

Blair Vidakovich 12 February 1991

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Summary

I am a philosophy PhD candidate about to submit their thesis. I have been a political activist for a long time. I am also an amateur programmer, a digital electronics enthusiast, and a member of the Free Software movement.

I started my academic career in 2009. I graduated from the University of Western Australia in 2012 with an Honours Degree in Political Science, and then again in 2013 with a Masters in Political Science. I am submitting my PhD thesis that I have done under the University of Notre Dame Australia on 30 June 2018.

I have been a political activist since the age of 16. I identify as a socialist, and

am a member of the Australian organisation Socialist Alliance. I have run (unsuccessfully) for public office with this party. I have been demonstrating, campaigning, and struggling for social justice for the rights of Aboriginal people, workers, women, LGBTIQA people, and people from nations oppressed by imperialism.

I am also an amateur computer programmer, electronics engineer, and hacker. You can find my various projects, both solo and collaborative, on my blog, bootlicker.party, and on my github repositories - under the username "bootlicker". I am particularly interested in 20th century digital electronics.

RELATIVE EXPERIENCE

United Nations Youth Association
Committee Member

Perth, Western Australia
2006 - 2010

I first joined this organisation as a participant in debating competitions, but went on to play a role in organising conferences, functions, and other activities in this.

In my role as a competition participant, I went on to become a finalist in the Hammarskjold Trophy Competition, which is a mock UN Security Council sitting session. I was also invited to come participate in the national version of the Hammarskjold competition in Canberra.

As a committee member, I was responsible for catering ordering and facilitation of discussions on complex international political issues.

IGA Supermarket
Deli Assistant

City Beach, Western Australia
2007 - 2008

- Communicate in the workplace.
- Deliver a service to customers.
- Process and maintain workplace information.
- Handle mail.
- Produce simple word processed documents.
- Create and use spreadsheets.
- Communicate electronically.
- Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices.
- Organise and complete daily work activities.
- Work effectively with others.

- Use business technology.
- Organise personal work priorities and development.
- Work effectively as an off site worker.
- Process financial transactions and extract interim reports.
- Process customer complaints.
- Support operational plan.
- Provide workplace information and resourcing plans.
- Support continuous improvement systems and processes.
- Contribute to team effectiveness.
- Utilise a knowledge management system.
- Create and use databases.
- Create electronic presentations.
- Purchase goods and services.
- Apply knowledge of WHS legislation in the workplace.
- Write simple documents.

UWA Political Science Club
General Member

University of Western Australia
2009 - 2013

I was not involved in administering this organisation like I was with the one above, but I did feature prominently as guest speaker on Marxism and Anti-Imperialism at public debates. I edited this society's monthly magazine.

Australian Labor Party
General Member

Perth, Western Australia
2010 - 2013

I identified as a socialist within this organisation, even though it is not an explicitly socialist political party. I further strengthened my ability to administer an organisation by being elected to the role of Vice President of a branch of the ALP. I organised debates, social functions, voting booths, door-knocking fundraising, and leafletting campaigns. I worked closely with the Trade Union Movement in Western Australia.

HHG Legal Group
Outside Clerk

West Perth, Western Australia
February 2010 - April 2010

- Communicate in the workplace.
- Deliver a service to customers.
- Process and maintain workplace information.
- Handle mail.
- Produce simple word processed documents.
- Create and use spreadsheets.
- Communicate electronically.
- Participate in environmentally sustainable work practices.
- Organise and complete daily work activities.
- Work effectively with others.
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- Create and use databases.
- Create electronic presentations.
- Purchase goods and services.
- Apply knowledge of WHS legislation in the workplace.
- Write simple documents.

