

Russell Powell

Boston University / Department of Philosophy
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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Science
Philosophical Bioethics

Areas of Competence: Legal/Political Philosophy, Moral Psychology, Philosophy of Mind

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Philosophy, Duke University (2009)
M.S. Evolutionary Biology, Duke University (2009)
J.D., *with honors*, New York University Law School (2002)
B.A. Philosophy, *summa cum laude*, SUNY Binghamton (1999)

HONORS

American Council of Learned Societies New Faculty Fellow, 2011 (declined for tenure-track job)
James B. Duke Fellow, Duke University Society of Fellows
Phi Beta Kappa, Binghamton University Chapter

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Boston University, Department of Philosophy (since July 2011)
Assistant Professor

Oxford University, Faculty of Philosophy (June 2009-present)
Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellow, Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics
James Martin Research Fellow, Institute for Science and Ethics, Oxford Martin School
Research Associate, Corpus Christi College

Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research, Vienna (Summer 2012)
Visiting Fellow, Conceptual, Theoretical and Ethical Problems in Human Evolution

Johns Hopkins University, Berman Institute of Bioethics (2008-2009)
Greenwall Postdoctoral Fellow

Georgetown University, Department of Philosophy / Kennedy Institute of Ethics (2008-2009)
Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy and *Senior Research Scholar*, respectively

JOURNAL APPOINTMENTS

Journal of Medical Ethics, *Associate Editor*, British Medical Journal Group (April 2011-present)

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Powell, R. (forthcoming), "The Future of Human Evolution," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*

Powell, R., S. Clarke and J. Savulescu (forthcoming). "An ethical and prudential argument for prioritizing the reduction of parasite-stress in the allocation of healthcare resources," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*

Powell, R. and A. Buchanan (2011), "Breaking Evolution's Chains: The Prospect of Deliberate Genetic Modification in Humans," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 36(1): 6-27. Re-printed in Briefing Book for the U.S. Presidential Commission for Bioethics, 2010.

Powell, R. and S. Clarke (forthcoming), "Religion as an Evolutionary Byproduct: A Critique of the Standard Model," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*.

- Powell, R. (forthcoming), “Convergent Evolution and the Limits of Natural Selection,” *European Journal for the Philosophy of Science*
- Powell, R., G. Kahane and J. Savulescu (forthcoming), “The Evolutionary Dimensions of Emerging Biotechnologies and their Ethical Implications,” *Philosophy & Technology*
- Powell, R. and S. Holm (forthcoming), “Organism, Machine, Artefact: The Conceptual and Ethical Foundations of Synthetic Biology,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*
- Powell, R. (2010), “What’s the harm? An Evolutionary Theoretical Critique of the Precautionary Principle,” *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 20(2): 181–206.
- Powell, R. (2010), “The Evolutionary Biological Implications of Human Genetic Engineering,” *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* doi: 10.1093/jmp/jhq004
- Douglas, T., R. Powell. K. Devolder et al. (2010), “Resisting Sparrow’s Sexy *Reductio*: Selection Principles and the Social Good,” *American Journal of Bioethics*
- Powell, R. (2009), “Contingency and Convergence in Macroevolution,” *Journal of Philosophy* 106(7): 390-404.
- Buchanan, A. and R. Powell (2008), “Constitutional Democracy and the Rule of International Law: Are They Compatible?” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 16(3): 326-349
- Powell, R. (2007), “Is Convergence More than an Analogy? Homoplasmy and its Implications for Macroevolutionary Predictability,” *Biology and Philosophy*, vol. 22, pp. 565-578
- Powell, R. (2007), “The Law and Philosophy of Preventive War: An Institution-Based Approach to Collective Self-Defense,” *Australian Journal of Legal Philosophy* 32: 67-89

JOURNALS EDITED

- Powell, R. (main editor), G. Kahane and J. Savulescu (co-eds.) (forthcoming), “Evolution, Genetic Engineering and Human Enhancement,” *Philosophy & Technology*
- Powell, R. (main editor) and S. Holm (forthcoming), “Organism, Machine and Artefact: The Conceptual and Normative Challenges of Synthetic Biology,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*

BOOKS

- Clarke, S., R. Powell and J. Savulescu (forthcoming), *Scientific and Conceptual Investigations of Religious Conflict*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

INVITED BOOK CHAPTERS

- Powell, R. (forthcoming), “On the Nature of Species and the Moral Significance of their Extinction,” in the *Oxford Handbook on Animal Ethics*, T.L. Beauchamp and R.J. Frey (eds.), Oxford University Press.
- Powell, R. (2010), “Nanoethics: Big Ethical Issues with Small Technology,” *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*
- Powell, R. and A. Buchanan (2009), “Fidelity to Constitutional Democracy and to Robust International Law,” in *Routledge Handbook of International Law*, D. Armstrong (ed.).

