The Tale of Two Universities:

MacIntyre and the Internal Goods of Mary College at ASU

by

Jonathon Paul Hofer

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Approved April 2023 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Jack Doody, Co-Chair
Colleen Sheehan, Co-Chair
Paul Carrese
Adam Seagrave

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2023

ABSTRACT

Alasdair MacIntyre's three-stage framework for the concept of virtue is used to assess the Mary College at Arizona State University program. Mary College at Arizona State University is a partnership between the University of Mary and Arizona State University, universities with conflicting views of practice of education, narrative of self, and hermeneutic of moral tradition. Members of Mary College at Arizona State University achieve the internal good of initiation and engagement into these conflicting views. The Mary College partnership has the potency to reignite the historically extended, socially embodied argument about the purpose of a university education between rival institutions of higher education and thereby revive the decaying social significance of the university.

DEDICATION

To my beloved and devoted wife and my wonderful children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre puts forward a framework for moral reasoning and a conception of virtues with Aristotelian roots in direct rebuttal of the anti-teleological turn moral philosophy takes after the Enlightenment. MacIntyre takes a historical look at how the Enlightenment project failed at debunking Aristotelian moral philosophy and as a result, modern moral philosophy is an incoherent structure leading to incomprehensible incommensurability of moral arguments. MacIntyre's argument is particularly insightful for understanding and evaluating the contemporary university and its purpose in contemporary society. In his historical account, MacIntyre strongly contrasts the conception of virtues passed down through Homeric, Athenian, and medieval scholasticism with that of the conception of virtue proffered by post-enlightenment moral philosophers. Using MacIntyre's framework for the conception of virtue, this paper will identify and evaluate the unique internal goods available to students simultaneously enrolled in two universities with conflicting views of the practice of education. The Mary College at ASU program is a partnership between the University of Mary (UMary) - a private, Catholic university – and Arizona State University - a public, secular R1 university. While these two instances of the university do not fully parallel MacIntyre's comparison of medieval scholasticism and modernity, they do represent two differing missions and visions of the practice fitting to the university, which, according to MacIntyre, means they differ in a fundamental way as institutions. Mary College at ASU, the partnership between UMary and ASU, will be used to demonstrate how private-public partnerships provide opportunities for unique internal goods for students participating in such an inter-university program. I will begin by spelling out and defining the terms of MacIntyre's threefold framework of the virtues, most

significantly the distinction made between practices and institutions, internal and external goods, and the definition of virtue. Using this framework, I will turn to each institution to elucidate the vision and mission of education it represents, the external goods pursued by each, the conception of the practice of education and the internal goods commensurate with that conception, the differing narratives of self, and the different postures towards tradition. Finally, I will turn to the Mary College at ASU program and identify the external goods each institution seeks to gain through the partnership and propose the unique internal goods available to students when they engage in the conflict of rival practices.

Before mapping out MacIntyre's framework, it is worth noting how he arrived at it. MacIntyre recapitulates the history of conceptions of moral reasoning. While frameworks of moral reasoning and conceptions of the virtues shifted and changed, they remained similar in that they were all teleological. The end in which the virtues of Homeric society, Athenian city-states, and Medieval Scholasticism aimed at varied, but there was always a *telos*, a man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-potential, which was the aim of man-as-he-happened-to-be (MacIntyre, 2007, 54). For Homeric Society, the *telos* was dependent on social roles, in Athens it was dependent on the *polis*, for Aristotle it was *eudemonia* (a well lived life of happiness), and in Catholic Medieval Scholasticism, Thomas Aquinas integrates the natural *telos* of Aristotle to the supernatural *telos* of religion, namely eternal life with God. For each of these, human reason is the essential instrument for both determining and moving toward the *telos* proposed by each. Incidentally, the Protestant Reformation was in part a reaction to Scholasticism's incorporating Greek Philosophical thought, most especially moral reasoning, into a religious framework – only God could provide man with his *telos*, human reason was too weak and corrupted (and Greek pagan Philosophy was, well, Pagan!). As a result, the privileged place of human reason shifts dramatically:

Reason does not comprehend essences or transitions from potentiality to act; these concepts belong to the despised conceptual scheme of scholasticism. Hence anti-Aristotelian science sets strict boundaries on the powers for reason. Reason is calculative; it can assess truths of fact and mathematical relations but nothing more. In the realm of practice therefore it can speak only of mean (MacIntyre, 2007, 54). Post-Enlightenment thinkers dismiss divine law but share in this conception of reason: "all reject any teleological view of human nature, any view of man as having an essence which defines his true end" (MacIntyre, 2007, 54). This rejection leaves moral reasoning in quite the conundrum and, as MacIntyre argues, is why the "project of finding a basis for morality had to fail" (MacIntyre, 2007, 54). The post-Enlightenment removal of a concept of a universal human end from ethics ruptured the history of moral inquiry:

> Since the whole point of ethics – both as a theoretical and a practical discipline – is to enable man to pass from his present state to his true end, the elimination of any notion of essential human nature and with it the abandonment of any notion of a *telos* leaves behind a moral scheme composed of two remaining elements whose relationship becomes quite unclear. There is on the one hand a certain content for morality: a set of injunctions deprived of their teleological context. There is on the other hand a certain view of untutored-human-nature-as-it-is. (MacIntyre, 2007, 54-5)

Without the concept of a *telos*, this rupture leaves any resulting ethical code incommensurable, "since the moral injunctions were originally at home in a scheme in which their purpose was to correct, improve and educate that human nature, they are clearly not going to be such as could be deduced from true statements about human nature or justified in some other way by appealing to its characteristics" (MacIntyre, 2007, 54-5). The

disconnect in ethical thinking, and the failure to recognize human life involves a striving towards an end, results in either wallowing in profound meaninglessness or to be restlessly self-determining meaning and calling it freedom.

