

THE GENEALOGICAL ETHICS OF LEADERSHIP-AS-PRACTICE

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A COMMENTARY ON K. Mensch and J. Barge (2019), “Understanding Challenges to Leadership-as-Practice by Way of MacIntyre’s Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry,” *Bus & Prof Ethics J* 38(1): 1–16,
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ABSTRACT

Mensch and Barge in their interpretation of Alasdair MacIntyre’s critique of genealogical ethics as a basis of ethical weakness in the emerging field of “leadership-as-practice,” suggest that L-A-P is lacking in ethical grounding especially because of its relativist philosophy. I address this valid ethical concern in L-A-P theory by arguing that there is a form of realism in Nietzschean axiology and that the dialogic potentialities in material-social interactions may offer a greater capacity for ethical reflexivity than a reliance on rules.

IN A RECENT article in the *Business & Professional Ethics Journal*, Kirk Mensch and James Barge (2019) presented a moral enquiry into the fabric of Leadership-as-Practice (L-A-P) theory, in so doing addressing an important gap in L-A-P regarding its ethical stance. In particular, they linked L-A-P with the genealogical approach to history and ethics based on Alasdair MacIntyre’s views, especially his oft-referenced *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*. Mensch and Barge trace the roots of genealogy to the work of Nietzsche and thereafter proceed to the philosophical traditions of social constructionism and phenomenology. Accordingly, as per Nietzsche’s genealogy, L-A-P cannot be based on any ultimate moral truth because it sees the

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