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HESBURGH ROOM

“Epistemic Injustice in Aristotelian Ethics” (Noell Birondo, Wichita State University)

This paper argues that the future direction of Aristotelian ethical thought would profit by incorporating some of the lessons from contemporary discussions of epistemic injustice. In particular, the paper argues that a better appreciation of *willful hermeneutical ignorance* is indispensable for developing an Aristotelian ethics appropriate to our current place in history. Willful hermeneutical ignorance occurs when dominantly situated knowers resist the epistemic resources developed by marginally situated knowers and therefore resist the transfer of knowledge that such resources make possible: for instance, they resist new concepts such as ‘sexual harassment,’ ‘white privilege,’ ‘racial profiling,’ and ‘epistemic injustice.’

The consideration of willful hermeneutical ignorance indicates that certain epistemic virtues will be indispensable to developing a plausible neo-Aristotelian ethics. In particular, the epistemic virtues of hermeneutic charity, epistemic humility, and theoretical open-mindedness must play a much larger role than they currently do in Aristotelian ethical thought itself. Only by *embodying* such epistemic virtues does a contemporary neo-Aristotelian ethics stand any chance of avoiding the all-too evident forms of epistemic injustice manifested in its previous historical incarnations, for instance in Aristotle himself. This would mark only a first, but crucial step in reframing moral discourse *within* Aristotelian ethical thought. Put differently, if neo-Aristotelian moral philosophers want to recover the original, radical promise of the twentieth-century revival of virtue ethics, and to develop a satisfying neo-Aristotelian ethics, then they need to pay greater attention to embodying such epistemic virtues – virtues that have *not* always been exhibited by moral philosophers themselves, as MacIntyre’s own work has often noticed.

To put the main point of the paper in somewhat theological language: I would insist that a contemporary Aristotelian ethics, having been raised from the dead by MacIntyre and his contemporaries, had better also take on a *new body* that exhibits, in contrast to the distorted self-understandings of its past incarnations, the epistemic virtues appropriate to our current place in history. This would be a neo-Aristotelian ethics that takes seriously those genealogical and Marxian features in MacIntyre’s work that still remain *very* much against-the-current in contemporary moral philosophy – and it would be a form of neo-Aristotelian ethics that, in better appreciating our current (globalized, multicultural, postcolonial/neo-colonial) place in history, strains to embody the virtues of epistemic justice.

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*Noell Birondo completed his Ph.D. at the University of Notre Dame and his B.A. at the University of California, Berkeley. He is currently an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Wichita State University (Kansas). His primary interests lie at the intersection of contemporary moral philosophy and ancient Greek philosophy. He is coeditor of *Virtue's Reasons: New Essays on Virtue, Character, and Reasons* (Routledge, 2017) and his recent papers include "Virtue and Prejudice: Giving and Taking Reasons," "Aristotle and the Virtues of Will Power," "Aristotelian Eudaimonism and Patriotism," and "Aristotle and Aztec Human Sacrifice."*

"Flourishing, Needs, and Practice" (Marco Grix, University of Auckland)

I conceptualise human needs in terms of necessary conditions for flourishing *qua* human, which – by using theories of well-being like Kraut's perfectionist/developmentalist approach – enables us to determine our needs (that apply to people across space, time, and cultures) in a comprehensive and exhaustive, but unavoidably abstract way. Unfortunately, abstract human needs are of little help when it comes to determining what does, and doesn't, qualify as legitimate needs of members of a particular political community. For example, a car purchase plausibly represents a legitimate requirement for many 'mainstream' Americans, especially where public transport is unavailable. Yet, it is not recognised as a legitimate need in communities like those of the Amish.

Need theory has been having a hard time accounting for and justifying such claims because it has been finding it difficult to translate abstract needs into culturally/communally specific requirements. However, practice theory is ideally suited to solve that problem. Once we realise that well-habitualised behaviour patterns (acquired through socialisation) are centrally among the things that people require to flourish *qua* human, it becomes clear that people need access to well-developed communal practice portfolios – and both the composition of these portfolios as well as the characteristics of the practices in them are communally specific.

