

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

HESBURGH ROOM

“MacIntyre, Managers, and the Possibility of Ethics” (Paul Blackledge, London South Bank University)

The critique of managerialism in Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue* and later in *Social Structures and their Threats to Moral Agency* appears to be unambiguous. Managers manipulate, and their actions are consequently anathema to the reproduction of virtues and good lives. This indeed is the interpretation of *After Virtue* reproduced by, amongst others, Kelvin Knight in his *Aristotelian Philosophy*. Interestingly, however, in sharp contrast to Knight’s interpretation of the applicability of MacIntyre’s virtue ethics to modern bureaucratic and capitalist managers, writers such as Greg Beabout and Geoff Moore have argued, in *The Character of the Manager* and *Virtue at Work* respectively, that a reasonable distinction can be made between good and bad institutions and consequently between good and bad managers. Moreover, they maintain that good management can be understood, contra MacIntyre, as a MacIntyrean practice that helps reproduce virtues that facilitate people to live good lives in good organisations. In this paper I argue that both Knight and Moore and Beabout are correct to interpret MacIntyre in the contradictory way they have, and that this antinomy illuminates a weakness in MacIntyre’s ethics generally and his conceptions of practices and institutions more specifically. My argument suggests that MacIntyreans need to articulate a more nuanced conception of institutions and practices than is evident in MacIntyre’s mature thought, for it is only through such a conceptualisation that a more coherent conception of revolutionary Aristotelianism is possible.

Paul Blackledge is a member of the Steering Committee of the International Society of MacIntyrean Enquiry. He is the author of Frederick Engels (SUNY: 2019), Marxism and Ethics: Freedom, Desire and Revolution (SUNY: 2012), Reflections on the Marxist Theory of History (Manchester University Press: 2006), Perry Anderson, Marxism and the New Left (Merlin Press: 2004). He is the co-editor of Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre’s Revolutionary Aristotelianism (University of Notre Dame Press: 2011), Alasdair MacIntyre’s Engagement with Marxism: Essays and Articles 1953-1974 (Brill: 2008), Revolutionary Aristotelianism: Ethics, Resistance and Utopia (Lucius and Lucius: 2008) and Historical Materialism and Social Evolution (Palgrave: 2002).

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

“Living with Uncertainty: Philosophical Inquiry without Nous” (Michael Dickson, University of South Carolina)

Many contemporary philosophers – especially those working in metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics – are known to rely on so-called ‘intuitions’ as evidence in philosophy, this evidence often appearing as a report of “my intuition”, or “our intuition”, about the truth of some philosophical claim, the intuition itself typically being taken to be some mental state or event or experience somehow connected to or involving an unmediated ‘seeming to be true’ of the claim. Undaunted by philosophers (such as myself) who are unmoved by almost any example of a so-called ‘intuition’, ‘intuitionists’ (let us call them) have mounted various arguments in defense of the evidential value of intuition in philosophy. Elsewhere, I have argued that the defense falters. Here, I review two illuminating aspects of that discussion: the intuitionist’s reply to the apparent lack of an account of intuition that could explain how or why intuitions (or the beliefs occasioned by or associated with them) are connected to the truth, and the intuitionist’s argument that the use of intuition in philosophy is unavoidable. I argue that these aspects of the intuitionist’s position reveal two things: first, the intuitionist understands philosophical inquiry as providing (at least ideally) a kind of certainty that is incompatible with a view of philosophical inquiry as in principle open-ended and always revisable; second, the intuitionist is committed to the impossibility of rational dialogue with some well-meaning interlocutors. Both positions are, arguably, contrary to a standard Aristotelian understanding of the nature of philosophical inquiry. Aristotelians might be tempted to respond to this situation by noticing that Aristotle himself has an account of ‘intuition’ (nous) that is well entrenched in his general epistemology and theory of the soul. Unlike most contemporary philosophers, then, Aristotelians may help themselves to the appeal to intuition in a manner that does not run afoul of what I am calling a ‘standard Aristotelian understanding’ of inquiry. My main argument in this talk is that this response is incorrect. While Aristotle does have account of nous and its activity and value, I argue that it is never necessary (on Aristotle’s understanding of nous), and sometimes also impermissible, to appeal to nous (or its so-called ‘deliverances’) in the context of philosophical inquiry. Unlike much contemporary philosophy, however, Aristotle’s philosophizing is not thereby hampered; on his own terms, it is possible to make real philosophical progress without appeal to intuition.

