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HESBURGH ROOM

“Wisdom, Place, and Formation: Recent Contributions to Alasdair MacIntyre’s Account of the Role of Philosophy in Catholic Higher Education” (Bryan Cross, Mount Mercy University)

Recently three books have been published that engage and develop Alasdair MacIntyre's writing on higher education and the contemporary university. Jack Baker and Jeffrey Bilbro have written *Wendell Berry And Higher Education: Cultivating Virtues of Place* (University Press of Kentucky, 2017). More recently Jānis (John) Tāivaldis Ozoliņš published *Education and the Pursuit of Wisdom: The Aims of Education Revisited* (Routledge, 2018), and Steven Stolz also recently published *Alasdair MacIntyre, Rationality and Education: Against Education of Our Age* (Springer, 2018). In this paper I examine the implications of each of these three works first on MacIntyre’s conception of philosophy as a tradition-constituted practice and second on MacIntyre’s conception of the role of philosophy-as-practice in the Catholic university in the tasks of the integration of knowledge and moral formation, especially in view of MacIntyre’s case for a “postliberal university of constrained disagreements” between rival philosophical traditions, as he proposes in the last chapter of *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*.

Brian Cross is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Mount Mercy University in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He completed his bachelor’s degree in cellular and molecular biology at the University of Michigan, received an M.Div. from Covenant Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in philosophy from Saint Louis University. He has taught previously at Saint Louis University, Lindenwood University, and Kenrick-Glennon Seminary. He has published in American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly and Catholic Social Science Review, and contributed chapters in two books published by Catholic University of America Press. His research includes among other things the role of tradition in philosophical practice and its implications for the role of philosophy in Catholic higher education.

“Towards an Educated Public: Communities of Question and Answer in an Age of Institutional Fragmentation” (Philip de Mahy, University of Louisiana, Lafayette)

This paper will explore the contemporary challenges of building and maintaining an educated public, that is, communities made up of members educated to debate collectively about their ends and how to achieve them within the larger society that they act in. I will explore the ways this problem framed by John Henry Newman, R.G. Collingwood, and Alasdair MacIntyre, focusing specifically on how Collingwood’s concept of a logic of question and answer informed MacIntyre’s idea of an educated public. For all three thinkers, well-functioning educational institutions aim to foster communities

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that share a common set of questions, the answers to which can be discussed from a shared conception of first principles, an adequate understanding of current events, and a common past.

I will demonstrate how all three aspects of contemporary educated communities develop out of a historical consciousness that allows for its members to question both themselves and the institutions that they engage within a coherent context. The challenges of fostering an educated public become especially complicated in a political environment made up of fragmented or failing institutions, such as the press and university system, upon which it is not possible to rely for a coherent shared understanding. At the end of my paper, I will show how these ideas are made manifest in the works of three historical figures, roughly contemporary with each other, who were all trying to cultivate and participate in forms of educated community: James Baldwin, Saul Alinsky, and Dorothy Day. In each case, I will explore how their attempts to overcome failing institutions aimed at cultivating an environment of reflective questioning. Major texts that I will draw upon in this paper include MacIntyre's *God, Philosophy, and Universities*, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity*, and *Dependent Rational Animals*; Collingwood's *Autobiography*, *The New Leviathan*; and John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University*.

Philip de Maby received a B.A. in political science from Louisiana State University and, in the beginning of 2019, completed his Ph.D. in Politics from The Catholic University of America, concentrating in Political Theory and American Politics. His dissertation was entitled "Historical Civilization and a Politics of the Living Past in the Work of R.G. Collingwood." For the past 8 years, he has worked in university administration positions at The Catholic University of America, Georgetown University, and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette where he serves as the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School.

