, there have been relatively few accessible and interdisciplinary investigations into perspective taking as a whole. The book I plan to finish during my TAFT Center Fellowship aims to correct that.

Justification & Context of Project

When we ask others to take our perspective, we do not simply want them to think about how we feel or think. We want them to do so in a certain way, namely by imagining that *they* are *us* in *our* situation. This requires a subtle interplay between projection and transformation. The idea is to use our experiences, our sensibilities, and our subjectivity to appreciate the experiences of the other while remaining sensitive to our differences. This way, we can understand the other "as from the inside" and feel what they feel (or something close to it). I think this captures the common sense view of perspective taking. But such a broad characterization leaves out the details of how this process is supposed to work. Although we find a smattering of evidence about such processes in various fields, relatively little work has been done to synthesize such work and produce a general account of what exactly is involved in this phenomenon.

In psychology, perspective taking is often assumed to be a gateway to empathy. But what perspective taking itself involves and how it gives rise to empathy remains under-explored. Perspective taking is often simply understood as the ability to think about others' minds. In philosophy, too, perspective taking has been thought of as a basic method of understanding others as minded or psychological beings, and not as a special and personalized way of relating to others. Perspective taking (*aka* simulation) has also been associated with mirror neurons and emotional resonance with others. But these phenomena are basic and almost automatic responses to others, not an effortful process carried out to *really* try to comprehend the other. The phenomenological tradition—starting with Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty—has favored what might be called a first-person approach. But this tradition has been relatively insulated from philosophy of mind and ethics, and from scientific psychology, although recent work on so-called neurophenomenology and empathy aims to correct that. In sum, psychology and philosophy only address part of the ordinary person's concern with perspective change.

There is therefore need for a more unified approach that takes into account the various strands relating to perspective taking coming from different traditions and different disciplines. This is what my book aims to offer. I defend a version of the common sense view that perspective taking: 1) involves a substantive change of perspectives (to a 1st person perspective), 2) is experiential (because it involves the imagination), 3) contains more details than more objective and discursive modes of thought, 4) allows you to share (part of) someone else's experience, and 5) brings to light distinctive kinds of information (what it's like). I then go on to explain its relation to our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world we live in. Lastly, I explain the centrality of perspective taking to moral and political issues.

My previous experience puts me in an excellent position to complete such a project. I was trained in Europe where the phenomenological approach is much more widely accepted and taught. My postdoc was in a program for Philosophy, Psychology, and Neuroscience (Washington University in St. Louis), and my previous position was a joint appointment between the Department of Philosophy and the Institute of Cognitive Science. I have also held a fellowship at the Center for Human Values at Princeton, where fellows are from a variety of related fields such as psychology, political science, philosophy, and history. I therefore have a solid interdisciplinary background. That is reflected in my work, which is primarily of an interdisciplinary nature.

I have edited one book on empathy and morality, I am the editor of the *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Empathy*, and I have published ten papers on empathy and/or perspective taking (perspective taking is widely thought to a form of empathy). I am therefore in a very good position to complete the proposed project. The book will develop ideas from my papers. For instance, I shall argue that only if we manage to imagine scenarios involving detailed perceptual imagery can we evoke the types of responses that we typically have ourselves to the situations others are in. I also develop the view that to be responsible agents, we must be able to take perspectives on our own actions that are different from our own.

The parts of the book that I will finish while a TAFT Center Fellow concern the relationship between perspective taking and our understanding of the world and ourselves, and perspective taking and power and respect. Power is associated with a decreased tendency to take the perspective of those less powerful. This helps explain the prevalence of the perspective of white males over the perspectives of women and non-whites in literature, movies, and politics. These cultural products increase the tendency of the disempowered to take the perspective of the powerful, and the powerful to ignore that of the less powerful. However, I shall argue that narratives from *other* perspectives help invert this tendency, sometimes even better than real-world interactions. Furthermore, other perspectives are essential to fully appreciate the moral and interpersonal significance of our actions. In fact, seeing ourselves and our actions from

other people's perspectives is required to fully understand *what* we are doing. Being social creatures operating in interpersonal space, the nature of our actions is not purely determined by our conception of what it is that we do. How other people conceive of them is sometimes essential to understanding what we do. What is an offhand remark to me may be a seething insult to you. There is therefore an intimate tie between our ability to take others' perspective and our own agency. Being perspective takers is an essential part of who we are, but it is also an important tool for understanding the world *as a common world*. The very existence of perspectives structures our understanding of all that surrounds us.

Project Format, Schedule & Fit with the TAFT Research Community

The aim is not to write a book exclusively for philosophers. Perspective taking is of interest to academics in many fields and to the general public. I therefore write so that the book is accessible to the educated public as well as of interest to philosophers, psychologists, literary theorists, and other scholars. The hope is to generate renewed discussion between disciplines on this issue and to make academic work more relevant to the public.

The multi-disciplinary environment of the TAFT Center is perfect for the project. Working alongside researchers from other fields will afford new perspectives (!) on the work and help me make my thinking more accessible. I also think that I can offer insights to people working in other fields about the role of perspective taking and empathy. According to my current schedule, I will have 6 chapters finished by the time I would take up the fellowship, and I will finish the last 4 chapters during the year at the Center. The book will be my first. I have previously published articles and book chapters, which has allowed me to develop ideas and positions on many different topics in philosophy. A book, however, allows a more detailed and sustained exploration of issues that have long concerned me: taking other people's perspectives and its significance to empathy, morality, and interpersonal understanding. It constitutes a significant shift away from focusing on ideas and arguments that can be developed within a journal article towards the construction of a more encompassing theory, and the carving out of a distinctive position in philosophical and intellectual space.

