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HESBURGH ROOM

“Is Humean Philosophy Destructive of Democracy?” (Roberta Bayer, Patrick Henry College)

I am studying the influence of Hutcheson and Reid on the Constitutional Framers, James Wilson (1742-1798), a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the leading theoretician of the American Constitution. MacIntyre's treatment of the Scottish philosophical tradition through Hutcheson is quite helpful to this project. Wilson's philosophical education in Scotland led him to argue that the moral sense allows a knowledge of the first principles of the natural law. His epistemological arguments lie in the neo-Aristotelian tradition of Hutcheson and Reid, but they are combined with metaphysical arguments about law from Richard Hooker's *Laws of the Ecclesiastical Polity*.

Wilson, following Reid, argued that Humean skepticism (which he considered a development of Lockean epistemology), would lead to despotism if integrated into the philosophical and legal framework of American law. Moreover he held that Blackstone's *Commentaries* were inadequate to supply a legal education for American students, for reasons connected to MacIntyre's discussion of Blackstone and Lord Stair. Wilson insists that law students must be provided with an education in 'true philosophy' because 'degenerate philosophy' will lead to despotism, illustrating his awareness of conflicting and incommensurable philosophical traditions. Siding with the neo-Aristotelian tradition, he said 'true philosophy', must be central to public life.

There are multiple surprises found in Wilson's thought, not least his reservations about the continental post-Grotian natural law tradition. His re-statement of the Common Sense philosophy of Thomas Reid modified by Richard Hooker's philosophical theology of natural law is also surprising. I will argue that Hooker provides the metaphysics of first principles that assists him to counter the epistemological and metaphysical skepticism of Hume and the 'way of ideas,' in a way that Reid does not. From Reid he had learned that skepticism undermines the principle of rational identity which is necessary to moral discourse and self-rule, and from Hooker he takes a philosophy of first principles without which there can be neither reason nor reasoning.

Roberta Bayer is associate professor of government at Patrick Henry College. She received her Ph.D. in Government and International Studies from the University of Notre Dame, an M.Sc. in political philosophy from the London School of Economics, and an M.A. in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto. Her current areas of research

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include the Scottish Enlightenment and the American Founding. Dr. Bayer was the Garwood Visiting Fellow in the James Madison Program at Princeton University during the 2018-19 academic year.

“Syllabuses of Error: Gilson and MacIntyre on the Background to Hume” (Mark Moes, Grand Valley State University)

According to Gilson in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, the radical empiricism and “theologism” of Ockhamism in the late middle ages was recapitulated and extended in the anti-scholastic Cartesian tradition, culminating in the occasionalism of Malebranche that provided Hume with many of his philosophical starting points. According to Alasdair MacIntyre in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, the “way of ideas” developed in the Cartesian tradition was put to work by Hume in his crafting of new secularizing theories of morality, law, and government. This paper focuses upon Hume’s anti-religious philosophy of religion in the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, an important piece of his overall secular liberal philosophical synthesis. It attempts to make clear that the two narratives of Gilson and MacIntyre show in different but complementary ways how Ockhamite and Cartesian positions, departing from important scholastic metaphysical insights, left theistic philosophy open to Hume’s critique.

The paper correlates each of five sections of the *Dialogues* with erroneous philosophical presuppositions derived from Ockhamism and Cartesianism, as follows: (1) Hume’s “mitigated skepticism” and theory of meaning (with its rejection of analogy) in Parts I and II correlate with the presuppositions of the Cartesian “way of ideas.” (2) Philo’s rebuttal of Cleanthes’ version of the Design Argument for God’s existence in Parts III through VIII correlates with various Cartesian philosophical positions—that causality is but a mental habit, that without an analogous notion of causality it is impossible to account for either human or divine agent causation, the impossibility of metaphysics and *a fortiori* of any account of the divine attributes or of matter as potency, etc. (3) The critiques of the Ontological and Cosmological arguments for God’s existence in Part IX correlate with the rejection of the analogy of being, treating ‘existence’ as a univocal on/off property. (4) The a-theological argument from Evil developed in Parts X-XI correlates with inordinate conceptions of divine omnipotence derived from Ockham and from Malebranche’s occasionalism. (5) Hume’s secular theories of morality, law, and government expressed in Part XII correlate with the psychology and epistemology of the “way of ideas,” with an absurdly oversimplified historiography of religion, and with the doctrine that no true synthesis of reason with revelation is possible (the only available theological options being Fideism or Deism).