Michael Dickson studied philosophy at the University of Notre Dame and Cambridge University, receiving his PhD in 1995. He studied philosophy of science and ancient philosophy, much of the latter with Prof. MacIntyre. He subsequently worked at Indiana University, eventually becoming the Ruth N. Halls Professor of History and Philosophy of Science, and later moved to the University of South Carolina, where he currently works. While his work has primarily been in history and philosophy of science, after a stint as an administrator he has returned to normal life and is focused, now, on medieval philosophy and philosophy of music.

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

“Unmasking Modernity: MacIntyre’s Critical Sociology of Performative Power” (Peter McMylor, University of Manchester)

This paper sets out to explore the work of the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre in relation to his profound criticisms of the social and economic order of modern capitalist modernity. The paper begins by setting his broad intellectual trajectory within the context of the emergence of the British New Left in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and highlights the continuing significance of some of the key themes explored by the New Left throughout all of MacIntyre’s work and especially in regard to his latest book, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (2016). The paper attempts to bring out the significant role that sociological analysis plays in MacIntyre’s account of modernity and notes the importance he gives to this type of analysis when analysing what appear to be purely philosophical issues. The paper suggests that this points towards MacIntyre’s work being a form of moral philosophy rooted in social practices that is especially congenial to sociology.

Peter McMylor teaches in the Department of Sociology in the School of Social Science, University of Manchester. He is the author of the first book length study to be published on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, {Alasdair MacIntyre: Critic of Modernity, (1994)} and he continues to work on MacIntyre and his contribution to social thought and also more generally on the relationship between morality/ethics and religion in respect of social and political theory with special reference to the sociology of intellectuals understood as bearers of ethical resources and culturally transformative identities.

JOYCE ROOM

“Wonder as an Antidote to Modernity: John Senior and the Integrated Humanities” (Todd Hartch, Eastern Kentucky University)

In 1970 John Senior and two colleagues at the University of Kansas started the Integrated Humanities Program (IHP) as an antidote to the disintegration of the modern university, which they saw as splintered, overly specialized, incoherent, and ultimately meaningless. Their four-semester program, they hoped, would provide a united and holistic introduction to Western culture by using the Great Books approach developed by Mark van Doren and Mortimer Adler, but with two twists that made it unlike anything else in American higher education at the time: 1) the whole program would be taught through the poetic mode of knowledge, the participatory sort of learning exemplified by observational astronomy and the memorization of poetry, and 2) the Western tradition would be taught from the perspective of what the professors called “Realism” or “The Perennial Philosophy,” not from a supposedly neutral viewpoint. At the heart of the IHP’s realism

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

was the belief that the real exists and is beautiful, good, and true; the three professors contrasted this belief with “anti-realism,” or the “perennial heresy” that reality is an illusion, which they saw in Western philosophies like nominalism, relativism, and voluntarism, and in Eastern thought, such as Buddhism. The program was wildly successful. Before it was shut down by worried administrators, it saw at least 200 of its students convert to Catholicism and many of its alumni become teachers, priests, and monks; it serves as the inspiration for several schools and a new Catholic college. This paper examines the history and philosophy of the IHP and argues that it provides a model of the kind of education that stands a chance of challenging and undermining modernity.

Todd Hartch is a History professor at Eastern Kentucky University, where he specializes in the religious history of Latin America. He is the author of The Rebirth of Latin American Christianity and The Prophet of Cuernavaca: Ivan Illich and the Crisis of the West. His current research focuses on the true, the good, and the beautiful in the contemporary United States.

