

# T. RAJA ROSENHAGEN

## CONTACT DETAILS:

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**EDUCATION** UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH: Ph.D. in Philosophy, expected: April 2018  
WESTFÄLISCHE WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNSTER (GERMANY): M.A. in Philosophy  
(minors: Indian Studies, Psychology), December 2005

**RESEARCH** AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION: Philosophy of Mind, Philosophy of Science, Epistemology  
AREAS OF COMPETENCE: Logic, History of Analytic Philosophy; Philosophy of Love;  
Indian Philosophy

## **DISSERTATION: “Experience and Belief: An Inquiry into the Doxastic Variability of Experience”**

How can our experience both be affected by our beliefs and constrain them? I argue that neither of the two accounts of experience that currently dominate the debate – relationalism and representationalism – provides a satisfactory answer. Drawing on my analysis of N. R. Hanson’s neglected account of the theory-ladenness of observation, I develop an account that does. Unlike relationalism, it accommodates various effects beliefs may have on experiential phenomenology. Representationalists can accommodate such effects, as well as effects on the content they attribute to experience. But if unbeknownst to the subject, her experience is affected by false, irrational, or unjustified beliefs, experience cannot play the role representationalists assign to it: justifying beliefs. On account I advocate, the rational role of experience is to make rational view-dependent transitions to perceptual judgments; phenomenally identical experiences can make rational different transitions if combined with suitably different background views. So construed, I argue, experience plays its rational role without exception and it can provide empirical constraint even if thoroughly affected by background views. All that is needed is a minimal assumption everyone in the debate shares: since experience is at least sometimes partly constituted by mind-independent items, it can defy our expectations.

**COMMITTEE:** Anil Gupta (chair), John McDowell, Robert Brandom, Edouard Machery

## **FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS**

APA TRAVEL GRANT for invited participants of the *Mentoring the Mentors* Workshop at the APA, Central Division, Kansas City, MI (2017)  
ALAN ROSS ANDERSON FELLOWSHIP, University of Pittsburgh (Fall 2017, 2016, 2013)  
NICHOLAS RESCHER DISSERTATION COMPLETION FELLOWSHIP, University of Pittsburgh (Summer 2016)  
CONFERENCE TRAVEL GRANT for the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Philosophy of Religion Conference in Claremont, CA, Udo Keller Stiftung Forum Humanum, Germany (2016)  
DIETRICH ARTS & SCIENCES PRE-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP, University of Pittsburgh (2014-15, 12-13, 10-11)  
PRE-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP, Max Planck Institute for History of Science, Berlin, Germany (funding for stay as a Visiting Scholar at the University of Pittsburgh, 2009-10)  
GERMAN SCHOLARSHIP FOR EXCELLENCY, Villigst e.V., Germany (2006-08)  
GERMAN SCHOLARSHIP FOR EXCELLENCY, Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, Germany (2000-05)

## ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

### UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

**President** of Philosophy Graduate Students, **Grad Student Representative to Faculty** (2014-2015)  
**Graduate Student Liaison**, tasked with Planning and Organization of job talks given by external candidates (Lunches and Dinners with Grad Students, Assessment and Evaluation of Graduate Student Feedback) (2015)  
Budget Committee, **Graduate Student Representative** (2015)

### UNIVERSITÄT ROSTOCK

Zentrum für Logik, Wissenschaftstheorie und Wissenschaftsgeschichte (Center for Logic, Philosophy of Science, and History of Science, ZLWWG), **Member of the Managing Board**, tasked with organizing talks, colloquia, and workshops (2009-10)  
ZLWWG, **Research Assistant, Coordinator**, Organization of conferences, lecture series, in charge of the reading group *Philosophy of Science* and of procuring third-party funds (2008-10)  
Institut für Philosophie (Department of Philosophy), **Mid-level Faculty Representative** at the School of Humanities (2008-09)