Mark Moes completed an M.A. in philosophical theology at the Aquinas Institute of Theology and a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is currently Professor of Philosophy at Grand Valley State

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University in Michigan, specializing in Ancient Philosophy. He is author of Plato's Dialogue Form and the Care of the Soul and articles on ancient philosophy and philosophy of medicine. He is currently doing research on two connected projects: (1) a book on Plato's Republic, and (2) a book on the whole corpus of the published writings of Alasdair MacIntyre.

“The Effects of Trauma on Practical Reasoning: Towards an Aristotelian Approach” (Jacob Farineau, University of Tennessee)

As Susan Brison points out, trauma destroys one's ability to understand oneself by disrupting the narrative that was in place prior to the traumatic event, and uprooting one's fundamental assumptions about the world. Accordingly, after trauma one loses the ability to understand who one is, as well as the vision of a viable future for oneself.

Theorizing trauma as a specifically self-destructive event poses a problem for Neo-Aristotelian theories of practical reasoning. Many such theories posit that self-understanding is a necessary condition of practical reason. Alasdair MacIntyre, for example, claims that in order to effectively deliberate about how to act one must understand who oneself is in the present and the self that one ought to become at some point in the future. Possible actions appear more or less proper as far as they could be a means of transforming the self one is into the self one understands he or she ought to become.

If we admit that trauma destroys one's narrative, strips one of self-understanding, and makes it impossible to envision a viable future, it seems that we must admit that traumatized persons are not capable of practical reason according to models like this. Further, some models of practical reasoning—such as Hume's—are less vulnerable to this problem because they do not mandate that one engaged in deliberation must maintain self-understanding. Brison herself opts for a more Humean model because such models seem to better account for how the traumatized self can still conduct practical reason.

The purpose of this paper is to argue that Aristotelian models of practical reasoning are more capable of accounting for the effects of trauma than Humean models. Using Jonathan Lear's *Radical Hope* to this effect, I will demonstrate that Aristotelian models offer a more accurate picture of how narrative is formed, and how it is reconstructed in the wake of trauma—namely, through the need to know oneself. As far as this is true, it follows that Aristotelian models of practical reasoning are stronger than Humean models because self-understanding, which is a necessary condition of practical reason, is achieved through one's narration of his or her life. Hence, contra-Brison, while

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Aristotelian theories leave open the possibility that traumatized persons lack the ability for practical reason, they better account for how traumatized persons regain this ability through the natural desire to know oneself.

Jacob Farineau is a PhD student in philosophy at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Farineau's primary interests pertain primarily to contemporary value theory and the history of philosophy (especially Ancient ethics). While getting his MA at Duquesne University, Smith became fascinated by the ability of virtue ethics to incorporate older traditions of thought into discussions of characteristically contemporary issues. By the same token, Smith is interested in investigating legitimate revisions to these traditions of thought that modernity and post-modernity put forward.

JOYCE ROOM

“Between the ‘Virtue of Hope’ and the ‘Acceptance of Inevitable Defeat’: Alasdair MacIntyre and Leszek Kołakowski” (Kamil Aksiuto, Marie Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin)

There is an interesting comparison to be made between the intellectual biographies of Alasdair MacIntyre and Leszek Kolakowski. Born in the same generation, both MacIntyre and Kolakowski started out as Marxists, albeit on the different sides of the Iron Curtain. Both then became disenchanted with Marxism and eventually moved towards the embracement of the Catholic Christianity. Yet the similarities between them might seem to pale in comparison with the radically different conclusions they drew from those experiences.

MacIntyre remains a harsh critic of capitalist modernity which he sees as inimical to the flourishing of the communal life, virtues and human flourishing in general. Likewise, he has consistently rejected liberalism as a restrictive ideology perpetuating the modern social order (Knight 1998). Therefore MacIntyre is often charged with utopianism, a charge he is happy to accept, insofar as “utopian” means seemingly removed far beyond what seems possible at a present moment (MacIntyre 1990, 2008). MacIntyre never abandoned the idea, once central to Marxism, of a revolutionary social practice which subverts the existing power structures (Knight 1998). Thus, he encourages his readers to think about the possibilities of the social, political and moral transformation, possibilities which might seem unrealistic, but are latent in the existing social order. This task requires, among other things, “a transformative political imagination”. Furthermore, MacIntyre’s conversion to Catholicism is clearly related to him stressing the importance of the virtue of hope (MacIntyre 2008).

