

My research interests

My research is on problems at the intersection of mind, language, and action.

I am just finishing a book manuscript on the nature of belief. It brings together views I have been developing over the last decade or so. It explores the metaphysics and semantics of mental states. I consider what mental states are, how they relate to a person's bodily states, and what it is for a mental state to be about the world.

It also explores the limits of belief. In particular, I am interested in the ways a person's relations to her social and natural environments put limits on what she can believe. And I examine the distinctive sorts of subjectivity involved in believing, especially the self-consciousness it involves and the so-called transparency of belief.

The book also discusses the explanation of action. I consider whether a person's actions are caused by her beliefs and other mental states, or whether some form of libertarianism about action is right. I examine the nature of inference, and the ways a person can be responsible for believing what she does. I end the book by exploring some topics in the ethics of belief. In particular, I argue against the idea that what a person ought to believe is fixed by the evidence she has. Instead, I argue, what a person ought to believe is fixed by what she ought to do and how she ought to be.

These research interests are closely tied to themes in the history of early analytic philosophy. I am especially influenced by Gottlob Frege, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Elizabeth Anscombe. They were interested in the nature of truth and representation, the metaphysics of action and free will, and the place of value and goodness in a natural world.

I hope this makes clear that I am interested in a broad range of topics, from both a contemporary and an historical point of view. I have supervised MRPs on all of these topics.

David Hunter