### WESTFÄLISCHE WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNSTER

Center for Philosophy of Science (ZfW), **Co-founder** and **Member of the Managing Board**, conference organization, reading group *Philosophy of Science*, website maintenance (2006-08)  
Department of Philosophy, Logic **TA** for Prof. Rosemarie Rheinwald, (2004-2007); **Research Assistant** for Prof. Kurt Bayertz, Latin translations (2005-07)

### MENTORING

APA Workshop: “Mentoring the Mentors”, invited participant, Central APA, Kansas City, MI (03/17)  
Undergraduate Mentoring Program, **Mentor** (since 2016), **Coordinator** (since 04/2016)  
Graduate Student Mentoring Program, **Founder, Coordinator, Mentor** (since 2015)

### CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

University of Pittsburgh, Philosophy Department, *Perceptual Experience and Empirical Reason*, October 21-23, 2016, **Main Conference Coordinator** (with Benjamin Schulz)  
University of Pittsburgh, Philosophy Department, Department for History and Philosophy of Science, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, *Annual PITT-CMU Philosophy Grad Student Conference*, **Chair** (2014); **Committee Member** (2013)  
Johannes-Gutenberg Universität zu Mainz, *Moderne Theorien Praktischer Normativität* [Modern Theories of Practical Normativity], June 24-26, 2010, **Main Organizer** (with Frank Brosow)  
Universität Rostock, Workshop *Philosophy and Medicine*, jointly organized by the Department of Philosophy (*Ludger Jansen*), History of Medicine (*Prof. Hans-Uwe Lammell*), and the ZLWWG Rostock (T. Raja Rosenbagen), July 31- August 1, 2009, **Co-Host, Member of the Organizing Committee**  
WWU Münster, ZfW, in cooperation with: ZLWWG Rostock, Max-Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte Berlin, *Scientific Knowledge in the Context of Thought Style and Paradigm – Ludwik Fleck and Thomas S. Kuhn on the Development of Scientific Knowledge*, July 21-23, 2008, **Co-Host, Member of the Organizing Committee**  
WWU Münster, ZfW, *International Workshop: The Nature of Scientific Evidence*, July 13-15 2007, **Co-Host, Member of the Organizing Committee**  
WWU Münster, ZfW, *International Workshop: Causality and Dispositions*, November 26-28, 2007, **Co-Host, Member of the Organizing Committee**

### REFEREE SERVICES

*The Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic and Communication*, vol. 9, edited by Edouard Machery and Jesse Prinz (2015)

**TEACHING**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY,Primary Instructor

2017, Summer Intro to Logic

Teaching Assistant

2017, Spring Intro to Philosophical Problems

2016, Spring Intro to Ethics

2015, Fall Intro to Political Philosophy

2014, Spring Logic 0500

2012, Spring Intro to Philosophical Problems

2011, Fall Concepts of Human Nature

main instructor

James Shaw

Patrick Reider

Japa Pallikkathayil

Thomas Ricketts

Brett Caloia

Jamsheed Siyar

WESTFÄLISCHE WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNSTER (WWU), ZENTRUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFTSTHEORIE (ZfW),courses taught independently and in cooperation [SS = summer term; WS = winter term]online

2017/18, WS Central Concepts of Philosophy of Science

2017, SS Mind &amp; Brain – Intro to the Philosophy of Cognitive Neuroscience

2016/17, WS What is causation?

2015/16, WS What is causation? (*self-designed, first online course ever offered at the ZfW*)in Münster2015, SS The Theory-ladenness of observation in light of recent developments in the cognitive sciences (with *Michael Pohl*, Philosophy)

2015, SS Central Concepts of Philosophy of Science

2014, SS Central Concepts of Philosophy of Science

2013, SS No Seeing without Knowing? The Theory-ladenness of Observation

2007/08, WS Interdisciplinary Seminar: What is Science?