IV. Curriculum Vitae

Academic Positions

- 2014- University of Cincinnati, Professor, Department of Philosophy
2009-2013 Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, Associate Professor,
Department of Philosophy & Institute of Cognitive Science
2003-2009 Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, Assistant Professor, Department of
Philosophy & Institute of Cognitive Science
2006-2007 Princeton University, Princeton, Laurance S. Rockefeller Visiting Fellow,
Center for Human Values
2001-2003 Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Postdoctoral Fellow,
Department of Philosophy & Program in Philosophy, Neuroscience, Psychology

Education

- 1994-2000 University College London, Philosophy, Ph.D.
1988-1994 University of Copenhagen, Philosophy, Cand.Phil.

Books

- Contracted *Handbook of Philosophy of Empathy*. Edited volume. London: Routledge.
2014 *Empathy and Morality*. Edited volume. New York: Oxford University Press.
2012 *Neurofeminism: Issues at the Intersection of Feminist Theory and Cognitive Science*.
Edited with R. Bluhm and A.J. Jacobson. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Journal Articles

- 2014 To Treat a Psychopath. *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics: Special issue on Psychopathy, Neurotechnologies, and Neuroethics* (ed. Fabrice Jotterand), 35, 31-42.
2012 The Many Faces of Empathy and Their Relation to Prosocial Action and Aggression Inhibition. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science (WIRE)*, 3, 253-63.
2010 Sans Goût: L'Art Et Le Psychopathe. *La Nouvelle Revue Française d'Esthétique*, 6: 151-163 (co-authored with James Harold).
2010 What Experimental Evidence Shows Us About the Role of Emotions in Moral Judgment. *Philosophy Compass*, 5/11, 999-1012.
2010 Imagining Others. *Atelier de l'Ethique*, 5:1, 34-49.
2010 The Descent of Shame. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, LXXX, 566-94.
2009 Feeling for Others: Empathy, Sympathy, and Morality. *Inquiry*, 52, 483-99.
2009 Patriotic Virtue. *Political Studies*, 57, 639-59 (co-authored with Fred Bennett).
2009 In Defence of (Model) Theory Theory. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 16, 360-78.
2008 The Mad, the Bad, and the Psychopath. *Neuroethics*, 1, 167-84.
2007 Social Systems. *Philosophical Psychology*, 20, 557-78.
2007 The Presence of Others. *Philosophical Studies*, 132, 161-90.
2005 Moral Unreason: The Case of Psychopathy. *Mind & Language*, 20, 237-57.
2003 The Mindreader and the Scientist. *Mind & Language*, 18, 296-315.
2001 Tacit Knowledge & Folk Psychology. *Danish Yearbook of Philosophy*, 35, 95-114.

Chapters in Edited Volumes

- Forthcoming Self-Simulation and Empathy. In Schramme, T. & Roughley, N. (Eds.) *Forms of Fellow Feeling: Empathy, Sympathy, Concern and Moral Agency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Forthcoming Knowing Me, Knowing You: Failure to Forecast and the Empathic Imagination. A. Kind & P. Kung (Eds.) *Knowledge through Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 2014 A Situationist Account of Sex/Gender Differences. With R. Bluhm. Sigrid Schmitz & Grit Höppner: (Eds) *Gendered Neurocultures: Feminist and Queer Perspectives on Current Brain Discourses*. Vienna: Zaglossus, 127-43.
- 2014 Knowing What We Are Doing. D. Jacobson & J. D'Arms (Eds.) *The Science of Ethics: Moral Psychology and Human Agency*. New York: Oxford University Press, 108-22.
- 2014 Without Fellow Feeling. In T. Schramme (Ed.): *Being Immoral: Psychopaths and Moral Indifference*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 91-114.
- 2014 (Almost) Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Empathy. H. Maibom (Ed.) *Empathy and Morality*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1-40.
- 2013 Values, Sanity, and Responsibility. In D. Shoemaker (Ed.): *Oxford Studies in Agency and Responsibility*, Vol. 1. New York: Oxford University Press, 263-83.
- 2012 Introduction (With R. Bluhm & A.J. Jacobsen). R. Bluhm, A. Jacobson, and H. Maibom: (Eds.) *Neurofeminism*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 1-10.
- 2012 In a Different Voice? R. Bluhm, A.J. Jacobson, and H. Maibom: (Eds.) *Neurofeminism*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 56-72.
- 2010 Rationalism, Emotivism, and the Psychopath. L. Malatesti & J. McMillan: (Eds.) *Responsibility and Psychopathy: Interfacing Law, Psychiatry and Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 305-25.
- 2008 Thoughts of Rivals, Thoughts of Failure. T. Botz-Bornstein (Ed.) *Culture, Nature, Memes: Dynamic Cognitive Theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press 101-16.
- 2008 The Will to Conform. Comment on McGeer. W. Sinnott-Armstrong (Ed.) *Moral Psychology, Volume 3*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 565-72.

Encyclopedia Articles

- Forthcoming Psychopathy: Morally incapacitated persons. In: S. Edwards & T. Schramme (Eds.) *Handbook of Concepts in the Philosophy of Medicine*, Springer.
- 2013 Folk Psychology. H. Pashler (Ed.): *The Encyclopedia of the Mind*. SAGE Publ.
- 2013 Theory Theory. B. Kaldis (Ed.): *Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences*. SAGE Publications.
- 2013 Psychopathy. H. LaFollette (Ed.): *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Work in Progress

- Draft Indifference to the Suffering of Others.
- In prep. *Knowing Me, Knowing You*. Book manuscript.