

Alice van't Hoff

CONTACT

212 1879 Hall
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08544
(609) 258-4289

a.vanthoff@princeton.edu
www.alicevanthoff.com

AREAS OF INTEREST

AOS: Metaphysics, Social Philosophy
AOC: Logic, Philosophy of Mind.

EDUCATION

Princeton University:

PhD in Philosophy, 2018–present.
Dissertation: “Quantification and (meta)ontology”.
Advisers: Harvey Lederman and Gideon Rosen.

University of Arizona:

Enrolled in Philosophy PhD Program, 2015–2018.

King’s College London:

MA in Philosophy, 2014–2015.
Distinction.

University of Oxford:

MPhil in Political Theory, 2012–2014.
Distinction.

University of Cambridge:

BA (Hons) in History, 2009–2012.
Starred First.

PUBLICATIONS

“In Defense of Causal Eliminativism”, *Synthese*, (2022), 200:5.

“Much Ado about Ontological Nihilism”, *Inquiry* (2023).

“Ways of being quantified”, under review.

“Identifying gender identity”, under review.

PRESENTATIONS

- “Quantificational pluralism and (meta-)ontology”,
Metaphysics Mayhem, Rutgers University. NJ. July 2023.

- “Identifying gender identity”, Social Metaphysics Workshop,
Duke University. NC. June 2023.

- Commentator on Andrew Rubner, “Operational Explanations and Normal-Proper Functions”—APA Central Division. IL. February 2022.
- “Metaphysical Parsimony”—APA Eastern Division. MD. January 2022.
- “What is gender and what is gender identity?”—UT Austin Philosophy Graduate Conference. TX. April 2021.
- “Internalism about Gender Identity”—Arizona Feminist Philosophy Graduate Conference. AZ. February 2020.
- “In Defense of Ontological Nihilism”—Australasian Association of Philosophy. Wollongong, Australia. July 2019.
- “Ideal Theory and Strategic Morality”—Brave New World Conference. Manchester, England. June 2017.
- “Self-Ascription, Authenticity, and Autonomy”—Oxford Graduate Political Theory Workshop. Oxford, England. February 2014.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lead Instructor

- Phil 347: Neuroethics, University of Arizona, Summer 2018.
- Phil 345: Philosophy and Psychiatry, University of Arizona, Summer 2017.

Teaching Assistant

- Phil 201: Introduction to Logic, Hans Halvorson. Princeton University, Spring 2021.
- Phil 315: Philosophy of Mind, Ryan Cox. Princeton University, Fall 2020.
- Phil 352: Philosophy of Bias, Grace Helton. Princeton University, Spring 2020.
- Phil 160: Mind, Matter, God, J. Christopher Maloney. University of Arizona, Fall 2017.
- Phil 150: Personal Morality, Michael Gill. University of Arizona, Fall 2016.

- Phil 205: Ethics and Economics of Wealth Creation, Guido Pincione. University of Arizona, Fall 2015.

Guest Lecturer

- “Realism about Gender” in Phil 370: Controversies in Feminist Philosophy, Susan J. Brison. Princeton University. Spring 2022.
- “Internalist Theories of Gender” in Phil 352: Philosophy of Bias, Grace Helton. Princeton University. Spring 2020.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND PRIZES

- 2015–2018: PPEL Fellowship, University of Arizona.
- 2015: Simon Dally Award, King’s College London.
- 2014–2015: Peter Goldie Scholarship & King’s College Masters Scholarship.
- 2012–2014: Arts and Humanities Research Council Masters Studentship.
- 2012: Sir John Plumb Prize for History.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Reviewer: *Erkenntnis*, *Mind*

Editorial Assistant:

- *Social Philosophy & Policy*, Spring 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2018.
- *Philosophical Perspectives*, Spring 2017.

Service:

- Mentor *Compass* workshop for underrepresented groups in philosophy. Princeton NJ. November 2021.
- Coordinator and Organizer *Compass* workshop for underrepresented groups in philosophy. Princeton NJ. November 2023.
- Graduate Representative for Minorities and Philosophy. Princeton University Philosophy Department. 2021–22.
- Outreach Committee member. Princeton University Philosophy Department. 2021–22.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Theorists of all stripes want to describe the world, but the theories which they advance are linguistic objects. One significant philosophical task is to distinguish the merely linguistic from the substantively representational elements of our theories of the world. My dissertation takes up this challenge, focusing on the interpretation of the quantifiers that are central to almost all sophisticated formal frameworks. Most important, is the existential quantifier, which says roughly that there is at least one entity of which a given formula is true. Typically, quantifiers modify nouns, but there are also so-called “higher-order” languages that make it possible to quantify over other parts of a sentence, into, say, predicate position. The dissertation considers the interpretive problems that arise when we extend our formal languages to encompass higher-order forms of quantification. Against those who refuse to draw a distinction between linguistic acts of quantification and substantive questions of ontology, I argue that such extensions imply that quantification need not always be ontologically committal. This conclusion suggests an interpretation that avoids construing higher-order quantification overly literally: there may be true higher-order quantified claims that do not imply that our ontology should include corresponding higher-order entities. I appeal to truthmaker semantics to suggest that higher-order quantifiers may enable informative recarvings of the same ontological content that we enumerated with merely nominal quantifiers. This approach turns out to have substantive philosophical consequences, supporting in particular a view that denies that our ontology should encompass abstract entities like numbers or sets.

October 2023