UNIVERSITÄT ROSTOCK, INSTITUT FÜR PHILOSOPHIE, courses taught independently and in cooperation2009, SS The Theory-ladenness of (scientific) observation (with *Jan Peters*, Cognitive Science)

2009, SS Modern Philosophy, core course for Bachelor Students (Descartes, Locke, Kant)

2009, SS Philosophy and Medicine (*Summer School*; with *Ludger Jansen & Prof. Ingvar Johansson*)

2008/09, WS Wilfrid Sellars: Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind

2008, SS Logical Empiricism: Selected Writings

WWU MÜNSTER, PHILOSOPHISCHES SEMINAR, courses taught independently and in cooperation2008/09, WS Salvation via non-dualist Knowledge: Shankara's Advaita-Vedānta (with *Annette Wilke*, Religious Studies)2008, SS Is there such a thing as a Just War? (with *Sebastian Laukötter*, Philosophy)

2008, SS Indian Philosophy: The Philosophy of the Bhagavadgītā

2007/08, WS Logical Empiricism: Selected Writings

2007, SS John McDowell: Mind and World

2006/07, WS Paul Feyerabend: Against Method

2006/07, WS Intro to Epistemological Relativism (with *Ansgar Seide*, Philosophy)2006, SS Philosophical Problems of the Natural Sciences (with *Christian Subm*, Philosophy)

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Philosophical Association  
Philosophy of Science Association  
Society for Indian Philosophy and Religion  
Society for the Study of Indian and Tibetan  
Buddhist Philosophy

American Association of Philosophy Teachers  
The Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love  
Gesellschaft für Analytische Philosophie  
Zentrum für Wissenschaftstheorie (ZfW),  
Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

## EDITORIAL WORK, PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, & TRANSLATIONS

### JOURNAL EDITING

Issue of *Analytic Philosophy* (edited by David Sosa) on *Perceptual Experience and Empirical Rationality*, as editorial assistant (January 2018, in preparation).

### CO-EDITED BOOK

Brosow, Frank & Tom Raja Rosenhagen (eds.) (2013): *Moderne Theorien Praktischer Rationalität. Zur Wirklichkeit und Wirkungsweise des praktischen Sollens*. Münster: mentis.  
[ENGLISH: Modern Theories of Practical Rationality. The Existence and Nature of the Practical Ought]

### ESSAYS

- “**On Linkages. Comments on Gupta**” (forthcoming 2018), in: *Analytic Philosophy*.
- “**Thin Looks and Concepts. Comments on Brewer**” (forthcoming 2018), in: *Analytic Philosophy*.
- “**Rational Responses to Ubiquitous Hijacking? Comments on Siegel**” (forthcoming 2018), in: *Analytic Philosophy*.
- “**Norwood Russell Hanson und die Theoriebeladenheit der Beobachtung**” (forthcoming), in: *Schlickiana* Vol. 8, edited by Martin Lemke and Hans-Jürgen Wendel, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag. (= Schriftenreihe der Moritz-Schlick-Forschungsstelle der Universität Rostock)  
[ENGLISH: Norwood Russell Hanson and the Theory-Ladenness of Observation]
- “**Toward Virtue: Love, Just Attention, and Moral Progress through Friendship**” (forthcoming), in: *Love and Justice*, Claremont Studies in Philosophy of Religion, Conference 2016, edited by Ingolf U. Dalferth and Trevor Kimball, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck.
- “**Physikalismus, Pragmatismus und die Frage nach dem Anfang. Zu Stemmers Konzeption des normativen Müssens**”, in: Brosow & Rosenhagen (2013): 297-328.  
[ENGLISH: Physicalism, Pragmatism, and the Question Where to Begin. Stemmer’s Conception of the Normative “Must”]
- “**Einleitung**” (with Frank Brosow), in: Brosow & Rosenhagen (2013): 1-17. [ENGLISH: Introduction]
- “**Fleck und Hegel über Wahrheit als Station in einer Entwicklung**”, in: Egloff, Rainer and Johannes Fehr (eds.) (2011): *Vérité, Widerstand, Development: At Work With / Arbeiten mit / Travailler avec Ludwik Fleck*. Zürich: Collegium Helveticum, Vol. 12, 157-167. [ENGLISH: Fleck and Hegel on Truth as a Station of a Development]
- “**Omnipotence, Omniscience, and God’s Right**” (with Anna Brückner, Jana Lührmann, Michael Pohl), in: Mößner, Nicola / Schmoranzler, Sebastian / Weidemann, Christian (eds.): (2007) *Richard Swinburne: Christian Philosophy in a Modern World*. Frankfurt/Main: Ontos. (= 11. Münstersche Vorlesungen zur Philosophie)
- “**Realist and Idealist Interpretations of Brandom’s Account of Objectivity**” (with Michael Pohl, Arne Weber), in: Prien, Bernd / Schweikard, David (Hg.) (2007): *Robert Brandom. Analytic Pragmatist*. Frankfurt/Main: Ontos. (= 10. Münstersche Vorlesungen zur Philosophie 2006)
- “**Experience Becoming Fully Literate – van Fraassen on the Verge of Constructivism**” (with Marie I. Kaiser, Christian Suhm), in: Berg-Hildebrand, Andreas / Suhm, Christian (eds.) (2006): *Bas C. van Fraassen. The Fortunes of Empiricism*. Frankfurt/Main: Ontos, 69-80. (= 9. Münstersche Vorlesungen zur Philosophie 2005)

