Professor Jonathan Birch

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Please check my Google Scholar profile for the latest record of my publications.

Professor of Philosophy at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Academic positions

2023-

In press

2018-2023	Associate Professor of Philosophy at the London School of Economics and Political Science.
2014-2018	Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the London School of Economics and Political Science.
2012-2014	Junior Research Fellow at Christ's College, University of Cambridge.
Education	
2009-13	PhD in History & Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. Dissertation title: <i>Kin Selection: A Philosophical Analysis</i> .
2008-9	MPhil in History & Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge.
2005-8	BA (Hons) in Natural Sciences, University of Cambridge.
Books	
2024	The Edge of Sentience: Risk and Precaution in Humans, Other Animals, and AI. Oxford University Press.
2017	The Philosophy of Social Evolution. Oxford University Press.

Journal articles (single-authored unless otherwise stated)

2024	disorders of consciousness. <i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i> . Emotionless animals? Constructionist theories of emotion beyond the human case. Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 124:71-94.
2024	When is a brain organoid a sentience candidate? <i>Molecular Psychology</i> 2:22.
2023	Is it time for insect researchers to consider their subjects' welfare? <i>PLoS Biology</i> 21(6): e3002138. [with Andrew Crump, Matilda Gibbons, Meghan Barrett, and Lars Chittka]
2022	Invertebrate sentience and sustainable seafood. <i>Nature Food</i> , 3:884-886. [with Charlotte Burn, Alexandra Schnell, Heather Browning and Andrew Crump]
2022	Should animal welfare be defined in terms of consciousness? <i>Philosophy of Science</i> 89:1114-1123.
2022	Materialism and the moral status of animals. <i>The Philosophical Quarterly</i> 72:795–815.
2022	Sentience in decapod crustaceans: A general framework and review of the evidence. <i>Animal Sentience</i> 7(32):1. [with Charlotte Burn, Alexandra Schnell, Heather Browning and Andrew Crump] [published as a target article with 30 commentaries and our responses.]

Medical AI, inductive risk and the communication of uncertainty: The case of

2022	The search for invertebrate consciousness. <i>Noûs</i> 56(1):133-153.
2022	Animal consciousness: the interplay of neural and behavioural evidence. <i>Journal of Consciousness Studies</i> . [co-authored with Andrew Crump.]
2022	Animal sentience. <i>Philosophy Compass</i> . [co-authored with Heather Browning.]
2022	Clinical decisions using AI must consider patient values. <i>Nature Medicine</i> 28(2):229-232. [co-authored with Katie Creel, Abhinav Jha and Anya Plutynski.]
2021	Science and policy in extremis: The UK's initial response to COVID-19. European Journal for Philosophy of Science 11(3):90.
2021	The cultural evolution of cultural evolution. <i>Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences</i> 376(1828):20200051. [co-authored with Cecilia Heyes.]
2021	The skilful origins of human normative cognition. <i>Analyse & Kritik</i> 43(1):191-201. [published as a target article with 4 commentaries and my responses.]
2021	Toolmaking and the evolution of normative cognition. Biology & Philosophy 36:4.
2020	Global workspace theory and animal consciousness. <i>Philosophical Topics</i> 48(1).
2020	Unlimited associative learning and the origins of consciousness: A primer and some predictions. <i>Biology and Philosophy</i> 35:56. [co-authored with Simona Ginsburg and
	Eva Jablonka] [published as a target article with 9 commentaries and our responses].
2020	Dimensions of animal consciousness. <i>Trends in Cognitive Sciences</i> 24(10): 789-801.
0000	[co-authored with Alexandra K. Schnell, Nicola S. Clayton].
2020	Kin selection, group selection, and the varieties of population structure. <i>British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i> 71(1):259-286.
2019	Joint know-how. Philosophical Studies 176:3329-3352.
2019	Inclusive fitness as a criterion for improvement. Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences 76:101186
2019	Are kin and group selection rivals or friends? Current Biology 29(11):R433-R438.
2019	Altruistic deception. Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences 74:27-33.
2018	Animal cognition and human values. Philosophy of Science 85:1026-1037.
2017	Animal sentience and the precautionary principle. <i>Animal Sentience</i> 2:16(1).
	[published as a target article with 20 commentaries and my responses.]
2017	The inclusive fitness controversy: finding a way forward. Royal Society Open Science 4:170355.
2016	Hamilton's two conceptions of social fitness. Philosophy of Science 83:848-860.
2016	Natural selection and the maximization of fitness. <i>Biological Reviews</i> 91(3):712-727.
2015	Kin selection and its critics. <i>BioScience</i> . 65(1): 22-32 [co-authored with Samir Okasha]. "Editor's choice", January 2015.
2014	Gene mobility and the concept of relatedness. Biology and Philosophy 29(4): 445-476.
2014	Queller's separation condition explained and defended. <i>American Naturalist</i> . 184(4): 531-540 [co-authored with James A. R. Marshall].
2014	Propositional content in signalling systems. Philosophical Studies 171(3): 493-512.
2014	Hamilton's rule and its discontents. <i>British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i> . 65(2): 381-411. "Editor's choice", June 2014.
2013	On the 'simulation argument' and selective scepticism. Erkenntnis 78(1): 95-107.
2012	Collective action in the fraternal transitions. Biology and Philosophy 27(3): 363-80.
2012	The negative view of natural selection. Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences 43(2): 569-73.
2012	Robust processes and teleological language. European Journal for Philosophy of Science 3(3): 299-312.
2009	Irretrievably confused? Innateness in explanatory context. Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences 40(4): 296-301.

