

Thomas C. Marré

School of Philosophy
The Catholic University of America
209 Aquinas Hall
620 Michigan Ave. NE
Washington D.C.

marre@cua.edu

Employment

Assistant Professor, The Catholic University of America	2019-
Visiting Lecturer, University of Pittsburgh	2018-2019
Adjunct Instructor of Philosophy, Carnegie Mellon University	2018-2019

Education

Ph.D., Philosophy (Joint Program in Classics, Philosophy, and Ancient Science),
University of Pittsburgh. August 2018
M.A., Philosophy, Tufts University. 2010
M.A., Classics, Tufts University. 2007
B.A., Philosophy & Classics, University of Dallas. 2005

Research

Areas of Specialization

Ancient Philosophy, Early Modern Philosophy (incl. Kant), History and Philosophy of Science

Areas of Competence

Ethics, Logic, Metaphysics

Dissertation

Teleology and Its Limits in Aristotle and Kant

Aristotle and Kant are often taken to offer diametrically opposed accounts of the metaphysical and epistemic status of natural teleology. I argue, however, that despite their initial similarities, Aristotle and Kant are addressing importantly distinct problems which have until now been conflated. Aristotle's natural teleology is concerned not with goal-directedness as such, but with a more general problem central to Greek philosophy: the possibility of motion. The *telos* of a motion is not, as it is so often thought to be, its goal or aim, but its limit. As a limit, the *telos* gives shape or form to motion, which would otherwise be unlimited and, therefore, unknowable. By contrast, Kant is concerned primarily with the possibility of a 'community' of form—how otherwise diverse particulars can share in some one form common to them all. This problem is intimately connected with the medieval dispute about universals, which concerned whether the community of form among many individuals was real, or merely a product of the intellect. This dispute informs not only Kant's discussion of genera and species in the introduction to the third *Critique*, but also the problem of natural teleology in the second half of the same: do the parts of an organic body stand in community together in virtue of a common form, or is the thought that they do merely a product of the intellect?

Committee: James G. Lennox and Stephen Engstrom (co-chairs), John McDowell, Jessica Gelber, James Allen, and Andrew Chignell.

Talks, Presentations, and Workshops

Self-Knowledge and the City in Plato's Euthyphro

Visitor's Philosophy Conference II: Dynamic Activity, Self-Knowledge, and Ethics
University of Pittsburgh, 2019

Efficient and Final Causation in Aristotle

Student-Faculty Colloquium, University of Pittsburgh, 2016

Telos and Apeiron in Aristotle and the Presocratics

Invited presentation for Topics in Ancient Philosophy: Aristotle's Teleology (Jessica Gelber), graduate seminar, University of Pittsburgh, 2016

Eudemian Ethics VI.9-10

Yale/Cornell/KCL Workshop in Ancient Philosophy, Cornell University, 2015

Powers in Aristotle's Metaphysics Θ

Rotman Summer Institute: Causal Powers in Science, University of Western Ontario, 2014

Individuating Action in Aristotle

Second Canadian Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy, University of British Columbia, 2014

Comments on Elaine Landry, 'Plato Wasn't a Mathematical Platonist,' Second Canadian Colloquium for Ancient Philosophy, University of British Columbia, 2014

Teleology and Time in Aristotle's Philosophy of Nature

Causation and Explanation conference, Catholic University of America, 2014

Teaching

Carnegie Mellon University

Primary Instructor

Spring 2019 Modern Moral Philosophy

Fall 2018 Ancient Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

Primary Instructor

Spring 2019 Concepts of Human Nature

Fall 2018 Concepts of Human Nature

Fall 2018 Empiricism

Summer 2018 Introduction to Logic

Summer 2016 Introduction to Ethics

Teaching Assistant

Spring 2018 Introduction to Logic

Fall 2017 Introduction to Ethics

M. Wilson

G. Strom

Spring 2017	History of Modern Philosophy	J. Humphreys
Fall 2016	Introduction to Logic	K. Manders
Spring 2016	Philosophy and Science	G. Valente
Fall 2015	Introduction to Ethics	M. Thompson
Spring 2014	Ancient Philosophy	J. Allen
Fall 2013	Introduction to Ethics	M. Thompson
Spring 2012	Philosophy and Science	G. Valente
Fall 2011	Ancient Philosophy	K. Inglis

Tufts University

Teaching Assistant

Spring 2010	Metaphysics	B. Epstein
Fall 2009	Political Philosophy	D. Denby
Spring 2009	Metaphysics	J. Azzouni
Fall 2008	Logic	S. Russinoff
Fall 2006	History of Ancient Greece	S. Hirsch

Fellowships, Awards, and Honors

Rescher Dissertation Completion Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh, Summer 2017
Andrew W. Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh
awarded for the years 2010-2011, 2012-2013, 2014-2015
Classics Department Scholarship, University of Dallas, 2001-2005

Service & Organizations

2015-2017	Mentor in Pitt Philosophy Mentoring Program for undergraduate students
2014-2015	Graduate Student Representative on the University of Pittsburgh Junior Faculty Search Committee, Fall 2015
2013-2014	Organizer — Faculty/Student Lunch Colloquia, University of Pittsburgh Philosophy Dept.
2013-2014	University of Pittsburgh Representative, Pennsylvania Circle of Ancient Philosophy
2012-2014	Librarian — Adolf Grunbaum Philosophical Reading Room, University of Pittsburgh, Philosophy Dept.

Graduate Coursework

University of Pittsburgh

Audited courses are marked with an asterisk.