This rupture of human teleology has also pervaded the culture of institutions and faith-based organizations, sometimes in obvious ways and in other ways more discreet, which have typically aligned with a traditional narrative of moral reasoning. Religious based institutions, and in this case institutions of higher education, are slowly being "converted" by this overwhelming cultural shift towards the autonomy of self which leaves their traditional moral schemes without their original context. Unprepared for the upheaval, these institutions and the individuals which constitute them are found grappling with the seemingly out of touch rules and struggling to justify moral beliefs bereft of a teleological context.

MacIntyre contends with the predominant contemporary moral philosophy of emotivism: "the doctrine that all evaluative judgements and more specifically all moral judgements are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character" (MacIntyre, 2007, 12). Indeed, from the emotivist view, the project I have embarked on to evaluate the institutions of UMary, ASU, and the partnership of Mary College at ASU program is simply an expression of the particular feelings or attitudes I have at the given moment toward these. According to the emotivist view, while I may include some factual elements, as soon as I stray into moral judgements, I have escaped rationality: "Factual judgements are true or false…but moral judgements, being expressions of attitude or feeling, are neither true nor false; and agreement in moral judgement is not to be secured by any rational method, for there are none" (MacIntyre, 2007, 12). As I have said, the post-Enlightenment's denial of a human

telos is the antecedent of the inability to make moral judgements. MacIntyre's historical account of the rupture of ethical thinking and the resulting emotivist view allows him to put forward a framework for ethical thinking which constitutes a contemporary revival of virtue ethics. MacIntyre's account both identifies and corrects the incommensurability of rival views. It is necessary to turn to MacIntyre's conception of virtue and his framework for moral evaluative judgements "for this kind of conceptual account has strong empirical implications; it provides an explanatory scheme which can be tested in particular cases," (MacIntyre, 2007, 196) and will allow us to identify and evaluate the institutions of education which come together to form Mary College at ASU.

MacIntyre lays out the brief history of ethical thinking and specifically identifies the moment of rupture in the tradition of moral inquiry so to demonstrate how the Enlightenment Project failed at providing a rational justification for objective morality. Interestingly enough, it is Nietzsche who MacIntyre puts forwards as the definitive voice demonstrating the failure:

> For it was Nietzsche's historic achievement to understand more clearly than any other philosopher – certainly more clearly than his counterparts in Anglo-Saxon emotivism and continental existentialism – not only that what purported to be appeals to objectivity were in fact expressions of subjective will, but also the nature of the problems that this posed for moral philosophy (MacIntyre, 2007, 113).

MacIntyre points to Nietzsche's keen insight which reveals in a poignant way how moral philosophy had been derailed. MacIntyre is not satisfied with Nietzsche. MacIntyre rightly points that Nietzsche did not properly justify a central failure of the Enlightenment moral philosophers - the inadequate dismissal of Aristotelianism and the dismissal of a teleological view. While Nietzsche succeeded in pointing out the failure of Enlightenment Project, he

had not properly dealt with Aristotelianism. MacIntyre sets up a show down, Aristotle versus Nietzsche, best two out of three, precisely because:

> Nietzsche's moral philosophy is matched specifically against Aristotle's by virtue of the historical role which each plays. For…it was because a moral tradition of which Aristotle's thought was the intellectual core was repudiated during the transitions of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries that the Enlightenment project of discovering new rational secular foundation for morality had to be undertaken…Hence the defensibility of the Nietzschean position turns *in the end* on the answer to the question: was it right in the first place to reject Aristotle? For if Aristotle's position in ethics and politics – or something very like it – could be sustained, the whole Nietzschean enterprise would be pointless. This is because the power of Nietzsche's position depends upon the truth of one central thesis: that all rational vindications of morality manifestly fail and that *therefore* belief in the tenets of morality needs to be explained in terms of a set of rationalizations which conceal the fundamentally non-rational phenomena of the will (MacIntyre, 2007, 117).

Rather than simply recapitulating Aristotle, MacIntyre conceives of Aristotelianism "not merely as it is expressed in key texts in his own writings, but as an attempt to inherit and to sum up a good deal that had gone before and in turn as a source of stimulus to much later thought" (MacIntyre, 2007, 119). MacIntyre does not seek to simply innovate Aristotelianism, but rather is a participation in and contribution to the history and tradition of moral inquiry *and* an invitation to continue to do the same, making ever clearer the best answers to moral questions *so far*.

CHAPTER 2

RIVAL PRACTICES OF EDUCATION

This is MacIntyre's great set up, for after a journey through the history of the concept of and historical representation of virtue, he puts forward a three-stage framework for understanding the core concept of virtue and, in doing so, puts not only Aristotle but also Augustine and Aquinas back on the proverbial table:

> The first stage requires a background account of what I shall call a practice, the second an account of what I have already characterized as the narrative order of a single human life and the third an account a good deal fuller than I have given up to now of what constitutes a moral tradition. Each later stage presupposes the earlier, but not *vice versa*. Each earlier stage is both modified by and reinterpreted in the light of, but also provides an essential constituent of each later stage. The progress in the development of the concept is closely related to, although it does not recapitulate in any straightforward way, the history of the tradition of which it forms the core (MacIntyre, 2007, 187).

MacIntyre reframes moral philosophy through a hermeneutic of continuity and revitalizes virtue ethics placing himself at the end of a long line of thinkers proposing the best answers *so far*. He also provides a framework by which moral evaluations can be comprehensible.

MacIntyre defines practice as "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended" (MacIntyre, 2007, 187). This concept of practice provides the context for any given virtue. Indeed, MacIntyre's move makes it so that virtue only makes

sense when placed within a specific context rather than some nebulous value floating out in space. Therefore, to be virtuous is to be excellent, but excellent within the context of a particular practice. To be an excellent violinist means to do the sorts of things good violinists do when good violinists do them – the excellence and the circumstance are integral to understanding what it means to be a good violinist. A practice is cooperative because human activity exists in relationship – practitioners of any given practice do not live in isolation, but by definition to be a practitioner according to Macintyre means to participate in something outside of the self.