I argue that a key aspect of political citizenship, the active participation in MacIntyre's meta-practice of *politics*, is the communal interpretation of both *human flourishing* (What does, and doesn't, it mean for members of our community to flourish as human beings?) and *human needs* (What does, and doesn't, it mean for members of our community to need A, B, C, *et cetera*?), which entails the determination of which practices are, and aren't, communally recognised ways of satisfying human needs and thus of flourishing *qua* human. What is more, I argue that a key aspect of ordinary practice citizenship, the active participation in and management of MacIntyre's ordinary practice (eg, *farming, chess-play*), is the community of practitioners' determination of which characteristics – including roles, activity patterns, and institutions – do, and don't, represent legitimate attributes of the practice in question. In these ways, the combination of need and practice theory overcomes the

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problem of specifying communally specific needs and simultaneously addresses MacIntyre's criticism that modern liberalism conceptualises the individual in separation of community and tradition, thereby taking away the grounds for agreement upon the substance of ends and ultimate goods.

Marco Grinx holds a BPhil from Oxford University and is currently a PhD student in Philosophy at the University of Auckland as well as a lecturer in Philosophy at Massey University, both New Zealand. His main areas of research interest are ethics, social and political philosophy, and environmental philosophy, with a special focus on human flourishing, needs, and virtue, habitualised activity and practice, and human consumption. Before turning to Philosophy, Marco received various university degrees in Business and Management and worked as a top management consultant at McKinsey & Company.

“Norms that Make a Difference: Institutions and Normative Expectations” (Frank Hindriks, University of Groningen)

It is sometimes said that there is honor among thieves. The intended meaning of this proverb is that even the unethical and disreputable adhere to common codes of conduct. If there really is honor among thieves, then the social practice of stealing is governed by norms (in addition to property rights). Thieves might, for instance, respect each other's territories. Consider police officers next. They have certain rights and obligations, such as to carry a gun and to fight crime. This reveals that also the practice of catching thieves is governed by norms, in this case formal rules. Thieves and police officers, as well as stealing and placing someone under arrest, are institutional phenomena. And they feature norms. But why is this? What roles do norms play in institutions?

Institutions facilitate and enable people to interact with each other in mutually beneficial ways. Their function is to generate collective benefits (Schotter:1981, Tuomela:2013). However, social practices that do not involve social norms can be mutually beneficial as well (Lewis:1969). This raises the question what social norms add to social practices. I argue that social norms secure or increase the collective benefits that social practices generate. They increase collective benefits by promoting cooperation. And they secure collective benefits by reinforcing existing ways of coordinating behaviors. In other words, social norms enhance the way in which social practices function or they prevent malfunctioning. In these ways, social norms make a difference to how people interact.

One way in which social norms can play these two roles is by means of sanctions. This idea plays a central role in equilibrium theories of institutions. The idea is that sanctions change people's preferences such that they cooperate (UllmannMargalit:1977, Schotter:1981). However, individuals often recognize the authority of social norms (Brennan:2013vs). And those who violate norms

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typically struggle with their decision to do so (Bandura:2016). This suggests that there is more to the decision to conform than can a cost-benefit calculation. I propose that norm followers appreciate the authority of the norm to a substantial extent. Norm violators, in contrast, do not do so or are not sufficiently motivated by it. In principle, then, the (perceived) legitimacy of a norm can as such make a difference to how people interact. To account for this, I propose, equilibrium theories have to be enriched with the notions of a normative rule and a normative expectation.

But how exactly are social norms implicated in institutions? I argue that institutions are norm-governed social practices. I defend this proposal in three steps. First, I discuss how social norms serve to either stabilize conventions or enable cooperation (section 1). Second, I criticize the claim that all social practices involve social norms (section 2). Third, I propose an analysis of what it means for a social norm to govern a social practice (section 3).

Frank Hindriks is a professor of ethics, social and political philosophy at the University of Groningen, where he is also the director of the Centre for Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE). Social institutions form his main topic of research. He is one of the founding editors of the Journal of Social Ontology. He has published widely in journals ranging from high ranking philosophy journals such as Mind & Language, Philosophical Quarterly and Philosophical Studies to social scientific journals such as Journal of Institutional Economics and Rationality and Society.

JOYCE ROOM

“Beyond Left and Right?” (Philip Devine, Providence College)

This essay continues my inquiry into the problem of the implications for political practice of the philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre. The question before us is to what extent his thought will provide us with political guidance in a world increasingly shaped by the market, the state, bureaucracy, and technology. I conclude that the ‘Left’ and ‘Right’ elements in MacIntyre’s philosophy cannot be easily be made to fit together, but that the effort is worth making.

Philip E. Devine is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Providence College. He was educated at Yale University (B.A), the University of California, Berkeley (Ph. D), and the Harvard Law School (Liberal Arts Fellow). His best known work is The Ethics of Homicide (Cornell University Press, reprinted by Notre Dame).