Policy reports

Review of the Evidence of Sentience in Cephalopod Molluscs and Decapod Crustaceans [with Charlotte Burn, Alexandra Schnell, Heather Browning and Andrew Crump].

Book chapters

Fitness maximization. In R. Joyce (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Evolution and Philosophy*. London: Routledge, pp. 49-63.

Special issues

2022 Birch, J., Browning, H., Crump, A. and Michel, M. (eds.) (2022) *Animal Consciousness*. Special issue of the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*.

Commentai	ries, introductions, editorials, book reviews and review essays
2023	Animal liberation—then and now (Review of Singer: Animal Liberation Now). Nature.
2023	Animal sentience and the Capabilities Approach to justice (Review of Nussbaum:
	Justice for Animals) Biology and Philosophy. [with Eva Read.]
2022	How we got stuck: the origins of inequality (Review of Sterelny: The Pleistocene
	Social Contract). Mind and Language 37:751-759. [with Andrew Buskell.]
2022	How should we study animal consciousness scientifically? Journal of Consciousness
	Studies. [special editorial co-authored with 14 others.]
2021	The hatching of consciousness (Review of Godfrey-Smith: Metazoa and Le Doux: The
202.	Deep History of Ourselves). History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences.
2021	Neural organoids and the precautionary principle. <i>American Journal of Bioethics</i>
2021	21(1):56-58. [co-authored with Heather Browning.]
2020	The meaning of biological signals (Introduction to a special issue on Content in
2020	
	Signalling Systems). Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical
2020	Sciences 84:101348. [co-authored with Manolo Martinez and Marc Artiga.]
2020	Zones of precaution (Commentary on Mikhalevich and Powell, 'Minds without
0000	spines'). Animal Sentience 5(29): 28
2020	The evolutionary roots of belief (Review essay on Fuentes: Why We Believe). Current
	Biology 30(17): R971-R973
2020	The place of animals in Kantian ethics (Review essay on Korsgaard: Fellow
	Creatures). Biology and Philosophy 35: 8.
2020	In search of the origins of consciousness (Review essay on Ginsburg and Jablonka:
	The Evolution of the Sensitive Soul). Acta Biotheoretica 68: 287-294.
2019	Review essay on Okasha: Agents and Goals in Evolution. <i>Mind</i> 128(512): 1408-1416.
2019	From the 'coding metaphor' to a theory of representation (Commentary on Brette, 'Is
	coding a relevant metaphor for the brain?'), Behavioral and Brain Sciences 42: e220.
	[co-authored with Joulia Smortchkova].
2018	Degrees of sentience? (Commentary on Sneddon et al., 'Fish sentience denial:
	muddying the waters'). Animal Sentience 21(11).
2018	The difference between the scope of a norm and its apparent source (Commentary
	on Stanford, 'The difference between ice cream and Nazis: Moral externalization and
	the evolution of human cooperation'). Behavioral and Brain Sciences 41: E97.
2017	Dividing the Pleistocene pie (Review of Baumard: The Origins of Fairness).
	BioScience 67(2): 180-182.
2017	Review of Tomasello: A Natural History of Human Morality. BJPS Review of Books
	2017.
2014	How cooperation became the norm (Review essay on Sterelny, Joyce, Calcott and
	Fraser (eds): Cooperation and Its Evolution). <i>Biology and Philosophy</i> 29(3): 433-44.
2014	Has Grafen formalized Darwin? (Commentary on Grafen, 'The Formal Darwinism
2011	project in outline'). <i>Biology and Philosophy</i> 29(2): 175-80.
2013	Review of Okasha and Binmore (eds): Evolution and Rationality. <i>British Journal for the</i>
2013	Philosophy of Science 64(3): 669-673.
2013	Explaining the human syndrome (Review of Sterelny: The Evolved Apprentice).
2013	Metascience 22(2): 347-350.
2012	Social revolution (Review essay on Bourke: Principles of Social Evolution). <i>Biology</i>
2012	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	and Philosophy 27(4): 571-81.

