

ALISON K. MCCONWELL

Department of Philosophy
University of Calgary
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EDUCATION:

Ph.D. Philosophy, University of Calgary, March 2017

Dissertation Title: Individuality, the Major Transitions and the Evolutionary Contingency Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Marc Ereshefsky

Committee: Dr. C. Kenneth Waters, Dr. Megan Delehanty,
Dr. Jessica Theodore (Department of Biology, UCalgary),
Dr. John Beatty (University of British Columbia)

Dissertation Abstract: The evolutionary contingency thesis is a view about the nature of evolution that emphasizes change, impermanence, and lack of necessity in how evolution unfolds (Gould 1989, Beatty 1995, 2006, Desjardin 2011, and Turner 2010). Evolutionary contingency produces diverse biological entities, processes, and mechanisms. I argue that this diversity amounts to a pluralism. First there are a plurality of evolutionary individuality types that selection acts on, which emerge, evolve, and disappear over the course of evolution. Second, I defend a disunified model of major transitions in evolution because there are many kinds of major events in life's history. And finally, I address the nature of cancer. I argue that contingency provides an evolutionary reason for philosophers to focus on the structural differences among types of cancers, rather than just their functional similarities.

M.A. Philosophy, Western University, 2011

Research Project Title: Subcortical Structures and Their Role in Conscious Function

Supervisor: Dr. John Nicholas

B.A. with High Honours in Philosophy, University of Regina, 2010

Honours Thesis Title: How to Build a Moral Bridge with Words

Supervisor: Dr. David Elliott

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION: Philosophy of Biology, Philosophy of Science

AREAS OF COMPETENCE: Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Mind

PUBLICATIONS:

(2017) Contingency and Individuality: A Plurality of Individuality Types. *Philosophy of Science*, 84(5).

(2017) Gouldian Arguments and the Sources of Contingency (with Adrian Currie). *Biology and Philosophy*, 32 (2): 243-261.

(2015). Review of Maureen O'Malley's *Philosophy of Microbiology* (2014). In *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 0: 1-5.

(2015). Review of Thomas Pradeu's *The Limits of the Self: Immunology and Biological Identity* (2012). In *Philosophy in Review* 35 (3): 171-173.

(2010). The Natural Way to Build a Moral Bridge with Words. In *Exploring the Cave*, 4, Philosophy Undergraduate Journal. SK: University of Regina

Manuscripts in Preparation:

- The Disunity of Major Transitions in Evolution
- A Philosophical Approach to Cancer Beyond its Role in Natural Selection: Tracking Medical Interventions that Target Cancer Kinds

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, California, U.S.A

Postdoctoral Fellow

- *Patrick Suppes Center for History and Philosophy of Science*, Stanford University, with Helen Longino and Michael Friedman (Begins September 2018)

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY, Calgary, AB, Canada

Postdoctoral Fellow

- *From Biological Practice to Scientific Metaphysics*, University of Calgary, with C. Kenneth Waters (2017-2018)

Instructor

- Philosophy 367: Philosophy of Science (Fall 2016)
- Philosophy 361: Evidence (Spring 2015)

Teaching Assistant (duties included both teaching, grading, and discussion sessions)

- Medical Science 205: Developing Health Research Literacy (Winter 2016 and Winter 2017)
- Philosophy 249: Introduction to Ethics (Winter 2014)
- Philosophy 201: Mind, Matter, and God (Fall 2013)
- Philosophy 249: Introduction to Ethics (Winter 2013)

Research Assistant (duties included bibliographic research, and preparation of research grant proposals)

- For Dr. Marc Ereshefsky: Spring 2014 – Winter 2014
Spring/Summer 2015
Spring 2016

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO, *London, ON, Canada*

Teaching Assistant (duties included grading)

- Philosophy 2074G: Business Ethics (Winter 2011)
- Philosophy 2700F: Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory (Fall 2010)

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA, *Regina, SK, Canada*

Teaching Assistant (duties included grading)

- Philosophy 272: Contemporary Moral Issues (2010)
- Philosophy 273: Biomedical Ethics (2009)
- Philosophy 150: Introduction to Practical Ethics (2009)
- Philosophy 100: Introduction to Philosophy (2009)

PRESENTATIONS:

(August 2017). Contingency and MacroEvolution. *Society of Vertebrate Paleontology: Thinking About Fossils, Philosophy of Paleontology Workshop*, August 22nd, 2017, University of Calgary.

(August 2017). Evolutionary Contingency is Both Destructive and Productive of Diversity. *Philosophy Meets Paleobiology in the Badlands*, August 25th-28th, 2017, Sandstone Lodge, Dinosaur Provincial Park, Alberta.

(November 2016). Contingency and Individuality: A Plurality of Evolutionary Individuality Types. *25th Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association*, Nov. 3-5th, 2016, Atlanta, Georgia.

(May, 2016). Contingency and Individuality: A Plurality of Evolutionary Individuality Types. *Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science*. UCalgary.

(November 2015). Biological Individuals. *The Apeiron Society for the Practice of Philosophy*. Scandinavian Centre, Calgary, AB.

(July 2015). Contingency and Individuality. Interdisciplinary Individuality Workshop July 27th-31st 2015, *Superorganisms, Organisms, and Suborganisms as Biological Individuals: Individuality in the Life Sciences*. Gut Siggen, Germany.

(July, 2015). Biological Individuality and the Evolutionary Contingency Thesis. *The International Society for History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology*. UQAM.

(May, 2013). 'Incomplete' Conscious Experience: An Investigation into the Nature of Animal Pain. *The Eleventh Annual Graduate Conference in Philosophy of Mind, Language, and Cognitive Science*. The University of Western Ontario.

