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Concurrent Session 4 | 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

HESBURGH ROOM

“On MacIntyre’s Aristotelian Questioning” (Christopher Quintana, Villanova University)

When one first reads the *Communist Manifesto*, with even the slightest knowledge of the history of communist states, one cannot help but raise the apt question that centers this conference: to what end? In this case, to what end is this polemical call for revolution (and the massive studies of *Das Kapital*) aimed at? It is no secret that Marxism has had an ambivalent relationship to morality.

Alasdair MacIntyre was no doubt aware of Marxism’s ambivalent relationship to morality. Readers of Alasdair MacIntyre’s work, especially those with an eye to his earlier Marxism, likely noted the rebuke against the “modern radical” in *After Virtue*. “Whatever else he [the modern radical] denounces in our culture” writes MacIntyre, “he is certain that it still possesses the resources in which he requires in order to denounce.” MacIntyre’s focus in the passage is on absence of an adequate moral language, on an inability to articulate a vision of the human good. MacIntyre has of course addressed this issue throughout. But a recent essay, *How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary: Ethics, Resistance, and Utopia* is an important development in MacIntyre’s work.

In this paper, I examine practice of Aristotelian questioning developed in his recent work and its consequences for moral and political practice and Neo-Aristotelian moral philosophy. At the level of practice, I show how MacIntyre’s notion of Aristotelian questioning enables development of a sophisticated and layered sense of the human good among communities. For example, a community building a school, must raise questions on what constitutes a good education, how children learn best, and what external goods are necessary. These Aristotelian questions, all aimed at achieving a realization of certain human capacities and character traits, harbors the development of a moral vocabulary of the human good as well as a political consciousness of what must be done to realize these projects.

Furthermore, I argue that MacIntyre’s Aristotelian questioning has consequences for Neo-Aristotelian moral philosophy. While MacIntyre emphasizes the limits of scholarly arguments, I suggest that Neo-Aristotelians stand to benefit by examining the radical moral and political criticisms that Aristotelian questioning engenders. It is a tradition which, contrary to its historical forbearers, has remained largely quietist regarding politics. I believe this is a mistake. I contest that a virtue politics is articulable as a natural extension of the ethics and is one which can supplement or rival the Marxist tradition.

Christopher Quintana is a PhD student in philosophy at Villanova University interested in the history of moral and political philosophy with an emphasis of Baruch Spinoza. More specifically, he is interested in the Aristotelian tradition's arguments concerning what it means to realize our human nature, how this moral vision affects politics (if at all), and the reception of Aristotelian moral philosophy. His latest research examines Spinoza's critique of final causes

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and how this impacts his ethics and relationship to Aristotelianism. He also has an interest in the ethical naturalism of neo-virtue ethics and historical resources for this tradition.

“When the End Is Care: Information and Communications Infrastructures to Support Human Wellbeing” (Mike Martin, Northumbria University)

This paper examines the concepts of wellbeing, infrastructure and governance and then develops a framework for the architectural discourse of systems of care. This is based on a concept of epistemic registers which is developed in the discussion. Peircian triadicity and MacIntyre’s neo-Aristotelian concept of virtuous judgement and practice are used to develop a theory and outline a practice for the co-design and co-governance of the information and communications infrastructure required to support communities of care.

Mike Martin is the Chair of Enterprise Information Sciences at Northumbria University. An electronics engineer by training and started my career working on first generation of speech technologies and HCI. I was heavily involved in the European Commission Research Programmes of the '80 and '90s in the theory, technologies and applications of distributed information and telecommunications systems.

“Truth As Our End, Philosophy As Our Practice” (Tamás Paár, Pázmány Péter Catholic University)

I am going to argue for three theses: (1) we should conceive truth as a necessary and natural end of humans, (2) philosophical enquiry should be conceived as the most eminent way to acquire truth, and (3) philosophy is itself a practice and can teach us to be virtuous.

Truth is necessarily a good for humans as it is a condition of any other goods: as Plato argued in the *Philebus*, lacking truth, we are in the dark concerning the question of how we can achieve happiness or whether we are happy or not. In a similar vein we might argue that even those who deny that there is a natural end for humans *qua* humans have to acknowledge that truth is a part of any of the ends that we may aim at. But this, in turn, entails that truth is our end by nature.

Truth could be understood in many ways, however, what seems to be the most important in the case of truth as a natural end for humans is the specific kind of truth we reach by understanding. As MacIntyre puts it in “Truth as a good: a reflection on *Fides et Ratio*”: for ‘the mind to understand is for it to have achieved its principal good, to have arrived at “the truth” in some area’.