Coles Supermarkets
Storeperson

Innaloo, Western Australia
January 2009 - April 2011

- Completing and checking import and export documentation
- Picking and processing orders.
- Receiving goods.
- Using product knowledge to complete work operations.
- Replenishing stock.
- Dispatching stock.
- Participating in stocktakes.
- Manually sorting mail and parcels.
- Carrying out delivery operations.
- Identifying products and storing to specifications.
- Operating commercial vehicles.
- Loading and unloading goods and/or cargo.
- Moving materials using a powered palletjack.
- Participating in an environmentally sustainable workplace.
- Operating a pallet jack.
- Following occupational health and safety procedures.
- Demonstrating an awareness of chain of responsibility regulations.
- Working in a socially diverse environment.
- Interpreting road maps and navigating pre-determined routes.
- Using infotechnology such as telzones.
- Following security procedures when working with goods and cargo.
- Capture records into a records keeping system.
- Providing information from and about records.
- Selling products and services.
- Monitoring plant and equipment in an environmentally sustainable manner.

De Vine Cellars
Storeperson

Mount Lawley, Western Australia
August 2011 - November 2012

- Completing and checking import and export documentation
- Picking and processing orders.
- Receiving goods.
- Using product knowledge to complete work operations.
- Replenishing stock.
- Dispatching stock.
- Participating in stocktakes.
- Manually sorting mail and parcels.
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- Providing information from and about records.
- Selling products and services.
- Monitoring plant and equipment in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Airlite Group
Cleaner

Swanbourne Army Barracks
October 2012 - February 2013

- Perform basic stain removal.
- Maintain carpeted floors.
- Clean ceiling surfaces and fittings.
- Clean wet areas.
- Plan for safe and efficient cleaning activities.
- Clean external surfaces.
- Participate in workplace safety arrangements.
- Operate commercial backpack vacuum cleaner.
- Maintain hard floor surfaces.
- Clean glass surfaces.
- Maintain furniture, fittings and room dressing.
- Sort and remove waste and recyclable materials.
- Maintain cleaning storage areas.
- Clean using microfibre techniques.
- Provide effective client surface.

Socialist Alternative
General Member

Perth, Western Australia
October 2013 - May 2015

I worked on the street canvassing for political campaigns and events. I promoted rallies, film screenings, political panels. The campaigns I promoted included the *National Union of Student's* National Days of Action. These Australia-wide rallies and strikes were scheduled to show opposition to budget cuts and decreases in working conditions.

I also worked closely with committee members on the campaign for Marriage Equality, which back then seemed like an impossible campaign to win. This is a campaign I have been involved in for many years.

I was also on the campaign team for this organisation's bid to be returned to office as the executive of the Curtin University Student Guild. We were unsuccessful, but I got to use my skills in invigilating vote counting again.

I was also involved in the beginning of the March in March, and March in August campaigns against the Abbott government. These were some of the biggest rallies Australia had seen for decades up until that point.

BIG W Mirrabooka
Storeperson

Mirrabooka, Western Australia
November 2013 - February 2014

- Completing and checking import and export documentation
- Picking and processing orders.
- Receiving goods.
- Using product knowledge to completework operations.
- Replenishing stock.
- Dispatching stock.
- Participating in stocktakes.
- Manually sorting mail and parcels.
- Carrying out delivery operations.
- Identifying products and storing to specifications.
- Operating commercial vehicles.
- Loading and unloading goods and/or cargo.
- Moving materials using a powered palletjack.
- Participating in an environmentally sustainable workplace.
- Operating a pallet jack.
- Following occupational health and safety procedures.
- Demonstrating an awareness of chain of responsibility

- regulations.
- Working in a socially diverse environment.
- Interpreting road maps and navigating pre-determined routes.
- Using infotechnology such as telzones.
- Following security procedures when working with goods and cargo.
- Capture records into a records keeping system.
- Providing information from and about records.
- Selling products and services.
- Monitoring plant and equipment in an environmentally sustainable manner.

University of Notre Dame
Sessional Tutor

Fremantle, Western Australia
July 2015 - December 2016

Introduction to Ethics (ET100): Students are introduced to philosophers with different theories about what it means to live an ethical life. By introducing participants to theoretical and practical foundations for living the moral life certain competencies will be developed along the way. One of the more important competencies is the ability to analyse a complex ethical issue rather than simply describe it.

Introduction to Philosophy (PH100): This unit introduces students to several key branches of philosophy: logic; metaphysics, epistemology, politics, and aesthetics. These disciplines will be examined using influential thinkers from the western philosophical tradition. Central concepts explored in this unit are arguments for the existence of God, love and beauty, free will and determinism, concepts of self.