"Bound and Boundaries: MacIntyre on the Bonds of Citizenship and Patriotism" (Len Ferry, Niagara College)

MacIntyre has been credited with offering the most profound critique of liberal modernity among the major philosophers of what was once described as the communitarian movement. Twice now Ronnie Beiner, himself formerly enmeshed in the liberal-communitarian debate, has written political obituaries for the movement, most recently in his 2014 book, *Political Philosophy: What it is and Why it matters*. Earlier he had arraigned the communitarian tradition to write its obituary in what he called a "last look at the communitarian challenge." That he has now taken yet another look at the same may mean that there is more to the story than he could originally tell. That aside, in both obituaries, Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel, and Michael Walzer are all charged with having failed to provide a real alternative to liberalism, though Beiner points out that this was not the intention of

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some of them. Surprisingly, MacIntyre's statements of the less ambitious sort hardly distinguish his project from those of Taylor and Sandel. Nevertheless, Beiner characterizes Alasdair MacIntyre's politics as "a bracingly radical alternative to liberalism." I actually think that on the problem of political authority Sandel and Taylor closer to MacIntyre than liberal political philosophy fails to provide a convincing account of the obligations of citizens, and, given MacIntyre's sometimes ambivalent position (moving uneasily between quelling liberalism and merely correcting it) he may be closer to the other two than Beiner thinks. It would be helpful for those of us committed to Thomist philosophy to clarify the positions of leading thinkers within our tradition towards liberal political philosophy, the theory of citizenship, and political authority, and part of my aim is to do that with respect to MacIntyre by arguing that Beiner has misunderstood the nature of MacIntyre's project, especially his lecture on patriotism.

In the early eighties, before his turn to Thomism but around the time of the publication of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre published two essays that, I want to argue, comprise his attempt to offer an internal critique of liberal political philosophy at a fundamental level. The essays are: "Philosophy and Politics"(PP) and "Is Patriotism a Virtue?"(IPAV). The aim of the essays is, I argue, negative: to demonstrate to liberal political philosophers that they cannot offer a sound defense of political authority or the correlative obligations of citizens of liberal democratic states to obey the law. Unfortunately, MacIntyre's project was often associated with the aims and aspirations of communitarians during this period, and, though there are important affinities, even affinities that inform the internal critique that I want to comment on, this has allowed many to miss the point and purpose of what MacIntyre was trying to achieve. On the one hand, in "Philosophy and Politics," MacIntyre pursues the critique of the consent and utilitarian traditions. On the other hand, in "Is Patriotism a Virtue?," he exposes the weaknesses in those arguments that target associative duties and those that trade on the receipt of benefits from the state.

Len Ferry teaches full-time in the Academic and Liberal Studies division at Niagara College. He is a "would-be" Thomist whose primary research focuses on moral and political philosophy, including natural law theory, virtue ethics, and philosophies of emotion. It would be fair to say he is something of a curmudgeon, but with affinities closer to MacIntyre than Finnis, though deeply influenced in his reading of Aquinas by both Maritain and Simon. He is, however, something of an intellectual dabbler, and so you are as likely to find him reading Deely as Dickens.

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JOYCE ROOM

“Is Tradition-Constituted Rationality Coherentist?” (Stephen Evensen, University of Notre Dame)

A thesis important to Alasdair MacIntyre’s thought is that all moral reasoning occurs within a tradition of inquiry. This thesis is a challenge to the assumption that holding fast to tradition inhibits social progress. Inspired by this thesis, the goal of my paper is twofold. First, I provide a model which expresses MacIntyre’s social epistemology. Second, I argue that MacIntyre’s social epistemology is most compatible with a coherentist theory of epistemic justification. I develop MacIntyre’s argument by arguing that there is a three-step process by which the traditions of moral communities, demarcated by distinctive linguistic and social habits and patterns, make progress. Moral communities first possess a set of moral data, subsequently reason to an explanatory principle, and then apply this principle in specific cases. I argue that while the presence of an initial set of data may resemble a foundationalist theory of justification, each data point and their explanatory principles are subject to continuous revision by the rest of the conceptual structure. The model developed in my paper shows that no one step in this process occupies a privileged position in justification. The opportunity for moral progress occurs when a community recognizes inconsistencies internal to their tradition. These inconsistencies can be remedied either by applying explanatory principles with greater consistency or by developing a new explanatory principle. I submit that establishing a precis-like model of MacIntyre’s work provides at least two benefits to MacIntyrean scholarship. First, MacIntyre’s arguments are often found amidst long historical excurses. By streamlining MacIntyre’s arguments, one is able to identify the points at which his arguments are most vulnerable to criticism. Second, I show how this model can help us make sense of recent revolutions in Western moral thought regarding marriage, immigration, finance capitalism, and other social institutions and practices.

