



International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry

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## Reflections on the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual ISME Conference, "MacIntyre as critic and educator" Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A.

*By Michael J. O'Neill*

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry was convened on July 28 at Providence College in Providence, R.I. Under the theme of "MacIntyre as Critic and Educator", the conference program included fifty presentations, three panel discussions and three plenary sessions. Presenters represented ten different countries. It was a truly international and interdisciplinary meeting. A sampling of the presenters reveals theologians, historians, philosophers, education theorists, psychologists, political theorists, theorists of Catholic social thought, economists, teachers of the culinary arts

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*Downtown Providence – Photo Charles Borges*

and literature professors. The conference closed successfully on July 31<sup>st</sup> with a sense of accomplishment and fellowship as well as anticipation for next year's conference in Nottingham, England.

If a conference is an indication of trends of thinking in scholarship, then concerns about the nature and role of tradition in MacIntyre are accelerating. As a corollary to the theme of tradition, significant discussion was given to MacIntyre's thinking about the role of philosophy in the university. As with previous conferences, ethical themes from MacIntyre's thought continued to be developed at Providence. Familiar veins of research proved they still have ideas that need to be mined. Questions of MacIntyre's relationship and indebtedness to Aquinas and Aristotle were profitably raised and discussed, as were MacIntyre's critique of liberalism and his Marxist roots. These conversations continue to invigorate the society. Virtue ethicists and natural law thinkers sought the limits of MacIntyre's contribution to both traditions. And, the society's commitment to continuing the discussion of Catholic social thought that originated in St. Meinrad resulted in interesting sessions on the question of the compatibility of Catholic social thought with rights theory, as well as sessions on the pedagogical challenges surrounding Catholic social thought. Presenters branched out to bring MacIntyre in conversation with other thinkers including Heidegger, Strawson, Mouffe, Augustine, Foucault and Dewey. Perhaps most originally for this conference, presenters



*Conference Hotel – Photo Charles Borges*

worked to articulate the intersection of MacIntyre's thinking about narrative with education and they pressed his thinking about narrative to see how it works as a hermeneutic lens for interpreting texts.

In keeping with the tradition of past conferences, the plenary speakers at the 5<sup>th</sup> conference delivered provocative challenges to MacIntyre's thinking. Prof. James Connelly (University of Hull) explored the contexts

and communities that produce environmental and military ethics, in the process raising questions about the potential incommensurability of values between communities. Prof. Daniel Dahlstrom (Boston University) suggested that the emphasis MacIntyre places on community identity leaves little space for articulating what an independent moral agent would look like; and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Marilynne Robinson (Iowa Writers' Workshop) eloquently challenged MacIntyre's account of protestant thinking in modernity.

Both Dahlstrom's and Robinson's presentations highlighted the tension in MacIntyre's thinking between its pre-modern and post modern influences. This tension was echoed in several papers during the conference and looks to be an emerging concern among ethicists who work on MacIntyre's thought. Each plenary session led to lively debate with the conversation continuing in the pubs and restaurants of Providence.

Equally important to the tradition of substantive content during the ISME conferences is the fellowship of its members. It was a pleasure to be able to participate in a truly interdisciplinary conference which seems to model the classical ideal of a community of friends in pursuit of the truth. I, for one, look forward to continuing this conversation with you all next year in Nottingham.

Michael O'Neill  
Conference Secretary, ISME 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, 2011

## From the Executive Secretary

Dear Friends of MacIntyre,

Greetings! In my hometown today, we are celebrating Oktoberfest. Mount Angel, Oregon is known to have the second largest Oktoberfest outside of Germany. It's a time to celebrate the harvests of our year, and celebrate we do.

One happy thing to celebrate is our recent annual conference at Providence College in Providence Rhode Island, especially since it was our 5<sup>th</sup> conference. Congratulations and thanks to all of you for supporting ISME and making ISME a success. I would also like to thank Providence College and Michael O'Neill who hosted the conference. The great conference papers, the smooth flow of events, and the after- conference venues testified to Michael's hard work. Thank you, Michael. We also had the largest number of attendees ever at one of our conferences!

### ISME Board Members

Jeffery Nicholas  
Executive Secretary  
Founding Member  
Kelvin Knight  
General Secretary  
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Chris Lutz  
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Founding Member  
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2011 Conference Secretary  
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Over the conference, the executive committee met with Jim Kelly from the University of Notre Dame. He encouraged us to apply to the UND Legal Clinic for help in attaining tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status. Chris Lutz and I met over Skype with a representative from the

clinic, and we are moving forward to achieving that goal. One step forward involved clarifying the constitution that is now available on line (<http://www.macintyreanquiry.org/styled/index.html>). Note that this version remains a draft, and we are working with representatives from the clinic to finalize it so that it meets government criteria for tax exempt status. We will be incorporated in Indiana, but will be able to function globally. The constitution and bylaws include our mission statement and is written with the idea of remaining flexible for our future needs and as grounded in Aristotelian praxis as possible. I'm very excited about moving forward on this and will keep you updated on progress in future newsletters and at the next conference.