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On the other hand, Kolakowski's late thought has a decidedly antiutopian flavour. The rejection of Marxism was deeper and more complete in his case than in MacIntyre's (Kolakowski 1974). Hence Kolakowski's suspiciousness of the utopian spirit as always containing the seeds of enslavement and uniformization (Kolakowski 1990). According to him consistent utopian projects try to bring about earthly paradise by forcefully (though unsuccessfully) eliminating all signs of social conflict and individual personality. Quite tellingly, instead of MacIntyre's embrace of the evangelical virtue of hope, Kolakowski claims that the lesson of Christianity is and has always been to: "accept our life as inevitable defeat" (Kolakowski 2012). This can surely be described as a deeply conservative, sceptical position. Yet the criticism of the utopian striving that Kolakowski offers is sound and worth revisiting. Moreover, it is very much to the point when identifying the dangers that MacIntyre's utopian theory and practice should avoid at all cost.

Kamil Alesiuto completed his PhD studies at the Graduate School for Social Research in Warsaw. He obtained his doctoral degree from the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Science. Currently he is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Political Science of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. In his academic work he specializes in history of political ideas and political philosophy.

"The Measurement of an Organizational Leader's Moral Philosophy Relative to MacIntyre's Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry" (James Barge, Eastern University)

This proposal serves to introduce the early stages in development of an instrument, as part of the dissertation process, to measure an individual organization leader's propensity toward the three rival versions of moral enquiry that MacIntyre (1990) argues exist today in significant conflict with one another. Tradition, with authoritative voices and texts driving moral enquiry in community originating with the ancient Greeks and developed more fully by Thomas Aquinas, suffered setbacks with the onset of the Reformation and the Enlightenment but has re-entered the conversation with MacIntyre's voice in the last 30 years (Morgan, 2008; Mensch & Barge, 2018). Ushering in the notion of universal objective truths, the Encyclopedists offered a rival version that relegated traditional moral authority to the past and attempted to solve morality one accumulated fact at a time (Kinghorn, 2011; MacIntyre, 1990). While not successful, they live on, albeit in conflict, with the normative ethics of deontology and utilitarianism of today (Gofrey & Lewis, 2018). Nietzsche offered genealogy and perspectivism, in particular, as a pointed response to the notion of universal truth arguing that truth is only valid from an individual's perspective and any attempt to force broad moral truths onto society is simply an attempt at power and subjugation (MacIntyre, 1990, Allen, 2017, Hibbs, 1993). His efforts laid the groundwork for the moral relativists and emotivists that

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thrive today as well (Solomon, 2003). These three camps of moral enquiry vie for our affections and intellects.

Organizational leaders have been shown to make moral decisions based on their individual moral philosophies and while scholars have developed and offered instruments to assess these underlying philosophies, for the most part, they have been limited to measuring normative ethical positions and some aspects of moral relativism (Shultz and Brender-Ilan, 2004; Davis, Andersen, & Curtis, 2001; Forsyth, 1992; Fernando & Chowdury, 2010). They lack the depth and breadth needed to completely assess an organizational leader's moral grounding given the existence of three distinct camps of moral enquiry, including traditionalism and the extended voices of genealogy (relativism and emotivism) that exist today. This gap can be addressed by developing an instrument based on a deep literature review surrounding these three versions of moral enquiry and the creation of a set of characteristics and subsequent statements that accurately represent each version and therefore the leaders who hold these philosophies. MacIntyre himself encourages empirical work in the pursuit of moral philosophy and the ability to quantitatively understand one's own propensity and that of others lends itself to richer dialogue and the potential for better solutions for moral dilemmas and decisions (Robson, 2015). Therefore, this proposal serves to introduce these characteristics and statements for review and feedback by the field of experts in MacIntyre's work and moral philosophy in general expected to attend the conference.

