

**SANFORD DIEHL**

Curriculum Vitae

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EMPLOYMENT

2021-24 Junior Research Fellow, Christ Church, University of Oxford

EDUCATION

2021 Harvard University, Ph.D., Philosophy

2013 Columbia University, B.A., Philosophy, *summa cum laude*, Honors in Philosophy  
Minor in German Literature and Cultural History

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Normative Ethics, Moral Psychology, Social Philosophy, Political Philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Post-Kantian European Philosophy, Metaethics, Applied Ethics, Epistemology

PUBLICATIONS

“Why Immanent Critique?” *European Journal of Philosophy* (forthcoming), online first:  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12708>

DISSERTATION: “Transparency and Recognition”

Abstract: My dissertation explores three ways in which our reasoning and attitudes about other people depend on the possibility of uptake from the people they concern. The first two essays develop accounts of love and respect as forms of recognition—that is, of taking someone to matter in a way that acknowledges to them their significance for you. I argue that loving action must, on pain of alienation, be based in a distinctively second-personal form of thought. And respect for other people, because it is at issue in hope, shame, and other attitudes, is a mode of acknowledgment not reducible to treating someone as a source of claims. The third essay defends the idea of immanent critique, as developed in the tradition of critical theory, by appeal to a conception of social criticism as a distinctive form of address.

Committee: Richard Moran (chair), Matthew Boyle (Chicago), Ned Hall, T.M. Scanlon,  
Kieran Setiya (MIT)

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2020-21 Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Harvard University
- 2020 Special Commendation for Extraordinary Teaching, Harvard University  
(*Harvard-wide award by undergraduate nomination to ~10% of instructors for their teaching during the pandemic*)
- 2019 GSAS Merit/Term-Time Fellowship, Harvard University  
(*Harvard-wide merit-based award for research, declined*)
- 2018-19 Graduate Fellowship, Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University
- 2018 Bowen Prize, Harvard University (*for best essay in moral or political philosophy*)
- 2018 Richard M. Martin Predissertation Fellowship, Harvard University
- 2015-19 Derek Bok Center Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University (4x)  
(*for receiving an average teaching evaluation score of at least 4.5/5*)
- 2015 GSAS Summer Predissertation Fellowship, Harvard University
- 2013 Phi Beta Kappa, Columbia University
- 2013 James Gutman Prize in Philosophy, Columbia University

## PRESENTATIONS (\* = refereed)

- 2022 “Aggregation and Alienation,” LMU-Zürich Early Career Conference on Relational Normativity, Universität Zürich (*planned*)\*
- 2021 “Respect and Directed Obligation,” MANCEPT Workshop on the Ideal of Recognition in Contemporary Normative Theory, University of Manchester (*online*)\*
- 2019 “Partiality and Being Loved,” Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University
- 2017 “Why Immanent Critique?” Chicagoland Graduate Philosophy Conference, University of Illinois-Chicago\*
- 2016 “Why Immanent Critique?” Workshop on European Philosophy, Harvard University
- 2014 “Hegel and Natural Teleology in Dewey’s Later Thought,” Virginia Tech Graduate Philosophy Conference, Virginia Tech\*

## COMMENTS

- 2019 on Julia Markovits, “The Partial Relativism of Praise and Blame,” Workshop on Rights and Supererogation, MIT
- 2019 on Sungho Kimlee, “Self-Cultivation in Early Confucianism,” Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics Faculty Seminar, Harvard University
- 2018 on Sean Aas, “Before Year Zero: Political Philosophy and the Prehistory of Disability,” Workshop in Social Philosophy, Princeton University\*

- 2017 on Max Lewis, “The Goldilocks Dilemma for Pessimists about Moral Deference,”  
Harvard-MIT Graduate Philosophy Conference, Harvard University

## TEACHING

### Primary Instructor:

- 2020 Contractualism, Spring (*undergraduate seminar*)  
2017 Moral Epistemology, Fall (*undergraduate seminar*)  
2019 Big Data, Ethics, and Moral Machines, Summer, Harvard Pre-College Program  
(*two-week summer course for high school students*)

### Teaching Assistant (\* = ran discussion section):

- 2019 Nozick’s *Philosophical Explanations*, Selim Berker, Spring  
2017 Marx and Marxism, Tommie Shelby, Spring\*  
2016 Self, Freedom, and Existence, Richard Moran, Fall\*  
2016 Violence and Democracy, Susanna Siegel, Spring  
2016 Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, Matthew Boyle, Spring\*  
2015 Existentialism in Literature and Film, Sean Kelly, Fall\*

### Guest Lectures:

- 2019 “Scanlon’s Contractualism,” in Modern Moral Philosophy and the History of Ethics  
2017 “Stephen Lukes, *Marxism and Morality*,” in Marx and Marxism  
2016 “The Third Antinomy,” in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*