Another piece of news: you may see some changes on the Steering Committee. First, Jenifer Booth has kindly agreed to become the newsletter editor – thank you, Jenifer. Richard Poirier is now editing an annual yearbook. If you have pictures of ISME related events, please forward them to him ([Richard.Poirier@umusic.com](mailto:Richard.Poirier@umusic.com)). Second, please join me in welcoming Ruth Groff and Buket Korkut Raptis to the Steering Committee. I'm sure they bring much to offer to ISME.

As evidenced by these changes, ISME continues to grow in many ways. I look forward to our many conferences and activities together. Next year, we will meet at the University of Nottingham before the Olympics arrive in London (plan your travels appropriately). We are looking for a non-US host for 2014, so if you have thought about offering up a site, please contact me.

I wish you all the best in your teaching, research, and activism this year!

Sincerely,

Jeffery Nicholas

Executive Secretary, ISME

6<sup>th</sup> Annual ISME Conference, “MacIntyre’s Philosophy and Well-being”  
Call for Papers



**University of Nottingham,  
19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> July, 2012**

**Conference Theme: Well-being**

**Call for Papers**

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of ISME, co-organized with the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice (CSSGJ), University of Nottingham, and the Centre for Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics (CASEP). London Metropolitan University, is to be held at the University of Nottingham in July 2012. The academic convenors for the Conference are Tony Burns (Co-Director CSSGJ) and Kelvin Knight (Director, CASEP). The proposed theme for the conference is Well-being.

The idea of ‘well-being’ has been in the news media in the UK quite a lot of late, and it lies close to the heart of the thinking and policies of the current ‘Con-Dem’ Government, as is evidenced by the speeches and writings of Prime Minister David Cameron. It can be connected to the idea of ‘the big society.’ This has become controversial recently, as the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) of the UK recently made a commitment to fund research which explores this idea and has, in consequence, been accused of bias/partiality in favour of government sponsored, ‘ideologically driven’ research projects. The thinking behind this initiative is also associated with the work of Richard Layard at the London School of Economics and with the British ‘think-tank,’ The Social Market Foundation.

The idea behind the conference is to explore the notion of well-being, both in theory and in practice (policy). More specifically, it is hoped that papers will engage critically with some of the current thinking about well-being and its policy implications from the standpoint of Alasdair MacIntyre and/or Aristotelian practical philosophy, a core concept for which is that of *eudaimonia*, variously translated as ‘happiness,’ ‘flourishing’ or ‘well-being.’ Contributions might also engage with the ideas of other contemporary Aristotelian thinkers, for example the ‘capabilities approach’ of Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen.

It is not envisaged that all of the papers presented at the conference will address this theme and contributions devoted to other aspects of the work of Alasdair MacIntyre are, as always, most welcome.

The academic convenors for the conference are Dr. Tony Burns (CSSGJ, University of Nottingham) and Dr. Kelvin Knight (CASEP, London Metropolitan University). The local organizer is Tony Burns. E-Mail addresses of convenors are: [tony.burns@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:tony.burns@nottingham.ac.uk); [kelvin.knight@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:kelvin.knight@londonmet.ac.uk)

Proposals should include a title, an abstract, and a some brief biographical infirmation. Proposals from postgraduate research students are welcome.

The final deadline for submission of proposals is **30<sup>th</sup> April, 2012**. Early submissions are preferred.

## Confirmed Keynote Speakers

**Dr. Mary Midgley**  
Title TBC

Dr. Midgley is one of the leading British moral philosophers of the twentieth century, writing for both academic and lay readerships. Her books include *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers* and *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature*

**Professor John Milbank**  
School of Theology & Religious Studies (University of Nottingham, UK)  
Title TBC

Professor Millbank is the author of several books including *Theology and Social Theory* and *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon*. He is also one of the editors of the *Radical Orthodoxy* collection of essays which occasioned much debate.

**Professor Greg Curry**  
Department of Philosophy (University of Nottingham, UK)  
Title “Is Narrative Good for You?”

Professor Curry is involved in editing several journals. His publications include a collection of essays, *Arts and Minds* and his recent *Narratives and Narrators*.



