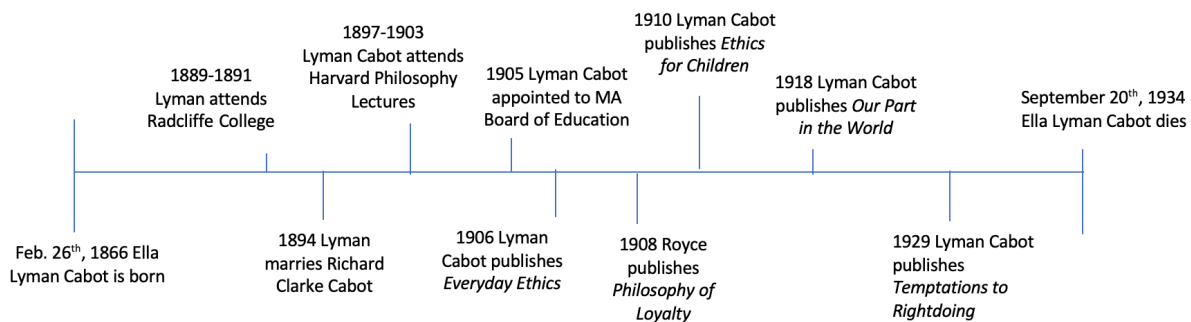


The Virtue Ethics of Ella Lyman Cabot

Abstract

This paper explores the virtue ethics of American philosopher Ella Lyman Cabot. After a brief introduction situating Lyman Cabot in the pragmatist tradition, I offer an articulation of her position in *Everyday Ethics* (1906) as both *structurally* and *substantively* a form of virtue ethics. I close by considering whether Lyman Cabot can adequately respond to a critique frequently leveled against her mentor, Josiah Royce – namely, that a virtue ethics organized around loyalty is too easily corrupted by loyalty to bad causes. I argue that Lyman Cabot’s account has the resources to respond to this critique.

Who is Ella Lyman Cabot?



Orientation to the Work

“My central ethical doctrine is that he who has found the vocation for which he is fitted has found his duty, and that without some inkling of a chosen work duty is meaningless. Out of loyalty to our chosen work springs all moral life, for an enduring interest is a master who leads us to a joyous self-expression and for that very reason to self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, and self-surrender.” (from *Everyday Ethics*)

Everyday Ethics (EE) has numerous parallels with Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (NE):

- Similar audience
- Structured as a virtue ethics
- Substance developed as a virtue ethics

Virtue Ethical in Structure

	Ella Lyman Cabot	Aristotle
Two Kinds of Virtue	1. "Schoolroom" Virtues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquired through repetition Examples: attention, concentration, intentness 2. Virtues of Choice and Contemplation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquired by actively bridging self and world Examples: sympathy, imagination, memory, courage 	1. Moral Virtues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquired from habitual action, aiming at the mean Examples: courage, temperance, thoughtfulness 2. Intellectual Virtues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquired by nature, study, deliberation Examples: understanding, wisdom
Unifying Virtue	Loyalty	Practical Wisdom

Virtue Ethical in Substance

The language of 'duty' may be misleading: it is derived from our chosen work, and is *meaningless* without it.

Core Virtues:

1. Sympathy: allows us to expand interest beyond our own
2. Imagination: enables extension of sympathy those beyond our proximity
3. Memory: necessary to learn from experience and history

Loyalty to Loyalty v. Loyalty to One's Chosen Work

Objection: *Loyalty as a virtue is suspect because one can be loyal to lousy causes.*

	Ella Lyman Cabot	Josiah Royce
Definition	Loyalty = Loyalty to one's chosen work	Loyalty to Loyalty
Possible Defenses, Objections, Conclusion	1. One's guiding interest must have <i>warmth</i> and serve a <i>real need</i> 2. Loyalty in ethical sense is impossible without other virtues	1. Commitment must aid loyalty in the world of one's fellows Objection: <i>fails when community is divided</i>

Lyman Cabot's work has resources for plausible and active defense against this objection.