James L. Barge is a PhD candidate in the Organizational Leadership Program at Eastern University. James has worked in the aerospace industry for the last twenty years as a quality and process improvement leader. He earned a B.A. in chemistry from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MBA from Xavier University in Cincinnati. His dissertation research is focused on the development of an instrument to assess how individual leaders' moral philosophies align with MacIntyre's three rival versions of moral inquiry.

“Marx on Human Nature: The Maladies and Potentialities of *Homo Laborans*” (Michael Morris, University of South Florida)

Drawing upon arguments from Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, I argue that rightly constituted labor plays an essential role in human flourishing. While other animals satisfy their limited wants through instinctual or at least highly invariant behavior patterns, we humans satisfy and multiply our desires through flexible, culturally heritable, and increasingly differentiated – though also increasingly intercalibrated – techniques and practices. While other animals thus receive their generic mode of life from biology, individual human beings receive their mode of life from their particular location in the unfolding material history of the species. Marx employs the term

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“species-being” to characterize this distinctively human relationship between the individual and the species. While this way of being opens up profound capacities for creativity and for species-level solidarity, it also generates two forms of alienation, both of which fissure the human self in increasingly evident, disruptive, and traumatic ways.

The human self exists at the fault lines that run *both* (a) between biology and the socio-cultural techniques and practices that inform us, *and* (b) between the subjective insights and ideas of the individual and the opaque rationalities and/or blatant irrationalities of the species-process as a whole. In an attempt to overcome this twofold alienation, humans must first strive to comprehend the purposes and interrelations inherent in the practices and techniques that always already form them, learning to appreciate what is indeed good and rational, while creatively modifying contingent accretions and structural maleficence. Second, we must identify our highest ends with the shared creativity of the material transformation of the material world, not with the pleasurable sensations such transformations may facilitate.

Marx argues that the destruction of wage labor must alleviate these dual forms of alienation, creating a radical form of collective harmony and the capacity to consciously direct history in heretofore unimagined ways. Marx and his followers have thus remained unduly sanguine in their appraisals of technology, centralized planning, and the bureaucratic state. I argue that the current uses of technology and the increasing power of large corporate *and* state structures necessarily exacerbate the forms of alienation that Marx rightly identifies. I therefore argue for an appraisal of work, technology, state, and market that places primary emphasis upon the promotion of decentralized creativity and at least an approximate equality of material influence, not upon the currently regnant values of maximal productivity and equitable distribution.

Michael Morris is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Florida. His recent book, Knowledge and Ideology (Cambridge, 2016) develops and defends a theory of social knowledge that draws heavily on Hegel, Marx, Lukács, and Mannheim. His recent articles include “The French Revolution and the New School of Europe: Towards a Political Interpretation of German Idealism” (European Journal of Philosophy, 2011) and “The Superfluous Revolution: Post-Kantian Philosophy and the Nature of Religious Excess” (Intellectual History Review, 2016).

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CARMICHAEL ROOM

“What Is the Modern State?” (V. Bradley Lewis, Catholic University of America)

Among the most consequential claims of Alasdair MacIntyre’s political philosophy is his claim that the modern state cannot embody the common good, understood as the final cause of political association in Thomistic-Aristotelian political philosophy. He characterizes the modern state in terms of its size and bureaucratic nature, but more importantly by its incoherence and inability to allow for adequate deliberation about the common good by the members of the community. Francis Slade has also criticized the modern state as a political form by reference to the thought of Aristotle and to the modern political philosophers who rejected Aristotelianism. Where Aristotle focused on political regimes, which described the rule by some concrete group of men over everyone else for the sake of the common good of the community, the modern state is grounded in the abstract notion of sovereignty, which is a kind of potentiality grounded in will and so inapt to serve as anything like a final cause. Slade’s opposition between the Aristotelian common good and modern sovereignty captures something important, but fails to grasp the specifically Christian contribution to political thought, that is, the notion that legitimate authority is ultimately divine authority. This notion is distinct from both Aristotle, for whom the legitimacy of authority is scarcely thematized and from the modern state and reveals what is most distinctive of the modern state: its claim to authority is grounded in the will of the people, that is, human and not divine authority. If the modern state is unable to embody the common good, this is because its conception of its own authority precludes the only true source of legitimate authority. This is a more basic and serious problem, I argue, than some of those identified by MacIntyre, but also perhaps more remediable. The remedy is a reinterpretation of the state’s authority, which is also a renewed emphasis on the limits to that authority and a paring back of the functions that it can legitimately exercise. But this does not—pace MacIntyre—require one to simply reject its claims to authority absolutely and unconditionally. It is unlikely that such a reinterpretation of the authority of the state will happen on any large scale in the immediate future, but this view can inform the relationship of individuals and communities—including the Church—with the state.