## Contemporary Aristotelian Studies Specialist Group of the Political Studies Association of the U.K.

*By Kelvin Knight*

Alasdair MacIntyre opened the inaugural conference of the Contemporary Aristotelian Studies specialist group of the UK Political Studies Association with a paper on Four Political Aristotles (an audio recording of which will soon be available [here](#)). The other keynote speakers at the conference, hosted by CASEP at London Metropolitan University on June 3rd 2011, were Dr Kirsten Ainsley (London School of Economics), Dr Ron Beadle (Newcastle Business School), and Dr Keith Breen (Queen's University, Belfast). Amongst the other hundred academics who attended were speakers from the USA, Canada, Italy, Greece, Poland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Croatia, Spain, Germany, and across the UK. The conference was sandwiched between one of Professor MacIntyre's regular Common Goods and Political Reasoning CASEP colloquia, on the 2nd, and the Marx and Philosophy annual conference on the 3rd, on the theme of Marx and Aristotle.

The PSA CAS group's 2012 conference will be at Nottingham University on July 18th, immediately preceding the ISME conference. Anyone interested in presenting a paper next year, either in Nottingham or at the group's panel in the PSA's 2012 Belfast conference on April 3rd-5th, should email [Tony.Burns@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Tony.Burns@nottingham.ac.uk). Tony is the group's Chair, Kelvin Knight its Secretary, Keith Breen its Treasurer, and Kim Redgrave is webmaster. The website is at <http://caspsa.wordpress.com/>.



*Professor MacIntyre, speaking on "Four Political Aristotles".*



*Dr. Kirsten Ainsley (LSE) is questioned by Dr Hendrik Hansen (University of Passau)( Dr Tolis Malakos, CASEP Visiting Research Fellow chairing).*

## Proposed Section of the American Political Science Association organised by Contemporary Aristotelian Studies

Philip de Mahy, a longstanding member of ISME, is leading an ambitious attempt to establish a Contemporary Aristotelian Studies-organized section of the American Political Science Association. The section's proposed President is Professor Ronald Beiner (University of Toronto, and CASEP Visiting Research Fellow).

Non-Political Scientists are encouraged to participate. In order to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, substantial crossover discounts have been negotiated for members who are paying dues to other national groups. Any actual or potential member of APSA who might wish to participate in the project is invited to contact Philip de Mahy at [demahy@cua.edu](mailto:demahy@cua.edu).

### MacIntyrean Enquiry in Brazil.

By Charles Borges

MacIntyre's thought has been intriguing Brazilian scholars since the early 90s. This is despite the fact that there are only two of MacIntyre's books translated into Portuguese in Brazil - *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* translated in 1991, and *After Virtue* translated in 2000 - Over the years, Brazilian scholars have increased their interest in the provocative work of Professor MacIntyre.

One of the pioneers in spreading the thought of MacIntyre through Brazilian Universities is PhG Marcelo Perine who has supported the Brazilian edition of *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* - translated by Dr. Marcelo Pimentel. Since this edition, we have seen a growing output on MacIntyre's thought. In 1999 PhG Helder Buenos Aires de Carvalho released his book *Tradição e Racionalidade na Filosofia de Alasdair MacIntyre (Tradition and Rationality in Alasdair MacIntyre's Philosophy)* which was of great value in spreading MacIntyre's thought around our Universities. It also made possible related research groups in philosophy, and even law and economics departments.

Nowadays we have many theses and dissertations being written in Universities in various states of our country; not to mention research groups concerned with the ethics, political philosophy, epistemology and metaphysics inherent in MacIntyre's work and papers published in specialized journals.

#### **Newsletter Submissions**

ISME encourages submissions and reserves the right to accept, reject and edit material with the author's permission. Please include your name, telephone no., mailing and email address. ISME does not return submitted materials, which become the property of ISME and may be published in any format unless ISME newsletter editors agree to limited rights in writing prior to acceptance for publication. Letters and editorial material may be emailed to Jenifer Booth at [jbooth\(at\)blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jbooth(at)blueyonder.co.uk)

We have too Professor Helder's blog (<http://macintyrebrasil.blogspot.com/>) as a means of spreading and recording all the research on MacIntyre.

We have a long way to go. We have, for example, the urgent task of translating the remainder of MacIntyre's major books into Portuguese in order to improve access to his thought. The MacIntyrean community is still relatively small but we have a promising future, since we have contact with and intellectual support from ISME, CASEP and scholars in the US and UK.

Charles Borges, PUCRS ([Pontifical Catholic University](#) of RS)

## Collection which began with the First ISME Conference

Half of the papers from the 2007 *Revolutionary Aristotelianism* conference were published in the volume of that name by Lucius and Lucius, Stuttgart in 2008. Some of those on politics are now published in Paul Blackledge & Kelvin Knight (ed.), *Virtue and Politics: Alasdair MacIntyre's Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2011. The book was launched in the USA at the Providence conference and in the UK at the PSA conference on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Contents are:

Alasdair MacIntyre, 'How Aristotelianism Can Become Revolutionary: Ethics, Resistance, and Utopia'; Kelvin Knight, 'Revolutionary Aristotelianism'; Tony Burns, 'Revolutionary Aristotelianism?: the political thought of Aristotle, Marx and MacIntyre'; Alex Callinicos, 'Two cheers for Enlightenment Universalism: Or, Why It's Hard to Be an Aristotelian Revolutionary'; Sean Sayers, 'MacIntyre and Modernity'; Niko Nojonen, 'Alienation, Practices, and Human Nature: Marxist Critique in MacIntyre's Aristotelian Ethics'; Paul Blackledge, 'Leadership or Management: Some Comments on Alasdair MacIntyre's Critique of Marx(ism)'; Émile Perreau-Saussine, 'The Moral Critique of Stalinism'; Neil Davidson, 'Alasdair MacIntyre and Trotskyism'; Sante Maletta, 'MacIntyre and the Subversion of Natural Law'; Anton Leist, 'Troubling Oneself with Ends'; Peter McMylor, 'Compartmentalisation and Social Roles: MacIntyre's Critical Theory of Modernity'; Kelvin Knight, 'Virtue, Politics, and History: Rival Enquiries into Action and Order'; Andrius Bielskis, 'Alasdair MacIntyre and the Lithuanian New Left'; Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Where We Were, Where We Are, Where We Need to Be'.

## Recent and Forthcoming Publications

Tom Angier (2011) *Techne in Aristotle's Ethics: Crafting the Moral Life*, Continuum.

Sean Sayers (2011), *Marx and Alienation: Essays on Hegelian Themes*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and New York.

Katinka Waelbers (2011), *Doing Good with Technologies: taking responsibility for the social role of emerging technologies*. Dordrecht, Springer.

Christopher Stephen Lutz: forthcoming (2012), *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre's After Virtue*, Continuum.

Fran O'Rourke (ed): forthcoming (2012), *What Happened In and To Moral Philosophy in the Twentieth Century?* University of Notre Dame Press. Including articles by Kelvin Knight, Arthur Madigan, James Edwin Mahon and James McEvoy, and also Alasdair MacIntyre's talk from the gathering to celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in Dublin: "On Having Survived the Academic Moral Philosophy of the Twentieth Century" and an epilogue entitled "What Next?".

## Events

Stageira, a research group on Aristotle's practical philosophy, has forthcoming events at <http://www.ub.edu/stageira>. These include:

- A lecture by Dr. Kelvin Knight (London Metropolitan University) at the University of Barcelona on the 27th of October 2011. Title: *Three Rival Versions of Thomistic Aristotelianism*
- A lecture by Prof. Dr. Christof Rapp (Lüdwig-Maximilians-Universität München) at the University of Barcelona. Date and title TBA.
- A one week seminar given by Prof. Dr. Alejandro G. Vigo (Universidad de Navarra) at the University of Barcelona. Dates and title TBA.

There is a call for papers for the "II Congreso Internacional de Filosofía Griega" (2nd International Conference of Greek Philosophy) organized by the SIFG (Sociedad Ibérica de Filosofía Griega: Iberic Society of Greek Philosophy) <http://sifg.org/>. The call for papers is in Spanish but papers can be presented in any language.

ISME will be at the ACPA on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2011:

Bruce Ballard will speak on *MacIntyre on Moral Error as a Source of Intellectual Error*

Comment: Michael O'Neill

Christopher Lutz will speak on *Faith and Reason in MacIntyrean Enquiry*

Comment: Bryan Cross

Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics (CASEP) London Metropolitan University UK

Talk by Philip de Mahy, of the Catholic University of America, on "Why Aristotle Was Not a Constitutionalist" . London Met, room CH504, Old Castle St., London E1, 4-6pm

Wednesday 19th October. Those without London Met ID, please email [casep@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:casep@londonmet.ac.uk) beforehand to ensure safe passage through security.

CASEP is running an 11-week reading group on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in Autumn.

Wednesdays 6 to 9pm, starting 5th of October, at London Met. room CM2-38 (the Board Room), Calcutta House, Old Castle Street, London E1



*London Met. post-graduate Kim Redgrave thanked for her work on the PSA Aristotelian conference and group (Dr. Tony Burns to the left).*

CASEP and the Centre for the Study of Religion, Conflict and Cooperation Conference call for papers

## Religion, Civil Religion, and the Common Good

London Metropolitan University

Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st June 2012.

Keynote speakers will include

Professor Ronald Beiner, University of Toronto  
author of *Civil Religion: A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy*, CUP, 2011  
"Secularism as a Common Good"

Dr. Patrick Riordan, Heythrop College  
author of *A Grammar of the Common Good: Speaking of Globalization*, Continuum, 2008  
Title T.B.C.  
and Professor Timothy Chappell, Open University  
author of *Ethics and Experience: Life Beyond Moral Theory*, Acumen, 2009  
"Delivering the Goods".

There will also be panel sessions. If you would like to present a paper, please email [casep@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:casep@londonmet.ac.uk).