ACADEMIC CONSULTING

- U.S. President’s Commission on Bioethics (2010); Nuffield Council on Bioethics (2011): Synthetic Biology
 American Psychological Association, *Monitor on Psychology*: Empirical Moral Psychology

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- o *Biomedical Ethics* (Boston University, 2011)

- *Bioethics* (Oxford University, Ethox Centre, Department of Public Health, 2011)
- *Philosophy of Science* (Oxford University, Lectures, co-taught w/ Prof. Simon Saunders 2010)
- *Ethical Theory* (Oxford University, New College, Tutorial 2010)
- *Practical Ethics* (Oxford University, St Anne's College, Tutorial 2010)
- *Philosophy of Biology - Graduate Level* (Georgetown University, Fall 2008, Spring 2009)
- *Philosophy of Environmental Science* (Georgetown University, Spring 2009)
- *The Ethics of War and International Affairs* (Duke University, mixed Grad/UG Seminar Spring 2008)
- *Genomics, Ethics and Public Policy* (Duke University, Fall 2007)
- *Biomedical Ethics* (Duke University, Summer 2007)
- *Philosophical Problems in Constitutional Law* (Duke University, Spring 2006)
- *Ethics and Public Policy* (w/ Allen Buchanan as primary instructor, Duke University, Fall 2006)

REFeree

Biology and Philosophy, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, American Journal of Bioethics, Mind, Philosophy & Technology, Wellcome Trust Foundation

DISSERTATION

Reading the Book of Life: Contingency and Convergence in Macroevolution
{Supervisor: Alexander Rosenberg}

Abstract. Biologists have long debated whether the shape of complex life represents the fluky culmination of an eminently unrepeatable series of contingencies, or whether there is a greater necessity to life's grand parade of forms. In his book *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (1989), the late paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould invites us to contemplate the following evolutionary thought experiment: rewind the "tape of life" to when the first animals evolved (some 550-700 million years ago), and consider how its story would again unfurl. Gould believed that replaying the tape of life would result in a radically different macroevolutionary outcome—a morphological menagerie bearing little resemblance to complex life as we know it. Others have argued that the evolution of animal life is highly replicable because it is significantly constrained by physical and biological laws. In this thesis, I analyze several key theoretical concepts in this debate, especially the notion of contingency as it functions in macroevolutionary theory, and I explore various methodological hurdles confronting the empirical resolution of this controversy.

EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY MASTERS THESIS

Extinction and Reiteration in the History of Life: A Macroevolutionary Dialectic
{Supervisor: V. Louise Roth}

Abstract. In this thesis, I examine the macroevolutionary dialectic between the extinction of biological forms on the one hand, and their evolutionary reiteration on the other. Extinction is historical, contingent, and irreversible, while reiteration is general, timeless, and cyclical. The first Part treats the conceptual and methodological problems relating to biological extinction, while the second examines the iterated evolution of robust image-forming sensory modalities, including vision, echolocation, and electromagnetism.

LAW SCHOOL THESIS

Science and Law in the Construction of Human Races (2002)
{Supervisor: F. Michael Higginbotham}

Abstract. In this thesis I explore the interaction between racist law and flawed science in perpetuating the American racial caste system in the Antebellum and post-Civil War South.

