

KURT C.M. MERTEL

Dept. of Philosophy, Queen's University
John Watson Hall, Kingston, Ontario K7L 3N6

E-mail: km113@queensu.ca
Homepage: kurtcmm.weebly.com

EMPLOYMENT

10/2016–08/2018 Research Fellow, Department of Philosophy, **Queen's University**.

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION AND COMPETENCE

AOS: 19th & 20th Century European Philosophy (esp. Phenomenology & Hermeneutics).
Ethics, Social & Political Philosophy (esp. Frankfurt School Critical Theory).

AOC: Applied Ethics, Critical Philosophy of Race, Philosophy of Language, Kant &
German Idealism.

EDUCATION

2009-2016 Ph.D. in Philosophy, **Northwestern University** (Conferred Sept. 2, 2016)
Dissertation: *Liberating the Self-Relation from Reification and Alienation:
Towards an Appropriative Approach*

Committee: Cristina Lafont (Chair), Charles Mills, Axel Honneth,
Steven Crowell, Robert Bernasconi.

It is widely held that reflexivity is the defining feature of selfhood: the ability of the self to stand in a certain relation to itself. The question of how exactly to theorize this self-relation, however, has been the source of ongoing debate, leading to many different accounts being offered. In my dissertation, I develop and defend a social philosophical account of the self-relation based on a novel interpretation of Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, which I call "the appropriative view". The appropriative approach challenges the cognitivist view that the self's relation to itself is essentially a knowledge relation on the one hand, and the constitutivist construal of the self-relation in terms of practical self-deliberation, on the other. Re-conceptualizing the self's relation to itself in terms of self-appropriation, which involves situating it within a broader social ontology, enables the appropriative view to avoid the problems of the cognitivist and constitutivist approaches and to provide the basis for a critique of self-reification and alienation as *social pathologies*, a possibility unavailable to rival views. The end result is to establish the exegetical and philosophical foundations for a Heideggerian Critical Theory that aims to revive and fulfill the original promise of the early Herbert Marcuse's attempt to fuse Marxism with phenomenology.

2015 DAAD Research Fellow, Institute for Social Research, **Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main** (March-August). Supervisor: Axel Honneth.

2013-14 DAAD Research Fellow, Institute of Philosophy, **Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main**. Supervisor: Axel Honneth.

- 2011 *Interdisciplinary Program in Critical Theory Certificate (IPCTC)*, Mellon Interdisciplinary Research Cluster in Critical Theory, **Northwestern University**.
- 2008-09 Doctoral Student, Department of Philosophy, **University of Toronto**.
- 2006-07 M.A. in Philosophy, **Queen's University**
Thesis: *Toward a Substantive Right of Exit*
Committee: Will Kymlicka (Chair), Christine Sypnowich, Margaret Moore.
- 1998-2002 Honours B.A. in Political Science (with High Distinction), **University of Toronto**
-

PUBLICATIONS

“Two Ways of Being a left-Heideggerian: The Crossroads Between Political and Social Ontology”, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (2017), DOI: 10.1177/0191453717692645.

“Re-Thinking Gareth Evans’s Approach to Indexical Sense and the Problem of Tracking Thoughts”, *Grazer Philosophische Studien: The International Journal for Analytic Philosophy*, (2017), DOI 10.1163/18756735-000013.

“Historicism and Critique in Herder’s *Another Philosophy of History*: Some Hermeneutic Reflections”, *European Journal of Philosophy* (2016), 24/2 (June): 397-416.

“Back to *Sein und Zeit*: The Methodological Significance of the Fusion of Ontology, Phenomenology and Hermeneutics”, *Debates y Combates: Por Un Nuevo Horizonte de la Política* (translated into Spanish) (2014), 4/6: 7-41.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

“A Critical Examination of Maeve Cooke’s Post-Secular Model of Democracy”, *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory*: 29 pp. in ms.