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“Necropolitics and Biopolitics: A Framework for Integration” (Obed Frausto, Ball State University)

Necropolitics and biopolitics have often been considered separate concepts. However, I argue that these concepts are relational and complementary. Achille Mbembé’s concept of necropolitics refers to a postcolonial political mechanism that destroys forms of life in the global south. Michel Foucault’s definition of biopolitics refers to a type of mechanism that wages silent war on social institutions, thereby controlling a population’s way of life. I believe that the conception of necropolitics and biopolitics should be situated beyond the nation-state in the same way that Hart and Negri propose the idea of global empire, but not in the same sense that Agamben proposes in *Homo Sacer* in which the ideal type of biopolitics are localized in space, such as the concentration camps. I believe that one way to integrate the notion of necropolitics and biopolitics is with neoliberalism. The logic of bio and necropolitics is the same: that the state is a totalitarian power operating under the principle of the state of exception. However, the state as a totalitarian power is ambivalent due to the fact that the state, on one hand, controls citizens’ way of life, and on the other hand, produces death. These effects are not regional, they are globalized, presenting in both developed and under-developed countries. The state of the exception operates in two dimensions: First, in the political sphere, the state provokes global wars. Second, in the economic sphere, transnational corporations use the state as a means to impose interests through national-states.

Obed Frausto received his PhD in the philosophy of science with a specialization in social studies of science and technology from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) in July 2016. His research interests include the utilization of political philosophy and social theory in examining the intersections of social science, science, politics, philosophy, and culture.

“MacIntyre, Aristotle, and Eudaimonism: The Egoist Challenge to After Virtue” (Zachary Willcutt, Boston College)

Alasdair MacIntyre argues in *After Virtue* that Aristotle’s self is sharply distinguished from the Cartesian, modern self. For Aristotle, the self is not an isolated *res cogitans* but the concrete social self that is embedded in the social roles that it plays. The self finds its existence precisely in the social function that it executes. Therefore, the self is relational and lives according to the relations in which it finds itself. Ethics emerges from this relationality, dictating how the self is to behave toward others. However, as a reading of Aristotle, this account that MacIntyre provides in *After Virtue* is problematic. The problem that faces this reading is that in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the social dimension is determined by the self-oriented character of Aristotle’s eudaimonism. That is, the self for Aristotle revolves around itself, focused on its own virtue and excellence in character to

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the exclusion of the other. The evidence for this claim is to be found in the structure of eudaimonia as being the self's own eudaimonia, the self-aggrandizing tendency of megalopsychia, and Aristotle's remark in his discussion of friendship that the friend is another self. For the chief good for Aristotle is properly the happiness or flourishing of the self; the end of the self is its own flourishing, suggesting that the self is to live for itself in a life that aims at its own excellence and strength. Megalopsychia is defined by the desire for superiority and the refusal to confer benefits unless such benefits manifest one's own superiority. The friend in the final account for Aristotle is another self, a being who is rejected in her otherness and assimilated into the self. Taken together, these themes show that Aristotle's ethics is ultimately characterized by an egoism. Egoism here refers to the priority of the self over the other in which the self is the self-sufficient center and focus of existence. What is so potent about Aristotle's vision of the self is that as embedded in social roles, the self is able to manipulate and dominate these roles for its own sake. Aristotle in an even more convincing way than Descartes sets forth a philosophy devoted to the self, which seems to be a challenge to an ethics such as MacIntyre's that is developed from an Aristotelian framework.

Zachary Willcutt is a doctoral student at Boston College who focuses on ethics and medieval philosophy, in particular on new readings of Augustine's ethics and medieval challenges to eudaimonism. He is currently working on a project that develops a second-personal ethics from Augustine's treatments of caritas and frui. He has recently published an article on the ethical meaning from a second-personal perspective of nuclear weapons in Humanities and Technology Review, and has taught philosophy classes at high school and community college.

CARMICHAEL ROOM

“The Bioethicist as Modern Medicine's MacIntyrean Character” (Bryan Pilkington, Seton Hall University)

In the last few decades, a good deal of ethical reflection on medicine has come from persons who hold the professional title of “bioethicist.” This would have struck leaders of ethical reflection on medical practice at the “dawn of bioethics,” like Paul Ramsey or Richard McCormick, as odd. It is no surprise that theologians, as well as philosophers, legal theorists, and social scientists, are interested in professional practices and ethical standards arising from the intimate and complex issues associated with human health and the wellness of communities. Understood in this way, the line of inquiry that bioethics appears to encompass – ethical questions about health and health-related practices – can be traced back much further, to Aquinas, then Aristotle, even to the pre-Socratics. This is because the subject matter engages foundational questions of our shared human experience. What would have been surprising to a Ramsey or a McCormick is the recent rise

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and dominance of the profession of bioethics. Bioethicists, so understood, are neither philosophers nor lawyers applying the resources of their discipline to complex ethical issues in medicine, but rather they are independent members of the relevant ethical task spaces in medicine. They govern the ethical conversation, holding degrees in bioethics. What once was a multidisciplinary endeavor is now often the task of a single profession.