It seems to be plausible that philosophy is the discipline that potentially aims at acquiring this truth and has the best resources to be successful in this endeavor. Philosophy, unlike other disciplines, can

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approach the whole in any given area, including the sum of all domains and not only partial dimensions. Therefore, philosophy could be capable of grasping how various domains are interconnected and how all of them find an ultimate explanation thus furnishing us with truth.

In their search for truth, philosophers put forward their theses, arguments, definitions and distinctions as a response to earlier participants of an ongoing debate. Those who are entering this debate for the first time have to learn that their former standards of enquiry could have been wanting. They have to acknowledge this so as to be able to further the standards of the philosophical enterprise. In this and other respects, philosophy is no different from painting, chemistry or farming. This suggests that philosophy itself is a practice in a MacIntyrean sense, and like the rest of practices, it can teach us to be virtuous. This way I am arguing against MacIntyre himself who suggests in his work on ‘Rival Aristotles’ that philosophy in itself can’t teach virtue.

Tamás Paár is a graduate student in the Doctoral School of Political Theory at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Budapest, Hungary). He received his degrees in philosophy and communications at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University and then completed an MA program at the Central European University. He is an editor of the philosophy journal Elpis. He spent his Fall term in 2018 at the University of Notre Dame. He is currently organizing the conference titled ‘MacIntyre 90 – Practice, Tradition, Natural Law’ which is to take place at the National University of Public Service in Budapest.

JOYCE ROOM

“MacIntyre, Friendship, and Liberal Education” (Jonathan J. Sanford, University of Dallas)

A university education, one might think if judging by conventional wisdom, is something to receive, to achieve, and to move beyond so that one can get even busier with a life that consists of two major parts: labor and entertainment. This is just what one should expect given the cultural framework MacIntyre identifies as Morality, the morality of modernity, which is a morality which entails a fundamentally consumeristic view of one’s life and purpose. One of the great virtues of MacIntyre’s *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* is the philosophical antidote that MacIntyre prescribes to Morality. Taking inspiration from MacIntyre, as well as Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, I aim with this presentation to explore several features of a NeoAristotelian view of liberal education within a university setting through a focus on friendship, arguing that a liberal education is a sort of friendship for the sake of friendship.

Jonathan J. Sanford is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Dallas and also serves the university as its Provost. He graduated summa cum laude from Xavier University in Classical Languages and Philosophy in 1997, received his PhD from University of Buffalo, State University of New York in 2001, and held a post-doctoral

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fellowship from Fordham University in 2001-2002. Sanford previously served at Franciscan University of Steubenville where in addition to his faculty appointments he served as Chair of the Philosophy Department and Associate VP for Academic Affairs. At the University of Dallas, he has previously served as the Dean of the undergraduate college of liberal arts. He has published widely on philosophical figures and topics, and more recently on liberal education. His latest book is Before Virtue: Assessing Contemporary Virtue Ethics (The Catholic University of America Press, 2015) and is currently writing a book on virtue and education.

CARMICHAEL ROOM

“Ethics, Politics, and the Practice of Writing in Thomas Mann’s Life and Work” (Andrius Bielskis, Mykolas Romeris University)

Alasdair MacIntyre’s famous conceptualization of practice, of the narrative unity of life and of tradition, provided contemporary moral theory with a groundbreaking theoretical framework to situate Aristotelian notion of *aretē* against the cultural background of advanced-modernity. One of the key philosophical theses defended in *After Virtue* is that, despite the fact that the institutional setting of the culture of bourgeois modernity is inimical to virtues, virtues can still be found and practiced when we seriously engage both in practices and in a narrative honesty with ourselves and our cultural-moral traditions. Literature as creative writing is important not only because it is a practice, but also because it allows writers and their readers to reflect on the narrative nature of our identities. Against this background, I will ask in which sense it is possible to claim that literature as a practice schools us in virtues. I will then look at Thomas Mann’s life to underline ethical, ideological and political conflicts against which his literary work should be interpreted. I will argue that Thomas Mann’s work may be understood both as a rich source for us to understand the 20 th century German (and European) bourgeois society and, at the same time, as the ideological obfuscation of such understanding. In other words, contrary to Gregory Lukács’s reading of Thomas Mann as a great realist, I will argue that, despite its literary brilliance in depicting the key tensions of German bourgeois culture, Mann’s portrayal of bourgeoisie and its way of life was both sociologically and ethically inaccurate. The ethical inaccuracy was because Thomas Mann, despite (or in spite of) his Nietzschean rebellion against morality, remained imprisoned by the ideologically institutionalized Kantian conception of Prussian militarized morality. Therein lied his far too dramatic dualism between duty and artistic sensuality and between death and eroticism. Sociologically it is inaccurate because objectively a bourgeois is not only Thomas Buddenbrook, who follows duty and devotedly works in his family company, but also Christian Buddenbrook, who can afford not to work and engage in artistic and erotic joys and misdemeanors.