“Teleology as a Dialectic of Cares and Aims” (Amod Lele, Boston University)

Which ends or purposes should be included in a neo-Aristotelian conception of flourishing? The proposed presentation argues for a teleology that emerges dialectically from individual human beings’ cares and aims. By “dialectically” here I mean that a mature conception of flourishing must include and emerge out of those cares and aims, as well as transcend or transform them. This proposed view stands in contrast to MacIntyre’s repeated insistence in *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (ECM) that human agents must acknowledge a standard of human goods that “independent of the concerns, cares, attitudes, and feelings of any particular agent...” (ECM 144; see also ECM 23, 140, 190) This view involves a *rapprochement* between MacIntyre’s ethical view in ECM and that of his adversaries, Harry Frankfurt and Bernard Williams.

The presentation argues for its alternative dialectical view on three grounds, some of which are also rooted in MacIntyre’s work. First, the presentation endorses MacIntyre’s claim, also in ECM, that normative judgements need to motivate us and they do so only “insofar as they afford expression to our sentiments, to our feelings and attitudes” (ECM 140). It argues that the demand for an independent standard stands in tension with this claim. Second, it argues for limiting the claims of a biological account of flourishing: biology can provide a standard only insofar as it is intrinsically linked to individual humans’ cares and aims. Finally, it looks to MacIntyre’s methodological claim in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry* that there can be “no set of independent standards of rational justification by appeal to which the issues between contending

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

traditions can be decided” (WJWR 346), and argues that there is an analogy between tradition and care, such that a neutral ethical standard independent of an agent’s cares is similarly impossible.

The presentation will then acknowledge MacIntyre’s objections to the related views of Frankfurt and Williams, responding to each objection in turn. Those objections are that one’s cares can be enlarged in ways one did not anticipate, as by encountering a great work of art (ECM 143–4); that we should be suspicious of our attitudes because “our feelings are apt to betray us and our attitudes are apt to obstruct our identifications of our feelings” (ECM 147); and that without an independent standard there is no way of judging between rival claims on our actions (ECM 140–1).

Amod Lele is Lecturer in Philosophy at Boston University. He has previously taught at Colorado College and Stonehill College. He received his PhD in the Study of Religion from Harvard University in 2007. His dissertation examined the ethics of the Buddhist philosopher Śāntideva, in dialogue with the neo-Aristotelian views of Martha Nussbaum. He has published in several venues including the Journal of Buddhist Ethics and the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Since 2009 he has written a biweekly blog in cross-cultural philosophy entitled Love of All Wisdom, and he manages and writes for the Indian Philosophy Blog.

“What Is Emotivist Culture?” (Peter Wicks, Elm Institute)

Of the claims that are central to the argument of *After Virtue* the most frequently misunderstood may be MacIntyre’s contention that we are living in an emotivist culture. The two most common ways in which this thesis is misunderstanding involve either (1) the conflation of MacIntyre’s claim with the more familiar contention that our society is awash in moral relativism or (2) interpreting MacIntyre to be saying that most inhabitants of the moral culture of modernity subscribe, at least implicitly, to the emotivist theory that moral utterances are expressions of subjective attitudes. But in calling contemporary culture “emotivist” MacIntyre is *not* claiming that most of its inhabitants are relativists or even emotivists. Rather he is drawing our attention to the features of contemporary ethical that have led to the “obliteration of any genuine distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations” (AV, 23), along with the cultural consequences of that obliteration.

In this paper I will clarify MacIntyre’s cultural diagnosis and the relationship that he posits between emotivist culture and the three characters that serve as representatives of that culture; the manager, the therapist, and the aesthete. I will also examine the ways in which MacIntyre’s later writings, especially *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, have extended this analysis even while sometimes deploying different terminology. I will conclude by offering some examples intended to illustrate that not only is MacIntyre’s analysis distinct from the more familiar cultural diagnoses with which it

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

is often conflated, but that it is considerably more plausible and more powerful in its explanatory reach.