Stephen Evensen received his undergraduate degree in political science at Bethel University (MN) and is currently completing an MA in analytic philosophy at Biola University. He has been accepted and is likely to matriculate in the MTS program at Notre Dame in August 2019.

“After Virtue but Before Conscience: Protestant Aristotelianism in Transition” (Layne Hancock, University of Notre Dame)

Several reviewers of *After Virtue* in the 1980s noted the lack of credit given to a Protestant tradition of virtue during the early modern era. MacIntyre provided a slight corrective to this omission in

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1988 with *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* in the form of chapters on the Augustinian and Aristotelian background to the Scottish Enlightenment, Hutcheson, and Hume. However expanded this picture is, its culmination with Humean skepticism seems to indicate an internal instability with Scottish moral sense theory in particular and Protestant virtue in general. The aim of this paper is to cast doubt on this conclusion by investigating one strain of Puritan virtue theory that predates Hutcheson and Hume by a century and follows immediately on the heels of the Reformation.

This essay introduces the account of the virtues offered by William Ames through two of his most popular works: *Marrow of Theology* and *Conscience with the Power and Cases Thereof*. The *Marrow* was a foundational theological textbook for Harvard, Yale, and various Dutch universities for the latter half of the seventeenth-century and includes extended interactions with the medieval and early modern virtue tradition. The manual on conscience on the other hand, not only retains elements of virtue but provides unique insight into a booming manualist tradition. (Ames' *Conscience* passed through twenty printings in less than thirty years and was the first of its kind.) Taken together, Ames' works of theology and casuistry provide a more nuanced story of the transition from virtue discourse to the popular emphasis upon conscience. The aim of this essay is to tell that story. If this retelling is correct, some of the implications that follow include (1) a more historically accurate account of Protestant virtue that (2) leads to new conciliar and ecumenical opportunities in the area of moral theology. This is already apparent from the resurgent interest in Protestant Thomism – a trend that MacIntyre helped inspire indirectly. Finally, (3) noting the social and technological factors that prompted the turn from virtue to a manualist approach in pastoral theology would help philosophers and theologians to set proper expectations and aims for contemporary virtue theory. In short, I propose a revision to MacIntyre's early modern history for the purpose of rendering his project more inclusive of the Christian virtue tradition.

Layne Hancock is a doctoral student at the University of Notre Dame in the area of moral theology. He received a Masters of Arts in Religion in philosophical theology at Yale Divinity School and a Masters of Divinity at Southern Seminary. His general focus is on the relationship between early modern philosophy and theology.

“The Networked End of Well-Being” (Martha Lang, College of DuPage)

The most appropriate and reasonable end for a human being is to establish a good life, but a good life is only reasonable if it is cultivated and instantiated in the context of community, with a strong likelihood of both sustainability and epistemic merit; and it is only appropriate if it includes a moral component. Theories of well-being attempt to articulate the conditions for a good life. I shall argue that the most viable theory of well-being is one that takes seriously the social nature of human

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beings, as well as both epistemic and moral considerations. The theory of well-being that succeeds is the *Network Theory of Well-Being, Revamped* (see Lang 2017). Lang presents Bishop's Network Theory of Well-Being as the most reasonable starting point for a theory of well-being because of its inclusive methodology. Bishop's theory is inclusive because he investigates both the science and the philosophy of well-being; the science of well-being that Bishop examines is positive psychology. Bishop's 2015 theory is that well-being is a matter of instantiating a positive causal network (PCN), which includes a homeostatic positive feedback loop of positive attitudes, positive emotions, positive interactions, and successes. Bishop admits that his theory of well-being has the consequence that wicked people can end up having well-being.