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Andrius Bielskis is Director of Centre for Aristotelian Studies and Critical Theory at Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, and Professor of Philosophy at Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania. He is the author of several books including Towards a Postmodern Understanding of the Political (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005), The Unholy Sacrament (Demos, 2014), On the Meaning of Philosophy and Art (MRU, 2015), Existence, Meaning, Excellence (Routledge, 2017), and the co-editor of Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Aristotelianism: Modernity, Conflict and Politics (with Eleni Leontsini and Kelvin Knight; Bloomsbury, forthcoming in 2019) and of Virtue and Economy: Essays of Morality and Markets (with Kelvin Knight; Ashgate, 2015). He was an International Onassis Fellow at the University of Athens in 2017 pursuing research on the critique of natural inequalities, especially the notorious argument for the existence of natural slaves in Aristotle's practical philosophy.

“Just as Satire or Morality Might Prevail”: Narrative Critiques of Commerce in Jane Austen’s Late Novels” (Elizabeth de Mahy, Catholic University of America)

This paper will explore how narrative can respond to moral challenges during times of rapid economic and technological change. In particular, it will consider the realistic novels written by Jane Austen towards the end of her life, seeing these novels as contributions to a tradition of radical critique of what today we would call consumer capitalism. Far from being the political quietist that she was considered to be for the first 150 years after her death, Austen’s 18th-century brand of Toryism and staunch Anglican upbringing made her wary of the effects of commerce and the rapidly expanding English nation state during the Napoleonic period, effects which she considered inimicable to the self-knowledge and growth in virtue necessary for individuals to reach their ends. The paper will especially consider Austen’s last, unfinished novel, *Sanditon*, which contrasts the Heywood family, traditional and from the country, with the Parkers, who have abandoned their ancestral home in favor of a speculation scheme, building up the seaside town of Sanditon aided by the financial support of the soberingly heedless lover of money, Lady Denham. I will connect *Sanditon* with other Austen characters, including Sir Walter Elliot from *Persuasion* as well as Maria Bertram and the Crawfords from *Mansfield Park*. Austen presents modern economic consumption as pernicious in large part because of the increasing abstraction of wealth, with colonialism, the banking system, industrialization, and international trade obscuring the sources of money and divorcing it from nature, unlike England’s traditional economy. William Cobbett, a contemporary of Austen, arrives at similar conclusions, such as in his series of *Political Register* articles entitled “Perish Commerce.” This paper will also briefly place these critiques of commerce and its effects on morality in the context of late 18th and early 19th century debates about luxury, especially those that compared increasingly wealthy England with the history of the declining Roman Empire. Throughout the paper, I will be relying upon the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, including his explicit references to Jane Austen in works such as *After Virtue* and his book review “Jane’s Fighting Ships,” but I will also be incorporating material from *Dependent Rational Animals* and lectures such as

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“Heedlessness” and “Ends and Endings.” In addition, the paper will utilize critiques found in James C. Scott’s *Seeing Like a State*.

Elizabeth de Mahy graduated in 2017 with a PhD in English Language and Literature from The Catholic University of America. She studied 18th and 19th century British Literature, focusing on Ethics and Education in the Works of Female Novelists. Her dissertation was entitled “The Ethics of Crisis in the Works of Jane Austen.” Elizabeth has taught classes in Composition and in British Literature.

“Learning Aristotelian Narrative Analysis with Jane Austen” (Dwight Lindley, Hillsdale College)