ESSAYS (CONTINUED)

- “**Indexical Truth and Anti-Metaphysical Inclinations – Getting Rid of the Remnants of Realism**”, in: Berg-Hildebrand, Andreas / Suhm, Christian (eds.) (2006): *Bas C. van Fraassen. The Fortunes of Empiricism*. Frankfurt/Main: Ontos, 81–92. (= 9. Münstersche Vorlesungen zur Philosophie 2005)
- “**Probleme der Religionsphilosophie Franz von Kutschera**“ (with Attila Karakus, Michael Pohl, Daniel Steinke), in: Halbig, Christoph / Weidemann, Christian (eds.) (2005): *Franz von Kutschera: Analytische Philosophie jenseits des Materialismus*. Münster: Lit Verlag, 105-116. (= Münsteraner Vorlesungen zur Philosophie, Bd. 7) [ENGLISH: Problems of Franz von Kutschera’s Philosophy of Religion]
- “**Pragmatism, Realism, and Science**” (with Marius Backmann, Andreas Berg-Hildebrand, Marie I. Kaiser, Michael Pohl, Christian Suhm, Robert Velten), in: Vieth, Andreas (eds.) (2004): *Richard Rorty. His Philosophy Under Discussion*. Heusenstamm bei Frankfurt: Ontos, 65-78. (= 8. Münstersche Vorlesungen zur Philosophie)

