

Mathew Lu

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Education:

2005	Cornell University, Ph.D., Philosophy
2002	Cornell University, M.A., Philosophy
1998	The University of Chicago, B. A. (honors), Philosophy

Honors:

1999, 2003	Sage Fellowship, Cornell University
2002	Western Civilization Studies Fellowship (full year of support), ISI
1998	Phi Beta Kappa, University of Chicago

Areas of Specialization:

Ethical Theory; History of Ethics; Social and Political Philosophy

Areas of Competence:

Medieval Philosophy; Kant; Phenomenology; Philosophy of Religion; Bioethics

Employment:

2005– present	Department of Philosophy, University of Tennessee – Knoxville, Lecturer
2005	Department of Philosophy, Cornell University, Summer Lecturer

Publications:

“Kantian Ethics and the Demands of Special Concern” (submitted for review)
“Selecting Potential Children: A Reply to John Davis” *Bioethics* (in preparation, by invitation of the author and editors of *Bioethics*)
“Cannibalism and Non-Personal Objects of Value” (in preparation)

Conferences / Presentations:

- Spring 2008 “Cannibalism and Non-Personal Objects of Value” - University of Tennessee
- Nov 2007 “Right Reason and the Reality of God” - University of Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture
- Oct 2007 “Cannibalism and Non-Personal Objects of Value” - Tennessee Philosophical Association 2007 Annual Meeting - Vanderbilt University
- Feb 2007 “Kant, Love, and Respect for Persons” - Case Western Reserve University
- Nov 2006 “Making and Doing: Moral Knowledge in Modern Philosophy” - University of Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture
- Nov 2006 “Kantian Ethics and the Demands of Special Concern” at the Tennessee Philosophical Association 2006 Annual Meeting - Vanderbilt University
- Oct 2006 “Something About Kant’s Ethics” - University of Tennessee

Present and Future Research

In the short term, I continue to work on extending and expanding the research program begun in my dissertation. In particular, I am presently interested in showing how a developmental moral psychology can shed light on our moral intuitions surrounding various questions in normative ethics. Right now I am writing a paper exploring the capacity of the dominant theories of normative ethics (broadly Kantian and consequentialist) to account for the value of non-personal objects, like the environment or beauty.

In the longer term, I want to continue to expand my research into the nature of moral autonomy. In particular, I want to probe, and indeed undermine, many settled views concerning ground moral principles like respect for persons, not because I think respect is unimportant, but because I don’t think it’s adequately understood. This larger project reflects my conviction that moral psychology represents a particularly compelling avenue for research outside some of the constraints of more typical normative ethics. Ultimately, I expect to draw heavily from a neo-Aristotelean and Thomistic understanding of the human good in developing this critique.

Language:

German

Courses Prepared to Teach:

Graduate seminar:

- Autonomy in Contemporary Moral Psychology
- Ethical Theory

Upper division (undergraduate):

- Contemporary Ethical Theory
- History of Ethics
- Kant's Ethics
- Kant (*First Critique*, etc.)
- Moral Psychology (Autonomy, Practical Rationality, etc.)
- Social & Political Philosophy
- 20th Century Continental Philosophy (Introduction to Phenomenology)
- Philosophy of Religion
- Bioethics

Lower division (undergraduate):

- Introduction to Philosophy
- Bioethics
- Business Ethics
- Existentialism
- Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion
- Medieval Philosophy

Please Note: These are course I am prepared to teach now, however I am eager to expand my competencies in a variety of areas.