The concept of practice also involves the crucial distinction between external and internal goods:

> There are thus two kinds of good possibly to be gained [through a practice]. On the one hand there are those goods externally and contingently attached…practices by the accidents of social circumstance…[such as] prestige, status and money. There are always alternative ways for achieving such goods, and their achievement is need to be had *only* by engaging in some particular kind of practice. On the other hand there are the goods internal to the practice…which cannot be had in any way but by [engaging in a specific practice]. We call them internal for two reasons: first, because we can only specify them in terms of [a specific practice] and by means of examples from such [practice]; and secondly because they can only be identified and recognized by the experience of participating in the practice in question. (MacIntyre, 2007, 188-9).

External goods are necessarily limited in supply, "characteristically objects of competition in which there must be losers as well as winners," whereas internal goods, while "indeed the outcome of competition to excel," are not a scarce resource but a benefit enjoyed by the individual, the community of practitioners, and the community as a whole (MacIntyre, 2007,

190). External and internal goods acquired through a practice are brought about through excellence and competition, but external goods are pursued for possession while internal goods are pursued for extension. MacIntyre's conception of practice is distinct from that of a technical skill or an institution. While a practice involves technical skills, "what is distinctive in a practice is in part the way in which conceptions of the relevant goods and ends which the technical skills serve – and every practice does require the exercise of technical skills – are transformed and enriched by these extensions of human powers and by that regard for its own internal goods" (MacIntyre, 2007, 193). To engage in a practice is, again, not primarily an individual act, but a participation in and in conversation with fellow practitioners, a friendship of sorts, both now and in all of history (MacIntyre, 2007, 194). It is the acceptance of certain authorities in the tradition of the practice and a simultaneous docility to that authority and the capacity to extend, deepen, and contribute to the tradition (MacIntyre, 2007, 192). A practice is distinct from an institution in that an institution is the bearer of a practice, "characteristically and necessarily concerned with…external goods. They are involved in acquiring money and other material goods; they are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power and status as rewards" (MacIntyre, 2007, 194). There exists, then, a fundamental tension within the relationship between practices and institutions for while "no practices can survive for any length of time unsustained by institutions," because an institution is only concerned with external goods, institutions tend to have a corrupting effect of practices prioritizing external over internal goods (MacIntyre, 2007, 194).

UMary and ASU are both institutions of higher education and, while it will be demonstrated how very different the practice of education sustained by each institution is, it is important to insist on their similarity as institutions. Both institutions exclusively pursue

external goods and both institutions operate in tension with the practitioners of the institutions who pursue the internal goods:

> Indeed so intimate is the relationship of practices to institutions-and consequently of the goods external to the goods internal to the practices in question that institutions and practices characteristically form a single causal order in which the ideals and the creativity of the practice are always vulnerable to the acquisitiveness of the institution, in which the cooperative care for common goods of the practice is always vulnerable to the competitiveness of the institution (MacIntyre, 2007, 194).

The virtues are required in order to sustain the tension between institutions and practitioners, the tension between the pursuit of external goods and the pursuit of internal goods.

ASU's charter helps clarify the internal goods which a public secular university pursues: "ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves." Here we see the emphasis on inclusivity and progress – the internal goods of education are difficult to discern beyond the opportunities an education can provide in order to advance and succeed, which opportunities are open to all. By and large, the practice of education, despite efforts to emphasize interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, is fractured among the many different schools and academic expertise with no unified sense of what constitutes moral inquiry. Furthermore, the role of the faculty within ASU focuses on "values" instead of virtues, with an emphasis on "health and safety" and not on the *good*. As a state institution and committed to inclusion, the practitioners are all "free" to peddle their own views of moral inquiry and

truth rather than any cohesive understanding of what "the good" is or what "the truth" may be, if it exists at all, or even what a university is. The responsibility of practitioners, and very much an external good which ASU is interested in, is training students well so they can jump into a lucrative career. A highly decorated graduating class with prestigious, high paying jobs reflects well on the teachers of those graduates and the university as a whole, not to mention the potential return on investment when those graduating students become alumni supporters. Education in this sense is training without any implication of the formation of a student from something akin to the tradition of moral inquiry as MacIntyre presents it. Truth is domesticated to strictly that which can be scientifically proven and therefore moral judgements are incommensurable with facts.

The excellence of the practice of education is primarily an excellence of doing with a secondary excellence of thought when at the service of doing. There is an ever-present drive for innovation and the discovery of knowledge – new and exciting research is an external good for the institution and, given the milieux of education bereft of formation, one of the key ways in which practitioners are able to succeed in their field. The troubling aspect of such a view of education is that the necessary and beneficial tension that normally exists between institution's pursuit of the external good and the practitioner's pursuit of the internal good disappears. The disintegration of the university as a faculty with a unified sense of practice and a comprehensive understanding of the internal goods of the practice diminish or disappear because the goods of education become strictly external. There may be a small contingent of faculty members, and even schools that form within the university, such as the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership, which band together but they must fend for themselves, stalwart against the constant pressure to conform to the primacy of external goods.

The practice of education at UMary contrasts significantly with that of ASU's practice. While still concerned with job training, UMary is explicitly concerned with the moral formation of its students. We can unpack UMary's practice by looking to its mission: "The University of Mary exists to serve the religious, academic, and cultural needs of the people in this region and beyond. It takes its tone from the commitment of the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery. These Sisters founded the university in 1959 and continue to sponsor it today. It is Christian, it is Catholic, and it is Benedictine" (University of Mary , n.d., "Mission and Identity"). UMary's practice is not only deeply rooted in the Catholic Academic Tradition and the framework for moral judgements, but also the responsibility to participate in, contribute to, and pass on the tradition. Contrary to that of ASU, faith and reason are complementary and truth exists and is knowable. UMary intimately integrates itself to the Christian, Catholic, and Benedictine traditions which direct the school. There remains a concern for job training, but it is integrated to the formation of the mind of the student with a generally accepted conception of the good received through tradition. Students are therefore prepared intellectually and morally because fact and value are linked through a moral framework. The excellence of such a practice of education is the excellence of doing, thinking, *and* being. However, this view of the practice of education faces tremendous tension with what society at large considers valuable about higher education, namely career advancement. There is tension not just between the institution and the practitioners, but within the individual practitioners who, while they may be committed to such a practice of education, plan out an internal competition between the internal and external goods for themselves and their families.