PRESENTATIONS & INVITED COMMENTS

- “**Comment on Rebecca Traynor: Accurate distortion: Perception, truth, and utility**”  
*Eastern APA Meeting*, Savannah, GA (01/18)
- “**Buddhist Overtones in Iris Murdoch’s Work on Moral Progress: Failing Concepts, Compassion, and Emptiness**”  
*Eastern APA Meeting*, Savannah, GA, *Society for the Study of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy* (01/18)
- “**Propositionalist Evidentialism, a False Dilemma, and the Variable Content View**”  
*41<sup>st</sup> Annual Midsouth Philosophy Conference*, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN (04/17)
- “**Comment on Sharon Mason: Knowledge, Reflection, and Thermometer Problems**”  
*41<sup>st</sup> Annual Midsouth Philosophy Conference*, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN (04/17)
- “**Norwood Russell Hanson’s Account of Experience: An Untimely Defense**”  
*Annual Student-Faculty Colloquium*, University of Pittsburgh (03/17)
- “**Comment on Haoying Liu: The Combination Problem and the Phenomenal Bond**”  
*Central APA Meeting*, Kansas City, MI (03/17)
- “**Sarvaga and Just Attention: Buddhist Elements in Murdochian Ethics**”  
*Eastern APA Meeting*, Baltimore, MA, *Society for Indian Philosophy and Religion* (01/17)
- “**Capitalizing on Illusory Experiences**”  
*Eastern APA Meeting*, Baltimore, MA (01/17)
- “**Internalism Without Experiential Content or: How Not to Care About Demons**”  
*2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Philosophy of Mind*, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal (09/16)
- “**A Murdochian Intervention**”  
*SEP-FEP Joint Annual Conference 2016*, part of submitted panel discussion on *Love and Justice: Can Union Views Do Justice to Just Love?*, Regent’s University London, England (UK) (08/16)
- “**Seeing As and Seeing That: A Fresh Look at Hanson’s Dually Representationalist Account of Experience**”  
*Pacific APA Meeting*, San Francisco, CA (04/16)  
*Meeting of Philosophy of Science Group India*, Mumbai, India (12/15) [*declined*]  
*3<sup>rd</sup> annual 2015 OZSW Conference*, Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands (12/15)  
*Central States Philosophical Association*, Lexington, KY (11/15)
- “**Toward Virtue: Love, Just Attention, and Moral Progress Through Philia**”  
*Pre-Conference Seminar to the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Philosophy of Religion Conference*, *Conference Theme: Love and Justice*, Claremont, CA (02/16)
- “**Against Fish’s Relationalist Account of Perception**”  
*3<sup>rd</sup> annual 2015 OZSW Conference*, Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands (12/15)

PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)

- “**Norwood Russell Hanson and the Theory-ladenness of Observation**” (invited talk)  
*Schlick-Symposium 2015*, Moritz-Schlick-Forschungsstelle, Universität Rostock, Germany (11/15)
- “**Friendship for the Less Virtuous**”  
*Philosophy Graduate Student Conference*, Boston University, Boston, MA (10/15)  
*Philosophy Graduate Student Conference*, Gonzaga University, Gonzaga, WA (04/15)
- “**Murdoch on Love and Privacy**”  
*SEP-FEP Joint Annual Conference 2015*, University of Dundee, Dundee, Scotland (UK) (09/15)  
*Philosophy Graduate Student Conference*, Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. (03/15)
- “**Überlegungen zu einer pragmatistischen Theorie praktischer Normativität**”  
*Conference Moderne Theorien Praktischer Normativität* (Modern Theories of Practical Normativity),  
 Johannes-Gutenberg Universität zu Mainz, Mainz, Germany (06/10)  
 [ENGLISH: Towards a Pragmatist Theory of Practical Normativity]
- “**McDowell’s and Gupta’s Accounts of Experience and their Underlying Motivations**”  
*Rostock-Torun Workshop 2010*, Nikolaus Kopernikus University Torun, Poland (05/10)
- “**On Kant, McDowell, and the Nature of Experience**”  
 Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, Emory University, Atlanta, GA (03/10)
- “**Preliminary Reflections on the Development of a Normative-Pragmatic Metaethics**”  
*Normativity Workshop*, WWU Münster, Germany (07/09)
- “**Must we Know in order to See? The Theory-ladenness of Observation**”  
*Lecture Series on History, Theory, and Ethics in the Medical Sciences*, Universität Rostock, Germany (07/09)  
*Lecture Series “Kaminabend,”* Center for Logic, Philosophy of Science and History of Science, Universität Rostock, Germany (10/08)
- “**The Theory-ladenness of Observation, Social, Pragmatic, and Normative Aspects**”  
*Rostock-Torun Workshop 2009: “Dimensions of Knowledge,”* Universität Rostock, Germany (06/09)
- “**Appearance and Truth: Truth as a Station of a Development – Or: How Much Hegel is in Fleck?**”  
*Workshop on Ludwik Fleck*, Center for Logic, Philosophy of Science and History of Science, Universität Rostock, Germany (04/09)
- “**Learning from Experience**”  
*Rostocker Lange Nacht der Wissenschaften* (Public Outreach Event), Rostock Zoo, Darwin-Box, Rostock, Germany (04/09)
- “**Of Iron Chunks, Animals, Stone Age People, and Neck Ties – Semantic and Pragmatic Aspects of the Theory-ladenness of Observation**” (invited talk)  
*Invited Speaker Series*, WWU, Münster, Germany (02/09)
- “**How to Model Scientific Progress – Some (B)randomized Reflections on Scientific Revolutions, Thought Styles, and Mental Models**”  
*Conference Scientific Knowledge in the Context of Thought Style and Paradigm – Ludwik Fleck and Thomas Kuhn on the Development of Scientific Knowledge*, WWU, Münster, Germany (07/08)
- “**Experience Revisited – Some Problematic Issues**”  
*Rostock-Torun Workshop 2008: “Cultures of Knowledge,”* Nikolaus Kopernikus Universität Torun, Poland (06/08)
- McDowell vs. Schantz: Do We Need Non-Conceptual Content?**  
*Workshop on the Nature of Scientific Evidence*, Center for Philosophy Science, WWU, Münster, Germany (07/07)