In this paper, I argue that MacIntyre's account of characters can help make sense of the way that bioethics is often practiced, at least within academic medical contexts in the United States. Relying on conceptual resources from *After Virtue*, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*, and *Ethics in the Conflict of Modernity*, I illustrate how this analysis explains the rise and prominence of the bioethicist, who is fittingly understood as the character of modern medicine. The argument is aided by work from sociology, which has mapped distinct task spaces within bioethics (broadly construed) and shown the movement of those doing this work from theologians to bioethicists. The argument is also aided by work from philosophy on the nature of professions and interprofessional methodologies. I conclude by recommending that the task spaces increasingly governed by professional bioethicists be reopened to the wider range of fields from which careful reflection on ethical issues in medicine once arose. Practically reasoning together from multiple disciplines toward the common good supported by medical practice is superior to the feigned neutrality and narrower understanding of human existence assumed within contemporary bioethics.

Bryan Pilkington, PhD is Associate Professor at Seton Hall University's School of Health and Medical Sciences, School of Medicine, College of Nursing, and Department of Philosophy. His research focuses on the concept of dignity, conscience protection, moral responsibility, and the practices of the health professions. He serves on editorial boards of the Journal of Medicine and Philosophy, HealthCare Ethics Committee Forum, and Christian Bioethics, the ethics committee of Hackensack University Medical Center, and as Junior Scholar at the Paul Ramsey Institute. He has taught philosophy and bioethics at Fordham University, Aquinas College, and the University of Notre Dame.

“Partial Evidence Abortion” (Peter Seipel, University of South Carolina)

By now, according to one historian, more than 25,000 books and articles have been published on the origins of the First World War (Clark 2012: xxxiv-xxv). Another roughly 10,000 have been written on Auschwitz (Miller 1990: 37), 20,000 on the Dead Sea Scrolls (Frey 2006: 407), and “something close to 50,000” on the American Civil War (Guelzo 2012: 5). There are even 10,000 books and articles on Hegel (Williams 1997: xi).

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Given the sheer amount of evidence at our disposal, it should come as no surprise to learn that we often believe and act on the basis of *partial evidence*. Partial evidence is some subset of the total body of evidence that is relevant to the epistemic status of a belief. We have partial evidence for a belief when we lack reasons for or against accepting it. While we may be aware of the existence of these reasons, we lack them in the sense that we do not know what they are and have not yet evaluated them. By the *total body of evidence*, I mean all the available reasons for affirming, rejecting, or suspending judgment on a belief. Reasons are available if someone has noticed them. Even if that's all we mean by the total evidence, I argue that it is sometimes wrong to act on the basis of partial evidence.

We can situate this view on a range of positions about the morality of partial evidence. At one extreme is the position that it is never permissible to act on a belief without considering the total body of relevant evidence. At the other extreme is the view that we can act on the basis of whatever evidence we happen to have on hand. I doubt that it is always or even typically wrong to act on partial evidence. However, drawing on Alasdair MacIntyre's account of the "virtues of acknowledged dependence," I argue that it may often be wrong to have what I call a *partial evidence abortion*. By a partial evidence abortion, I mean an abortion that we undertake even though our evidence is limited. People who have partial evidence abortions possess neither the total evidence on abortion nor a representative sample of that evidence but decide to have an abortion anyway.

Peter Seipel is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Carolina Lancaster. I received my Ph.D. from Fordham University in 2016. My area of specialization is ethics and my areas of competence include bioethics and epistemology. I have published a number of papers on Alasdair MacIntyre and Aquinas in highly selective, peer-reviewed journals, including most recently the Canadian Journal of Philosophy. My submission for the present conference was awarded the best paper by a non-tenured faculty member by the South Carolina Society for Philosophy.