CHAPTER 3

RIVAL VIEWS OF SELF

The second stage of MacIntyre's framework is the narrative unity of the single human life. Practice is the context in which virtue is displayed precisely because virtues only make sense in a specific social setting, and "a setting has a history, a history within which the histories of individual agents not only are, but have to be, situated, just because without the setting and its changes through time the history of the individual agent and his changes through time will be unintelligible" (MacIntyre, 2007, 206-7). Rather than a life composed of different albeit adjacent parts and roles such as son, brother, father, co-worker, teacher, etc., MacIntyre conceives of the unity of a person with a single story in which all of those roles provide a bearing. This narrative mode is what provides the individual with a particularized *telos* within their character and makes the virtues intelligible and, therefore, factual moral judgements can be made. While a Catholic priest, a father of four children, and a seasoned Philosopher all need pursue excellence, and indeed may very well aim at the same virtues, the particular manifestation of say fortitude will be intelligible through the unity of their specific character. That does not mean the priest, father, and Philosopher are disconnected, but quite the opposite:

> What the agent is able to do and say intelligibly as an actor is deeply affected by the fact that we are never more (and sometimes less) than the co-authors of our own narratives. Only in fantasy do we live what story we please. In life, as both Aristotle and Engels noted, we are always under certain constraints. We enter upon a stage which we did not design and we find ourselves part of an action that was not of our making. Each of us being a main character in his own drama plays subordinate parts

in the dramas of others, and each drama constrains the others (MacIntyre, 2007,

213).

To conceive of the human life as a unified narrative is quite different from the liberal individual's view where each individual is his or her own cosmos and the ideal of freedom is one in which the liberal individual fractures himself or herself from any and all interference of personal autonomy. MacIntyre's second stage of the narrative unity of the human life draws together all aspects of the individual - their personality, identity, assigned and chosen roles, and their history - into a single character with a particular setting. The narrative unity of the human life is fundamentally an understanding of the human person in conversation, for "man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially as story-telling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth" (MacIntyre, 2007, 216).

The practice of education found at ASU, one that embodies the hermeneutic of rupture of moral inquiry, leads to a fracturing of the narrative of self. In the name of freedom, the liberal individual separates themselves from any authority which threatens their autonomy of identity. Contrary to what MacIntyre proposes, the liberal individual sees the proposition of a narrative unity as the greatest threat to one's autonomy. It is no surprise, then, that such a view of the self has no room for co-authors – identity is restricted only to that which is chosen by the individual. Reality is what I choose it to be. This is evident from MacIntyre's explanation that each successive step in the framework flows from and presupposes the former stage. With no sense of moral truth and with education truncated from the responsibility to morally form students, what is left is just to pass on technical skills.

MacIntyre names encyclopaedia and genealogy as the competing views of narrative which, while different in many aspects, share in the antiteleological narrative of self:

> The encyclopaedist's conception is of a single framework within which knowledge is discriminated from mere belief, progress towards knowledge is mapped, and truth is understood as the relationship of *our* knowledge to *the* world, through the application of those methods whose rules are the rules of rationality as such. Nietzsche, as a genealogist, takes there to be a multiplicity of perspectives with each of which truth-from-a-point-of-view may be asserted, but no truth-as-such, an empty notion, about *the* world, an equally empty notion (MacIntyre, 1991, 42).

This notion of Nietzschean perspectivism is alive and well at the secular university and is the primary narrative of the self. The self is nothing more than a projection of fragmented moments, masks worn "with no rules of rationality as such to be appealed to, there are rather strategies of insight and strategies of subversion…A genealogical view requires of us sufficient insight to understand that allegiance to just such a view is always a sign of badness, of inadequately managed rancor and resentment" (MacIntyre, 1991, p.42). MacIntyre helps to pinpoint the great allegiance to diversity and inclusion – a failure to appreciate all viewpoints, or worse yet, an elevation of one viewpoint as truer than others is categorically bad.

MacIntyre levels his criticism of the geological view precisely in terms of the incomprehensibility of the genealogist's view of the self:

> The successive strategies of the genealogist may not inescapably after all involve him or her in commitments to standards at odds with the central theses of the genealogical stance. For in making his or her sequence of strategies of masking and unmasking intelligible to him or herself, the genealogist has to ascribe to the

genealogical self a continuity of deliberate purpose and a commitment to that

purpose which can only be ascribe to a self no to be dissolved into masks and

moments, a self which cannot but be conceived as more and other than its disguises

and concealments and negotiants, a self which just insofar as it can adopt alternative

perspectives is itself not perspectival, put persistent and substantial. Make of the

genealogist's self nothing but what genealogy makes of it, and that self is dissolved to

the point at which there is no longer a continuous genealogical project (MacIntyre,

1991, 54).

There must be a "self" for a mask to be worn. Yet how does such a narrative of self survive

at a liberal university such as ASU? The liberal university has become so fragmented by this

view of self, this standard of perspectivism, and that the collective community of American

institutions of higher education have become so siloed off from each other and, even if there

was a formidable contender willing and able to defend a rival view, the self-isolation this

narrative view has built an ever-growing insulation of the practice and institutions of higher

education that such a confrontation would have little to of effect exterior to the institution.

It would have to come from within.