(January, 2010). Animals and Law: An Analysis of Legal and Moral Issues. *The Third Annual Western Canadian Undergraduate Philosophy Conference*. University of British Columbia

HONORS AND AWARDS:

Philip E. Vernon Award (\$1800)	2016
Philosophy Graduate Essay Competition Award (\$1400)	2016
Canadian Journal of Philosophy Conference Grant (\$1340)	2015
Faculty of Arts Dean's Office Graduate Scholarship (\$1000)	2015
SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship, University of Calgary (\$60 000)	2014
Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship, University of Calgary (\$15 000) offered, but declined	2014
Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship, University of Calgary (\$10 000)	2013
Queen Elizabeth II Scholarship, University of Calgary (\$10 000)	2012
Ontario Government Scholarship, UWO (\$15 000) offered, but declined	2011
Leslie A. Dybvig Scholarship in Ethics, University of Regina (\$1600)	2010
Academic Gold Scholarship, University of Regina (\$1500)	2008

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE:

Climate and Diversity Committee Graduate Student Representative for Department, University of Calgary, Sept 2016-April 2017.

Organizer of Professional Workshop Series for CV and Resume Construction for Graduate Students, Department of Philosophy, University of Calgary, March 16th and 30th 2016.

Contributor for Webpage Construction concerning Philosophy Graduate Students' Association and Department Student Life, Department of Philosophy, University of Calgary, February 2016.

Co-Organizer for Biological Individuality Reading and Research Group, April 2016-June 2016.

Conference Committee Chair, the 5th Annual Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, University of Calgary, May 2016.

Executive President, Philosophy Graduate Students' Association, University of Calgary, May 2015-April 2016.

Conference Director, the 4th Annual Philosophy Graduate Student Conference in Philosophy of Science, University of Calgary, March 2015.

Registration Organizer, Calgary Summit of Philosophers of Science: Future Approaches for Philosophy of Biology, University of Calgary, Sept 26-28 2014.

Executive Administrator, Philosophy Graduate Students' Association, University of Calgary, May 2013–April 2015.

Conference Executive Committee Chair, the 3rd Annual Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, University of Calgary, March 2014 and 2nd Annual Conference in March 2013.

SERVICE TO THE DISCIPLINE:

Managing Editor of and Contributor to 'A Philosopher's Take' Blog, May 15th, 2016 – present.

Journal referee for *Biology and Philosophy*, 2016, 2017.

Conference referee for the University of Calgary's 4th Annual Philosophy Graduate Student Conference in Philosophy of Science 2015.

Conference referee for the University of Western Ontario's Eighth Annual Graduate Conference in Philosophy of Mind, Language, and Cognitive Science, 2011.

Workshops and Research Groups:

From Biological Practice to Scientific Metaphysics: Calgary 2017 Summer Institute, June 19th-June 30th, 2017, Banff, Alberta.

Major Transitions in Evolution, Interdisciplinary Reading and Research Group in Biological Sciences, Winter 2017

Stereotype Threat and Microaggressions in the Classroom, November 24th, 2015. Equity and Diversity Office, University of Calgary.

Feminism, March 20th 2015, Philosophy Graduate Students' Association, University of Calgary.

Gender Inequity, November 14th and 21st 2013, Philosophy Graduate Students' Association, University of Calgary.

GRADUATE COURSEWORK:

Scientific Practice (Audit)	C. Kenneth Waters and Marc Ereshefsky	Winter 2017
Issues in Historical Science (Audit)	Adrian Currie	Winter 2016
Natural Kinds, Classification, and Scientific Practice (Audit)	Marc Ereshefsky	Winter 2016
Scientific Metaphysics (Audit)	Marc Ereshefsky and C. Kenneth Waters	Fall 2015
Epistemology and Science (Audit)	C. Kenneth Waters	Fall 2014
Logic II	Ali Kazmi	Winter 2014
Philosophy of Physics	Kerry McKenzie	Summer 2013
Sustainability and Environmental Ethics	Allen Habib	Winter 2013
Philosophy of Mind	Greg Janzen	Winter 2013
Philosophy of Biology	Marc Ereshefsky	Fall 2012
Philosophy of Mind and Consciousness	Walter Glannon	Fall 2012
Philosophy of Perception	John Nicholas	Winter 2011

Evolutionary Perspectives in Ethics	Gillian Barker	Winter 2011
The Language of Thought	Chris Viger	Winter 2011
Moore's Ethics	Anthony Skelton	Fall 2010
Philosophy of Law	Barry Hoffmaster	Fall 2010
Mental Representation	Angela Mendelovici	Fall 2010

REFERENCES:

Marc Ereshefsky, Department of Philosophy, University of Calgary, AB T2N 1N4.

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C. Kenneth Waters, Department of Philosophy, University of Calgary, AB T2N 1N4.

Phone: (403) 220-5989 Email: ckwaters@ucalgary.ca

Megan Delehanty, Department of Philosophy, University of Calgary, AB T2N 1N4

Phone: (403) 220-2828 Email: mdelehan@ucalgary.ca

John Beatty, Department of Philosophy, University of British Columbia, BC V6T 1Z1

Phone: (604) 822-2444 Email: john.beatty@ubc.ca

Jay Odenbaugh, Department of Philosophy, Lewis and Clark College, OR 97219 USA

Phone: (503) 768-7377 Email: jay@lclark.edu

Walter Glannon, Department of Philosophy, University of Calgary, AB T2N 1N4.

Phone: (403) 220-3171 Email: wglannon@ucalgary.ca

Teaching References: Megan Delehanty and Marc Ereshefsky

Last CV update: Sept 2017