"When Is It Prudent to Polarize in a Democracy?" (Christopher Wolfe, University of St. Thomas)

This paper will consider the possibility of deliberation about the common good in our present circumstances. It could be objected that the issues deliberated in today's Congress only cover a very thin, limited range of issues, and that what takes place there is not truly deliberation about the common good for that reason. Empirical political science studies of deliberation in Congress indicate that some deliberation does still take place there, but not on certain polarizing issues. For example, a debate about building roads is not as polarizing as a debate about abortion. A debate

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about building roads is largely a debate about means, not ends. Almost all agree on the end of effective transportation, but many don't agree about the end of radical autonomy of the individual that the abortion debate involves. At the same time, it seems futile to think that deliberation about ends can be avoided or "bracketed off" as Rawls might say. Arguments about ends reemerge even when tries to avoid them, and avoiding them might be imprudent too.

To broach this problem, I will consider several studies by political scientist Joseph Bessette. Bessette's early book on the subject of deliberative democracy, *The Mild Voice of Reason* (1994), argued that the Constitutional system James Madison helped create was designed to facilitate deliberation about the common good, to "refine and enlarge the public views" as *Federalist 10* says. However in a more recent essay, "In Defense of Polarization" (2018), Bessette argues that at crucial points in their careers Madison and Lincoln turned to polarization rather than deliberation, and that in both cases the decisions to do so were prudent. Bessette indicates that for polarization to be prudent, its purpose must be to "clarify" some fundamental choice before the nation (such as slavery), and that the actions involved in polarization ought to be for a limited period of time. Other risks are involved if those two aspects do not guide the decision to abandon deliberation.

What my paper will attempt to add is some criteria for when it is prudent to make the decision to abandon deliberation and polarize on an issue. The set of criteria I will offer for politicians will differ slightly from the criteria offered for voters; however, I do think that individuals and statesmen alike ought to engage in deliberation about ends (as I think Aristotle and Alasdair MacIntyre would agree).

Christopher Wolfe is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. He has previously taught at the University of Dallas, North Lake College, and Founders Classical Academy. He received a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Dallas in 2009 and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Claremont Graduate University in 2014. He has published articles on ethics and political philosophy including "Some Objections to MacIntyre from Deliberative Democracy," "Alasdair MacIntyre on the Grand End Conception of Practical Reasoning," and "A Response to John Rawls's Critique of Loyola on the Human Good".

SALON C, SMITH BALLROOM

"No Man Can Serve Two Masters: Defending Aquinas on Our Single Final End" (Raymond Hain)

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Aquinas argues in the first question of the *prima secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae* that all the actions of every human agent are performed for the sake of a single final end. There is significant controversy over the interpretation and plausibility of this claim, and this is particularly important given that it is foundational to Aquinas's overall moral theory. This paper considers three standard interpretations of this argument (Peter Ryan's empirical/psychological interpretation, Scott MacDonald's normative interpretation, and Steven Jensen's traditional metaphysical/explanatory interpretation) and concludes that all three are accurate, though partial, expressions of Aquinas's claims. The empirical/psychological interpretation expresses the material cause of human action, the normative interpretation expresses the final cause of human action, and the metaphysical/explanatory interpretation expresses the efficient and formal causes of human action. The resulting combined view makes sense of Aquinas's claims, can respond to the objections that each particular interpretation lodges against the others, and makes Thomistic ethics a result of Thomistic action theory.

Because of the significant apparent implausibility of the empirical/psychological interpretation, the most important objections to my unified interpretation derive from the obvious disunity of the lives of all human agents. On the one hand, it is difficult to defend the claim that agents consciously order their lives around a single final end, especially when we remember that for Aquinas, every human agent orders his or her actions in this way by the age of discretion (traditionally around the age of seven). And on the other hand, there is obvious disunity in all human lives, expressed most clearly for Aquinas by the existence of venial sin (a theological concept, but equally applicable in a secular sense).

Though the remainder of this paper will briefly address the first difficulty, the problem of venial sin will be my primary focus. In short, venial sin represents a breakdown in human rationality, and therefore in a deep sense an absence of human action. This means that sinful human behavior, as evil, is an absence of human action in the life of the agent. Therefore the moral life for human beings is a life of human action, and the better we are, the more we act, and vice versa. According to this way of thinking, the various actions of agents that are not ordered to the single final end do not disprove Aquinas's argument, since properly speaking they are not human actions.

Raymond Hain is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Associate Director of the Humanities Program at Providence College in Providence, RI. His research interests include the history of ethics (especially St. Thomas Aquinas), applied ethics (especially medical ethics and the ethics of architecture), Alexis de Tocqueville, and philosophy and literature. His essays have appeared in various journals and collections including The Thomist, International

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Journal of Applied Philosophy, and The Anthem Companion to Tocqueville. He is the editor of Beyond the Self: Virtue Ethics and the Problem of Culture.