“Heidegger's Ontology of Care as a Critique of the Reification of Self, Other, and World”, *Human Affairs: Postdisciplinary Humanities and Social Sciences Quarterly* (2017), Vol. 4 (Invited contribution for special issue edited by L’ubomir Dunaj and Vádislav Suvák).

“Thomas McCarthy’s Critical Theory of Development and Hermeneutics as Practical Philosophy: Towards a Constructive Dialogue”, *Las Armas de La Critica: Contribuciones a la Teoría Crítica de la Sociedad* (“The Weapons of Critique: Contributions to a Critical Theory of Society”) (2017), J. Serrano and G. Casuso (eds.), Barcelona: Anthropos.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Appropriating and Appropriated Self: Language, Selfhood, and the Social in Being and Time (Book manuscript).

“Moving Beyond Self-Constitution: The Case for an Appropriative Approach to the Self-Relation” (Under Review).

HONOURS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2016 **ICUB Post-Doctoral Fellowship**, Institute for Research in the Humanities (IRH), University of Bucharest (declined).
- 2015 **Interdisciplinary Conference Grant**, Mellon Interdisciplinary Research Cluster in Critical Theory, Northwestern University
- 2015 **Short-Term Research Grant**, (March–August), German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (Institute for Social Research, Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main. Supervisor: Axel Honneth).
- 2015 **Supplemental Award**, the Graduate School, Northwestern University (awarded to students who secure external fellowships).
- 2013-14 **Long-Term Research Grant** (October–July), German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (Institute of Philosophy, Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main. Supervisor: Axel Honneth).
- 2013-14 **Supplemental Award**, the Graduate School, Northwestern University
- 2013 **École Normale Supérieure (ENS)-Exchange Fellowship**, Northwestern University (Fellowship for an official exchange with ENS-Paris, offered to one Northwestern graduate student each year. Declined in favour of DAAD Research Grant)
- 2013 **Finalist**, Weinberg College of the Arts and Sciences (WCAS) **Outstanding Graduate Student Teacher Award** (One student from the Humanities Division is selected each year)
- 2013 **Travel Grant**, Dept. of Philosophy, Northwestern University
- 2011 **Intensive Summer Language Grant**, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
- 2010 & 2011 **Travel Grant**, Dept. of Philosophy and the Graduate School, Northwestern University
- 2009-11 **SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship** (replaces CGSD)
- 2009, 2014 **University Fellowship**, the Graduate School, Northwestern University
- 2008 **Conference Travel Grant**, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Toronto
- 2008-11 **J.A. Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship-Doctoral** (CGSD), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)
- 2008 **Ontario Graduate Scholarship**, Ministry of Training, Government of Ontario (OGS) (Declined in favour of CGSD)
- 2007 **Travel Grant**, Dept. of Philosophy and the Graduate School, Queen’s University
- 2006 **Canada Graduate Scholarship-Master’s** (CGSM), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)
- 2006 **Queen’s University Graduate Scholarship**
-

REFEREED PRESENTATIONS

- 2017 “Social Philosophical Reflections on Self-Alienation in the Contemporary Service Economy”, 7th *Annual International Conference: The Social Pathologies of Contemporary Civilization*, Goethe University of Frankfurt, Frankfurt (Oct. 19-20).
- 2016 “The Question of the Priority of Political vs. Social Ontology in the left-Heideggerian Tradition”, Panel “New Directions in Critical Theory”, *International Political Science Association World Congress*, Poznan (Unable to attend)
- 2013 “Beyond Self-Observation and Self-Constitution: Towards a Heideggerian ‘Appropriative’ Approach to the Self-Relation”, *Copenhagen Summer School in Phenomenology and the Philosophy of Mind*, University of Copenhagen.