UMary's narrative of self aligns with that of MacIntyre's "tradition-based" narrative

of the self: "For the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities

from which I derive my identity. I am born with a past; and to try to cut myself of from that

past, in the individualist mode, is to deform my present relationships. The possession of an

historical identity and the possession of a social identity coincide" (MacIntyre, 2007, 221).

UMary's mission and vision statements embrace the Christian, Catholic, and Benedictine

identities and aim to embody them in the particular society in which they inhabit:

Education for Life

We intend that our students, warmed by the light of Benedictine values, will discover 'the Mary difference' – excellence in education that exists hand-in-hand with a commitment to servant leadership. Indelible values will light their way for the whole of life. In their relationships, in their communities, and in their intellectual and spiritual pursuits, they will bless the world. We dreamed boldly and stepped out in faith to create Vision 2030, a three-phase campaign: *Education for Life.* Vision 2030 intends to provide the framework to achieve this and create ethical adults with wholesome values, who will contribute their gifts to the well-being of society (University of Mary , n.d., "Values of Vision 2030").

It is striking how different this vision is made manifest – everything aims at the tension of integrity. The individual is conceived of as a unified whole, and the life of that individual should be lived in and through that wholeness because that is precisely where meaning and the good are found – in owning your story. This concept of personal identity can be understood as a result of Aquinas' synthesis of Aristotle and Augustine and:

Must have three central dimensions. Because, as Aquinas put it, I *am* and do not merely have a body, albeit a soul-informed body, part of being one and the same person throughout this bodily life is having one and the same body. Secondly, I as a member of more than one community engage in transactions extended through time with others, and because I within my community undertake projects extended through time, it must be possible throughout this bodily life to impute continuing accountability for agency. So my identity as one and the same person requires me on occasion to make intelligible to myself and to others within my communities what it was that I was doing in behaving as I did on some particular occasion and to be prepared at an future time to reevaluate my actions in the light of the judgements

17

proposed by others. So part of being one and the same person throughout this bodily life is being continuously liable to account for my actions, attitudes, and beliefs to others within my communities.

> Thirdly, because my life is to be understood as a teleologically ordered unity, a whole the nature of which and the good of which I have to learn how to discover, my live has the continuity and unity of a quest, a quest whose object is to discover that truth about my life as a whole which his indispensable part of the of good of that life (MacIntyre, 1991, 197).

The narrative conception of the human life is not some coping mechanism for imagining a better way to live or hoping desperately that life has meaning and ignoring all unpleasantries along the way. The narrative unity of the human person, and UMary's particular identity as Christian, Catholic, and Benedictine requires a radical accountability to one's history, the place one finds himself. Rather than an obstacle to happiness, knowing and owning the history of your story is what provides the context and setting for each individual life:

> I am someone's son or daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tripe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be the good for one who inhabits these roles. As such, I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritance, rightful expectations and obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point. This is in part what give my life its own moral particularity (MacIntyre, 2007s, 220).

MacIntyre breathes sociology and psychology into Aristotelian virtue ethics and in so doing makes its principles accessible to the twentieth and twenty-first century. Virtues are not some ethereal idea of some worn out philosopher but, with a narrative vision of the human

person, moral judgements can be made based on the particulars of each life and within the particular setting in which each life shares in history. And here again we see this narrative vision from UMary – the Christian, Catholic, Benedictine identity are not just cute, appealing advertising material. They are messy, real, and tension filled histories worthy of students to encounter and grapple with as they work to accept and take accountability for the whole of their life.

But even a university such as UMary, while proposing such an integrative vision of the person, is limited in reach to those internal to the institution and, as an institution, remains constrained with external goods. So far, the University has been able to attract and retain both a thriving student, faculty, and staff population committed to such a vision, but the pressure to provide a competitive suite of resources for students is proving to be financially overwhelming for similarly sized religious universities. The University may very well have a compelling vision, one which aligns quite well with MacIntyre's conception of the narrative unity of a human life, but vision without resources is just a hallucination.

CHAPTER 4

CONFLICT OF RIVAL TRADITIONS

The third and final stage of MacIntyre's framework is that of moral tradition. Just as practices exist within the narrative unity of life, the narrative unity of life occurs within a tradition. Tradition is what brings together and makes intelligible the narratives of each individual. Each narrative is drawn together into a community of connected characters within a tradition: "I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say, whether I like it or not, whether I recognize it or not, one of the bearers of a tradition" (MacIntyre, 2007, 221). As a bearer of tradition, each narrative simultaneously clarifies and is clarified in exercising excellence. Returning to the example of how different characters require different

virtues, the Philosopher's character acts as an opportunity for the father to grow in wisdom and perseverance, the father's character acts as an opportunity for the Philosopher to grow in patience, both characters providing an opportunity for the other to clarify and be clarified in the relationship between a student and professor, and so on. This intelligibility of narrative situated within a tradition relies on the virtues "insofar as the virtues sustain the relationships required for practices, they have to sustain relationships to the past – and to the future – as well as in the present" (MacIntyre, 2007, 221). Tradition is the final stage of MacIntyre's three step framework because it is the final hermeneutic of continuity and therefore intelligibility.

> For all reasoning takes place within the context of some traditional mode of thought, transcending through criticism and invention the limitations of what had hitherto been reasoned in that tradition; this is as true of modern physics as of medieval logic. Moreover when a tradition is in good order it is always partially constituted by an argument about the goods the pursuit of which gives to that tradition its particular point and purpose. So when an institution – a university, say, or a farm, or a hospital – is the bearer of a tradition of practice or practices, its common life will be partly, but in a centrally important way, constituted by a continuous argument as to what a university is and ought to be or what good farming is or what good medicine is. Traditions, when vital, embody continuities of conflict…A living tradition then is an historically extended, socially embodied argument, an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition. Within a tradition the pursuit of goods extends through generations, sometimes through many generations. Hence the individual's search for his or her good is generally and characteristically

conducted within a context defined by those traditions of which the individual's life

is a part. (MacIntyre, 2007, 222).