V. Bradley Lewis is associate professor in the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America, where he has taught since 1997. He specializes in political and legal philosophy and has published articles on classical political philosophy (Plato, Aristotle), natural law, religious freedom, and Catholic Social Teaching. Professor Lewis is presently at work on a book about the idea of the common good. He also serves as associate editor of The American Journal of Jurisprudence and as a fellow of the Institute for Human Ecology at CUA.

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“Austrian Constructivism” (Elijah Millgram, University of Utah)

Philosophical traditions compete, MacIntyre has argued, on the basis of their ability to account for other traditions' stumbling blocks and undefended assumptions. Within Kantian moral philosophy, we find the so-called Formula of Humanity -- that persons are ends in themselves -- treated as a rock-bottom commitment; we also find it giving rise to puzzles that the Kantians are unable to resolve to their own satisfaction. Are other philosophical traditions able to reframe this iconic Kantian position so as to make possible headway on the theoretical anomalies to which it gives rise?

I will argue that the so-called Austrian economists have the wherewithal to make sense of Kantian personhood: persons, understood as ends in themselves, solve a social coordination problem, in roughly the way that market actors solve resource allocation problems. People are ends in themselves -- they must be treated not as mere means, but as autonomous agents whose choices constrain one's own decisions -- *in that* our existence as persons is a means to the very large end of solving an extremely complicated collective choice problem. You have unconditional value *only conditionally*: on a particular distributed construction procedure being the means of handling the coordination of activities -- the means that we have in fact collectively adopted.

Elijah Millgram is E. E. Erickson Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Utah. He is author of Practical Induction (Harvard UP), Hard Truths (Wiley-Blackwell), and The Great Endarkenment (Oxford UP). He is currently completing a book on John Stuart Mill and the meaning of life.

“Marx, MacIntyre and Metahistory: Mapping a Historical Road to Utopia” (Steven Peña, San Jacinto College, University of St. Thomas)

In the first half of the twentieth century several famous philosophical historians, as for example Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee, revived and reconstructed a prophetic historical thesis of Karl Marx, viz., that the West was in a long-term, inevitable decline, a decline in principle wholly predictable on a correct understanding of certain historical laws. Just what that set of operative historical laws consisted in was distinct for the several thinkers. Yet, because this narrative of inevitable secular decline was so central to the interpretive framework by and around which the historiography of these thinkers was presented, we may be justified in thinking of them as in some sense Marx' children, that is, his historiographical offspring. Nevertheless, when we consider closely the stance taken by these prophets of decline toward the coming cataclysm facing Western civilization we find a clear divergence emerging. For where Toynbee espies a looming disaster that can at best be mitigated by establishing something reminiscent of a renewed medieval consensus,

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Karl Marx finds clear reasons for presenting us with a considerably more sanguine prophecy. For Marx' thesis is not merely one of decline, but of decline and *renewal*. It is in this concept of renewal----one based on developing something akin to the medieval consensus and broad synthesis Toynbee spoke of----that the theoretical relationship between Alasdair MacIntyre and Karl Marx may be found. To be sure MacIntyre presents us with a more realistic map to this distant utopia, where Marx sees all the details of renewal as ultimately merely what the historian Hugh Trevor-Roper called the “epiphenomena” of the class struggle. Nevertheless, I will argue that not only is Alasdair MacIntyre philosophically descended from Karl Marx, but additionally that there is at least some sense in which MacIntyre is in fact his only legitimate offspring.

Steven Peña teaches at San Jacinto College and the University of St. Thomas, both in Houston, Texas. His PhD is in philosophy and his interests lie in rationality, metahistory, the philosophy of science and ethics. Recent conference papers include “Alasdair Agonistes: McIntyre and a New Discontent with Modernity” and “Proof and ‘Expansive Naturalism’ in Thomas Aquinas.” He has a book on logic: Homo Logicus: Introduction, Inquiry and Reflection in the Art of Right Reasoning.