CONFERENCES / TALKS

- ❖ *The Ethics of Germ-Line Modification*, Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey, August 2011
- ❖ *Genetic Modification and Preservation of Human Good*, Boston University, January 2011
- ❖ *The Ethics of Germ-Line Modification*, New York University, January 2011
- ❖ Co-organizer: *Organism and Machine: The Conceptual and Normative Challenges of Synthetic Biology*, University of Copenhagen, 2011 (w/ Sune Holm)
- ❖ *A Future Without Genetic Engineering: Medicine, Evolution and the Preservation of Human Good*, James Martin Advanced Research Seminar, Oxford University, 2010
- ❖ *The Ethics of Synthetic Biology: A Comprehensive Approach* (w/ Allen Buchanan), material presented at the meeting of the U.S. Presidential Commission for Bioethics, 2010
- ❖ *Evolution, Engineering, and Human Variation*, Big Bioethics workshop, Oxford University, 2010
- ❖ *Adaptationism and the Limits of Natural Selection*, Altenberg Symposium in Theoretical Biology, Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research, University of Vienna, 2010
- ❖ *Is Religion an Adaptation or a Byproduct?* University of Edinburgh, International conference on Science and Religion, 2010 (European Society for the Study of Science and Theology).
- ❖ Chief Organizer: *Scientific and Normative Perspectives on Religious Conflict*, University of Oxford, 2010 (with Steve Clarke)
- ❖ *Is Extinction Really Forever? Convergent Evolution and the Limits of Natural Selection*, Darwin Day Speaker, Department of Evolution, Ecology and Behavior, Georgetown University (2009)
- ❖ *What's the Harm? A Skeptical Assessment of the Precautionary Principle*, Georgetown Univ. Conference on the Ethics of Emerging Technologies, 2008
- ❖ *Precaution and Genetic Modification*, Johns Hopkins University, Berman Inst. of Bioethics, 2008
- ❖ *Contingency in Macroevolution*, Rutgers Univ. Philosophy Dept. Colloquium (2008)
- ❖ *Reading the Book of Life*, Florida State Univ. Department of Philosophy (2008)
- ❖ *This Gouldian View of Life*, University of Kansas, Philosophy Colloquium (2008)
- ❖ *Is Robust Image-Formation a Key Innovation?* Philosophy of Biology Conference on Complexity (Université de Montréal, 2006).
- ❖ *Constitutionalism and Robust International Law*, Duke University, Philosophy Department
- ❖ *Preventive War: Institutions and the Right to Self-Defense*, Graduate Conference in Ethics and Political Philosophy (Virginia Tech, 2006).
- ❖ *Faculty Advisory Committee*, Provost Lecture Series: *Science & Human Nature* (2007-2008)
- ❖ Organizer: 7th annual Conference in Philosophy & Biology, *Exploring the Major Transitions of Life: Individuality, Coloniality, and the Units of Selection*, Duke, 2008 (w/ Leonore Fleming)
- ❖ 6th annual Conference in Philosophy and Biology, *Chance in Evolution* (Duke, 2007)
- ❖ 5th annual Conference in Philosophy and Biology, *The Emotions as Norm Enforcers: The Interface between Evolution, Ethics, and Game Theory* (Duke, 2006).

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, New York, NY

Attorney, Complex Mass Torts and Insurance Litigation, 2001-2004

Commercial Matters: Class action litigation, complex product liability, commercial contracts, intellectual property, insurance law, and corporate finance.

Pro Bono Matters: Immigration (asylum), domestic relations (VAWA petitions), housing discrimination, and animal welfare.

Awards: Pro Bono Publico Service Award, 2002-2003

Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, New York, NY.

Litigation Specialist, May-September 2006

Commercial Matters: Patent and Advertising Litigation

Animal Legal Defense Fund

Law Professional Volunteer, Oct. 2002-Present

The Legal Aid Society New York, NY

Student Attorney Practitioner, Aug. 2001-May 2002

BAR MEMBERSHIP

New York State Bar, 2002; U.S. District Courts, Eastern and Southern Dist. of N.Y.

LANGUAGES / ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Proficient in written and spoken Korean; French

HOBBIES

Fossil hunting, snorkeling, wildlife photography, aquariums, hiking, running, sports that involve balls

REFERENCES

Alex Rosenberg (alexrose@duke.edu)
R. Taylor Cole Professor of Philosophy
Duke University

Owen Flanagan (ojf@duke.edu)
James B. Duke Professor of Philosophy
Duke University

Julian Savulescu (julian.savulescu@stx.ox.ac.uk)
Uehiro Chair in Practical Ethics and Director
Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics
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