Peter Wicks is Scholar-in-Residence at the Elm Institute in New Haven, CT. Educated at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Dr. Wicks came to the United States as Jane Eliza Procter Visiting Fellow at Princeton's Graduate School before pursuing his doctoral studies at the University of Notre Dame, where he completed his Ph.D. in 2010. Before joining the Elm Institute in 2015 he was Catherine of Siena Fellow at Villanova University, where he taught ethics and political philosophy. His main research interests are the contemporary applications of Aristotelian ethical and political thought and the intellectual foundations of utilitarianism. Dr. Wicks is currently completing a book, The Ethics of Peter Singer: A Study of Utilitarianism in Theory and Practice, which examines the sources of the appeal of utilitarianism in contemporary culture through a critical examination of the work of the contemporary philosopher Peter Singer.

CARMICHAEL ROOM

“Egalitarian Aristotelianism: Justice, Common Interest, and the Art of Politics” (Eleni Leontsini, University of Ioannina)

This paper aims to reconsider Aristotelian political theory from an egalitarian perspective and to pinpoint its legacy and relevance to contemporary political theory, demonstrating the importance of Aristotelian political theory for contemporary liberal democracies in a changing world, suggesting a new critique of neoliberal political theory and practice. Aristotle's philosophy is still relevant today, especially his moral and political thought. Indeed, we are experiencing a notable revival of activity in various philosophical areas of neo-Aristotelian philosophy, as well as in the study of Aristotle's philosophy per se. But although Aristotle's writings serve as a common source, contemporary Aristotelian theories are rarely based on close analysis of Aristotle's texts. What is needed is to go back to Aristotle's texts and examine his arguments afresh from both a scholarly and a philosophical perspective. The paper will focus on key aspects of Aristotle's thought, such as his notions of justice (*dikaionē* & *aplōs dikaion*), concord (*homonoia*), friendship (*philia*) and the art of ruling (*technē tou archein*), arguing that Aristotle's theory requires us to have concern for our fellow citizens; 'concern for others' as opposed to the mere 'respect for others' that contemporary liberalism advocates. Thus, I will examine these aspects of Aristotle's philosophy that have not so far been adequately discussed, in relation to his conception of 'common or public interest' (*κοινῆ συμφέρον/koinē symferon*) which is essential in order to understand the Aristotelian vision for 'the art of politics' which should always aim towards the interest of the many (the people/*plēthos*). This cannot be adequately be explained without trying to make sense of Aristotle's discussion in the

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Politics on natural slavery (*doubleia*) and his arguments in favour of ‘natural inequalities’, in relation to his definition of freedom (*eleutheria*) and his conception of a free citizen (*eleutheros*) in both his *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, but also in his *Metaphysics*, if one is to be able to argue in favour of a theory of ‘Egalitarian Aristotelianism’.

Dr Eleni Leontsini (PhD Glasgow) is Assistant Professor of the History of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, University of Ioannina, Greece. She is International Research Fellow at MRU’s Centre for Aristotelian Studies and Critical Theory, Visiting Researcher at the University of Glasgow Department of Philosophy, Member of the Executive Committee of ISME, Member of CASEP and Co-Convenor of the Specialist Group of Contemporary Aristotelian Studies, PSA, UK. Her research focuses on both classical and contemporary Aristotelianism, specializing in Aristotle’s moral and political philosophy. She has authored: The Appropriation of Aristotle in the Liberal Communitarian Debate (foreword R. Stalley, Athens: Saripolos Library, 2007; in English), the Greek National Curriculum philosophy textbook Anthology of Ancient Greek Philosophical Texts (OAED, 2009). She has co-edited (with Golfo Maggini) States and Citizens: Identity, Community, Diversity (Smili, 2016; in Greek) and (with Andrius Bielskis and Kelvin Knight) Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Aristotelianism: Modernity, Conflict and Politics (London: Bloomsbury; forthcoming 2019).

“Does Aristotle Recognize a Legislative Power?” (James Stoner, Louisiana State University)

Americans describe the three branches of government recognized by the Constitution—legislative, executive, and judicial—as though they represent three natural and necessary elements of all political orders. Historically this has not always been the case. The presence of judges may be as old as recorded history, but the executive power as such is an invention of modern times (in *Taming the Prince* Harvey Mansfield argues it was an invention of Machiavelli, refined by Locke and Montesquieu). Similarly, I argue, the legislative power as such is a modern invention, consequent to the invention of the executive: Laws can be explicitly made when it is presumed they will be certainly enforced. In classical political philosophy, laws, when not attributed to a god or to a mythical founder, were thought to emanate from the people or, more controversially, from “a public personage who has care of the whole people,” in Aquinas’s formulation. The modern notion supposes laws can be rightfully imposed and enforced even if the consent of those who are subject to them is by way of a theory of representation, rather than by the actual persuasion of minds who obey.