MacIntyre masterfully presents the integrity of his argument by demonstrating the very thing he is presenting. Through his framework MacIntyre revitalizes the tradition of moral inquiry by means of an argument of what makes available the goods of moral inquiry by first identifying and making intelligible his context, his practice, the narrative of his life, and the tradition of moral philosophy - and proves how his argument satisfies the conditions of his framework. He does not put forward any definition of the good. Rather his three stage development insists on the fundamental necessity of the virtues, for "virtues find their point and purpose not only in sustaining those relationships necessary in the variety of goods internal to practices are to be achieved and not only in sustaining the form of an individual life in which that individual may seek out his or her good as the good of his or her whole life, but also in sustaining those traditions which provide both practices and individual lives with their necessary historical context" (MacIntyre, 2007, 223).

ASU's charter is conceived within the hermeneutic of rupture and therefore tradition has little to no place in determining the institutions trajectory other than as a means to demonstrate progress: "The individualism of modernity could of course find no use for the notion of tradition within its own conceptual scheme except as an adversary notion" (MacIntyre, 2007, 222). The practice of education has been hyper focused on external goods and the narrative of self followed that rupture:

> For it was not merely that academic enquiry increasingly became professionalized
> and specialized, and that formal education correspondingly became a preparation for
> and initiation into professionalization and specialization but that, for the most part
> and increasingly, moral and theological truth ceased to be recognized as objects of

substantive enquiry and instead were relegated to the realm of privatized belief

(MacIntyre, 1991, 217).

What is decidedly characteristic about the modern secular university is the way its

fragmentation has cut off any meaningful dialogue within the university. Rather than

substantive academic debate there is a constant stream of ego-centric ideologies, factions of

students and faculty playing the role of vigilant watch dogs looking out for the slightest

departure from a genealogists view of diversity, equity, and inclusion – all must be heard

because all have their own perspective, however ego-centric. Instead of the type of lively

debate which MacIntyre points to as the sign of the health of a tradition, and therefore the

health of the institution within that tradition, the modern secular university must work

tirelessly to maintain some simulacra of politeness. What results is "the capacity of the

contemporary university not only to dissolve antagonism, to emasculate hostility, but also in

so doing to render itself culturally irrelevant" (MacIntyre, 1991, 218-9).

ASU deserves a great deal of credit for it seems to have heard MacIntyre's eerie

prognosis and was able to perceive the decomposition of its relevance and the decay of its

foundation. Under the leadership of President Michael Crow ASU's charter is refined and

redirected by casting a new strategic vision for higher education in New American

University, "a reconceptualization of 21st century higher education" (Arizona State

University , n.d.). The New American University provides a fresh interpretation of ASU's

charter and an in-depth vision for revitalizing and reorienting the university beyond the

limits of the domesticated use of "values" and "health" and trying to set itself free from the

narrative of liberal individualism. To be sure ASU still insists that diversity, inclusion, and

academic integrity ought to be present in the university, but so often what subsists are mere

simulacra. Instead, ASU commits itself to true diversity of thought and narrative history. It

reemphasizes inclusion of ideas and the need for meaningful, connected communities. It strives to bring together curricula focusing on intra and inter university dialogue and collaboration. ASU's New American University is ambitious in its goals, bold in its claims, and revolutionary in contemporary, public universities:

A New Environment: In this setting, ideas cross pollinate

This restructuring into a truly interdisciplinary unit allowed scientists, economists, philosophers, and others to come together to create a new and rich academic landscape, which in turn inspires students to think and learn in different ways.

A New Community: Collaboration is key

Only through earned trust and a thorough understanding of people, places and their problems is it possible to create transformative change. In the eyes of ASU, everyone touched by the university is a potential partner in, potential beneficiary of, and potential contributor to the realization of healthier future.

A New Objective: New school = master learners

The time has come for college completion to mean something beyond just a career. Society's survival and success in the future will rely on solutions derived from the most capable of thinkers. They will be men and women who have been trained to think critically and that have been educated from a strong foundation that enables them to learn anything. Though their expertise may lie in certain areas, the way they learn and apply information will be radically different from past generations, allowing them move [sic] seamlessly between disciplines and to work collaboratively with others in innovative ways (Arizona State University , n.d.).

Notice the emphasis on unity, connectedness, collaboration, and an understanding of context. This new strategic vision addresses and attempts to reorder the university precisely

in the ways the genealogical vision of the fractured, masked individual fails and the practice of education which only pursues external goods.

UMary, while steeped in the tradition of the university and moral inquiry, while upholding the hermeneutic of continuity, still faces the practical challenges of the current reality – competing with the tantalizing external goods which have become the primary focus of other universities. UMary, like many universities of its stature, seemingly had two options – cave to the demands of external goods and let the mission and vision informed aspects of its practice to fade, or reinforce its traditional minded mission and vision focus and insulate itself from all exterior views, especially secular views, which could threaten it. It, however, led by its president Monsignor James P. Shea, was not convinced that such a dichotomy existed. Thomas Aquinas provides the key for the third way.

Thomas Aquinas was similarly confronted with the incommensurability of two rival traditions – the practiced Augustinian tradition and the newly accessible Aristotelian tradition – and the resulting dilemma: "to refuse to integrate the Aristotelian corpus and its teaching into the curriculum would have been to seem to abandon the claim that theology can indeed order and direct the other secular sciences and arts; yet it seemed that to accept the Aristotelian corpus into the curriculum would be to produce incoherence in the structures of teaching and knowledge" (MacIntyre, 1991, 109). The difficulty was also practical – debate between the rival positions was not possible because "each system of thought had its own set of standards internal to it and there was no third set of neutral standards to which appeal could be made" (MacIntyre, 1991, 109). These rival conceptual idioms "can only be recognized and characterized by someone who inhabits both alternative conceptual schemes, who knows and is able to utter the idiom of each from within, who has become, so to speak, a native speaker of two first languages, each with its own distinctive

conceptual idiom" (MacIntyre, 1991, 114). Aquinas, an incredible mind uniquely situated within history having an exceptional teacher in Albert the Great, was capable of engaging in the language game of each rival view a fluent speaker. This was only possible because:

> Albertus Magnus had taken upon himself the massive task of making the new Aristotelian learning, including in that a good deal of Islamic commentary and of other related material, available, so far as possible, as a whole in Latin commentary and exposition…So that although Albertus rejected a variety of Aristotelian doctrines in his theology…he did not allow these critical stances to undermine the presentation of Aristotle and of Aristotelianism in his and its own terms. It thus became possible for his pupils to understand the Aristotelian standpoint from within in a thoroughgoing way (MacIntyre, 1991, 115).

