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Member Interviews

Work/Life Balance

# APA Member Interview: Michael Broz

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*Michael Broz is a doctoral candidate at **Memorial University of Newfoundland**. His research is focused on social relations and social ontology, specifically drawing from Marx.*

***What are you working on right now?***

I am currently working on my proposal for my doctoral dissertation, which has me reading (and re-reading) Hobbes, Schmitt, Marx, and C. B. Macpherson, among others. In basic terms, my dissertation is arguing that there is what I call *Sozialeinstellung*, or Social Habit, defined as a universal force that drives individuals to behave in a socially defined and focused way. This develops a social ontology that I hope to explore further.

I am currently awaiting the decision on an article regarding art and political economy in one journal and revising a conference paper on queerness in Marxism from last year to be submitted for publication in June.

Outside my research, I am working at the journal *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies* in my new role as assistant book review editor and also technical processing editor. I have been with this journal since it started and though it can be demanding work, I have loved every minute of my experience. Learning copyediting, typesetting, online journal work, and book review editing has really given me a lot of experience. Our Editor-in-Chief, who is also my doctoral supervisor, has really given me unique opportunities to help build an international journal, and it has deeply enriched my formal education.

### ***What topic do you think is under explored in philosophy?***

I think philosophy can gain insights from the examination of the global pandemic. Viruses operate by injecting essential data into an alienated organism that functions as a reproduction machine for the virus; but because the reproduction process is imperfect, it creates mutations. I find myself toying with the idea that this process can teach us something about dialectical processes of change over time. It is something I have been thinking about for some time: how to draw inspiration from the natural sciences as a methodological stepping-stone to make progress in philosophy.

***If you could wake up tomorrow with a new talent, what would you most like it to be?***

I would love to be able to play a musical instrument. I love music and have tried piano, the French horn, guitar, and bass guitar. I don't have a natural gift for music, but I love listening to it and think I would get a lot of joy from producing it.

***What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?***

I have struggled with illness all my life. My parents were told when I was 14 years old that I was unlikely to graduate high school. Instead, I graduated high school with honors and went on to obtain a BA, an MA, and am now working on my Ph.D. I'd like to think that my academic achievements were not partly acts of defiance against my early prognosis, but in all honesty, I know they were. The years of illness and hospitalizations were hard, but these experiences have greatly shaped my philosophical views, and I feel blessed to have had the support of many family members and friends.

***What time of day are you most productive and creative?***

In my department I am famously known for sending emails at 3:00am. I am a night owl. I like the freedom from distractions, the soft lighting, and how, interestingly, my philosophical ideas feel so much clearer in the wee hours of the morning. As my colleague Jordan jokes "I could call Michael at 3am or 3pm and have the same likelihood that Michael be awake and will answer."

***What's your favorite quote?***

"To die, to sleep / To sleep perchance to dream / ay, there's the rub / For in this sleep of death / What dreams may come?"—Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

I love Shakespeare to begin with, but this particular quote has always stuck with me. Hamlet is asking one of the most basic human questions: what comes after death? Whether you are an atheist or a person of faith, this is a question that we all grapple with, and here its poignancy is supplied by the beautiful phrasing of the afterlife as a kind of dream, both fleeting and eternal.

*This section of the APA Blog is designed to get to know our fellow philosophers a little better. We're including profiles of APA members that spotlight what captures their interest not only inside the office, but also outside of it. We'd love for you to be a part of it, so please contact us via the [interview nomination form here](#) to nominate yourself or a friend.*



### **Sabrina D. MisirHiralall**

Dr. Sabrina D. MisirHiralall is an editor at the Blog of the APA who currently teaches philosophy, religion, and education courses solely online for Montclair State University, Three Rivers Community College, and St. John's University.

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