Coles Supermarkets
Cleaning and Trolley Collection

Sydney, New South Wales
March 2017 - August 2017

Cleaning the bakery, fresh fruit & vegetable preparation areas, and other parts of various Coles Supermarket warehouse sections out in the Sydney Western suburbs. Also collecting and organising the wheeled metal customer trolleys.

Socialist Alliance
Organiser and Branch Executive Member

Sydney, New South Wales
April 2017 - Present

In this organisation I have been involved in coordinating party branches, fundraising (such as fundraising events), political education of younger members, developing policy for elections, running for public office on socialist platforms. An important thing that happened was the ALP adopted the socialist housing policy I developed for the Newcastle Town Council election. This organisation stands firmly against imperialist aggression.

HireUp
Disability Support Worker

Sydney, New South Wales
January 2018 - Present

I have been involved in caring and supporting people with disabilities. Many of my clients receive funding from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Much of my work has centred around supporting young adolescent boys with varying degrees of autism. I tutor clients with very mild autism, and assist them in their schoolwork.

EDUCATION

Notre Dame University
PhD in Philosophy

Fremantle, Western Australia
2015 - 2018

Naturalism, Biology, Concept Formation, Human Normativity
Dissertation: Re-Enchanting Nature: Hegel Contributes
Powerfully to an Understanding of Naturalism - Submitting
Thesis 31 December 2018.

I am interested in constructing a philosophical naturalism that is compatible with moral realism. Naturalism is the position that only what is natural is real. The explanation for what is natural is normally meant to be the methods and ontology of the natural sciences - physics, chemistry, and biology. Because these disciplines do not admit of moral entities, or do not use moral reasoning in order to do their work, it is most often deemed that morality must be treated in an anti-realist fashion.

So I am interested in building a naturalism which *does* admit of the understandings and conclusions were ordinarily refer to in everyday language.

University of Western Australia
Master of International Relations

Perth, Western Australia
2013 - 2013

Studied under Professors Roderic Pitty and Sarah Percy. Worked primarily on Constructivist theories of international relations as an alternative to Realist and Neoliberal theories. A lot of the work I produced was theoretical, but I did some concrete or applied work. This was on the validity of the popular attitude that nuclear weapons promote peace due to the idea of 'Mutually Assured Destruction'. I come down against the idea that nuclear weapons promote peace at all.

University of Western Australia
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, Honours 2A

Perth, Western Australia
2009 - 2012

Rational Choice Theory, Welfare Economics, Social Choice Theory
Dissertation: Assessing the validity of the mainstream
'rational choice theory' in game theory, decision theory and economic theory.

- President of UWA Philosophy Club
- Co-Editor of UWA Politics Club Magazine
- YMCA Youth Parliament Participant 2009, 2010, 2012
- Several editorial articles in the Pelican, the student union magazine

University of Western Australia
Bachelor of Laws

Perth, Western Australia
2009 - 2012

Discontinued after three years of study. Studied criminal law, negligence law (torts), contract law, property law, and trusts.

Research Interests:

Analytic philosophy, metaphysical naturalism, evolutionary biology, concept formation, philosophy of mind, 18th and 19th century German philosophy, John McDowell, Wilfrid Sellars, Hegelianism, Kantianism, German Idealism.

Selected Conference Papers:

- “Human Experience is Normative ‘All the Way Down’: An Outline of McDowell’s Transcendental Empiricism”, presentation at Murdoch Philosophy Colloquium, Murdoch University, Perth, WA (November 2015).
 - “A Genealogy of John McDowell’s Epistemological Argument in Mind and World”, presentation at Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference, Monash University, Melbourne, VIC (July 2016).
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Interests

- Programming (especially Lisp, Python, Assembly Language, and Ada);
- Analytic Philosophy (moral philosophy, monism, dialectics, materialism);
- Second Generation Digital Electronics (discrete transistor logic);
- Marxist Philosophy (Gyorgy Lukacs, Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, Herbert Marcuse);