- 2010 “Blocking the Argument from Hallucination: The Phenomenological Disjunctivist Approach”, *Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress*, Concordia University.
- 2010 “Rescuing Kant from Non-Conceptualist Kantianism”, *Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress*, Concordia University.
- 2009 “Kant’s Aesthetics and the Hermeneutics of Art”, *Canadian Society for Aesthetics*, Carleton University.
- 2008 “Gadamerian Themes in McDowell’s Recent Philosophy” *Annual Meeting of the North American Society for Philosophical Hermeneutics* (NASPH), DePaul University.
2007 *Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress*, University of Saskatchewan
- 2008 “Narrative and Interpretation: Horizons and Boundaries”, part of a panel titled, “The Limits of Narrative”, *Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress*, University of British Columbia.
- 2007 “Toward a Substantive Right of Exit”, *Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress*, University of Saskatchewan.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- 2017 “Heidegger's Ontology of Care as a Critique of the Reification of Self, Other, and World”, Workshop: *Care of the Self in a Global Era*, University of Presov, (June 26-27).
- 2017 “Self-Appropriation vs. Self-Constitution: Social Philosophical Reflections on the Self-Relation”, Colloquium, Department of Philosophy, Queen’s University (March 16).
- 2017 “Fundamental Ontology as Critical Social Theory: Reviving Marcuse’s Abandoned Project”, Department of Philosophy, University of Warsaw (Date TBD).
- 2016 “Two Ways of Being a left-Heideggerian: The Crossroads Between Political and Social Ontology”, *Research Colloquium of the Institute for Social Research*, Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main.
- 2015 “The Question of the Priority of Political vs. Social Ontology in the left-Heideggerian Tradition”, *New Approaches to Critical Theory Workshop*, Justus Liebig University of Giessen.
- 2014 “Towards an Appropriative Approach to the Self-Relation”, Colloquium in Social Philosophy (Axel Honneth), Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main.

OTHER PRESENTATIONS

- 2013 “Beyond Self-Observation and Self-Constitution: Towards a Heideggerian Appropriative Approach to the Self-Relation”, Dissertation Research Seminar, Northwestern University.
- 2012 “Honneth and Heidegger on Reification”, Dissertation Research Seminar, Northwestern University.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2008 (Fall) **Graduate Research Assistant**, Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto

Supervisor: Joseph Heath

Produced a bibliography and literature review in business ethics for a textbook in Applied Ethics.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Primary Instructor (Northwestern University)

Summer 2016 Introduction to Political Philosophy

Teaching Assistant

Trent University

Winter 2017 Introduction to Critical Thinking (Online; Yussif Yakubu)

Northwestern University

Winter 2013 Introduction to Philosophy (Sanford Goldberg)
Fall 2012 Philosophy and Public Issues (Two sections) (Mark Sheldon)
Spring 2012 Introduction to Early Modern Philosophy (Baron Reed)
Winter 2012 Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (300-level) (Axel Mueller)
Fall 2011 Introduction to Ancient Philosophy (Ken Seeskin)
Spring 2011 Introduction to Moral Philosophy (Jon Garthoff)
Winter 2011 Introduction to Existentialism (Mark Alznauer)
Fall 2010 Reading Foucault (300-level) (Penelope Deutscher)

Guest Lecture: Re-thinking Democracy after Globalization (Freshman Seminar), October 26 2012 (Cristina Lafont).

Queen's University

Winter 2008 Introduction to Critical Thinking (Nancy Salay)
F/W2006/07 Introduction to Applied Ethics (Michael Kocsis)

GRADUATE SEMINARS (audited courses marked with an asterisk*)

19TH AND 20TH CENTURY CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Proseminar II: Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Cristina Lafont)
Heidegger on Presence and the Thing (Jean-Luc Marion, University of Chicago)
Heidegger and Time (Françoise Dastur)
Truth and Authenticity: Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Lambert Zuidervaart)
Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (Cristina Lafont)
The Philosophy of History in the German Tradition (Rachel Zuckert)
Derrida and Deconstruction (Penelope Deutscher)
Hermeneutics and Critical Theory (Paul Fairfield, Queen's University)
Copenhagen Summer School in Phenomenology and the Philosophy of Mind