Modern Philosophy

Leibniz	N. Rescher
Kant	S. Engstrom
*Hegel	R. Brandom
*Kant's Theory of Judgment	S. Engstrom
*Wittgenstein's <i>Tractatus</i>	T. Ricketts

Kant and the Exact Sciences
Nature and Laws of Nature in the 16th and 17th Centuries
*Kantian Ethics
*Kant's *Critique of Judgment*

A. Jauernig
P. Machamer
S. Engstrom
A. Chignell

Ancient Philosophy

*Hellenistic Ethics
Aristotle's Poetics
Understanding Aristotle's Teleology

J. Allen
M. Smethurst
Al. Gotthelf &
J. Lennox

On Ancient Medicine

*Aristotle's Philosophy of Science
Plato's *Parmenides* & *Phaedrus*
Ancient Skepticism
*Aristotle's Teleology

J. Allen
J. Lennox
R. Polansky
J. Allen
J. Gelber

Ethics

Ethics Core Seminar
*Ethics

J. Setiya
M. Thompson

MeSE, Logic, and Philosophy of Science

Advanced Logic Core Seminar
Metaphysics and Epistemology Core Seminar
Philosophy of Science Core Seminar

M. Wilson
T. Ricketts
J. Woodward

Tufts University

Causation
Logic
Fictional Objects
Phenomenology and Existentialism
Philosophy of History
Wittgenstein
Philosophy of the Ordinary

G. Smith
M. Richard
J. Azzouni
N. Bauer
G. Smith
A. Baz
N. Bauer &
A. Baz
E. Kelly
G. Matthews

Languages

Ancient Greek, Latin, German (reading)

References

James G. Lennox
Professor of History and
Philosophy of Science
University of Pittsburgh
jglennox@pitt.edu

John McDowell
Distinguished University
Professor of Philosophy
University of Pittsburgh
mcdowell@pitt.edu

Stephen Engstrom
Professor of Philosophy
University of Pittsburgh
engstrom@pitt.edu

Jessica Gelber
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
University of Toronto
jessica.gelber@utoronto.ca

James Allen
Professor of Philosophy
University of Toronto
jv.allen@utoronto.ca

Andrew Chignell
Laurance S. Rockefeller Professor
Princeton University
chignell@princeton.edu

Dissertation Abstract: *Teleology and Its Limits in Aristotle and Kant*

In my dissertation, I explain why Aristotle and Kant both thought teleology in some sense necessary for natural science and why each ultimately accords it a very different scientific status. In doing so, I articulate and defend novel conceptions of both the problems they were addressing and the solutions they were concerned to defend. Those problems, I argue, were importantly different and we misunderstand a central philosophical notion and its history—teleology—by conflating them.

First, I argue that Aristotle's natural teleology constitutes an essential part of his solution to a larger problem in ancient Greek philosophy: how is motion or change possible? Motion had been thought by some to be infinite or unlimited because divisible without limit. For Aristotle, to lack limit means to lack form, and for that reason, Aristotle thinks the unlimited is (as such) unknowable—it is formless. This means, however, that motion would seem to be unknowable. And because Aristotle defines *nature* in terms of motion, nature too would seem to be unknowable. Reformulated in these terms, the problem is now this: knowledge of nature requires knowledge of natural motion, but motion seems to be unlimited or formless and thus unknowable. Aristotle's conception of teleology, I argue, is designed to meet just this problem. Seeing how, though, requires that we understand the vocabulary in which he frames that conception in a radically new way.

Both ancient and contemporary commentators have taken the '*telos*' in 'teleology' to mean something like 'goal' or 'aim.' As a result, its connection to the possibility of motion is obscure. I argue, however, that *telos* in fact means 'end' in the very concrete sense of 'limit.' Aristotle often glosses *telos* with limit, and this association is consistent with prior usage in both philosophical and non-philosophical contexts as far back as Homer. The *telos* was, in fact, one of the three standardly recognized limits, together with beginning and middle—*archē* and *meson*. All three show up in important ways in Aristotle's natural philosophy. But so understood, the *telos* has a natural relation to the possibility of motion: it serves as a limit in virtue of which motion has form and is, therefore, intelligible. The *telos*, in fact, is the outer bound of a motion, the point at which it ends. House-building ends with the house, maturation with adulthood. Without such an end or limit, motion would be unlimited and unknowable—it would lack form.

Second, I argue that Kant's treatment of teleology is intimately related to medieval and early modern disputes about universals and the reality of our empirical classifications of things. Central to my account is the category of community, which has been largely neglected in the literature on Kant's teleology. Discursive intellects like ours, Kant says, require that we approach nature as if it were ordered into a system of genera and species. In such a system, species stand in community under their genus. The species are parts of the genus and together they form a whole. The medievals had said the same, and when they disputed about the reality of universals, i.e. common forms, they were also disputing whether or not the community (*communitas*) of a given form was real or simply effected by the intellect. Kant side-steps the dispute, saying only that our intellects are such that we must act *as if* nature were ordered into relations of community.

Kant's treatment of natural teleology, I argue, runs parallel. Something like an oak, which Kant calls a natural end, is said to possess the form of a system and its parts are all said to issue from a common or communal ground. This communal ground is responsible for the distinctive unity of a natural end: all the parts share in it and stand in community with one another because of it. As in the case of genus and species, so here we can only approach organisms *as if* their parts formed a real whole in virtue of a common ground, i.e. some form. Their ground is never actually given to us, and as a consequence, genuine understanding of the apparent unity and purposiveness of natural things eludes us. Teleology, so construed, can never be accorded genuinely scientific status.