“Toward What End Is Human Life?” (Evelyn Mazzucco)

We share a common humanity, but in what this humanity consists has been completely revised by the Enlightenment thinkers. It marked the beginning of the displacement of absolute truth by scientific truth and then by relative truth. Only facts scientifically verifiable could be accepted as true, and then there was only one's own perceptions that were considered true. On this basis Thomistic philosophy was unacceptable because it posited immaterial realities. It is only human for man to ask about purpose which is the essence of the question, “Toward what end?” Yet modern philosophy as it has become more atheistic and materialistic has found it increasingly difficult to answer this question.

Modern man seldom even asks this question, but its varied answers are at the root of the deep divisions in modern society. The end is what determines moral concepts. It matters whether or not God exists, whether or not there is life after death. These issues cannot be treated as merely matters of opinion that have no effect on our lives. For, having in our society today many diverse answers to the question, “Toward what end is human life?”, we answer with MacIntyre, “Each of us has to choose both with whom we wish to be morally bound and by what ends, rules and virtues we wish to be guided. These two choices are inextricably linked. In choosing this end or that virtue highly, I make certain moral relationship with some people and other moral relationships with others impossible. Speaking from within my own moral vocabulary, I shall find myself bound by the criteria embodied in it.” Our society does not accept the validity of MacIntyre's view and in rejecting it gives a false hope for a solution to our divisions as a society. A society to hold together must have an agreed answer to the question, “Toward what end?”

The reasons for this lack of unity of purpose or with its connection to modern philosophy will be explored in this paper based on the writings of MacIntyre, Fulton Sheen and Joseph Ratzinger and the earlier philosophers to which they refer.

Evelyn Mazzucco is a member of the International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry, having presented four papers on education, relativism, and economics at their meetings. She has her master's degree in physics and teaches and tutors both in physics and mathematics.

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“There and Back Again’: Narrative Teleology and the Transcendental Argument for the Existence of God” (Kevin Scott, University of Notre Dame)

At the conclusion of his recent book, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, Alasdair MacIntyre states, “The perfection and completion of a life consists in an agent’s having persisted in moving toward and beyond the best goods of which she or he knows.” Moreover, because such striving presupposes “some further good, an object of desire beyond all particular and finite goods,” we, the reader, are here led out of ethics and politics and into natural theology. The language used here by MacIntyre is suggestive of the transcendental argument for the existence of God, which takes the capacious openness of the human intellect toward any and all finite realities as an indication that said intellect cannot help but posit the existence of some actually infinite being. While this similarity is suggestive of the kind of natural theological project which MacIntyre has in mind here, I argue that it also provides an indication of how to solve one of the key difficulties faced in his best known work, *After Virtue*.

In this earlier volume, MacIntyre attempts to provide a new foundation for Aristotelian morality, one based on criteria of narrative truth and coherence rather than a teleological biology. These criteria, however, would later be found by MacIntyre to be insufficient to ground a realist theory of the human good, and would be replaced with a consideration of a metaphysical biology of the ends of human nature. I share the judgment that narrative truth and coherence alone cannot ground teleology of the kind needed for Aristotelian and Thomistic ethics. One can, for instance, construct multiple such narratives describing the same event or action, each highlighting different true elements and possessing its own coherence relative to its author’s purposes. At the same time, however, concern for narrative, even narrative of the metaphysically thin kind advocated in *After Virtue*, may provide the basis for a transcendental argument of the kind suggested by MacIntyre more recently. While narrative truth and coherence by themselves are unable to provide the foundation for a teleological ethics, concern with maintaining these criteria bring one in a direction pointing toward the intellectual pursuit of God. Even if the human mind through its narratives is unable to establish moral teleology, its striving toward organizing the world in narrative terms points toward the affirmation of the existence of God, who can then, in turn, ground a more metaphysically robust teleology.

Kevin Scott is a PhD Candidate in the Philosophy department of the University of Notre Dame and a Sorin Fellow with the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture. His primary research interests are ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy of religion. Before coming to Notre Dame, he earned a BA in Philosophy and Classics from Canisius College (Buffalo, NY) and an MA in English from SUNY University at Buffalo, writing an MA thesis titled “The Devil We Are Possessed By: Flannery O’Connor and Girardian Mimesis.” His dissertation is a defense of a Neo-Aristotelian approach to moral philosophy.