This paper will examine what Aristotle understands to be the source of human law. In book four of the *Politics* (1298a), he speaks of three parts in every regime: (1) that which “is to deliberate about common matters,” (2) “the part connected with offices,” and (3) “the adjudicative part.” The

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

deliberative part “has authority concerning war and peace, alliances and their dissolution, laws, [judicial cases carrying penalties of] death or exile or confiscation, and the choosing and auditing of officials” (Lord, tr.). Having “authority concerning... laws” is not necessarily the legislative power in the modern sense, and at any rate it is only part of the business of the deliberative part. (Actually, Aristotle’s enumeration of deliberative functions better summarizes the powers of Congress than does the phrase “legislative power.”)

Keeping in mind his references to the “lawgiver” as well as his discussion of unwritten law, I hope to explain how Aristotle understands the role human beings play in the making of laws and to contrast his account of law to our contemporary notion, gleaned perhaps some instruction as to how law can achieve genuine, not fictional, assent.

James R. Stoner, Jr. is the Hermann Moyses, Jr., Professor and Director of the Eric Voegelin Institute in the Department of Political Science at Louisiana State University. He is the author of Common-Law Liberty: Rethinking American Constitutionalism (Kansas, 2003) and Common Law and Liberal Theory: Coke, Hobbes, and the Origins of American Constitutionalism (Kansas, 1992), and co-editor of The Political Thought of the Civil War (Kansas 2018) and three other books. He earned his A.B. from Middlebury College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University and has been a visiting professor and fellow at Princeton University.

“Defining the Good Life in the 6th Mass Extinction Event: The Concept of ‘Flourishing’ in Contemporary Climate Ethics, Science, and Technology” (Jude Galbraith, University of Notre Dame)

A fundamental goal of climate science and climate ethics is to improve our relationship with the environment. To do this, we must have a conception of flourishing that includes the climate alongside the rest of the goods that are central to human life in the 21st century. A contemporary theory of climate ethics has to include a conception of what it is to live well with the earth, or what it is to live as best as possible in the climate conditions we find ourselves in. I make this caveat because our climate conditions today are not ideal – we are in a state of climate unrest or even crisis. This is not to say that we cannot formulate visions of the good life with regard to the earth and our relations to it, but that such formulations, if they are to be useful, must speak to the conditions of emergency we find ourselves in.

I consider this question from several perspectives: first, a *naturalistic* perspective, and second, a *technosocial* perspective. The first takes as its starting point what science can tell us about real and ideal human interactions with nature broadly speaking, based upon psychology, sociology, and

Saturday, July 27, 2019

Concurrent Session 7 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

ecology. Certain objective, naturalistic measures have been used as indications of flourishing in humans and other species, and it is possible to generalize about the relations that obtain between humans and the non-human world when humans perform well according to these measures.

The second, technosocial perspective takes as its starting point the contingencies of the cultural, political, and technological situation we find ourselves in, asking what vision of “living well with the earth” is embedded in our cultural, technological, and scientific narratives? Is this a realistic and defensible vision? Is there even a single coherent vision available? I critically examine the historical genesis of contemporary visions of building a right relationship with the natural world.

In my analysis, I will be using traditional concepts of *civic virtue*, integrating them with contemporary ecosciences, environmental ethics, and the ethics of technology and innovation. A final question of my talk will be: how can “green technology” and speculative climate engineering techniques help us fulfill, or radically alter, our notion of living well with the earth?

Jude Galbraith is a graduate student in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Notre Dame. He is currently writing a dissertation on the ethics of Climate Engineering research, and is also involved in research and teaching projects related to robot ethics. He has general research interests in technology ethics as well as in the intersection of technology and religion.