### GRADUATE-LEVEL COURSEWORK (\* = audit)

Modern Moral Philosophy and the History of Ethics (Doyle & Setiya, MIT)\*  
The First Person (Doyle & Moran)\*  
Topics in Political Philosophy (Stanczyk)\*  
Kant’s Ethical Theory (Korsgaard)\*  
Partiality and Impartiality (Preston-Roedder & Setiya, MIT)\*  
Normative and Meta-Normative Questions (Berker & Parfit)\*  
Moral Psychology (Setiya, MIT)  
The Ethics of Belief (Rinard)  
Metaethics (Berker)  
Marx (Tuck, Harvard Government)  
Other Minds (Boyle & Moran)  
Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (Boyle)  
Epistemology (White, MIT)  
First-Year Colloquium (Richard)

Aristotle's Ethics (Korsgaard)  
Equality and Liberty (Scanlon)  
First-Year Colloquium (Hall & Simmons)  
Knowledge and Abilities (Richard)\*  
Heidegger's *Being and Time* (Carman, Columbia)  
Hegel and Dewey (Honneth, Columbia)  
Metaethics (Vogt, Columbia)  
Weber and Lukács (Honneth & Neuhauser, Columbia)  
Hegel and Durkheim (Neuhauser, Columbia)

#### SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

2019 Organizer, Prospective Students Visit  
2018-19 Philosophy Graduate Student Representative  
2018 Member, Departmental Climate Committee  
2018 Participant, Critical Theory Summer School, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
2016-18 Departmental Representative to the Graduate Student Council  
2016-18 Research Assistant for Richard Moran  
2016 Research Assistant for Susanna Siegel  
2014-18 Organizer, Harvard Philosophy Talk-Shop Series  
2013-19 Referee, MIT-Harvard Graduate Philosophy Conference  
2011-13 Research Assistant for Samuel Moyn  
2013-21 Organizer of or regular participant in reading groups on relational normativity, rights, analytical Marxism, neo-Aristotelian ethics, Kant, philosophy and literature, philosophy in German, the work of Joseph Raz, and the work of Vincent Descombes

#### LANGUAGES

English (native), German (proficient), Spanish (basic)

## Dissertation Abstract

Sanford Diehl

Bernard Williams observes that the idea that social institutions and interpersonal relations should be *transparent*—that their structure should be accessible and acceptable to each person—animates not only the contractualist philosophical tradition but all views that “retain more radical hopes born of the Enlightenment,” including the Marxian project of ideology critique.<sup>1</sup> My dissertation explores how the value of transparency makes the success of our reasoning and attitudes about other people depend on the possibility of uptake from those people themselves. I focus on three domains: interpersonal love, interpersonal morality, and social critique.

Chapter 1 considers actions and attitudes central to love and friendship that must be undertaken for the right reason to be undertaken at all. Consoling a distraught friend only so that she will owe you a favor, for instance, does not merely fail to merit praise; it fails to constitute real support. I argue that what separates genuine care from its alienated imitation is whether the other person figures in the agent’s practical thought in an essentially second-personal way. To grasp a second-personal thought, one must understand it to corefer with the first-personal thoughts of its referent, congruent with the interconnection of uses of ‘you’ and ‘I’ in conversation. Love for another subject is thus shaped partly by the conditions of its intelligibility as such to that person.

Chapter 2 asks how best to understand the intersubjective dimension of respect for other people: the fact that respect is a form of recognition, a way of taking someone to matter which acknowledges to them their significance for you. One possibility is to conceive of respect in deontic terms, as a matter of proper regard for the claims that other people can legitimately make against one. I argue that this deontic conception of respect is too narrow to capture the many different contexts in which respect and disrespect for other people can be at issue in interpersonal interaction, including in hope and shame. It is more promising, I suggest, to think of respect as having the conceptual and explanatory structure of a virtue.

One form of transparency in political contexts is the ability to understand and affirm the social practices and institutions that shape one’s own life. Chapter 3 explores this form of transparency by defending the principle, central to the Frankfurt School tradition of critical social theory, that social criticism should rely only on normative criteria that are “immanent” to the society under evaluation. The key idea of the paper is that a normative theory can have a practical aim that places legitimate constraints on its contents. For example, since the aim of advice is to contribute to the advisee’s deliberation about what to do, a judgment about what someone should do is good advice only if that person could take it up in her own deliberation. I argue that there is a valuable form of social criticism analogous to advice which aims to contribute to the reflection of members of society on how to orient themselves practically to their social world. Social and historical circumstances can prevent a normative criterion from serving as a genuine basis for orientation to the social world, rendering it ineligible for use in social criticism of this kind.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 101.