Teaching Experience:

University of Tennessee – Knoxville

upper division:

- “19th & 20th Century Philosophy” – 2006 & 2007
- “Ethical Theory” – 2006
- “Philosophy of Religion” - 2007

lower division:

- “Introduction to Philosophy” – 2005 & 2006
- “Bioethics” – 2005 & 2007
- “Business Ethics” – 2006

Cornell University

Full Instructor:

- “Existentialism” – 2005
- “The Philosophy of Love” (Freshman Writing Seminar) – 2004

Graduate-level Coursework:

History

Phil 309: Plato	G. Fine
Phil 312: Hume	C. Williams
Phil 414: Heidegger	W. Bracken
Phil 612: Augustine and the Will	S. MacDonald

Moral, Social, and Political Philosophy

Phil 346: Modern Political Philosophy	R. Miller
Phil 446: Community, Nation, & Morality	R. Miller
Phil 447: Reconceiving Liberalism	R. Miller
Phil 642: Morality, Self & Psychopathology	J. Whiting

Core

Phil 319: Philosophy in the mid 20th Century	H. Hodes
Phil 331: Deductive Logic	H. Hodes
Phil 481: Problems in the Philosophy of Science	R. Boyd
Phil 662: Philosophy of Mind	S. Shoemaker

As an Undergraduate (University of Chicago)

Freud	J. Lear
Kant's <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>	R. Pippin
Kant's Ethics	C. Vogler

References:

Professor Richard Miller, Cornell University
Professor Scott MacDonald, Cornell University
Professor Jennifer Whiting, University of Toronto
Assistant Professor John Davis, Cal State—Fullerton

Assistant Professor William Bracken, University of California – Riverside*
Assistant Professor Andrew Chignell, Cornell University*

* - in support of teaching

Ph.D. Dissertation: On Loyalty

(Committee: Richard Miller (chair), Scott MacDonald, Jennifer Whiting)

Our particular loyalties are centrally important to our moral lives, affecting our actions in countless ways, and yet the phenomenon itself has received less sustained philosophical attention than it deserves. I think this represents a genuine deficiency in moral psychology, because loyalties are as much at the ground of moral action as is moral reflection. Thus, I argue in my dissertation that we must take account of loyalties if our concern with practical reason is to be accurate to its actual expression in the world.

After surveying the limited literature in the field, I begin by pursuing Bernard Williams' suggestion that the deepest loyalties in human life are not subject to justification on the basis of universalist moral theories. In general, I argue that modern ethical theory—both of the broadly consequentialist and the broadly Kantian sort—cannot adequately account for demands of loyalty towards particular persons, groups, etc, because those theories are intrinsically insensitive to the values that generate such demands within the will itself. I argue that both approaches (though certainly for very different reasons) tend to be insensitive to the importance of the particularities of the moral self. That is, both treat moral agents, in some important ways, as generic. This is unsurprising, as something like this must be the result of their characteristic impartiality. However, if I am right, this overweening impartiality can become deeply problematic when it undermines the very ground of the self.

This is not to deny the need for, or the central moral importance of, impartiality; but it is to say that that impartiality must be tempered by a practical concern for how actual human agents are constituted and develop. So after an essentially critical first half of the dissertation, I devote the remainder to the positive project of understanding the role deep loyalties play in the intra-volitional structure of a mature human will. My argument attempts to describe the ground conditions of a morally mature will—i.e. some of the essential features of human moral psychology as they are actually valued, features which no moral theory can ignore while remaining faithful to the content of the lived moral life.

I make special use of Harry Frankfurt's innovative account of volition, autonomy and commitment, including his recent work on love. Especially important is Frankfurt's notion of volitional necessity—the idea that a moral agent can be impelled to perform certain actions not as a result of the deliberations of practical reason, but because his caring for certain objects is itself partially constitutive of his will. I argue that it is in this constitutive relationship that we finally find an understanding of the unique values underlying the deepest loyalties in human life. As useful as Frankfurt's account is, however, his apparent indifference to the source of a given agent's higher-order, volitionally constitutive commitments is problematic. Therefore, drawing on work by Jonathan Lear, I offer an account of the origins of moral responsibility in the course of personal moral development. I argue that moral responsibility can only be fully understood developmentally, in light of how an agent achieves maturity as a reaction to, and reflection of, the public values of his social world.

With these tools in place, I argue that we can finally understand just how necessary loyalties are in human life and the degree to which they underwrite the very possibility of volitional agency itself. The structure of any humanly valuable will generates the sort of volitional necessities that just are the deepest loyalties in human life. Accordingly, any truly accurate conception of the moral psychology of real human beings must make room for such loyalties, which fundamentally represent an expression of the self.