Since at least 1821 (in Richard Whately’s review of her last two novels), Jane Austen’s novelistic imagination has often been called Aristotelian: she depicts character, action, practical reasoning, teleology, and ethical probability in distinctly Aristotelian ways. At the same time, she does not just follow Aristotelian principles in her own poetic construction of narratives; she dramatizes the narrative constructions, good and bad, of her characters. Catherine Morland, Elinor Dashwood, Emma Woodhouse: these and many others are trying to make it through Austen’s moral world as Aristotelian poets in their own right, evolving probabilistic narratives to explain themselves and the other characters in their lives. Indeed, the trial, conflict, failure, and reconstruction of their moral narratives comprise the substance and chief interest of a Jane Austen plot: we go to Austen for epistemological dramas of narrative crisis. In this essay, I will describe and exemplify the basic dimensions of Austen’s Aristotelian narrative imagination with some reference to relevant texts from the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*. From there, my argument will be that Austen’s dramatization of narrative reasoning is compelling inasmuch as A. it feels *real*; it is true to the way we commonly analyze moral situations; B. it presents moral narrative construction done well: we are hungry for good examples of moral drama, lived virtuously, or at least with good will, even in times of utter crisis and collapse; C. it turns on the same sorts of questions and challenges we face today, only simplified and clarified, so that the conditions and qualities of successful moral reasoning stand out more clearly than they usually do in every-day life. For these reasons, my final claim is that Jane Austen’s novels (and other works in the “realist” tradition of fiction that followed her) will often do a better job of influencing contemporary moral discourse than theory, or even sermons. There must of course be a general resistance to overt formation in Aristotelian categories and narrative reasoning, but as Whately wrote in 1821, Jane Austen’s fiction “guides the judgment” silently, and “furnishes general rules of practical wisdom.”

Dwight Lindley is associate professor of English at Hillsdale College in Michigan. He teaches courses in the Great Books, as well as more specialized classes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century British literature. He has published

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articles on John Henry Newman, George Eliot, Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, and literary theory, all against the backdrop of Western philosophy and theology. His two book projects are on Aristotelian practical reasoning in nineteenth-century novels and philosophy, and a Romantic-Aristotelian Theory of Literature.

SALON C, SMITH BALLROOM

“The Rational Justification of Philosophical Traditions in Alasdair MacIntyre’s Later Thought” (Jorge Arbelaez, Universidad de La Sabana)

Although Alasdair MacIntyre shows a continuous interest in moral issues during the development of his thought since the 1970s, it is also evident that simultaneously to his moral philosophy he argues in favor of an epistemological stance to justify his moral perspective. This has elicited the emergence of an epistemological focus on his philosophical work. Regarding this issue, I follow the approaches made by Herdt (1998), Mosteller (2006), D' Andrea (2006), Cross (2014), Rouard (2014), Caiazza (2014) and Lutz (2014) to MacIntyre's later thought.

The thesis that I argue for is that for MacIntyre the rational superiority of a philosophical tradition is determined by its capacity to integrate coherently in it the major number of possible different interpretations about the worldly phenomena, while preserving its original identity and avoiding epistemological relativism. The paper is divided in three parts: in the first part, I present and criticize MacIntyre's “disquieting suggestion” regarding contemporary philosophy because it is the general epistemological milieu with which he discusses across his later thought. In the second part, I explain MacIntyre's use of the concept of tradition as it is developed through the publication of *After Virtue* (2007) and his last book, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (2016). MacIntyre's (1988) initial claim concerning the concept of tradition is that it is “an argument extended through time in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition (...) and those internal interpretative debates (...)”. These two kinds of conflict are constituted by a hermeneutical approach, whose object is always the ever-changing relationship between the fundamental agreements and the non-fundamental agreements in a tradition. In the third part, I claim that this hermeneutical approach is key to evaluate the rational superiority of a philosophical tradition in comparison to other philosophical traditions. In fact, the major accomplishment of MacIntyre's defense of his claim in favor of the tradition constituted enquiry is that it avoids epistemological relativism, while at the same time being dynamic and open to changes by reformulating its fundamental agreements if needed.

I conclude that MacIntyre's hermeneutical approach to rationality constitutes a plausible stance to define the terms of the possibility of progress in philosophy as a science, even if it needs to be

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completed by a Thomistic perspective of truth as adequation, which MacIntyre does not develop systematically.

Jorge E. Arbeláez is a part time professor of Philosophy at Universidad de La Sabana in Bogota, Colombia. His major philosophical interests are Thomist epistemology and the history of Medieval Philosophy. And he is pursuing a master's degree of Philosophy at Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, where he undertakes research on Alasdair MacIntyre's epistemology. Professor Arbeláez focuses on MacIntyre's possible solution to some problems of metaphilosophy. In this regard, his research examines the evaluation criteria that MacIntyre offers to define whether a particular philosophical tradition could be more rational than other philosophical traditions.

“MacIntyrian Resources for (Re-)Writing Histories with the End in Sight” (Michael Baxter, Regis University)

Virtually all professional histories narrate the past without any clear conception of humanity's end, in the hopes of avoiding any overt evaluative content of the narratives, thereby recording, indeed creating, so to speak, a world without ends. In this paper, I will argue for the possibility of writing histories with the end in sight, that is, writing histories that account for the goal or telos of human life, thereby enabling us to make moral judgments and craft our historical narratives accordingly.