Research grants and prizes

2024	Grant	from	The I	Navigat	ion Fun	d (appr	ox. \$115,000).	

- Grant from Open Philanthropy (held at QMUL) for a project on "Addressing key evidence gaps in the science of insect sentience" (up to \$1m over three years dependent on periodic reviews).
- 2024 Grant from Google Research (approx. £80,000).
- 2020-25 ERC Starting Grant on Foundations of Animal Sentience (ASENT) (€1.5m over five years).
- Defra grant for Review of the Evidence of Sentience in Cephalopod Molluscs and Decapod Crustaceans (AW0517) (£33,150 over six months).
- 2015-18 Philip Leverhulme Prize from the Leverhulme Trust (£100,000 over three years).

Visiting fellowships

- 2018 Visiting Fellowship at the Australian National University, August 2018.
- 2016 Visiting Fellowship at UC Irvine, March-April 2016.
- Visiting Fellowship at the Australian National University, July-August 2015.

Selected writing for a general audience

2024	The dangers of Al-assisted	farming. Aeon.	[with Virginie Simoneau-Gilbert.]

- Al, invertebrates, and the risk of living absurdly. LSE Philosophy Blog.
- 2023 What has feelings? Aeon. [with Kristin Andrews.]
- 2022 Octopus farms raise huge animal welfare concerns—and they're unsustainable too. *The Conversation.* [co-authored with Alexandra Schnell and Heather Browning.]
- Octopuses, crabs and lobsters feel pain—here's how we found out. *The Conversation*. [co-authored with Alexandra Schnell and Andrew Crump.]
- 2021 How to respond to Omicron: Lessons from Alpha. LSE COVID-19 blog.
- 2021 Which animals should be considered sentient in the eyes of the law? The Guardian.
- Humans, animals and pandemics: what needs to change? *LSE Festival* [a video and blog post.]
- 2020-21 Science and policy in extremis, parts 1 and 2. LSE COVID-19 blog.
- 2020 G. E. Moore's hands vs radical scepticism. LSE Philosophy blog [teaching resource]
- The mind-body problem. *LSE Philosophy blog.* [teaching resource]
- A conversation [with David Sloan Wilson] about the equivalence of theories of social evolution. *This View of Life blog*.
- How do we know how to act together? LSE Philosophy blog.
- Five reasons to vote in a safe seat. LSE British Politics & Policy blog.
- 2017 Crabs and lobsters deserve protection from being cooked alive. *Aeon*. Syndicated in *The Week*.
- The philosophy of social evolution [a series of 5 posts summarising the book]. *Brains Blog.*

Administration

- 2021-2023 Doctoral Programme Director (Admissions), LSE Philosophy.
- 2019-2024 Member of the Research Development Panel, LSE.
- 2019-present Member of the Academic Nominations Committee, LSE (renewed for second term).
- 2018-2021 Doctoral Programme Director, LSE Philosophy.

Professional and public service

2024-present	Member of the UK government's Animals in Science Committee.	
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- 2022 Interim director of the Forum for Philosophy.
- 2020-22 Associate Editor, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science.
- 2018-23 LAHP Subject Area Group panel member/chair (Theoretical Philosophy).
- Fellow of the Forum for Philosophy (in this capacity, organizer of five public events per year at the LSE).
- 2017-20 Trustee (Committee Member) of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science.
- 2015-17 Treasurer of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science.