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Habermas' Theory of Communicative Rationality (Cristina Lafont)
Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action (Joseph Heath, University of Toronto)
Contemporary Theories of Democracy (Cristina Lafont)
Seminar in the Critical Philosophy of Race (Charles Mills)*
Topics in Political Philosophy: Egalitarianism (Charles Mills)
Topics in Social and Political Theory: Ideal vs. Non-Ideal Theory (Charles Mills)
Negativity and Ontology (Ernesto Laclau)
Colloquium in Social Philosophy (Tilo Wesche, University of Frankfurt)*

Colloquium in Social Philosophy (Axel Honneth, University of Frankfurt)*
Colloquium in Social Philosophy (Axel Honneth, University of Frankfurt)*
Multiculturalism and Human Rights (Will Kymlicka, Queen's University)

KANT AND GERMAN IDEALISM

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (Paul Franks, University of Toronto)
Kant's Third Critique and Contemporary Political Thought (Ernesto Laclau)
Hegel's *Logic* in a Historical Perspective (Ernesto Laclau)
Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Mark Alznauer)
*Independent Studies: Transcendental Idealism (Peter Fenves)

ETHICS

Ethical Theory: Intrinsic Value (Richard Kraut)
Ethical Theory: Moral Realism (Richard Kraut)*
The *Nicomachean Ethics* (Richard Kraut)
Aristotelian Ethics (Stephen Leighton, Queen's University)

AESTHETICS

The End of Modernism (Robert Pippin and David Wellbery, University of Chicago)
Theories of Literature (Peter Fenves)
Perception and Beauty (Sonia Sedivy, University of Toronto)
Topics in Contemporary Philosophy of Art (Deborah Knight, Queen's University).
Topics in the Philosophy of Film (Deborah Knight).

PHILOSOPHY OF MIND AND LANGUAGE

Proseminar: Topics in Philosophy of Language (Peter Ludlow)
Proseminar: Topics in the Philosophy of Mind and Perception (Diana Raffman and Evan Thompson, University of Toronto)
John McDowell's *Mind and World* (David Bakhurst, Queen's University)
Proseminar: Topics in the Philosophy of Mind (Deborah Knight, Queen's University)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE

- 2017 **Chair**, *Workshop: Teaching and Learning: Metaphysical, Epistemic and Ethical Issues*: "Teaching and Telling", Speaker: Sebastian Rödl (University of Leipzig), Queen's University.
- 2016 **Panel Co-Organizer & Chair** (with Ruhtan Yalciner) "New Directions in Critical Theory", *World Congress of Political Science*, Poznan (July 23-28; Unable to attend).
- 2015 **Co-Organizer** (with Justo Serrano) of the *International Working Group in Critical Theory*, Institute for Social Research, Goethe University of Frankfurt.
- 2013–2014 **Participant**, *International Working Group in Critical Theory*, Institute for Social Research, University of Frankfurt.
- 2010-12 **Founding Member**, *Philosophy Inclusiveness Committee*, Department of Philosophy, Northwestern University, 2010-2012.
- 2010 **Reviewer**, *Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics 4th Annual Conference*, Northwestern University.
- 2010 **Chair**, *Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress*: "Intensionality and Epistemic Justification.", Speaker: Patrick Bondy. Concordia University.

- 2008 **Chair**, *Workshop on Social Reason*: "Torture and Dignity." Speaker: Jay Bernstein. Queen's University.
- 2007 **Chair**, *Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress*: "Knowing how and Knowing that." Speaker: Victor Kumar. University of Saskatchewan.
- 2007 **Chair**, *Self and Other Conference*: "The Other-in-the-Same: Levinas' Deformalization of Sensibility and Affectivity." Speaker: Bettina Bergo. Queen's University.
-

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Canadian Philosophical Association
American Philosophical Association

LANGUAGES

English (Native)
French (Fluent)
German (Advanced Reading, Writing, and Speaking; B 2.3 Certificate, Goethe Institute);
Spanish (Advanced Reading, Writing, and Speaking)
Turkish (Fluent)

REFERENCES

Available upon request.