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Emplotting Virtue: A Narrative Approach to Environmental Virtue Ethics

Brian Treanor

Loyola Marymount University

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Faculty Pub Night – Fall 2014

Date: November 4, 2014

Speaker: Brian Treanor



About the Author

Brian Treanor reads, writes, and teaches at [Loyola Marymount University](#), where he is currently Charles S. Casassa Chair and Professor of [Philosophy](#). He also serves as the Director of the [Academy for Catholic Thought and Imagination](#), an interdisciplinary research institute that seeks to encourage intellectual dialogue at LMU, and to support faculty scholarship on a wide range of topics in the humanities, social sciences, arts, and sciences.

He completed his undergraduate studies at [UCLA](#) in between absences to live and study in Japan, climb, travel, and engage in serial autodidacticism. His graduate work began quite a bit later, after some years spent living and traveling abroad, as well as time working as a climbing guide in the United States. He studied first at [CSU, Long Beach](#), where he worked with Daniel Guerriere, and later (after yet another leave) at [Boston College](#), during which time he had the extreme good fortune of having his short time in Boston overlap both the initial years of Richard Kearney's full-time residence and the final years of Jacques Taminiaux's tenure, as well as the presence of Richard Cobb-Stevens, Fr. William Richardson, and others.

He's a native of California, though he's traveled on six continents and lived, in very small towns and very large cities, on three. He and his family still travel several months a year, and try to do so on a low-carbon, low-cost, high-adventure, experience-rich model. They spend a fair bit of

each year living out of tents, cabins, boats, trailers, and the like. He has a number of interests outside of academia. Climbing of all sorts has been an abiding passion in his life, and he's spent a great deal of time ascending and descending rock, ice, and snow. Other mountain-related pursuits developed organically from this passion, including skiing, backpacking, fly fishing, and similar activities. He's also interested in music, poetry, literature, art, chess, history, science, gardening, and a great many other things. Brian finds there's no shortage of worthwhile endeavors to occupy his time.

About the Author's Work

Despite its ancient roots, virtue ethics has only recently been fully appreciated as a resource for environmental philosophy. Fundamental to virtue ethics is an acknowledgment that neither good ethical rules nor good intentions are effective absent the character required to bring them to fulfillment.

Brian Treanor builds on recent work on virtue ethics in environmental philosophy, finding an important grounding in the narrative theory of philosophers like Paul Ricoeur and Richard Kearney. Character and ethical formation, Treanor argues, are intimately tied to our relationship with the narratives through which we view the human place in the natural world. By reframing environmental questions in terms of individual, social, and environmental narratives about flourishing, *Emplotting Virtue* offers a powerful vision of how we might remake our character so as to live more happily, more sustainably, and more virtuously in a diverse, beautiful, wondrous, and fragile world.