Through a series of counter-examples, Lang argues that Bishop's theory is missing an essential component. The missing component is *holistic authenticity*, which is a loaded term because it involves not only authenticity but also the features of its holistic qualifier. Beyond subjective authenticity, holistic authenticity requires objectivity, which is achieved through two constraints on one's subjective authenticity: an epistemically robust information requirement, as well as a general moral requirement. Lang provides details about both of these requirements for well-being, which, when added to the PCN model of well-being, results in a good life that is good for the individual, as well as the group. And that seems to be a proper end for each of us. There are similarities to Aristotle's virtuous end, but the model of the good life that emerges from the *Network Theory of Well-Being, Revamped* is more flexible and diverse, avoiding common pitfalls of the standard Aristotelian account. In my paper, I will explain the aforementioned theories of well-being in more detail and will make suggestions for utilizing the preferred theory of well-being in the creation of public policies that promote appealing ends in terms of the good life but which simultaneously uphold both reason and morality.

Martha Louise Lang completed her PhD in Philosophy in 2017 at Florida State University, with an emphasis on environmental ethics and well-being. Lang currently teaches philosophy at College of DuPage in a suburb of Chicago and does academic coaching, along with philosophical counseling, at University of St. Francis in Joliet, IL. Lang is certified in Logic-Based Therapy through the National Philosophical Counseling Association and is developing a series of programs and initiatives called Philosophy & Zen, which aim to promote a more just society through philosophy and meditation practices. Lang is interested in working towards public policy reform, to help incorporate philosophy into public secondary schools.

CARMICHAEL ROOM

“Special Operations Forces as a Practice” (Bart Kennedy, Naval Postgraduate School)

Special Operations Forces have become the tool of choice for US overseas policy during an era of persistent conflict. A relatively recent development in military history, special operations forces constitute a peculiar nascent tradition of soldiering.

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The body of literature on special operations forces is primarily historical, popular, or deal with questions of political science. This paper examines the brief history of American special operations forces, what specifically makes them unique, and the narratives and traditions that surround them. It then addresses the significance of special operations for moral discourse on war within contemporary American society, drawing on MacIntyre, Aristotle, and others to construct a critical analysis of the ethics of special operations. It argues that within the American military special operations are a unique practice as defined by MacIntyre and that some of the narratives and traditions that are partially constitutive of the practice are a hazard for both the special operators and the community.

Drawing on the limited academic and popular literature on American special operations, the paper shapes a picture of a distinctive American practice that is both highly visible but remarkably opaque to the citizen.

Captain Bart Kennedy is a United States Army Special Forces officer who is currently a graduate student in the Defense Analysis Department at the United States Naval Postgraduate School. He is writing his thesis on philosophical issues surrounding Special Operations Forces and how MacIntyre's account of practice, narrative, and tradition can be fruitfully applied to this community. He has operational experience in Africa, Europe, Iraq, and Afghanistan. He is a graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville with a Masters in Philosophy.

“Local Community and Community Practices in the Driftless Region: Understanding the Role the Community Practices of Deliberation, Celebration, and Contemplation Play in Flourishing through an Empirical Investigation of the 7 Rivers Alliance” (James McGuire, Saint Louis University)

In *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre calls for “the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained.” In “Politics, Philosophy, and the Common Good,” MacIntyre writes, “It is important to examine instructive examples of the politics of local community.” Beadle, Moore, Bernacchio and Couch, Coe, and others have responded to MacIntyre’s call through the empirical investigation of institutions and practice-based communities. Nonetheless, MacIntyre’s call to investigate the role local community itself plays in flourishing has gone unanswered.

