

Heather M. Wallace

CONTACT Department of Philosophy heather.wallace@duke.edu
Duke University hmwallace00@gmail.com
West Duke Building 1 (919) 308-7054
Box 90743
Durham, NC 27708

EDUCATION

Duke University, PhD Candidate Present
Dissertation Advisors: Owen Flanagan (Philosophy) and Toril Moi (Literature)
GPA: 3.79
Certificate in College Teaching

Whitworth University, B.A. Philosophy and English 2011
GPA: 3.98 summa cum laude

DISSERTATION

“Barriers to Reciprocity: The Problem of Others’ Minds”
Directors: Owen Flanagan (Philosophy) and Toril Moi (Literature)
An abstract is included at the end of the C.V.

RESEARCH

Area of Specialization: Philosophy of Mind
Areas of Competence: Existentialism, Philosophy of Literature, Feminist Philosophy

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Duke Center for Philosophy, Arts, and Literature (PAL)
Associate Director, present
Assistant Director, 2013-2015

Critical Thinking Assessment, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences
Duke University Office of Assessment
Grader, Spring 2013

PUBLICATIONS, Co-Authored

Owen Flanagan and Heather Wallace, “The Character of Consciousness” *Understanding James, Understanding Modernism*. ed. David Evans (Bloomsbury Press), 2017.

Owen Flanagan and Heather Wallace, “William James and the Problem of Consciousness” *Consciousness and the Great Philosophers*. ed. Stephen Leach and James Tartaglia (Routledge Press), 2017.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

“The Problem of Others’ Minds: Simone de Beauvoir, Ambiguity, and Reciprocity”
October 12, 2017: Duke Philosophy Department, hosted by the Duke Philosophy Women and Minorities in Philosophy Working Group

“Doing Philosophy is a Speech Act in the Real World: A Philosophy of Climate and the Climate of Philosophy”
November 11, 2016: Duke Philosophy Department, hosted by the Duke Philosophy Graduate Student Climate Committee

“What is the difference between knowing a person and knowing a tornado?”
March 24, 2015: GradX, Duke Graduate School Student Presentation

“Authenticity and Other People”
April 4, 2015: Comments at the Pacific American Philosophical Association

“How to Live with Others: Interpersonal Distance”
February 10, 2015: Response to Invited Speaker Corina Stan, Duke PAL

“The Truth About Others: Epistemic Authority and Relativism in *Theaetetus*”
10th Annual Gonzaga Graduate Philosophy Conference, April 25-26, 2014

HONORS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Ottis Green Fellowship, 2016-2017

James B. Duke Fellowship, 2011-2015

Lilly Graduate Fellows Program Teaching Fellowship, 2011-2014

Hutchins Paper Prize, Gonzaga Graduate Student Philosophy Conference, April 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Duke University

PHIL 103 Introduction to Philosophy
Spring 2016, Fall 2015

PHIL 150 Logic
Spring 2015, Fall 2014, Summer 2014

PHIL 285 Existentialism
Summer 2017

Co-Instructor

Duke in Greece Study Abroad Program: The Birth of Reason in Ancient Greece
Professor Michael Ferejohn, Summer 2015

Reason and Argument, Fall 2017
Dean Jesse Summers

Teaching Assistant, Duke University

Introduction to Philosophy, Professor Owen Flanagan, Spring 2014

History of Ancient Philosophy, Professor Michael Ferejohn, Fall 2013

Metaphysics of Time and Space, Professor Sara Bernstein, Spring 2013

History of Modern Philosophy, Professor Andrew Janiak, Fall 2012

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Philosophical Association, 2013-present

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

“Teaching Argument Mapping,” workshop, UNC, April 2015

Peer teaching observations with other graduate students, Spring 2015

“Writing is Thinking,” workshop, Duke, Feb 2013

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Graduate Student Climate Committee, member, founder, Fall 2016-present

Graduate Student Bylaws Committee, chair, Jan- Sept 2016

Graduate Student Works-in-Progress Coordinator, Duke Philosophy, 2013-2014

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Barriers to Reciprocity: The Problem of Others' Minds

H. M. Wallace
Duke University Philosophy

Committee:

Advisors: Owen Flanagan and Toril Moi
Nancy Bauer (Tufts), Allen Buchanan, and Michael Ferejohn

People experience themselves as subjects--as conscious, mental, feeling individuals with agency—and as objects in the midst of the world-- visible to others' judgments and vulnerable to their responses. Simone de Beauvoir calls this dual experience the 'tragic ambiguity' of the human condition. These two aspects of experience come into conflict every time our self-attributions are contradicted by the judgments of others about us. A struggle presents itself over who is authoritative: who has the best vantage point to determine the truth about oneself? This struggle is epistemic—who is right?—and ethical—how does this conflict play out interpersonally?

Beauvoir's philosophical framework as a feminist existentialist provides us with guidelines for navigating this conflict. Beauvoir argues for two claims: 1) we are fundamentally ambiguous: we are always both subject and object, and 2) we continually fail to accept and account for our ambiguity, in our philosophical theories and our ordinary lives. We are constantly tempted to eliminate our own or others' subjectivity in order to avoid the conflict of our competing judgments. The stakes of this failure are high: we make both epistemic and ethical mistakes when we try to deny or eliminate our ambiguity. Beauvoir shows us how our philosophical concepts fail to assume our ambiguity, and by doing so, fail at grasping reality *and* fail at community.

Beauvoir's account of our failures of ambiguity is not a historical footnote, but a powerful contemporary critique. Her analysis applies to our philosophical projects today. Her insights name and correct these failures across philosophy's sub-disciplines. In this project, I apply her analysis to three distinct conversations in contemporary analytic philosophy: self-knowledge and other minds in philosophy of mind, relativism regarding truth in interpreting Plato's *Theaetetus*, and the ethics of our contemporary philosophy practices in classrooms and colloquium. Through these applications, I argue that philosophy fails at its own aims when it fails to account for our ambiguity—and that by forefronting Beauvoir's concept of ambiguity, we can build philosophies that more successfully answer to reality and are more available to a diverse community.