TRANSLATION (English → German):

- “**Aus Gründen handeln – ein Vorschlag auf Graswurzelebene**”  
 for Ralf Stoecker, in: Brosow & Rosenhagen (2013), 36-58. [ENGLISH: Acting for Reasons – A Grass Root Approach]

## GRADUATE COURSEWORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH<sup>1</sup>

[\* = audited, HPS = Department for History and Philosophy of Science]

### METAPHYSICS, EPISTEMOLOGY, PERCEPTION

Empiricism & Judgment

\*J. J. Gibson's Ecological Account of Perception (HPS)

\*Directed Study on Perception

Epistemology of Experimental Practices (HPS)

\*Epistemology of Sensory Experience

Metaphysics and Epistemology, Core

*Anil Gupta*

*Peter Machamer & Jim Lennox*

*John McDowell*

*Edouard Machery*

*John McDowell*

*Tom Ricketts*

### PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE & LOGIC

\*Making it Explicit and Between Saying and Doing (2x)

\*Wittgenstein: Philosophical Investigations

Philosophy of Language

Advanced Logic, Core

\*Advanced Logic, Core

*Robert Brandom*

*Tom Ricketts*

*James Shaw & Karl Schafer*

*Ken Manders*

*Mark Wilson*

### HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY & PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Topics in Ancient Philosophy: Aristotle

Hegel (1x for credit, 1x audited)

\*Plato's Gorgias

Pragmatism

Leibniz

\*Kant

Philosophy of Science, Core (HPS)

History and Philosophy of the Musical Sciences (HPS)

*Kristen Inglis*

*Robert Brandom*

*James Allen*

*Nicholas Rescher*

*Nicholas Rescher*

*Stephen Engstrom*

*John Norton*

*Paolo Palmieri*

### MORAL PHILOSOPHY

\*Philosophy of Love

Directed Study on Iris Murdoch

Ethics, Core

*Kieran Setiya*

*Kieran Setiya*

*Kieran Setiya*

### OTHER

Teaching Philosophy (2013)

Advanced Reading Group on Experience (since 2012)

*Anil Gupta*

*John McDowell*

*Wayne Wu*

1 Courses taken/audited at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster are available on request.

## REFERENCES

Anil Gupta, Alan Ross Anderson Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh  
([agupta@pitt.edu](mailto:agupta@pitt.edu))

John McDowell, Distinguished University Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh  
([jmcdowe1@pitt.edu](mailto:jmcdowe1@pitt.edu))

Robert Brandom, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh  
([rbrandom@pitt.edu](mailto:rbrandom@pitt.edu))

Edouard Machery, Distinguished Professor, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University  
of Pittsburgh ([machery@pitt.edu](mailto:machery@pitt.edu))

Thomas Ricketts, Professor of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh ([ricketts@pitt.edu](mailto:ricketts@pitt.edu)) [teaching]