Because he was so immersed in both, Aquinas was able to integrate them together by "fusing the conception of enquiry shared by both Aristotelians and Augustinians (MacIntyre, 1991, 123). Aquinas did not provide some simple insight or helpful commentary, but provided an integrated framework:

> It was into the common framework furnished by this conception, thus spelled out analogically, casually, and practically that Aquinas integrated both rival schemes of concepts and beliefs in such a way as both to correct in each that which he took by its own standards could be shown to be defective or unsound and to remove from each, in a way justified by that correction, that which barred them from reconciliation. Retrospectively we can understand him as having rescued both standpoints from imminent, even if unrecognized, epistemological crises.

Thus for UMary, in respect to the life of the tradition it represents, both the choice to abandon and the choice to insulate itself lead to death and decay of the tradition, for the

former constitutes a rupture with the tradition itself and the latter constitutes a rupture with what MacIntyre presents as what keeps traditions healthy and alive: "an historically extended, socially embodied argument" (MacIntyre, 2007, 222).

Mary College at ASU is an attempt by UMary and ASU to solve the crisis each institution of higher education is experiencing. As institutions they are motivated by external goods but practitioners within each institution also seek to offer the unique internal goods offered by such partnership. The program of Mary College at ASU intentionally involves students from both UMary and ASU so as to introduce students to the rival practice of education and so to expose them to the competing views of self and the authority of moral tradition.

Mary College at ASU is a partnership between ASU and UMary whereby students at each university are able to take courses which meet degree requirements for their home university from the host university through a domestic exchange. The Mary College at ASU program teaches UMary's Catholic studies curriculum. Students from UMary can participate in the Mary College at ASU program for one semester and live on ASU's campus taking both ASU and Mary College at ASU courses. ASU students can participate in the Mary College at ASU program the entirety of their undergraduate career taking courses Mary College at ASU courses that meet ASU degree requirements and even minoring or majoring in Catholic Studies all while remaining a full-time ASU student. Students pay a membership fee each semester rather than per credit tuition to gain access to up to 19 career credits through the domestic exchange, as well as a number of other membership benefits designed to cultivate friendship.

Again, while Mary College at ASU exists as a partnership between two very different institutions of higher education, yet they share in an important fundamental characteristic as

institutions. They are, therefore, as institutions both primarily concerned with external goods. Certainly, both institutions are pursuing opportunities for increased revenue and retention, but each also have particular external goods they are seeking. The external goods UMary seeks are the geographical extension of its brand and the prestige of being the Catholic partner of ASU – students can attend UMary and still access the immense resources of a state-funded institution (ASU's electron spectroscopy lab is the same size as UMary's entire science building. The Mary College at ASU partnership is enticing also as a potential increased revenue source for UMary. Expanded branding, prestige, and revenue are all very enticing and valuable external goods for UMary. ASU seeks to continue to expand and prove its claim of inclusivity specifically to attract and retain a good percentage of religiously motivated students (especially considering how formidable of a competitor Grand Canyon University has become) and to continue its reputation as an innovator. ASU too, then, seeks the external goods of branding, prestige, and revenue. And as institutions, these external goods need remain, or at least the possibility of them remain, if the partnership between the institutions is to remain.

What is there to say of internal goods of such a partnership and how extensive are those goods when present? If these goods are present, "can we now realize, within the forms imposed by the contemporary university, the kind of and the degree of antagonistic dialogue between fundamentally conflicting and incommensurable standpoints which moral and theological enquiry may be held to require from within one or more of the contending standpoints" (MacIntyre, 1991, 221)? Rather than succumb to the false dichotomy of secularization versus mission isolation, UMary sees a route similar to that of what was offered to Aquinas. Indeed, it was Crow's strategic vision for ASU which sparked the real

possibility of Mary College at ASU. Crow's strategic vision signaled a reconsideration of what a university is and what it should do with a seeming recognition:

> that universities are places where conceptions of and standards of rational justification are elaborated, put to work in the detailed practices of enquiry, and themselves rationally evaluated, so that only from the university can the wider society learn how to conduct its own debates, practical or theoretical, in a rationally defensible way. But that claim itself can be plausibly and justifiably advanced only when and if so far as the university is a place where rival and antagonistic views of rational justification, such as those of genealogist and Thomists, are afforded the opportunity both to develop their own enquiries, in practice and in the articulation of the theory of that practice, and to conduct their intellectual and moral warfare (MacIntyre, 1991, 222).

The genealogical vision and the traditional vision of education are both in threat of decay because they are both removed from that sustained argumentation which keeps traditions alive. The possibility of this reignited argumentation is *the* internal good that practitioners from both institutions, as expressed by President Crow and Monsignor Shea through their strategic vision, hope to share in such an arrangement. Mary College at ASU provides an unique opportunity for "the presentation of that overall system of thought and practice, which is Aquinas translated into contemporary terms, requires both a different kind of curriculum ordering of the disciplines from that divisive and fragmenting partitioning which contemporary academia imposes and the development of morally committed modes of dialectical enquiry, for which contemporary academia affords no place" (MacIntyre, 1991, 220). The Catholic Studies program, a curriculum intentionally designed to contrast with the fragmentation of modern academic modes, offered within the public secular university's

general studies courses substantially provides the morally committed mode of the Catholic Imaginative Vision of dialectical enquiry.