In this paper, I seek to answer MacIntyre’s call to investigate local community in two ways. First, I extend MacIntyre’s virtue-practice-institution framework to include a notion of “community practice,” and consider three community practices in particular: deliberation, celebration, and contemplation. Second, with an understanding of community practices in hand, I investigate how

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community practices are central to flourishing community. Particularly, I engage the community of La Crosse, Wisconsin via the 7 Rivers Alliance—a non-profit bringing together community leaders and organizations to pursue the common good. By introducing “MacIntyrean Empirics” into the work of 7 Rivers Alliance, I reveal how community practices are central to flourishing local community, and thereby to flourishing individual lives.

James McGuire studies philosophy at Saint Louis University. His major interests concern political philosophy, ethics, and the ways these debates and inquiry shape how we live well together, and vice versa. Of particular interest are notions of the common good and the ways we can seek, achieve, and actualize it. In addition to teaching and studying at Saint Louis University, McGuire serves as the Graduate Student Association Vice President of North Campus. Besides his academic work, McGuire has a passion for nature which he exercises most often through hiking, canoeing, and backpacking—activities, which in turn, shape his philosophical pursuits.

“Sport as MacIntyrean Practice: Ancient Practice and Modern Assessment” (Michael O’Neill, Providence College)

In a remarkable moment, within a large, complex and exhaustive process of certification for high school coaching, the National Federation of High Schools online coaching course stated that, “Research is inconclusive as to whether participation in sports is effective as an educational tool.” This brief statement occurs within a process that is meant to certify coaches as educators who, in theory, participate in the teaching of a curriculum through sport. A survey of the current research shows that the announcement summarizes the prevailing wisdom within education research. That is, it summarizes the position that it is not clear what, if anything, participation in sport teaches.

Considering the mountain of treasure (in terms of taxes and payments to private clubs, coaches and trainers) that has been spent on high school sports in the United States, this statement is nothing short of shocking. Sport has traditionally been understood to serve a heuristic purpose for the young in the community. It has ancient roots in the training of character. The ancient Greeks saw in competition the channeling of potentially destructive *eris* into healthy expression. And, they saw the function of sport to be a primary, and again healthy, outlet for *thymos*. In short, sport helped mold the *psyche* of the young Athenian citizen.

In this paper, I raise the question as to how modern ethical standards are articulated and measured in relation to an ancient practice. I argue from a MacIntyrean standpoint, using MacIntyre’s conception of a ‘practice’, that participation in sport disseminates certain goods internal to the practice, and reinforces the habits of virtue needed to access the practice. As a means to character

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development, the function of sport focuses on reinforcing virtues, intellectual (practical thinking) and moral. I argue that the modern attempts to assess the educational value of sport are hindered by the inability of modern assessment standards (which are fundamentally rooted in modern regularian ethical theories) to appreciate the focus of sport on the uncovering of internal goods and the reinforcement of habits of character. The benefit of participation in sport is not primarily a matter of rule following, which is the essence of modern ethics.

I conclude with the point that sport is fundamentally meritocratic not democratic or egalitarian, which means it is essentially focused on the development of meritocratic virtue ethics, not on egalitarian or utilitarian ethics.

Michael O'Neill received his PhD from the Catholic University of America with distinction. He has been a member of the faculty at Providence College, in Providence, Rhode Island, for seventeen years. Dr. O'Neill is an associate professor and former chair of the philosophy department with research interests in political philosophy, philosophy of history, aesthetics and recently, philosophy of sport. His current writing projects focus on anti-liberalism, sport as a MacIntyrean practice, and the nature of academic space. He is married and lives with his wife, Lisa, and three children in Franklin, Massachusetts.