Nikolaus Strobach, University Professor, WWU Münster ([nstro\\_01@uni-muenster.de](mailto:nstro_01@uni-muenster.de))

## OTHER

### LANGUAGES

GERMAN (native)	ENGLISH (like native)	FRENCH (good)	HINDI (good)
LATIN (reading)	SANSKRIT (reading)	ANCIENT GREEK (intermediate)	PORTUGUESE (intermediate)
NORWEGIAN (intermediate)	SPANISH (basic)		

### OTHER INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

2009 research stay in Haarlem/Amsterdam, The Netherlands, research in the Wiener Kreis Archiv, part  
of the Noord-Hollands-Archief

2002-03 research stay in Mahārāshtra, India, specialization in Indian Studies on Traditional Indian  
Medicine



### Dissertation Abstract: *Experience and Belief*

Visual experience, it is widely held, is theory-laden and plays a vital rational role. In my dissertation, I do two things: I first argue that the two families of views that dominate the debate on visual experience fail to accommodate both these features. Second, I develop an account that does.

The account I advocate takes its cues from my analysis of Hanson's neglected account of scientific observation, which I use as a foil against which to assess contemporary accounts of visual experience. Three aspects of Hanson's view are particularly noteworthy: *first*, it accommodates numerous ways in which beliefs can affect our seeing – both its phenomenology and the conceptual content he thinks seeing involves. *Second*, Hanson claims that some of these effects are not contingent, but necessary for seeing to be epistemically significant. This is a semantic claim: the concepts seeing involves derive an essential part of their meaning from being integrated in the seeing subject's belief context. Absent such a context, neither determinate concepts nor, *a fortiori*, epistemically significant seeing are possible. And since seeing's conceptual content semantically depends on the subject's belief context, the former may change along with the latter. The *third* important aspect is Hanson's insistence that the phenomenology of seeing, if co-constituted by environing items, can diverge from our expectations. Whether we notice such divergence or not, how we see and respond to it – all this depends on our belief context. That such divergence is possible, however, is crucial for establishing that seeing, though determined by beliefs, can exert empirical constraint.

That Hanson accommodates numerous effects of beliefs on seeing is a virtue of his account – one that relationalism lacks, as I show by analyzing various relationalist views. Relationalists think that the vital role of experience is to relate us to mind-independent items. Crucially, they also think that this relation neither involves nor depends on concepts. Thus, I argue, there are many effects beliefs may have on seeing that relationalists in principle cannot accommodate.

Representationalists, on the other hand, can accommodate such effects. Doing so, however, bars them from also crediting experience with what they take to be its vital rational role: justifying beliefs. For if experience is affected by false, irrational, or unjustified beliefs, its ability to play that role is impaired. As I show via a discussion of Siegel's recent account of the rationality of perception, representationalists are saddled with the unsatisfactory consequence that for all we know, experience often executes its rational role poorly; both experience itself and we, in relying on it, may be irrational.

The view I offer builds on Hanson's remarks on empirical constraint. Implicit in these remarks, I argue, is an account of the rational role of experience that diverges from those offered by relationalists and representationalists. No doubt relationalists are right that experience often relates us to mind-independent objects. Also, representationalists may be right that *via* its content, experience may sometimes serve to justify our beliefs. But I suggest that generally, the main rational role of experience is to make rational *transitions* to perceptual beliefs. And which transitions an experience with a given phenomenology makes rational depends neither just on what, if anything, experience relates us to, nor just on its content, but crucially on the experiencing subject's belief context.

My view thus assigns a vital rational role to experience while also integrating Hanson's insight that experience can only play this role if a suitable belief context is present. Crucially, it succeeds where both relationalists and contemporary representationalists fail: it credits experience with a rational role that is not impaired, not even if the effects of beliefs on experience are widespread. Finally, I show that the novel perspective I offer on the bearing of experience on belief has significant implications for all debates – both in philosophy and beyond – in which experience is credited with a rational role.