To be clear, the Mary College at ASU program as it currently operates is far from such institutionally extended internal goods. It is a humble program teaching a few dozen students each semester. The program does bear the fruit of unique internal goods for the students who opt to participate because it allows them to experience "the university as a place of constrained disagreement, of imposed participation in conflict, in which a central responsibility of higher education would be to initiate students into conflict" (MacIntyre, 1991, 231). It is the practice of initiating and actively engaging students in this conflict which makes possible the internal goods provided by such an experience for students enrolled as members of Mary College. Both for ASU students who gain access to the Catholic academic tradition and UMary students who gain access to the secular genealogist view, these internal goods are an awareness of the conflict in the vision and practice of education between UMary and ASU, the conflict in the narrative of the self, and the conflict between a hermeneutic of rupture as opposed to continuity of moral inquiry.

The program of Mary College at ASU and the internal goods it offers requires two institutions to remain sufficiently motivated by external goods but also practitioners willing and motivated to:

> [participate] in conflict as the protagonist of a particular point of view, engaged thereby in two distinct but related tasks. The first of these would be to advance enquiry from within that particular point of view, preserving and transforming the initial agreements with those who share that point of view and so articulating through moral and theological enquiry a framework within which the parts of the curriculum might once again become parts of a whole. The second task would be to

enter into controversy with other rival standpoints, doing so *both* in order to exhibit

what is mistaken in that rival standpoint in the light of the understanding afforded by

one's own point of view *and* in order to test and retest the central theses advanced

from one's own point of view against the strongest possible objections to them to be

derived from one's opponents (MacIntyre, 1991, 231).

This is the work of the practitioners of Mary College and the practice which students are

introduced to – reintroducing conflict and disagreement as an essential experience of the

university which has preferred "safe zones." Civic discourse on campus is not simply at the

service of all voices being heard or as a means to diffuse conflict. When in full bloom, this

culture of discourse and disputation will require practitioners:

> Concerned to uphold and to order the ongoing conflicts, to provide and sustain
>
> institutionalized means for their expression, to negotiate the modes of encounter
>
> between opponents, to ensure that rival voices were not illegitimately suppressed, to
>
> sustain the university – not as an arena of neutral objectivity, as in the liberal
>
> university, since each of the contending standpoints would be advancing its own
>
> partisan account of the nature and function of objectivity – but as an arena of
>
> conflict in which the most fundamental type of moral and theological disagreement
>
> was accorded recognition. One responsibility in discharging the duties of this second
>
> role would be to ensure that the recognition of conflict and disagreement do not
>
> blind us to the importance of those large areas of agreement without which conflict
>
> and disagreement themselves would necessarily be sterile (MacIntyre, 1991, 231).

This second role is already being practiced through the School of Civic and Economic

Thought and Leadership, who because of their view of education have been natural

collaborators for the Mary College at ASU program. Indeed, the Mary College at ASU

program and the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership are two prime examples where ASU is grappling with "the question of its own justification in a new light by providing a place of systematic encounter for rival standpoints concerned with moral and theological justification" and thereby closing the distance on the utopian charge brought against MacIntyre.

The partnership between UMary and ASU, two institutions of higher education, is made possible by a shared pursuit of each institution of external goods available *and* by the pursuit of the internal goods perceived by the practitioners of each university which are made possible by such an agreement. This private-secular university partnership has the capacity to reignite the conflict between the conceptions of the practice of education, the narrative of self, and rival views of the tradition of moral inquiry. The primary accessibility of the internal goods provided by the partnership are the introduction and engagement with students who participate in the conflict at each of MacIntyre's three-stage development. The Mary College at ASU program does not, therefore, represent the privileged place in which these internal goods are accessed by the students but it is through the partnership that the practice of education, views of the narrative unity of self, and the following of the moral tradition of the Christian, Catholic, Benedictine University is able to play the role of proposing the counter-points to the views of the secular liberal university. Students from both UMary and ASU share in the benefits of being offered the most compelling arguments from both viewpoints so far conceived and are able to play out the drama by becoming fluent in both visions. Made possible by the ambitious and high-hearted vision newly cast by both universities, the three-stage MacIteryrian framework of virtues are the primary locus of the conflict in which the students are introduced. The universities so reconceived through their vision not only share in the pursuit of the external goods, but also in the required

31

virtues needed to sustain the program. At Mary College at ASU, students of are given the unique opportunity to exercise the virtues by cohabitating the differing practices of education, by participating and engaging in the conflict of what constitutes the narrative of self and the pursuit of truth, and by sustaining and revivifying, even if in a small way internally or within their peer groups, the tradition of the university as an encounter with conflict and the tension of the best moral conceptions offered *so far*. While such internal goods are currently limited in scope to the students opting into the program, the reintroduction of the tradition versus genealogy debate between two universities articulating visions of the renewal of education and for such debate to occur within each university has the potency to extend the internal goods of the "constrained disagreement" institutionally on the path to a "postliberal university" (MacIntyre, 1991, 234). The achievement of such a postliberal university would be fundamentally and essentially integrated to the sustaining power of the virtues and fail or succeed to the degree in which the virtues are maintained and the tradition of genuine conflict and argument flourish.

REFERENCES

Arizona State University. n.d. "New American University." Accessed April 13, 2023. https://newamericanuniversity.asu.edu/.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: Third Edition*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.

Pope Paul VI. *Evangelii nuntiandi*. 8 December 1975. Papal Archive. The Holy See. https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html.

University of Mary. n.d. "Mission & Identity." Accessed April 16, 2023. https://www.umary.edu/about/mission-identity.

University of Mary. n.d. "Values of Vision 2030." Accessed April 14, 2023. https://www.umary.edu/donors/ways-to-give/vision-2030/values-vision-2030.