My paper comes in seven (brief) parts, designed to be given (if need be) within a fifteen-minute presentation. First, I identify the problem by showing how historians misjudge and distort the radical social ethic of Dorothy Day owing to the Weberian worldview that informs their work. Second, I show how that Weberian worldview was transmitted by Ernst Troeltsch, H. Richard Niebuhr, and Reinhold Niebuhr, whose combined work shaped the field of U.S. religious history. Third, I show how this subfield was only part of the overall shaping of the field of history with Weberian “political realist” assumptions associated with the end-of-ideology movement in the context of the Cold War. Fourth, I counter these assumptions with MacIntyre's account in *After Virtue* of the loss of humanity's telos and his retrieval of it through a positive account of virtue, narrative, and tradition. Fifth, I argue that MacIntyre's implied alternative history in *After Virtue* must be seen as part of his longstanding refusal to accept the binary terms of the Cold War and the moral alternatives, utilitarianism and Kantianism, entailed therein (as in “Notes from the Moral Wilderness” and the introductory sections in *Against Self-Images of the Age*). Sixth, I argue that Dorothy Day took a similar stand against the binary terms of the Cold War (her writings are very provocative in this regard) and envisioned the formation of new communities as alternatives to the state-and-market-systems of modernity. Seventh, I argue for an alternate reading and writing of twentieth-century history, focusing on resistance to capitalism, refusal to accept the Cold War

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alternatives, and reconstruction of genuine political community, one that affirms the histories offered at the end of *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* but also goes beyond them to provide histories of non-aligned, Cold-War era movements such as the Catholic Worker which, it may well turn out, prove not to be as marginal or unrealistic as they are too often narrated.

Michael J. Baxter received a Ph.D. in Religion from Duke University (1996), was a fellow at the Center for the Study of American Religion at Princeton (1995-96), taught Theology at the University of Notre Dame (1996-2011), was a fellow of the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University (2011-12), taught Catholic Studies at DePaul University (2012-15), and now teaches Religious Studies at Regis University in Denver. He is the author of numerous articles and is currently completing a book titled Against the Americanist Grain: Essays for a Radical Counter-Tradition of Catholic Social Ethics (Cascade Press).

“Newman’s Philosophy and Illative Sense as Tools for Contemporary Dialogue” (Marial Corona, University of Navarra)

Strictly speaking, J. H. Newman (1801-1890) is not considered a neo-Aristotelian philosopher, however, he developed his epistemology within an Aristotelian frame of mind and it has been argued that the best way to understand his philosophy is from an Aristotelian perspective (Hochschild 334). Well trained in Aristotle’s logic, Newman came to realize its limitations for concrete reasoning and in his later works, he upheld both: the powers and the limitations of deductive reasoning. He used this awareness, along with his Aristotelian realism, as anchors for his theory of knowledge.

From a philosophical perspective his two major works are *The Idea of a University* and *The Grammar of Assent*. These provide the setting for his development of two concepts imbued with a distinctly Aristotelian character: philosophy (seen as a virtue) and the illative sense. He understands both as habits of the mind that perfect our reasoning and expand its possibilities.

Towards the end of his life, in a ceremony in which his achievements were honored, Newman stated that “for thirty, forty, fifty years I have resisted to the best of my powers the spirit of liberalism” (AR 64). In his *Apologia* he had enumerated the principles of liberalism, three of which are: “No one can believe what he does not understand”, “No [...] doctrine is anything more than an opinion which happens to be held by bodies of men” and “It is dishonest in a man to make an act of faith in what he has not had brought home to him by actual proof” (499). As it can be seen, what he labeled “liberalism” is what we understand today as relativism.

After exploring the Aristotelian roots of his theory of knowledge and the characteristics and correlations of these two habits of the mind, philosophy and the illative sense, as Newman

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understood them, this paper suggests that they are timely and valuable tools to enlighten and counteract the dogmatism and relativism that overshadow today's moral discourse.

Marial Corona is a lay consecrated woman in Regnum Christi. She obtained a BA in Religious and Pastoral Studies in 2008 in Mater Ecclesiae College, in Rhode Island and afterwards taught theology in Monterrey, Mexico. In 2013 she obtained a Master in Philosophy from the University of Navarra in Spain. Her Master's Thesis centered on John Henry Newman and his Idea of a University. Subsequently she worked five years in Chicago, where her ministry was to set up and accompany young people in mission trips. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in Navarra, continuing her research on Newman.